

THE SOCIAL THEORIES OF THE PRESS: JOURNALISM AND SOCIETY

Copyright © 2005
SBPjor / Associação
Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Jornalismo

BEATRIZ MAROCCHI

Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Brazil

ABSTRACT

For a short period of time, between the end of the 19th century and the middle of the 20th, newspapers and journalists were under the spotlight as never before. However, the comprehensive reviews of the theories of the press do not acknowledge the thought of this period and its development into "the social theories of the press" (H. Hardt, 1979). This article is positioned in this gap of press studies, and it uses as a starting point the foucaultian description of the different thresholds that establish the levels of discourse elaboration (Foucault, 1995). It aims at exploring the theoretical production that approximates German and American scholars such as Albert Schäffle (1831-1903); Karl Kries (1821-1898); Karl Bücher (1847-1930); Ferdinand Tönnies (1835-1936); Albion Small (1854-1926); Edward Ross (1856-1951); Max Weber (1864-1920); Robert Park (1864-1944) and Walter Lippmann (1889-1974), rescuing this production from the pre-history of the press to materialize evidence that this production coincides, in its external origin, with the modern newspaper practices, although there seemed to be no dependence between them at the time.

KEY-WORDS archeology, press discourse, social theories of the press

Between the end of the 19th century and the middle of the last century, the press was explored by a group of German and American scholars, who had somehow occasionally shared the journalistic practices, the concern about teaching journalism in academic settings, the study of newspapers and its relation to society, as well as sociology as a field of journalism investigation and teaching.

The extensive reviews on the different theories of journalism display a huge gap on this historical content which comprises the so-called "social theories of the press" (H. Hardt, 1970), except for isolated references to the study of journalism and society conducted by M. Weber, R. Park and W. Lippmann (N. Traquina, 2000 and 2002, M. Wolff, 1987), not even considering them under its possible influence.

However, for the first time, by means of the exchanges that took place among scholars such as Albert Schäffle (1831-1903); Karl Knies (1821-1898); Karl Bücher (1847-1930); Ferdinand Tönnies (1835-1936); Albion Small (1854-1926); Edward Ross (1856-1951); William Sumner (1840-1910), Max Weber (1864-1920); Robert Park (1864-1944); Walter Lippmann (1889-1974), the journalistic practice became the object of a dense epistemic texture, marked by the criticism on the power mechanism that put the modern newspaper to work.

This article aims at reviewing those exogenous theories, which were born bound to the social science, in order to restore them to modern journalism, thus achieving a social perspective to the studies on journalism related to the newspaper practice and its outcomes, both in the press discourse production mechanism and the relationship of the press discourse with the heterogeneous set of discourses that marked its production at the time.

Why Foucault?

We are dealing with the domain of discourse, more precisely in a foucaultian sense of archeology which seems to be the most appropriate way of exploring the characteristics of journalism and the unfolding that took place at the time, either through the “social theories of the press”, the press knowledge produced and disseminated by newspapers, or the relation between these and a “certain thought structure from which it would be impossible to escape at the time” (M. Foucault, 1995, p. 217). Why is that so?

1. The foucaultian perspective is more appropriate to the study of journalism because at the time journalism was not organized into a discipline of its own; journalistic knowledge was considered hierarchically inferior; its actions were not acknowledged and its contents were subjected to the studies of society. Only later were they redeemed by means of scholarship. (Foucault, 1995, p. 202; 2002, pp. 11-12; Hardt, 1979).

2. Secondly, archeology uses a method of approaching these discourses because the science constitution map devised by Foucault holds in one single archive the thresholds corresponding to the levels of a discursive formation prior to the establishment of the discipline. Such background methodology has from the very beginning inspired our ambition of reviewing this oblivion of the social theories of the press, so that we could develop into the relations that the social theories of

the press hold with the practices and the various other theories that will address journalism.

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault establishes five thresholds, or five distinct emerging components in the constitution of science, which could, to some extent, be transferred and applied to journalism: a) discursive formation, b) positivity threshold; c) epistemologization threshold, d) scientism threshold, e) formalization threshold (1995, p. 211).

The undisciplined journalistic practices are located within this large picture, and in the case of Brazilian journalism it develops from the 19th century up to present time. These practices are demonstrated through techniques and effects, independently of academic acknowledgement, to which we have dedicated a prior investigation (2004), or this area we are focused on at present, or further, the coercion game to which practices and scientific discourse are subject.

The discourses we analyzed nearly match with journalism practice, but it does not mean they had been regulatory; journalism in the 19th century was doing well without them. However, with them, they gain another perspective, an external, orchestrated view of things, a criticism of the same practices, identified with their connections to capitalism, with the fast reproduction techniques (and the notions of time and space attached to them), and the political-economic functions attributed to them by the bourgeois mentality in founding the modern state¹. A criticism on behalf of society in general and a kind of counter-journalism was materialized by Park's project *Thought News*, a newspaper that was supposed to interpret daily events from a philosophical perspective, but that never came out. (M.R.B. Conde, 2002, p. 14).

