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# POLITICAL ECONOMY *of* JOURNALISM

*New (and old) logics of  
production and consumption*





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*Teresina, 2018*



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## PREFACE

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Journalism is a most critical resource for our struggles to continuously expand the boundaries of the limited democratic spheres we daily experience in our lives, be it within the families, or work, or school, or politics at large. And, yes, the centrality of journalism for democracies may be a truism, but exactly because it appears to be so evidently true is that we can never relinquish our disposition to uncover the possibilities to democratize all possible aspects of journalism. And this is what this book does, by exploring different aspects of the journalistic craft and of the business of journalism, thanks to a brilliant team of women and men from different parts of the world, some still new to academia, others experienced and widely recognized academicians, all united by the powerful analytical and practical tools of the political economy of communications.

Given the diversity of the chapters that follow, this preface has not been written on the basis of their individual merit and argumentation, but instead on the basis of the most general research question that all the chapters, in one way or another, grapple with: how to deal theoretically and practically with the structural changes journalism has been undergoing since the advent of the internet and the applications that have largely disrupted, all over the world, the way journalism is produced, distributed and consumed.

Coincidentally, or not, such structural changes in the political economy of journalism have been coming in pair with the eruption in different parts of the world, from the United States to Hungary, to Turkey, to Italy, to parts of Germany, and Denmark, and Sweden, to present-day Brazil, etc, of threats to the democratic arrangements that have been in construction since the end of the World War II, centered on the idea of universal human rights.

As said above, journalism is a most critical resource for our struggles to continuously expand the boundaries of the limited democratic spheres we daily experience in our lives. But what will be made of even such limited struggles, when journalism, in its relationship with politics and democracy, is more and more identified by massive, nontransparent processes of disinformation, the so-called ‘fake-news’, rather than by a commitment to the idea that news only becomes news when it is fit to print?

Studies such as the ones we encounter in this book, even not dealing directly with such a question, are an important reminder that journalism is central to democracy, and for this we thank COMUM, the one and only research group in this country to directly address the political economy of journalism.

Brasília, October, 2018

## INTRODUCTION

The period known as informational capitalism, post-fordism or flexible accumulation has brought several changes in the way of producing, processing, managing, stocking and communicating information. Several activities had their way of acting changed to respond to the needs of capital including journalism. The need to become closer to the audience and interacting with it, shortening the distances and, sometimes, blurring the boundaries between those who produce and those who consume the news, has made the Internet, specially social networks, the most valued locus of both information and communication. The vast volume of information available, the possibility of becoming a content producer and the speed of the exchange process, almost instantaneous, allows the establishment of new logics of production and consumption of journalism, highlighting issues from the survival of the traditional press to ethical issues related to the content published. What is the ethical limit to the exploitation of crime images, catastrophes, or public figures?

The social networks have also provoked changes in the forms of debate and in social participation, opening spaces for interventions such as the Arab Spring, June journeys in Brazil, among other movements that experienced new ways of social interaction and new forms of media coverage counting on the participation of alternative sources. Social networks became spaces of political dispute, of symbolic capital construction used by artists and politicians to promote themselves, but also by activists and journalists in search of information and greater visibility for their products. By conditioning the behaviour of the media, modelling the information-spectacle and proposing a new capitalist model of business, the Internet and social networks threaten the rigor and credibility of journalists who face the instantaneity of

publication, the exacerbation of the spectacle, or post truth as others prefer to call it, and the old problem of rumours, nowadays with faster diffusion. On the other hand, platforms such as Facebook and Google are also provoking changes in the production of journalism regarding their control over digital advertising, the growth of fake news and the replacement of editors with computer algorithms.

In these new environment we need to discuss further issues such as: the survival of press media; the new business models for the digital journalism; the restructuring of traditional news companies based on new contracts, even more flexible, accumulation of functions and hierarchical and organizational changes; the ethical crisis of the journalism in Brazil and around the world; the role of public media; the collective or crowd sourced funding of alternative journalism; Journalism as labour, as a place of value production; the role of journalists in the age of social networks; who are the journalists; the role of women in this scenario; the role of social networks; how to manage information and media spectacle; the role of Google and Facebook in these environments; the role of trade unions in face of new labour challenges; and issues about surveillance and digital control.

Continuing the studies on Political Economy of Journalism, the Comum Group presents the new edition which focuses on the threats and challenges that Communication and more specifically Journalism has been facing with the emergence of new logics of production and consumption related to the use of Internet, especially social networks. We aim to provoke a deep discussion about the work process in journalism; the issues of gender and equality within the journalistic community; the capitalist logic of accumulation applied to media; and the ethical and citizen questions which interfere in the journalistic production.

Understanding the capitalist dynamic, the role of the media and journalism, the relationship between the diverse social spheres and the asymmetric constitution of power is essential to think about the current time and to propose alternatives to overcome the threats and challenges to Journalism.

This book compiles several articles written by both promising and established researchers dedicated to the communication field around the world. The Comum group and collaborators from Canada, Spain, United Kingdom and Brazil has been working hard to shed light on those issues which are changing not only Journalism, but the way we deal with information, communication and society.

We hope you enjoy the book,

Jacqueline Lima Dourado – UFPI  
Vincent Mosco – Queen’s University  
Denise Maria Moura da Silva Lopes – UFRJ  
Juliana Fernandes Teixeira – UFPI  
Renan da Silva Marques – UFPI



## New Media: The Next Internet<sup>1</sup>

Vincent Mosco<sup>2</sup>

The Internet that much of the world has used for close to thirty years is rapidly evolving into a new media form, what I call the Next Internet. The convergence of cloud computing, big data analytics, and the Internet of Things makes up the Next Internet and marks a new stage in digital development, a genuine ontological shift in the emerging post-Internet world (Mosco, 2017). It not only deepens the tendency to experience others primarily through technological mediation. It also shifts the relationship between humans and digital machines. The original Internet required an external device, such as a computer, tablet, or smart phone, to which one logged on to connect and communicate. Less an external means of communication, the Next Internet's digital networks are embedded everywhere. They are enabling constant and ubiquitous connections to sensor-equipped objects, and to the scanners worn on, and placed in, living bodies. As with electricity, but far more powerfully, digital technology greatly expands its influence even as it withdraws into the woodwork of life. The human-computer divide is increasingly becoming an anachronism. For now, it means a steady integration of humans and machines. But it promises a future that raises fundamental questions for all of our institutions as we proceed to what some expect will be the trans-human world ahead.

It would be presumptuous to map out the precise composition of the next stage in the digital world, but it is reasonable to conclude that the Internet, as we have known it for almost three decades, is changing and that the Next Internet may do more to disrupt the world than its older sibling. The Next Internet is far from fully formed and still bears some of the characteristics of the original one. But it is growing

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<sup>1</sup> October 2017

<sup>2</sup> Vincent Mosco (Ph.D, Harvard) is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Queen's University and Distinguished Professor of Communication, New Media Centre, Fudan University, Shanghai. His research interests include the political economy of communication, the social impacts of information technology, and communication policy. Dr. Mosco is the author or editor of twenty-three books and is currently working on "The Smart City in a Digital World" to be published by Emerald in 2019.

rapidly and is already challenging its founders' vision of a democratic, decentralized, and pluralistic digital world. The Next Internet brings together three interconnected systems: cloud computing, big data analytics, and the Internet of Things. It promises centralized data storage and services in vast digital factories that process massive streams of information gathered by networked sensors stored in every possible consumer, industrial, and office device, as well as in living bodies. But the Next Internet is also creating major environmental, privacy and labor challenges. The change is so massive, the upheaval so sudden, that it is forcing leaders to rethink the models that have described our dominant system of communication, prompting even some technology executives to consider the concept of an information utility. As one CEO puts it, "In the not too distant future, cloud computing will become a 'dispersed utility' and we will come to regard it in much the same way that we view our other core utilities such as gas, water and electricity." (Bridgwater, 2016) Such a conclusion is significant because it opens the door to giving the Next Internet public utility status and a greater degree of public control than the dispersed commercial system enjoys today.

The brilliance of the original Internet was figuring out how to get a decentralized, distributed world of servers to communicate and thereby connect users through simple, universal software standards. This began to change with the growth of cloud computing, symbolized best by the enormous data centers that have sprung up, seemingly overnight, all over the world. The cloud is a system for storing, processing, and distributing data, applications, and software using remote computers that provide digital services on demand for a fee. Familiar examples include Google's Gmail, Apple's iCloud, and Microsoft Office, which increasingly distributes its widely-used word processing and business software through the cloud for a monthly fee.

The cloud enables businesses, government agencies and individuals to move their data from onsite to large data centers located all over the world. What is saved in storage space also opens a rapidly growing business for companies that profit from storage fees, from services provided online, and from the sale of customer data to firms

interested in marketing products and services. Spy agencies like the National Security Agency (NSA) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) also work closely with cloud companies, particularly Amazon, the world's leading cloud computing provider, to meet their security and intelligence needs (Kunkel, 2014). The diverse collection of servers providing the foundation for the original Internet has evolved into a centralized, global system of data centers, each containing tens or hundreds of thousands of linked servers, connected to the world through telecommunications systems, and operated primarily by private corporations and government military and surveillance agencies. The leading science journal *Nature* made very clear the practical difference between the original Internet and one based in the cloud when it called on the U.S. government to establish a "Cloud Commons," one version of an information utility, for biological research, especially in genomics. It did so because research on large data sets is far easier and faster to carry out in the cloud than through servers based in university research facilities (a difference in project time alone of between 6 weeks for the cloud and 6 months for the old Internet). (Stein et al., 2015).

The cloud is more like a data factory than a storage warehouse because it processes data to produce services such as marketing, accounting, customer relations, as well as legal and financial services. That makes companies and government agencies partners in service provision with the companies that own and manage data centers. It also marks a major step toward creating a centralized, globalized and fully commercial Internet that resembles giant water and electric utilities. The major cloud providers are almost all large corporations. Amazon leads the pack but it is closely followed by led by Microsoft, IBM, and Google. Through service contracts, most of these are well integrated into the military, intelligence, and surveillance arms of government. Amazon, for example, provides cloud computing storage and services for both the CIA (through a \$600 million contract) and the NSA. Meanwhile government agencies demanding heightened levels of security are building their own cloud facilities, including the NSA, which in 2015 opened one of the world's largest, in a remote mountain location in Utah.

Big data analytics makes up the second leg of the Next Internet. In spite of the proliferation of fancy new titles, like data science professional, that fuel enthusiasm, there is very little that a social scientist would find novel in the big data approach. It generally involves taking a large, often massive, and, almost always, quantitative data set, and examining the specific ways the data do or do not correlate, in order to draw conclusions about current behavior and attitudes and go on to make predictions. The aim is to produce algorithms or a set of rules that specify conclusions to be drawn or actions to be taken under specific conditions.

Facebook, for example, takes the data generated by its two billion or so users and relates the “likes” associated with posts about everything from celebrities, companies, and politicians to views about society, products and, of course, cats. These enable the company to develop profiles on its subscribers which Facebook sells to marketers who target users with customized ads sent to their Facebook pages, what years ago in the pre-social media age, Gandy (1993) called the panoptic sort. Google does the same for search topics as well as for the content of Gmail, and Amazon creates profiles of its users based on searches and purchases on its site. Given the limitations of quantitative correlational analysis, especially the absence of historical context, theory, and subjectivity (qualitative data is ignored or poorly translated into numbers), such analysis is not always accurate and incidents of big data failures, on such projects as seasonal flu forecasting and building models for economic development, are mounting, as are the opportunities to make mischief with data for profit (Mosco, 2017). One has to look no further than the 2016 U.S. presidential election when big data analysis not only failed to forecast the outcome. It may also have shaped the result because it produced flawed algorithms that led the Hillary Clinton team to believe data suggesting she was the clear leader and likely winner, what amounted to a massive case of a panoptic missort. Nevertheless, for simple questions such as what are the likes and dislikes of every conceivable demographic cohort or for drawing conclusions about users based on their friendship and follower networks, the data sets available for analysis in the digital factories that make up

the cloud, offer major incentives for companies and governments to invest in data centers and in big data analysis. It is reasonable to be concerned that singular reliance on big data in research is paving the way for *digital positivism*, a methodological essentialism that ignores history, theory, and subjectivity.

The cloud and big data are enhanced substantially by the growth of the Internet of Things. From watches that monitor blood pressure to refrigerators that order fresh milk, from assembly lines “manned” by robots to drones that deliver weapons, it promises a profound impact on individuals and society. The Internet of Things refers to a system that installs sensors and processing devices into everyday objects (watches), production tools (robotic arms), and armaments (weaponized drones) and connects them in networks that gather and use data on their performance. The sensors in a refrigerator form a network of things that report on what’s inside and how it is used. The Internet of Things is made possible by advances in the ability to miniaturize scanning devices and provide them with sufficient processing power to monitor activity, analyze usage, and deliver results over digital networks (Greengard, 2015).

A 2015 report from the private think tank McKinsey concluded that by 2025 the Internet of Things will have an economic impact of between \$3.9 and \$11.1 trillion (US) which, at the high end, is over ten percent of the world economy (Manyika, 2015). Significantly, it is the manufacturing sector, and especially General Electric, that leads the way as production using robots and opportunities for operational surveillance enable more tightly managed and efficient factories and global supply chains. The deployment of Internet of Things systems will also extend, McKinsey maintains, to offices, retail operations, the management of cities, and overall transportation, as automated vehicles take to the streets and highways made “smart” by sensors embedded everywhere. Home monitoring will also grow, promising greater control over heating and cooling, ordering food and supplies. Monitoring the body will also expand with sensors that will continuously monitor fitness, blood pressure, heart rate, and the performance of vital organs. This sounds futuristic and, depending on your point of view, either

dystopian or utopian, but it speaks to the power of the new technology and to the fundamental differences between the original Internet and its successor.

Companies have been quick to take advantage of their leading positions in the digital world to expand into the Internet of Things. Prime examples include autonomous vehicles under development at Tesla, Uber, and Google, the Apple Watch, and Amazon's embrace of robotics in its warehouses to speed the work of order fulfillment. Amazon is also beginning to use drones for deliveries, and is developing entirely new forms of packaging containing pushbuttons that automate ordering refills. The Internet of Things has also given new life to an old industrial firm, General Electric, which was remade in the 1990s by shifting from manufacturing to finance. GE has now all but abandoned the increasingly regulated world of banking and remade the company to become a dominant player producing devices essential to the Internet of Things and making use of them in its own industrial processes. Along with the benefits to corporations, the Internet of Things holds out great promise for the military, because it greatly strengthens opportunities to automate warfare through robotics and weaponized, in addition to enhancing and automating the management of troops (Gusterson, 2015).

For business, one enormously valuable result of monitoring every device and connecting them in a global grid of objects is the exponential growth in commercially useful data. Making use of this surge in data will require both new cloud data centers and widespread use of data analysis. As McKinsey puts it, "Currently, most Internet of Things data are not used. For example, on an oil platform that has 30,000 sensors, only 1 percent of the data are examined. That's because this information is used mostly to detect and control anomalies—not for optimization and prediction, which provide the greatest value" (Manyika, 2015). How to use data, internally and as a marketable commodity, is one of the biggest challenges facing the Internet of Things industry.

Most of what is written about the Next Internet is technical or promotional, emphasizing the engineering required to build it or touting the potential in sometimes dreamily hyperbolic terms- nonstop

leisure, friction-free capitalism, and the Singularity. We are just beginning to see some discussion of the serious policy issues that arise in a world of massive data centers, nonstop analysis of human behavior, and ubiquitous connectivity. These include the concentration of power over the Next Internet in a handful of mainly U.S. companies and the military-intelligence apparatus; the environmental consequences of building and maintaining massive data centers and powering systems; threats to privacy and security; and the impact of automated systems on human labor.

Two things stand out about the early configuration of the Next Internet industry. It is already highly concentrated and is dominated by American firms. Indeed, the top five Next Internet companies were also the world's leaders in market value. These include Amazon, which controls over one-third of the cloud computing market and has a formidable presence in big data and the Internet of Things. The company was among the first to build a one-size-fits-all cloud service that attracted individuals and organizations with its simplicity and massively discounted prices that suggest the not-so-fine art of predatory pricing was at work here. Google, Microsoft, Facebook, and Apple round out the list of firms that use their control over the original Internet to become leaders in the Next Internet. Legacy companies like IBM, Oracle, HP, and Cisco have scrambled to replace their expertise in servicing IT departments that are now disappearing and pivot to the new digital world. However the need to cannibalize old systems and remake their organizations has made the going slow. In addition, there are firms that specialize in one or another of the constituent Next Internet systems, such as Rackspace and Salesforce.com, but these are constantly undermined by encroachment from the dominant companies. A force of potentially great significance in the Next Internet arena is General Electric, which is betting heavily on reinventing factories with the Internet of Things.

Historians of technology will recognize the similarity between this pattern of ownership concentration and the early days of electrification, telegraphy, telephony and broadcasting. In each of these cases, regulation and outright state ownership were required to control

commercial abuses and increase access at affordable rates. However, these remedies are less likely to be applied in a world where regulation and government ownership are no longer in favor. Moreover, as in the past, dominant firms are benefitting from their close ties to the military and intelligence agencies, providing them with Next Internet services and cooperating, more often than not, with requests for information on users. In fact, close ties to the Pentagon, including its well-funded research arm DARPA, as well as to the NSA and the CIA helps to explain why there are no challengers to U.S. hegemony over the Next Internet coming from Europe, whose telecommunications companies once led the world.

China provides the only serious competition. There, government has invested heavily in Next Internet technologies going as far as to integrate them into its five-year plans. This has benefited leading companies like Alibaba, Baidu, Huawei, and Tencent, among others. Signaling that it intends to challenge America's lead, Alibaba has set up shop in Silicon Valley and, like other Chinese firms, is building on the enormous domestic market to extend its reach internationally (Tse & Hendrichs, 2016). A look at the remaining policy issues reveals why the concentration of corporate power is such a significant problem and why it is essential that societies begin to consider the need for public intervention to regulate and control the Next Internet as an information utility.

Because the digital world is made up of invisible electrons zipping through the air, there is a tendency to view it as immaterial. Nothing could be further from the truth and the sooner this is recognized, the more likely the environmental problems associated with the Next Internet will be addressed. Cloud data centers are very material structures and, as they come to fill the world, there are numerous emerging environmental policy issues. At the top of the list is power consumption in data centers that will escalate as the number of always-on sensors expands exponentially. Moreover, customer demand for 24/7 services requires several layers of backup power, including lead acid batteries and diesel generators that have been found to be carcinogenic. Furthermore, many data centers require large, continuous supplies

of water for their cooling systems and this raises serious policy issues in places like the U.S. West where years of drought have taken their toll. So far, data center operators have used their economic power and the allure of promised jobs to successfully pressure local governments to provide property tax breaks, cut-rate power deals, and relief from pollution regulations.

Some companies have responded to opposition from environmental groups, especially Greenpeace, by incorporating solar and other sustainable energy sources into their data center power supplies. But as data requirements grow, systematic regulation is required, including a broad review of discount power deals, the use of massively polluting backup systems, and the diversion of water resources to cool servers. Notwithstanding any progress in this area, the primary source of power consumption in the Next Internet is from the sensors embedded in the billions of connected devices and from the communication systems that link people and things through cellular and other wireless networks. A world of ubiquitous, always-on connected devices, is enough to make energy executives enthusiastic, especially the lobbying arm of the coal industry which views the Next Internet as an opportunity to build on what a study for the U.S. National Academy of Sciences calls “the renaissance of coal” (Steckel, Edenhofer, & Jacob, 2015). As a report sponsored by the coal industry concluded, “The inherent nature of the mobile Internet, a key feature of the emergent Cloud architecture, requires far more energy than do wired networks. . . . Trends now promise faster, not slower, growth in ICT energy use” (Mills, 2013). When the environmental impacts of Next Internet systems are considered alongside their massive stimulation of consumption, the implications for climate change are staggering.

Privacy and security issues multiply in the Next Internet because greater connectivity increases opportunities for technical breakdowns and criminal hacking. Indeed one tech journalist referred to the Internet of Things as “the greatest mass surveillance infrastructure ever” (Powles, 2015). By the standards anticipated in a digital world where the Internet of Things is fully developed, today’s Internet is far from creating a connected world. About 40 percent of the world’s

population now uses the Internet at least once a year, and, as one might expect, access is concentrated in the developed world and in urban centers (Gagliardi, 2015). With only 1 percent connectivity among objects, we are far from the vision of ubiquitous computing. But even at this relatively low level, technical problems and criminal hacking plague the system. On one day alone in 2015, the entire U.S. fleet of United Airlines planes was grounded, the New York Stock Exchange shut down for several hours, and the Wall Street Journal's computers simply stopped operating. All of these were explained as the result of technical "glitches." Just as this calamity hit the news stream, the U.S. government reported that hackers had stolen the personnel records of 22.1 million federal employees, contractors, and their families and friends who provided information for background checks. The haul also included over one million sets of fingerprints (Nakashima, 2015). In the largest reported hack of all, in December 2016, Yahoo reported that hackers had made off with the records of one billion people in 2013 and were selling the data on the Dark Web, the corner of the Internet inhabited by criminals, spies, and those seeking stolen or illegal goods (Goel & Perloth, 2016).

Hacking aside, the most significant threats arise from data-hungry businesses and governments. For them, the greatest attraction of ubiquitous computing is the valuable data on the behavior of people and the performance of objects. These offer companies the opportunity to refine targeted advertising and product development well beyond the crude systems that today's Internet makes possible and they enable governments to deepen their ability to track and control of citizen behavior and attitudes. Consider the commercial benefits to insurance companies that will be able to continuously monitor the health of customers, their driving habits, and the state of their homes; or to governments that can adjust benefits and other services based on citizen behavior registered in their actions, as well as their interactions with one another and with the things that fill their lives; or to employers who are even now requiring office workers to wear sensor devices on and under the skin for ubiquitous performance monitoring (Payne, 2015). Discussions of anticipatory selling as well as of algorithmic policing,

euphemistically called “predictive analytics,” are worrisome to privacy advocates because they are attracting great interest from businesses and governments (Davenport, 2014).

The impact of the Next Internet on jobs and the nature of labor is also an important policy issue. At first glance, it is tempting to think “here we go again” because the impact of technology on jobs has been discussed for many years but especially since the end of World War II when the computer scientist Norbert Wiener generated considerable public debate by raising the specter of massive job loss due to automation (Wiener, 1948). Moreover, the Next Internet is creating and will likely continue to create employment, including traditional construction jobs in the build out of global networks of data centers, in the new profession of data science, and in the control, maintenance, and monitoring of networked things. There is another reason why it is important to approach the impact of computer technology on jobs and the economy with caution. As research documents, overall employment has been much more closely tied to GDP than to computerization and, except for the late 1990s when there was massive investment in hardware, the long-promised productivity gains from IT have failed to materialize (Gordon, 2016).

However, today there are far more opportunities for the new technology to eliminate human labor, especially professional knowledge work. In fact, one expert consultant prefers to define cloud computing as “nothing more than the next step in outsourcing your IT operations” (McKendrick, 2013). This is in keeping with a general tendency which one researcher for Gartner Associates summarizes succinctly: “The long run value proposition of IT is not to support the human workforce – it is to replace it” (Dignan, 2011a). The Next Internet creates immediate opportunities for companies to rationalize their information technology operations. Again, from Gartner, “CIOs believe that their data centers, servers, desktop and business applications are grossly inefficient and must be rationalized over the next ten years. We believe that the people associated with these inefficient assets will also be rationalized in significant numbers along the way” (Dignan, 2011a).

Next Internet companies maintain that their systems can break a pattern in business organizations that began when the first

large computers entered the workplace. Back then all business and government agencies insisted that it was essential to operate their own IT departments and, for larger organizations, their own data centers. Next Internet supporters insist that it is no longer essential to build and run thousands of organization-specific facilities when a few large data centers can meet the demand at lower cost with far fewer professional personnel. This process has already begun and early studies demonstrate that, even with limited downsizing of IT departments, companies are saving between fifteen and twenty percent of their IT budgets (Howlett, 2014).

The Next Internet also makes possible the widespread rationalization of practically all knowledge and creative labor because the work of these occupations increasingly involves the production, processing, and distribution of information. According to one observer, “In the next 40 years analytics systems will replace much of what the knowledge worker does today” (Dignan, 2011b). A 2013 report concluded that almost half the current U.S. workforce is directly threatened and in the high-risk category for job loss (Frey & Osborne, 2013). Whatever the precise share, there is no doubt that the current trend is to use software to move knowledge worker labor to machine systems. We are now beginning to see the impacts on education, health care, the law, accounting, finance, sales and the media. Private and public sector organizations are encouraged to outsource all but their core business processes to companies like Salesforce.com which specializes in managing vast databases of customer information, a job that marketing and client service departments inside companies typically performed.

The expansion of outsourcing to computers raises serious questions for the entire global system of flexible production. According to Gartner, “That outcome will hit all economies -- especially emerging ones like India that now dominate technology outsourcing” (Dignan, 2011a). The Next Internet also expands the range of potential outsourcing practices. It may be an overstatement to declare, as did Forbes magazine, “We are all outsourcers now,” but it certainly makes feasible more kinds of outsourcing: “Outsourcing is no longer simply defined by multi-million-dollar mega-deals in which IT department operations are

turned over to a third party. Rather, bits and pieces of a lot of smaller things are gradually being turned over to outside entities” (McKendrick, 2014). Amazon is a leading force in this process with its Mechanical Turk business that charges individuals and organizations to outsource micro-tasks to a worldwide reserve army of online piece workers. Combined with the promise of product warehouses full of robots to locate, pack, and ship goods, and drones to deliver them, Amazon is the leading edge of the Next Internet’s push to expand labor intensification throughout the world. Whatever the impact on the number of jobs, the Next Internet is already changing the labor process. Workers at a Swedish firm can attest to this as they arrive at the office each day with RFID chips implanted under the skin to improve productivity and management control (Cellan-Jones, 2015).

What can be done to address these problems? First and foremost, it is essential to view them as intrinsically social and not just technological. While technology plays a role in addressing serious policy issues, there is no simple digital fix to solve them. It will take concerted political action to tame the concentrated corporate power that is now making the Next Internet a tool to expand the power and profit of a handful of digital giants. It will also take global social movements, stronger versions of what supporters called a New World Information and Communication Order in the twentieth century, to build a digital commons for the twenty-first. Furthermore, we need to make environmental protection and sustainability central to all decision-making about the Next Internet. It is also important to rethink privacy as the human right of access to the psychological space essential to develop individual autonomy. Above all, privacy is an essential right of citizenship and not a tradable commodity. Protection of personal, interpersonal and autonomous space from commercial and government surveillance must also be central to the choices made about the Next Internet. Finally, we need social policies about employment and income that address the state of human labor in an age when automation threatens jobs, including now those of the white-collar workforce, and massively invasive surveillance threatens fundamental worker rights. Does this mean we should reopen the discussion of a guaranteed

annual income? What is the right balance between job creation and a guaranteed income? How can we facilitate organizing digital workers who tend to be employed in the “gig” economy of precarious jobs? Are unions at Salon and Vice, and worker associations at Uber and Lyft, all pioneering web-based successes, good models for the future?

The digital world is at a critical juncture represented by two clashing visions. The first imagines a democratic society where information is fully accessible to all citizens as an essential service. In this view information is managed through various forms of regulation and control that are governed by representative institutions whose goal is the fullest possible access and control for the greatest number of citizens. Governance might take multiple forms, including different combinations of centralized and decentralized approaches at local, regional, national, and international levels. The second envisions a world controlled by global corporations and the surveillance and intelligence arms of national governments. Under this model, the market is the leading force shaping decisions about the production, distribution and exchange of information, and corporations with market power hold the most influence. In this fundamentally undemocratic world, digital behemoths share power with governments that make full use of technology for surveillance, control, and coercion.

Fifty years ago, long before the first Internet, the Canadian scholar and policy analyst Douglas Parkhill chose the democratic vision in his book about the need to create a global system of computer utilities that would guarantee public control and universal access. Social movements had helped to tame private monopoly power over essential resources like water and electricity by making them public utilities. Parkhill (1966) made the case that information was no less essential and no less in need of public control. The Next Internet is an opportunity to build on this vision.

The utility concept received a boost when the U.S. Federal Communication Commission issued a 2015 ruling affirming the right of people to fair and equal access to the Internet, what is popularly known as the net neutrality decision. Although limited and currently under attack by the Trump government, the decision sparked hopes that

we would begin to see the Internet not as the property of commercial and military interests but as a public commons, controlled by citizens. In its call for “platform cooperatives” Jeremy Corbyn’s 2016 “Digital Democracy Manifesto” proposes a rich, contemporary version of the public utility idea that has received support from progressive Internet and social movement activists (Scholz and Schneider, 2016). The rise of cloud computing, with its extreme centralizing tendencies, has brought about renewed interest in the utility concept including among technologists and entrepreneurs. Given the massive environmental, privacy, and labor issues associated with the Next Internet and the abject failure of existing policy processes to deal with them, it is imperative to consider how to create democratic and publicly controlled communication networks and the political system that would use them in the public interest.

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## Rethinking Journalism on online environment: players, business models and liability

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### Abstract

In the last decade, the content consumption through the Internet has been increased fast and strongly, reaching also the news industry with new business model, players and modes of production and consumption. This article discusses the role played by IT companies, specially Google and Facebook, in the news environment regarding the editorial productive chain and the responsibility on the content shared. We also look at the news business model available and the relation between media companies and aggregators from the Political Economy perspective regarding the productive chain. Drawing on news consumption, media economic models and business strategies, the article rethink the Journalism dynamic on online environment.

### Keywords

Internet; IT companies; Journalism; Media economic models; News consumption; Political Economy

### INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the digital technology, more broadly, and the spread of the Internet, specifically, allowed great changes in all media business affecting the modes of production, distribution and consumption. The news environment has also been experiencing significant changes. The distribution of news before the popularization of the Internet was basically restricted to media companies: broadcasters and news companies. The prominence of IT companies in the convergence process (Henten & Tadayoni, 2015) blurred the boundaries between information and communication industries and allowed the distribution and consumption of news through new channels as social networks and messaging platforms, potentialized with the use of mobile devices.

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In an attempt to be closer to their audience, news companies around the world as The Guardian, The New York Times, BBC, El País, Globo etc, created their pages on Facebook using the platform to stimulate the access of their websites and establish new channels of communication and content flow. On the other side of the business, Facebook is thinking about separating the content published by family and friends from journalistic news in the user's news feed. The Facebook's intention is to create a space called "Explore" to cluster page's messages, which is affecting directly the news companies' business model on Internet. This new model of showing the messages in the user news feed is being tested in six countries (Sri Lanka, Bolivia, Slovakia, Serbia, Guatemala and Cambodia) and it has provoked a drop of traffic on news websites (Cano, 2017).

The Facebook's chief operating officer (COO) Sheryl Sandberg has been repeatedly affirming that Facebook is not a media company, even though many aspects suggest the opposite as: the fact that this social media has been pointed as the main source of political news for millennials and almost half of the adults in United States uses it to access news; the business model of the company that allows the selling of advertisement against content; the number of employees acting as moderators, about 4.500 with the provision of hiring more 3.000; and also the employment of fact-checkers (Griffith, 2017). Nonetheless it is clear that the company has a big role in the distribution and also in the spread of news, building a new configuration in the dynamic of production and consumption of media that also has reflections on traditional media companies.

Google is another IT company that has been investing in the journalistic segment offering training to journalists in partnership with institutions around the world as the University of Hong Kong, the University of Texas through the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, American Press Institute, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies and the National Association of Newspaper (*Associação Nacional de Jornais*) in Brazil; and also has playing a central role in the distribution of news. The journalist's training can be seen as part of a strategy to reinforce the use of Google tools in the journalistic

environment or also as a company step towards media business, in the production link.

In this new configuration of control of information, selling of consumers data, targeted advertisements, fake news, reconfiguration of business models and forms of production and consumption of news, we ask about the role of IT industries in the journalistic field, the extension of their play and the responsibility over content from the perspective of the Political Economy regarding the production chain and the changes in the economic model of print and broadcast industries.

In the first section, we analyse the news consumption habits in some countries and the growing use of social networks and message apps to access news content. This overview of the consumption habits enable us to visualize some trends and to evaluate the role of IT companies in the journalistic environment. In the second section, we analyse previous economic models in print and broadcast industries and the changes introduced by the possibilities brought by Internet and the reconfiguration of Journalism in the online environment. The third section is dedicated to examine the editorial responsibilities over news and the principles that should guide Journalism.

## 1. THE CONSUMPTION OF NEWS

The consumption of news through different media has been studied by many scholars, especially after the spread of the Internet and the rise of online news, covering issues related to liability, business model, competition, relationship between media and audience and so on. Michelstein and Boczkowski (2010, p. 1086), after examining some trends of research on the subject and do some empirical research, concluded that “despite the proliferation of sites and technologies, most users are still influenced by past consumption habits”. Because they are linked to cultural, social and economic dimensions, the consumption habits are not uniform even within a country. Their analysis took into account the features of the media, the profile of the audience including gender, age, income, educational level and geographical location, but also the characteristics of the society and local environment.

In the United Kingdom, for instance, the rate of Internet penetration reaches 90% of the households and 9 among 10 adults<sup>3</sup> have used Internet recently<sup>4</sup>. However the consumption of online news covers only 64% of the adults that use Internet, being more popular among adults aged between 25-34, reaching 78%, and less popular among adults aged above 65, of which only 37% read online news from newspapers or magazines. The use of social networks as Facebook and Twitter prevails among the population between 16 and 24 years old, reaching 96% of them, while among those above 65 years old, the rate of use reaches only 27% (Office for National Statistics, 2017a, 2017b).

While the consume of online news from magazines and newspapers has few variation among the population aged between 16 and 54, reaching the pick among those between 25 and 34 years old, but reaching the same percentage in the 16-24 and 45-54 strips, the use of social networks is inversely proportional to age. The older the user, the lower the use of those platforms.

Accordingly to News consumption in the UK: 2016 by Ofcom, younger age groups are more likely to use Internet as a source of information than those aged above 65, who prefer radio, newspaper and TV. TV is still the media most used for adults in the UK, but the consume of news through the Internet is a trend in course. The use of mobile phone to access the news prevails among 29% of the adults in the country and the number of people that get news from social media posts increased in 2016 related to the previous year, reaching almost half of the respondents. Among those in the 16-24 strip, the consume of news on social media is around 69% (Ofcom, 2016, p. 42).

The same path can be observed in other countries. TV is still important to the consumption of news in Europe, but online sources are the ones that are growing faster. The EU average of social media news use is 52%. In Denmark, the Internet penetration is 96% and the consumption of news online is bigger than by television. However this consumption is made directly to news websites instead of social media, whose consumption of news through this medium is shrinking (Reuters, 2017).

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<sup>3</sup> People aged above 16 years old.

<sup>4</sup> In the last three months before the survey.

Australia and Japan have more than 92% of Internet penetration. People use online sources to get news, but TV is still an important medium. In countries like Hong Kong and Malaysia where the Internet penetration is 82% and 70%, respectively, people tend to be informed by online websites, more than TV, and by social media (Reuters, 2017). The panorama in America is similar: the consume of news on online environment is bigger than on TV. United States and Canada have the higher Internet penetration rates, 90% and 93%. In these countries, Facebook is an important source of news responding for 48% and 40%, respectively. Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico are increasing the Internet penetration in their territories reaching 79%, 68%, 80% and 56% respectively. In those countries, the population with access to the Internet is informed mainly through social media. Facebook responds for 65% of the news consumption in Argentina, 57% in Brazil, 70% in Chile and 63% in Mexico (Reuters, 2017). In Brazil, online platforms are the main source of news for the residents of urban areas with high income and educational level (Reuters, 2017).

Regarding the use of online platforms, the 2017 Online News Report of Reuters Institute found a tendency of messaging apps as Whatsapp to rival social media like Facebook in the use of these platforms to the consumption of news in some markets, including Brazil, Spain and Malaysia (Reuters Institute, 2017, p. 10). Even though the consumption of news through Facebook, for instance, is higher than messaging apps, 47% of its users against 23% of Whatsapp, the latter is growing in Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australasia while the former has stopped to grow or decreased in some markets (Reuters Institute, 2017, p. 12). The reasons highlighted by the study are the absence of algorithms to filter the content and the private character of these apps. The latter is particularly important in markets where there are restrictions on the dissemination of political views.

More than compete, these platforms work in a complementary model, strengthen the consumption of content based on social bonds, once the biggest ones are part of the same group. Facebook controls the two greatest messaging apps around the world, WhatsApp and Messenger, besides Instagram, whose snapchats are more and more popular.

Also is important to observe the growing of news consumption through mobile devices which is opening new routes to content. In Brazil, in 2016, smartphones outperformed computers as the first channel of online news consumption. Data from 2016 Brazilian Media Research<sup>5</sup> shows that 91% of the Brazilians who took part in the survey access content through mobile phone while 65% do it using computers. According to the study, Brazilians use to spend more than five hours per day connected, more than the time spent on TV, which varies from three to four hours daily.

Besides the mobility, which allow the consumption of content everywhere, two strategies have stimulating the news consumption through mobile devices: spotlight news widget and personalised alerts. In the United States mobile news notifications have grown 8% in the last year.

The place where people get online news from varies substantially around the world. Accordingly to Reuters Institute (2017), Finland, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom are the countries where people usually go directly to the website of media companies to get the news. While countries in Latin America and Eastern Europe as Chile, Argentina, Hungary and Romania prefer social media. Aggregators have a good market in Asia, specially in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong. However, all these markets share a feature in common, the predominant role of IT companies. Whether it is not a consensus that online news are substituting or complementing other kinds of media (Michelstein & Boczkowski, 2010), there are a lot of evidences that IT companies as Facebook and Google are playing a great role in the diffusion of news. The understanding of the *modus operandi* of these platforms give us a big picture of the business and responsibilities involved in the circulation of news on the Internet.

## 2. THE NEW CONFIGURATION OF THE NEWS PRODUCTIVE CHAIN

Miége et al (1986), interested in media economic models, established three paradigms to analyse markets linked to informational

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<sup>5</sup> Available at <<https://goo.gl/zfSdWZ>> Accessed on 19 October 2017.

and cultural production in the 1980's: editorial, wave and press. The editorial paradigm is based in punctual works such as books, disc, video and cinema. It is a market of niche in which the editor is in the core, choosing the pieces that will be sale as cultural merchandise, and serving as a link between production and distribution. This market does not work with factual news in a daily basis, but focuses on the exploitation of specific issues, preferences and niches.

The wave paradigm relies on the audience loyalty. It is the economic model adopted by radio and television systems. It offers a variety of programs targeting the mass consumption, adopting as the main format a general programming grid. The journalism is also an important part and is fixed in the grid at prime-time. The revenue in these companies comes from advertising and parafiscality and it is the programmer the central figure responsible for the selection and negotiation of the contents to be conveyed.

The latter paradigm, press, is designed around the editor-in-chief figure who chooses the subjects, organizes the newspaper or magazine and has responsibility over all content published. In press industry, revenues come from direct sales, subscription and advertisement. Traditionally, the company that owns the support, newspaper or magazine, was responsible for the distribution of its content. There was no intermediate between the press and the public. The journalists or news agencies were responsible to produce the reports printed or conveyed. The editor-in-chief should arrange the reports in the newspaper, establish the angle adopted, control all the production process and also the distribution.

In these three paradigms, the productive chain used to work almost independently of each other, although there was a synergistic relationship among companies in the cultural industries. However, from the late 1980's all these paradigms experienced changes in business model with the emergence of the network industries, a set of cultural industries whose the market action depends on the implantation of a network to carry and distribute the content that will be accessed by the public accordingly to their demand, which is the case of telecommunications and also Internet based companies. The

network industries are more focused in the distribution of content than in the production and rely on third parties content. The remuneration comes from advertising and subscriptions.

Facebook, Google and Apple are part of the network industries that exploit content of third parties, provoking changes in the productive chain of news, especially in the distribution. As said before, almost all news companies have a profile in Facebook and the news are also available through apps that aggregate different contents according to user's demand. The role played by the editor-in-chief was transferred to IT companies, which sell advertising against third parties' content, design tools to maximize visualization of contents, and exploit media market based on the information given by users.

## 2.1 What are aggregators?

Aggregators can be seen as apps which enclose in a unique interface what the user wants to consume, operating as a sort of online content menu. Uniformity is present in the conception of an intuitive and usable layout, and also in the format applied in all aggregated media, which can range from texts and links of blogs and websites to videos and multimedia content.

Torres (2013) defines as aggregators apps for mobile devices – tablets and smartphones – that fulfill the function of filtering and aggregating news content produced by journalistic organizations. The responsibility for curating information can be attributed to both human agents like journalists, users / readers, and non-human agents such as algorithm systems.

The aggregators collect information from various external sources and allow the user access to them without having to open the browser tab or the website, working as organizers. These platforms are, therefore, configured as mediators of access to information and traffic drivers. As such, they work with automatic filtering, recommendation systems, without disregarding the appreciation of the user who will share, comment or give likes to a particular publication and from this, inform the aggregator what he wants to see.

According to Roberts (1998) aggregators can be understood as an evolution of newsgroups, discussion groups easily found on the Internet in the late 1990s. “They were forums where individuals could post some content and that anyone else could read at another time” (Roberts, 1998, p. 360). The forums were configured as predecessors of the aggregators because they allowed the gathering of several contents in the same space, passing through the human filter, that is, the preferences of the users. The term news aggregator was first mentioned in 1999 by Dave Winer, the developer of My.UserLand.com, the first site to employ the RSS format in the diffusion of its news. However, it is important to highlight that the information flux in the forums were multilateral, while in the current aggregating model is unilateral, once the user does not post news, he or she is just exposed to the ones that someone or some algorithm decided that is more likely to be read based on the information given by the user. Also there is an important financial component in the current aggregating business model, which is the selling of advertisements against content, not present in the past forums.

With news aggregators, network surfing has lost some of its randomness, gaining more in targeting. If the exposure to news on social media was often accidental and linked to the scroll bar, today, with aggregation services, the same news will be directed to the users according to their demand, filtered by topics, characters of interest, geographic proximity and even the likes deposited in Facebook posts and hashtags used on Twitter.

News aggregators work under the logic of convenience, especially if one takes into account the rise of access through smartphone screens, where it is difficult to navigate quickly between various apps open. The advantage of the aggregator lies precisely on storing a multitude of information in a single app. Some services are standalone, like Flipboard and SmartNews, and others are part of a larger group such as Apple News, Google News, Snapchat Discover and Line News. The latter both aggregate and allow content to fit into other ecosystems and aggregators.

Because they gather and do not produce information, aggregators depend on an external system for feeding their catalogs. These systems are called feeds, distributors of information in the form of update lists to which the user must sign up in order to have access. Sites, blogs, social networks, all of them have individual feeds whose access is made by downloading an app or through a link. Given the diversity of feeds that can be found in the network environment, the role of aggregators is therefore to allow access to different feeds in a single interface.

## 2.2 New Business models

Like aggregators, feeds are hybrid constructs, composed by human and non-human agents, which appear to each user in a personalized way (D'Andrea & Jurno, 2015). A great example of a feed you can find currently on the network is the Facebook news feed: this is the user's home page. This feed is divided into the "main stories" versions, where appear the content considered to be of most interest to the user by Facebook, filtered by subjects; and "recent", where updates of all connections of the profile owner appear, filtered by the date of publication, starting from the newest to the oldest (Bucher, 2012).

While it is a customizable feed, Facebook's home page also sets itself up as a news aggregator because it brings together, in a social networking logic, information from media pages around the world. If on the one hand, publishers can give more reach to their publications when inserted into Facebook, on the other hand, they lose the exclusivity they have when inserted into a news-specific aggregator. This is because in the social network the news publications compete with advertisements and posts of all the connections of the user. The amount and speed of updates makes the visibility even more ephemeral.

Facebook itself offers the means to circumvent the ephemerality of updates. By pushing posts, business profiles, which include news content pages, it can create publications to be displayed in multiple places, as well as targeting them to a specific audience. Boosting a post makes more people enjoy, share, and comment on certain content,

making it sometimes reach new users. The driven publication contains a call-to-action button such as sign-up to receive newsletters or subscription to a feed<sup>6</sup> (Facebook, 2017).

Promoted publications can be targeted, displayed to the publisher's choice audience; available at multiple placements, displayed on the mobile phone and computer news feed as well as on Instagram; conveyed by video to an audience network; programmed, the publisher can define the period of publication time; creative, when the post goes on the air with the "sponsored" label in the upper left corner. The budget to promote publications is personalized, the values are negotiated, but Facebook charges one dollar a day as a minimum amount (Facebook, 2017).

In 2017, it was Google who announced the transformation of their search app into a personal interest news feed aggregator<sup>7</sup>. The idea is to display news, videos and alerts related to relevant or popular subjects taking into account the geographic location of the user. Google News entered the United States market in July 2017, available for download on iOS and Android systems with the promise to waive the search for updates: they are shown below the search box, in the format of cards, separated by areas of interest. The feed is further individualized and allows the user to follow only topics of interest.