3. It is within this picture that a magnetic power field will appear, "an exercise field of the enunciative function", which, in terms of the foucautian archive², may approximate, at a time, not its own historical time, the different discourses that configure the social theories of the press and the different thresholds that characterize the rise of journalism as an autonomous discipline, thus demonstrating how these discourses and historical thresholds are related, how they overlap, and the conditions in which they alternate and establish themselves. It is the analyst's task to undo the existing inertia in this field by stimulating relations among what was apparently separated in the past, by tracking their silent rise, repeated and purified in contemporary theories. To establish such connections, Foucault devises the statement and the enunciative function (Foucault, 1995, pp. 212-216).

The status of journalism

As previously mentioned, it was not the intention of those scholars to establish the boundaries of a new discipline through a set of objects, concepts and theoretical choices. In fact, there was a widespread intention of conceiving and treating the press on a regular basis as a problematic institution in society by means of sociological and philosophical instruments, and establishing the academy as the locus for specialization courses aiming at journalist education.

Knies, for instance, considered that the social impact of the media, such as the telegraph, should be studied by economists, historians and politicians. Yet for controlling the impact of newspapers he suggested the regularization of journalistic practices. Due to the impact newspapers had on the lives of thousands of people, journalists should be intellectually qualified and have their actions framed by professional rules and ethical principles (cited by Hardt, 1979, p. 94-97).

Schäffle, who was a journalist at the age of 19, used to say that the career had forced him to look for better education; in order to be able to express himself on a number of subjects, he plunged into several disciplines through sources in French and in English. As a scientist, he criticized in his writings the way journalists wrote, and argued that science should provide positive insights to give an end both to the charlatanism of government and the cult of verbosity in the press, "...positive insights... this would have put an end to charlatanism of government, to the cult of verbosity in the press, to the disappointment of the audience, to the contamination of journalism with literary scum, and to paid sophistry and rhetoric" (in Hardt, 1979, p. 71). Schäffle also recognized the need for a substantial reform of the daily press. He suggested the separation of advertising and information and opinion functions to improve the quality of newspaper coverage and the professional ethics of journalism.

Tönnies considered press investigation as an important area of empirical sociology (sociography); he believed that it was unnecessary to establish a new science for the entire field of investigation, and that sociology itself could provide important contributions for a critical history of the press, especially from a sociological and philosophical perspective (cited by Hardt, 1979, p. 154).

Bücher, like Tönnies, did not agree with the autonomy of journalism as a "special science". According to Bücher, the aim of journalism courses he gave at the University of Leipzig was to be "an applied knowledge":

"I wanted the lecture courses that I gave at Basel and here at Leipzig on this subject I wanted to be seen as transmitting useful knowledge, not as the beginnings of a special science. It is possible that the sociological study of newspaper journalism, which hardly started, may furnish the building blocks for such a science; today we are still a long distance from that point" (cited by Hardt, 1979, p. 102).

The study of journalism, according to Weber, should establish a triangulation with the journalistic practice and the society behavior (cited by Hardt, 1979, p. 170). And so he did during practically his entire life. Weber was a useful political journalist who had been censored once for attacking the Kaiser. His articles were about political institutions, the Kaiser's role and other important officers, the military, the political parties and the pressure groups in the late 19th century. However, as he himself acknowledged, his points of view would not have an impact even on the newspapers' editorial line he worked with (cited by Hardt, 1979, p. 162). This did not prevent him from suggesting to the German Association of Sociology, in 1910, "a genuinely scientific study of the press", in the field of sociology of the press, as he considered it important to carry on working in collaboration with journalists. He believed the theme could not be objectively approached if the dominant press circles did not trust the project:

"Es imposible que, si por parte de los representantes de las casas editoras o por parte de los periodistas nos encontramos con la sospecha de que el objetivo de la Asociación es formular críticas moralizantes sobre la situación existente – es imposible, digo, que alcancemos entonces nuestro propósito; porque es imposible alcanzarlo si no nos podemos proveer, en muy gran medida, de material procedente precisamente de este sector. (1992, p. 251)"

Park, who, like Weber and Schäffle, had been a journalist, will suggest incorporating that previous experience to the sociological method. Park affirmed he had become a journalist to be able to describe the behavior of society under the influence of the news, in the precise and universal scientific language:

"Estudié filosofía porque esperaba adquirir una mayor perspectiva acerca de la naturaleza y función de esa clase de conocimiento que llamamos noticias. Además, deseaba hacerme con un punto de vista fundamental desde el que pudiera describir el comportamiento de la sociedad, bajo la influencia de las noticias, en el lenguaje preciso universal de la ciencia" (cited by B. Conde, 2000, p. 15).

For Park, sociologists were a sort of super reporters, like the men who wrote for Fortune, differing from them in terms of their production, which had a scientific intent in telling the facts more precisely and neutrally than a journalist would, and so compared to the “major news”:

“El sociólogo cuenta las cosas de una forma poco más precisa, y con un estilo un poco más imparcial que el hombre medio: lo que mi amigo Franklin Ford llamaría las grandes noticias” (cited by B. Conde, 2000, p. 61).

From his articles about the press, journalists emerge as urban characters who practiced journalism as informal and intuitive sociologists, acting with the eyes and ears “of an audience which had become too numerous and disperse, over which it was not possible to keep direct social control” (B. Conde, 2000, p. 11). Park’s remarks partly coincide with the journalistic practices displayed in Brazilian newspaper texts of that time; in a previous study (Marocco, 2004), it was possible to attest that journalists would regularly play the role of a “moral censor”. They would denounce the police as incompetent to apply the law to certain odd individuals, who would not conform to the social order, and, very often, would offer to take the place of the police as the eyes they did not seem to have, or did not want to make use of, as in the text below published in a porto-alegrense newspaper called Gazetinha:

And talking about mendicants, the wise local police should recall the large number of vagabonds begging in the streets (...). Every day, a sturdy Italian wanders in the streets of the capital, taking a blind boy by the hand, who, fingering a greasy concertina, goes begging from door to door” (August 12th, 1897).

The thought of the time

The news³ was produced by the newspapers and harshly criticized by this set of theories which would in fact establish another level of knowledge (Foucault, 1995, pp. 206, 211). However, in both levels of knowledge – the journalistic knowledge and the academic discourse about journalism – there is a certain structure of thought inspired in the view of society as an organism.

From this organicist perspective, the journalistic discourse naturalized the sociological discourse and, at the same time, in the academic discourse, newspapers took the shape of vital organs for governments and businesses, deviating from the original function attributed and

claimed by the social science – to produce and disseminate information – to serve the economic and political elites, more concretely, the modern⁴ state and its corrective project of the “social body” deformities (Capelato, 1989 p. 134). Firstly, we will examine the constitution of the academic discourse in its organicist sense:

1. Schäffle compared the human organism to the communication⁵ system; he conceived the nervous cells, the ganglions and the nervous centers as forming a long network to be replicated in both worlds. In this system, the individuals, like the cells, would get in touch with other cells/other individuals, within the organism/communication system, which would offer a large variety of connections. According to Schäffle, in the case of society, a book, a newspaper, or a social circle could develop into dozens, hundreds of network connections.

“Each new book read by an individual, each newspaper he subscribes to, each social circle he joins increases his participation by dozens and hundreds of connections – and this often takes place over night” (mentioned in Hardt, 1979, p. 46).

The second element of the system devised by Schäffle – the nervous center – corresponded to social institutions. Those would be comprised by professionals and scholars dedicated to the production and transmission of symbols⁶, which, as information, were the prerequisite to social participation.

Daily newspapers, for instance, that participated in the social organism as institutions, were nervous centers comprised by professionals and scholars who functioned within an appropriate structure, following production and distribution processes that would allow intellectual tendencies to express themselves. And they went through permanent ups and downs. On the one hand, they would support the government, politicians and political parties; they collected and transmitted the elites’ ideas. On the other hand, in relating to the public, they would appear as public opinion, agencies of communication (cited by Hardt, 1979, pp. 68-69). As an “opinion maker”⁷, according to Schäffle, the press was the first power of the state, the key to succeed in the social action and in exerting power, accomplishing two major functions: transmitting information and giving power visibility. In this picture, journalists performed the role of mediators, positioning themselves between the leaders of the society and the public. A journalist, as someone who thought, felt and experienced the routines of everyday life, would not normally create ideas; he was unable to do a serious intellectual job. To improve the quality of the newspapers,

Schäffle suggested, as previously mentioned, the intervention of science and more concretely the separation of advertising, information and opinion.

2. Small emphasized that language was the “most flexible means of capitalizing human experience and of making it at the same time a circulation medium” (cited in Hardt, 1979, p. 197); communication, a nervous system, and each individual, a “terminal cell” in the process of communication⁸. In his partnership with Vincent, Small described the press as a set of physical and psychological channels that materialized symbols to be distributed to social groups of several magnitudes. In his words, the press was “all the arrangements of communicating channels for the collection of ideas, their embodiment in printed symbols, and the distribution of the latter throughout social groups of greater or lesser magnitude” (cited in Hardt, 1979, p. 199). This production and distribution process of printed symbols, according to both authors, fulfilled the needs of several social segments, or the interests of specific groups or organizations. As such, the press became the main means of communication between leaderships and their followers, or, in other words, the impulses communicated by the papers would lead and stimulate all sorts of interactions: among researchers, who would publish their outcomes of their research in books and newspapers; among religious leaders, who owned their own newspapers to spread their doctrines, among governors, politicians, political parties and trade unions, which, likewise, had their own newspapers or could influence other papers. The press was intended to influence those leaderships within the limits of social life, but, at the same time, a newspaper had to be attractive enough to the greatest possible number of consumers. Thus, its content would not conform to the elites’ interests only, but reflect popular interests as well. This need of adapting to the audiences and their prejudices prevented newspapers from exerting a positive influence on public opinion. Sensationalism, a type of journalism aimed at pleasing the audiences, combined specific interests and corruption quite often ended up distorting the facts. However, the newspaper was not the final source of the evil: the responsibility should be distributed throughout the whole social organism.

3. Kries compared society to an organism whose maturation coincides with the improvement of the social communication system. From this perspective, technological development affected the life of thousands of people. The telegraph, for instance, worked as an instrument for the fast transmission of information, but, at the same time, it should be considered

in terms of its impacts and the power it held to bind the social body:

"In comparison to our body we must say that the central organ in the network is an ambulatory one... the telegraph must appear to us like the eye and the ear of areas and countries, with which they perceive what is going on in the world" (cited by Hardt, 1979, p. 95).