With the entry into the market for instant updates, Google starts to compete directly with Apple News, one of the companies that profited more last year after the launch of the feed aggregator Spotlight, which combines the possibility of signing to receive alerts based in favorite trends and publishers. The feed and alerts together led to Spotlight overfeeding, which increased app traffic by one-third by 2016. In 2016, 25% of iPhone users in the United States and Australia and 18% of users in the UK accessed the Apple aggregator weekly (Reuters, 2017).

Not to be outdone, Google News has improved integration with search engines from the Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) initiative<sup>8</sup>: pages are hosted by Google to facilitate downloads, but publications are

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<sup>6</sup> Available at <<https://goo.gl/bTMnA8>>. Accessed on 19 October 2017

<sup>7</sup> Available at <<https://goo.gl/iFeoTF>>. Accessed on 20 October 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Available at <<https://goo.gl/CAYrBf>>. Accessed on 20 October 2017.

still managed by publishers themselves, as well as in Apple's Spotlight. As a result, large world news producers have seen a significant increase in the proportion of mobile traffic with AMPs. This makes Google widely used in many markets – 13% in the United States, 10% in Europe, 21% in Asia and Latin America – while other aggregators, such as Reddit and SmartNews, remain more restricted to specific regions of the United States, Europe and Asia.

Who has been gaining more and more space in the market is Snapchat Discover, an aggregator that offers feeds of large print vehicles like Le Monde, Wall Street Journal and CNN and enables them to reach younger audiences. The advantage of Snapchat Discover compared to other aggregators is that it allows access to the individual feeds of each publisher. In addition to the United States, the aggregator is also present in Australia, the United Kingdom and, from the end of 2016 to early 2017, has entered in non-English speaking markets such as France, Norway and Germany. The business model of Snapchat Discover is based on the sharing of ad revenue with media partners<sup>9</sup>.

Aggregators became essential in the process of news distribution, opening new windows to spread journalistic content and generating new business model, where IT companies has to be taken into account by broadcasters and press industry in their business strategies. Sundar Pichai, Google's CEO, declared in an interview that Google is focusing now in how to promote best content, which put in evidence journalist features in the distribution processes: selection. "When we launched the DNI [Digital News Initiative], we started with basic ideas. Now we are already focused on how to make it easier to subscribe or promote the best content" (Cano, 2017).

### 3. JOURNALISM AND DIGITAL CHANGES

Accordingly to the Oxford Dictionary of Journalism, journalism is

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<sup>9</sup> Available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jpmorganchase/2017/11/21/designing-impact-more-than-a-century-of-innovation-led-to-the-smart-buildings-of-today/#5f3f827f69ad>, accessed on 27 November 2017.

a set of practices through which information is found out and communicated, often involving making public what would otherwise be private, and which is typically published or broadcast in a format such as newspaper, magazine, bulletin, documentary, website, or blog. Journalism entails discovering or uncovering fresh, topical, factual material and making it publicly available, but it goes beyond that to include amplifying, contextualizing, or commenting on facts and comments that have already been made public (Harcup, 2014, p.148).

By this definition, especially paying attention to the last part regarding the amplification of materials already published, and to the public speeches of IT companies CEOs we could affirm that social media and aggregators are also involved in journalism activities. But who is responsible by the content?

As a set of practices and norms and values that guide such practices, Journalism is also a process that can be divided into stages in order to increase their understanding (Franciscato, 2005). These steps include: 1) investigation; 2) production; 3) circulation; 4) consumption of news, understood here as the raw material of journalistic activity (Machado, 2008).

The first stage, that of the investigation, comprehends the conflicts between sources and journalists and involves a complex negotiation between these two actors. The second stage, the production of news material, basically consists of shaping the information in order to give it aspects that allow it to circulate through different platforms in an efficient and effective way. Finally, circulation refers to the channels through which the news circulates after its publication. These channels are operated by static mechanisms – traditional channels – or dynamic ones, when they escape the control of the inspection and depart from the appropriation of the content by the public (Machado, 2008).

The idea of a connected visualization allows the emergence of a new type of consumer: a more engaged one who appropriates the platform and its contents to make the information circulates and recirculates. This notion of re-circulation can be understood as a sub-step of the process of the circulation in the journalist production, usually located after the consumption, as proposed by Machado and Palacios (Zago, 2011, p.14). In the process of re-circulation, the emission,

reception and answer happen in the same place. These interpersonal exchanges can, therefore, increase the reach of the information (Zago, 2011, p.13).

From this perspective, we can say that the re-circulation is a result of a process of collaborative consumption of contents, whose immediate effect is giving visibility to contents through exchange of opinions and comments among the network users. Jensen (2010) affirms that the communication in the digital context happens in three different levels: 1) the interpersonal communication, based on the one-to-one model; 2) the mass media, that relies on the one-to-many model, i.e., an emission centre that conveys content to many people; 3) the digital social networks, that operates based on the models one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many. The last model can be seen more as a potential than as a concrete fact, once the possibilities of interaction are shaped by the companies that control the infrastructures and the contents. The model of communication adopted by the social networks still relies on the political and economic structures that control the sector.

Although, the stages inherent in journalistic activity appear well defined and well marked within a production routine, in practice what is observed are more fluid, less rigid aspects, mainly by the number of situations that the journalist confronts daily. In a brief evaluation of the rules governing journalism, Henriques (2009) makes one caveat: trying to enunciate rules and procedures of journalistic production can lead to the reduction of activity to only one of its various manifestations.

The thesis defended by Henriques (2009, p.2) is that journalism is too broad to be apprehended in a unique way and this is mainly due to the fact that it is an activity that appropriates the real and interprets it. For the author, there is no single formula to relate to the world and this reverberates directly in the ways journalistic activity is performed by the journalist. However, it should be borne in mind that, even with a few minor variations, journalistic writing has a set of guiding principles and coding rules of its own which constitute a kind of “particular grammar”.

[...]. This process always follows a specific method, a particular production technique. There are certain codes, certain norms of writing and even conduct that constitute these 'eyeglasses' of which Bourdieu speaks and which are in fact effects of the principles, of the epistemological structures in which the activity is based (Henriques, 2009, p. 3).

The need for contingency rules of journalistic technique is due to the fact that its object is society and that its raw material, the news, is linked to human social relations. The journalist deals with a fluid product permeated by numerous discursive relations. According to Lage (2001), the news producer has to choose between several approaches and forms of representation to give relevance and quality to its contents.

Certain formal evaluation criteria are established in the classification of what will be presented. They are "very important parameters to the activity, since they play a fundamental role in the tasks of selection and hierarchy of the real. Indeed, they operate as a kind of particular way of looking at the world"<sup>10</sup> (Lage, 2001, 92). The author identifies six criteria related to the field of empirical evaluations. These are: 1) Social Identification; 2) Ineditism; 3) Intensity; 4) Proximity; 5) Opportunity and 6) Actuality.

The ineditism seeks to follow the maxim of "what has not yet been published is worth more than what has already been published"; the intensity and social identification relate to the strength that a subject has for society and the degree of curiosity that it is able of awakening in people. The proximity works with the geographic question: the closer a fact is, the more relevant it becomes; the opportunity refers to the possibility of exploration that a given event has and, lastly, the actuality is to reduce as much as possible the time lag between fact and news: the more recent the information, the more valuable it will be.

Ineditism, intensity, social identification, opportunity, closeness and actuality constitute formal standards, rules and criteria for structuring the news, so they are subject to variations according to the material available. But in addition to the defining aspects of the

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<sup>10</sup> Free translation. Original in Portuguese: "parâmetros muito caros à atividade, já que cumprem papel fundamental nas tarefas de seleção e hierarquização do real. Em verdade, eles operam como uma espécie de maneira particular de olhar o mundo".

relevance of information, there are still the values inherent in ethos, universally shared, at least in theory, and which constitute the expected mode of action of a journalist.

The basic values that govern journalistic activity are: 1) Freedom; 2) Independence and autonomy; 3) Credibility; 4) Truth and Honesty (Henriques, 2009). First, it is not to link the work to one's own interests or to others, and to value the consistency of the information with which it is handled, guaranteeing the truthfulness of what is conveyed and confined solely to the fact, without value judgment or taking any party position.

Kovack and Rosenstiel (2003) add to the values that govern journalism the loyalty to the public interest, starting from the following question: for whom does the journalist work? The appreciation of the public interest, along with independence and autonomy, become the pillars of journalistic activity: the journalist, as a servant of the interest of society, should not be trapped in the institutional ties of those who finance him/her in the private sector. Even if it is inserted in an environment permeated by rules and production standards, the professional must keep in mind that what he/she produces will be appropriate for those outside the editorial walls, so the journalist is committed to the public.

With the advent of the internet, journalistic production assumes an overvaluation of the time factor. Actuality is increasingly important, to the detriment of guiding principles such as truthfulness and credibility. The changes in the news production process are mainly due to the digitization, the transformation of atoms into bytes (Negroponte, 1995), which gives the information the character of a product in transit. The concern with the quality of the content and the thoroughness of the investigation are governed, not by values of the ethos, but by the need of constant feeding of automated systems of distribution of information. "The new software makes it possible to reduce production time, but also allows journalists to automate their actions" (Canavilhas, 2011, p.16).

Ultimately, there is a reconfiguration of the essence of the news process. What feeds society and governs journalistic work is agility,

ease of access to information. The proximity, in the sense of physical distance from the fact, becomes the possibility of interaction between the links of the journalistic chain and the public, and the importance of a fact is attributed to the amount of notifications it generates to the user.

Corrêa (2011) points out that there is, in fact, a polarization of interests between consumers and producers of information. According to the author, the balance of information values is leaning more to the side of the audience and those who produce information must begin to lose sight of collective attraction aspects or more general criteria of relevance, and focus more on the specific priorities of each individual. The consumption of the news is customized in increasing degrees and its production must also follow in the same direction.

#### 4. FINAL REMARKS

Journalism, as an economic activity, is located in the fine line between the public and the private. According to Corrêa (2011), the business nature of journalistic activity coexists with the condition of providing necessary and decisive information in the processes of citizen participation and public control. With the emergence of the digital and the preeminence of IT companies in the spread of information in general and also news, especially through mobile devices and social networks, the borders between public and private sphere became even more blurred. On one hand, we can see a new organization form of journalistic companies using social networks and aggregators to reach the public. On the other hand, we observe IT companies investing great sums in tools to promote content and increasing the advertising revenue, earned against the provision of third parties news. In the middle, the public faces the dispute between media and IT companies for advertisements and the proliferation of fake news in an environment unregulated.

Before the emergence of network industries such as telecommunication and Internet based industries, it was possible to delimited an economic model of editorial, wave and press industries,

centered in key figures, with a productive chain well defined counting on some synergistic relations but not dependent on them. The network industries introduced a new logic that subsume the other industries. The crescent use of the Internet for all activities, since checking the weather forecast until trade transactions, and specially for entertainment, getting in touch with friends and getting news, transformed IT companies in mediators, the link between population and all sort of business sectors, including the journalistic.

The demand of being online, accessible and close to the public, enforced journalistic companies to join social networks. The contents are now available at social networks, aggregators apps and so on, generating new forms of appreciation and business model. Whether it is clear that IT companies is playing a great role in the spread of news and in promoting new ways to profit on journalistic news, it is not clear the limits of the responsibilities of those companies over content.

In Brazil, some law-writers consider that the provider of content, as Facebook, Google, Apple etc, has to take responsibility over a content only in cases when some illicit is founded and informed to the company. The main responsible for the content is the information provider, which means the journalistic companies. However, Facebook has facing some problems in United States and United Kingdom regarding both the spread of fake news and the publicizing of racist content. The company has been developing a project in partnership with media companies called “Facebook Journalism Project” in order to strengthen the bonds between the two sectors and fight these issues. But it is important to highlight that, in the case of Facebook, the company owns money with the promotion of fake news and therefore should be responsible for what is showed in the news feed.

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## The concept of public sphere revisited: citizenship, media convergence and vigilance systems

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### Abstract

The article analyses the concept of public sphere departing from the new contemporary communicational dynamics: the digital culture, the mobility, the media convergence and the vigilance systems. Therefore, initially, are recovered the concepts of the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas and his contribution about the genesis of democratic societies and their fragmented identities population, that walk in direction to an implementation of social welfare policy, inserted in a logic of late capitalism. With this politic-economic system established, the investigation considers that, in the current moment, of transition from analogical to digital paradigm, the media replace themselves all the time, making possible new (virtual) spaces to talk about social issues. The challenges in the ambit of citizenship, from a partial empowerment of the subjects, are renewed and create new provocations to think about the models of pluralist societies and their multicultural contrasts. This way, the article analyses the emergence of new agents of discourse production who appropriate this space and mobilize themselves around some questions, spread their ideas in the network and gain space in the daily life of society. Offering a classification about how the public sphere phenomenon materializes itself in the current time, discusses the force of civil society, the empowerment of subjects and the possibility of mobilization of the citizen around themes of collective interest.

### Keywords

public sphere; citizenship; media convergence.

### INTRODUCTION

Between the decades of 1960 and 1970, German the philosopher Jürgen Habermas dedicated his work to analyze industrial society in transformation, departing from a Marxist perspective that criticized the excessive advancement of capitalism over social life. The Habermas' analysis was an alternative to the recently emerged post-modern theories, even though his concerns related to the contemporary world changes could be considered complementary and non-antagonistic to what we know today as post-modernity. From Europe, his investigations

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influenced a legion of critical Latin-American social scientists. Habermas wasn't worried to extol the technological discourse and was even less interested to describe its incorporations in the social behavior of that time. Following the tradition of Frankfurt University Institute for Social Research, where always occupied a prominent theoretical position, he preferred to grub the genesis of democratic societies and its fragmented identities populations, that by that time were walking through the implementation of social welfare policy, getting inserted in a late capitalism logic – terminology comprehended as a specific phase of the capitalism when it was potentialized the expansion of multinational corporations, the opening and globalizations of markets and the free circulation of transnational massively consumed flows. Habermas offered a critical diagnostic to the phase that became a capitalistic crisis, which now is hugely accepted by the critical thoughts, more than a stage of development as it was defended by technicians and less critical researchers.

Considered an important exponent of neomarxist perspective of the 20th century, Habermas knew how to separate historical contexts when considered that, differently from Karl Marx's time when conflicts were founded in social classes, the recently arrived legitimacy crisis represented a difficulty that, by one side, the State managed and regulated the free market, and by the other, guaranteed the access to social rights and occupation taxes (jobs) capable of ensuring the human development. This crisis started to be formatted for, at least, three centuries, gaining breath with the arrival of public spaces dedicated to criticize traditions, population life conditions and State politics. In the hypothesis of Habermas, they were spaces that extrapolated the limits of State-owned authority, such as the French literary salons, the British coffee shops and the Portuguese taverns. Those spaces became meditation centers capable of encouraging society to challenge the State actions. They constitute what, later, Habermas denominated as "public sphere". In the development of the concept, he considered that this kind of spaces collaborated to the triggering of French Revolution in 1789.

Contemporarily, new significations can be inscribed to Habermas' legacy. Technological and social phenomena, such as the

development and incorporation of daily internet, digital convergence and new media dynamics, cross the “unfinished modernity project” alerted by the German philosopher. In our current moment, of transition from the analogical paradigm to the digital, media replace themselves every time, making possible new (virtual) enclosures that dialogue with social matters. The challenges in the ambit of citizenship, departing from a partial empowerment of individuals, are renewed and generate new provocations for us to think roles of pluralist societies and its multicultural contrasts (Habermas, 2007). Especially considering his notion of public sphere, this article proposes to enlarge the discussion about cyberspace and its condition of new habermasian public sphere. In this sense, the analysis parts from the presupposition that the subject mobility – from spectator to interlocutor and content producer – is the main cultural and social transformation that was made possible by the new configuration of communicational environment. The theoretical movement is made to recover the concept of public sphere, aiming to verify if the platforms of digital social media constitute a new instance of public sphere. It considers the appearing of new agents, who produce discourses and appropriate this space, mobilizing themselves alongside other questions, spreading their ideas on the web and conquering space on the daily life of society. Thus, the core of the discussion is the force that comes from civil society, through the empowerment of the subject in cyberspace and the possibility of mobilization of the citizens around certain issues of collective interest.

#### THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC SPHERE

In his book *Man's Worldly Goods*, the American economist Leo Huberman reflects about the political-economic transformations of humanity since the feudal era to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The author says that was the appearing of the huge merchant fairs – that from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century bought and sold products from Orient and Occident, transacting in countries like England, France, Belgium, Germany and Italy – what made appear the big cities and developed what now we call modern State. In a decline process, the feudal system

loses breath with the appearing of a new kind of wealth: money – mobile, fluid and material. At the same time, with the growing importance of capital, to the detriment of land, emerges a new group: middle class. This scenario of social reaccommodation entails a dispute of spaces and interests among the old seigneurs and populations of cities ruled by associations of organized merchants. By that time, the mobilization of middle class and collective debate didn't have the objective to knock down the seigneurs, but the goal to make them abandon some practices that prevented the expansion of commerce (Huberman, 2013). The new environment of sociability intersection, of idea debates, of ideologies, of politic, economic and culture discussions started to play a central role in the process of construction of the modern society. It is the embryo of collective debates in public spheres.

During the 15th century, with the buying and selling of lands as merchandise, the ancient feudal organization was broke by the pressure of economic forces that no longer could be controlled. Geopolitical concerns fomented on public sphere, such as national divisions, legislation and language, started to occupy the center of the matters. The ascension of middle class offered new dimensions to the ways of living in society: old institutions decay, new institutions appear and foment public debates that are formed with the objective to fight for collective causes, such as road insecurities and taxes abuses (Huberman, 2013). The intensification of merchant mobilizations searching for rights and the encounter of citizens to debate common interests marks the “separation” of State and society, the private and the notion of public. Habermas (1984) concepts this public space of mobilization and debates as *bourgeois public sphere*, which must be understood as:

The sphere of private people reunited in public; they claim this public sphere regulated by authority, but directly against their own authority, aiming to discuss with it the general laws of exchange in the fundamentally private sphere, but publically relevant, the laws of exchange of products and social work (Habermas, 1984, p. 42).

The habermasian public sphere is understood as an instance of subjects reunited in public with the objective to debate State, laws and social work questions. The public concept is in contraposition to the

private sphere. Besides, the public sphere is characterized as a “literary public sphere that founds its institutions in *coffee-houses*, in *salons* and diner communities” (Habermas, 1984, p. 45). The German philosopher also highlights the role of press in this process that emerges with the modern state and the rising of capitalism, opening the way for public debate and the exchange of information. It means, the press was one of the existing means of discussions of that time and played an important role in the constitution of the habermasian public sphere. Although the formation of the public sphere was given by and in benefit of bourgeois class and limited itself strictly to higher social classes, excluding women, working classes and ethnic minorities from the discussions, Habermas argues that this space was vital for the initial development of democracy, once the bourgeois struggle against absolutism and it enlarged some guarantees and citizen rights. Thus, it is important to comprehend this public sphere as a place where expression and communicative action would incentivize a collective conscience capable of making possible the conversation and deliberations among subjects, opportuning communication flows directed to the formation of a public opinion and an aggregative structure of many groups and entities interacting.

In the mass media context, habermasian public sphere has had a hard symbiosis. That happened because the interests of huge media groups were turned to the spread of information non-rarely manipulated, and the consumption, limiting the public debate and weakening the reflection about collective issues. In this direction, the context of digital media can seem a little advanced, even though the Internet is also passible of suffering the interference of powerful economy sectors, global companies with specific interests and normative politics. It also can become a space structured only by hegemonic views and a place of reproduction of social inequality and minority exclusion, so present in the world of life.

But most researchers consider that the development of internet revolutionized the way subjects relate and interact. The environment created with the ascension of social networks and new portable technological dispositive invented new forms of interaction, creating new ways of circulating and spreading news. If we consider how public sphere modifies itself in relation with historical time and

social space, the current scenario drawn by technological apparatus, social network and new possibilities of interaction also modifies the perception surrounding the concept of public space (Habermas, 2007). Through forums, discussion groups or spontaneous mobilizations, new discourse production agents appropriate this cyberspace – more accessible and democratic than other mass communication means – to spread information, claim rights, debate topics, organize and mobilize actions, foment the social activism, promote collaboration and tease exchange among participants. This perception of the reconfiguration of public space, enlarged and more democratic of the way users can position themselves somehow, culminates in a force that comes from civil society that restructures social relations and put the social actor mobility as central in the new configuration of digital communicational environment.

#### **PUBLIC SPHERE AND MEDIA CONVERGENCE**

In the last decades, complementary theoretical approaches actualized and enlarged the habermasian thoughts to the context of digital convergence and communication means. In this sense, French sociologist Dominique Wolton considered that, parallel to the purely technicist approaches, it should emerge another one that allies culture and technology. Other dimension, maybe more balanced, that would open the roads to social researches interested in clearing communication “connected to the freedom of information, the struggles for democracy and an opened society, finally making the ideal of communication one of the biggest values of our societies” (Wolton, 2012, p. 9). The main contribution of Wolton was to think the cultural allied to the technological, without antagonism. Defending that “it is not possible to think in a communication system without relating it to other two characters: cultural and social” (Wolton, 2012, p. 6), the researcher subverted the technic to the status of social platform capable of developing ties - the social tie, specifically -, considering that the cyberspace becomes a place of new social and cultural structures from an action of the subject and the collectiveness.

Therefore, Wolton was one of the firsts to consider that the Internet itself wouldn't be just a technological medium, since cyberspace would materialize the flows of this new social dimension, through the network users. The French sociologist enlarges the notion of public sphere defending that the essential in public space is not the circulation of information and communication, but the creation of a new collective conscience. "Public space is a specificity of modern history connected to the emergence of the subject, the conscience freedom, the language, and demands numerous cultural conditions", according to Wolton, being that, "to debate freely and contestationally, it is necessary not just common languages, but also common interests, common symbolic fields, public expressions, then the recognition and use of a publicity principle" (Wolton, 2012, p. 164). This is an approach that converges with the habermasian conception, specifically in reference of a space of a discursive action of the subject, considered free and who needs the recognition of the other as equal and interlocutor capable of interpretations and negotiations.

Considering that in the digital convergence environment, digital communication doesn't occur in a vertical model anymore, from one center to many others, but from a horizontal model, from many to many, Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells says that the decisive question of this new social configuration is the displacement of the community to the web as a central form to organize interaction. "The networks are created by choices and strategies of social actors, be them subjects, families or social groups". Yet, according to Castells, "the greatest transformation of sociability in complex societies occurred with the substitution of special communities to networks as fundamental forms of sociability" (Castells, 2003, p. 106). In this sense, the change of sociability standards in our society and the evolution of social interaction are pointed by Castells as central in this new scenario, letting, also, the technological mean in second plan:

The study of sociability in/over/with the Internet must be placed in the context of the sociability standards transformation in our society. That doesn't mean to undervalue the importance of technological mean, but to insert its specific effects on general evolution of standards of social interactions in relation with the material supports of this interaction: space, organizations and technologies of communication (Castells, 2003, p. 105).

Again, we are reinforcing the thought that speaking in the new communicational environment doesn't mean to think only in the technological instrument itself, but in its entire social, cultural and economic conjuncture. Digital convergence allows the emergence of a new social dimension and the formation of a new public space: the cyberspace, which reveals much more than a space of convergence from traditional media to the Internet, because it is from it and inside it that society is organizing itself, mobilizing, living together and exchanging symbolic goods, ideas, products, information and knowledge.

The cyberspace is, this way, a space of relations, representations, information and interaction among the subjects. Therefore, it can't be considered something ready, limited and finished. It means, the cyberspace is always a construction and a representation that comes from the relations and interactions of the subjects. Nevertheless, if the cyberspace depends on exchanges and the constant presence of the subject, it is possible to consider that the greatest paradigm broke in the scenario of convergence is the displacement of the public role, that overcomes the model emission-message-reception and is placed as a producer agent in the process.

Researcher of the intelligence technologies, the Tunisian Pierre Lévy develops another contemporary approach and also actualizes the Habermas' concept, inserting it in the environment of social network. Lévy introduces the idea of anthropological space, that would be a space of proximity proper of human relations and dependent of technique, significations, language, culture, conventions, representations and emotions to be configured as it is. Anthropological spaces should be connected to the relations among the social actors and conversation can be considered a common construction of a space of significations, where each interlocutor tries to change according to his own particularities. The anthropological spaces would emerge, then, from interactions between people and situations among social actors who evoke messages, representations and a gamma of significations. They are the fundamental organizers of huge eras and the act of men, their thoughts, their relations that actualize this space (Lévy, 2011). It means, each social dynamic can be comprehended as a configuration of spaces

that reinvents the social bound, the social exchanges, the collective debates, the learning and the synergy of competences.

The author presents a taxonomy of the anthropological space, which is divided in: Earth; Territory; Space of Market; and Space of Knowledge. The Earth was the first space occupied by humanity, being it the place where human beings elaborated the world as it is. Ergo, Earth is not the ground itself, but comprehends just the world of significations, language, technical processes and social institutions. Territory is related to the domestication of animals, the agriculture, the city, the State, the writing, the job division, among others. It means, when there is the formation of civilization, emerges the territory divisions and with them the costumes, habits and cultures are born and structured. About the third anthropological space, the Space of Market, Lévy talks about its development in the dawn of modern times departing from the organization of the energy flows, of feedstock circulations, of merchandise exchange of information, and wealth and capital flow. It is a more dynamic and quick space, which crosses frontiers. The fourth and last anthropological space, the Space of Knowledge, comprehends a new anthropological dimension connected to the relations of the human being: among other people, with itself or in relation with things. It's a space which is developed in an activity of individual and collective knowledge; it is related to a space without borders of relations, of metamorphosis of relations and with the appearance of different ways of being. It is the space of digital network, of virtual universe, of cyberspaces and collective intellectuals.

Based on Lévy's considerations, it is possible to verify that the current social dynamics – with the development of information technologies, the advent of the Internet, the evolution of the process of content production and the interconnection among people all over the world – reconfigures the space of interaction and reinvents the public sphere debate and collective deliberation. Because new places are perfectly articulated from a new physical support, which modifies the concept of social bound among the actors and makes possible a new understanding of the cultural and social dimension.

## CITIZENSHIP, INTERNET AND VIGILANCE SYSTEMS

Although some researchers still defend a positive vision when analyze the cyberspace as a place for democracy and freedom of expression, it is necessary to make caveats about this romantic idea, once the users are automatically monitored by *softwares* that observe their behavior and collect information about their consumption standards. If, in the past, journalism editorial lines interfered in the decision making and collective imaginary, in the present our autonomy in the web is equally impaired by the effect of recommendation and algorithms (*big data*) softwares, which orientate the consumption. It is necessary to relativize the idea that cyberspace is a place of absolute representability, of freedom of expression by excellence and an obvious instance of democracy. In the digital social dialogue, the crossings and transversalities comes from economic interests. Maybe, for most connected citizens, those influences are imperceptible or even insignificant during the use of everyday tools. However, to understand the social dimension of this new public sphere, it is necessary to understand how internet could be limited for large and real democratic debates.

The studies of the Hungarian-American physician Barabási (2009) about network topology clarifies that it is an error to understand the cyberspace as a completely equal and democratic space. According to the author, the mapping projects of the web showed that there is a complete lack of democracy and equality on the network. In Barabási optics, this happens due to the fact that even that each subject has the right to put whatever he wants on social network or any other platform, that doesn't mean that this person has any chance to be seen or heard. Thus, in the entire web context, some issues or subjects will have more visibility and influence than others. The researcher says that on the web there are *hubs*, websites that have more connectivity and that are easy to find independently of where the subject stays on the web. These websites have more power of connectivity compared to the rest of the web and become reference for masses. And as many connections this *hub* has, more connections are suggested to it. It means, the more visible is the website, more visible it tends to be, letting the largest part of the contents entirely invisible on the web.

Following the same logic, in *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You*, the politic and Internet activist, Eli Pariser (2012), points the aspects that limit the understanding of cyberspace as a place for equality debates about social issues. For the American researcher, the main aspect that makes utopic the idea that Internet may completely redemocratize society, making people more civic and critic, is the fact that cyberspace is constantly reflected on the own interests of each subject. Pariser explains that what rules the Internet relations is the personalization of contents, made possible by algorithms and data base of big organizations, such as Google and Facebook. The capitalist crossing in cyberspace is given as the giant of Internet creates models for the contents that arrive to each subject based on their previous behavior. The more personalized is the offer, bigger is the chance of an user to buy a similar product. This way, the more personalized is the offer, bigger are the chances for organizations to sell advertises to big labels. The web is becoming, therefore, an information market about the subject behaviors.

Personalization, however, is not restricted to advertisement, it is molding the information flows too. To Pariser, social networks platforms like Facebook can also offer information and news according to personal desires. Once Facebook is becoming the main source of news consumption for most people, as much the user clicks in a topic and issue, the more the data base will understand that that kind of material should be directed to this same user on the next searches. Pariser calls attention for the concerning consequence of this content direction: the informative determinism. To the author, personalization can lead us to this determinism because the things we clicked in the past will determine what we will see in the future.

This targeting and personalization of information leads to another phenomenon that the author calls “filter bubble”. These filters are responsible for examining the behavior of the user and determine what he desires to do, read, share or follow. Therefore, each subject consumes information according to what he thinks and believes. This way, the bubbles have a huge social and cultural cost, once they modify the manner subjects see ideas and information, causing impact on their understanding about society and their perception of the world.

An equalitarian and democratic debate demands a collision of different ideas, cultures and ideologies, requires that subjects base themselves in sharing facts and breaking prejudice. When we ignore or behave as an outsider to a part of those differences, the democratic debate can't be fulfilled, because only one of the many world perspectives is considered. Therefore, in the filter bubble of internet, according to Pariser, subjects have fewer meetings that can bring new perceptions and learnings. By the time it is easier to reunite activists for civil society claims, the personalization makes more difficult to reach a larger and heterogenic public. The bubbles block important and complex social issues, making hard to effectuate the public debate. Ergo, the filter bubble doesn't affect only the way we process information. But, above all, modifies the manners we think and get involved in public debates, what can lead to the disappearing of some debates about important issues for civil society. It means content personalization in cyberspace presents a threat to the public debate and to the contemporary public sphere itself.

Even though there are capitalistic crossings, the invisible bubbles, the personalization and the search for data by big organizations, it is still possible to ensure that communication among subjects intermediated by technological instruments acquires an important value in the constitution of public space. Because important forums for discussion and debates of relevant themes for society are fomented by the subject himself and not by institutions, media or government. It's in this new instance of public sphere that the subjects are depositing their world vision, their point of views, experiences, opinions, perspectives, sharing ideas and fomenting important debates about social reality. The network turns to be, this way, a potentiating tool of the public sphere – in the Habermasin sense of a space for articulation that aims for a collective goal and a common conscience, with public visibility and available for any person present on the web.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The cyberspace can be considered a new dimension of the public sphere in development, whose objective is to produce and build

a plurality of opinions, articulating different social actors with different discursive contents that circulate in distinct deliberative spaces. Thus, tends to promote a space of diffusion, spread and enlargement of themes, problems and social issues. Although cyberspace can offer larger conditions for a public debate, the ripening of this debate is still happening and the public sphere, however, can't be considered dynamic, incorporative, accessible to everyone and with a plural participation yet. The empowerment of subjects in the contemporary public sphere is rising, but there are still economic crossings, personalization and the filter bubble threatening those advances. By the same time the virtue of the Internet is its capacity to erode the power of an institutional center and give power to the subjects in the conduction of their own personal and social issues, the cyberspace is being ruled by big corporations with economic purposes that threaten the contemporary public sphere. To ensure an effectively public space for the citizens, it is necessary a group of actions, both for subjects and organizations. The first thing that companies that dominate internet can do is to turn their filter process and *big data* more transparent for the public, so their responsibilities are clear and accepted. Besides that, organizations and their programmers must include in their systems, programs and projects for the citizenship and foment of public debates. Another important step is in the hands of the user, who must be engaged in the defense of internet. It's indispensable that the new agents of discourse production have a public sphere truly free of external influences, that is as big and equalitarian as possible, because just like this it is possible to create and ensure an articulation of different social actors in the deliberative process, which are essential for the contemporary and democratic society.

Lastly, it is possible to draw the following original taxonomy of the public sphere concept, from the accomplished studies, dialogues among authors and analyzed objects:

- Bourgeois public sphere: in Habermas' conception, the bourgeois public sphere emerges with the Modern State and the rise of middle class, which begins to reunite in

public with the objective to debate collective issues, mainly about laws and rules imposed by the Government. In this moment, occurs the separation of state and society, private and public, this understood as a collective space for common use. Thus, bourgeois public sphere is known as an instance of subjects reunited in public to debate social, political and collective matters;

- Mediated public sphere: after the advent of press, emerges another phenomenon in the public space: a space mediated by the media system, that process demands coming from institutions, political organizations, administrative representatives, social movements, associations and the civil society. Habermas has, initially, a reductive perception of the media. According to him, the demands processed by communication means originate a public sphere of disorganized networks and message flows, that are depolizer and reproductive of a vision based on economic interests. However, in posterior considerations, the author already gives to communication means the function of captioning, organizing and providing diverse contents which may contribute for the development of a public sphere and the feed of communicative flows. The communication means give visibility to several demands of society, fomenting discussions in other arenas of discussion, exercising, this way, a mediator role in public sphere. However, it's necessary to recognize that communication means give privilege to certain points of view and emphasize determinate questions and issues according to their interests. Thus, the mediator role of media system should be analyzed under the perspective that the stage of social reality presented is built under a repertory of preferences and definitions of each vehicle. Even though, are important in the creation of deliberative structures for a society that has democracy as its core.

- Anthropological public sphere: this concept was presented by Lévy and it's related to the human and anthropological aspects of the spaces. It means this public sphere depends of the social context, the cultural representations and human emotions to be developed. This way, the public sphere reconfigures itself accordingly to the social representations of each time. The anthropological spaces are relativists because they modify themselves and get adapted around the object they hold. So, the anthropological spaces can be considered spaces of significations and are divided in four: the Earth, the Territory, the Space of Market and Space of Knowledge. This last one, that aggregates the entire social dimension made possible by technology, besides an indispensable technical instrumentation, incites to reinvent the social bound around the reciprocal learn, the synergy of competences, the imagination and the collective intelligences.
- Globalized public sphere: considering that the public sphere is formed by communicative flows among different social actors, it is possible to understand the social structure in network as a globalized public sphere, once the structural changes of capitalism in the globalization affects directly this flow. The technological advances generates an impact in economy and politics, also affecting society and the manners of sociability, that now happens in global reach. In the perception of the authors, the globalized public sphere will make possible the emergence of an alternative communication democracy, more popular and organized, based in social movements. The worldwide interconnection is the new social organization and a new instance of public sphere.

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## The crisis of business and journalism: A Critical Political Economy Approach

Ibrahim Seaga Shaw<sup>1</sup>

The failure to strike a fine balance between making profit and staying in business on one hand and addressing the interests of the public they serve on the other hand has been the most worrying concern and fall-out of the current crisis facing capitalism and journalism. There is a plethora of research for e.g Herman and Chomsky (1988), Herman (2002), McChesney (2004, 2013), Shaw (2016) which suggests that journalists have mostly tipped the balance in favour of boosting the corporate interests of the owners of capital or the means of production and not necessarily the real producers and consumers of goods and services. Yet this is in sharp contrast to their social responsibility to hold power, be it political or corporate, to account in the interest of the general public. But the journalist also faces a huge crisis of choice or identity. On one hand, he draws his power and inspiration from liberalism: the freedom to hold power to account by informing and educating the public about their human wrongs. Yet, on the other hand, he depends on neoliberal capitalism to be able to perform this watchdog role since without the capital to employ him and provide the other means of producing the news and comments, he will not exist as a professional journalist.

In order to resolve this crisis, this chapter calls for a shift in paradigm from traditional business journalism to what I call 'Public Business Journalism' which seeks to not only to blur the distinction between reporting for the investor (the capitalist) and the general public(society), but to tip the balance in favour of the latter if it comes

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to making a choice because it constitutes the majority, including the former, and also because this would help address, rather than reinforce, the imbalances of society. It argues that a shift to the more postmodern 'Public Business Journalism' is crucial to averting future failures of business journalism in holding power to account, and, by extension, future global financial crises.

This chapter attempts two things. First, it critically explores the concepts of political economy, political economy of journalism, and public business journalism within historical, contemporary and global contexts. Second, it critically explores the modern business model of business and journalism in the context of the crisis of the political economy of global capitalism against the challenger postmodern alternative models such as Marxism, Keynesianism etc. It discusses the history of the neo-liberal business model of business journalism in the context of the free market capitalist philosophy of Adam Smith which emphasises non-government interference or regulation of business, including the media industry, and the anti-capitalist philosophy of Karl Marx, which insists on regulation of business to protect the interests of workers as the producers of wealth.

#### **POLITICAL ECONOMY OF JOURNALISM AND PUBLIC BUSINESS JOURNALISM**

Political economy as a major critical perspective in communication research in the 1940s initially developed from the critical theory of media and communication developed by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. These scholars and other political economists after them, all members of the Frankfurt School, were very critical of the increasing commercialisation of media and communication where news or ideas of media and communication ceased to be considered as a cultural value to be shared by all members of the community, and instead taken to mean something to be bought and sold to the highest bidder. The political economy perspective interrogates the notion, prominent in some theories, that reality can be informed only by ideas or observations, and not by both. It also questions the view that all ideas and observations necessarily constitute reality. Political economists

rather generally believe that reality can be constituted by many sources and "cannot be reduced to the essentialism of either economics (e.g. money alone drives the media) or culture (e.g. people's values drive the media)" (Mosco, 2009, p. 1). They hold the view that reality cannot simply be dismissed as the figment of our imagination based on an idea or ideology of some kind but is informed by a combination of both this ideology and experience; a combination of theory and practice to put it simply. Another way to put it is to say ideas on their own cannot, or do not, constitute realities while on the other hand observations alone cannot, or do not, also constitute reality. Reality is therefore the result of both ideology and observation: a combination of the normative and the empirical, or of the prescriptive and the descriptive.

The approach is largely trans-disciplinary as it is inspired by the concepts of social change, social process, and social relations. Yet the approach puts emphasis on social institutions such as media businesses which are more or less influenced by the dominant classes of society.

Before exploring the concept of political economy of journalism I have considered it important to provide a kind of conceptualisation of the much broader and multi-disciplinary concept of political economy. Mosco (2009, p. 2) provides two main definitions of political economy. The first, which is based on a much narrower sense, sees political economy as "the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources". Mosco (2009) argues that the extent to which his definition calls attention to how the business of communication operates underscores its practical value. It for instance provides us an idea of how a product of communication moves through a chain of production and distribution processes and structures before finally getting to the consumer. It also illuminates how the choices consumers make about the communication products such as a news item, a movie, a comedy etc. are fed back into policies and decisions politicians and businessmen make and take, respectively, in producing new or similar products. This definition invites us to consider how not just the communication product but the very attention of the consumers is put in the market place. It helps

us see the approach as facilitating our understanding of how power relations operate, how people use and abuse power to make some people get what they want albeit sometimes at the expense of some people blatantly denied what they want. It gives us an idea of how power relations interact, and sometimes clash, in the chain of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.

A much broader definition of political economy, according to Mosco (2009), sees it as the "study of control and survival in public life". The key words in this definition are *control* and *survival*; control relates to how a community of people runs and manages its affairs while survival refers to what people do on a daily basis for example production, distribution and consumption to keep their society on the move. While control relates to a political process as it involves community power relations, survival relates to an economic process as it involves economic power relations that shape or influence the production and reproduction, as well as the distribution and consumption of goods and services. The extent to which this definition provides the political economy approach the power to encompass all human activity and processes underpins its standing as a more ambitious way of understanding this rather ambivalent approach.

## POLITICAL ECONOMY OF JOURNALISM

Journalism practice is normally considered as part of the broad field of communication and media studies, which is in turn part of the much broader field of communication. The field of communication encompasses a much wider range of disciplines, which in addition to communication and media studies, include sociology, linguistics, information studies, philosophy, architecture, computer science but for the purposes of this book I will only focus on communication and media studies, especially on the specialist field of business journalism. Mosco (2009, p. 8) sees communication as a "social exchange of meaning whose outcome is the measure or mark of a social relationship". He makes the argument that from this perspective, communication should not be merely seen as the process of transmitting information but as "social production of meaning that constitutes a relationship" (Mosco,

2009, p. 8). Thus he warns against the tendency to communication essentialism (Burke, 1969a, 1969b; Latour, 1999; McCloskey, 2002), that is an inclination to reduce reality to the "rhetoric of conversation" or communication alone without also seeing it as the "logic of inquiry" or analysis (Mosco, 2009, p. 66). I go along with Mosco's preference for a combination of the "logic of inquiry" and rhetoric of conversation as the basis of epistemology, that is critical knowledge and understanding of a communication message. By way of reinforcing this line of thinking Mosco (2009, p. 66) affirms that this combination of the two approaches specifically:

Maintains that understanding is not a process by which one person observes and reports on reality by using language that reveals that reality. Rather, understanding takes place when two or more people exchange observations and ideas, and express them in language that does not reveal reality, but which helps to constitute reality.

In a way the combination of the rhetoric of conversation and the logic of inquiry resonates with the political economy of communication. Broadly speaking, when you talk about the political economy of communication you are talking about how political and economic power relations are influenced, or vice versa, within the context of agenda-setting by our "systems of mass media, information, and entertainment" (Mosco, 2009, p. 6). Since journalistic praxis generally operates within the structures of these mass communications systems, political economy of journalism can be defined as the way in which journalists are influenced, or vice versa, by the political and economic power relations, within an agenda setting context, and how that impacts on their social responsibility role to serve as watchdogs, rather than mere lapdogs or cheer leaders, in the interest of the general public. This definition in a way suggests some kind of resonance between the concept of the political economy of journalism and that of public business journalism, especially in the context in which the public business journalist is able to use the political economic perspective to interrogate the political and economic power relations in the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services in the public interest.

## BUSINESS JOURNALISM AND PUBLIC BUSINESS JOURNALISM

Business Journalism deals with reporting in the media that discusses events, topics and issues related to the economy, business, development, and industries or how people as producers and consumers spend their money to better themselves in both national and global contexts. It includes writing about activities and issues involving other beats such as employment, unemployment, workplace, food, health and wellbeing, insurance, technology, personal finance, corporate finance, public finance, and consumer reporting. Chris Roush (2011, p. 8) defines business journalism as "all reporting and writing that is not only about business but also about the economy". Stories about business are generally about money and how it is spent by the investor and the consumer. Business beats feature in business sections of newspapers or in the business press. In one of the first books on business journalism, Julien Elfenbein (1969, p. 3) defines it as:

The organized, systemic, and periodic extraction of news-information, know-how, and know-what from the most authentic sources, its transformation into intelligence, and its timely distribution to the prime decision-makers and the labor force in all fields of human activity by competent editors, reporters, technical contributors, and publishers.

However, this definition is limited to business beats in specialised businesspapers. A businesspaper, according to Elfenbein (1969, p. 8), is the generic term used to describe "independent technical periodicals" published as magazine or newspaper at least four times a year and specifically intended to serve special fields of private or public enterprise and not directed to the wider public. Readers and sources of information used in businesspapers are mostly from these special fields such as trade, agricultural, marketing, technical, educational, medical etc. They also mostly focus on issues and activities of these special fields instead of all beats about business and the economy. Thus the main purpose of these businesspapers is to serve the interest of their readers and sources of information, who are mostly the elites of society, by providing them with business intelligence and other specialist technical

know-hows and know-whats. This is supposed to be different from mainstream business newspapers that feature stories about business and the economy broadly speaking. Business newspapers such as *Financial Times* or business magazines such as *Business Week* are directed at the general public who can also serve as sources of information.

Yet business journalism, whether by way of the businesspaper targeting readers and sources in a specialist field or the business newspaper targeting readers and sources from the wider public, is recognised as having hugely contributed, and still contributing, to the growth of business and modern industrial society. Effenbein (1969, p. 1) asserts that the "businesspaper is the most potent kind of continuing education in our adult world. No other medium, moreover, is as effective or economical for reaching and influencing the majority of prime decision-makers". There would have been no modernisation if there was no business journalism. It was business journalism that exposed the exploitation of former colonies and slaves, as well as the monopolies and trusts that ran many industries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the US. The best business journalists are often the best journalists in the world. For e.g. three of the best six journalisms of the 20<sup>th</sup> century compiled by New York University Journalism Department had specific business journalism elements in them (Roush, 2011).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, business journalists alerted the public to safety problems in vehicles and in chemicals. It was business journalism that warned the public about investment schemes and poorly run businesses that take the money of gullible investors. The Food and Drug Administrator, which ensures that we eat healthy foods, was set up following business journalism's exposure of spoiled meat being sold to unsuspecting consumers. Business journalism has ensured that killer drugs are not stocked for consumers to buy. Media have had a profound effect on business and the economy. The development of the newspaper has contributed to the widening of markets, effectiveness of competition, lowering of the costs of production, the spread of the price system etc.

However, despite its important role to people and society, business journalism is often not taken seriously by journalists and

consumers. This is often because business stories are often less dramatic and therefore boring to read. They are often full of numbers and statistics that make them difficult and boring to read. They often lack depth, understanding and context. Normal business stories do not necessarily attract mass readership and mass advertising. Most business stories are therefore limited to a small space in a mainstream daily newspaper and very limited air time on radio and TV.