Knies looked upon the telegraph as a technological development that met the conditions of providing a means of fast and continuous service not only for those who operated newspapers but also for those whose information needs became a prerequisite for the successful conduction of business and the exchange of material goods. Thus, if combined with the realization that the news affects the behavior of individuals, the importance of the telegraph as an instrument of news communication in modern society must become self-evident. Knies acknowledged the interdependence of economic and cultural spheres of society in his discussion of news communication as a means of satisfying old needs and creating new ones. Yet, newspapers were means of information transmission through time and space, aiming at fulfilling more immediate needs of the audience at a lower cost (cited by Hardt, 1979, p. 92, 95). But, besides satisfying the audience's need for information, according to Knies, newspapers helped create new needs through advertising. As it is displayed in a public platform, advertising saves time and efforts, stimulates consumption and production, and can be considered positive to the economic sustainability of newspapers.

4. Park's idea of a social organism is closely connected to the existence of a collective action, consensus⁹ and interaction among most members in society, through communication; "in one word", he remarked, "there is society where there is communication". In this strict dependence frame, communication could reduce the divergences to accomplish maintenance of a cultural group unity and integrity in time and space (B. Conde, 2002, pp. 90-102). In the broad sense attributed by Park, "communication is essential to the cultural process" because it enables consensus and understanding among individuals in a social group; it establishes a network of habits and mutual expectations to bind different social institutions as a family and a union; it sustains the necessary conditions for the society to function; it guarantees the transmission of historical heritage from one generation to the next.

Concerning its instrumental sense, long before McLuhan, Park had conceived the means of communication as extensions of the human condition, and as a suppressor of physical and spatial barriers separating

people. In this sense, he recognized the powerful impact of the cinema in disseminating American attitudes and lifestyle; the news, according to Park, had a referential or didactic function; there was no scientific status for it, and it was essential to the government and business. In other words, it could be a social control tool, which was spontaneously done by the community itself through personal contact and rumors, in a different historical circumstance (B. Conte, 2000, pp. 94-95, 106-237).

The science discourse in journalistic discourses

The 19th and 20th century social thought was quickly incorporated into the newspapers discourse.

Journalists, as state earlier, had made thousands of intersections among organicism, positivism and the society: they naturally related the social organism to pathological events, such as the abolishment of slavery, as it cast "in our political organism arterial system the impure and formidable mass of two million blacks, all of a sudden invested with constitutional prerogatives"; they demanded that the police took action to repress and marginalize the *less adapted individuals*, the "troublemakers", who hindered the healthy development of the Brazilian society (B. Marocco, 2004; J. de Mesquita, cited by M.H. Capelato, 1988, p. 81; S. Chalhoub, 2001; W. Fraga Filho, 1996; S. Pesavento, 1998; A. Z. Vargas, 1998; C. Mauch, 1998).

Prostitutes, beggars, gamblers, vagabonds, and unemployed people manifested the symptom of a "sick organism" (Marocco, 2004). The newspapers would classify beggars and jobless in a *hierarchy of species* respectively as "harmful to our lives and noxious to our progress" and "one of the most degrading social sores" (*O Estado de S. Paulo*, October 1st, 1933, cited by Capelato, 1988, pp. 131-132). Prostitutes were described as "the cancerous sore of society" (*Gazetinha*, May 11th, 1898). Boys and youngsters were "the children of the last social classes"; "children of the evil and the mire" (*O Independente*, October 12th, 1905; January 16th and 30th, 1908, cited in Pesavento, 1998, p. 123). Against those "agents of social demoralization", the "saloon mice and rats", *O Independente* incited a "war without truce", demanding that the police fought like the sanitary authorities were struggling against the mice, the fleas and for extermination of the bubonic plague:

“... as the public sanitary authorities struggle in a war without truce against rats, fleas and the bubonic plague, it is your duty to follow their examples, struggling against the saloon mice and rats, these genuine agents of social demoralization” (January 12th, 1902).

Social control

This journalistic method of turning individuals into objects, which gave rise to the “idleness” and the “dishonest occupations repression” (1888), motivated an alliance between the Brazilian government and the newspapers, as claimed by Comte¹⁰. At the same time, it built and put to work what is a close notion of the parkian “familiar formal acts”, which, in the case of the newspapers, would designate a discursive journalistic texture for intervention in the social¹¹ process .

The news and the newspaper supported the positive strategy, and seem to have been an efficient tool for the Brazilian government in the difficult task of maintaining “an essential order” (Comte, 1934), a tool that would signalize what was out of normality, supported by customs, law, public opinion and, more concretely, the Brazilian government reform plans. In Parks words, those actions would “control” the reality (B. Conte, 2000, pp. 155, 236; see note 8 in this article).

In “Social Decadence” (1918), Ross expresses about the same opinion: the newspapers had “an increasing power over the audience”, suggesting that this happened because newspapers published a certain type of fact, omitted others and would publish whatever they decided to on the front page, according to the relevance determined by newspapers’ owners. That is to say that newspapers’ owners would shape public opinion without the audience noticing it. Two years later, Ross would continue these considerations on how newspapers suppressed certain information:

“¿Qué puede hacerse respecto de la supresión de las noticias? Al menos podemos desistir de criticar y predicar. Urgir al director, sometido al anuncinante o al propietario, a ser más independiente es invitarle a que abandone la profesión. En cuando al capitalista propietario, exhortarlo para que maneje su diario en interés de la verdad y del progreso es tan razonable como tratar de convencer al molinero para que maneje su propiedad en favor del bien general en lugar de en su beneficio privado. Lo que hace falta es abrir un camino nuevo y amplio pra la conciencia pública” (1910, 200).

A journalistic cartography

The 19th century porto-alegrense newspapers, in their explanatory attempt, created a new cartography¹²; they referred neither to the uptown nor to the downtown, as people were used to referring to the city due to its geographical features, nor to the thin street network and its complicated and dense urban weaving. The daily reports would display the unusual events. Through strange inventories, the newspapers signalized where a minor offence had taken or was likely to take place, the constructions where idleness and immorality developed, or the streets where lack of hygiene and the dirt would jeopardize public health. From the perspective of these journalistic images, Porto Alegre was a dangerous, violent, dirty and immoral city:

Gazetinha and *Gazeta da Tarde*, two newspapers from Porto Alegre, described a bestial city, which, similar to Victor Hugo's "great evil cave", would break off with social order, law, science, progress and the civilization:

"Por debajo de todas las minas, de todas las galerías, por debajo de todo el progreso y de la utopía, mucho más abajo y sin relación alguna con las etapas superiores, está la última etapa. Lugar formidable. Es lo que hemos llamado el tercer subterráneo. Es la fosa de las tinieblas. Es la cueva de los ciegos. Comunica con los abismos. Es la gran caverna del mal. Las siluetas feroces que rondan en esta fosa, casi bestias, casi fantasmas, no se interesan por el progreso universal, ignoran la idea y la palabra" (1998, p. 314).

As in the book Patron-Minette, the journalists focused particularly on a "remarkable place" that the whole society wanted to destroy; to this extent, as this was a shared purpose, journalists should observe and record, following a light strategy, much light on them, as recommended by Victor Hugo:

"¿Qué se necesita para hacer desaparecer esas larvas? Luz. Mucha luz. Ni un murciélagos resiste la luz del alba. Hay que empezar por iluminar la sociedad de arriba" (1998, p. 317).

In this sense, the *Gazeta da Tarde* would say that Porto Alegre was contaminated by a "bunch of criminal vagabonds", who should be destroyed and severely corrected. These "jobless and profitless" individuals were devoted to idleness and vices, in spite of abundant job offers. As a consequence, there was an increase in crimes motivated by robbery:

"Porto Alegre has been taken by a gang of criminal vagabonds. An end to it is urgently needed. This jobless and profitless scum, with plenty of jobs in supply, must be severely corrected. Devoted to idleness, vices and irresponsibility, the outcomes are an increase in crime, motivated by robbery" (July 27th, 1897).

A few days later, the *Gazetinha* provides additional information: the peaceful and orderly capital looked like a "Turkish town, submitted to attackers":

"Nowadays, the capital of Rio Grande do Sul resembles more a bandits' hiding place than the prime city of a civilized state ... it is no longer the peaceful capital of the orderly state of Rio Grande do Sul, resembling more a Turkish town, taken by attackers" (August 1st, 1897).

In the previous year, the newspaper affirmed that Porto Alegre could be compared to former Calabria. On the same note, *Gazetinha* associated the problem to the mugging and aggressions against passers-by during the night. On the 2nd of May, 1896, for instance, Pedro Miliareli, a worker, was "plundered" and "severely beaten" in the fish market. On the same week, a streetcar company employee was mugged on his way to Arraial do Partenon:

"Day after day (...) the newspapers report aggressions against passers-by during the night, some of them not far from the downtown area (...) During the day, there is the police (...) most of the time to give tickets, however, at night, after ten o'clock, they are hardly seen downtown, and they totally disappear from the suburbs, leaving them at the mercy of the vagabonds, thieves and attackers. On the 2nd this month, at night, a poor Italian worker, over 60 years of age, Pedro Miliarelli, fell asleep in the fish market, next to a stand, where he was robbed in more than a hundred thousand réis, besides being severely beaten (...) Early this week a Carris Train Company employee was mugged on his way to Arraial do Partenon (...) This looks like former Calabria" (May 9th, 1896).

2. In the dirty and ugly streets of Porto Alegre, journalists as João do Rio¹³ took stock on the tenement houses, where the needy piled up. Elderly people, youngsters, men, women and even babies dwelled in wrecked useless stables with their few belongings, all together, without any intimacy. Ten to twelve people would share a cubicle without any ventilation.

"The person in charge, trembling, walked before us, raising the candle-holder. He opened the iron door and closed it behind us. Then we began to see the ground floor, rooms with beds in rows, as in quarters, bedspreads with grimy sheets, where sailors, soldiers, bearded workers were sleeping, open-mouthed, slavering. Some were covered up to the neck. Others spread completely naked. The bad smell increased. It seemed like the air was becoming rare. Stopping for a while we could hear the breathing of that world as the sounds of a far-away machine. It was the area of the reserved rooms and mats" (*Gazeta de Notícias*, June 19th, 1904, in João do Rio, 1997, p. 282).