By far the most scathing criticism mainstream business journalism has faced over the years, despite all its great achievements in the building of modern industrial society, is its failure to serve as a proper watchdog of business, and by extension to strike a balance between meeting the business bottomline and the public interest.

This situation looks inevitable on face value as majority of the readers and sources of information for business newspapers are business or financial elites. Moreover, mainstream business journalism is rooted to the business model of journalism as a profit making-concern for financial performance not production sites or places of work, or welfare of workers and consumers. The truth is most business newspapers produce large volumes of business-related news and commentaries but most are tempted to increasingly focus solely on spinning the business bottom line and not the good of society at large (Roush, 2011, p. 9). But business journalism faces a kind of a paradox! The business journalists always navigate the dilemma of choosing between the bottom line and the public good. Normatively, business journalists can and should strike a balance between the two, and there are few cases where this has happened. Yet, empirically, business journalists are increasingly tempted to go for the bottom line and not necessarily what is good for society.

Former Wall Street Journal Deputy Editor Barney Calame, who is also a former president of the Society of American Business Editors and Writers, said: "Especially in times of financial pressure, there is a temptation to create coverage whose primary objective is to attract advertisers rather than serve readers... Good journalism can and should do both" (Cited in Roush, 2011, p. 9). Yet, empirically, business journalism is informed by the business model of journalism

based on pushing the business bottom line over that of the public interest. This failure makes the business journalist of the business press or business newspapers little or no different from that of the special field businesspaper who solely caters for its readers and sources of information located within the special field. It is in order to address this problem that this chapter seeks to critically explore the failure of business journalists in striking the balance between the bottom line of the business model and the public interest, especially during periods of global financial crisis. Drawing inspiration from a political economy perspective, I blame this failure of business journalism on its increasing dwindling social responsibility role in holding power—political and corporate—to account. It is also for this reason that I have proposed public business journalism as an alternative to this rather problematic mainstream business journalism. "Public business journalism is informed by the alternative models of journalism that strike a balance between financial performance and the welfare of the real producers of wealth and consumers of the end products" (Shaw, 2016). I argue that public business journalism has the potential not only to narrow the gap between reporting for the bottomline (the interest of the investor with the capital) and the public interest (society at large, including workers, consumers etc.) but to tip the balance in favour of society if it comes to making a choice because it constitutes the majority, including the investor. As I emphasised earlier in this section, the public business journalist needs to adopt a critical political economy perspective to be in a better position to achieve a proper balance between the business bottomline and the public interest, and to tip the balance in favour of the less dominant public interest if it comes to making a choice between the two.

A business journalist with a critical political economy perspective would be interested in interrogating the interaction between the political and economic relations that threaten the interest or very survival of members of the public, including of course producers and consumers of goods and services, as well as the investors. The savvy business journalist needs to adopt the critical political economy approach in researching and writing a business story or news programme. When

something dramatic happens, for instance, a sudden increase in taxation to pay for public services, the business journalist with a critical political economy perspective would not only be interested in reporting it but in looking at the "bigger picture of such a policy". He would want to know the "implications of such a policy for the public, the politicians and the businessmen, and not just for the last two" (Shaw, 2016).

Moreover, the interest of the public business journalist goes beyond monitoring and contributing to corporate governance, which seems to be the pre-occupation of mainstream business or financial journalism. Engwell and Sahlin (2007, p.266) argue that business journalists have a "powerful impact on the way corporations relate to their environment and the way in which they are governed and managed". Engwell and Sahlin (2007, p. 266-267) identify two corporate governance functions of business journalism: a) as monitor—report and investigate corporate activities to provide shareholders with "in-depth knowledge and assessments" to underpin their decisions; b) as carrier—of "general models for conceptualising corporations, management, governance and environments". Going by these two main functions of BJ it is clear that traditional business journalism is more orientated to the corporate, in fact mostly big corporate investors' interests than those of the real producers (workers) and consumers of goods and services in the market place.

#### CRISIS IN CAPITALISM, ANTI-CAPITALISM AND THE BUSINESS MODEL OF JOURNALISM

Global financial crises in the last two centuries happened mainly because of the crisis in Global capitalism which can be traced to its very beginnings in the industrial revolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fierce disagreements have occurred in the responses by political and business elites to these crises; such disagreements have largely been polarised along neo-liberal capitalist or Marxist-Socialist approaches to resolve the crises. In the debate that followed the 2008 financial crisis, a thought-provoking *Financial Times* (FT) comment and debate series entitled '**Capitalism in Crisis**' no doubt captured the spirit of the times.

Yet, Lord Meghnad Desai, Emeritus Professor at the London School of Economics was quoted in one of the FT series arguing that there is “no crisis of capitalism” but admits “there’s a crisis of western capitalism, which has gone geriatric. The dynamic capitalism, with its energy, innovation and sheer greed for growth has moved east” (cited in an article in the FT by David Pilling (16/1/2012) titled “Capitalism in Crisis: Perilous Path to Prosperity”). Lord Desai’s argument suggests that as Western capitalism modelled on the free market economy is collapsing on its own turf a much more flexible and modified one modelled on the hybrid of capitalism and socialism is thriving in Asia. This hybrid is based on a system where economic activities are controlled by both the state and market forces of supply and demand. But truth is this so-called moderate model of Asian capitalism is equally in crisis as Asian governments who had initially hoped for a gradual shift to the *strictu sensu* Western free market capitalism have been disillusioned by suddenly realising that their economies have also been badly hit by the 2008 global recession. This meant they had no choice but to yield to pressure from the IMF, that great stepmother of the Washington Consensus, to deregulate pure and simple along the free market capitalism lines or die.

This section will explore the following questions: What can you say have been the main points of disagreements between the capitalist and anti-capitalist philosophers of political economy? What justifications, if any, can you offer for the anti-capitalist and other alternative views of business and journalism? To what extent is the business model of journalism traced to Adam Smith’s political economy of capitalism? In looking at the points of disagreements between the capitalist and anti-capitalist philosophers of political economy I will try to explore the history, social totality, and moral philosophy of the political economy of capitalism and anti-capitalism.

I would like to start this section by briefly looking at the earliest political organisations before the emergence of capitalism. They are as follows:

Subsistence—Every family producing what is enough to live on

Slavery—Exploitation of man by man for monetary gains

Feudalism—workers are the vassals of wealthy people and institutions

Even some religions, especially Islam, could be considered philosophies of political economy. In fact in addition to being the prophetic leader of Muslims, Muhammed could, according to Bachman (2001), be considered to be the most important political economist to precede Adam Smith.

Modern capitalism itself can be traced to Adam Smith, the first philosopher of political economy who wrote the ground-breaking *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) where he explained the concepts of the free market economy. Smith argued that growth of the modern industry can only take place when the markets—the supply and demand of goods and services— are free from control of politicians. One of Smith's most influential concepts was that of the "invisible hand" which represents the forces of competition that balance supply and demand of goods and services. His other two important concepts are specialisation and division of labour which ensure that individuals specialise in developing skills that enable them to produce more of their product. It is based on the idea that if everyone specialises in what they are very good at producing, this will increase the quality and quantity of goods and services produced, and hence returns in profit, than if everyone is obliged to complete all the separate steps in the production chain. This was a period of great social and historical transformation in which capitalism based on the ideas of free market competition and no state control was born. Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill and David Ricardo are considered as the founding figures of the political economy of capitalism because of their contributions to the intellectual understanding of how the neoliberal capitalist system operated during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19 centuries. These three figures explained the great capitalist revolution as part of the "great social upheaval that transformed societies based primarily on agricultural labour into commercial, manufacturing , and, eventually

industrial societies" (Mosco, 2009, p. 3). Smith's political economy of capitalism is also characterised by an interest in the totality of social relations that constitute economic, political, social, and cultural spheres of life. Societal relations are not just about politics and economics but also social and cultural. Political economists believe that there is a big picture of society that is worth understanding. In his conceptualisation of the political economy of capitalism, Adam Smith looked beyond the normal political and economic power relations to capture elements of the social, moral and cultural as well. "The political economist asks: How are power and wealth related and how are these in turn connected to cultural and social life" (Mosco, 2009, p. 4).

Another characteristic of Smith's political economy of capitalism, which has often been ignored, is its commitment to the principle of moral philosophy. In fact Adam Smith saw himself more as a moral philosopher than an economist. This is evident in that he favoured his first book "The Theory of Moral Sentiments" (1759) more than his second more popular "Wealth of Nations" (1776) in which he actually explained his theory of capitalism. In his first book Smith called attention to values of self-interest, materialism, and individual freedom that he said were contributing to the rise of commercial capitalism. Smith's moral philosophy approach supports the idea of extending the values of freedom and democracy beyond the political realm, that is participating in government, to all aspects of social, economic and cultural life where rights such as income equality and access to education etc. are guaranteed and respected.

In fact it has been argued that it was mainly because of Smith's commitment to the moral philosophy of political economy of capitalism that he did not favour a complete free market economy when it comes to some public services such as education. Hence he thought that government should not rely solely on private markets to provide education (Bachman, 2001).

The political economic organisation of socialism, anti-capitalism so to speak, on the other hand was founded by Karl Marx following the publication of the other ground-breaking book *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) he co-authored with Friedrich Engels. This book

criticised the unplanned and unregulated capitalism, and instead called for a planned and regulated system of producing and distributing goods and services to prevent the exploitation of the poor workers and consumers by the rich owners of capital or the means of production. Marx and Engels argued that unplanned capitalism must invariably collapse to give way to planned production. This can be considered as the effective beginning of the divide between the unplanned and unregulated neoliberal capitalist market economy on one hand and the planned and regulated socialist market economy on the other. Tensions between these two binary positions often exacerbate during periods of financial crisis. Marx was very critical of the so-called "dynamic forces within capitalism, and between capitalism and other forms of political economic organisation" (Mosco, 2009, p. 3). Marx's argument was motivated by the desire to understand the processes of social change in modernisation/industrialisation—which he believed would lead to socialism. Marx's philosophy is called dialectical materialism which is taken to mean that all growth and social change are the product of opposition forces competing for economic survival. His theory of value affirms that every good or service is worth the value of the labour put into its production. Marx was as a matter of fact totally opposed to the idea of exploitation of man by man in the name of capitalism.

Smith and Marx however agreed on the totality of social relations as they aimed to build on the unity of the political and economic by justifying their mutual influence and how they relate to wider social and cultural areas of life (Mosco, 2009). But they disagreed on the principle of moral philosophy. While Smith sees moral philosophy as enhancing the capacity of people to enjoy their right to participate not only in the political activities of their society but also in the economic, cultural and social ones as well, for Marx it meant viewing human labour simply as a marketable commodity.

#### **OTHER POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CAPITALISM THINKERS**

Other philosophers of political economy of capitalism as defined and defended by Adam Smith are as follows:

David Ricardo was a 19<sup>th</sup> century stockbroker who argued that international trade could flourish if all countries are encouraged to produce those products and services they are best at producing. This theory of comparative advantage, as it later came to be known, laid a very sound foundation for Smith's theory of an open and free market system that encourages specialization and division of labour.

Another political economy philosopher who closely followed Smith was Milton Friedman, winner of the 1976 Nobel Prize for Economics who disagreed with Keynes' idea of government intervention arguing that markets work best with the least government intervention. Friedman was in fact a firm realist who argued that the sole duty of business is to make profit. He is associated with monetarism, the theory that economies expand and contract largely due to the size of money in supply. Friedman is therefore critical of any attempt by the state to intervene to resolve a difficult economic climate by printing more money or making more money available in supply (Bachman, 2001).

Joseph Schumpeter for his part wrote in the 1930s and 1940s that economies grow by what he called a process of business cycle—birth, failure, and rebirth—making the case that occasional failure is both inevitable and important. Schumpeter emerged as one of the most influential economists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: his ideas of capitalism, also based on realism, became more popular in Silicon Valley, home of high technology US software companies such as Sisco Systems etc. that emerged with the rise of the internet in the 1990s. He stressed the importance of risk-taking in business. Schumpeter is also remembered as the political economist of capitalism who introduced the idea of micro credit in Bangladesh to help poor women, mostly largely exploited by men, including in Sweat shops, to start their own businesses. The scheme ensured that women did not need physical collateral to get a loan as they were too poor to own one; they instead asked to promise their honour. The women set themselves into cooperatives and group members were responsible for ensuring that loans taken through this scheme are paid back in time.

Arthur Laffer, who, like Friedman, is opposed to the Keynesian theory, believes that reducing taxes would take away money from

government and put it in the private sector. Laffer was very instrumental in Reagan's introduction of tax cuts in the 1980s. He is one of the supply-side economists who believed in boosting economic growth by cutting taxes on people doing business. It is based on the idea that less taxation would ensure that businesses make more profit and hence expand and engage in more economic activities that would boost economic growth. Other classical economists such as Jeffrey Sachs (2005) argue that economic growth will end poverty as wealth created in the process will be deployed to support activities that would in turn benefit the poor.

All the above philosophers of political economy who closely followed and supported Adam Smith's theory of free and open market capitalism developed arguments that resonated with certain eras and certain patterns of economic and political organization. These philosophers greatly contributed in offering slightly tweaked, albeit supportive, interpretations of Adam Smith's ideas of capitalism which contributed towards the great social transformations of market-based economies since the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Bachman, 2001).

#### OTHER POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ANTI-CAPITALISM THINKERS

Other thinkers of political economy whose views of anti-capitalism closely echoed Marx's philosophy are as follows:

John Maynard Keynes was the British economist who advised former US President Franklin Roosevelt that the way out of the Great Depression was to use government to boost employment even if that meant running a federal budget deficit. The Keynesian theory, as his economic philosophy came to be known, is basically based on the idea that increasing spending and consumption can stimulate economic growth. Keynes argued that governments should be bold enough to take risks to pump money into the economy to increase economic activity such as production, distribution and consumption, which in turn lead to more jobs and more money in the pockets of workers to spend. The Keynesian economic theory argues that state intervention was necessary to moderate "boom and bust" cycles of economic activity (Briggs, 2010, p. 1). He called for the use of fiscal and monetary policy

interventions to avert or minimize the adverse effects of economic recession and depression. Keynes' theory marked a dramatic shift in paradigm among economic thinkers at the time, especially the classical ones, who argued for minimal government interference in the markets. Keynes argued in his book "The General Theory of Employment, interest and Money" (1936); that demand, not supply, is the key variable governing the overall level of economic activity. Thus while Adam Smith was associated with ideas of classical or orthodox liberalism or capitalism, John Keynes was associated those of moderate liberalism or capitalism that can allow massive government intervention to increase economic activity that would create demand.

Following his death in 1946 aged 62, the success of Keynes' economic measures influenced many Western capitalist countries to adopt them in the 50s and 60s. In fact Keynesian policy interventions are still being adopted and implemented in developed, emerging and developing economics, especially during the 2007-2008 financial crisis. British Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne recently referred to Keynes in a speech announcing plans for substantial fiscal stimulus to address the worst effects of the 2008 recession drawing on the Keynesian economic theory.

However, despite its mass appeal internationally, Keynes theory met with some fierce criticisms in the 1970s as critics saw it as out of tune with the reality of economics. Friedman was particularly critical of Keynes' famous Philip's curve which predicted an inverse relationship between unemployment and inflation. It implied that unemployment could be reduced by government stimulus which will by all means force inflation down. However, Milton Friedman, one of Keynes fiercest critics, was not convinced. In 1968 he published a paper arguing that the fixed relations implied by the Philips curve did not exist. Friedman warned that sustained Keynesian policies could lead to both unemployment and inflation rising at once—a phenomenon that soon became known as "stagflation". In the early 1970s Friedman's prediction came to pass as "stagflation" hit both the US and Britain, with the situation even worsening following the 1973 oil crisis. These developments led to the then US President Reagan and British Prime

Minister Thatcher to embrace capitalism big time in the early 1980s eventually leading to what came to be known as the Neo-liberal Washington consensus. Free market capitalism was then declared as the only alternative to returning to economic development. Thatcher famously declared "There is no alternative" when she faced widespread opposition to her programme of radical neoliberal reform. As Chang and Grabel (2004, p. 1) put it "Thatcher's dictum captures the triumphalism, habits and closed mindedness with which the neoliberal orthodoxy has dominated discussions of economic policy around the world during the last quarter of a century". However, Chang and Grabel (2004) dismiss Thatcher's claim as fundamentally flawed as they proposed alternative approaches to "rapid economic development that is equitable, stable and sustainable".

The Chang and Grabel (2004) optimistic thesis seems to support Keynes's model of macroeconomics which, despite criticisms from economists like Friedman and few others, received very wide appeal and rallied many followers. One such follower is John Kenneth Galbraith who argues for decreasing expenditure of the nation's wealth on private consumption and increasing spending on public services. Arthur Okun, another thinker of the Keynesian school, who, unlike the others, actually served in the US administrations of JF Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson in the late 1960s, argues that higher levels of economic growth are accompanied by lower unemployment. Okun's theory implied that for every 2.2 percent of real growth in the gross national product (GNP), unemployment fell by 1 point.

There are also other political economy philosophers who do not necessarily see themselves as followers of the Keynesian theory but support the idea of at least some interventions to address social inequalities caused by market failures where only rich people can survive. One such theorist is Amartya Sen, the 1998 winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics, who calls for a policy that would moderate market failures with policies aimed at providing education and addressing social inequality. In his book "Development as Freedom" (1999) Sen sees development as the expansion of human capabilities rather than mere economic growth. Another contemporary thinker is Peter Singer (2002) who makes the case that anyone able to help the poor should

donate part of their income to aid poverty relief. However, Andrew Kuper (2002) is critical of the Singer approach to solve world poverty as being a dangerously individualist "practical ethics" and proposing a "political philosophy" approach as a different theoretical orientation for development and politics.

Another even more radical political economy thinker is Thomas Pogge who believes in global justice and goes further than Singer and Kuper to call on the world's rich to not only help others in need but also to refrain from contributing to the imposition of a global institutional order that impedes the fulfilment of their basic socio-economic rights (Pogge, 2005). Pogge's vision of development is more proactive and preventative as he believes that it is better to stop creating the harm that impedes global development for all instead of creating the harm and then reactively going to find a solution to resolve it. Pogge famously called on the affluent Global North not only to pay for the "harm" their forefathers inflicted on the Global South through slave trade and colonialism, but to stop inflicting this "harm" in its present form of neo-colonialism. He warns: "We are *harming* the global poor if and in so far as we collaborate in imposing an *unjust* global institutional global order upon them" (Pogge, 2005, p. 4). Shaw (2012, p. 172) notes that Pogge has a "very pro-active view on humanitarian intervention to alleviate or end global poverty" basing it on what he called the Kantian pacifist cosmopolitan thinking of the "do no harm" or refrain from conducting actions that "would violate the rights of people to live in peace and dignity". Pogge argues that while we are bound by moral duty to "rescue people from life-threatening poverty, it can be misleading to focus just on that when more stringent negative duties are also in play: duties not to expose people to life-threatening poverty and duties to shield them from harm from which we would be actively responsible" (Pogge, 2005, p. 5). Pogge notes that global inequality and poverty are the enduring features of global capitalism, Pogge's "do no harm" philosophy of political economy resonates with Tim Unwin's people-centred development, or Sen's development with a human face, that goes beyond Sach's thesis --benefits of economic growth trickling down to the poor to incorporate development that tackles inequality in society.

If we extend the contours of the "do no harm" thesis of Pogge beyond those of the political economy of pro-global people development to those of the political economy of pro-global people business or global public business we would see that it has resonance for the anti-capitalist philosophy of putting the interest of the public above the owners of capital whose sole interest is to maximise profit at the expense of the general public. Critics of the business press have accused it of complicity in the process.

Instead of following prescriptions advanced by cosmopolitans such as Kuper and Pogge, business journalists have unfortunately allowed themselves to be enlisted to help spread and promote the message of the free market neoliberal economic theory that emphasises profit over that of the public interest. Herman(2002), one of the founders of the propaganda model (1988) takes a swipe on the mainstream business press for their apathy and apparent double standards. He accuses them of being largely reluctant to challenge "labour bargaining power and inequality" and "often explicitly or implicitly denying that there were any losers" albeit "occasionally accepting that there were losers as well as winners" (Herman, 2002, p. 72). Herman argues that business journalists often use the "free trade" capitalist cliché to describe arrangements that were in the first place "about investor rights", not trade, and fail even to mention those investor rights (Ibid.). Herman writes further:

They have also persistently ignored the fact that intellectual property rights, like patents, are monopoly rights that interfere with the freedom of trade, and in urging the benefits of free trade to developing countries, the media have failed to acknowledge that all the great industrialised countries—including Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and United States—and in the Asian Tigers used protectionism for extended periods to help them compete globally before taking off into sustained growth (Herman, 2002, p. 72).

Herman's argument above suggests a kind of double standards of neoliberal capitalism. It is free investment, and not free trade, that is the freedom to invest as you want as long as you are making profit even at the expense of the rest of the public. It is okay and normal for

the developed nations of the North to protect their own products and services but not so for the developing countries who are coerced by institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to open their markets or die in poverty. Here it is the investor—the owner of capital—who calls the shot such as asking the developing countries through the World Bank and IMF to adopt an open market system that would ensure profits for him/her. Again if you translate this into the microeconomic context, it is the investor, for example the banker, who calls the shot such as asking the mortgage borrower to pay back the loan with a certain interest, and sometimes with some add-ons such as premium insurance protection. However, while all measures are taken to protect and maximise the investors' investment whether or not the mortgage products turned out to be defective for example subprime loans, the mortgage borrower's product is never protected against hidden agendas of the lending bank or other risks such as foreclosure. The question that comes to mind is: what is the role of the business press in the reporting that is skewed in favour of protecting and maximising the investor's mortgage product. The business press was hugely blamed for contributing to the 2008 financial meltdown in the US and Europe because it approached the mortgage story more as an investment than a consumer story. Yet, as Starkman (2012) admits, business journalists still seem to be in denial regarding their failure to serve as watchdogs over the suspect activities of financial institutions in the years leading to the 2008 financial crisis.

By way of concluding this chapter, I would like to make the argument that in order to strike a balance between the interests of the investor and the consumer, be it of mortgage products or not, the business journalist needs to move beyond the traditional boundaries of business journalism to public business journalism. As we have seen in my discussions earlier on in this chapter, while business journalism resonates more with classical or orthodox neoliberal capitalism that lays more emphasis on the idea of maximising profit or economic growth that would trickle down to the poor (Smith, 1776; Sachs, 2001), public business journalism, or business journalism with a critical political economy perspective, resonates more with the political economy of

anti-capitalism that lays more emphasis on the principles of equality (Sen,1999; Unwin, 2001), "do no harm" (Pogge, 2005) , and above all institutional development (Shaw, 2012).

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## Capitalist restructuring, intellectual labor and the material conditions for online journalism production

César Bolaño<sup>1</sup>

The objective of this paper is to discuss the general material conditions related to the deep transformations in capitalism that started with the structural crisis of the 1970's from a Marxist perspective. This has a decisive influence on the actions and thinking of journalists and other intellectuals in the present conditions of capitalist development.

The convergence of the information, telecommunication, and audio-visual sectors is an important point in the discussion of the most general structural changes associated with global capitalism when considering both the development of productive forces and especially the social relations. It is related to the troublesome internal contradictions of information in the capitalist mode of production, and strongly affects the fundamental mediating structure that guarantees the conditions of hegemony construction in monopoly capitalism in the twentieth century: the Culture Industry (Bolaño, 2015).

The central point is that mediation, in general, is produced not by the State apparatus, but by individual capitals in competition that employ a special kind of labor, the *cultural labor*, which is the real mediator since it is subsumed by a specific kind of capital: The one invested in the culture industries and the media. Journalistic production is a good example of it. Therefore, the mediating structure is doubly contradictory because it involves the basic labor-capital contradiction, which is, under these conditions, the support of the general (popular) culture-economy contradiction.

I discussed that rather deeply in the referred book. Now we can extend the idea considering the importance of intellectual labor – which obviously encompasses cultural labor – and its subordination to the

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process of capital accumulation. We can start with the example of online news, in the perspective of the political economy of communication and culture (PEC), and the inherently contradictory character of the Internet: A new mediating structure that, on the one hand, represents the interests of capital and the State (social control, advertisement, propaganda) and, on the other hand, opens possibilities for horizontal interaction.

Social media and the Internet are thus a new cultural form, different from the broadcasting system studied by Williams (1974) for example that compete with the old Culture Industry, deploying, nevertheless, similar functions and presenting similar contradictions. The main question in all cases is the incorporation of intellectual labor to capital in order to construct the new legitimizing system, in which technological information and competition invade not only the global labor process but also all spheres of life.

Journalists are part of a wide cultural working class that mediates, as a third element, political and economic powers and the masses. The above-cited double contradiction involves another kind of contradiction, a subjective one, installed in the conscience of the cultural worker, which conforms and limits his perceptions of the world. In the case of journalists, that contradiction can be easily found in the vast literature known as “journalism studies”. Its main categories – productive routines, noticeability criteria, agenda setting, etc. – incorporate an evident tension between the abstract liberal definitions and the concrete labor process organization.

In this paper, nevertheless, I will not discuss the latter. In another work (Bolaño, 2009) I supported that journalism studies must incorporate the advances of the political economy of communication and culture in order to develop its own critical explanatory potential. Here, I concentrate on the more general questions mentioned and in the PEC perspective.

## THE INTERNET AND THE PRESS

Some French and English authors when researching the Political Economy of Communication and Culture accept the idea of two general

models of culture industries organization: Editorial industries and flow culture. Editorial industries produce touchable goods like books, films, videos, CDs, CD-ROMs, DVDs, etc. The flow culture paradigm, on the other hand, is the radio and television sectors. In these cases, different cultural goods are articulated in a continuous and repetitive flow of programs that guarantees the fidelity of the audience. It means that part of the global audience can be attached to a radio or television chain, which can sell achieved audience ratings to buyers on the advertising market (Smythe, 1977; Bolaño, 2015).

In both cases, the diversity of techno-aesthetic standards (Bolaño, 2015) and subjects is reduced. However, a margin of experimentation is always necessary because of the aleatory character of the value of cultural goods. French economists of communication and culture generally think that this is due to the survival, in cultural industries, of certain characteristics of the traditional art market. In my view – which incorporates critically some ideas from the Latin American cultural studies, especially Barbero (1987; 2002) –, on the contrary, a special kind of labor is needed because of the symbolic mediation function of these industries, that is, cultural, conceptual or artistic labor.<sup>2</sup>

This particular kind of labor is subordinated to the technical and bureaucratic apparatus of the big business and the State, but in a limited way. In the case of a new media, like segmented TV (via cable, satellite, UHF, MMDS, etc.), there is a degree of consensus about the approximation of TV to the editorial logic, or, in other words, to a news industry market logic, which is often taken as an intermediate logic between the two main paradigms.<sup>3</sup>

Another important development in the communication and culture economy is that by the simple development of a new informational or communicational technology we cannot foretell anything definitive about the social form that it will effectively assume, or even if it will have any social relevance. The possibilities opened

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<sup>2</sup> The most important contributions from French school are those of Huet et. al. (1978), Flichy (1980), Miège et. al. (1986).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Miège et. al. (1986). Other industrial logics may be detected (Zallo, 1988; Bolaño, 2015) but it is not important here.

by technical developments are only one of the factors that must be considered if we try to trace realistic scenarios of the future. A specific invention may originate a completely new industry in opposition to the more traditional ones. Such is the case of mass consumption of TVs in the 50's, in opposition to the cinema industry. It may also destroy old dominant businesses. That is the case of the passage from silent cinema to spoken cinema and the development of color TV.

In the first case, we have a completely new specific technological trajectory. In the second, we saw the substitution of an ancient trajectory by a more efficient one. That seems to be/have been (it has already happened) the case in the accelerated development of CD-players, and in substitution of K7-players in automobiles. This same destructive element may be seen in the substitution of vinyl by compact discs, etc. When it comes to the Internet, we are talking about something substantially different from all past introductions of new information and communication technologies, because of its specific hybrid character.<sup>4</sup> It is not a new technology or a new industry competing with the older ones, but rather the result of the development of brand new technologies; its penetration and global expansion create a new space for human action and socialization on a global basis.

Capitalist development in the twentieth century brought us Internet and now we cannot live without it. It is not a new society, an "information society" opposed to capitalism, but the same old capitalist system reorganized, which demands more and more efficient tools in the form of production, stocks, and circulation of information. It is necessary to both accelerate capital rotation – and in doing so it facilitates the accumulation process – and ensure the new legitimating conditions of a class domination exerted over an increasing part of the

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<sup>4</sup> It is clear that also in the case of radio and telephone, the so-called “founder systems”, according to Flichy, technology was plenty of possibilities; any of those inventions served as mean of communication. In fact, for the telephone to be a two way means of communication (followed closely by TV), it was necessary to reach the definition of a financial model-imposing, budgetary or advertising for that only by charging the phone calls the development of telephone industry was possible. It has been said that cable TV and mobile phones would, somehow change this logical form, not in the sense of “inversion”, but in the sense of destabilization of the consolidated positions, practically in all sectors, exception made to the most traditional one: publishing, improved by the increase in demand due to the growth of TV and, very likely, Internet, as well.

global population. Information and communication, in its capitalist form, continue to serve capital, but now in a renewed way adequate to the needs of the conservative modernization, characteristic of the twentieth century final decades.

What would the Internet do for international news companies? The answer is immediate and very simple: search for profits. Telecom companies, cable operators, and the press are the kind of enterprises that have competitive advantages in terms of incorporated know-how; Internet opens up new disputes for the new information markets. Moreover, it seems that the circulation model of public information on the web is similar to an intermediate model between edition industries and flow culture. This is also the view of many communication economists in the case of the traditional press.

The discussion of financing models was very important before its stabilization for the international mainstream business, and it is still important in the local, national and non-mainstream level. In general, it is necessary to consider the mix of subscription, publicity and "revenue from interaction".<sup>5</sup> In each case, press companies will face competitors that have specific knowledge in the field, but the oligopolistic structure of the different markets seems to already be completely stabilized.

However, as we are talking about a new economic sector with technologies, specifically production and presentation techniques, not yet completely stabilized, the barriers to new competition are relatively reduced, especially in the case of competitors with financial power and successful partners in the field. Telecom companies, cable operators, and banks, for instance, are obviously potential competitors or partners. Potential competitors challenge even the traditional news business. Social media and other content producers, for instance, can attract a significant part of its public. On the other hand, it obliges large news

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<sup>5</sup> Advertising on line is yet something unknown, including the fragmentation of the audience in thousands of sites of every kind. In addition, the subscriptions system is questionable if the papers are not able to offer their public more than what they used to offer. To establish competition with the traditional press, the online papers must offer some additional offers, such as special interactive services, mainly the personalized ones, which select those of main interest of the user inside the great amount of information around the system. The social function of the online press seems to be at large extent, searching, selection, organization, classification, and presentation of information to the public specific segments, each one having specific interests. Actual news company advantages in this respect are due to specific *savoir-faire*.

companies to take a position in the new market, in which they have the advantage of presenting “credibility” and techno-aesthetic standards accepted by the captive public.<sup>6</sup>

## THE CULTURAL QUESTION

In conclusion, one may say that information, in its capitalist form, will not change its intrinsic characteristics through the development of information and communication technologies. On the contrary, it remains essential for the process of economic exploitation, political dominance, and ideological reproduction. Nevertheless, the Internet can also be seen as a carrier of a potential information democratization and a promoter of horizontal communication, which articulates civil society in a more independent and relatively invisible – to the capital and the State – manner.

The same factors that improve capital accumulation also open new possibilities for enacting transformation. However, due to the largest historical defeat suffered by the working class, the most important revolutionary force in the capitalist system, it is difficult to see progressive changes in this perspective. Workers are particularly affected by the present profound and implacable capitalist global restructuring. In spite of that, the Internet opens up the possibility for actions of solidarity by civil society and its organizations in the search for a new social order with more justice and autonomy in relation to the capital and the State.

In this way, the Internet may be seen as a promise of an interactive global communication, which may serve to a global solidarity community. On the other hand, it is true that the hacker culture, which favors non-economic actions, already exists, and that the Internet conception and expansion offers users some autonomy. We should not hold illusions about these promising possibilities since

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<sup>6</sup> The relative formal homogenization - and content homogenization -, which can be seen in all cultural industries, played its role. For example, the introduction of informatics and communication technology in the production process of the great press has been transformed into modification, which becomes the presentation of some papers about the same to the standardized Windows screen.

the asymmetries, structurally related to the constitution of the web, guarantee the existence of a complex hierarchy where those (individuals but mainly organizations) who detain economic, political or symbolic capital, dominate a larger space and can control the actions of everyone else. Furthermore, the hegemony of economic interests is growing fast – especially after the smart phones being everywhere – and, this is the main point, all its logic is essentially individualist and competitive.

There still exists, anyway, space for anti-hegemonic political actions on the web, due to the contradictory character of capitalist information argued elsewhere (Bolaño, 2015). Interaction, in particular, may be an essential element for the rescue of functions like agitprop and organization of independent non-official and non-capitalist press, linked to social movements. The essential point is the idea of "creating community", that is, articulating groups at a global level to strengthen local political actions. The relations between local and global spheres are a key element. When capital merges in the globalization process, which renders all national resisting actions ineffective, it is natural and necessary that resistance groups organize and act on a global level as well. The Internet facilitates this action. However, it will only have a real significance, different from a pure "symbolic guerrilla", if concrete local political elements are activated. Without such action, little efficacy will be attained.

The so-called virtual space does not substitute real space but adds a new dimension to it. In other words, virtual space is nothing but an extension of the real world, that is, an extension of the second nature. This brings us to the old question regarding the relationship between the potentialities of productive forces and the limits imposed by alienated production relations (within which technological progress is carried on). In this sense, it is possible to overcome the considerations on the dialectics "structural-determinations/historical-liberty", and put the problem in the core of the mode of production concept.

We may also see this problem as a question of convergence. Let us begin with cultural work. The cultural question may be considered in two different ways. First, we may see it in the sense of an opposition between economy and culture, taken as two separated spheres linked

by relationships of tension and even determination. From a general sociological perspective, cultural producers and artists are defined as intellectuals, in the traditional meaning, or as organic intellectuals, depending on the circumstances. In this case, cultural work has the ideological function of constructing class hegemony, or an alternative anti-hegemonic, class project of society.

The concept of "national popular culture", in my opinion, is marked by this first definition. The dominant class is one that is capable of transforming its particular interests into national interests and, by extension, its own particular class culture into a hegemonic culture, socially recognized as the norm, or as the superior standard at a national level. Culture can be seen, on the other hand, from an anthropologic perspective, as an ensemble of social practices - which includes economic practices -, as the culture produced by people. It is not necessarily nation-people, but rather community-people, auto-defined on the basis of profound cultural identities, which ensures *Lebenswelt* symbolic reproduction - to cite a term frequently used by Habermas (1981) - in an endogenous way.

In this sense, we may not, in principle, talk about a cultural producer separated from the community, or in cultural work as a special kind of work. Each community produces its own culture, but even here, we can talk about class cultures. Hobsbawn (1987), for example, shows very clearly the existence of a proletarian culture in the nineteenth century in England, as opposed to a hegemonic bourgeois culture. The same phenomenon can be observed, for example, among the anarchist workers that constitute the Brazilian proletariat before 1930.

In the twentieth century, a new occurrence deeply changes the question: Cultural Industry. Culture Industry creates a mass culture that is not bourgeois, but essentially popular, in the sense of a cultural form opposed to learned culture. Moreover, Cultural Industry creates popular culture, transforming it into mass culture, which, in turn, dissolves and subordinates all forms of class culture, from folklore to learned culture. All 'old' cultures must reorganize themselves as resistance cultures in relation to the new hegemonic mass culture. Mass Culture, whose main paradigm, until now, is generalist TV, the North

American music industry, and Hollywood cinema, developed itself as a response to the needs of the capitalist mode of production in the form that it is structured during the twentieth century.

The opposition publicity/propaganda is fundamental to understand the functionalities of Culture Industry, mass communication, and the media. Publicity is related to the capital accumulation process, capitalist competition, mass consumption, etc. while propaganda, on the other hand, is related to the ideological reproduction of the system defined as a State function, to the political sphere, to class domination, legitimization etc. (Bolaño, 2015). There is both solidarity and tension between these two functions of Cultural Industry, the specific capitalist form of cultural production, hegemonic in the social-economic conditions of monopolistic capitalism. In order to accomplish these two functions, that is, to efficiently mediate the relations between capital and State, on one side, and the mass (audience), on the other, the Culture Industry must also fulfill life world symbolic reproduction needs.

It is related to the fact that the “colonization” process that Cultural Industry itself exerts over *Lebenswelt* (Habermas, 1981) destroys mechanisms of internal symbolic reproduction. In this way, Cultural Industry unifies the two concepts of culture presented above by creating a national popular culture, in the anthropological sense, that strives not only to satisfy the needs of legitimating domination but also, and mainly, the manipulation of necessities, in order to ensure capital accumulation continuity.

To accomplish this third function, Cultural Industry must be capable of creating an empathy with the public, transforming it into their audience. The popular artist is the paradigmatic figure of the cultural worker. He is dispossessed in a double sense. On the one hand, he is separated from the public. To communicate with it, he is constrained to submit himself to the techno-economic apparatus that transforms him into a surplus-value producer. On the other hand, his work is subsumed to capital. Capital arrives thus to rationalize cultural production in a wide extension.

As a result, in cultural production, there are all the classical effects observed in the period of the working class constitution: labor

specialization, unemployment, the constitution of a reserve industrial army etc. The problem is that the subsumption process of cultural work in the capital has limits. We may discuss if the possibilities of a real subsumption in the cultural sectors are as radical as in the case of material goods. It is true that one can substitute a whole orchestra by a unique electronic tool, but the life world symbolic needs are so specific and complex that this substitution has found limits that, so far, could not be overcome. That prevents a larger expropriation of the popular artists' knowledge, different from what occurred with artisans during the beginnings of capitalist production.

Not all this is specific to artistic work, but it characterizes any cultural mediation work, like journalism, teaching, etc. So what may we say about intellectual work in general?

## INTELLECTUAL LABOR

The separation between manual and intellectual work is much older than capitalism, nevertheless the starting point of capitalist production is precisely the expropriation of the artisans' knowledge because the medieval artisans' system of commodity production partially erased this old separation. In the capitalist manufacture period, that preceded the Industrial Revolution, the capital could promote the reposition of that pragmatic separation by articulating both manual and intellectual operations in its own interior. In other terms, the separation acquires then a specific character because it is not limited anymore to the macro-social sphere anymore, but happens inside the working process and the coherence of the whole is given by capital itself. It alienates the manual worker by preventing him from using all his mental capabilities or having a complete perception of the production process. Even the intellectual worker is alienated because he loses his capacity of acting directly on the means and objects of work. It also atrophies part of his creative human potentialities.

Marx treated the ominous consequences of the division of labor in details, concentrating his analysis on manual work. We know very well about the injuries that this division causes in the case of the individual worker, deforming his body and consciousness, making him

coarse; at the same time, the collective worker became more efficient, enriching capital. A similar process affects intellectual and bureaucratic workers, promoting other forms of stress and atrophy, other kinds of diseases and alienation. That becomes very clear in the present since the capitalist expanded usage of conceptual, control, and organizational work deeply modifies all the capitalist social structure.

In general terms, knowledge is no more than the property of individual intellectual workers – as, in the past, the knowledge of the complete labor process was a property of the artisans. In the manufacturing system, capital expropriated the artisans' knowledge, by the action of other intellectual workers that developed machine tools by which knowledge is transferred from man to an element of constant capital. The same now happens with intellectual workers through software development. This is convergence.

The software is the form 'discovered' by the system to incorporate mental work, to standardize it and to exploit its potentialities. It guarantees the transformation of knowledge into an element of constant capital. The present subsumption process of conceptual, intellectual or bureaucratic work in the capital is historically specific. It acquires a new push and attains a quantitative and qualitative superior stage with the development of informatics and telematics. At the same time, the introduction of informatics in the traditional labor process and the development of robotics provoked an increasing intellectualization of the traditional working class.

Convergence tends, therefore, to the development of cultural and intellectual production in general. Such convergence, on the other hand, extends itself to a variety of sectors of traditional working class. In all cases, it involves the same questions on mediation and limits discussed above when analyzing the cultural work problematic. Unfortunately, it turns out that this movement is not happening in the direction of overcoming alienated work. On the contrary, what we are seeing is a change in favor of the working class alienation: At this point the capital extracts not only the physical and manual capacities of workers, but also their mental energy in order to produce plus-value. It essentially changes the social structure and the basic capitalist social relation.

Cesareo's (1974) concept of 'partial intellectuals', under these conditions, does not reflect completely what is happening. It is not simply the overcoming of the old style intellectual and its substitution by a new alienated intellectual. What we see now is an extended intellectual labor subsumption, linked to a general intellectualization of all labor processes. That is possible, obviously, because of the deskilling, fragmentation, and all the old tendencies of the industrial revolution, acting now on the intellectual labor.

In a conjuncture marked by a broad substitution of manual workers by robots, capital demands the extraction not mainly of physical, but mental energies from the working class instead. It promotes hypertrophy of certain intellectual capabilities in detriment of others, and new forms of alienation; a deeper social exclusion, complete misery of those who do not adapt to the changes, and at the same time an increase in unemployment of skilled labor. In summary, all the social (and mental) sicknesses that characterizes the end of the century: Spiritual misery, insecurity, violence on all levels, sense of loss, drug consumption, alcoholism, micro-social forms of corruption, etc.

It is a classic situation: (Re) constitution of a working class (now intellectualized in the sense mentioned above), whose subsumption to capital only grows parallel to the formation of an industrial reserve army adequate to the new system's structure. Consequently, we can see increasing relative misery, wealth concentration, capital centralization and wider competition expansion. In all these trends, the twenty-first century seems a lot like the nineteenth century: (Neo) liberalism is the predominant ideology, Keynesian State interventionism decreases, and the Welfare State is reduced.

The general law of capital accumulation imposes itself impetuously. All this confirms Marx's prognostics (discredited during the expansive post World War II period) once again. However, it does not mean a simple return to the past. All the central problems posed by the monopolistic system in the twentieth century remain the same. Up until now, new forms of general social and economic regulation are not capable of creating the conditions for a global development.

Cultural Industry begins, in the transition period from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, linked to what Habermas (1961)

labelled the 'public sphere structural change', that is, the sterilization of the characteristics of the bourgeois public sphere that made it critical and developed its important political action capacities. This critical bourgeois public sphere is substituted under Monopolist Capitalism by a form of manipulative (publicist or propagandistic) communication. It is a reaction against the potential explosive character of the old public sphere, which was increasingly present in the transition from liberal to a massive democratic State that eliminates the restrictions to non-proprietary and non-educated class participation in public debates and decisions.

Now, we can see a new restructuring of the public sphere that regains the potential critical and excluding characteristics of its classic bourgeois constitution. At the same time, it maintains and deepens for most of the global population, the paradigms of mass culture and national State. The Internet is the most important example of such tendency. Initially regarded as a revolutionary structure, non-hierarchic, of communication between free and equal individuals, it turns out to be a space of a complex and extremely asymmetric ensemble of agents. In such space, the real capacity of communication and relevant access to information depends precisely on the elements that restricted the participation of masses to the nineteenth century's public sphere: Economic (property) and political power and knowledge.

The present transformation of all the communication system tends not to a greater democracy, but rather to the constitution of a world where a process of concentration of power makes 'communicative action' and the critical thinking possible for specific parts of global population. The majority, on the contrary, remains excluded and submitted to the illusion of a periodic participation in the electoral process, which is increasingly innocuous. Material and symbolic production converge and show us the current tendency of a complete capitalist world. In this new situation nothing escapes from the commodity form.

#### THE CASE OF JOURNALISM

The essence of the problem is the tension in the consciousness of the individuals between the professional liberal definitions and the

concrete organization of the labor process that one can read in many works in the field of journalism studies. The lack of a political economy of communication and culture – the main theoretical perspective adopted in this paper – reduces the explanatory force of these studies and its intrinsically critical contribution.

Journalists experience today a radical example of the processes above discussed. We are now more than 30 years away from the beginnings of the introduction of informatics in press production, and the present development of writer robots, which turn their work partially redundant, among other scary engines, put them in one of the most fragile positions of the intellectual working class in the current restructuring process.

The good news is that the development of communication and information technologies shows, nevertheless, the possibility for overcoming the division between work and life. In other words, it makes the alienation process deeper, but it also demonstrates that a real transformation in a non-capitalist sense is up to date, especially considering the degree of labor socialization that the changes in the productive sphere present.

In a situation where material needs are potentially satisfied, it opens liberating possibilities that we could not imagine before. In this sense, it is necessary to fight not only for the socialization of free time, but also for the self-organization of free time by the working class, against the individualistic and dividing tendencies of its capitalist management.

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## The challenge of audience participation for regional media: professional and organisational strategies for community development

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### **Abstract**

The communication and management activities on social media included under the Anglophone term “Community Management” represent a vital activity for the present and future of news organisations. It is in that context that this chapter analyses the current development of the evolving professional profile of the “community manager”, taking as case study the most representative public and commercial regional media in the Basque Country and Catalonia. The main objectives are to determine the profile, routines and attitudes of community managers in these media, and to understand what kind of two-way dialogue occurs between these corporations and their audience from the point of view of the professionals responsible for the area of interactivity management.