2.1 Wherever there was this kind of housing, there was garbage accumulated in the streets to such a degree that the journalists had isolated the "filthiness foci" in a special section. *Gazetinha*, in a note claiming for urban neatness, suggests Praça da Bandeira should become Praça do Lixo¹⁴:

"Praça da Bandeira (...) should change its name to simply praça do lixo" (December 16th, 1897).

About this same campaign, a journalist denounced the lack of municipal attention to the Beco do Poço¹⁵, which was often full of garbage:

"And we take this occasion to call the municipal inspectors' attention to the uncleanliness of General Paranhos Street and Beco do Poço; the drips are usually full of rubbish" (March 5th, 1896).

3. Porto Alegre's extremely narrow streets concentrated immorality in brothels. Beco do Fanha, Beco do Oitavo, Beco do Império, Praça do Paraíso, Rua dos Sete Pecados Mortais¹⁶ concentrated the city's immoral side. These "filthy perdition dens" were almost daily featured by *Gazetinha* in a crusade the journalists considered "an important service to the public morale". This service, as frequently stated, had a double intention: to inform the imprudent women, who could somehow be attracted to prostitution, and to fight police neglect by denouncing those wretched "pigpens" location, where prostitution vice prevailed with its "gloomy procession of misery and disgrace".

"(...) We are aware that we have run into the displeasure of the brothels' habitués, known under the significant name of maternity, but it does not matter: being aware of this important service we are rendering

to the public morale, calling the attention of imprudent women that might be attracted to the filthy perdition dens is a powerful encouragement to continue the inglorious drudgery of denouncing to the police the wretched pigpens, where the prostitution vice remains unpunished with all its gloomy procession of misery and disgrace" (November 21st, 1897).

The web organized in journalistic notes denounced the geographical expansion of the "huge prostitution Hydra" to the outskirts, but mainly exploited the details that stirred up the readers' morbidity. They informed, for instance, that a 12-year-old girl, sold to a pander by her parents, was offered at the Praça da Alfândega, and that many of the nuns' school students on Rua do Arvoredo were used to prostitution (*Gazeta da Tarde*, August 5th and September 18th, 1895, cited in Pesavento, 1998, p. 131). Three years later, a journalist from *Gazetinha* was patrolling the routines of the prostitutes, as previously¹⁷ announced, and narrating in details a visit to *crioula* Fausta's brothel. Escorted by a guide, he will arrive at the old two-story house with three windows; will knock at the famous prostitute's door, who will open the door herself, but, due to dimness of the place, will not let her face be "properly seen" so that the journalist could not precisely describe her to the readers:

"On the next block, Quirino stopped in front of a an old two-story house with three windows on the upper floor, and two windows and doors with hallways in the ground floor.

- They're here, he said.

- And now what?

- You just get in and make your arrangements with the owner (...). We entered with him the dark hallway (...) Quirino, who was ahead of us, knocked and murmured: Miss Fausta! The door immediately opened and, at the threshold, a crioula showed up, her face hidden by the gloominess of the place..." (*Gazetinha*, May 12th, 1898).

Final considerations

What has been seen so far made it possible to make progress into the epistemological gap concerning the social theories of the press in four aspects:

1. About its contents, little explored by the reviews dedicated to the theories of journalism, but, at the same time, very important to any studies that intend to approach journalism and its historical relation to society. In this sense, generally speaking, it is possible to come to the conclusion that social theories have promoted a precise and clear approximation to

the journalistic practices. At the same time, never before had newspapers, advertising, social control mechanisms embedded in the journalistic discourse, been so much and so harshly criticized. In parallel to these theoretical formulations, the journalistic discourse continued to be produced and disseminated according to approaches, rules, journalists' observations, traditions governed by social practices and pressure, and a type of plebeian truth, implicit in "the truth" of journalism at that time. Those elements, from a discursive practice scope, would make it possible to establish a certain scientific discourse, that is to say, journalistic knowledge¹⁸ could be abstracted from those exogenous theories, in spite of their rejection of the institutional character of journalism, and, conversely, as the journalistic discourse was supported by many of the concepts present in the social theories. Thus, such theories could never be left out of a history of journalism.

2. Secondly, it is possible to conclude that this new type of rationality recognizes and describes a close relation between journalistic device and science, and that being aware of its mechanisms may contribute to the identification of new forms of scientific discourse emerging in the journalistic discourse, and vice-versa.

3. Thirdly, thanks to a field of enunciative forces, formed within the discourses of that time, it is possible to unveil how newspapers gave a journalistic shape, and a new meaning to a set of heterogeneous statements, as well as covenanted with the Brazilian government, and the reformists in general, who aimed at social control. While the social reforms were being pursued by a network of institutions, newspapers would publish a number of discourses on their detractors¹⁹, and, as such, were a virtual threat to society.

4. Finally, they make it possible to follow the migration of certain notions of that time to contemporary theories; specifically, journalistic concepts such as precision²⁰, agenda²¹, gatekeeping, or *two step flow*²², were identified. Since their appearance, it is possible to describe how these discourses have evolved and been filtered until they met journalistic scientific norms. But this is a theme for the next step on this research.

NOTES

- 1 According to Knies, newspapers participated in the foundation of the modern state, regularly publishing about social life events (cited by Hardt, 1979, p. 91).
- 2 The enunciative relations materialize the “functioning system” archive, allowing the statements to last and change regularly. Thus, the archive is both the locus of what could be said and the specific level of knowledge and institutional discursive practices, which, at present, will make it possible to update former discourses as specified practices.
- 3 About the news as a form of knowledge, see R. Park, 1940, pp. 669-686
- 4 The position of the papers, at that time, concerning the needy (beggars, homeless children, inferior races, vagabonds, prostitutes, subversive foreigners, and others), stands with the liberal theories that recommend repression and social marginalization of troublemakers and, more concretely, with the Brazilian government project on “idleness” and “dishonest occupations repression” (1888), due to their irregular lives. The society acts against them in “self defense”. Drinking, the drunk, gambling, and gamblers were considered “special crimes”; prostitution, the prostitutes, who disturb the public tranquility; uproar and turbulent individuals who, with words or actions would offend the moral, the public tranquility and the peace of families (1888:67-68). The journalists from Porto Alegre would frequently cite this legal device to criticize the police’s incompetence, which seemed to ignore it, and to claim its use through repressive police actions. (Capelato, 1989, p. 137; Marocco, 2004).
- 5 Schäffle acknowledged the influence of Spencer and Comte on his work, but rejected the idea that his analogies to the human body would reduce the sociological phenomenon to a biological fact. According to Hardt, “Schäffle recognized the influence of Comte, Spencer and Lilienfeld on his work, but he never identified society with an organism, or social movements with the biological struggle for survival. In his discussion of the function of political economy, for instance, Schäffle emphasized the importance of psychological and moral considerations” (1979, p. 43).
- 6 Schäffle showed an appreciation for the importance of symbols, tradition, and communication in society. He described those elements as constituting a physical mechanism of the social body which mediates collective sensations, collective stimulations, and the internal

- relationships of collective consciousness (Hardt, 1979, p. 44).
- 7 From Schäffle's perspective, the press was an essential instrument to the destruction, change, or creation of public opinion. At the same time, it was a necessary forum for those who wanted to lie, judge, terrorize or alarm the masses, that is to say, political parties, with their good and bad intentions, politicians, financial speculators and religious propaganda. He said: "With the help of the press one 'makes' public opinion at least for the day" (cited by Hardt, 1979, p. 67).
 - 8 Schäffle has highlighted the importance of language as a pre-requisite to social participation; language, he would say, is a tool for intellectual development and it allows the development of relations with others and with the social environment in general.
 - 9 Schäffle has highlighted the importance of language as a prerequisite to social participation; language, he would say, is a tool for the intellectual development and allows the development of relations with others and with the social environment in general.
 - 10 The press, together with novels and dramas, the so-called "triple education", was the great partner of the governments in the difficult task of maintaining an "essential order": "the present governments will immediately warn how efficient the universal propagation of real knowledge can be, and secondly, will put its continuous efforts towards the difficult maintenance of an essential order" (Comte, 1934, p. 182).
 - 11 According to Park, as the mind controlled an individual's body, the society had structures to control its members. It was neither the work division, nor the competition that characterized society, but social control, an expression borrowed from Ross. "By social control we undoubtedly mean the arbitrary intervention of an individual (officer, civil servant or leader) in the social process. A police officer arrests a criminal, a lawyer influences a juror with his eloquence, a judge sentences a defendant; all these are familiar formal acts, a manifestation of social control. What makes this social control is, in strict terms, the fact that these acts must be supported by the customs, the law, and the public opinion" (B. Conte, 2000, pp. 154-155).
 - 12 According to Y. Michaud, these dangerous urban itineraries are already defined and greatly delimitated within our daily lives, regardless of newspapers (1998, p. 50). In this sense, journalistic maps are nothing but new maps of the "dangerousness", constructed upon the mechanisms of social segregation, operating within the society, either authorizing or not

customary displacement.