### **Keywords**

Community Management; audiences; media; Basque Country; Catalonia.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter pays attention to the current community management-related strategies of the most relevant Basque and Catalanian public and private regional media. These media have been selected on account of their level of diffusion, as well as their greater closeness to the public and the society they belong to.

As with nationwide media around the world, regional news organisations have seen the need to introduce professional profiles with a full-time commitment into the newsroom with a deep understanding of online and multiplatform tools – chats, blogs, microblogging, social networks, and so on. Regional media have thus widely accepted and are calling for user-generated-content (Harrison, 2010, pp. 243-256). The rationale behind this is that their brand will be solidly reinforced amongst the public and in the company itself, and that a picture of “concern” for the audience’s thoughts and feelings will be conveyed. This rationale seems to be much stronger in regional than in nationwide media, due to their closeness to the society in which they are inserted.

According to our main theoretical framework, changes in communications at the beginning of the new millennium brought the figure of the public as an active participant – the active audience, *User Generated Content* (Harrison, 2010), *prosumer* or *Aca/Fan* (Jenkins, 2006). Ever since *Time* magazine published its now legendary front

page in 2006 showing the most influential person of the year as the surprising and eye-catching “You”, it is necessary to consider that the axis of communication has changed, from vertical to horizontal. There are several ways of putting a name to this change in different areas and more specifically in the area of information, where it receives names like *public journalism* or *participative journalism*. This process of media convergence, coinciding with some of the most relevant technological changes, saw the birth of the social networks Facebook (2004) and Twitter (2006). As Boczkowski (2004, p.1) observed with the example of the blank page dedicated to the reader of *Publick Occurrences* (1690), which could well have been the first American newspaper, the intention of getting the public to take part is not new. However the technological possibilities are.

The user becomes a participant, a co-author. The companies involved, whether in the area of entertainment or information, react by taking part in the matter and turning a potential problem into an opportunity. The dogma “we write, you read” is no longer valid. The new situation is a challenge for the role of the professional journalist as a *gate-keeper* (Hermida & Thurman, 2008). At certain moments publications are saturated by the volume of traffic with the readers; those that create problems in virtual communities are called *trolls* (Hardaker, 2010; Shepard, 2011).

The company must somehow manage the amateur contents that reach the newsrooms. In this respect, academic environments have also been sensitive to the increasing opportunities offered by audience involvement in the media. This assessment becomes particularly evident when it comes to: a) “participatory news” (Domingo, 2011; Singer *et al.*, 2011); b) how journalists exploit social networking activity (Paulussen, 2008; Hermida, 2011); or c) the influence of “public journalism” or “citizen journalism” (Heikkilä *et al.*, 2014) and online user generated-content in journalists’ routines (Wardle & Williams, 2010; Harrison, 2010).

Nevertheless, what we will be looking at here is the processes by which public participation is handled in a range of media and the perceptions of those community managers of their work, which involves

outwardly and inwardly monitoring those comments and debates. With regard to perceptions of the active audience that gets involved, most recent studies overlook the meaningfulness of the public's participation for the actors, moving no further than in-depth analysis of the types of comments received in programmes (Helle & Arts, 2012) or examining the ways journalists handle information on social networks (Marwick & Danah, 2011; Broersma & Graham, 2012; Opgenhaffen & Leen, 2015).

The increasing modes of interaction offered by the integration of established media and the social web have been a vital driving force, improving citizens' possibilities of getting involved in the public domain and having a public voice (Couldry, 2008). Likewise, in the context of ongoing discussions of increased participation, what stands out is the impact this is having on established, representative structures for organising media as a public good. Therefore, it is vitally important to grasp the routines for managing such participation on media platforms of different types.

While it is true that the concept of "community manager" is still evolving, it has already been defined as a professional who listens to the online community (social networks, spaces open for comments) and relates to the latter on behalf of the company, while integrating these spaces into business strategies by informing the company about what is being said about it in the digital world (Cobos, 2011). That is, it introduces the voice of customers to the company and, at the same time, it promotes the news media brand (Greer & Ferguson, 2011). Nonetheless, it can be noted that the new professional profiles have still grown very little in the media analysed (Bakker, 2014).

Since the social media manager works as a strategist who designs the general approach of the company's digital presence, another key question when considering the need for a community manager in a company is the ROI (*Return on Investment*). As many actions do not necessarily have an immediate repercussion, it is important to remember that reputation and social media virality are part of a long-term project.

## 2. METHODOLOGICAL OUTLINE

According to the theoretical framework outlined above, the study explained in this chapter aimed to describe the social and professional profile of the community managers currently working for the most important Basque and Catalanian regional media. In addition, the study considered the rules by which the Basque and Catalanian media regulate the public's participation, the spaces used and offered for that purpose and the advantages and disadvantages of 2.0 communication actions from the point of view of the selected media.

In total, six media were selected, three Basque – Deia (a private press company), Goiena Taldea (a private multimedia group: press, radio, TV and online) and Euskal Irrati Telebista (a public broadcaster) – and three Catalanian – Corporació Catalana de Mitjans Audiovisuals (CCMA) (a public broadcaster), El Punt Avui (a private press company) and Diari ARA (a private press company).

Qualitative methods such as non-participant observation and questionnaires were used to obtain detailed information on the habits, attitudes and viewpoints of the community managers.

The script of the interview, included at the end of the chapter, was sent to the *community managers* of the six regional Basque and Catalanian media, as indicated below. The professionals interviewed were those whose position most closely resembled that of a community manager: Josetxu Rodriguez, editor-in-chief of Deia.com; Lontzo Sainz, Social Media Manager of EITB; Iban Arantzabal, organisational director of the Goiena Group; Montse Enrubia, in charge of Social Media at the CCMA's News Services; Andreu Mas, Director of Digital Content at *El Punt Avui*; and Oriol Colominas, Director of Social Media at the Diari ARA.

The same questions were used for the six media analysed to obtain accurate, first-hand information concerning the profile of this new professional and the management of the social networks they carry out. As can be seen (See appendix), special emphasis was placed on the management of social networks to discover whether or not the role of community manager exists, and if so, what its articulation will be in

the present and in the future (questions 1, 2, 3, 6). The personal profile is addressed in question 4. Questions are also asked about how the community manager reinforces and monitors the network (questions 5, 7, 8). The relationship with the business strategy (question 10) and the analysis of results (question 9) completes the interview (the whole questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1). The interview questions paid special attention to Facebook and Twitter since they are the social media platforms preferred by the media analysed in this chapter.

Face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted between April and October 2017. The first ones took place in the online newsrooms of the newspaper *Deia*, the Basque Public Radio and Televisión EITB –in the part of the newsroom working for *Eitb.com*–. Telephone interviews were conducted in Goiena and the Catalanian media, while the interviewees were at the company's headquarters; the interviews were carried out with a telephone in speaker mode and recorded as such. After all the data were collected, the interviews were transcribed and coded using the key word in each question of the previously designed survey.

### 3. CASE STUDIES DESCRIPTION

We will begin with the newspaper *Deia*, the paper version of which appeared at the end of the nineteen seventies during the period of transition to democracy. The online version appeared at the end of the nineties and was understood to be a necessity, quite apart from considerations of profitability. *Deia*, whose headquarters is currently in Bilbao (Biscay), belongs to the company Grupo Noticias which is also responsible for the diffusion of *Diario de Noticias* (Navarre), *Noticias de Alava* (Alava) and *Noticias de Gipuzkoa*, as well as owning the radio station *Onda Vasca*. The convergence between paper and the web has been gradual although total integration has not yet been reached. The brand is important for *Deia*, as both the online and paper versions belong to the same company though internally they recognise that the web version is outstripping the paper version in media strategy. This vision conditions the way activity on web 2.0 is understood, as we will

see later on. The website *Deia.com* has about 50,000 readers every day, according to its manager, Josetxu Rodriguez.

Next, there is Euskal Irrati Telebista (EITB – Basque Radio Television, which includes the television stations ETB 1, 2, 3, Canal Vasco and ETB Sat, as well as several radio stations: Euskadi Irratia, Radio Euskadi, Radio Vitoria, Gaztea, EITB irratia, etab,), whose broadcasts use both Spanish and Basque (Euskara). EITB, together with the Catalanian Televisió de Catalunya (TVC), were pioneers in Spain as autonomous networks, being the first to receive broadcasting licenses at the beginning of the eighties. EITB.eus is the main website of the Basque Group, and it has been considered the main axis of the convergent processes carried out by the group over the last decade to promote more efficient multiplatform content creation and dissemination processes (Larrondo *et al.*, 2012).

Goiena Servicios de Comunicación (*Goiena Komunikazio Zerbitzuak Koop. E.*) is a local communications group. It was created in 2000, although we can date its communications origins back to the birth of the weekly press publication *Arrasate Press* in autumn 1988 in Arrasate-Mondragon, the main town of the Alto Deba region in the province of Guipuzcoa, the Basque Country (Larrañaga, 2008, pp. 93-108). Goiena, which is based on a cooperative type of organisation (not strictly private or public capital), created products exclusively in the Basque language and of a regional nature (aimed mainly at the regional population). It is very close to the citizens and its activity is divided into four specific media:

- *Goienkaria*, a weekly regional publication issued on Mondays and Fridays (2000), whose origin dates back to 1988. Every week 19,000 copies are distributed free of charge in nine towns, and on Mondays another 5,000 are distributed to subscribers.

- *Goitb* or *Goiena Telebista*, a local television channel (1990). It broadcasts 55 hours a week and its production is mainly its own.

- *Arrasate Irratia*, a local municipal radio (1992). It broadcasts 50 hours a week.

- *Goiena.net*, an information portal on Internet (2003). This portal also participates in the management of the Internet site Sustatu.

com, together with the company CodeSyntax from Eibar (the Basque Country).

The Goiena Group has four offices located in four different places: two of them are in Mondragon, one in Bergara and another in Aretxabaleta. In its field of action in the Alto Deba region it reaches as many as 65,000 inhabitants. The company currently has 52 employees. It is a multimedia group and its journalists elaborate their reports for any of the media mentioned above. Goiena was the first Basque information service to incorporate blogs in February 2005.

The *Corporació Catalana de Mitjans Audiovisuals* (CCMA – Catalan Media Corporation) is the public radio and television company of Catalonia, which includes *Televisió de Catalunya* (TV3, Canal 33, 3/24, Super3, Esport 3) and *Catalunya Ràdio*, amongst other radio stations. In 2007 it changed its name (*Corporació Catalana de Ràdio i Televisió*). The CCMA has its own website, which houses different channels and media, including the respective live broadcasts (*En Directo*) of those channels and media as well as the streaming option “3 a la carta”.

*El Punt Avui* appeared in June 2011, resulting from the merger of the newspapers *Avui* (which came out in 1976 and was acquired in 1979 by the *Hermes Comunicació* publishing company) and *El Punt* (1979), two historical Catalan newspapers. Following the merger the newspaper was expected to have the third largest sales in Catalan, after *La Vanguardia* and *El Periódico*. *El Punt Avui* complements its textual tradition with television broadcasts that can be accessed online.

The *Diari Ara* appeared in 2010, on the initiative of Oriol Soler (Grup Cultura 03, nowadays Grup Som) and Ferran Rodés. Its vocation was to be politically independent and to provide an answer to new social concerns. It has an integrated newsroom. The group includes the ARA Llibres publishing Company and several magazines in Catalan (*Sàpiens*, *Descobrir Catalunya*, *Cuïnes*, *Altair*). It receives support from different sources, including the Fundació Carulla, as well as from independent creators and journalists (Carles Capdevila – now deceased, Albert Om, Toni Soler, Antoni Bassas, amongst others).

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Social media main activities

Deia's activity on web 2.0 is based on three Twitter accounts and the management of a centralised Facebook page. As Deia's editor explains, "information is posted throughout the day on Twitter and the Facebook page, and it can be seen that there is a journalist or a personal behind it, responding, making surveys and so on".

In the case of EITB, a Social Media Plan has been in existence for the last ten years, along with a guide to managing personal brands for communication professionals. On a day-to-day basis, the group has a team formed of three people and a manager (Lontzo Sainz) who manage corporate accounts on social media and also the accounts of the main brands and programs (news and entertainment). In addition to corporate accounts, the EITB communications group has thematic communities on Facebook on subjects like Euskara, culture, sports, news and gastronomy. Local blogs and photos of villages and towns sent in by users have a place in these thematic communities, together with news or entertainment content concerning those villages and towns. The team's profile as content generators thus makes it possible to generate posts in local blogs and adapt each message to the characteristics of those communities. The corporate accounts on Television (@euskaltelebista), News (@eitbNoticias @eitbalbisteak), Sport (@eitbkirolak) or Culture (@eitbKultura) are managed by the colleagues at eitb.eus who generate content for those thematic channels.

In Goiena's case, they have opted for the microblogging platform Twitter to which they dedicate most time within their business strategy. On the other hand, during 2013 four more professionals began to work, thus reinforcing the blog section. Not much effort has been dedicated to Facebook to date. This could be a mistake to be corrected in the future, according to the interviewee from this medium, Iban Arantzabal.

There is no Community Manager profile at the CCMA, instead there is the *Noves Finestres* (new Windows) section, headed by Judit Argila and including Montse Enrubia (News) and a journalist from

Sports. Its function consists in implementing these tools and tendencies throughout the newsroom, so that use of the digital field becomes a task for the journalists themselves. Sometimes this is a question of “preaching” as the staff is mature and some old dynamics are still followed. The members of the *Noves Finestres* team proceed from the digital environment or else they are recycled journalists – there is a bit of everything. They are slightly younger than the rest of the staff (around 30 years old, none reach the age of 40). The generational difference might be a problem, but the CCMA management insists on using social media. The tasks of *Noves Finestres* include training and the application of protocols to ensure that everyone acts in the same way, since it is believed that it should not be noticeable that different people are involved. The main challenges in the future are to open up an Instagram account, a communications channel on Whatsapp, and Messenger.

The aim on social media is to have a channel for direct communication with users, capture digital traffic, and increase digital traffic on screen and in digital format. The “second screen” is being promoted, more for fiction and documentaries than for news programs. The Twitter account of the news channel 24 horas (3/24) started in August 2007. The aim is to have a presence on these news platforms, generate traffic, get closer to the spectator and also to carry out the work of linguistic normalisation that is a characteristic of the channel.

Under normal conditions Twitter serves for breaking news (e.g. about fires), while Facebook is for providing a more social appearance because if the news stories do not generate interest, there is no traffic. Normally, the medium’s presence on social networks is 80% on Facebook and 14% on Twitter; now (October 2017, following the referendum on independence) Twitter use has grown significantly (by as much as 30%); “we have more followers on the Twitter accounts than before”, according to Enrubia. In any case, breaking news is always posted on social media, and directly on the web.

Facebook has a more social use. “We don’t have blogs”, observes Enrubia, instead there are analysis sections. Journalists have a personal account on Twitter, but not on Facebook.

The Catalan newspaper *El Punt Avui* uses social media like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to increase its community of digital readers. By means of this activity, traffic is directed from social media to the medium's digital edition, enabling it to gain new readers. This medium was initially reticent about taking a position on the digital market and even today considers that the media in general have not been able to come up with a formula enabling users and advertising clients to evaluate the important gate-keeping role of the medium and the journalist. Initially blogs played an important role for this newspaper, but they have been displaced by microblogging. At this medium, there are approximately forty corporate social media that are managed by a small group of journalists. The medium's journalists are monitored from these corporate accounts and the journalists are able to monitor the brand's accounts, thus producing a multiplying effect in both directions.

The *Ara* medium emerged with the clear goal of being both a digital and a printed newspaper and of having a strong presence in the two news fields. According to the explanation given by this medium, that is why social media form part of its idiosyncrasy or DNA. "Facebook is the main source of the medium's social traffic, so we are able to make a good analysis of what is shared. In addition, it serves for creating and consolidating thematic communities around the newspaper". In the case of Twitter, this serves for spreading all of the content they generate, as there are active profiles for all the sections. The blogs on *Ara* are quite specifically for the readers. It is the latter who create and feed the content. In fact, according to this medium, that is the main path, together with comments and direct dealings with subscribers, for generating community around the brand.

#### 4.2. Vision and management of activity on social networks

In the case of *Deia*, although this company is part of a media group and the website has a "common core" aimed at making use of synergies of content, *Deia.com* operates as an independent website. *Deia*, which is one of the strongest media in the group, posts content which is accessible to the rest of the media in a common digital management

facility, though each medium aims to maintain a “hyperlocal” focus. The same goes for the social networks. The social media strategy needs to individually attend to or manage the social platforms of each medium or brand within the group, basically because the group is looking for the “hyperlocation” of each brand. In the case of Web 2.0, this hyperlocation becomes a key requirement for getting closer to readers.

On the other hand, the group does not have a professional or a group dedicated to the management of its journalistic activity on the 2.0 media or platforms. More specifically, Deia does not have a “community manager” to manage the communication tasks via social media. In this respect, its activity on Facebook and Twitter was promoted by the editor-in-chief of the website who is still today one of the most active professionals when it comes to strengthening and managing 2.0 activity.

Social media activity needs time and is added to the daily list of tasks of the web team, which once again goes to show that the work of journalists has become more and more complex over time. The Web 2.0 gives us as much work to do as the work and posting of content on the website (Josetxo Rodriguez, editor-in-chief of Deia, 2017).

Today everyone in the web newsroom is aware of the importance of Journalism 2.0, though it could not be foreseen some years ago and for the time being resources have not been provided to manage this specific activity: “We are the same people working online, but then and now we have different websites which are also hyper-demanding”. All of this, together with the growing convergence amongst the printed edition, the website and the group’s radio (Onda Vasca) means a notable increase in the daily demands placed on the online journalists. This workload means that in many cases not enough attention is paid to the medium’s 2.0 platforms. There is a lack of personnel and responsibility is spread out in many cases.

According to the Deia interviewee, Josetxo Rodriguez, over time some of the fundamental doubts about journalism have been cleared up – such as, for example, the need to prioritise content over other aspects such as the type of format. The doubts that exist today regarding the best internal strategy for meeting the challenge of Web 2.0 will also be cleared up in coming years.

We do not intend to create a specific work group in the future for the 2.0 task because we understand that the Deia team has to provide an outlet for the content through multiple channels (paper, radio, website and social networks), which implies convergence and a tendency towards polyvalence in the work of journalists. We thus believe that our 2.0 activity is integrated in the content structure of the medium and the news group, and is not separated from or detached from the journalistic activity (Josetxo Rodriguez, editor-in-chief of Deia, 2017).

Rodriguez explains that most of the journalists working in the newsroom do not have a 2.0 mentality and have not assimilated the importance of social media journalism, although the workload is what is holding back their dedication and involvement on a daily basis.

The management of comments merits a special mention, since Deia.com has decided to keep them open, while the rest of the media in the group require prior registration for the publication of comments. Deia has a main control mechanism: other users sound the alert about content, which is then restricted by the newsroom or by a comments manager who can eliminate it directly.

In the case of the Basque Public Radio and Television EITB, as the Social Media Manager Lontzo Sainz observes, the strategy on social networks is based on two fundamental reasons: as a means of managing the brand and being present among people, and of answering and attracting an audience to the service maintained by the communication group in the area of Internet.

It is not possible to do one without the other. We understood that we could not go to the audience without attending to people, without being receptive and actively listening; and nor could we only listen actively without forgetting about the business. At this moment, the two parts are highly satisfactory and traffic coming from the social networks towards the EITB Group is around 15%. It is also a continuous source of communication with our public and a very effective way of generating brand reputation (Lontzo Sainz, EITB's Social Media Manager, 2017).

Regarding the profile of the Community Manager, Sainz is responsible for all “the Social Media issues”. He is also in charge of amplifying the blog platform, managing the content generated by the users, the automated content (time, traffic) and the bulletins. As Sainz stresses, there is ample documentation regarding the profile of the

community manager in the media. For example, he mentions that the AERCO (Spanish Association of Online Community Managers) defines this as a professional with specific skills and knowledge: capacity of communication; knowing the product, the tool; knowing how to write, having the capacity to relate to people; knowing where your client is and treating him/her as such, etc. A whole series of conditions that in some cases are met and in others are not. Yet there is no doubt that the community manager must be a person who likes the medium, the Internet, the applications and the rest. Above all, he or she must be a person who is interested, has the capacity to analyse and is undergoing constant training.

As Sainz explains in the interview, EITB's Social Media Plan has more than one hundred pages: "The social media plan talks, above all, about pure business. For us it is very important to measure the impact; you'd better know what you are providing and follow up on it".

EITB has had an established strategy on social networks for four or five years. At first, they used "good will", but there was a clear lack of strategy and intentionality. In many cases, things were done without respecting the rules of use, for example on Facebook where some profiles were created for specific TV or radio program brands. The management of the social networks at EITB started when a series of good practices were established, using a Social Media Plan, which included a part on training "so that people (the professionals in the group) would know what social networks were and that the Group had decided to operate with them and that they should make a correct, appropriate and satisfactory use of the social networks".

As for the management of social networks, Saenz explains that one of the most important parts is planning: "Nothing can be left to improvisation; what you are going to do each day and when you know that an event is going to happen, how to address it and with what resources". Another important question is the follow up, knowing how to measure, direct and redirect. And the third important question is to know what is being faced. A lot is said about crisis management, knowing what can happen and as it does, it is necessary to address it, to be constant and to respond. In a word, to be "aware".

It is difficult to predict what will happen in the future and with respect to the presence of the EITB Group on the social networks. As long as it is 15% of my business, I will try to dedicate the time and resources required, keeping well away from those opinions that state that it is no more than a passing fad. For the moment, we can see that the presence of the Group on the social networks is a business and is also solid. The results vouch for us and allow us to be optimistic for the future (Lontzo Sainz, EITB's Social Media Manager, 2017).

With respect to the specific social networks Twitter and Facebook, Sainz comments that nowadays there is more “return” on Facebook, though Twitter has grown enormously over the last year and a half. Each of them is different however. Facebook is asynchronous and Twitter is immediate.

Generally speaking, the media professionals focus on managing the social networks while they are at work, though there is also a bit of everything here too. Sainz also highlights the need to differentiate between the personal Twitter account and the corporate account, especially when giving an opinion. In this respect, the experience and results are classified as positive.

With respect to the control carried out by the medium itself of user-generated content, it is understood that there are basic rules of behaviour, which must be respected. Initially nothing is removed, no content is deleted. This is done afterwards. As happens at Deia, EITB also has a non-automated control process; occasionally other users report inappropriate content. It is important that the “offender” should be identified and expelled. Moreover, as Sainz observes in the case of this medium, such management is even more important as it is a public body, and the rule “don't feed the troll” is applied in order to protect the community.

Sainz highlights two changes with respect to the productive routines derived from the social media strategy. An internal work group was created. It carried out an initial study to observe and analyse what was going on in other media (BBC, RTVE, TV3, CNN). A group of people was also trained that would be dedicated to managing the digital identity of the group.

In the case of Goiena and its vision and management of social network activity, this communications group understands that use of

social media brings many advantages. These benefits include the fact that people receive news that interests them and, especially, a relationship is established with them. They mention that they have received some complaints through the social networks which would have been lost had it not been for these platforms. If there were a drawback, it would be the lack of time to deal with all the comments and messages but, in general, they emphasise that it is an excellent tool for receiving the opinions of the public and for distributing highly relevant questions and news.

This group started to use the social media in its cooperative as soon as they were actively implemented in Basque society: starting in 2007 new accounts were opened, participation policies were drawn up and although this was originally managed by three or four members of the company, it was gradually extended to the rest of its staff. This started what was to be an experimental phase for the young cooperative. Later on, they also started to distribute news on Twitter, the latest social network to join the day-to-day life of the journalist. Therefore, no specific strategy was established for the use of these social platforms, rather it gradually took shape as the journalists became familiar with them and started to use the new tools as something of their own, although an agreement was reached in 2013 to establish a series of rules for their use.

Indeed, there have been changes during recent years. I would say we are more digital now. Our journalists, who can be considered citizens of the world right now by the way, are now more used to the new digital tools when compared to two years ago. In fact, the world is becoming reconciled with new technologies and young people have a significant impact on that, they are driving it and it seems that this trend will continue along that path. Young people are propelling this and the most experienced staff at the newsroom have to adapt. We have taken some steps in that direction. Internal training has been of great importance, but the significance of self-training cannot be denied. The latter has been fostered with specific training done outside the newsroom and, for instance, fewer colleagues have received the html knowledge course. We still think that more than a single figure, we need shared work dynamics in the newsroom. It is true that each of us has to take care of their digital brands and that's what we are doing on Twitter and Facebook in particular, but not exclusively (Iban Arantzabal, Managing Director of Goiena, 2017).

Goiena believes that social media use does not need to be related to the idea that “we need to be there no matter what”, instead they prefer to think “we need to be there because it has many benefits” (Iban Arantzabal, Managing Director of Goiena, 2017). Naturally, it is necessary to know what these benefits are and how to make the most of them. In any case, the Group has not had to establish any major changes in its structure in order to pursue these objectives. Indeed, there are people in the company with sufficient knowledge of the area of social network use.

In terms of what they believe about the role of the community manager, they recognize that the group has not appointed a community manager or a similar figure because they believe that all the journalists must have a minimum knowledge: “Only in this way can we establish a more horizontal and diverse organisation, that is, believing in and promoting the autonomy of the journalist” (Iban Arantzabal, Managing Director of Goiena, 2017).

Thus, in the business structure of Goiena there is no specific group that coordinates or handles the activities of participation. It is the Goiena journalists themselves who do this collectively. The managing director of the company observes that to do this the journalists have resorted to self-study and to the in-house training offered by the company. He states that “there is still a lot of work to be done in the area of training” (Iban Arantzabal, Managing Director of Goiena, 2017), although they are aware of the value of the experience acquired through the daily use of these social platforms.

As for the issue of training, and given that the people who come to work at Goiena proceed from the journalism faculties, the decision was made in 2013 to reinforce the commercial area of the group. In this way, weekly meetings have been established that are attended by all the members of the commercial part. During these meetings the use of Internet as a whole and the social media in particular are discussed. Similarly, Goiena developed a stylebook to offer the best options for promoting the different forms of public participation.

Apart from this, Goiena does not use filters for the comments made. As it is a regional medium, the quantity of participations is less

than in those media that have a larger scope. In this way, they have only had to eliminate tweets on a few occasions: “This type of message is not common in their community (...) anonymity on Twitter is rather limited” (Iban Arantzabal, Managing Director of Goiena, 2017).

As a conclusion to what was said regarding the management in the Goiena Group, we mentioned above that the amount of time required for the daily management of the social networks is outstanding amongst the difficulties observed. It is also important to point out the difficulty in attaining the appropriate tone with which to participate in the new platforms, as they involve using a different language from that used on paper or television. Therefore, finding the right tone is a challenge for the journalists.

In any case, Goiena explains that it is essential to consider the nature of each platform and to use a different language in each one. At this regional media group, they are convinced that the management of audience participation and the social media will become increasingly important in the company “because communication needs life” (Iban Arantzabal, Managing Director of Goiena, 2017).

It will also be necessary to establish a much closer relationship between emitter and receiver. In any case, for the managing director of Goiena the success or failure of public participation on the social media should not be measured by the number of tweets received. He stated that he preferred a moderate number but with good content. Even so, they consider the *Analytics* tool (<http://www.google.com/analytics/>) adequate for measuring participating users. They also commented on the difference shown on this terrain by the more active journalists, who have a greater influence on those around them (for example, the journalists who work in the sports section).

With a view to the future, in the short and medium-term the Goiena group has two big challenges regarding the management of audience participation. On the one hand, there is the issue of activating the community, which will be done by using the company’s own profiles and increasing the community of bloggers by 100% in the coming months. On the other hand, since the figure of the multimedia journalist is a palpable reality at Goiena, the next challenge for this

company is that of the “catalyst journalist”, that is, the catalyst who belongs to the community and facilitates the multidirectional movement of information.

With respect to managing social media at the CCMA, there is a team that takes care of the tendencies, of drawing a line in the use of social media, especially referring to content verification. Social media are considered to be a key factor when looking to the future and they will continue to be given importance through the training of editors and the broadening of resources and concrete tasks.

Social media use is evaluated by monitoring. On a day-to-day basis use is made of Ezyinsight (which monitors Facebook and there is a pilot test for Twitter. Filters can be applied to see how the different media are functioning and which stories are producing the most traffic) and Adobe (online audience, where people are coming from). The following day monitoring is done with the Kantar Media Instar Social tool and with Datknosys, which makes it possible to follow conversations, profiles and competitors. Part of the team moderates and monitors comments. Due to lack of resources there is no specific profile dedicated to that task:

Between all of us we check that the users are complying with the norms when it comes to making comments. We don't use automatic devices for that (Montse Enrubia, in charge of Social Media at the CCMA's News Services, 2017).

With respect to El Punt Avui, the medium's “digital scepticism” has meant that social media work is shared out during the day amongst the people who form part of the team responsible for the digital edition. There is no specific person or group assigned exclusively to that task. The team is formed of multidisciplinary journalists. There are no digital natives. The whole team has undergone a process of reconversion that has been highly rewarding from the professional point of view. The task consists in carrying out up-to-the-minute updating of the torrent of information and in monitoring what is said about the medium on social media. As observed by the interviewee at this medium, nowadays it is a question of trying to envisage what path digital communication will follow, and what will be the best complementary role with regard to

the printed product. “We are currently in the phase of analysis, but it is clear that social media are going to play an important role in news strategy, both today’s social media and those that will be created in the future” (Andreu Mas, Director of Digital Content, 2017). Measuring its success on social media is not a priority for El Punt Avui. However, guaranteeing the truthfulness of what is published and not being drawn along by unchecked news dynamics is the most important question:

The social media are necessary for consolidating and increasing one’s digital reputation. We have the obligation of awakening social media users to the fact that reliable information can be obtained from communications professionals (Andreu Mas, Director of Digital Content, 2017).

In the case of the *Diari Ara*, given that social media form part of the newspaper’s DNA, it is the journalists themselves who carry out certain community management tasks. As a result the web team takes on certain responsibilities in this aspect and since two years ago there has been a Director of Social Media, Oriol Colominas, a journalist with a background in digital marketing and social media and with experience of both fields. This medium measures and evaluates all the actions in Social Media to see if they have been successful and how they could improve. As Oriol Colominas notes, the most complicated aspect at the level of community management and participation has been to develop a specific strategy for each social medium and, above all, to keep each of them at a similar level of quality as the printed and online newspaper, especially at times when there is a high demand for news.

## CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REMARKS

This chapter has considered six basic aspects relating to the absence or presence of a community manager, the functions associated to this professional profile and the level of use of, or preference for, specific social media. The text has also considered additional data from the perspective of the advantages and disadvantages of managing audience participation in the newsroom, particularly in terms of the ROI (*Return On Investment*).

Regarding the professionalization of managing the social media, the absence of a profile with expertise in community management-related activities in four of the newsrooms considered must be highlighted. We single out the planned strategy at EITB and Diari Ara, parallel to the figure of the Social Media Manager, which was something that we did not find – or only in a more incipient manner – at Goiena, Deia and two of the Catalanian media, that is, CCMA and El Punt Avui. As an exception, the profile of the community manager in the case of EITB coincides explicitly with the recommendations of AERCO.

The presence or absence of this figure in the newsroom of the regional media examined can be considered to be indicative of the importance that the company gives to its operations in the online field and everything surrounding it. It is not for nothing that the community manager's activity must develop on the basis of a multiple perspective that takes into account different formats and strategies, as well as being coherent or unified. With respect to the most suitable profile, there is agreement in highlighting the importance of possessing an understanding of journalism and marketing, as well as a preference for continuous training and recycling.

In the use of specific social media, more interest can be detected in exploiting activity on Twitter, rather than on Facebook. This higher level of Twitter activity is also related to the activity of the medium's journalists on this social network, insofar as they have to encourage interactions between the medium's corporate accounts and the journalistic accounts of its professionals.

Concerning ROI (*Return On Investment*), although not all of the media refer to it in this manner, there is some concern about the hours invested in managing a medium's social networks. There is agreement in the warning that the activity of managing social media increases the workload, especially of online journalists, a load that is not sufficiently recognized in every case.

In general, all the professionals interviewed believe that their social media activity is integrated into the structure of the content of the medium and the news group, and is not separate from or outside its journalistic activity. They agree that their presence on the social media

is of such importance that they have developed suitable strategies and, in some cases, professional teams dedicated to this. Thus, in this study we have seen three ways of perceiving and managing participation on social media and these three views are related to the business model implemented in each company.

Firstly, the public enterprise, which has more resources, experiences what we can call an ideal situation with a team and a person specializing in community management, a role that is particularly evident in the case of the Basque public service broadcaster EITB. Even so, from now onwards there will be time to see what effect, if any, such participation has on the editorial decisions of that public broadcaster, as citizens are willing to influence their media through participation. Next, the private companies (Deia, El Punt Avui, ARA) have not yet reached the same stage as the public services, and their professionals, in addition to their full-time dedication to the printed edition, the radio or the web, have to participate on social networks, which increases the need for multi-skilling. Finally, we have the model of a regional cooperative business (Goiena) where the professionals believe in a horizontal structure and where from the very beginning the company considered journalists to be multimedia broadcasters. Thus, to give a boost to all that potential, they face the challenge of creating the “dynamic” or “catalyst” journalist, who belongs to the community as a journalist and, at the same time, facilitates a multidirectional movement of information as a mass motivator.

Even if it provides a static picture, this study evidences that the management of social media is becoming a more serious or strategic part of the structure of the medium (paper/radio/TV, web + social networks). This idea must be accompanied by another increasingly relevant idea, namely, that the journalist is a communicator, rather than a paper/TV/radio or online journalist. He or she is also a *community manager*. Journalists will be communicators who generate content that is distributed over different media to those who “follow” them, while an editor or social media manager will be in charge of planning that distribution.

## APPENDIX

Questionnaire used in the interviews:

1. What role have the social media played on the medium/group to date? (Advantages or benefits)
2. When were they first actively used? Was this active use the result of a planned strategy? What was the reason for starting to use them? (Specific objectives that were followed and are followed with this use)
3. What other decisions were involved in starting to use the social media? (For example, the appointment of a team, appointment of a manager or community manager, etc.)
4. What is the profile of this manager or team? (Knowledge, experience, area he/she comes from.....)
5. What does the day-to-day management of the social media consist of? What are the main difficulties?
  - 5.1. What screening criteria are used for the acceptance or rejection of comments or news (or if applicable, on social media, such as the Facebook page of the medium)?
  - 5.2. Are automatic mechanisms or devices (as in machines that read capitals, emoticons) or human means used to meet these criteria?
6. Do you believe that this activity of managing and handling the social media will become increasingly important for the media? Have you started to talk about this issue with a view to the future?
7. What specific uses does the medium/group give to Facebook, Twitter and blogs?
8. Are the journalists also involved in the use and management of the Web 2.0? (Blog management, Twitter accounts, etc). How have they responded to this request for collaboration on Web 2.0 - if applicable?
9. Is there any mechanism to measure the success of these actions?
10. Short and medium-term challenges regarding this question for the company.

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## The production process of television journalism in the face of mobile devices: understanding the perspective of professionals from the TV stations of Piauí (Brazil)<sup>1</sup>

Juliana Fernandes Teixeira<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

Several times, TV stations are accused of resisting to the potential of the Internet, and portals are also accused of usurping TV space. But does this dichotomy correspond to the current reality? In this paper, the intention was to investigate the perspective of television professionals regarding the use of mobile devices by audiovisual journalism, focusing on the state of Piauí (Brazil). In addition to an overview of the field research (with dates, names and positions of interviewees), categories are proposed that consider the positioning of these professionals regarding the combination of audiovisual visualization and mobility. Among these categories, we point out: 1) search for constant updates and innovations; 2) users' contribution; and 3) acceleration of the production process. The paper is finalized with restrictions to the point of view of these professionals, but always focusing on pointing out suggestions and future solutions.

### Keywords

Audiovisual journalism; Mobile devices; Journalistic production process; TV stations.

### INTRODUCTION<sup>3</sup>

With mobile devices, audiovisual journalism can broaden its reach, record events that were not necessarily covered by TV stations and develop a quicker production process. Hence the objective of this paper is to investigate the perspective of the professionals of these broadcasters about the use of such devices in their organizations, focusing on the TV stations from Teresina - Piauí - Brazil. The focus on Piauí is due to this paper being part of a broader research developed

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within the Postdoctoral Program of the Postgraduate Program in Communication of the Federal University of Piauí.

The methodology adopted is the case study (Yin, 2005), from which we propose to analyze the Piauí affiliates of the most expressive television networks in the Brazilian national scene: “*TV Clube*” (*Globo*); “*TV Antena 10*” (*Record*) and “*TV Cidade Verde*” (*SBT*). We also included in our *corpus* the “*Rede Meio Norte*”, mainly due to the effort of this journalistic organization regarding the exploitation of multimediality and interactivity in its audiovisual contents in Piauí.

It is important to emphasize that the case study is a methodological strategy characterized by a process of combination of methodologies, with the main intention of broadening the description, explanation and understanding of the object. Although case studies are the appropriate strategy for “how” and “why” questions are set, when the researcher has little control over events and / or when the focus is on contemporary phenomena inserted in some context of the real life, this methodology can be based on evidence, at the same time, quantitative and qualitative (Machado & Palacios, 2007).

Thus, it is common for a case study to have at least two sources of evidence, from which we can highlight direct observation of the events being studied and interviews with the people involved (Yin, 2005). As a direct observation, we include the visit to the research site, with the objective of providing additional data on the theme under analysis (Matsuuchi Duarte, 2009), which we carried out in the four TV stations studied. On the same day of the visit to each of the journalistic organizations, the professionals directly responsible for journalistic production and / or social media were interviewed.

A significant amount of time has been devoted to the accomplishment, transcription, categorization and writing of the field research results (about four months), since the field research stage is one of the most relevant in terms of potential future results. It has two specific and complementary objectives: to identify important hypotheses for the understanding of the object of study and to investigate regularities and / or discontinuities for the elaboration of new hypotheses. Special

attention must be given to the processing of collected data, since it is the interpretation and reconstruction carried out by the researcher that allows the articulation of the concepts through a differentiated dialogue with reality (Duarte, 2009).

An important caveat is that not every case study necessarily requires conducting a field research. In previous studies (Teixeira, 2015), for example, methodological adaptations were made in order to relinquish going to the field. Although we recognize the relevance of this strategy in the offices of newsrooms / communication companies, at that time, this technique was made impossible by the inclusion of international cases, which generated limitations regarding the displacement and the authorizations to join the newsrooms. We opted, therefore, for the systematic observation of the selected products, using analysis sheets, complemented by interviews with the editors of the studied cybermedia - what, in no way, prevented the achievement of relevant results.

At any rate, in the present postdoctoral research, the pertinence of the field trip, along with the interviews, was considered. We visited the newsrooms of the four stations analyzed and interviewed a total of seven professionals. The visits, as well as the conversations with the professionals interviewed, were carried out in the following manner:

- TV CLUBE: visit on February 1st, 2017
  - A) Jaqueline Siqueira, webjournalism manager at Rede Clube
  - B) Paulo Nóbrega, journalism director at TV Clube
  
- REDE MEIO NORTE: visit on February 2nd, 2017
  - C) Marcos Monturil, journalism coordinator at rede Meio Norte
  
- TV CIDADE VERDE: visit on February 7th, 2017
  - D) Yala Sena, head coordinator at Cidade Verde Portal
  - E) Ítallo Victor, Planning and design of social media at Cidade Verde

- TV ANTENA 10: visit on February 9th, 2017

F) Renato Ricarte, producer of the program *Sabadão Bom Demais*, responsible for the TV social networks and public participation of Tony, in the *Bancada*

G) Douglas Cordeiro, journalism director and commentator of the *Bancada Piauí* program

The choice for the interview is due to the fact that it is a technique that explores a subject from the search of information, perceptions and experiences of informants to analyze and present them in a structured way. It seeks to collect answers from the subjective experience of a source. This type of methodological tool allows exploring a subject or deepening it, describing processes, understanding the past and pointing perspectives (Duarte, 2009).

In this research about audiovisual journalism on mobile devices, a semi-open interview with journalism or digital media professionals, directly involved in the production process of the broadcasters (in the steps that considered, of course, smartphones) was adopted. The semi-open interview is an in-depth interview model, which is based on a guide-book script, which responds to the interest of the research and is presented to the interviewee in an open manner. This way, it is possible to reconcile the flexibility of the issue with the control of the script. Although the thematic, order and depth of the questions are determined by the researcher, the interviewee has a fundamental role, because the progress of the interview will depend on their knowledge and willingness to talk about the subject.

It is true that several adaptations in the script originally planned were necessary due to the dynamics of the operation of each case study - such as changes in the order of the questions and adjustments in the script based on interesting reports that certain interviewees could add to the research. In any case, we consider that the objectives pursued with this methodological strategy have been fully achieved. Next, the main results will be presented, duly categorized in agreement with points in common among the stations from Teresina investigated and synthesizing the most pertinent statements of the professionals interviewed.

## 1. SEARCH FOR CONSTANT UPDATES AND INNOVATIONS

An expression used in a recurring way by the professionals interviewed in Teresina's television stations was "innovation". Although we recognize that it is, in contemporary times, a market necessity, it is a fact that there is no consensus in the definition or delimitation of what an innovation is. As pointed out by Palacios, Barbosa, Firmino and Cunha (2015), as with the question of quality, when we approach innovation, we are confronted with a huge and complex variety of typologies, indicators and measurement scales, as well as a vast literature and different areas of knowledge.

The difficulties are increased due to the fact that many studies of innovation remain restricted to app-specific scopes or to academic researches, so that some professionals are not able to define or identify effective innovation. At the extreme limit we simply have to abandon any attempt at understanding the concept because, according to Grubenmann's survey (2013), there are very few authors who explain what they understand by innovation when they approach the subject in some publication. A problem that, especially in the daily productive routine of journalism, is intensified.

This scenario ends up perpetuating the difficulties and inconsistencies in the implementation of innovations, as they become constant overlaps and redundancies, compromising the construction of effective experiments.

In any case, in this paper, we sought to identify what the interviewed professionals point out as innovations, as well as to highlight their arduous and relevant efforts in this regard. After all, in an academic research, the task is not to perform normative indications but to systematize the observed reality. Since, according to Rogers (1983), we consider innovation as an idea, practice or object perceived as new.

In other words, what matters in a decisive way is the perception of the novelty by the individual, regardless of the time lapse between this perception and the first use or discovery of the innovation. Thus, innovation, in the sense we intend to give the term in our remarks about audiovisual journalism on mobile devices does not necessarily involve major disruptions or discontinuities (Palacios; Barbosa; Firmino & Cunha, 2015).

In addition, nowadays, innovations imply transformations in different segments, such as products, processes, market and ways of use (Steinbock, 2005; Tourinho, 2010); therefore, they should not be thought of in a restricted and limited way. It is from this conception that it is possible to affirm that television stations from Teresina have been engaged in the search for constant updates and changes.

The discontinuities are recurrent, which can contribute, especially in the long term, to the emergence and elaboration of experimental or innovative contents. It is an essential search mainly for mobile devices, which today offer a new way of reading, demanding new patterns of visualization and differentiated treatments for journalistic content, including audio-visual ones (Cabrera González & Bernal Triviño, 2011; Gonçalves, 2009).

Illustrations, in this sense, can be pointed out in the cases of *TV Clube*, *TV Cidade Verde* and *TV Antena 10*. According to Paulo Nóbrega, journalism director at Rede Globo's affiliated network in Piauí, at the specific moment of field research, the app went through a transition stage: if it was previously called "You on Piauí TV", it would then become "You on Rede Clube". This because:

"Piauí TV" is the name of only two of our television programs, the 1st and 2nd editions, the midday one and the one in the evening. And the other news programs, where are they? How will they be represented? For example, "Bom dia" (Good Morning) has its loyal audience. The "Clube Rural" (Rural Club), which is the optional Sunday, also has its audience there. The thing is more on top of these two TV news. Then, as the team that was hired to create this new app, started with "You on the Net Club", where all the TV Clube's news and entertainment products are in this app. (Nóbrega, 2017) (Our translation)

At the time of the interview for the present research, the new app was not yet available for public access. Anyway, the title change was already visible to anyone looking for the app on mobile devices. In the case of *TV Cidade Verde*, the update is mainly sought through the exploration of convergence. So much so that, according to the head coordinator of the *Cidade Verde* Portal, Yala Sena, a specific sector was created, with an exclusive professional, to work with audiovisual materials. That is, even if the video is segregated in relation to the text, there is already the perception that it is a type of content important for journalistic production focused on the Internet.

We have an editor called “TV editor.” The idea is to migrate the reports that are highlights of the day, put them on the portal. And some of these stories have their editorials, both from the videos as well as a specific editor, which is the TV editor. Then we point out the issues ... For example, some TV interviewee, we transform into an article and put the video and photo, or give an amplitude to the interview, making it more detailed. It does not give this option to the Internet user to only by him watching the video, but they can see the summary in a text, they see on a photo, they see on the audiovisual. (Sena, 2017) (Our translation)

In the same direction some of the experiments on *TV Antena 10* are directed. According to Renato Ricarte, responsible for the social networks of the station, there is an effort, mainly in the Beto Rego’s program, to explore the potential of the audiovisual offered by Skype.