- 13 Brazilian columnist who described Rio de Janeiro's urban scenario in the early 20th century.
- 14 N.T.: Bandeira Square should become Garbage Square.
- 15 N.T: Poço Dead end drips.
- 16 N.T.: Fanha Dead end, Oitavo Dead end, Imperio Dead end, Paraiso Square, Sete Pecados Mortais Street.
- 17 The newspaper announced the visit: "Hardly ever a writer's intent was to lay bare before the audience the society's most horrible and cancerous sore. Oh! many will cry out, this is cheap, it is too dirty to be published in the press. And we will them: whatever affects the family well-fare, affects the society as a whole" (Gazetinha, 11th May, 1898).
- 18 In Foucault's words, "this set of elements, formed irregularly by a discursive practice, and essential to the constitution of a science, in spite of not being necessarily intended to be acknowledged, could be called *knowledge*" (1995, p. 206).
- 19 Our studies demonstrated that the Porto Alegre journalists' view of the city is associated with the pressures from different 19th century institutions intended to embellish and modernize the cities, as well as the individuals' normalization, as already denounced by W. Benjamin in the Passages Project (Benjamin, in S. Buck-Morss, 1995; Pesavento, 1998; Marocco, 2004, and others).
- 20 Park had argued for "precision journalism", considered an innovation in the frame suggested by Phillip Meyer in the early 70s in the United States (B. Conde, 2000, p. 21).
- 21 Frazier and Gaziano, and Rogers and Dearing considered that the *agenda setting* is implicit in Park's thought (B. Conte, 2000, p. 113).
- 22 Small recognized the editors' *gatekeeper* function, and described the communication levels (two step flow) established previously by Schäffle, and later by Lasswell (Hardt, 1979, p. 203).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BERGANZA CONDE, M^a. R. (2000). *Comunicación, opinión pública y prensa en la sociología de Robert E. Park*, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, Madrid, 313p.
- BUCK-MORSS, S. (1995). *Dialética de la mirada*. Walter Benjamin y el proyecto de los Pasajes, La balsa de la Medusa, Madrid, 418p.
- CAPELATO, M.H. (1988). *Os arautos do liberalismo. Imprensa paulista 1920-1945*, Brasiliense, São Paulo, 258p.
- CHALHOUB, S. (2001). *Trabalho, lar e botequim. O cotidiano dos trabalhadores no Rio de Janeiro da belle époque*, 2a edição, Editora da Unicamp, São Paulo, 367p.
- COMTE, A. (1980). *Discurso sobre el espíritu positivo*, Alianza, Madrid, 136p.
- FOUCAULT, M. (1995). *A arqueologia do saber*, 4a edição, Forense Universitária, Rio de Janeiro, 239p.
- FOUCAULT, M. (2002). *Em defesa da sociedade*, Martins Fontes, São Paulo, 382p.
- FRAGA FILHO, W. (1996). *Mendigos, moleques e vadíos na Bahia do século XIX*, Hucitec/Edufba, Salvador, 188p.
- FRAZIER, P.J; GAZIANO, C. (1979). 'Robert Ezra Park's theory of news, public opinion and social control.', *Journalism Monographs*, Nov. 1979, Number 64, pp.1-47.
- HARDT, H. (1979). *Social theories of the press. Early german & american perspectives*. Sage Publications, Inc., Beverly Hills, 239p.
- MAROCCHI, B. (2004). *Prostitutas, jogadores, pobres e vagabundos no discurso jornalístico*, Editora Unisinos, São Leopoldo, 125p.
- LIPPmann, W. (1995). *Liberty and the news*, Transaction Publishers, New Jersey, 92p.
- MARX, G. n.d., 'Forward to Ferdinand Tönnies, a theory of public opinion', acessado em 12, setembro, 2004, <http://web.mit.edu/gtmarx/www/tonnies.html/>
- MAUCH, C. (1994). 'Saneamento moral em Porto Alegre na década de 1890' In: *Porto Alegre na virada do século; Cultura e sociedade*, Editora da Universidade, Editora da Unisinos, Editora da Ulbra, Porto Alegre, pp. 9-24.
- MIRANDA, O. de (org.) (1995). *Para ler Ferdinand Tönnies*, Edusp, São Paulo, 360p.
- PARK, R (1923). 'Natural history of the newspaper'. *American Journal of Sociology, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press*, Volume 29, Issue (Nov., 1923.), pp.80-98.

- PARK, R (1924). 'News as a form of knowledge'. *American Journal of Sociology*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, Volume 45, Issue 5 (Mar, 1924), pp.669-686.
- PARK, R (1941). 'News and the power of the press'. *American Journal of Sociology*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, Volume 47, Issue 1 (Jul., 1941), pp.1-11.
- PARK, R. (1972). 'Notícia como uma forma de conhecimento: um capítulo na sociologia do conhecimento', em STEINBERG, C. (org.) *Meios de comunicação de massa*, São Paulo, Cultrix, pp.168-185.
- PESAVENTO, S. (1998), *Os pobres da cidade*, 2a edição, Editora da Universidade, Porto Alegre, 149p.
- ROSS, E. 'La supresión de las noticias importantes'. *REIS – Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, Madrid, Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 94/01, pp. 191-202.
- TRAQUINA, N. (2002). *O estudo do jornalismo no século XX*, Unisinos, São Leopoldo, 220p.
- TRAQUINA, N. (org.) (2000). 'O estudo das notícias no fim do século XX'. *Revista de comunicação e linguagens*, fev. 2000, N° 27, pp. 15-31.
- VARGAS, A.Z. (1994). 'Moralidade, autoritarismo e controle social em Porto Alegre na virada do século XIX', In: *Porto Alegre na virada do século XIX; Cultura e sociedade*, Editora da Universidade, Editora Unisinos, Editora da Ulbra, Porto Alegre, pp.25-42.
- WEBER, M. (1968) *Ciência e política*, 4a edição, Cultrix, São Paulo, 124p.
- WOLFF, M. (1987). *Teorias da comunicação*, Presença, Lisboa, 249p.

Other documents

Anais do Congresso Nacional. Projectos 33 A-1888, de repressão à ociosidade e as profissões desonestas, apresentado à Câmara de Deputados do Brasil em 10 de julho, 1888.

Newspapers

Gazetinha

5.3.1896; 9.5.1896; 1º.8.1897; 21.11.1897; 16.12.1897; 11.5.1898;
12.5.1898.

Gazeta da Tarde

27.7.1897.

O Independente

12.1.1902.

Beatriz Marocco is professor and researcher at the Vale do Rio dos Sinos University