His program [Beto Rego] is very fond of it; a program for the masses and he really likes the participation of the people. He had stopped using Skype and returned to it again. He has a prank called “carrion trophy,” which is a stuffed vulture; and in that he asks the people: “To whom would you give this trophy, such as, perhaps, Agespisa or Eletrobrás?” (local companies managed by the government that run the water and power distribution) and this is the game. In this, people participate and make their complaints about their neighborhood, which has been without energy for many days, that energy only lacks at night. Then, you have that participation. When it begins to get saturated, we suspend it and invent something or repeat things that we used in the past to be able to dynamize and return that participation. I also realize that in some times it is stronger than in others. Even for the matter that in Teresina people travel at certain periods of the year. (Ricarte, 2017) (Our translation)

Updates and innovations need not, however, to be limited to content alone. On the contrary, they can (and should) be incorporated into the production processes, as already pointed out before. This has been an effort by Piauí television broadcasters, as was especially evident in the interviews of *Rede Meio Norte*, *TV Cidade Verde* and *TV Clube*, when journalists mentioned the existence of rotating and interdisciplinary teams.

Although much is said, from the potentials of the Internet, on the importance of the multifaceted journalist, it is the interdisciplinary teams that become more and more present in the daily life of journalistic organizations. This is because, even if multimedia journalists can work alone in less relevant events, they generally cannot produce quality content on larger events (Quinn, 2005). Jenkins (2008) argues that we need to discover and learn how - and why - groups with different

backgrounds can hear and work together for the common good. Weaver and Löffelholz (2008) endorse this perspective by stating that we cannot ignore contributions from other disciplines, which must be incorporated.

It is true that building such a team is not an easy task, especially in times of cost reduction and budget cuts. However, it is an important initiative, especially in Internet products, which require the integration of professionals with different backgrounds (Keirstead, 2005; Boczkowski, 2004). And this seems to be being sought by the television stations studied by the present research.

At *Rede Meio Norte*, according to journalism coordinator Marcos Monturil, there is a specific Information Technology team, which serves all affiliates and is responsible for the station app (Monturil, 2017). At *TV Cidade Verde*, the logic is similar: so much so that one of our interviewees, Ítallo Victor, responsible for planning and designing social media, was hired with the challenge of thinking about the digital convergence of journalistic contents of the organization.

I was initially called in to take care of social media; there was not, though it was necessary, such a great bond to the portal. Basically, I became responsible for spreading the contents of the portal, especially for the TV. When I joined it, there were no such integration channels. So, it is no use spreading something that is not working internally. (...) My role started to be to plan this area, to integrate the vehicles of the group and to be able to evolve this environment, since it did not exist. It was 2010 ... Then, it has been seven years, it will be eight years now. And since then we have been thinking... (Victor, 2017) (Our translation).

At *TV Clube*, Paulo Nóbrega points out that, although it is the Information Technology team that develops and maintains the app, dialogues between all those involved in the production process are essential, so that new ideas are implemented to have a renewal of projects. "I consider it a salutary thing, because it is the time that you can implant your management model, change the team, and then move on to another one. Because things tend, over time, to get stifled" (Nóbrega, 2017) (Our translation).

It is true that the search for transformations pointed out here may seem timid in the face of the potential offered by mobile devices for

contemporary audiovisual journalism. However, one must also consider that mutations in content are usually slow and gradual; innovations need time to emerge (Rogers, 1983; Salaverría, 2005b; Quinn, 2005; Gynnild, 2014). The challenge of journalism, therefore, is to continue reinventing itself against the dizzying pace of technological innovations; which makes the culture of innovation not a luxury or an intermittent activity, but a constant need of journalistic organizations (Briggs, 2013).

Palacios, Barbosa, Firmino and Cunha (2015) suggest that journalistic products that are intended to be innovative for mobile devices need, in this context, to be characterized by differentiated characteristics, enhancing new specificities, properties and semantics. In the scope of the present research, we next draw attention to the question of interactivity, one of the main uses of the apps.

## 2. USERS' CONTRIBUTIONS: INTERACTIVITY OR APPROPRIATION OF VIDEOS?

Public involvement in the production process is a reality that tends to grow in any field of contemporary cultural production, including in this case the various forms of communication. In Diaz Noci's perspective (2016), users' contributions can take multiple forms and several of them are extremely original and authoritative, impacting increasingly on the formats adopted by traditional organizations. Of course, many collaborations only complement the work already done by journalists; in any case, these new individuals are now part of the flow of information and business models of journalism.

In this scenario, it is possible to point out two foci of observation of the users' contributions in the journalistic process: 1) active audiences, who interact with professionals through tools that the organizations themselves make available; and 2) collaborative content, which encompasses materials received by professionals and which directly interfere in the construction of the news (Díaz Noci, 2016). Such participations, as we have seen throughout this research, have been intensified from the insertion of mobile devices in the daily life of individuals. So much so that, in the current journalism, one of the biggest challenges for communication companies, according to Lins (2016), is to integrate mobile devices into their production process in

the most rapid, simple and personal way possible, preferably based on apps.

The news has circulated differently, in fact. Apps make it easier to consume information because they are practical and engaging. Even when the user is faced with another medium, mobile devices continue to be media support, creating the phenomenon known as multiscreens. (...) This option not only to see what is happening, but to be able to comment and share with other users, makes the mobile ecosystem more and more fertile for the news. (Lins, 2016, p.64) (Our translation)

As our research focus is on the audiovisual, we are interested in observing, specifically, how these devices have become “contemporary machines of visibility” (Martins, 2016, p.103-104), providing content to which broadcasters would not have access easily or in due time, for example. After all, with smartphones, today, journalism can broaden its reach by recording events that were not necessarily covered by the media in the past. At any rate, it is important to admit, as Marcos Monturil, from *Rede Meio Norte*, pointed out, that the stimulus to participation is not something new, but it has an expressive relationship with the audience profile targeted by each broadcaster.

It has always been a very strong feature of the production of *Rede Meio Norte* to be popular. We've always had a great deal of worry about reaching the pizza as whole, as we say. But we have a very strong connection with classes C, D, and E, the most popular classes. For that, we have always observed that it was important to have a great interactivity with the viewer. In the earliest times, we used to do this by means of the open telephone, the famous telephone on the air, which radio still uses very often. Television also used it a lot. There were programs like “The voice of the people” that attended the public with telephone on the air and this was always our characteristic. With the advent of new technologies, we have adapted our characteristic to new formats; and the use of the gadgets came in handy for this, because it provides an interactivity in several ways. How is it worked out today? Virtually all programs, at least the live ones, work by using WhatsApp numbers for public participation and ensuring interactivity with the viewer. All programs do this, whether it is a journalistic, culture or entertainment program. This feature is also widely used as a source of agenda, because it is from these channels that we receive a lot of scripts. (Monturil, 2017) (Our translation)

*TV Antena 10* follows a very similar dynamic of exploitation of interactivity. In the opinion of the journalism director Douglas Cordeiro,

users' contributions sometimes act as a targeting of content produced for television viewing.

Through TV social networks, we receive this; we encourage it in the programs. There we receive content from viewers, content in audio, video, photography. We display these contents and, whenever possible, we exhibit with the participation of the viewer. It happens a lot, for example: the viewer has a problem in the neighborhood, in the city, he sends the photograph or sends the image and makes a narration. Then, there's a lot of that "you're the reporter" story. After that, we evaluate and, if appropriate, we send a reporting team to delve deeper into the subject. Therefore, it's the typical case of conducting TV work through social networks. We have Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Facebook; and all this is used and open for viewers to participate and send content and we put it on the air. (Cordeiro, 2017) (Our translation)

At TV Clube, social networks are also considered fundamental for the establishment of exchanges with users, but there is an attempt to foment, more and more, the participations through the app. According to Jaqueline Siqueira, webjournalism manager at Rede Clube, the app was developed precisely to receive these contributions.

This app was developed for anyone who wants to send suggestions, send their questions to the news, then they use the app. *G1* and *Globo Esporte.com* already have their own tools that are 'You at G1' and 'You at Globo Esporte'. And there is also the e-mail from the newsroom that we publicize on the sites. But this app was developed only for the TV (...). It is intended to stimulate interactivity. (Siqueira, 2017) (Our translation)

However, we cannot consider the multiple initiatives of interactivity adopted by journalistic companies in a naive manner; after all, as an article published in 1995 by researchers from Harvard Business Review pointed out, personalization is a way to "keep customers forever." (Lins, 2016, p. 61) This has undoubtedly contributed to make the television stations engage in spaces of interaction with their viewers, also from the apps for mobile devices.

As Martins (2016) alerts, telejournalism, often through participatory journalism discourse, has systematically harnessed the contents generated by users. However, this can generate problems such as the attribution of meanings that are skewed to these images, which may not be consistent with the meanings originally attributed by the

users to the narrative sent to the journalistic organization. Another questionable strategy is the production, by professionals themselves, of content under an aesthetics close to the amateur (through resources such as low definition, absence or precariousness of audio, etc.), in an attempt to offer their audience more “realistic” narratives.

Perhaps, one way to overcome some of these problems is in the structure adopted by the TV Clube app. The proposal of the journalism director, Paulo Nóbrega, is that the app directs the guidelines directly to the programs with which the users wish to collaborate.

It is a very nice way of communication, as follows: only the production team of that news or that entertainment product, such as the “Program” (which is coordinated by the programming, not by the journalism), only those personnel will receive the messages viewers send to that product. So, I do not have that news circulation, because this happens a lot in affiliates. ‘Ah, I saw it here first, I got it first’; then another news also saw it, picked it up, and suddenly the two work the same theme at the same time. This happened a lot at *Verdes Mares*, and here, at “You on Piauí TV” happened too. That way, the person who sends you their information, their curiosity, their news suggestion, is already sending it to the news of their choice, the newspaper that they think is the best one. Of course, this is what the viewer understands, but who understands what news is going to be better is us, eminently, but this filter already happens in each team. So that has been making it much easier. I have access (I mean, I’m supposed to have) as the thing is being implemented, I’m still not getting; but I will have access to all the emails, that is, to all the programs that will be sent, I will have access, together with the editor and the rest we separate by news. (Nóbrega, 2017) (Our translation)

Another strategy (universal but that seems forgotten in recent times) is content excellence, which needs to be constantly adapted to continue to attract users. So much so that among the professionals interviewed for this research, the only one who emphasized the importance of having the content also rethought for the digital environment was Ítallo Victor, from *TV Cidade Verde*, who pointed out:

For example, there came a time when we considered extinguishing the Economics editor; but we thought “no, let’s do the following: let’s try to have a person for the Economics editor”, including as an Economics blog, that would be a national editorial, but the blog would speak of something more focused on the labour market, more to the budget, more to finances. Hence, today this editor is one of the most accessed, so we, instead of excluding content that had / has an enormous potential, eventually became a flagship. (Victor, 2017) (Our translation)

Despite these caveats, it is possible to affirm that the issues discussed so far demonstrate that, at least in the TV broadcasters from Teresina, mobile apps have collaborated in the insertion (to some extent) of the spectators in the journalistic production process. The big question is whether the communication media are making an appropriate use of these contributions and how it has impacted the productive routine of their professionals. Therefore, the discussion about the reconfiguration of journalistic processes against the potential of mobile devices is urgently needed, which is undertaken in the section that follows.

### 3. THE ACCELERATION OF THE PRODUCTION PROCESS: THE MAIN EFFECT OF THE USE OF MOBILE DEVICES

As discussed in the previous section, not all the features of digital appointed as media-specific, such as interactivity, multimedia, and hypertextuality, are either appropriately exclusive or original (so that they were already possible as printing, radio, or television). Salaverría (2017) also argues that, to a greater or lesser extent, all contemporary media value these same characteristics in a journalistic product. In any case, there are nine specificities that continue to be demanded of online media: 1) platform, 2) temporality, 3) theme, 4) scope, 5) ownership, 6) authorship, 7) focus, 8) economic purpose and 9) dynamism. This requires an increasingly agile production process, a requirement that has often been achieved with the help of mobile devices.

The use of mobile devices in the journalistic production process passes, according to Lins (2016), by three basic points: 1) the use of technology in a simple and effective way; 2) the training of editorial staff to use the available apps in the production and distribution of news; and 3) the daily monitoring of the results obtained in order to improve and adjust the work performed routinely. It is no coincidence that almost all media, today, rely on social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.) and messaging apps (Whatsapp, Telegram, etc.) as information-gathering tools.

Although we have pointed out in the previous section the attempt of some organizations to establish interaction through their own apps, the preferred platform is usually Whatsapp (Souza, 2016). This statement was corroborated by the reports of all those interviewed in the present study. There are several reasons listed by TV professionals from Teresina networks for this protagonism.

Jaqueline Siqueira, from TV Clube, was categorical: “It’s a great tool because it’s instantaneous” (Siqueira, 2017). For Renato Ricarte, from TV Antena 10, “for WhatsApp is that faster, more instantaneous thing” (Ricarte, 2017). Marcos Monturil, from the Rede Meio Norte, also points out the agility provided to the news production by Whatsapp:

We noticed in WhatsApp and in telephony in general, that we had the opportunity to dynamize our time, we practically eliminated the need for constant meetings. One of the things that most hinders who works with production and fast results nowadays is always having to hold meetings. The first general planning meeting still exists. But that amount of meeting to upgrade and update, to check-list, WhatsApp allows us to do this in our own places, without disrupting our routine. So, in our daily lives, in addition to energizing this planning thing (the meetings), it also facilitates this traffic of information circulating. (...) Thus we can dynamize our time and deal with the issues in a general, global, faster and more objective way. (Monturil, 2017) (Our translation)

Monturil, however, also reveals a more critical view of the use of these technological potentialities, drawing attention to, for example, the fact that this rapidity in the circulation of information reaches the journalistic process “for better and for worse.” This is because it removes the exclusivity of the journalist regarding the disclosure of events, which can compromise the reliability of the facts. The journalist coordinator of *Rede Meio Norte* also looks at the new working conditions imposed by instant messaging apps.

Once again, I hit the WhatsApp key, as it is the most used resource today for anyone who works with mobile devices. It is 1% leisure (maximum 5%, play with friends etc.) and at least 95% work. I myself, the last time I counted, I had over 40 minutes of work. (...) As I am a coordinator, each program makes a group and puts me in it. When I check it, I’m in more than 40 groups. (Monturil, 2017) (Our translation)

At *TV Cidade Verde*, although Whatsapp is also used (including through in-app offerings), practitioners seem to be in line with the more critical perspective mentioned above. In the opinion of the portal's head coordinator, Yala Sena, we cannot, as journalists, get lost in the wealth of information received through apps and social networks.

It's a mixture we get kind of worried about. What I always say is that the social network has arrived, it is there with the cell phones, Facebook and so on, but the journalist cannot forget that there is the scoop, the exclusivity, they cannot be only accommodated with the social network. The social networks cannot be making the agenda of the press. It's a big concern. I think journalists are very comfortable with social media, they think that's only that, and it's not. It is important that you go out in the street, eye to eye, interview, ask, feel the heat of things, I think this is very important. I'm very critical of this social networking issue: I consider it an ally, but you have to be very careful because it's a double-edged sword. (Sena, 2017) (Our translation)

In short, the process of audiovisual journalistic production seems increasingly characterized by omnipresent and omniscient apps (Martins, 2016), reaffirming the role of instantaneousness in journalism. A specificity that has been put in the foreground again before the mobile devices. Such weight is because, in previous researches (Teixeira, 2011), we had identified that the instantaneousness of the live was being relegated to the background by some cybermedia, to the detriment of memory.

This picture, however, has been reversed: few are the ones that store files in cell phones; what matters most is to put the content to circulate as fast as possible. The concept of periodicity has already been completely replaced by permanent updating, according to Machado (2000). In fact, the very existence periodization is affected by the permanent network presence (Sodré, 2009). And this is reflected in the more and more constant live transmissions performed with the help of mobile devices.

We use as main illustrations, in this sense, the production process of *TV Antena 10*, which performs, with recurrence, live broadcast of its programs by Facebook (Ricarte, 2017). According to the journalism director, Douglas Cordeiro, besides the journalistic transmissions in studio, there are constant attempts to insert the participations of the spectators also live. "There is a kind of totem in which people participate

live, according to the characteristics of each program. For example, the programs of Beto and Arnaldo, which are more popular programs, in which the public complains about something, sends live “hellos” and is put live on air” (Cordeiro, 2017).

We add to that the availability, in the cell phone of all the reporters, of a program that allows that they enter on air, live, from anywhere where they have Internet. Another possibility, when the program is not on display, is for journalists to send their audiovisual material through an FTP channel.

It's a channel they use to send the content straight to television, and automatically, if it does not require editing, that channel already puts it directly on the switcher and is ready for display. Here there is also a connection that allows, for example, if I'm in my room and someone sends me content when the program is on the air, this connection allows me to send that image, audio, directly to the switcher. It's live streamed right away! (Cordeiro, 2017) (Our translation)

The professionals interviewed for this research, however, are cautious in this quest for instantaneity. As well argued by TV Clube's Jaqueline Siqueira:

In journalism, scrutiny is everything, listening to all sides is everything, do not believe everything you receive. The instantaneity is cool, these apps that have been created are cool, the advent of the Internet is everything, you can know everything at all times, all the time. But the journalist must have a responsibility, they must have a concern in this investigation. You cannot go out shooting just because you want to be the first. We have an image to watch over, we must respect the Internet user. (...) Then you must be very cautious. The word is caution. It is not good to to be anxious: I want to publish soon, I want to be the first. With us it does not solve, we do not work that way. (Siqueira, 2017) (Our translation)

In other words, as much as they speed up the production process, mobile devices can also bring greater responsibilities and concerns to journalists, reaffirming the basic precepts of the profession and its deontological commitments. The verification gets more and more attention, the credibility becomes a differential and the authenticity is checked in the materials received by the professionals. Still in the words of Siqueira (2017),

First: we must be sure, we have to have a lot of confidence. We have to certify that this video we receive is true, if it is real, if it happened and check with the video owner if they authorize the publication; so we call the person and check. (...) Because, with this Internet game, of instantaneity, there is a lot of catch, there are many people who send information that is not true. (...) We must be very sure of what we are doing. You know how much the press has been 'shaken up' by believing in WhatsApp's messages, by these groups, and how many people have already been harmed by being pointed as pivots of something. (...) We have this concern. Sometimes people comment that G1 takes a little longer to update, it takes a little longer to upload articles. But although speed is important on the Internet, truth is more important. (Our translation)

The media coordinator of *Rede Meio Norte*, Marcos Monturil, makes the same kind of warning about the importance of the investigation.

The information arrives fast. But at the same time, everything that is fast is sometimes not safe. Our daily challenge (that we are very picky with the producers) is to know how to balance that speed with credibility, with conviction of what you are getting and what you are passing on. We get a lot of fake information; a lot that is not real. The WhatsApp news is very dangerous: 'Oh, someone has died' and it's a joke, a manipulation, you'll see that it was something else. So, this issue of information circulation, while helping, it poses a greater risk to the journalist, who has to be very attentive with this. (Monturil, 2017) (Our translation)

In addition to these caveats highlighted by the own interviewees, the next and last section of this paper will point out some issues that we need to be aware of regarding the use of mobile devices in audiovisual journalism. It is believed that in this way it is also possible to indicate suggestions for future improvements of processes and products with and for smartphones.

#### 4. CONCLUSION: NECESSARY RESTRICTIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

It was possible to notice, from the considerations made throughout this paper, that audiovisual journalism has appropriated the mobile devices in multiple ways by its professionals, whether in a totally conscious way or not. Several of these strategies have a direct or indirect relation to the decrease in the historical credibility attributed

to certain journalistic organizations (Küng, 2015), in that it seeks to use, for example, images as indisputable proofs that the event occurred in the way it is being narrated by the journalist. It is, therefore, not only an attempt to aggregate the users' contributions, but an effective commercial and marketing need for the maintenance of communication companies.

This demands a constant, and probably unending, adaptation of these organizations and their professionals for mobile technologies. However, there are not always technical or financial conditions to follow the increasingly active dynamics of this process (Souza, 2016). As well pointed out by Douglas Cordeiro, journalism director of *TV Antena 10*:

Television stations are being forced to assimilate this; then a problem arises: the speed at which technology changes and presents new possibilities, this speed works against us. Because we can hardly adapt to a new technology, and already: either this technology has a new version or there is a more modern technology. This is all very fast. It's all very instantaneous and then we often can not keep up with that speed. It is different with the big broadcasters, because they have a much larger structure. But affiliates, for example, who have a smaller staff, suffer somewhat from this. Sometimes we get caught up here three or four days with Roberto teaching us how to work with certain equipment, then the next day he comes in and says 'oh, this one is gone'. And it is a path with no return. Either the broadcasters assimilate this, incorporate this into their production mode, into the news production process or there will come a time when broadcasters will be completely obsolete. (Cordeiro, 2017) (Our translation)

The only solution to this, perhaps, is the incessant recycling of the professionals and the technologies used. After all, digital represents a no-return path, of which journalism is already aware that it needs to be followed. However, specific sectors are more sacrificed before these challenges, such as affiliated, regional broadcasters, for example. Considering that the present research analyzes journalistic organizations from Teresina, it is fundamental to take into account that the Brazilian Northeast, although until the seventeenth century was the richest region of the country, got to the twentieth century as the poorest and most backward, due to the domination of certain political and social interests that prioritized the Center-South of Brazil (Melo & Melo, 2009; Aguiar, 2016).

Thus, seeking regional development is more than a social contribution of television broadcasters, but an initiative that may favor its own evolution and visibility on the national scene. Structural transformations, involving quantitative and qualitative innovations in their products and processes, however, are essential. One of the solutions to such challenges is very likely in the convergence. There is little to grow, being resistant to this contemporary phenomenon. And history proves this, in the words of Aguiar (2016), author who reminds us that, in the Northeast, until the end of the twentieth century, there was great resistance for the introduction of material and social innovations, due to a crystallized past in the land-holding structure (averse to the distribution of income and urbanization), which did not favor the development of the region, leading to a delay in its technical and material evolution (including telecommunications infrastructure, information systems and media organizations).

It is not a matter here, of course, the defense of the centralization of the production process in the pattern of national broadcasters. But a growing and productive exchange of knowledge, not only with these broadcasters, but also with other sectors, such as academia. After all, as suggested by authors such as Nonaka and Takeuchi (1997), the most appropriate is that the innovation process is not confined internally to the organization but also happens in the interorganizational sphere. That is, organizations need to look “out and into the future,” seeing and anticipating changes in products and production processes.

It is in this same direction that Pinho and Vasconcellos (2010) defend the creation of Collaborative Innovation Networks, which imply that innovations can emerge from internal or external sources to organizations and even from other institutional spheres, such as the university. It is a network of institutions, whether public or private, developing activities and interactions to generate innovations. According to Inkinen and Kaivo-Oja (2009), several networks are possible to be established: production, customers, normalization and policy networks are just some of the examples. In addition, innovation networks can offer the resources to transform the business model in order to achieve the increasingly necessary competitiveness in the journalistic market.

The convergence, therefore, between the potential of television, the Internet and mobile devices is appropriate and welcome; even though these benefits, from Wolff's (2015) point of view, are not always counted as efficiency. In any case, it has already been verified, throughout this research, that the professionals of the television stations of Piauí seek an exchange between the television programs and the digital platforms. Paulo Nóbrega, journalism director at TV Clube, stressed the effort to attract Internet users to television and vice versa.

If you've been following the news, we're always calling people in to go to the virtual stores and download the app for free. In fact, since the Internet has gained momentum and news sites have gained a lot of strength and credibility, we, as a TV, had to move. And then, the big leap was to see that, not as an enemy, but as a potent effect, which could potentialize their work. We have to go where all our viewers are, of course. Obviously, the viewer today is very different from when I, for example, started. Very different. The time that one stopped to watch the newspaper ... First, one is no longer faithful to a channel, or to a transmitter, or to a television news. It is very difficult to have this fidelity. Second, you can not hold people all the time in front of a TV. (Nóbrega, 2017) (Our translation)

In the same direction, there have been the initiatives of TV Antena 10. In agreement with Renato Ricarte, responsible for the social networks of the broadcaster, this exchange of content between television and the Internet is fundamental, as well as the renewal of this interaction of times, in order to maintain public interest in posts.

We put a lot of emphasis on the issues of the photos, announcing what is happening on TV, both local and national (*Record TV*). For example: soon there is *this* program, still today *so-and-so's* program will be on... and we always feed it this way. It's more a way to feed and tell the viewer what's going on and what's going to be on. (...) Sometimes we change ... I, for example, I have been taking in the last few weeks a little more journalistic information. If you look at the TV's Instagram, there are some funny videos I put in: mostly in the morning, on a Friday, that goes well. Sometimes even something more informative. And I realize that there must be change because to put in just posting, photos and videos of TV shows and Record, sometimes it saturates the subject. Then you change a little and then come back again. It's basically this, more to give satisfaction, to be feeding. On YouTube, we put the programs because people sometimes want to rewatch them. It is, indeed, the third screen. It's an alternative way for people to watch it, too. (Ricarte, 2017) (Our translation)

At *TV Cidade Verde*, the initiatives to establish convergence are not so different, although there is an even more expressive concern than in the other cases studied with the issue of mobile devices. In the opinion of the portal's head coordinator, Yala Sena, this perception may have come late judging by the current convergent situation.

We fell asleep at the wheel, actually. We noticed that, in the last year, our cell phone accesses increased by more than 50%. Before, 50% of our accesses were via Google, people via search. It's something we found a bit different, because people were looking for news via Google. And now, we are realizing that the accesses of the site *cidadeverde.com* through cell phones are increasing. So, we adopted several measures because we had a difficulty, because on the phone it was large, flat, had all this problem. And then, our technical team made an adjustment and is making the site more responsive, adapting to each device, so we are investing more. (...) What I realize is that *Cidade Verde* has been waking up now for the phone apps. The accesses are very strong; we realize this, and we are trying to make these adjustments so that the user does not get bored, because also the user wants to be at ease. (Sena, 2017) (Our translation)

This concern with the user is another important solution for audiovisual journalism in mobile devices in the medium and long term. After all, as important as understanding how these platforms work, it is also relevant to use them to reach people and track the results generated daily by the metrics in order to know and maintain your audience (Lins, 2016). As argued by Torres (2017) in a recent thesis, the concept of editorial measurement is increasingly central because it allows us to observe the strategies that organizations need to adopt to structure their production, as well as to understand the flow of circulated information. Thus, it is important to consider, in addition to the clicks, measurement units such as attention and impact, as well as issues linked to hierarchy of news and vanity metrics, monitoring beyond product and data orientation.

The TV stations studied in this research still have limited data in this regard. In any case, they already show concern, showing the importance of effectively getting to know their audience and attracting others, especially the younger ones. The constant and incessant renewal of public, products and production processes seem therefore to be the most appropriate solution for journalism. In times of mobile devices, too, innovation persists as one of the wisest and at the same time more daring alternatives.

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## THE SPACES DESIGNED FOR THE AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION IN PIAUÍ TV 1ª EDIÇÃO<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This work aims to discuss the spaces designed for public participation in the TV news Piauí TV 1ª edição, broadcasted by TV Clube, affiliated of Rede Globo in Piauí. The research analyzes how much of the program is allocated to the participation and which are the participatory mechanisms in order to promote a reflection on the role reserved to the ordinary citizen. The study has the Political Economy of Journalism as its central point and it consists in the execution of a study of quantitative and qualitative approach, using as its methodology the analysis of the contents in a week of the TV news.

### Keywords

Participation; TV news; TV Clube; Piauí TV 1ª edição.

### INTRODUCTION

“Participate. Help us build today’s program.” Followed by a contact number, this phrase has often been spoken right after the arrangement of the main TV networks from Piauí. This research aims at understanding in which form the audience participation occurs in the production of *Piauí TV 1ª edição*’s (First Edition Piauí TV) contents, broadcasted by TV Clube, an affiliate of Rede Globo in Piauí, a state located in the Northeast of Brazil, with a population of 3.2 million people.

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The *Piauí TV 1ª edição* (First Edition Piauí TV) was chosen because it is the one with the widest audience in its time range, an indicator which must be credited to the national programming schedule of Rede Globo, which is almost completely retransmitted in the state. Globo is the largest producer of audiovisual content in Brazil, whose programs comply with the requirements imposed by the “Globo Quality Standard”. This characteristic makes it more interesting that the rigid format of the TV news opening more space for the participation of lay people.

The study is based on the Political Economy of Communication, which has no other role than to offset firmly the market logic, exposing the contradictions of the capitalist system and the very recomposition of the participation of the social sectors in the various processes of communication production (Cabral, 2008).

The research *corpus* includes the programs of the week between October 10th and 15th, 2016 (six editions), marked by the beginning of a series of fires in Piauí. The sample was thus delimited to ascertain the hypothesis that the difficulty of displacing the teams to the countryside of the state would make the TV news use amateur images.

The daily TV news, which is on between 12:00 p.m. and 12:45 p.m., from Monday to Saturday, is divided into four blocks, hosted by the journalists Aline Moreira and Marcelo Magno, who took turns in hosting during the analyzed week, possibly due to the holiday on October 12, day of Nossa Senhora Aparecida (Our Lady of Conception) and Children’s day.

The *Piauí TV 1ª edição* is one of the main products of TV Clube<sup>5</sup> in terms of audience and also in the number of people involved in the production, being one of the five programs produced by the network, as the remaining part of the schedule consists on the retransmission of Rede Globo programs.

The TV news shows “are the primary mean of information of the Brazilians, at local and national level, and clearly fulfill a public function in Brazil, a country marked by unequal access to consumer

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<sup>5</sup> Launched in 1972, Rede Clube from Teresina was the first TV broadcaster in Piauí, being the one with the highest audience among broadcasters with commercial purposes in Piauí.

goods and also to essential rights” (Coutinho & Mata, 2010, p. 235) (Our translation). It should be noted that only 36.9% of Piauí households have access to the Internet, according to the National Survey by Household Sample 2015, of the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE – Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics).

Although it maintains a strong presence in the homes of Brazilian families, the free-to-air television has faced constant falls in the national scope, motivated mainly by the competition with the cable TV and with the internet. The number of plugged TVs decreases year after year, and broadcasters have lost 28% of the audience in the period from 2000 to 2013, representing an average of two percentage points less annually (Becker; Gambaro & Souza Filho, 2015).

The sudden change occurred in the media landscape in recent years is due not only to technological innovation, but to how users chose to appropriate of the instruments and how they built new procedures of intervention. Cardoso (2010) argues that we have surpassed the communication model based on mass communication to a model based on network communication.

This scenario has forced television to seek more the audience integration and participation. Silva (2012, p.11) states that the rising collaboration of the viewers in producing the news facilitates the maintenance of a link with the TV news, and assists the journalists in the anticipated construction of the audience. This is because, “by suggesting agendas, sending images, complaints and staggering news, the viewer ‘tells’ journalists what they want to consume as news.” (Our translation).

Although the new technologies allow a greater participation of the audience in the production of news, the audience has never been passive (Jenkins, 2008; Alves, 2016), there was only a change in the instruments used, like smartphones, that allow the viewer to send videos and audios that are daily broadcast on TV news. Nevertheless, Silverstone (1999) warns that not all access can be viewed as participation and not all participation can be seen as effective.

[...] the falling costs of the equipment and stages of the program production process, as well as the transmission of content by radio and TV stations, also increase the chorus for the recomposition of the sector in its various aspects: financing, training, spaces for broadcasting, in the face of the imminence of access or of a simulacrum of participation impinging on the population, potentially producer with respect to the effectiveness of the digital support (Cabral, 2008, p. 78) (Our translation)

The *Piauí TV 1ª edição* brings the audience into the TV news, with the production of segments such as *Vistoria do Calendário* (Calendar Inspection) fruit of the suggestions sent by the viewers, and *Criança Faz Cada Pergunta* (Children Ask Tricky Questions), which uses videos recorded with children and sent by parents or guardians.

We also analyzed the questions from viewers which were asked to interviewees at the studio and the predominant sources in the articles. In four of the six editions, the segments involving the participation of the audience were announced on the enlisting<sup>6</sup>. Only on the October 15 issue, Saturday, the production contact phone was announced and broadcasted on-screen characters during the enlisting.

**Table 1.** Announcement of participation spaces on the enlisting.

Day	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>Announcement on Enlisting</b>	X		X		X	X

Source: The authors.

## 1. PARTICIPATION

Bordenave (2013) defines participation as a universal human need, therefore, an individual's right, and, as such, it should be encouraged. The author emphasizes that this participation is learned and perfected, although it is conditioned by a series of factors, such as personal issues, group size, social structure and the philosophy of the institution.

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<sup>6</sup> The day's headlines narrated by the TV hosts at the opening of the news.

Facilitated by organization and communicational flows, participation can solve, but it can also generate conflicts. “It can be deployed both for liberation and equality goals and for maintaining a situation of control of many by some” (Bordenave, 2013, p.12) (Our translation).

By differentiating the types of participation in active and passive, the author points out three levels: to *be part*, in an idea of passivity; *take part*, already in a situation of active participation; and *be a part*, involving loyalty and responsibility of the participant individuals.

It is reasonable to approach two of the main criticisms to participation. Outhwaite (1996) points out that this participation has become extremely difficult because of the breadth of the modern government and because of the need to make faster and faster decisions. In this case, society is seen as an element that hinders decision making, by making the process cumbersome.

The second criticism is that people only participate to defend their own interests. “Participants are not always interested in carefully considering the views of other participants or in reformulating their own positions, meeting the demands of a critical-rational debate. Very often, individuals make their own ideas advance”(Maia, 2007, p. 51). (Our translation)

Dagnino (1994) also warns that it will always be possible to say that the spaces of participation are instituted by the State with self-legitimizing intentions, serving as instruments of co-optation. The author enumerates the difficulties for the popular sectors to effectively play this role as a co-participant in city management: asymmetries of information, use of language and technical know-how. However, she contends that none of those arguments serves as a pretext for discarding that possibility.

Communication is one of the operative tools of participation, which maintains a skeptical position in relation to the power to expand the participation of the communication means in stating that “the means of communication in our ‘democratic’ capitalist society are far from encouraging popular participation, as, being owned by hegemonic social groups, they serve their own interests” (Bordenave, 2013, p. 69) (Our translation).

Dourado (2013) agrees with Bordenave when he says that the means of communication have a fundamental importance in the exercise of citizenship in modern democracies, but that they have their potential limited by their performance as an economic entity.

Bolaño (1995, p. 2) shows concern about the path followed by the concept of participation, "dangerously resemantized by sectors of the Latin American academy that, far from the 70's political projects, approach the needs of the market ideology, discovering the sovereignty of the recipient and the realization of citizenship in consumption" (Our translation).

Based on these reflections, we will now turn to the participation spaces found on *Piauí TV 1ª edição*, observing the role assumed by the audience in the production of content.

## 2. SPACES OF PARTICIPATION

For Bobbio, Matteucci and Pasquino (1998, p.890), one of the factors that condition the participation is constituted by structures or occasions of participation, "broadly determined by the environment in which the individual moves." (Our translation)

The purpose of this research goes beyond identifying the types of participation offered in the different spaces of *Piauí TV 1ª edição*. After all, "participatory instruments must be questioned under at least two main critical points: who participates and what inequalities subsist in the participation" (Milani, 2008, p.552) (our translation), which requires a more in-depth analysis, whose results of which will be presented next.

### 2.1 Issues

Coutinho and Mata (2010, p. 241) determined that, in the majority of local and regional TV networks, their own production is mostly occupied by telejournalism and that "in local TV news the population assumes a more active role, of protagonism in the stories

woven individually, and sometimes uses TV networks to claim their rights." This ascertainment applies to *Piauí TV 1ª edição*, but to reach this conclusion, we have tried to verify the protagonism of the audience in the production of the articles, especially by the number of times the microphone was conceded to ordinary citizens.

As this research focuses on the audience participation, we will adopt the work of Sigal (1973, p.3) that differs official sources, in other words, governmental, of all others. "The first represents the constituted powers and has a facilitated access to usual channels; while the non-governmental, or 'unknown' becomes news as long as it is involved in spectacular occurrences or actions."

By this classification, people identified as members of associations, community organizations and rural unions were considered non-governmental sources.

Out of the 19 articles exhibited by *Piauí TV 1ª edição* during the analyzed week, only in one of them the number of official sources exceeded the number of non-governmental sources. This outstanding article was broadcasted on October 14th, and it was about the performance of the Fire Department in the fight against the wildfires that devastated Piauí in the period studied.

In 16 articles, the number of non-governmental sources predominates over the official sources and, among these, six have no official sources. The themes are related to the articles raised by the social bias: risk of increased unemployment with the possible prohibition of *vaquejadas*<sup>7</sup> throughout the country, mass for the day of Our Lady of Conception, the project for the Reform of High School Education, bushfires in Teresina, Teacher's Day and *Parkinson's disease*.

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<sup>7</sup> *Vaquejada* is a typical activity from the Northeast of Brazil in which cowboys (*vaqueiros*) on horseback pursue a bull, seeking to pin it between the two horses and direct it to a goal where the animal is then knocked over. (From Wikipedia.org).

**Table 2.** Official and non-official sources in the articles:

Day	No. of articles	No. of articles with higher number of unofficial sources	No. of articles with higher number of official sources	Nº of articles with equal number of official and unofficial sources
10	4	3	-	1
11	3	2	-	1
12	5	5	-	-
13	1	1	-	-
14	2	1	1	-
15	4	4	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

Source: The authors

The segments *Vistoria do Calendário* (Calendar Inspection) and (*Children Ask Tricky Questions*) were not accounted as articles, which certainly would raise the percentage of those who do not bring official sources. Also, the notes, the *stand ups* and the noise emissions produced in isolation were not accounted. Except on the 12th, on the other days, at least one of the articles was broadcasted without the credit (name) of one or more non-governmental sources. Regardless of whether this has occurred due to technical problems related to work routine or any other reason, the lack of identification compromises their legitimacy.

**Table 3.** Articles without identification of their sources

Day	No. of articles	No. of articles broadcasted with one or more unidentified sources
10	4	2
11	3	1
12	5	2
13	1	1
14	2	1
15	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>

Source: The authors

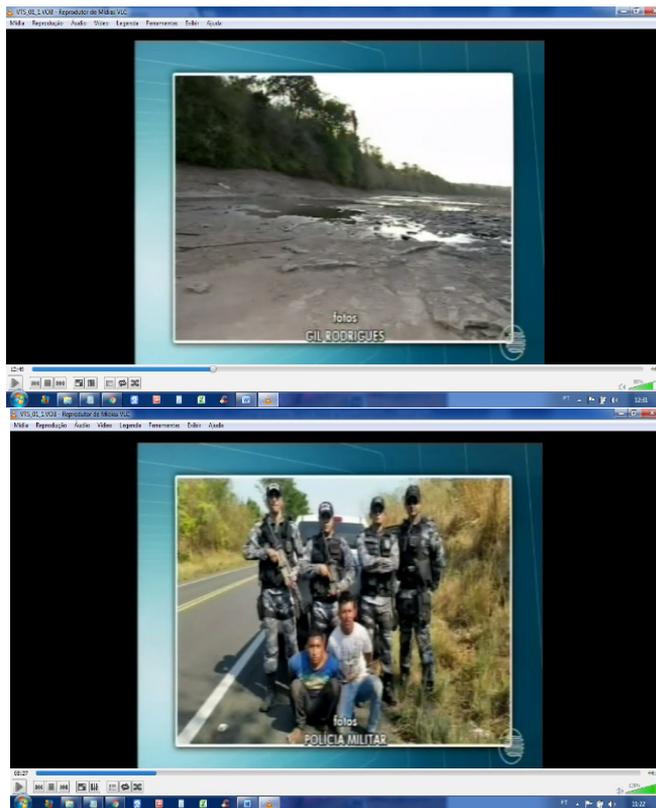
*Piauí TV 1ª edição*, in general, does not utilize the images produced by amateurs, which contradicts the initial hypothesis, that the cases of fires in many cities would provide the use of videos uploaded by countryside people to enrich the news coverage.

On October 13th, in the article on the fires in the capital, it is possible to hear the cameraman himself asking questions to a resident whose house is on fire. The lack of a directional microphone leads one to believe that it is a material produced by an amateur, although the images have excellent quality. In an interview carried out exclusively for this research, the host Marcelo Magno says that the TV network often sends their own cameramen on motorcycles to get to certain events more quickly, which would have been the case of the above-mentioned article.



Source: *Prints* of the article in which the cameraman asked the questions (on 10/13/16).

However, in the edition of October 12th, photos of the Rio Longá riverbed, by drought, were broadcasted. The images are credited to Gil Rodrigues, probably a resident of the region. In the same article, notes are posted covered with photos of different police operations sent by the Civil Police, Military Police and Polinter.



Source: *Prints* of the article from 10/12/16.

The resistance to use amateurish images is a result of the techno-aesthetic standard adopted by Rede Globo, defined by Bolaño (2000) as the configuration of techniques, aesthetic forms, strategies, structures, that define the production standards historically determined by a company or a particular cultural producer for whom this pattern is a source of barriers to entry.

## 2.2 Live Participations

The ordinary citizen does not participate in the live insertions in the same condition as the reporter or official sources do. It is possible that this characteristic occurs due to the unpredictability of such participation, which would imply the lack of control by the network.

On the 13th, the reporter Renan Nunes goes live from União-PI to talk about the fires that occurred in the town and their resulting damages. At some point, an audible with a resident is broadcasted. It should be noted that the resident's participation was recorded and edited prior to airing. This was the only time that a non-governmental source was allowed speech, even if recorded, during a live.

Only on two occasions the reporter went live on the *Piauí TV 1<sup>a</sup> edição* (First Edition Piauí TV) alone. In the others, all of them counted on the participation of an official source.

**Table 4.** Live

Day	No. of live	Only the reporter	The Reporter + An Official Source	The Reporter + An Unofficial Source
10	3	-	3	-
11	3	1	2	-
12	3	1	2*	-
13	4	2	1	1**
14	2	-	2	-
15	1	-	1*	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>

Source: The authors

\*Cultural producers responsible for the events reported live were considered official sources.

\*\* During the live transmission on the fires in Union an audible recorded with a resident was transmitted.

### 2.3 Studio Interviews

During the week, three live interviews were conducted in the studio, two took place on the 13th - with Major José Veloso, public relations of the Fire Department, and with the otolaryngologist Tovar Luz -, and a third interview on the 15th, with the neurologist Leonardo Moura. In all of them, the presenters remained with a tablet in their hands to read the questions sent by the viewers.

On the 13th, the television news was presented by Marcelo Magno, who did not announce an interview with Major José Veloso in the beginning, but announced the studio with the otolaryngologist about health problems caused by smoke from the fires, although he did not inform the contact number so viewers could send their questions. It was only at the beginning of the second interview that the phone numbers were available on the screen, but is important to highlight that the presenter did not say anything to encourage participation.

During the first interview, the presenter did not attribute any questions to the viewers. But in the second interview, when talking to the doctor, Marcelo Magno asks a question of a person named “Regina”, without her surname or locality, probably sent to the *Whatsapp* number of *Piauí TV* and received through the tablet. No other question is attributed to the viewers, although there were several questions.

On the 15th, the presenter Aline Moreira announced an interview with the neurologist about Parkinson’s disease in the beginning of the program, and informed the telephone numbers by which viewers could send questions to the specialist. The numbers were also placed on the screen, in a clear incentive to public participation.



Source: Screenshot of the show on Oct. 15th.

Among the various questions asked by the presenter, three of them were identified as being from viewers. In the first, Aline Moreira refers to the author of the question as “Maria da Cruz”; in the second she informs that it is a “viewer’s question”; and in the third she says that it is “a person asking”. In the latter two cases, the omission of the viewers’ names may be due to a number of factors, such as requests from the participants themselves, as they both revealed personal health problems.

The TV studio is transformed into a collective doctor’s office, where people located in different parts of the state have their questions answered by experts. This strategy represents a service provision space, while working as an audience-winning mechanism.

**Chart 5.** Studio interviews

Dia	Studio interviews	Telephone Number released to viewers’ questions	Questions attributed to viewers
10	-	-	-
11	-	-	-
13	2	Only in the beginning of the second interview	Only on the second interview
15	1	In the beginning and during the interview	YES.

Source: The Authors

#### 2.4 *Vistoria do Calendário* (Calendar Inspection)

Presented exclusively by *Piauí TV 1ª edição*, the section ***Vistoria do Calendário* (Calendar Inspection)** is an unfolding of *Calendário* (Calendar), implemented in February 2011, as part of the editorial project of the Network’s community journalism. The latter “is a proposal in which the viewer, at the time of the station’s agenda, dialogues with public agents, demanding improvements for their neighborhoods” (Caland, 2014, p.6) (Our translation).

The section ***Vistoria do Calendário***, in turn, consists of the return to the locality, to check if the public authority made the improvement requested by the population, and usually the return occurs on a date scheduled by the public manager on the occasion of the *Calendário* segment.

In a report of the *Portal da Clube (Clube's Website)* (Rede Clube, 2016), the station celebrates the mark of 52 cases resolved in 2016, out of a total of 220 complaints and denunciations made to the TV news. In the same report, the host Marcelo Magno says that the “section became so strong that it was reflected in the qualitative and audience researches”.

Caland's work (2014, p.58-59) reinforces this argument by means of an interview with Teresina's then-director of journalism, Paulo Rogério Fernandes, in which he states: “The return is enormous. The audience of the news item increased from 23 points to 30 points, according to Ibope's latest poll. Some viewers call, not *Piauí TV*, but the *Calendário* (Calendar) program. So, you can have an idea of its strength”.

The call for people to participate, to send complaints, ends up becoming a social brand, to defend the citizens' rights, when, in fact, it is also a marketing strategy, to translate participation into audience. According to Dourado (2012, p. 99), “social marketing and merchandising act as important tools inserted in marketing communication, always aiming at a greater interaction with the consumer.” (Our translation) In the corpus of this research, the *Calendário* (Calendar) segment was not broadcasted, although the ***Vistoria do Calendário segment*** was displayed on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. In all of them, people from the community were interviewed, many of them transformed into characters, with their difficulties explored in the report.

**Chart 6. *Vistoria do Calendário* (Calendar Inspection)**

Day	10	11	12	13	14	15
The segment is broadcasted	X	X			X	X

Source: The Authors

According to Caland (2014), the most common requests made by viewers are polyhedral and asphalt paving, sewage system, land cleaning, water supply, security and street lighting supply, rebuilding of schools, health centers, sewage systems and squares, and traffic signs. The segment is suspended during the election period to avoid political use of it.

For Pateman (1992), participation is educational and promotes, through a process of training and awareness, the development of citizenship, whose exercise contributes to the rupture of the cycle of subordination and social injustices. But, in the case in question, even allowing the participation of the ordinary citizen in the TV news, the segment reinforces the idea that the population needs the press to solve their problems, as by themselves they have no force to claim, so it is a participation that does not empower the viewer.

Caland (2014, p. 85) reveals that viewers overvalue the segment and "stand as co-adjutants in the process where, at first glance, they seem to ignore that public authorities must fulfill their obligations and meet the wishes of the population, without the need of being pressured by the media". (Our translation).

The *Vistoria do Calendário* does not record with authorities, that is, the official sources. The managers' responses are sent in the form of notes on behalf of the complained organization, which are usually read after the report has been broadcasted with the people from the locality. While prioritizing the complaint, this type of approach results in less wear and tear for the manager, who has neither his image nor his name exposed.

A curious point is that none of the segments displayed in the week in question identifies the person who submitted the suggestion transmitted. In the interview granted for this research, Marcelo Magno affirms that there is a concern so that the segment does not serve as a political springboard for community leaderships.

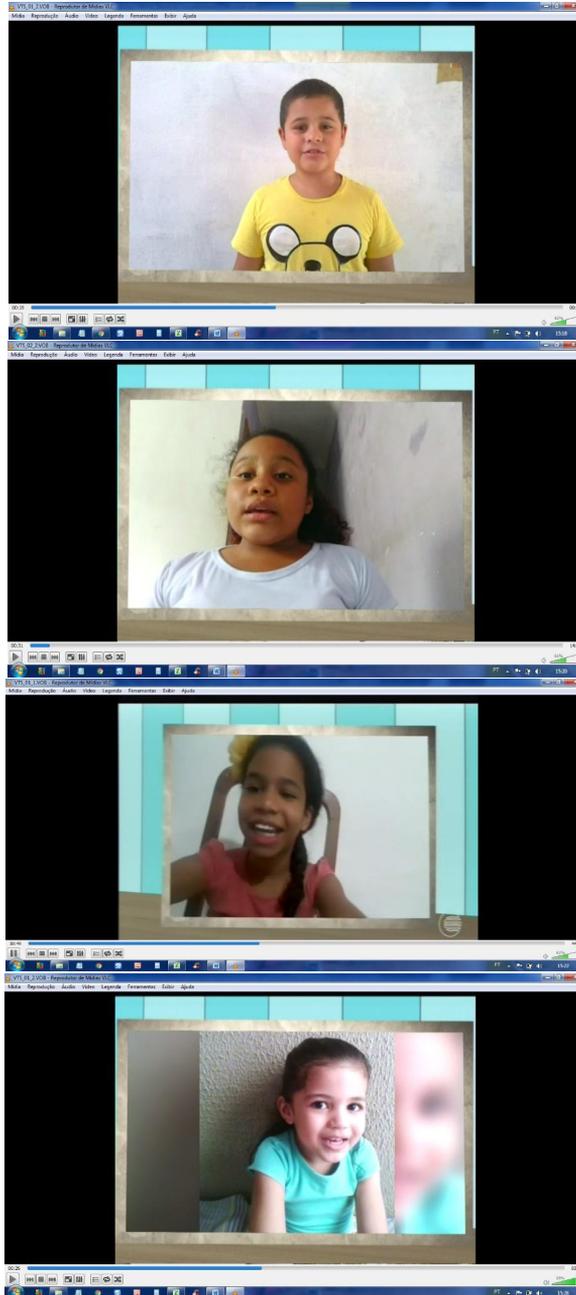
## 2.5 *Criança Faz Cada Pergunta* (Children Ask Tricky Questions)

“Life is not a bed of roses when it comes to children, right? Come on! They’re beautiful, they’re funny, they bring a damn joy into our lives, but who’s never been in a tight spot when they ask you those questions that you cannot answer?” (Our translation) That is how the section ***Criança Faz Cada Pergunta* (Children Ask Tricky Questions)** is announced on October 10<sup>th</sup> as a tribute to Children’s Day celebrated on the 12th.

The host, Marcelo Magno, informs that the videos that were selected among the ones sent by the viewers the previous week will be displayed from a provocation of *Piauí TV 1ª edição*. The videos bring children asking varied questions, and then the answers recorded with experts by the journalist Aline Moreira are displayed.

Araújo (2011) points out that the relative ease of access to smartphones with digital cameras and the popularization of video editing programs have enabled the TV to open a more meaningful space for the viewer to participate, whether in expressing their dissatisfaction or to see themselves even as news. “There is an increase in the forms of participation of the recipients in different media, which evokes a new look at the production processes that involve journalistic practice” (Amorim, 2009, pp. 45-46) (Our translation).

During the week 13 videos were broadcasted with 15 children. They are amateur videos, recorded using cell phones, at a front angle, suggesting some public familiarity with the type of video that can be transmitted.



Source: Screenshots of the show on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Chart 7. Criança Faz Cada Pergunta (Children Ask Tricky Questions)**

Day	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>The Section is Transmitted</b>	X	X	X		X	X

Source: The Authors

While announcing them, the presenters used expressions such as “it’s time for the kids to talk”, “it’s time for the kids to see themselves”, giving a playful tone to the inserts.

There were controversial points, such as the choice of experts to answer the questions, such as a priest who was asked to respond to how God created people, since Catholicism does not answer this question satisfactorily for all religions; or a cardiologist to explain why there are diseases at all.

Several experts use terms that may compromise the child’s understanding, such as “racial slander,” “analog signal,” “satellite reception,” and “lineage.” On the other hand, in some cases, the answers were directed to the children with more accessible vocabulary, as the example of the obstetrician who said that would answer the question “how you would respond to your own daughter”.

By the end of one of the segments, the host says "There’s the answer to Thayanne’s question" , although there is no indication that the child watched the news or that she understood the explanation given by the specialist. Therefore, it is evident that the purpose of the framework is not to fulfill the mission of informing but to amuse, and for Silverstone (1999), play in media is a space in which meanings are built by participation within a shared and structured place.

#### FINAL REMARKS

We noticed that the live space of *Piauí TV 1ª edição* (First Edition Piauí TV) is reserved to the authorities, to the official sources, while the reports are priority space of the people, of their demands. Contrary to expectations, the TV news did not use amateur images to register the fires inside the state.

Announcements of the participation spaces in the beginning of the transmission demonstrate the importance that the insertion of the public assumed in the business model that is configured, since these beginnings can be seen as a propagandistic appeal, a kind of teaser. However, the main role assumed by the participation is to entertain and attract the attention of the viewer in order to generate audience, essential in the dispute for advertising investments.

Looking at the new technologies and, specially, for the online environment, Gillmor (2004, p. 137) says that now “the user is truly in power,” (Our translation) but it must be considered that the processes of selection, editing, and vehiculation of are still exclusive of journalists. This leads us to suggest the realization of a field research to ascertain the quantity of videos and suggestions sent to the production of the *Piauí TV 1ª edição*, as well as to inquire how the selection of this material happens, from the perspective of the gatekeeper.

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## COMMUNICATION COLLECTIVES IN BRAZIL: Emergence and socio-historical contexts<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The communication collectives have become a contemporary, heterogeneous, alive and fragmented phenomenon, that defines itself as alternative and independent, standing in opposition to hegemonic models of communication of business format established in Brazil throughout the twentieth century. Using technology tools, they produce content in different arrangements, usually in more horizontal formats, often in a collaborative way. This study approaches the communication collectives in Brazil seeking to fulfill the following points: to define them and to historically understand the discursive affiliations in which they subscribe; to contextualize their emergence; to present a mapping of these movements. In the end, we will try to situate them from the processes of reconfiguration of the social movements of the last decades.

**Keywords:** collective; collective communication; social movements.

### INTRODUCTION

June 2013 was marked by the largest wave of protests in Brazil since the impeachment movement of the former President Collor de Melo in 1992<sup>4</sup>. The protests share certain characteristics similar to the

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<sup>4</sup> The movements of June 2013 receive some denominations, as Gohn (2015) observes: in the media they are called demonstrations. “Journeys, acts, wave, mass protests, mobilizations, revolts, are other denominations found” (Gohn, 2015, p.8). The author usually uses the terms demonstrations and acts of protest. Among the protesters, the use of the term June Journeys became more common. The term refers to the July Days, series of events and street demonstrations that mark the Russian Revolution of 1917, taking the Bolshevik party to power, later called the Communist Party (Fitzpatrick, 2017). Also called the June Days were the demonstrations of the workers’ revolt that occurred in Paris in June 1848 during the Second French Republic, which was conservative, reactionary and hostile to socialism (Agulhon, 1991)

demonstrations that happened just before in the world, as in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya (which became known as the Arab Spring), in several European countries (such as the Indignados Movement in Spain) and the United States (Occupy) (Castells, 2013; Alves, 2012). In common, these different movements sought the questioning of capitalism, the critique of globalization, the refusal to hierarchies, the demands for better public services. They also reflect the disenchantment of the population with representative systems (Gohn, 2015; Gohn & Bringel, 2014; Castells, 2013).

These demonstrations were also marked by the intense use of communication through social media as instruments of organization and dissemination of political action. And in this regard, these new forms of communication are part of a double logic. On the one hand, they engaged in the construction of an alternative, counter-hegemonic account of events when compared to state media (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012) or mainstream media vehicles (Gohn, 2015; Gohn & Bringel, 2013; Alves, 2012). On the other hand, they organized themselves from a more horizontal logic, adopting a model (and, in a way, an identity) associated with what has been called in Brazil “communication collectives”.

These groups operate in a decentralized way, with massive use of smartphones, little financial investment, networking and resorting to voluntary journalists as well as non-professionals in the area of communication - a format that at that moment surprises the mainstream media. They are willing to dispute the narrative about the present time with the other media outlets, imposing themselves a difficult task, since, historically, the Brazilian public space has been mostly occupied by the mainstream media. The communication collectives elect guidelines for human rights, and when they question the major media, they end up finding resonance in part of the public that, over time, already developed critical capacities before journalistic narratives, as several studies already showed (De Certeau, 2000; Bourdieu, 2007, 2009).

The specificity of communication collectives resides, therefore, in a set of practices (based on the use of social media and a more horizontal model of information production) and in the production

of a counter-hegemonic discourse on reality. They are also actors who occupy an outsider position in the broader context of the Brazilian media system, often standing in opposition (or even in confrontation) to the mainstream media. These characteristics suggest a process of (self) construction of a *locus* and of a specific *ethos* to these collectives as agents of renewal of journalism and political action in Brazil. But what would this *ethos* be? What characteristics allow us to group this diversity of initiatives, with often different political and editorial projects and logics of functioning (Roxo, Grohmann & Marques, 2017) as belonging to the same movement? And how do these collectives fit into a logic of change and permanence in the broader context of the reconfigurations of social movements and journalistic practice?

These questions reveal that despite the proliferation of these collectives and the growing interest of the academic community in their practices (Sousa, 2017; Maia et al., 2017, Oliveira & Gronmann, 2015), there is still room for a more conceptual discussion in relation to this object. This is the purpose of this chapter, which seeks to question a double movement of naturalization of these communication collectives. On the one hand, it aims to deconstruct the definition associated with techno-determinist discourse, which tends to consider these movements as a direct result of the introduction of digital technologies, particularly social networks. On the other hand, we also seek to distance ourselves from the (naive) discourses of mythification that situate the emergence of these movements as a result of an almost spontaneous generation, of political and media manifestations in the international public scene - particularly the waves of demonstrations that have occurred in different countries in recent years. We defend here that the communication collectives are inscribed, to a certain extent, in more structured processes of reconfiguration of the relations between media and social movements.

To advance in this discussion, this chapter performs three moves. First, a still incipient effort of archeology of these collectives trying to recover - based on the methodology developed by Le Cam (2010) - the discursive affiliations that perpass the practice of these actors. Second, in an effort to insert these collectives into the processes of transformation of journalism, partly triggered by the proliferation of

social networks. And finally, we seek to situate the status of these new actors in the broader phenomenon of renewal of social movements as of the end of the twentieth century.

#### THE HEIRS OF A COUNTER-HEGEMONIC DISCOURSE

What we name here communication collectives proliferate in the first decades of the 21st century and usually call the terms “alternative” and “independent” in their own definition. Thus, they pose as alternatives to large-format media that are predominantly entrepreneurial - in that they seek another narrative for events or choose guidelines or approaches that they consider to be neglected - and independent - when they seek to escape traditional forms of conventional journalism financing, trying to guarantee editorial independence, derived from financial independence, through various forms of financing.

The production of this discourse in defense of a counter-hegemonic status, as opposed to the traditional media, refers to an earlier historical affiliation, that of the universe of the Brazilian anarchist press of the early twentieth century. In a context of the proliferation of the working class in Brazil, libertarian activists began to take on the role of “journalists (activist-journalists) to produce a counter-hegemonic discourse that instigated new forms and social relations and breaking with the current model, implementing a model based on anarchist ideals” (Strongren, 2017, p.19), including themes such as “freedom, emancipation, autonomy and solidarity” (Strongren, 2017, p.17).

This affiliation will be resumed by the different experiences of alternative press that have emerged in Brazil since the 1950s and proliferate, especially in the following decades, during the military regime. Kucinsky (2003) speaks of at least 150 alternative or nano papers edited in that period. In spite of the diversity of editorial projects, “what identified all the alternative press was the contingency of ideological political combat against dictatorship, the tradition of struggles for structural change and orthodox criticism of peripheral capitalism and imperialism” (Kucinsky, 2003, p. 19). They thus constituted a space for

the expression of a homogeneous collective consciousness through the practice of integral journalism.

These media were, therefore, alternatives not only to the current political and economic models, but to the vertical structure of traditional media companies. They are part of the context of the proliferation of cooperative culture in Brazil<sup>5</sup>, but also in Europe<sup>6</sup>. They are autonomous entities, without owners (or, in other words, where members are owners), in which individuals unite voluntarily, based on concepts such as mutual action, collaboration and solidarity, as a political and economic alternative to capitalism (Gaiger, 2016; Cefai, 2011; Razeto, 1997, 2002).

With the end of the outbreak of the alternative press, this militant and counter-hegemonic affiliation of journalism will be resumed in the experiences of the trade union and associative press throughout the 1980s (Kucinsky, 2003) and, later, in a context of professionalization of the modalities of communication from other political and social movements, a process partially described by Sant'Anna (2009) in his work on "media of the sources"<sup>7</sup>. We can also see traces of this alternative discourse in the phenomenon of "dirty" bloggers, which emerges in 2010. As Guazina (2013, p.76) explains in a context of closing large media to the expression of alternative points of view, some journalists will combine daily professional activity with the use of the Internet as a space for the diffusion of their "individual political and / or ideological convictions".

Therefore, the alternative blog, as a space of counter-hegemonic expression, allows us to associate the political-militant affiliation of the

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<sup>5</sup> Although there are previous experiences, in Brazil the cooperatives prosper from the years of 1970, with the law 5.764/71 that disciplines the creation of cooperatives and later with the Federal Constitution of 1988, that inhibited the interference of the State and conferred power of self-management to cooperatives.

<sup>6</sup> It is at this moment, for example, that experiences of shared management of newspapers emerge in France (Ruellan, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Francisco Sant'Anna (2009) coined the term "media of the sources" to refer to a new actor in the Brazilian political scene, brought to the media sphere by sectors of civil society and public power: they are means of communication maintained by social actors until then considered only as a source of information: corporations, nongovernmental organizations, social movements, begin to have large circulation newspapers, radio stations, TV, etc.

twentieth-century journalism with the techno-libertarian discourse of the internet, whose origins go back to the appropriation of this military technology by the counter-culture movements of the United States in the years 1960-1970 (Flichy, 1999). In fact, the idea that the new technological supports (eg. social media and smartphones) would have allowed a democratization of the means of information production and the construction of a more horizontal model of communication, is much less an exclusivity of the communication collectives. It is a tributary of the internet culture itself, being periodically retaken and reconfigured, as new socio-technical devices appear and are seen as potential tools for renewal of the public media space. This is what happened with the personal pages, the alternative blogs, the different modalities of civic and citizen journalism, the social networks.

This does not mean denying the originality of the communication collectives, but reinserting them into a longer historicity of continuity and reappropriation of the three discursive affiliations that underlie this object: that of alternative journalism, that of counter-hegemonic militant discourse, and that of the internet as a tool for democratizing public space. At the same time, these collectives are also inserted in more recent processes of transformation of the journalistic practice and of the social movements themselves, as we will discuss next.

#### THE COMMUNICATION COLLECTIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE

In order to try to define what communication collectives are, it can be helpful to try to think what they are not. Thus, from this starting point, we consider it important to clarify three aspects. First, not all contemporary alternative communication vehicles are collectives, although some studies indicate the prevalence of this model. The experiences are sheltered in new forms of organization that have varied configurations, adopting individual formats, in collective and cooperatives, of journalists or communication professionals, as well as activist character - mobilized, from political causes and adopting collaborative practices, in which anyone can produce content (Mick & Tavares, 2017).

Second, even if a large part of these initiatives are composed of journalists or have journalists integrating the group, collective products that emerge in the digital format produce varied types of communication content, including journalism.

Finally: not all content-producing collectives are progressive. Gohn (2017) refers to reactionary or conservative social movements and their respective experiences of communication, equally reactionary or conservative. In this case, these actors hardly stand in opposition to traditional media, as progressive actors tend to do.

In this study we are interested in communication groups with progressive bias, which continue the tradition of alternative and/or independent journalism. These collectives, more than other models, experience collaboration, horizontality and interdependence - concepts not infrequently charged not to operate in an idealized model. Yet they help to create less hierarchical and more decentralized spaces.

Sharing this reasoning, Gaiger (2016), a critique of utilitarian models, assumes that the difficulties faced by collective formats in market-dominated environments and the risks of distortion have to a large extent to do with the fact that collaborative models are “out of place”, that is, they are of a different order than the capitalist model that dominates the corporate formats. In this way, a kind of experience that shares affinity with the communication collectives is the collective of cultural production that gains momentum in the 21st century. They allow the expression of alternative cultural manifestations, giving voice to peripheral and / or non-dominant groups, often linked to, but not only to, identity movements. Many culture collectives produce their own channels of communication. Moreover, many communication collectives are born out of the need for cultural groupings to find space to manifest themselves and to give visibility to their guidelines - often claimed as absent from the mainstream media - by feeling represented.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> In an interview to *Le Monde Diplomatique Brasil* (Sep.2017), Raul Santiago, from the collective *Papo Reto*, formed in 2014 by residents of Complexo do Alemão and Penha, in Rio de Janeiro, clarifies that the objective of the collective is to report events, protests and claims “into the hill” and, on the other hand, to put out the reality of the favela, “opposing the stigmas produced by the commercial media.” The interviewee affirms that, through the independent communication collective *Papo Reto*, they seek to make a different coverage from the corporate

Mick and Tavares (2017) consider that in the last decade the perception of some sectors of society has widened that there is a gap between what the news media say/do and what these agents believe should be said/done. Having access to the tools that allow the creation of reports on their own, the most diverse experiences come to tell the daily life that is not seen in the journalism discourse of the mainstream media, taking on the role of producing significations about their problems and environment.

Since they are distrustful of the mainstream media<sup>9</sup>, many groups and associations are trying to construct a public space and an autonomous communication, finding in the internet and in the platforms of social networks the most suitable way, for being faster, interactive, horizontal, with power amplification, independent of traditional media vehicles, allowing the desired autonomy and network organization (Castells, 2013).

This enthusiasm for the possibilities of communication via technologies changes over time, as we shall see. Nevertheless, one can observe the transition from a situation in which previous organizations and social movements, even if they had their own media outlets, sought to articulate strategies that allowed them to be visible in the mainstream media thus gaining the right to exist publicly, to a situation in which the proper channels of information circulation refuse and oppose the traditional media companies – which is the case of many communication collectives. In this regard, Gaiger (2016) suggests that one can think of “choices” on the part of the participants of the alternative organizations and not in the opportunism of the workers or emergency exit which is used in the absence of other opportunities.

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media, applying the “from the favela resident to the favela itself” and putting into practice “we for ourselves”. *Papo Reto* is an example of a collective that was born culturally and in parallel became communication, having a network of resident-collaborators who send information in a continuous way.

<sup>9</sup> Latinobarómetro has been researching the credibility of the press in 18 Latin American countries since 2004. In the last ten years, two-thirds of respondents agreed with the assertion that the media “are often influenced by institutions or powerful people” Asked about the assertion that “the media are sufficiently independent”, only a quarter of respondents agree with this premise. The media in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico were below average in credibility. Latinobarómetro is a non-profit NGO based in Santiago, Chile, responsible for the production and publication of data. Available at <<http://www.latinobarometro.org/lat.jsp>>. Accessed on: September 27, 2017.

## THE COMMUNICATION COLLECTIVES IN BRAZIL

It is from the second decade of the 21st century that the format of communication collectives begins to proliferate in Brazil. In fact, observing the growth wave of alternative journalism in Latin America, the *Inflection Point* (2016)<sup>10</sup> report produced by *SembraMedia*<sup>11</sup>, with support from *Omidyar Network*<sup>12</sup>, investigates the emergence and growth of 100 digital vehicles in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico in the last twenty years. The report refers to the format as alternative journalism, digital journalism, to even less alternative names such as digital media startups and digital entrepreneurs. According to the study, journalists are being pushed to produce independent journalism in highly politically polarized countries, where media ownership is very concentrated, with government advertising often used to reward large-circulation vehicles.

The report also highlights that the advent of easier-to-use social media and web-design tools have made digital journalism almost entirely possible with self property and effort, requiring few resources and achieving maintenance with diversified sources of revenue. The report highlights an emphasis on the collective model over the last decade. It states that these initiatives are publishing stories that other media often can not (or would not) cover due to government control or influence of financial interests.

Communication collectives find the opportunity to stimulate and take advantage of the climate of protest against traditional media. They seek, therefore, space and legitimacy when confronting powerful actors, and who, even if questioned, remain, to a great extent,

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**10** The report *Inflection Point - Impact, Threats and Sustainability: a study of Latin American digital media entrepreneurs*, according to their presentation, seeks to foster and strengthen the growing digital media ecosystem in Latin America.

**11** SembraMedia is a Spanish non-profit organization and studies the growth of Spanish-language digital alternative media. In developing the report that raises data from Argentina, Colombia and Mexico. It also included Brazil due to its proximity to the language and geography and the growth of the model in Brazil.

**12** Omidyar Network is an American philanthropic investment organization that claims to defend independent media and investigative journalism. The organization is one of the main maintainers of the Agência Pública in Brazil.

dominating the ways of being and doing in the journalistic field. For Henn and Oliveira (2015) the new actors in the communication arena are stimulated by events that already have a narrative nature, in a scenario where journalism has its condition threatened in the public sphere that constitutes a space of dispute of meanings.

Created in 2011, Agência Pública (Public Agency on a free translation) is the best known among organizations that are willing to understand and encourage independent journalism in Brazil. It is defined as non-profit and aims to study alternative media production and stimulate reporting on human rights<sup>13</sup> issues. Agência Pública is maintained by international philanthropic investment organizations such as Ford Foundation and Omidyar Network, also receiving resources through crowdfunding. The organization finances, through notices, reports from various collectives.

The growth of the collective format in Brazil led Agência Pública to propose the *Map of Independent Journalism*, a collaborative database based on suggestions from Internet users and selected by Agência Pública according to the following criteria: initiatives that are the result of a collective format, which primarily produce journalistic content, born on the internet and not linked to large media groups, politicians, organizations or companies. Data collection for the Map began in November 2015. As it is produced collaboratively, it continues to receive and select suggestions. Until the consultation for the production of this research (October 2017), 79 initiatives were registered in 12 states and in the Federal District.

Through the Independent Journalism Map, other information can be obtained: the state of São Paulo concentrates 36 collectives, almost half of the total of the Map. Among the listed initiatives, the oldest is Scream and Yell website, specialized in musical journalism, founded in 1996. The emergence of new initiatives has gone through a period of stagnation, until in 2013 it is possible to observe a jump from five to 18 new ones coinciding with the period of the June Journeys. From there, this number keeps growing<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Available at: <<https://apublica.org>>. Accessed on: September 18, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Most well-known collective of this movement is the Mídia NINJA, acronym for Independent

Of the 79 collectives, Agencia Pública states that 29 “are not yet maintained”. Among the initiatives considered sustainable, there are different funding models: subscriptions or memberships, advertising, donations of individuals or legal entities, organizing events, crowdfunding, partnerships with NGOs, public fundings and incentive laws, social movements’ contributions and personal investments. In its turn, the *Inflection Point*<sup>15</sup> report speaks of at least 15 sources of revenue used by collectives in Latin America that include advertising, consulting, training, courses, events, crowdfunding, signatures, even audience donations, which may include small-value donations which, together, would form a capital.

In seeking to escape from conventional media financing, aiming at editorial independence, collectives face issues ranging from the difficulty of investing to doubts about their longevity. Often forms of financing and associations with international bodies are also treated in a generic or nebulous manner, becoming a breeding ground for speculations that may turn against the collectives themselves, making them the targets of suspicion.

## THE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In addition to the attempt to construct an alternative media project (from the point of view of practices, discourse and forms of organization and financing), communication collectives are still part of a broader process of reconfiguration of social movements and their

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Narratives, Journalism and Action, author of much of the images that circulate and responsible for many real-time transmissions of the first protests. It was created in 2012 from Fora do Eixo, a network of collectives directed to the production of musical events, created in 2005 in Cuiabá, Mato Grosso. The Mídia NINJA is able to join the protesters, who, in large part, collaborate with the broadcasts and help to give visibility to protests throughout Brazil (Foletto, 2017). It is important to mention the Mídia NINJA because they remain in activity and served as a stimulus to other collectives that proliferated in the second decade of the 21st century and which are based on the desire to promote independent journalism, inspired by projects of the same type carried out abroad. Foletto (2017) further emphasizes that the Mídia NINJA experience becomes important for helping attract researchers from the field of communication who have since tried to understand the phenomenon of collectives.

**15** Available at: <<http://data.sembramedia.org/modelos-de-negocios/?lang=pt-br>>. Accessed on: 01 October 2017.

forms of political action (and militancy). In the 21st century, some studies began to point out the incorporation of social movements into the institutionalized political logic, a domestication of these movements and the concern with an institutionalist reading of political participation, leaving other forms of collective mobilization in the background. The institutionalized bias of the social movement differs from its original characteristic of being a form of collective action of extrainstitutional character, outside the channels sanctioned by the authorities, although some actors relate to the political institutions through several channels and spaces, but maintaining its central characteristic of confrontation (Trindade, 2017; Jasper, 2016; Tarrow, 2011). Originally, for social movements, “the action of extra-institutional character is an action endowed with a political character, not a collective behavioral deviation or the fruit of social anomie” (Trindade, 2017, p. 211).

Since the first decade of the 21st century, there has been a recovery in the debate on social movements in Brazil and in the world. This debate is partially based on the emergence of an international activism, with the return of marches and street mobilizations in the world, and a renewal in social actors, with their increasingly moving and less institutionalized practices (Gohn & Bringel, 2014).

The sociologist and political scientist Charles Tilly (1978, 2005) devised the dynamics of mobilizations within broad historical frameworks. For him, between the 17th and 19th centuries the actions were reactions to imposed structural conditions (revolts against taxes, expropriations, etc.). In the 20th and 21st centuries collective actions refer to struggles for redistribution of income and other collective services under the control of large organizations - public or private. For Gohn (2014), in the new millennium the great novelty that propelled social movements was the global format they acquired, when they are ‘pushed’ into this new context by the historical conjuncture that articulates space-time. Now they are globalized or globalizing social movements.

Gohn (2014) states that there is already a vast empirical material on these movements, but complains of theoretical gaps such as the very concept of social movement and what role they have in the 21st century.

The author considers that there is a difficulty in saying if June 2013 protests can be called social movement or it would be a mobilization. On their turn, Toro and Werneck (2007) do not reveal anguish or haste in determining if a given collective action is or is not social movement. For them “movement” is something that appears only at the end of a process, being first a mobilization. These authors interpret movement as a result and not as the initial focus of collective action.

In this perspective, we can think of the communication collectives as a situation of conflict in relation to the organized social adversary that are the conventional means of communication. Although they seek to establish differences in relation to these actors, they share the same cultural mechanism in the quest to communicate, by presenting alternative narratives about public events. In fact, since the last decades of the twentieth century, social movements have begun to turn directly against the powers that dominate the universe of instrumentality - given by the market and financial organs - and identity - that these movements seek to preserve or build (Touraine, 1997, 2005).

In terms of organization, the communication collectives seek to escape from the rigid structures of the former workers’ or trade union social movements, which are always hierarchical, centralized and focused on leaders. Some studies still point to the possibility that some of these movements may become moral movements (Gohn, 2014, 2017; Touraine, 1997, 2005, 2011). Therefore, many scholars use the term “new social movements” (Castells, 2013; Dahlgreen, 2011; Santos, 2007, 2011; Cefai, 2005, 2009). This term refers to the way some actors engage themselves in the new public arenas where boundaries of what is political are permanently displaced. In this context, new rights and new powers arise, facing constraints with established powers. Moreover, these “new social movements” seek to reinforce themselves by invoking values based on empowerment, autonomy, access to dignity, and demand the solution of new public problems, renewing militant practices.

The new social movements highlight concepts such as self-management and internal democracy, helping to put accent on the idea of collectives, whether cultural or communication. The defense of identities that characterizes these new social movements is also

reflected on the editorial choices of communication collectives, focused on subjects like feminist, ecology, anti-prejudice engagement, etc.

A list of characteristics shared by these new social movements is pointed out by Castells (2013). He observes the occupations and marches that took place around the world from 2010 on. These movements seem to be characterized by: the connection within a network in multiple forms (both global and local); the spontaneous origins usually triggered by a spark of indignation; the sentiment of companionship; the horizontality in favor of cooperation and solidarity; self-reflectiveness; the refusal of a programmatic organization, not focused on a single project; the defense of political project based on a new utopia discourse - the utopia of the autonomy of the subject in relation to the institutions; and are without leadership.

This lack of leadership for Castells (2013) should be interpreted not as a lack of potential leaders, but as a mistrust of most of the movement's participants in relation to any form of delegation of power, since the implicit rule is that be self-governing. Self-management, thus, more than an organizational procedure, becomes a political goal. And the idea of horizontality also fulfills the function of being a critique to the crisis of representation.

Gohn (2017) also talks about "brand new social movements", referring to the servants or established on the public scene in the decade of 2010. For the author, street demonstrations in Brazil are among the newest forms of social movements. She clarifies that the brand new is not, in principle, endowed with virtualities that qualify it as good or progressive, and is therefore not an analytical category, but a historical construction. Gohn (2017) emphasizes as characteristic of the newest social movements the strong use of sociodigital media. On how to think social and collective movements, the author (2017, p.23) argues that:

A collective can become a social movement or self-denominate movement, or articulate itself to a set of other collective that constitute a social movement. Or, still, deny the social movement form, considering it stuck to the traditional models of doing politics.

During June 2013 protests, many demonstrators preferred to call themselves members of collective groups than defining themselves as a social movement. Gohn (2014) suggests that the militant category

is renumbered as “social activist”, an actor who gains more space with the advancement of social media. In this regard, Cefai (2005, p.144) refers to the communicative practices of social movements that use social media as “mediativism”. The author affirms that the movements perceived the party they could draw from cyberspace: “minimum costs, greater symmetry between producers and consumers of information, an immediate ubiquity of messages without any delay in time, a formidable instrument of communication and coordination among activists.”

The technical potentialities of digital resources have influenced the imaginary of much of the debate. For Castells (2013) the communication environment affects the production of power relations in society and the arrival of the Internet would have the role of invigorating democracy by the possibility it creates of cheaper, faster and more accessible communication between people who might not get in touch.

On the other hand, changes in the very path of development of social media technologies and their appropriation by capital have been holding back excessive enthusiasm, since the mainstream media continues to have a strong influence on public debate at the same time as social media remains under the control of the state and of the companies that organize these networks, which increasingly assume the role of also monitoring the visibility of what is published.

In this way, Salter (2004) argues that technology is not a neutral instrument and that its constitutive structure limits its use, having behind the development of technologies a complex and dynamic process involving different actors, interests and contexts. Da Silva, Bragatto and Sampaio (2016, p. 29) corroborate this idea by stating that social media platforms “are generally private and organized through rules and algorithms that are not publicly known and serve exclusively market interests.” Thus, State and the corporations who control social media (such as Google and Facebook), whether in the form of laws and regulations or the manipulation of what is made visible in search of capitalization, make the social network a space under control, increasingly watched and of relative autonomy.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter sought to contribute to an initial discussion regarding the format of the collectives, to highlight the context of its emergence and the emergence of the phenomenon in Brazil. In the study we still call the socio-historical inscription of these collectives in a logic of continuity in relation to other discursive affiliations that support the proposal of horizontal and counter-hegemonic communication - a movement that will be enhanced by the techno-optimist discourses in relation to the democratizing role of the internet. We also show the extent to which these groups are part of broader processes of renewal of journalism (as opposed to the discourses of “crisis” of this practice) and reconfiguration of social movements.

Obviously, these processes are no longer mediated and favored by the emergence of new technological supports, particularly the proliferation of smartphones and the intensive use of social networks as tools of information circulation. However, we can not forget - and here we point out - that there is no consensus on the power of social media, and with that of the communication collectives, as channels for the inclusion of discourses, political debates and contributions to modern democracies. In addition to competing with consolidated vehicles, collectives find obstacles in the laws and regulations of the state and in the companies that control social media. Therefore, reflecting on communication collectives is important because it is also a reflection on the power of the media and the use and opportunities of communication.

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## POPULARIZING THE POPULAR: strategies of delegitimization of the alternative communication by traditional media groups

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### Abstract

This research addresses many strategies adopted by traditional media groups to bring their contents and products closer to the people. At the same time, they build an identity in which they refer themselves as legitimate to deal with popular issues through various audiovisual genres. The research articulates references of the audiovisual field and of the Political Economy of Communication with the analysis of programs and processes that characterize the presented strategies. It is proposed that, through these strategies, traditional media groups conform a proper definition of the popular through their audiovisual products, contributing to disqualify alternative communication initiatives that would provide greater cultural diversity to the communication system.

### Keywords

Political Economy of Communication; Alternative Communication; media groups; Communication policies; cultural diversity.

## INTRODUCTION

The absence of a Communication sector distinct from the state-owned public and the private-commercial one is constructed not only by the inexistence of a policy that enables its continuity, but also of a process of delegitimation historically established from traditional

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means of communication that mobilize the public opinion in favor of a logic of approaching the popular from the entertainment.

The present text seeks to explore this *modus operandi* of popularization of the popular through traditional means of communication. Part of the consolidation of the media concentration in the country, which enabled the affirmation of the hegemony of the private sector, the own stagnation of the public-state sector and the stigmatization of community communication initiatives.

Next it demonstrates that the consolidation of this hegemony has been facing threats both by the growing expansion of alternative communication initiatives implemented from diverse social organizations and by the consolidation of the Internet as a platform for production and sharing of different contents that propel the participation of the most distinguished producers, constituting streams of information and contents that travel aside traditional media groups.

Finally, it analyzes strategies implemented by traditional media groups to reinforce this popularization of the popular, either through various entertainment products in various television genres, or by disqualifying community communication initiatives and formulating and implementing policies that could legitimize them.

Thus, the objective is to understand an extremely sensitive problem in the face of the need to formulate democratic communication policies in the country, which involves both the training of professionals for the various activities around this professional practice, and the mobilization of sectors of society that struggle for the affirmation of democratic communication as a human right.

## 1. CONSOLIDATION OF THE HEGEMONY OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA GROUPS

The concentration of the media groups is a reality in all countries, which interferes with the pluralism and diversity of the content of the programs presented to the people, disregarding the culture and the subjects that should be of interest to the population, regarding the

formation of citizenship and human rights valorization. What matters for the media market is to group several companies into diverse areas capable of forming a conglomerate, from the result of mergers, acquisitions and/or the creation of a new group, where the focus is to rationalize costs and risks, acquiring more power and generating profits, leading to a monopoly and/or oligopoly in a particular country or region.

It can not be ignored that the legislation of each country is different, working with the reality of its people and territory. It is not possible to offer the same content to every and/or any country or small municipality. It is necessary to consider the culture, economy, politics, the reality of each place. It is a fact that media "entrepreneurs" look at communication as a lucrative business. As such, they avoid interventions by governments and civil society and stand as the "capable" ones to direct their investments. However, media can not be placed as a commodity. Media concentration causes social and cultural impacts on society. It is necessary, therefore, to know the scenario to avoid that it is maintained and strengthens the abuse of power and the influence on the society.

Dênis de Moraes (2013, pp.20-21) verified that there is still a mediatic and reproductive concentration logic of the market and technological culture that has as its axes the digitization, virtualization, symbolic mercantilization and internationalization of businesses. From the study of the audiences and from the constant market research, it is verified who the public is and what it likes, not ignoring, however, the editorial line of each vehicle.

Media conglomerates know that they should be under laws that would limit them, by interfering directly in people's lives. At the same time, they have a notion that they can overthrow or raise politicians and party policies, becoming an additional and superior power in each country, in addition to the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary. Therefore, if they can "call the shots", they are not afraid to position themselves.

In the case of Brazil, besides interfering in the daily lives of the population, manipulating it with distorted information, they ignore the Article 220, fifth paragraph, of the Brazilian Federal Constitution (1988), which prohibits monopoly and oligopoly of the media, and the article

221, which attributes the following principles for the production and programming of radio and television broadcasters: "I - preference for educational, artistic, cultural and informational purposes"; II - promote national and regional culture and stimulate "independent production which aims its dissemination"; "III - regionalization of cultural, artistic and journalistic production, according to percentages established by law"; in addition to "IV - respect for the ethical and social values of the person and the family".

The interest in democratizing the media and programming is not seen on the market. The largest media groups take advantage of the large audience and expose their own ideas and interests as what is right and what should be accepted by society. They sell ideas in their newspapers, magazines, television and radio programs, opening spaces for commercials that bring great financial returns. They do not give importance to what is registered in the Chapter 5 of the Brazilian Constitution and offer content to the population without the least concern with quality, seducing Brazilians with "social projects in the community" that give them more credibility, taking the community communication media out of the way. Something that yields publicity investments and favors of the Governments, if they want to reach in the population. They simply immobilize governments and control them, in many cases, as puppets, preventing them from acting as representatives of the interest of the population.

In the case of broadcasting (radio and television) in Brazil, five private national groups dominate the market, besides being leaders in other areas, whether media or not. They are: Rede Globo, SBT, Record, Bandeirantes and Rede TV! They reach almost 100% of the national territory and they only do not reach places in Brazil where there is no electricity or solar energy.

According to Mídia Dados Brasil 2017 (Data Media Brazil 2017), Rede Globo reaches 98.3%, that is, in 5,476 Brazilian cities, reaching 99.4% of households with TV; SBT in 88.1%, conquering 4,909 municipalities and 96.8% of households with television; Record with 78.1% or 4,351 municipalities, reaching 93.8% of households with TV; Bandeirantes with 64.1%, in 3,572 municipalities and 90.1% of

households with television; and Rede TV with 56.7%, reaching 3,159 municipalities and 78.5% of households with television.

How is it possible to find such great power if the current Brazilian Constitution admits neither monopoly nor oligopoly of the media? How to ignore that Rede Globo has 123 stations, with five of them their own; SBT, 114 stations, of which 8 are owned; Record, 108 stations, 17 of them their own; Bandeirantes, 34 stations; and Rede TV!, 40 stations?

In addition to the Brazilian legislation prohibiting media monopoly and oligopoly, it also does not allow, through the Decree 236/67, the corporate interest of the same group in more than five VHF concessions in the country, and two in UHF, in each State. However, bans are ignored by media groups, which establish themselves in the market with as many radio and television broadcasters as possible.

As Elvira Lobato (1995, p. 36) observed, "oligopolies were formed through a gap left in the law. It set the limits by entity and shareholder, but it did not predict a simple trick: the registration of concessions using the names of several family members". Something that happens easily in Brazil: relatives and even "straw-men" (friends, employees etc) registered as legal owners of media groups established in the country.

It is verified a great power of communication conglomerates in Brazil that invest in global, regional and local strategies, reaching almost 100% of Brazilian households with radio and open TV. They join international groups and then join regional groups, since they join local broadcasters, reaching cities and even villages more quickly. The strategy is to invest in the knowledge of the site and its target audience, identifying their needs and attending them with content that interests them from the so-called "quality programming", having a single objective: profits.

It is also important to remember the strategies of media conglomerates that, since the 80s of the last century, have been sustaining their concern for the local, the community and their interests. Speech and practice whose sole purpose is to conquest people to give credibility to media groups, thus yielding profit for investors.

In the studies carried out by Gisela Ortriwano (1985, p. 28) on radio as a vehicle, it was verified that the national programming of a

radio station "is no longer justified, turning more to regional aspects, connected to the community in which it operates". In her researches, she recalled that "Brazilian radio was able to have truly national characteristics, with the exception of a few broadcasters, such as the Rio de Janeiro National Radio", but since the 1980s "interconnection has been done through regional broadcasters". But is this reality still present?

With the advancement of technologies, the radio is also present in mobile devices and is available via the Internet. Today it is thought both nationally and locally. However, even with technological development, the goals and objectives of the groups have not changed. It can not be ignored that there are still local stations which are managed by politicians who use the radio to spread their ideologies, using the needs of the communities in their schedules. The focus is not to give space to citizens and neither democratize communication, giving voice to the community, but to try to take this space away from community radios. They do not allow the resident to speak or react. The important thing is to have commercial stations that have commercial spaces, generating profits for their "owners", manipulating information and putting it as truth for listeners.

Paulo Macedo (2017) recorded that Rede Globo's list involves 27 economic groups that command 118 broadcasters that integrates its network, 90% of its programming being governed nationally and the rest being local. Even with the disparity in numbers, the relationship is considered harmonious, being able to reach the communities. For the director of the Relationship Center with the Affiliates of TV Globo, Thais Soares, in an interview given to Macedo (2007): "the connection with the communities is important. Content and local connections attract these people and provide that audience with an essential service because it speaks specifically about their problems". The goal is for Globo to ensure the production of content and the affiliates deliver the signal to the households with the best technology. In the case of the local commercial bias, it is of the affiliates.

How to explain the relationship with the small ones, offering them only 10% of the programming? According to Rogério Bazi (1999, p.8),

"the costs of regionalization are high". Even in many groups it is detected that "there are few programs produced locally by the broadcasters, and only advertising is inserted in the regional square." But despite the costs, the challenge is to deliver quality, community-driven programming, identifying viewers with their culture. In the field of advertising, regionalization is having positive results, now it is necessary to invest in the content of local and regional information.

As Globo has a prominent place in the Brazilian scenario, its affiliates end up occupying evidence as regional groups. But regional networks do not have as much power as national ones. One of the differences highlighted by Sérgio Caparelli (1982, p. 94) is the lack of autonomy of the Regional Networks in relation to the definition of programming, since "such networks basically depend on the programs generated by the national networks that transmit in chains or retransmit later".

In Brazil, in 1998, according to the records of the magazine *Meio e Mensagem* no. 829, Rede Globo invested in the affiliated television broadcasters in the interior of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, increasing the space for local programming. There were investments in the infrastructure of the journalism and commercial departments to make the stations more local. It all started in April 1995. The first changes could be noticed in the local space of the SP Um news in Bauru, São José dos Campos, São José do Rio Preto and Sorocaba, which was generated from the capital. This year, Globo also modified its programming, creating programs that would reach people from different regions.

Thus, the great media entrepreneurs found that it was worth investing in regional groups. Those who already had their networks created and the public defined, also invested in cable TV, as did Rede Brasil Sul (RBS) on May 15, 1995 with the launch of TVCOM, in Porto Alegre, a community cable TV with a focus on local. Although it was a project that was successful in the southern region of Brazil, on January 27, 2017, the activities of TVCOM Santa Catarina were closed, and the one from Rio Grande do Sul was extinguished in 2015.

Even though TVCOM closed its activities, RBS has been considered, since the 1990s, the largest regional network in Brazil. "The broadcaster

is proud of using all the local spaces provided by Rede Globo, which represent between 15% and 16% of the programming" (Sirotsky, s.d., p.20). According to Nelson Sirotsky (s.d., p.31), through the generation of local programs by each of the network's broadcasters, RBS allowed the community to be heard. He emphasized as one of the main characteristics of the group the community action that has been going on since its origins, present "in numerous campaigns developed by the group's television, radio and newspapers, and which are intended to find solutions to the most varied problems experienced by the communities in which it is present."

However, in the face of political crises and constant investigations that have been taking place in Brazil in August 2017, RBS sold the communication vehicles it had in Santa Catarina to NSC Comunicação. "NSC Comunicação, composed of six TV stations, eight radio stations, four newspapers and communication portals, is already born leader of all the markets and platforms in which it operates" (Gasperin, 2017). What would make the largest regional communication group sell all its vehicles in Santa Catarina? For Rogério Christofolletti (2016), Fabio Fabrini and Fabio Serapião (2017) would be its alleged involvement in Operation Zelotes, which investigates fraud in judgments in the Administrative Council of Tax Appeals (Carf), an agency that analyzes the Federal Revenue's appeals processes.

According to the commercial vice president of Record TV, Walter Zagari (2017), considered a defender of the regionalization of content as one of the main successes of local broadcasters, "in a country with the dimensions of Brazil, regionalization is a factor of extreme importance and determinant for the success of any broadcaster". For, as he pointed out, "if there is synergy between national and local, there is no other result but success".

The top five groups use their mainstream TV news (morning, noon, and afternoon) to conquer people with local affairs. How do you explain going out with calendars to "demand" that the square is repaired or with explicit complaints against rulers? They try to use the needs of the population by drawing attention from everyone as the problem solvers, overlapping, even Justice and Police. They seduce communities by trying to take from community media its importance, overlapping

entertainment with the journalistic purpose that should guide such programs, based on the articulation between audience, political and economic support, and cultural incidence.

## 2. LIMITS AND THREATS TO THE HEGEMONY OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA

The social appropriation of information and communication technologies, more accessible in the 1980s and 1990s, made possible the realization of diverse experiences and processes of production and distribution of contents by groups, organizations and social movements that, with the support of support groups, were constituted through the participation of social and academic media.

Since then, several community, associative and free radio and TV stations emerged, encouraging the production and delivery of alternative content to the traditional hegemonic media. Beyond the appropriation of media, it was a question of understanding their uses to face questions that have always been placed in the daily life of social and political movements in different contexts. The falling costs of technologies allowed the development of products, aesthetics and dialogues in the social media, leading to the understanding that society and its constituent groups were not represented in the traditional hegemonic media.

The desire to occupy the spectrum was not consensual among the achievers of these initiatives, as far as defenders of the public space as a form of popular harmonization did not believe and did not mobilize to occupy spaces in the traditional media in favor of the dynamics that they established. On the other hand, the media created from the community itself tried to produce and circulate contents different from the traditional ones, establishing an alternative and counter-hegemonic practice, contributing to increase the importance of the struggle for the democratization of the communication for the strengthening of more general fights.

Thus, productions of more prominence and their makers got more attention of traditional media, taking over spaces in the traditional media. At present, however, community media have ceased to be a direct threat to traditional media because of delegitimization through media

content and products, and the absence of state support policies, which will be discussed later, but also by the displacement of the broadcasting platform of TV content from the expansion of cable TV and the Internet.

The audience ratings that traditional media groups were accustomed to dealing with in the 1980s and 1990s became more modest throughout the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Programs of the most varied themes and styles revealed different aesthetics that had on social media based on the video, with YouTube as the protagonist, a considerable competitor to the comfortable domain of traditional media.

Internet is currently articulated in an environment constituted by the growing dissemination of broadband, allowing the full use of real-time multimedia supports of social media by mobile and geolocated technologies, which have been expanding to objects and supports of different natures. It is a communication environment that does not have limits in the regulatory field for the elaboration, implementation and maintenance of communication initiatives, facilitating the transition of several community initiatives and seeing the emergence of several others from that same environment, which currently already reconfigure the way people watch TV, especially young people from large urban centers.

The alert is already on and several facing attempts have already been triggered. From the adoption of tools and social media such as apps and broadcasting channels of their own content (portals: Globo.com, R7, among others, apps: GloboPlay, BandNews, among others), to the acquisition of people who have achieved notoriety through channels on YouTube (Felipe Neto, Whindersson Nunes, among others), as well as other fronts, such as the realization of famous people's TV channels on YouTube (such as Máisa Silva, SBT, or Izabel Alvares, Masterchef Brasil, broadcast by Band).

If community communication initiatives, alternatives to traditional media logic, did not follow the technological transformations related to the Internet and social media, incorporating the perspective of media convergence is vital to transpose the present condition, as well as to face fragmentation and limited adherence of the community perspective to the Internet environment, seeking to understand common bases of

action between movements of different articulations and demands, as well as facing the challenge of programming and disseminating interesting audiovisual contents that foster popular participation, citizenship and valorization of rights human rights, in confronting the traditional media territory mostly private.

### 3. THE POPULARIZATION OF THE POPULAR: STRATEGIES

Media conglomerates grow stronger every day because, as Octavio Ianni (1997, p.15) has detected, "they plan their activities, based on the most stringent technical requirements, of the accumulated intellectual resources." They check each market well, whether local or global, considering the spaces, open or not, the competitors, "capital resources, technology, workforce, new products, marketing, lobbying and so on". Thus, considering all the possibilities, they analyze how to obtain profit and strategic position in the new place, thus conquering another territory that will enter the new map of investments and dominion of the group.

When analyzing the data recorded by *Mídia Dados 2017* about the composition of the programming of the open TV in the period from Monday to Friday from 7am to 6pm during 2016, Rede Globo recorded that most of its programming (less than a third), 27%, is journalism; at SBT, 50% is soap operas; at Record, 40% is journalism and 40% is soap opera; at Bandeirantes, 33% is journalism; and at Rede TV! 67% is female. But what kind and how is information passed?

The October 31, 2017 issue of Rio Globo's midday TV news in Rio de Janeiro is a good example. With its RJTV, it gave five minutes to show how residents of a community wanted a square and the city hall. As the situation was not solved, they decided to make a "kitty" and leave the government aside. Globo's reaction? It did not know what to do. The City Hall was called, following the procedure, but as it was live, the population changed the script and the journalist, without understanding what was happening, took the calendar setting a deadline for the return to a new charge for the City, deconstructing which should be a journalistic practice.

At SBT Rio, the strategy is to make a combative journalism, showing what happens in the state, putting the population live and even cursing who speaks what the presenter does not want to hear. A mixture of popular and police journalism. At Record, they make *Balanço Geral*, which is like SBT, but goes beyond: mixing journalism with entertainment, with news about celebrities, police cases, denunciations, provision of services, pointing out that its goal is to show the daily life of the community. At Bandeirantes, there is no concern about recording local journalism at noon. Its focus on the schedule is the sport. To work with the community, it invests in *Brasil Urgente*, a program in the afternoon, which brings themes focused on health, safety, work, traffic, sports, politics and even behavior, involving the public in polls and participation through social networks. And Rede TV!, to bring the public closer, sells the space from 12 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. Journalism is not its focus. It invests in entertainment, ignoring, like the other groups, the article 221 of the Constitution.

In addition to nonsense programs that say they approach the community, giving voice to the population, the media groups promote their programs inside the communities performing actions in partnership with institutions to consolidate the brand and get the loyalty of the residents of the locality. This is the case of the shows and promotions made by Rede Globo, such as Global Action, which goes to the communities and together with the partners, provide documents for the population, haircuts, produce concerts, give employment guidance, etc. Similar initiatives are developed by SBT (Teleton), Record (Ressoar), besides Criança Esperança, also from Rede Globo, which mobilizes the period close to October 12, raising a considerable amount of money and distributing to community projects with the support of Unicef. All on behalf of the social, after all it is the one that guarantees exemption in taxes, background for initiatives of social responsibility in the sector, but that sublimates the articulation of the population for the production and the circulation of contents in their own spaces, able to trigger and to disseminate the importance of their production processes.

## CONCLUSION

Here we were able to understand how Brazilian media groups intensify and distribute their strategies of dissemination of products that are articulated with the population as a whole, guaranteeing them legitimacy to their cultural and political practices, as well as neutralizing the development of community communication initiatives as well as their recognition by the population.

The article understands these strategies within the logic of affirming the media concentration of these companies, which at the same time constitute a shield against political incidents capable of deconstructing this business model in the legal and regulatory field.

It also signals the emptying of the mobilization of society around community communication initiatives. The motivation of this scenario has been developed by the strategies of reproduction of popular narratives, which both reinforce social legitimacy to the communication products conveyed by the conventional media, as they disfigure the alternative communication in the political and legal scope, with consistent reflections on the way in which these initiatives are conceived in the academic and social environment, except in restricted niches in which we understand their contribution to social development, to the affirmation of citizenship and human rights.

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## CRISIS and restructuring of sports journalism in Brazil: the story of Placar Magazine

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### Abstract

The present chapter is based on the theoretical and methodological axis of the Political Economy of Communication (PEC) to deal with Placar Magazine, Brazil's leading sports magazine, especially highlighting the crisis that marks the XXI century for Abril Publisher. The research established in this text is qualitative, using as a methodological procedure the bibliographic research, from authors such as Bolaño (2000; 2015) and Figaro (2011) to deal with informational capitalism, and others such as Unzelte (2015) and Rocco Júnior and Belmonte (2014) for the specific case of Placar's history. Besides starting from the documentary research, sites and editorials from 2015 to 2017, which deal with the migration to Caras Publisher in 2016, and the return in 2017 to Abril Publisher, this time with the goal of being multiplatform, without being periodic, to face the challenge of becoming profitable.

### Keywords

Placar Magazine; Abril Publisher; contemporary capitalism; Political Economy of Communication.

### INTRODUCTION

The present text is based on the theoretical and methodological axis of the Political Economy of Communication (PEC) to deal with the recent history of the Placar Magazine, while one of Abril's Publisher best-known periodicals and the only magazine dedicated to sports in Brazil, football in particular, in the middle of the profusion of other sources of information about the thematic in a socio-historical context of concentration and centralization of the capital, including the average markets.

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It is a qualitative research that seeks to describe, but also to explain, the changes in the magazine in both contexts: the Abril Group crisis, and the contextual moment of competition with other media. Based in this, the bibliographical research was applied as a form of data collection, this one in two parts, the first, among others, from Bolaño (2000, 2015) and Figaro (2011) to deal with the restructuring of capitalism and the changes in the work of journalists and communicators in general; the second to deal with the history of Placar Magazine, cases of Unzelte (2015) and Rocco Júnior and Belmonte (2014).

Analyzing this case in a book that aims to observe market changes with digital technologies of information and communication, especially Internet tools, it is interesting to show a variable of the historical crisis process and consequent reconfiguration of Abril Group, one of the main company in Brazil. Journalism is understood as “a historical product, the result of economic, political, technological and social influences” (Bolaño & Brittos, 2006, p. 4).

Studying Placar follows the suggestion presented in the first volume of this collection, in which A. Santos (2013, pp. 143-144) indicated that:

Mapping the media specialized in sports would also be an interesting work, even as a way to deal with a long-term segmented market - [...] the first specialized magazine appeared in the 1930s. In addition, there is all the analysis of the digital convergence process [...]. Something that reflects the Multiplicity of Supply Phase, term of Brittos (2009) to define the period marked by the opening of the communication market in Brazil, especially since 1995, with the approval of the Cable Law.

Based on these premises, we will develop the following movements of explanation of the content: we begin with the transformations that took place within the capitalist mode of production in its contemporary phase, notably the post-1970 productive restructuring, in close relation with the development of the Cultural Industry; we will continue with the presentation of Placar Magazine’s history, in order to understand its importance for Brazilian sports journalism and its different phases; and, finally, present the comings and goings of Placar Magazine since 2015, in a multiplatform tendency that tends to consider the competition among medias.

## JOURNALISM, THE CULTURAL INDUSTRY AND THE RESTRUCTURING OF CAPITALISM

The print is dead. The assertion is repeated since the mid-1990s, especially from the advent of commercial internet. In the case of Brazil, 1995. The following year, the first news portals were launched in Brazil: Universo Online (UOL), Brasil Online (BOL) and ZAZ (which became Terra in 2000)<sup>3</sup>, which were also used as providers of access to the worldwide network. The same assertion has been used, nowadays, sometimes as a catastrophic and wailing announcement, sometimes as the annunciation of a new and wonderful era. In the limit, the two perceptions, although antagonistic, refer to the appearance of the ongoing structural changes.

These prognoses are based on the restructuring of the mode of capitalist accumulation that began in the 1970s. The profound changes brought to the world of work by the introduction of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the productive sphere also reached, and consequently, the sphere of circulation and consumption of information, so far divided between electronic media and printed out (with the known hegemony of television in relation to radio, magazines, newspapers, etc.), which mark the mass consumption of symbolic/cultural goods, characteristic of the Industry Cultural agreement since the second post-war period (Bolaño, 2000, 2015).

Just over two decades later, the transformations in the production and circulation processes and consumption of information and cultural goods show the structural changes that are desired when restructuring the markets towards flexible models of production, circulation and consumption. The restructuring of journalistic writing for more “flexible”, “convergent”, “integrated” and other designations can be translated into reduction of personnel, intensification of work and polyvalence adopted at an increasingly faster rhythm (Figaro et al., 2013), in order to attend the needs of digitized newspaper companies on the one hand. On the other hand, in Brazil this does not translate into such significant changes in the flow of capital between the different media segments. The broadcasters of free-to-air channels, where such changes are also observed, have a large advantage in the allocation of

advertising funds, ranging from 53% (G1, 2017a) to 55.5% (G1, 2017b) of the total. The internet is still far from reaching a similar level<sup>3</sup>.

But if the competition with the internet hasn't pointed out to a sharp drop in Brazilian TV revenue yet, the same can't be said about newspapers and magazines. The drop in the circulation has intensified and some medias choose to keep only the digital versions. This migration is notably unequal relative to regions of the country and size of media groups. Large media groups, in general, maintain digital and printed versions, such as Globo, Abril, Folha and Estado de São Paulo.

Altogether, according to data released at the beginning of 2017, based on the survey conducted by IVC (Circulation Verifier Institute) (Poder360, 2017)<sup>4</sup>, the eleven largest daily newspapers in Brazil reduced their circulation by 162 thousand copies in 2016 and 2017. The reduction in the number of subscribers exceeds 400,000 copies if we consider the period from 2015 to 2017, when was also seen an increase in the number of subscribers of the digital versions - but in lower numbers, not representing a real migration from one medium to another. The number went from 532 thousand subscribers in 2015 to 588 thousand in 2017, approximately 56 thousand new subscribers in the period.

The reduction in the circulation of prints can also be verified in particular cases, like the one of the weekly magazine of greater

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<sup>3</sup> The Kantar Ibope surveys mentioned above do not take into consideration the advertising funds for the Internet. However, it is possible to infer, from public investment in advertising, percentages close to those practiced by private companies. One example is Caixa Econômica Federal, one of the 10 largest advertisers in the country, which in 2014 allocated only 1% of advertising fund for the internet, compared to 79% of TV funding in the same year. This is a sharp reduction, after having registered a total of 10% of the money for Internet and 75% for TV in 2013. Yet if we consider the data available in the system of Contractual Execution of the Communication Office of the Presidency of the Republic (Secom), the amounts directed for advertising on TV Globo (Globo Comunicação e Participações SA) between January and October 2017 amount to R\$ 41,617,001.83 (excluding Globosat TV channels subscription, nor radios, prints and portals belonging to the group). Abril Group, object of our article, appears with R\$ 2,540,917.24 of funds destined (R\$ 2,191,685.60 for publications in magazines and the rest for websites of the group). For Universo Online, the amount was R\$ 198,273.41 and the portal Terra appears with R\$ 83,084.11. Secom's system has not found any data referring to advertising on Google or Youtube. The data refers to the amounts paid to the advertising agencies, which execute the payments with the companies responsible for the placement and were obtained directly from the system of Contract Execution of Advertising.

<sup>4</sup> The data was released and evaluated the performance of 11 major daily newspapers in Brazil.

circulation in the country. Since April 2016, *Veja* (Abril Group) has reduced its print run to 960,000 copies (1,005,799 copies to the previous edition), leaving the first mark of 1 million in decades. The decision was made even after March sales overtook the sales from the first two months of the year by 50% (Portal Imprensa, 2016).

Even with the fallen in the print circulation, it's possible to be observed that the revenue of media groups that operate with prints and the internet is still heavily dependent on the revenue of the former. In February 2017, *Folha de São Paulo* had 171 thousand subscribers of the digital version and 143 thousand of the print version<sup>5</sup>, which contrasts with the data from the revenue received from the federal executive, for example (see note 5).

At the other end, the reduction of jobs positions in print out medias completes a complex equation of labor restructuring in journalistic writing. Some of the jobs migrate to digital, but less than the number of layoffs. The reasons are complete themselves: on one side, the revenue growth in digital media does not follow the losses from the prints; on the other side, there is the flexibility of labor relations, with a strong introduction of outsourced workers and “so forth” (Antunes, 2011), changes in the news production process, disappearance of intermediate functions, reduction of physical spaces where work is done, laying off of large numbers of graphic workers (including machinery replacement, if not eliminating them for substitution by the digital media or outsourced companies), the polyvalence of journalistic functions, especially younger ones, marked by multimedia production.

Although there are particularities in each case, the phenomenon is far from being exclusively from Brazil. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the US agency responsible for job information in the United States, show that from 2001 to 2016 there was a shrinkage of more than 50 percent of the job functions in printed medias, from 412,000 journalists to 174,000 in of 15 years. In the same period, the number of journalists working on digital media has tripled, which does not represent a recovery in absolute numbers. It went over from 67,000 jobs in 2001 to 206,000 in 2016. An increase of 139,000 jobs, which

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<sup>5</sup> *Folha* is the only major newspaper to sell separately subscriptions to the print and digital versions.

reducing from the layoffs in the printing sector (238,000 in the period surveyed), still leaves a deficit of 99,000 (The Economics Daily, 2017). The work on digital media is therefore born within the framework of a restructured labor market at the global level and, thus, one can't speak of simple migration from print to digital jobs.

It is also in this scenario that emerge those journalistic companies that are not linked to media conglomerates and which operate, basically, on the Internet. The landscape assumes more diverse tones if we consider the data collected in recent research (Figaro, Nonato & Kinoshita, 2017), giving an account of 181 “journalistic arrangements” that come under different names: independent, alternative, counter-hegemonic, etc. Also noteworthy is the growing concern of Brazilian researchers in investigating the phenomenon:

with the goal of understanding the alternatives that are being sought by these professionals in defense of their knowledge to do in the enunciation of an alternative and/or independent journalistic discourse. This concern is due to the restructuring of the forms of contemporary journalistic work, resulting from the advancement of technologies, the consequent innovations in the journalistic routine, and also by unemployment, which causes professionals to adopt and incorporate alternative work (Figaro, Nonato & Kinoshita, 2017, p. 2).

The expressive presence of these new experiences shouldn't be used, however, to cast doubts about the maintenance of the oligopolized trend of the sector. Evidently, in agreement with the work of the authors, it is to be remembered that the whole process is loaded with contradictions and these must be explained beyond the appearance of the phenomenon. The monopoly phase of capitalism remains and tends to deepen, as can be seen in the mergers and acquisitions of various sectors of the Cultural Industry.

Strictly speaking, the concept of the Multiplicity of Supply Phase (Brittos, 2009) still allows us to understand this period of strong diversification in the supply of symbolic goods, without being translated into a strong pluralization of the actors that participate in a given sector. To this, we would add the expression developed by Muniz Jr. (2010) in the analysis of the publishing market (the Cultural Industry sector

that has the presence of foreign capital more in evidence), of “oligopoly in fringe”, including a variety of small and medium-sized actors that operate in the periphery of the sector, in much less profitable niches, while those that are more profitable are oligopolized by big funds. In another article dedicated to the analysis of the transformations in the work of the editors, the author situates the editorial market within the framework of the Cultural Industry at a global level, pointing out that:

it is impossible to think of the dynamics of the publishing industry worldwide, without taking into account the movements that bring financial fund and productive fund closer together, and the production of content in different media, in an integrated or at least interconnected way. Although some authors highlight the low profitability of publishers in comparison with audiovisual companies, for example, the fact is that the world's large media conglomerates (Bertelsmann, Disney, Mondadori, TimeWarner, Planeta, Viacom, among others) have their “publishing arms” (Muniz Jr., 2008, p. 2).

It goes on identifying the absorption movement of a variety of these small enterprises by large conglomerates, in the exactly extent that they constitute a competitive advantage for them.

Previously isolated publishers, often owned by a family and still managed by them, have joined holding companies that also gather newspapers, magazine publishers, television and radio stations, internet companies, etc. In other cases, book publishers have been merging with each other. If, in the first instance, funds were linked by the affinity of *métier*, in recent years even software companies, banks and education participate in publishing businesses (Muniz Jr, 2010, pp. 9-10).

It makes sense, therefore, the lean company that characterizes the current phase of flexible accumulation of the capitalist mode of production (Antunes, 2011). Companies that hegemonize certain sectors are able to impose the conditions under which all others must operate, either through a complex outsourcing scheme whereby the leading company transfers part of the production to smaller companies (Druck, 1999), or by determining the technological and competitiveness standards of the entire sector (Bolaño, 2000, 2003).

The case of the Cultural Industry reveals numerous examples, with television as the main window and a great deal of other ways in the midst of restructuring to compete in the digitized scenario. Recent

news around the world of major changes in news and media companies generally comes at a great rate. Only at the end of 2017, a Brazilian magazine (Caros Amigos) with 20 years of publication announced the closure of its printed version, the Spanish newspaper El País announced the outsourcing of its entire printed production (undoing of all its graphic park) and Disney bought a large portion of the FOX group in the United States, taking another step towards global oligopolization. Bolaño (2015, p. 67) rightly places the current trend of this sector in the following terms:

it is nowadays the dispute between two paradigms of the organization of the digitized culture, namely the Internet and the digital terrestrial TV, this last one closer to the previous model of mass TV, controlled by a national oligopoly, usually linked to local or regional oligarchies within the framework of national State action, and the first, more appropriate to a neoliberal, internationalized model, basically outside the control of the State. This is not, obviously, an option between two technological trajectories, but a regulatory dispute between two complementary logics, involving important interests.

Magazines, newspapers and other publications that maintain their local or national relevance have been taken (or dragged) by the process of digitization and convergence of media and content. However, Bolaño (2015, p. 67) confronts the hasty conclusions of a collapse (including the concept) of the Cultural Industry, stating that:

the disappearance of TV, for example, is out of the question, although its configuration may change radically in the coming years. [...] The fact is that the Cultural Industry gains enormous capillarity in its new configuration, articulated by the new convergent telematic networks.

It is important to emphasize that it is on this basis that the multiplicity of supply is constructed. The oligopolization replaces the direct competition in the offer of diversification of content, whatever its purpose (journalistic, entertainment, etc.), as it takes to the limit the capillarization of its multiplatform production. In this sense, the mergers and acquisitions of communication giants for each other, seek to ensure the competition at the lowest possible level and the supply of symbolic goods at the highest possible level of diversification according to interests and evaluations as market strategies. In the case of the

Internet, the largest companies in the world have a consolidated market in Brazil. Dantas (2017, p. 2) explains that:

This market is basically dominated by a handful of large US corporations, identified by the acronym GAFA: Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple. However, there has also been a growing presence of Chinese corporations, such as Alibaba, not forgetting the Japanese and Korean leaderships on video game platforms.

In order to get an idea of the penetration of these companies in the country, just remember that more than half (55%) of Brazilians believe that the internet is reduced to Facebook, according to Mozilla Foundation data (Valente, 2017). Or that the number of hits to the content of the UOL news portal is greater through shared links on Facebook than through the homepage of the portal itself<sup>6</sup>. In the paper mentioned, Dantas (2017) seeks to demonstrate that the companies that form the GAFA are actually controlled by the same shareholders, all linked to the financial market and criticizes the current stage of the global network under hegemony of financialization.

The participatory, collaborative, open internet that should overcome such alienating social relations as a result of the conscious action of the subjects promoted by the free network [...], this internet has become, in the real world, a system of consumption production similar to the “old” cultural industry, disposing, however, of technological resources to foster far more powerful markets than could ever be available to radio or television (Dantas, 2017, p. 9).

National oligopolies, in this scenario, are constantly threatening by the creation of gigantic international oligopolies. Muniz Jr. (2010) clearly observes the participation of multinationals hegemonizing the Brazilian publishing market. Thus, the digitalization process itself becomes a permanent crisis process for a variety of national companies and media outlets, even those with a long history in the national market and that operate without any direct competition in their segment (sports magazines). This is the case of Placar Magazine, which we will deal with next.

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<sup>6</sup> The data were not disclosed by UOL, but the company's professionals confirm that the statement circulates in meetings and internal communications.

## PLACAR ALMOST NEVER MADE A PROFIT

If we can point to football as “an important way of exporting to the whole world an ideal conduct by the elites, who received it easily due to the naval and commercial power of the United Kingdom” (A. Santos, 2013, p. 133), it’s necessary to understand that the popular appropriation of this sport ended up making it so interesting to be commercialized as a source of information and consumption for other industries.

In the Cultural Industry case, it will become one of the main subjects to be developed, emphasizing that the interaction between communication and football is fundamental for the formation and evolution of both as elements of entertainment. A. Santos (2013) also emphasizes sport as the element of entertainment closest to the news, attending to processes such as momentarily and factuality, being necessary to consider the live event and news about it. Here, it is the second aspect we look at.

The first Brazilian magazine that will also deal with football coverage will be *Sport*, in São Paulo, that circulates during four months of 1914, but also focused on other sports at a time when football was restricted in terms of practitioners and the public. According to A. Santos and I. Santos (2017), the following decades were made up of newsletters and new periodicals on the subject, which grew especially in the 1930s with commercial radio and the standardization of football in Brazil. Thus, sports journalism is constituted, with a strong presence also on the radio and in newspapers, general or specialized and starting on TV.

Although it was under proposal since the 1950s, with the repercussion of the FIFA World Cup Brazil of that year, only in 1970 that Abril Publisher launches its magazine dedicated to sports. It is important to remember that football had already been consolidated as a popular cultural element in the country, whose Brazilian team had won two World Cups (1958 and 1962), had been second place in 1950 and third in 1938. From the point of view of financial interest, it was the year of the creation of the Sports Lottery, the main betting game of the decade, which proves how important football was in a phase prior to sports marketing.

Rocco Júnior and Belmonte (2014, p. 6) include Placar Magazine in the same roll of magazines as Realidade and Veja, which appeared in the 1960s, in the sense that the group “invested in its publishing initiatives in publications that presented innovative characteristics for the time, with great reports, that portrayed the themes of the period, sometimes in controversial tones”.

Ribeiro (2007, p. 28) presents the context of its emergence:

The biggest and best sports magazine in Brazil, published by Abril Publisher, appeared at the height of the country’s political effervescence and in the eye of the hurricane of the crisis installed with the dismissal of the Brazilian National Team coach, on the eve of the dispute of the World Cup in Mexico. Placar, idealized by the journalist and lawyer Cláudio de Souza, was intended for readers interested in more elaborate, intelligent reporting, written only by sports journalists. In a short time, a prime team stood out in the pages of the new magazine. Most of this prime team was made up of journalists who worked in the sports edition of Estadão and JT, such as Michel Laurence, Hedyl Valle Jr., Woile Guimarães and José Maria de Aquino.

Unzelte (2015) classifies the history of the Placar in seven phases: Politics, yes, but without losing the sport spirit (1970 to 1984); All the Sports (1984); The Soccer of Veja (1984 to 1988); When “More” is less (1988 to 1990); Monthly and thematic (1990 to 1995); Football, Sex and Rock & Roll (1995 to 1997); Struggle for survival (since 1997). We could include in this list two other recent phases that will interest us especially later: Caras (2015-2016) and Retorno (since October 2016).

Going through each one of them, the first phase of the magazine was marked by investigative journalism even during the most complicated period of dictatorship. According to Cabo (2014), Placar comes up with 40 pages, at NCr \$ 1.00, with some internal pages already in color. Unzelte (2015) summarizes that the circulation of this period was 120 thousand copies, with the first edition selling 200 thousand, having as a big problem being unable to report the results after the round, going to the stands two days later, Tuesday which meant that it took time for the sales to equal the costs.

The magazine relied on the tri-world championship of the Brazilian Soccer Team in 1970 and, from 1971, with the organization of the Brazilian Championship. Another trump card that emerged in the period was the Silver Ball award for the best Brazilian players.

The late 1970s are marked by discussions about political openness. While more political news, as against the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship during the FIFA World Cup Argentina 1978 (Cabo, 2014), the same year, the magazine decided to make special editions about the 13 great Brazilian clubs, which followed the same format of publishing, so they were simpler to be produced, but were very successful. “The thirteen magazines were made in 45 days and ‘they were sold a lot’, which saved that 1978 for Placar. From that moment on, Placar had discovered [...] a way that justified the survival of the magazine: the special editions” (Chiarioni & Kroehn, 2010, p. 93).

The magazine has a financial peak in the 1980s, with coverage of the 1982 FIFA World Cup Spain, which with the loss to Italy generated an environment of disappointment about football, with sales dropping for the next three months, growing again only with the report about the Mob on the Sports Lottery, which increased the discredit on soccer. In financial terms, Rocco Jr and Belmonte (2014, p. 1) summarize this phase:

Placar was notable in the first phase for articles with strong information content and investigative guidelines remembered even nowadays, especially for unraveling the underworld of Brazilian football. Due to the poor economic and financial results obtained by the publication, the magazine had to change its direction, turning to the entertainment and the spectacle.

In 1984, Placar went through two other phases. The first, from April 20 to November 9, receives the slogan “All the Sports”, even though football was present on most pages, but with some publicity, which was not present in the magazine for most of the years. As the magazine dropped in a few months from 100 thousand copies sold to 45 thousand, the idea of creating a Brazilian Sports Illustrated did not avenge in practice and, as of November 16, Placar started to repeat, in format and type of content, what would be *Veja*, weekly magazine of information, period that lasts until 1988 (Unzelte, 2015).

The highlight of this phase was the support to the Copa Union, which would reduce the first division of the Brazilian to 16 clubs, relying on marketing and exclusivity of transmission of Rede Globo de Televisão (Globo Television Network).

The phase “When ‘More’ is less” (1988 to 1990) appears larger in number of pages and in size, more colorful and cheaper (printed on newsprint, costs 100 cruzeiros less), but with a profile that gets back towards football and with calls that seek to attract the reader from sensationalism.

According to Kfoury (Unzelte, 2015, p. 162), who accumulated the function of editor of the magazine with the direction of the Abril group, it was the phase of better circulation, considering also the problem of appreciation of the currency, with constant changes, and inflation uncontrolled:

In the previous format, Placar was, I think, in 45 [thousand copies sold]. The idea of Placar Mais who gave was me. It was the solution. How can Placar survive? Let's cheapen the cost. Let's make a cheap magazine, let's do a direct magazine straight from the machine, let's make a magazine to earn pennies. [...] Another thing: do not forget that in a country that lived under the inflationary spiral, Placar made money every week. Unless it was the ideal, it was money every week. [...] When we made that magazine straight from the machine, without a cover ... Placar Mais! It cost money. [...] it sold 100 thousand, 105 thousand, a hundred and ... A big “money”! The “cash” that went straight into Abril Publisher's cash flow. In Collor's time! So, Placar was the tithe of the church. Placar was the guarantee.

According to Unzelte (2015), from August 1990 to April 1991, Abril Publisher replaced Placar with “A Semana em Ação (The Week in Action): the weekly magazine for sports, leisure and emotion”, aiming at the public from São Paulo, considering the conjuncture that demarcates the period, with Collor's Plan, inflationary crisis and failure of Brazil in the FIFA World Cup Italy 1990.

The “Monthly and Thematic” phase (1990 to 1995) began without a defined periodicity, but with a team that joined for special editions, with the edition of October of 1990 winning another prize Esso, when honoring Pele for his 50-year birthday. At the time of a major crisis with the Collor's government, the focus on maintaining the brand was for a lean writing and would work especially with archival material (Unzelte, 2015).

If the defeats of Brazil in Cups from 1982 to 1990 were a great weight to deal on football, the title of 1994 represented a resumption of the magazine.

During the 1994 World Cup, special editions were released after each Brazilian game. Produced in São Paulo, and on paper with lower quality, the editions were successful sales. The publication that celebrated the title of Brazil, for example, had a circulation of more than 500 thousand copies. The special moment of the magazine, with its renaissance in sales and its good economic performance, made Abril Publisher decide for a major reformulation in the periodical, after 25 years of its launch, with significant editorial changes and, mainly, a new team of journalists in the newsroom. After three months of preparation and an investment of approximately one million dollars, Placar is relaunched in April 1995, with the slogan “Football, sex and rock’n roll.” The publication aimed a target, young people, much more interested in entertainment, than in soccer, or in the sport itself. The magazine has also adopted a new format [...] more focused on entertainment than information. [...] The first edition of the new phase came to the drawing of 237 thousand copies, a record for Placar (Rocco Júnior & Belmonte, 2014, p. 11).

Still according to the authors, this phase follows the new directions of sports entertainment, identified in this case as a trajectory that “clearly shows how the sporting fact, now no more news, is transformed into commodity, typical merchandise of the entertainment industry and consumption” (Rocco Júnior & Belmonte, 2014, p. 2). It also takes in consideration the financial matter, since on the one hand, it follows the path of large investments to renew technically the newsrooms in Brazil. On the other hand, the change of target audience arises because until then, “despite the editorial success and investigative quality of several of its reports, Placar was never, in the 1980s and in the first half of the 1990s, a good journalistic product. Between 1979 and 1995, for example, the magazine only made a profit in three years” (Ibid., p. 11).

The “Football, Sex and Rock & Roll” phase was the first to allow subscriptions in the magazine’s history, beginning with the April 1102 issue of April 1995, with a monthly run, with an innovative visual project of a larger size (27,5 cm by 35.8 cm), at R\$ 4 (more expensive than *Veja*).

Although it claims that as early as January of 1996 the magazine passed to a normal size (22,6 cm by 29,9 cm), because the magazine in its second year is no longer a bench, Unzelte (2015) demarcates the phase “Fight for survival” with the departure of “sex and rock & roll” from the magazine’s title and title captions in October 1997. In the middle of exchanges in command, given the magazine historic difficulty of keeping itself, even getting up to 110,000 signatures in the previous

period, the disengagement with that phase was consolidated after the 1998 World Cup, with the return to a logo only with the name “Placar” on top, in the March 1999’s issue.

A. Santos (2013, p. 130) points out to the 1990s as strong investments in communication companies, “favored by a good moment in the economy after the Real Plan”, which also generates a crisis especially in the two main Brazilian communication groups, Globo and Abril “which [...] has slowed down the growth rate, that only returns at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, but presenting new directions, such as the creation of popular newspapers”.

The first alternative to stay in this interregnum, now already in competition with the incipient internet in Brazil - which already had the magazine site on the air - was to bet on the weekly editions from April 2001, which lasted until February of the following year. The magazine went from R\$ 1.99 to R\$ 2.50 and left a loss, according to the director at that time, Sérgio Xavier Filho (Unzelte, 2015, p. 195):

We even sold in a week around ninety thousand. It was a magazine for dummies. Veja was selling 140. I think it was not a failure. But he had to make four [a month] and the guy had no money for four. He didn’t have time, I think, to consume four, too. The fact is that if we look numerically it was not a failure. But the hole he left ... Wow, I guess it was about a million, something like that.

A magazine that reached a newsroom with 80 people and went for 14 in the weekly phase, it had left 3, the chief editor, a special editor and responsible for the texts and an art editor. It followed the reductions on personnel from the 2000s. According to Xavier Filho (Unzelte, 2015, p. 197), the phase without periodicity, from 2002 to 2003, was the first to make a more significant profit, but starting with other products in addition to the magazine:

What turned the key in 2002 was the economic one. 2002 was the first year of profit, I think if I am not mistaken 300 thousand reais profit, without any help from anyone. It was basically us selling things to the reader, only selling things with a little structure. When I say that in 2002 we had a great result, it was due to the DVD. The DVD Cup was very important in the financial result. I think I changed a little at that time, that’s when it snapped that Placar was not just a magazine, if it was the DVD that paid our bills in 2002, 2003, 2004, I think until 2006. The DVD was very important in the last results. [...] So if you had the DVD, if that brand helped that content, and vice versa.

The monthly periodicity returns in May of 2003, also after a year of FIFA World Cup conquered by Brazil. It was when the idea of setting up a lounge for sponsors to enjoy the events in the two main stadiums of the country, Morumbi and Maracanã (Chiarioni & Kroehn, 2010).

From 2008 to 2010, the magazine would still launch a newspaper, most of the time in daily periodicity, reaching circulation of 70,000 free copies (Unzelte, 2015). Three years later, the concern about changing the magazine to reach an audience that sought information more and more immediately appeared in the magazine's redesigned look, in which editor-in-chief Maurício Barros said: "Although we do not have any more direct competition in the segment, we compete with [...] all media that produce content related to soccer" (Gonçalves & Caldas, 2013).

The magazine would once again produce Brazil's post-match specials at the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil, added to the digital edition "Bola da Veja", in partnership with a magazine of the same name. There were 34 free editions available for download on different platforms at 7am with "real-time updates, previous day coverage, news, reports, backstage, photos, videos and posts from social networks" (Unzelte, 2015, p. 216).

The major changes in the magazine structure in this century, however, came with the resale of titles published by Abril in the following decade, which will be discussed below.

#### THE ABRIL CRISIS AND THE COME AND GO OF PLACAR

In order to deal with the last decade of the Abril Group, it is necessary to understand its restructuring process after a crisis that appeared in the late 1990s, due to the frustration on the bet about paid TV in Brazil - which led the group to compete with Globo in the 1990s (see about in A. Santos, 2016). In addition, it was the decade of modernization of newsrooms, with the diffusion of the Internet in companies, but all this with a financial return that could not achieve what was expected especially in the scenario that was designed:

The end of that decade would present a series of economic crises in developing countries, with a strong reflection in Brazil, which would also happen in 1999, resulting at the end of the equalization of the Real with the dollar, and adoption of the floating exchange rate. The economic crisis in the country affected local business groups, including Brazilian communications conglomerates (Santos, Rocha & Lemos, 2016, p. 162).

There was a change in legislation to, among other things, enable the participation of up to 30% of foreign capital in the communication groups. Abril Group was one of the few that achieved its financialization process, with 30% of its shares sold to the South African group Naspers Ltda.

Thus, contrary to what had happened with the Globo Group, Abril's recovery was more difficult, dragging on for the next decade. The culmination of this was from 2013 to 2015, with the closing of some magazines from the publisher and the transfer of other brands to the Argentine publisher Caras, whose magazine of the same name was printed and distributed by the Brazilian's, with an estimated staff cuts of 120 employees.

After almost a year of negotiations, on June 2, 2015, Placar entered in this list, joining the other 16 magazines that were sold. The editor-in-chief from Caras, Edgardo Martolio, would assume the oversight of Placar with the clear intention, since the first editorial (edition 1405), to create something aimed at all sports:

Football, the cornerstone of our idea, will have more coverage. But their top soccer players, now, in this pluralistic and democratic republic that flourishes in our pages, will live with neighbors obvious and natural: the idols of other sports. Our Golden Ball and Silver Ball awards will be taken on another dimension. The magazine will address the whole family and not just men. Moreover, if we want to excite someone in particular, it is the children of this man. PLACAR undertakes to rescue the fans' emotions and qualify the sport as much as to become a publication of consultation. Thus, yesterday, today and tomorrow must divide space equally, as well as statistics with curiosity and regional with the international (Martolio, 2015, p. 4).

The new phase of Placar bet on double editions to open space for other sports, with six editions of the podium supplement (from February to August 2017), taking advantage of the Summer Olympics in

Rio de Janeiro; in addition to other things to expand the brand, seen by the superintendent as fundamental to give confidence to the Brazilian sport after the 7 to 1 in the Copa semifinals at home. From this premise on, the September edition announced the advertising campaign, with videos on YouTube, “Let’s love our national team back”, created by Dentsu Agency. There was also the Placar National Clubs Cup, which took place in November 2017 with players from the base and with Brazilian TV broadcast. The TV, by the way, was a dream of Martolio (Menon, 2015): “I think of having a television program on a closed channel only about the Silver Ball”.

Figure 1 - “I want to collaborate with Placar”

Source: Placar Magazine, October 2017, p. 42

As for the collaboration, word of fashion Communication, the October 2015 edition came with an image (Figure 1) asking for collaboration, which was part of the following editions, especially with short texts. Another change was on the site, as explained by Martolio (2016a, p. 4) in the February 2016 issue: “We now have regional information. Also these in real time, from most of the major world championships, some with **premium** service, that is, even with heat map from where the stars have been”.

In the April 2017 edition, Martolio's optimism turns to an outrage by complaints about other sports, saying that the newsroom had a few employees “because the crisis does not allow us to grow and the magazine can no longer lose more money that it lost for decades

covering its insufficient cash flow with the profitability of other titles of the publisher that launched it” (Martolio, 2016b, p. 4).

May issue would bring another campaign with the Dentsu Agency, also with videos on YouTube, against the rivals of the Centennial America’s Cup. The following editions had even more pessimistic editorials, with August explaining the loss of 25% during the period of Placar with Caras after 19% sales increase through May (Martolio, 2016c). The one from September complained about the financial impossibility of specials, while the October one questioned “Is it worth so much effort?” (Martolio, 2016d). Not really, and next month the magazine would return to Abril along with four other titles.

Placar moved to the Lifestyle Unit, under the command of Sergio Gwercman, with the view of the Abril’s Group President Walter Longo to increase the options for advertising investment with audience segmentation, prioritizing “the options of exploring these brands in other platforms and opportunities for synergy between our businesses” (Editorial, 2016).

The bet followed the process of opening options in other media, starting even a sale of T-shirts on the Abril website with the Placar brand, as well as specials that may have exclusive advertising. As for the content, the January 2017 edition was dedicated to the 1980s and had as editors the former players Zico and Casagrande, debuting the new phase within the Abril:

The biggest soccer magazine in Brazil starts 2017 with great news, multiplatform for those who love sports. With a new concept of the product, every month, PLACAR will have special contents in several formats for its readers. Books, digital editions, guides and dossiers will be launched that will explore deeply specific themes of the football universe, going far beyond the daily news. On the internet, the title is also new. He joins the portal VEJA.com, where all football content will have the brand PLACAR. It is a union that is already born huge, within one of the largest news portals in the country, which in January hit its historic record of audience, reaching 23.2 million of unique users. The result means an increase of 142% in the number of accesses compared to the same period of last year. On Facebook, there are 7 million followers, the largest number among Brazilian publications, which now add to the nearly 2 million followers of PLACAR (April, 2017).

The group's concern with the Internet had already been released in September 2016 with the creation of a metric system to add the audiences of magazines and digital media in order to present it to advertisers (April, 2016).

The last attempt, starting May 15, 2017, is an interview program on YouTube and on their Facebook page, "Placar Ao Vivo" (Placar Live), under the presentation of Rodrigo Rodrigues, former host of ESPN Brazil. The program goes on air from Monday to Friday, from 12:30 p.m., schedule of the sports programs of the open TV.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the midst of the end of printed journalism, a little has been studied about this market in the last decades. This work helps fulfill the role of enlightening the problematic issues regarding the development of the Cultural Industry from its first mass media, which continues to exist.

Placar's case is an example of the specific analysis required. Owner of a strong brand and in a market that unlike the past decade, has no direct competitors, the magazine understood the competition with the other media, especially the Internet and seeks to requalify to sell the print and other products. However, the analysis of the history of the magazine also shows that even in better market conjunctures it did not make a profit; well as that the importance of diversification of products, in the case of special products, already appeared in the 1970s.

Another curious fact to be noted is that in the midst of the sports investment 'boom' thanks to the mega-sports events in Brazil, segmented journalism in this sector has not evolved as much as in terms of the multiplicity of ways to disseminate content.

Analyzing this and other cases is very important for the Political Economy of Communication in its approach to journalism, especially to understand the processes of adaptation of the Cultural Industry in a market in which global leaders are increasingly tightening their areas of action to centralize the funds, decreasing competitors.

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## ***JORNAL NACIONAL*' AS A SPACE OF TECHNICAL- AESTHETIC HEGEMONY OF REDE GLOBO <sup>2</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

In contemporary telejournalism, transformations in the techno-aesthetic format are a constant and understanding in what way these changes have taken place becomes fundamental. The objective of this research is precisely to analyze how the transformations in the *Jornal Nacional* were implemented in order to maintain and/or recover Rede Globo's techno-aesthetic hegemony, especially in order to meet methodological strategies aimed at maintaining and / or expanding the audience and television advertisers in times of convergence. Based on observations in the period from April 20 to 25, 2015 (old format) and from April 27 to May 2, 2015 (later format that motivated the beginning of this research) and the edition of June 19, 2017 (current format) as well as in data from advertising magazines, some starting points for the present research are proposed. The central hypothesis is that by changing the format of the main television news broadcaster, *Jornal Nacional*, the Globo network broke with apparent formality and the old rules of production, but still presents the public with a television journalism with traces of formality by continuing to follow a pattern techno-aesthetic, although this pattern has been reconfigured as a strategy of repositioning in the market. In order to try to understand this reconfiguration in the newscast, we use the Political Economy of Communication and Journalism as a theoretical perspective and the case study as a methodological strategy.

### **Keywords**

Format; Hegemony; *Jornal Nacional*; Techno-aesthetic standard; Telejournalism.

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## INTRODUCTION

In April 2015, in the week in which Rede Globo, an television network, celebrated its 50th anniversary, *Jornal Nacional* presented to the public a new scenery and a new format, changes that are the result of a long process of reconfiguring the company's journalism to dialogue with an increasingly avid aspiration for dynamism and informality. The change was an attempt to fit in these new times in which the *Jornal Nacional* has been strongly threatened in its hegemony<sup>6</sup>.

From the demarcated movements of the scene, something unimaginable in the era of static television newscasting and sullen feature anchors, approaching presenters with reporters through a futuristic and high-tech screen<sup>7</sup> to informal dialogues during the weather forecast with cordial treatments by nicknames (“Maju”), in addition to very personal comments (“so cold!”, “I’m going to put on my coat”), *Jornal Nacional* seems to have reformulated an aesthetic standard for Brazilian television journalism that soon was followed by affiliates of Globo network and competing broadcasters. Cranes, steady cams (system in which the camera is coupled to the body of the operator, giving the impression that it floats) and pedestals began to compose the technological apparatus behind the scenes of the program.

In June 2017, almost two years after the changes that awakened us for this research, *Jornal Nacional* presented another reconfiguration. In 2017, *Jornal Nacional* (JN) became part of the newsroom with a panoramic window to the street, in the shape of American news. Cranes and steady cams, already present in the structure of 2015, were partially maintained.

With the reconfiguration, one of the main changes is the end of the screen for the interaction of presenters with the reporters and the presenter of the weather forecast. Instead, the broadcaster brought

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<sup>6</sup> Brittos (2001, p. 41-42) works with the concept of hegemony from the vision by Gramsci, as a phenomenon which is constructed with the maintenance of the supremacy of dominants over dominated, it is therefore a process of identification of symbolic goods within the social or diffusion of an ideology. The hegemonic actions are situated as an expression of relations of power in which the exchanges are unequal and marked by the domination.

<sup>7</sup> *Oled* monitor by *Sony*, whose brand does not appear, and a *Logitech* keyboard, *dinove* model.

in holographic projections, a technology that pushes the reporter physically far into the picture. In this way, William Bonner and Renata Vasconcellos came face to face with Maria Julia Coutinho, based in São Paulo, and with reporters anywhere in Brazil and in the world.

From São Paulo, Maria Júlia appears on the JN's stage in Rio de Janeiro in size and format through a projection. For this JN of 2017, the station constructed a new building that is attached to the Central of Journalism, in Jardim Botânico, in Rio de Janeiro, at the intersection between Pacheco Leão and Von Martius streets.

In 2017, it draws attention to the fact that the updates in format have become more constant. For four decades the television news was static. In the last decade, the updates have become recurrent and strictly linked to technology. It is worth noting that the innovation does not contemplate editorial line, since the reports remain following the same production line and the same format of presentation.

It is based on Mosco's (2016) understanding of the Political Economy of Communication (PEC) that we will guide the reflections around the analysis of the socio-political-economic context in which communication phenomena happen. Regarding the strategies of observation, we will use Alves-Mazzotti Case Study as basis (2006, pp. 641-642), in which "the interest in the case is due to the belief that it can facilitate the understanding of something broader as it can serve to provide insight into a subject". It is, therefore, a case study from the analysis of content of television news content and documents.

#### THE HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF HEGEMONY

In the twentieth century, the use of the word hegemony expands earlier uses that indicated the dominance of one country or rulers over others and is generally understood as the leadership of one class over others in a system of alliances. Outhwaite and Bottomore (1996) fit the ideas of the Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci, who extended the concept significantly (1929-35) and also came to suggest the term as the organizing principle of a society in which a class overlaps over others, not only by force, but also by maintaining the subjection of the mass of

the population. The enrichment of the meaning of hegemony would be related to the growing complexity of modern society in which politics has changed.

Increasingly, the demands and needs of society came to be seen as the responsibility of governments, whereas they could be relegated to the private sphere defined as outside politics. Ideas, culture and the way people view themselves and their relationships with others and with institutions are of paramount importance to the way a society is governed and organized and justify the nature of power - which holds it and in what ways. (Outhwaite & Bottomore, 1996, p.350)

Hegemony, in its birth, that is, in Gramsci (1971), appears as the design of a living network of reciprocal constitution of meanings and values that seem to confirm each other. According to the author, hegemony presupposes the conquest of the consensus and the cultural and political-ideological leadership of one class or class block over the other. In addition to assembling the economic bases, hegemony has to do with perceptions, value judgments and principles among actors of political action. For the thinker, the gross domination of one class over the others is almost never possible, except in open and terrorist dictatorships. A ruling class, in order to be a leader, must articulate a block of alliances around itself and at least obtain the passive consensus of the classes and strata.

In Gramsci (1971), hegemony is born and is consolidated in disputes involving not only issues related to economic structure and political organization, but also involve ethical and cultural points, practices, modes of representation and models of authority that aim to legitimize. Thus, hegemony includes traits of culture and social acceptance to a universe of persuasions, rules of conduct. Such thinking about hegemony is complemented by Mosco's (2016, p.58) proposition for hegemony as "that which will be embodied and given as natural, common sense, a naturalized way of thinking about the world, including everything from cosmology to ethics of daily social practices" (Mosco, 2016, p. 58).

It is understood, therefore, that as the very nature of politics and society has changed, the meaning of hegemony, as command,

domination or influence, in turn, has also widened. “The word today implies intellectual and moral leadership and is related to the function of a system of ideas or ideologies in the maintenance or contestation of the structure of a particular society” (Outhwaite & Bottomore, 1996, p. 350).

Brittos (2001) sees the concept of hegemony from the viewpoint of Gramsci, as a phenomenon that is constructed with the maintenance of the supremacy of dominant over dominated. The hegemonic actions are situated as an expression of power relations whose exchanges are unequal and marked by the domination. The author points to hegemony as a key concept to understand the media based on the perception that the Gramscian concept of hegemony is fundamental in the understanding that meaning is not imposed but negotiated.

In this reality, the exchanges are unequal and marked by domination, leaving the hegemonic class the direction of society. It should be noted that Gramsci's conception of hegemony does not exclude ideology, which remains in cultural productions, a common understanding even of new conceptions of the phenomenon, despite variations in formulation and verification (Brittos, 2001, p. 41-42).

Thus, hegemony, in agreement with Brittos (2001), also situates as the diffusion of ideology, embedded among these capitalist culturalist goods, and can obtain positive results. Even with public resistance, the concept of hegemony admits correct and misleading typical of the reception process, already considering the notion of the receiver as an active subject.

Whilst for Laclau and Mouffe (2015), the whole hegemonic position is based on an unstable equilibrium located in political conjunctures that bring positive and negative aspects. “It is built from negativity, but only insofar as it manages to be the positivity of the social is consolidated” (Laclau & Mouffe, 2015, p.236).

The authors analyze different theoretical categories with the purpose of formulating the concept of “hegemony” that will consecrate the general field of emergency hegemony, which would be the articulation to practices, that is, a field in which the “elements” did not crystallize in “moments”.

In a closed system of relational identities, in which the sense at every moment is absolutely fixed, there is no place for hegemonic practice. A fully managed system of differences, which excluded any floating signifier, is not open to any set field: the principle of repetition would dominate any practice within it, and there would be nothing to hegemonize. It is because hegemony involves incomplete and open character of the social, which can only be established in a field dominated by articulatory practices (Laclau & Mouffe, 2015, p.178).

In this sense of bringing the context to the concept update, Dourado and Andrade (2013) defend, the repositioning of hegemony, neoliberal hegemony “with the adoption of deregulation of economic relations, in order to establish the minimal intervention of the State also of society on the action of the private initiative - including on the means of communication” (Andrade, 2013, p.154). For the authors, it is the political and economic pressures that lead the state to control the media in Brazil, where media financing has state control since the banks are administered directly or indirectly by the state or federal government.

### 1. TV GLOBO AS HEGEMONIC SPACE

To understand a little of the construction of what would become a communications empire in Brazil, it is urgent to understand about the emergence of Rede Globo and how it was projected in the market and created a model of making television. The empire’s bases have North American origins. The differential for the consolidation of Globo and the model it implemented began in 1962, even before the station’s inauguration, when it was associated with the Time Life group.

“In addition to the financial benefits, the main balance brought with this association was of a technical and administrative nature” (Borelli & Priolli, 2010, p. 59) to make television, so that the business group placed at the head of Globo began to manage the television product as a product of any other company, while the other broadcasters at the time saw television as a cultural medium, only.

Herz (1987) explains that the then Globo and Time Life agreement was denounced as illegal. As soon as the businessman Roberto Marinho acquired the TV Globo concession in 1962, he signed a

partnership with the American group, which guaranteed Globo a large capital for the purchase of equipment and construction of the station; in exchange Time Life would have a share in the company's profits. Two months after the inauguration of Globo in 1965, the commercial relationship of the companies was denounced as illegitimate since foreign participation in domestic companies was not allowed at the time.

The agreement between companies violated the article 160 of the Brazilian Constitution, which prohibited the participation of foreign capital in the management or ownership of communication companies. Thus, "Rede Globo imposed a standard of television production with innovative language resources and levels of technical quality that founded a Brazilian way of television production" (Herz, 1987, p. 206).

The physical presence of Time Life group consultant Joe Wallach on Globo has raised suspicions about the US group's control of the content and strategic decisions of the broadcaster. Only in 1970, Joe Wallach, officially retired from the Time Life group and was exclusively in Globo, as executive director. Two years later, in 1967, General Adroaldo Mesquita da Costa, in a strictly political decision, considered that there was no partnership between the two companies, an opinion that left the situation of Rede Globo legal in the country and, in 1971, the agreement between the companies was officially overturned. The case was also investigated by the CPI (Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry) in the Chamber of Deputies as brought by Bolaño (2004) and Dourado (2012).

In his testimony to the CPI, Roberto Marinho states that, in signing the agreement between TV Globo and Time Life on July 24, 1962, the US group undertakes to pass 300 million cruzeiros through the promissory, although the agreement participation has never come into force ... Although Marinho sustains that the main contract did not go ahead, he admits the competent technical training of the team and the accounting advice received from the foreign group (Dourado, 2012, pp. 104-105).

In agreement with Bolaño (2004), the controversial agreement with Time Life was important for Globo in two senses: firstly because it brought a necessary capital support for the implantation of a television

and secondly because it allowed the broadcaster to create a model of commercial television highly competitive by having resources and technical and administrative guidance covering key sectors of the company, fundamental for the emergence of Globo.

## 2. THE TECHNO-AESTHETIC STANDARD

This hegemonic pattern of Rede Globo is accentuated by Kalikoske (2010) as a result of strategies at broad levels, but especially political-economic, aimed at the diffusion of the broadcaster's ideology. The cultural hegemonic model is consolidated by the techno-aesthetic standard and although the term techno-aesthetic standard of Leroy (1992) has not been idealized for the television market, departs from Bolaño (2004), the correlation on the competitive mutations in this market, especially from the 1970s onwards, which has identified symbolic production as subordinate to aesthetic and ideological dimensions and together in an oligopolistic context that incorporates cultural and economic actions.

The techno-aesthetic pattern, in essence, represents the overlap of the cultural, aesthetic, and political segments in the theater. Hence the notion extends to other cultural productions, including television productions.

It can be observed in the spectacle system, as in any subsystem, they both refer to techno-economic structures and socio-economic structures. Through the first type of structures diffuse technological changes destined to the artistic activity and alter the information that this activity was established with the diverse sectors of the economy and relations existing between the several phases of the production or deviations and artistic interchange (Leroy, 1992, p. 241-242).

The term aesthetics is derived from the Greek *aisthesis*, *aistheton* (sensation, sensitive) and denotes sensation, sensory perception or sensitive knowledge. The first definition of aesthetics, in the modern sense, was made by Alexander Baumgarten (1714-1762) as a science of sensible knowledge. The "aesthetics" was brought to Philosophy in

the mid-eighteenth century by the German philosopher, who debated a cognitive science which is materialized by the senses. The definition appears in 1750, in the work *A esthetica*, and marks the apparition as a philosophical course, alongside logics, metaphysics and ethics, a subject concerned primarily with the definition of beauty and the intellectualist character. “The emergence of aesthetics as a philosophical course is also linked to a time when there was disagreement over what art is, what taste is, what artistic creation is, what beautiful is.” (Herman, 2005, p. 26)

Aesthetics took some time to be accepted by scholars. As Outhwaite and Bottomore (1996) point out, the traditional meaning of aesthetics only became known in the nineteenth century by Hegel’s influence (1770-1831). Recognizing as evident, in the modern sense, aesthetics is understood as:

a philosophical course that is a philosophy of aesthetic phenomena (objects, quality, experiences and values), a philosophy of art (of creativity, of the work of art and of its perception), a philosophy of art critique taken in a broad way (metacritical) or, finally, a course that has a philosophical concern with all three spheres together. (Outhwaite & Bottomore, 1996, p.265)

In this research, predetermined types for the action are understood as standard, the performance of roles or social relations that present some specific options before the case has a certain definition. In the case of the techno-aesthetic standard, they are the guidelines for using specific techniques that guide social relations.

In the 1990s, while TV Globo prioritized “good taste”, competitors, such as SBT, were betting on the popular Mexican soap operas, on the informative “Here, Now”, and on the auditorium program “Ratinho”. In this period of confrontation of the audience, the *Jornal Nacional* is jolted and appear criticisms as to the paralyzed format of the program.

This winning structure from the point of view of the audience was jolted as part of what happened in the electoral process of 1989, when, according to Conti (1999), the TV station broadcast an edited version of a debate among the main candidates for the presidency of the Republic. A fact that was publicized a few years later by Globo itself. According to experts, in that period, it was possible to note the

broadcaster's commitment in the preference to a political side during the campaign. "Overexposure in the phase of accelerated growth in the researches, fast and always sympathetic references in the period in which, at the maximum level, the strategy adopted by the candidate [Fernando Collor] started to be absent from the video" (Bolaño, 2004, p. 213).

These events refer once more to the concept of hegemony in order to try to understand the communicational phenomenon as a chain of:

positions, facts, structures and dynamics in which companies. Mostly private, produce and distribute cultural products considering economic imperatives, as a way to monetize more their assets and maximize their profits, rejecting the view that the present tendency for mergers, incorporations and agreements, between media corporations, bearing in mind the reinforcement of positions, towards a global oligopoly, is due to a larger project, of world conspiracy. Not agreeing with meanings that defend the omnipotence or passivity of one of the parts, it is verified that the communication requires some transaction (Brittos, 2001, p.43).

Yet Canclini (1990) also develops from the concept of hegemony a conception that, by itself, reveals in the industrial communication popular cultures, traditional and local, subjected to the capitalist process and reconfigured alongside massive demonstrations, which reduce its weight in everyday life.

In our analyses of April 22, 2015 is the following response to such a political episode mentioned above in a chapter of the Jornal Nacional' anniversary series, which begins with several excerpts from reporters' passages, coverages of that time, such as: Tancredo Neves' death, Ayrton Sena's death, the fourth championship of the Brazilian soccer team and the controversial political coverage in the elections of 89. On this last issue and the controversial edition in the debate of the second round of the 89's elections between Collor and Lula, it is worth emphasizing the speech by William Bonner during the series:

To summarize a debate, as one does in a football match, as it was to the idea at the time, is a huge risk because any selection of stretches can always be questioned and that is what happened. Not to mention that the edition gave more time to Collor's speech than Lula's. It was a learning experience for Globo. Globo acknowledged the error of trying to edit a political debate, this was public and the texts and videos that clarify this episode are on [memoriaglobo.com.br](http://memoriaglobo.com.br) (Bonner, 2015).

Among the advertisers, the prestige of *Jornal Nacional* remained until 1999, when the television news was reconfigured for the sake of survival in the market since “it was registered a fall in the value of ads” (Borelli & Priolli, 2010, p.73). The precious seconds of publicity at the opening, closing, and TV news’ breaks began to fall. Besides the move into the aesthetics of the program (presenters and scenario) as will be seen later, *Jornal Nacional* began to invest in news about health, consumption and solidarity, which, at the time, had some effect in terms of audience with oscillation of peak.

On the current research data, according to an internal survey ordered by TV Cidade Verde, affiliated to SBT in Piauí, to IBOPE, in May 2016, *Jornal Nacional* ranked first in the home audiences in the state, with 46.86% of the audience. Followed by the Globo network’s 9 p.m.’s soap opera, with 42.53% of the audience’s attention and the local news of TV Clube, affiliated to the Globo network in Piauí, Piauí TV Second Edition, with 41.84% of the audience.

In May 2017, data show a decline of the *Jornal Nacional* in terms of audience in Piauí from first to third place in the audience ranking. A year later, the 7 p.m.’s soap opera appears first in the ranking with 47.23% of audience and then the Piauí TV Second edition with 46.52% and the *Jornal Nacional* with 44.98%. In percentage terms the fall is 1.88% and in absolute terms the loss is almost 40 thousand viewers, as a percentage point corresponds to 20 thousand viewers, according to the survey.

Despite the loss of audience in Piauí of *Jornal Nacional*, it remains among the three most watched television programs in the state and the Globo network remains with a strong audience in Piauí. Still according to the survey conducted by Ibope in May 2017, considering the 40 most watched programs in the state, 39 are from the Globo network or from the local affiliate, Rede Clube. The exception is “*Balanço Geral*”, from Antena 10, an affiliate of Record network in Piauí, which ranks thirtieth in the ranking with 18.05% of the audience in Piauí.

### 3. ANALYSES OF THE JORNAL NACIONAL IN 2015

As part of the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of Globo, on April 27, 2015, the date that sets the weeks of analyses of this research, Jornal Nacional has won a new scenery. A program with a modern packaging designed to please the audience, began to combine news and entertainment, a model already tested in other TV news programs such as “Jornal Hoje” (Today News), also from the Globo network.

Renata Vasconcellos and William Bonner began to present the TV news at a new, more modern workbench. The larger space ensured mobility and allowed journalists to circulate freely through the studio, broadcasting news at the stand and also standing, on different angles. Real-time, live conversations with international correspondents and reporting teams in Brazil began to be made by the Sony-branded Oled monitor, whose brand does not appear, and a Logitech keyboard, dinove model.

The meteorological information started being transmitted live and directly from Globo’s newsroom in São Paulo. With the use of high technology, the Jornal Nacional newsroom has, in the background, an even bigger second screen, in which high resolution images are displayed in harmony with the subjects dealt with in the reports.



Figure 01- Jornal Nacional, December 2014, before the latest changes (William Bonner and Renata Vasconcelos still on the fixed workbench)



Figure 02 - Jornal Nacional, April 2015, after the changes (William Bonner and Renata Vasconcelos on a side angle)

Due to the delimitation of our corpus, from April 20 to 25, 2015 to April 27, to May 2, 2015, the previous period will be called of old format, and the later one of new format, only to facilitate the denomination once that what is called here as “new” will still be stressed during the reviews.

In the old format, Jornal Nacional used frontal plans<sup>8</sup>: general, medium, short medium, close and close up. Already in the new format, the angulation is diversified with the insertion of lateral angles, where the presenters are now seen in profile and not more only frontally.

This reformulation in the form of news presentation, in 2015, at Nacional News, is based on the capacity of television to manifest itself as a technological platform that, in the view of Bolaño and Brittos (2007), has the potential to achieve the convergence of numerous communication services, and can restrict the boundaries between countries.

Regarding the time of exhibition of the editions of the two weeks under analysis, it is possible to notice the same average total production time, with change of time only on Wednesday, when the edition is usually smaller, on average 28 minutes, divided in two blocks.

<sup>8</sup> Plan: camera angulation. It might be general, medium, American, first plan (close), very first plan (close-up) (Paternostro, 2006, p. 214).

Yet, on the other days, the edition varies from 40 to 42 minutes with three and can extend up to four blocks. On the two Saturdays analyzed, the edition was larger, the production time reached 48 minutes. In the analyzed editions it is possible to see that all the visible actors involved in the construction of the news, such as hosts and reporters, tend to seek the appropriateness of the time used to transmit the message with the total time available for the presentation of the news.

As for the time allocated to contents, it remains balanced in the two weeks under analysis, with more time devoted to the news of politics, economy, health, education, institutional (issues related to the broadcaster, such as the news anniversary and a Globo employee's death) and world issues to the detriment of the news of varieties like sports, culture, although always present. Thus, establishing a need to raise issues related to what Bourdieu (1997) calls bus-facts, should interest everyone and should not shock anyone, only distract and while it is said, in the author's view, other precious issues are omitted since time is preciously expensive on television.

On the two Saturdays analyzed, the workbench is occupied by different hosts from the ones of the week as it has been since the launch of the television news. On the Saturday of the first week under review, April 25, 2015, the news is led by Chico Pinheiro and Cristiane Pelajo. On the Saturday of the second week under review, the edition of May 2, 2015, is presented by Ana Paula Araújo and Alexandre Garcia. From the new format, the content of *Jornal Nacional* on G1 portal brings an exclusive video for subscribers, to which there was no access. It is always the last video published in each edition.

Such changes in the news are presented in a way that the distinction between visual, aesthetic, economic and political structures becomes not viable, and it is often possible to combine the look of this research with the techno-aesthetic standard, which places all structures at play.

It is a constant game between the techno-aesthetic structures, technical-economic structures and socio-economic structures in the global economic system. Thus, one can consider the creation of the twentieth century, or even nineteenth-century work, not only because economic structures and technical structures evolved, but also because ideology and aesthetics have evolved their side (Leroy, 1992, p.245).

#### 4. ANALYSES OF JORNAL NACIONAL IN 2017

In 2017, the news presents itself as “JN’s new home”. On June 19, the JN repeated the expression three times (issues announcement, weather forecasting and the call of the story about the new scenery), the block passages began to show the newsroom with banners that bring sentences about the following issues. The break call with a photo masking the scenery and a written text “on the air” on the newsroom, with perspective stripes on the block passage and no longer on the horizontal. The logo of globo play in a footnote calling in a fixed way refers to the point of maintaining hegemony.

The hosts are in the middle of the newsroom, they are no longer on the top, but in the center of the new journalism newsroom of Globo with 1370 square meters, the double of the size of the former newsroom. Jornal Nacional’ scenery is right in the center and the newsroom integrates professionals from Globo, Globo News and Internet (g1).



Figure 03 – Jornal Nacional, June 2017, after the changes (Jornal Nacional in the center of the integrated newsroom)

However, the edition of the audiovisual content itself remains the same, except for the last report talking about the scenery with a long official speech, a report talking exclusively about the new format, which

refers to the key words like: technology, information and integration. The report by Pedro Bassan gives details of the new newsroom, in numbers and aesthetics. “They are 1,370 square meters, the double of the previous space, 189 jobs,” an excerpt from the report.

The time of edition on June 19, 2017, with a total of 42 minutes and 25 seconds also follows the same time pattern of the editions analyzed in 2015. The news provision (police, politics, sport and the world) also occupy relatively the same space, with most of the edition dedicated to local politics.

The final report of that edition, signed by reporter Pedro Bassan, draws attention to the official speech of two people directly linked to Globo: the general director of TV Globo, Carlos Henrique Schroder, who says that “the purpose of all of this is you, who watches us”, and the president of the Globo group, Roberto Irineu Marinho, who states that “it is an appropriate moment to reflect with you on what this represents for all of us and reaffirm our commitment to journalism, with the continuity of our business and with Brazil.”

Finally, the speech of Roberto Irineu Marinho, president of the Globo group, at the inauguration of the new scenery, completes the reasoning of this research by linking the change of format to a marketing issue, when assuming the position of the company, the word “company” appeared five times in his speech, reproduced in the report of 5 minutes and 23 seconds, the speech of the president is 3 minutes, more than the total time of the article.

## CONCLUSIONS

The reconfiguration of the Jornal Nacional potentializes the controversial and fruitful relationship between journalism and entertainment, referring to the criticism of journalism that refuses to assume such a side of fun and hides itself, often, in the guise of seriousness. It is based on what amuses, usually seen as necessary opposition to information, that returns to the public in a space marked by hybridity.

It is also defended the idea that if there is an imprisonment to the genre there is no innovation. It is not feasible to frame telejournalism

in static rules since there is not a pure genre or a consonance of this idea with the characteristics of the market, which translates journalism as a business counter in constant attempts of innovation.

The analyses of *Jornal Nacional* in both 2015 and 2017 also show that Globo TV news media also had to adapt, creating “journalistic products” in accordance with the new society of consumption and entertainment that is configured in the contemporary world.

As discussed throughout the article, concerns about updating program formatting on a recurring basis can be justified by the audience numbers. Even after the investments of 2015, with the change in format, which drew attention to this research, the numbers fell again, according to the article published on the “Plantão Brasil” (Brazil on Duty) website. About a month later, *Jornal Nacional* again underwent a change in its format, leading us to apprehend this reconfiguration in the format as something even broader in today’s telejournalism in the face of a social and marketing need, from the perspective of fitting into the changes in society and market needs.

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## The “cinema de borda” in Piauí as an expression of the alternative techno-aesthetic standard<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The objective of this article is to investigate alternative production of audiovisual content, focusing on movies made in Piauí, Brazil. It reflects on the style adopted by videos produced by filmmakers from Piauí and how they have contributed to the emergence of new practices, narratives, aesthetics and audiovisual languages, thus relating to the perspective of the Political Economy of Communication. The starting point for the research is in the films of local filmmakers Franklin Pires ("Todo mundo mora no Dirceu" and "Corpúsculo") and Cícero Filho ("Ai, que vida!"). The purpose is to identify the points that configure these contents as an alternative techno-aesthetic standard, constituting what we understand as “cinema de borda”.

### Keywords

Audiovisual; Political Economy of Communication; Alternative technical-aesthetic standard; Cinema de borda.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary communicational practices, the effects caused by digital technologies help to maintain the status quo and to promote a rupture in apparently stable markets. Nowadays it can be used as a strategic resource to restructure several languages (among which the audiovisual one) and to adapt the contents to the potential of the emerging mobile devices (Quinn, 2005, p.4-5; Barichello; Machado, 2011, p.175; Viana & França, 2011, p.22; González & Triviño, 2011, p.4).

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<sup>2</sup> The term “cinema de borda” refers to an expression of the alternative techno-aesthetic standard movies. It will be kept in Portuguese in the text.

In the age of digitalization, made easier by mobile devices, a new concept of homemade and more democratic audiovisual productions is being created. The films produced in this new perspective are the result of a more accessible domestic technology to the public, who are interested in producing this kind of material. This emerging context, mainly characterized by digital material, has both intensified the exchange of content and widened the audience market. It has impacted the stages of production, distribution, and circulation of communication and audiovisual content (Miguel, 2009, p.49; Silva, 2015, p.10; Paiva; Sobrinho Neto & Santos, 2016, p.82, p.91).

These productions do not follow the pattern of narrative and the basic components of cinema like photography direction, sound direction, editing, production, distribution, etc. Instead, they usually start from a theme which their own director, who is often also the producer, improvisedly scripts over the course of the recordings. It could be called "homemade" production.

It is in this sense that this paper is related to the theoretical perspective of the Political Economy of Communication, whose scope is to study the influences of social relations (mainly those of power) in the production, distribution and consumption of resources, including the ones from communication (Mosco, 1999, p.98; Esteves, 2009, p.10). The main objective is to observe and analyze the audiovisual content produced according to alternative standards. It is not in vain that the films that make up the corpus of this article are the following cinematographic productions made in Piauí: "Ai Que Vida!", by Cícero Filho; "Todo Mundo Mora no Dirceu" and "Corpúsculo", both by the filmmaker Franklin Pires.

It can be justified that the initial choice for these films is due to some criteria, which will be developed in detail in other stages of the postdoctoral research that this paper integrates. In any case, it is important to list some of them, such as: to be popular; to have low cost of production; to present a strong appeal for dissemination through social networks; to be a parody, in local terms, of national and international contents, addressing themes essentially related to popular localities of Piauí.

The intention is to observe, analyze, and interpret the data and relate them from a historical conception of reality and its scientific reconstruction, to a later application and return to reality, by including in the future the production of videos made in and by communities of Piauí. The research, in the present stage, is the result of academic reading, recording, and discussing, as well as monitoring and mapping audiovisual content produced in the state. Only subsequently, the application of instruments and systematized categories are expected to be applied in the production of videos made by the collaborators, especially those from communities in Teresina.

Throughout this paper, the concept of alternative technical-aesthetic standard will be defined and, by its means, it will be exposed how it influences the production of peripheral films, here categorized as “cinema de borda”, which will be defined in the following section.

## 2. CINEMA DE BORDA

“Cinema de borda” is constituted by the deconstruction of the glamour existing in the American cinema, created through the industrial system, or even by capitalism. This new style of filmmaking arises with the intention of reflecting the image of society, the reality. The films are produced in neighborhoods, community centers and even in the outskirts of the city, commonly known as “favelas”. In the words of Nogueira (2009, p.14):

We have, therefore, in a way of concluding that two scales have long seemed to coexist in the history of cinema: on the one hand, the overproduction, full of “vedetas” (movie stars), fancy scenarios or extravagant special effects, able to aspire to the absolute epic, of which the various widescreen formats and surrounding sound technologies are a great example; on the other, the home-movie, the film recording of a personal experience; full of subjectivity even in its insignificance, either made of adventures and anecdotes, or made of inconsequential episodes, of which the mobile phone films and the minimal screens are the most exemplary concretization. (Our translation)

Lyra (2009, p. 36) reveals that “trash”, “kitsch”, and other forms considered bad taste or not aesthetically appreciable, are viewed with good humor and lack of value judgments in “filmes de borda”. It is

necessary to emphasize that “trash” and “kitsch” refer to the idea of something that was poorly done and / or produced by amateurs.

The style of these films, in general, tends towards excess or precariousness, being very close, also, of the trivialization of sonorous and image codes. In these cinematographic phenomena, the configurations are due not only to the status of the technique already previously structured by the massive audiovisual media, but also to the technological limits imposed by the cameras used (almost always of video), besides other situations like the lack of sophisticated resources of illumination, simple framing and linear arrangement of assemblies. (Lyra, 2009, p.37) (Our translation)

The amateur cinema has its roots not only in the precariousness and difficulties faced by the producers, but also in the preference for film production that has been adopted, which is the cinema of reality. This is undeniable when one starts to analyze the number of documentaries that have been produced in recent years. According to Lyra (2009, p.40), in addition to documentaries, there are fiction films that seek this reality by producing dramas and aspects of the country’s history and society.

Another important aspect is that “cinema de borda” is the result of technological democratization, because due to the greater access and consequent lowering of the costs of equipment, a direct consequence of the globalization process in the neoliberal model, as any individual can access the registration and the dissemination of contents in social networks. However, this democratization could generate the production of lacking content, due to the filmic resolutions of the cameras that were used. These strands open up to the ideal conditions of a cinematographic realization originated mainly from the practices and representations of daily life, without having to deny the great industrial production of culture (Lyra, 2009, p.40-41).

Despite the difficulties that the producers endure for the production of these films, mainly because of the precariousness of the resources, they serve as a historical record for that society. Because, through these audiovisual resources, it is possible to represent or remember the customs and jargon used by the people of that community. In the words of Lopes (2014, p.183-184), “the potential spectator also

enters this equation, since the gender film best meets the expectations of the general public, articulating clearly the production with daily practices and media habits, especially television” (our translation).

### 3. DEFINITION OF THE ALTERNATIVE TECHNICAL-AESTHETIC STANDARD

It is essential to delimit the concept of "alternative technical-aesthetic standard", central in the postdoctoral research of which it is part. For this, the contributions of Leroy (1992), Kalikoske (2010) and Brittos & Oliveira (2010) are taken as the basis.

The term "technical-aesthetic standard" was created and established by Leroy (1992), who focused mainly on theatrical art. The studies of this French author tried to show the oppositions, polarities, and complementarities that involve art and technology. Thus, "a technical-aesthetic system can be analyzed in these terms as a coherent set of institutions and processes, with a specific gender and style." (Leroy, 1992, p. 241) (Our translation)

Leroy (1992) says that certain aesthetics, according to certain economic structures, constitute integrated techno-aesthetic systems. This concept is supported by the studies of the Groupe de Recherche sur les Enjeux de la Communication (Gresec), a research group linked to Université Stendhal Grenoble III. The researcher observes the adoption of techno-economic structures (technological development) and socio-economic structures (raising of skilled labor) employed to provide unit to the French theatrical spectacle.

It is an understanding of the adoption of technologies in a direct relation with the socioeconomic structures for the raising of the skilled workforce (initially used to the French theatrical spectacle and later applied to the adoption of similar characteristics in the cultural industries). Therefore, we briefly consider the technical-aesthetic pattern as a technical-aesthetic structure resulting from an interweaving between technology and aesthetics. From this perspective, techno-socioeconomic structures can diffuse technological changes, modify the ways that information circulates, and transform existing relations amongst the various forms of production (Leroy, 1992).

Bolaño (2000) and Kalikoske (2010) direct the concept to the television market and correlate the competitive variations in the market by observing the seventies of the last century. Their analysis understands techno-aesthetic as a set of economic structures that deal with the interrelationships between the different sectors of its scope of action, in addition to the different phases of the same production process. Therefore, a techno-aesthetic system comprises a coherent set of institutions, products, and processes, with specific genre and style, without this entailing a closed structure, but rather adapting to the social, economic, and political conditions in which they occur.

What is called the techno-aesthetic standard is a set of characteristics that define a communicational agent and its products, based on relations established with the public, as well as on the involvement with other actors, such as the state, its competitors and the several sectors of the market. (Brittos & Oliveira, 2010, p.1) (Our translation)

In order to delimit the key concept of this research in an even more precise and specific way, it is also advisable to separate and delineate some of its terms separately, starting by the idea of "techno". In the words of Pinto (2005), technique is the action of producing made effective by the knowledge that guides it. Thus every technique requires a mode of production, just as every productive system generates certain kinds of techniques. "What gives a social character to production is the need to use the technique or, in a final analysis, to continually invent new forms of action, so that they, being effective, may return in the form of knowledge expanded to the collection of reason, may develop and expand it". (Pinto, 2005, p.485) (Our translation).

Thinking about the question of "aesthetics", in turn, requires the understanding that today, considering the new audiovisual formats, visual quality is not always a priority, granting (sometimes) space to the authenticity and veracity that the audiovisual can add to the narrative. When we talk about alternative production, the intention is not the highest quality of image and audio, but the highest quality of image and audio made possible by the equipment that the producer has, and through the domain he has in editing the material, from the software.

In this case, the images recorded through mobile devices by individuals and shared by themselves with the traditional media, such as TV channels (Paiva et al, 2016), are considered above all. As a definition of aesthetics, the entry of Outhwaite and Bottomore (1996, p.267-268):

Aesthetics must and indeed can be practiced with greater logical and linguistic precision, but at the same time cannot be reduced to the analysis of concepts and the ways in which they are used. In this respect, the situation of aesthetics does not differ substantially from that of other branches of the humanities. It is a mistake to apply the requirements used in science or mathematics to aesthetics. Moreover, even in the natural sciences there is no single, universal paradigm of scientific accuracy. (Our translation)

Regarding the concomitant use of the terms "standard" and "alternative", it is a question of whether such terms are presented as antagonistic or contradictory. Combined with the "alternative", it is sought to show that this pattern encompasses those features not constrained in the methodology of cultural organization and homogenization as a product of the process of globalization of audiovisual contents.

It would, indeed, be possible to argue that, if it is a pattern, it is no longer alternative. However, communication, as an exchange, a sharing, a common action, the alternative does not come close to the idea of subversion of models, and, rather, of an option, of another possible choice. Thus, the concept of standard is not used here in an imperative or normative sense, but rather focuses on the attempt to a mutual understanding from communication (Sodré, 2014).

According to Dourado & Andres (2009), the Brazilian audiovisual is limited to the hegemonic model of communication oligopolies. But that does not mean that a variety of technical-aesthetic standards cannot exist. In addition to the hegemonic, Kalikoske (2010) highlights the anachronistic, emergent, peripheral, and alternative patterns, although the author warns that there are other possible categorizations, as well as crossings between them. However, in this research, we follow the author's definition to use the concept of alternative audiovisual materials:

It is understood as an alternative all audiovisuals that, despite the existence of variables, deviate from the standards described above. Because of its low cost, it is often synonymous with home or amateur production, such as the audiovisual produced by Internet users, from free software with friendly platforms. Its diverse formats differ aesthetically, with a high degree of experimentation and some innovation. As a rule, it does not aim at profitability, in addition to intending educational content, themes not developed by the mainstream media, manifestations of different tribes, etc. Although the internet is its main means of distribution, the audiovisual produced by communities and small groups is also understood as an alternative (Kalikoske, 2010, p.10). (Our translation)

It is in this sense that the purpose of this article was to analyze alternative films produced in Piauí; which we present in the following section. In spite of the criticisms already mentioned, these new standards may, despite the standards, be considered alternative, presenting new possibilities not only for regional practices, routines, and tools of regional communication, but also for their languages and for the relation between issuer and content receiver.

#### 4. ANALYSIS OF THE TECHNICAL-AESTHETIC ELEMENTS OF PIAUI'S FILMS

We are in agreement with the perception of Nogueira (2009) that the idea of an alternative, domestic or edge cinema has an expressive conceptual comprehensiveness. Therefore, as this author suggests, throughout this paper, we do not propose a taxonomy or categorization to deal with our research problem. Instead, the analysis presented next was based on three pillars of observation: 1) the general synopsis of the films; 2) the language adopted in the scripts; and 3) the technical-aesthetic construction of the narrative.

##### 4.1. *Ai, que vida!*<sup>3</sup>

The feature-length film by Cícero Filho, a journalist and filmmaker, takes place in the mid-1990s. The narration is produced in a fictional city, Poço Fundo, located in the countryside of Piauí. The

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<sup>3</sup> This movie title can be translated as “Oh! What a (bad) life!”

film reveals the condition of submission and political alienation that the people live in relation to the town mayor, Zé Leitão, who seeks re-election. The chaos in the public administration and consequently the robberies in the town's coffers are easily dribbled by the mayor through the rhetoric he uses. It is worth noting that a new character emerges in the political scenario, Cleonice Cruz, who will try to run the elections, after perceiving the corrupt acts of the mayor. The candidate succeeds in drawing crowds through clear, objective speeches, always showing the economic reality of the municipality. Cleonice manages to win the elections. In addition, the film shows the love triangle between the characters Jerod, Valdir and Charleni. The triangle ends when Charleni discovers on the day of her wedding that her fiancé, Jerod, cheated on her.

"Ai que Vida!" was released in 2007. In the course of the narration, it is observed that it is usual the day-to-day colloquialism, which is more spontaneous and dynamic than the formal language. It is also notable that in the speeches of some characters, like Jerod, a less informal language is used, precisely to demonstrate the differences between social classes. The use of a more popular vocabulary, including neologism, is purposeful to reflect the dominant ideology of that population. With this, the dialogues are constructed of slang, nicknames and regional expressions.

The scenes that make up the film can be considered better constructed according to aspects of editing, audio and image quality (and yet, when we take into consideration the technology used at the time of the recording, but no longer in the present day). This is a result, among other factors, of the experience that the filmmaker has. "Aí que vida!" is the 24th cinematographic work of Cicero. It is possible to emphasize the quality of the audio, although the quality of the cameras used did not have adequate technology, as a consequence of the low budget invested in the production that ended up in the distortion of the images, which consequently compromising their sharpness. However, the chosen frameworks were necessary to make the harmonic composition of the production of a whole.

#### 4.2. Todo mundo mora no Dirceu<sup>4</sup>

The film "Todo Mundo Mora no Dirceu" portrays the life of a shy young man known as Dirceu. In the beginning of the narrative, Dirceu is always despised by acquaintances and his own relatives. The young man falls in love with Nina, but the girl was dating a neighborhood bandit, known as Toião. Nina always complained about Dirceu that he had no attitude, but she did not know that all his frightened actions were a consequence of shyness. To conquer Nina and be accepted by society, Dirceu began to ingest a type of drug that changed his personality. It is worth mentioning that his purpose with the ingestion of the drug was frustrated, because the girl began to wonder about his behavior. However, at the end of the movie he goes to rehabilitation and manages to be free from addiction, and finally, Nina stays with him.

The narrative deals with an important issue that is the denial or acceptance of an identity and everything a teenager can do to feel accepted, such as behavioral changes, drug use or dressing differently. It is worth mentioning that this type of behavior in search of acceptance is more common in the outskirts of the cities, since teenagers are generally poorly oriented by their parents. In addition, there is a strong media influence on young people, since advertisements, with the use of appealing expressions, try to convince the individual to adhere to a certain product in order to be part of some group of society. That is why a great number of people end up on the path of drugs because they see in the world of trafficking the fastest way to get products that capitalist media sells at all times.

The beginning of the movie has a strong pulling force because the first scenes are everyday images of the neighborhood in which the main character lives, with passages of songs. This audiovisual production has a negative and a positive point. The positive thing is that the scenes have good quality because of the camera used in the recordings, and in certain parts of the comedy there are visual effects that contribute to the fruitful outcome. However, in contrast, the audio of the entire movie is

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<sup>4</sup> This movie title can be translated as "Everybody lives in the Dirceu". "Dirceu" is a neighborhood of Teresina, the capital of Piauí.

totally out of sync with the scenes. To remedy the problem, a dubbing was done, but it was not convincing because the impression the viewer has is that he is watching a cartoon. The script of Franklin Pires opts for humor and especially values the social discourse of exclusion. Lines with words or expressions known only in the northeast and try to bring out, in the form of audiovisual art, the social voices of the local identity.

The actor and producer, Franklin Pires, is from Piauí and already has a vast curriculum in relation to audiovisual productions in the state. Most of the plays he created were turned into films. "Todo Mundo Mora no Dirceu" contains entries from comedians such as Amaury Jucá and the biggest youtuber in Brazil, Whindersson Nunes, both from Piauí.

#### 4.3. Corpúsculo<sup>5</sup>

The satire of Catherine Hardwicke's "Twilight" movie (an adaptation of Stephanie Meyer's book) portrays the story of young Bella Swina, who comes to live in a small town of three people and meets Edward Cuallém, a vegetarian vampire. Her moving to the town will bring the passion between the two, who have to face the angry love of Jacob Pink.

In Corpúsculo, also produced by Franklin Pires, the video quality varies according to ambient lighting. The scenes made during the day have good image quality, but in the scenes that happen at night they lose that quality and they end up getting a colored filter on top. Sometimes the characters' speeches become out of sync with what is shown, and the sound effects, which most seem to belong to cartoons, are used in the attempt to improve, but they end up worsening the audio quality insofar as they generate a distortion in the characters' speeches. But it is worth mentioning that the goal of the film is achieved, especially with regard to its humorous tone. After all, even flaws, often arising from the bad conditions that are offered in filmmaking, become elements of the alternative techno-aesthetic pattern (such as home and local humor).

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<sup>5</sup> This movie title can be translated as "Corpuscle", but it is not possible to translate into English the relation of the word in Portuguese "Corpúsculo" with the word "Crepúsculo" (which is Twilight in Portuguese), what is also part of the satire.

The narrative is marked by typical northeastern expressions and aims to emphasize the relationship between the historical development of people living in that region with the development of language. So it is noticeable the use of the “language of the Northeast” throughout the film, and it is mainly used to make the film funnier and to promote an identification between the spectators from Piauí who are watching it and the characters’ history. Therefore, the use of these popular expressions is an audiovisual technique used with the purpose of approaching the viewer with what is being exposed, that is, it generates an acquaintance with the content.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The initial results of the postdoctoral research that this paper links show that the alternative films produced in Piauí do not consist of simple attempts to generate differentiated audiovisual contents. Instead, they represent a struggle for new forms of social interaction and collaboration (Rego, 2016) for local audiovisual production. After all, apart from breaking the current and hegemonic model of Brazilian cinematographic production, today, it is possible that, especially from social networks, local cinema reaches more and more people and public. Especially when we consider Aguiar's (2016) assertion that the Brazilian northeast tends to be politically and mediatically deprecated in relation to the center-south of the country, demanding even more the approach of themes focused on regional development and specificities.

The expectation is that a speech that is more representative of local interests and identity and at the same time in tune with contemporary and digital strategies will be reached. Even because, at present, there is no longer the same control over the distribution of cinematographic productions: the internet allows local contents to circulate at national and international levels, making it difficult to delimit a more specific target audience.

In any case, this is not a problem. On the contrary, it allows an amplification of the discussions carried out at the regional level. In addition, the issue of inequality is not only at the heart of political conflicts (Piketty, 2015), but also, and in a significant way, in media

conflicts. This struggle, today, according to Brittos & Oliveira (2010), is only possible because of the potential offered by the digitization and the convergence of the media.

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