ARTICLE

JOURNALISM IN TRANSITION:
notes on contracts and contracting

MOZAHIR SALOMÃO BRUCK
Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais – MG – Brazil
ORCID: 0000-0002-9983-6072

ABSTRACT – From a theoretical point of view, this article reflects on the heuristic power, the theoretical and methodological possibilities, and the forms for appropriating reading contracts and communication contracts in journalism investigations as they pertain to the new reshaping of production processes, circulation and news consumption. We give thought to authors such as Charaudeau (2006), Verón (2005,1983), Fausto Neto (2007), Lopes (2004), Benetti(2008), Dalmonte (2009) Rodrigues (2012), Deuze and Witschge (2018), and others, and reflect on the possibilities and implications of the aforementioned contracts in terms of their theoretical and methodological applications.
Key-words: Journalism Theories. Reading contracts. Communication contracts.

JORNALISMO EM RECONFIGURAÇÃO:
notas sobre contratos e contratações

RESUMO – O artigo busca refletir, em perspectivação teórica, sobre a potência heurística, possibilidades teórico-metodológicas e modos de apropriação das noções de contratos de leitura e contratos de comunicação em investigações no âmbito do jornalismo, dados os novos contextos de reconfiguração dos processos de produção, circulação e consumo de notícias. Busca-se refletir a partir de autores como Charaudeau (2006), Verón (2005,1985), Fausto Neto (2007), Lopes (2004), Benetti (2008), Dalmonte (2009), Rodrigues (2012), Deuze e Witschge (2017) entre outros, as possibilidades e implicações da eleição das mencionadas noções em destaque, em termos de apropriações teóricas e aplicações metodológicas.
Palavras-Chave: Teorias do Jornalismo. Contratos de leitura. Contratos de comunicação.

PERIODISMO EN RECONFIGURACIÓN:
notas sobre contratos y contrataciones

RESUMEN – El artículo busca reflejar, en perspectiva teórica, sobre la potencia heurística, posibilidades teórico-metodológicas y modos de apropiación de las nociones de contratos de lectura y contratos de comunicación en investigaciones en el ámbito del periodismo, observados los nuevos contextos de reconfiguración de los procesos de producción, circulación y consumo de noticias. Se busca reflexionar a partir de autores como Charaudeau (2006), Verón (2005,1985), Fausto Neto (2007), Lopes (2004), Benetti(2008), Dalmonte (2009), Rodrigues (2012), Deuze e Witschge (2017) entre otros, las posibilidades e implicaciones de la elección de las mencionadas nociones en destaque, en términos de apropiaciones teóricas y aplicaciones metodológicas.
Palabras-clave: Teorías del Periodismo. Contratos de lectura. Contratos de comunicación.

1 Introduction

This article[1] is a predominantly theoretical reflection on the reshaping of contracting (communication and reading) in journalism that has occurred in recent years, one that is undergoing changes to its dynamics and practices of production, circulation, including its very presence in society. This is a tentative exercise in theoretical coordination in which the heuristic power of reading contracts and communication contracts is used as a hypothesis to better understand these shifts and changes. In order to do this we look to communication contracts as they are described in works from Charaudeu (2006), Dalmonte (2009), Rodrigues (2012) and Benetti (2008), and reading contracts as described in works from Fausto Neto (2007) and Verón (2005 and 1985). Works from authors such as Leal (2011) and Rocha (2010) which intersect with different aspects of our discussion are also very important for our reflection.

Of particular importance is recognizing evidence, signs, or even traces of the reshaping of these contracts so as to better understand the ways in which effective theoretical and methodological possibilities can be applied to empirical objects in the field of journalism, whether

that be aesthetic-linguistic or narrative studies, or criteria for selecting and including content or processes; for example, news frameworks and agendas between offline and online media vehicles.

The promise of delivering the "truth" of events through journalism is, historically, a fundamental basis of the relationship between the journalistic media and its public. Even though journalists have always had their own specific notion of truth, what has been observed, especially over the last two decades, is that the entrance of new actors, new technology, and new modes of production, circulation and consumption of information have somewhat reshaped these relations to the point that we now ask ourselves which parts of that 'contract' between mass media and their audiences still remain from the previous media scene where journalistic vehicles had an almost exclusive legitimacy to inform and raise awareness on world events.

Indeed, it is not just a coincidence that these movements were gaining steam at the same time that social media, like *Facebook*, were consolidating their positions in 2004. Deuze and Witschge (2017) focus on these transformations in journalism in an attempt to better understand these new scenarios full of great complexities. They highlight that journalism is currently facing some significant changes, particularly to some of its production structures, but is also facing some important rearrangements.

> It is a challenge to see journalism as a networking practice (Russell, 2015), one that involves a variety of actors and actants (including the creation of audiences, as well as robots, that produce news), which includes a global rise in the number of startups (Küng, 2015), recognizing the permanence of structures that give meaning, such as newsrooms do. The somewhat formal (and professional) arrangement of journalism requires an awareness of the inhabited nature (Hallett and Ventresca, 2006) of the spaces in which the new work takes place. Newsrooms as inhabited institutions provide the raw materials and guidelines for the way people work, and the many people who enter and leave newsrooms produce the institution, setting it in motion.(...) That is not to say that contemporary news institutions are inhabited, and those in the past were not. As Matt Carlson suggests, journalism has always been "a varied cultural practice embedded in a complicated social landscape." Journalism is not a solid and stable thing one can point out, but a constantly changing meaning applied differently depending on the context. (Deuze & Witschge, 2017, s/p).

For this reason, we reflect on the reshaping of contracting in journalism, not only in the media and their languages, but in mediations and interactional processes: new distribution logics, new content formats, languages that reinvent themselves, and the

explosion of the supply of information which has been so oxygenated that the sensation we have toda is that information has become oxygen itself, such as its constant presence in the environments we are in, which we go through, and which we access.

We had the opportunity to discuss our proposition with Prof. José Luiz Braga[2] as we recognize that the theory of contracts (for communication and reading) is important for research in journalism which has always had to avoid perceiving production as an isolated stage/aspect, distinct from reception. As Braga mentions, "the gestures of seeking information and producing material are already inscribed in a contractual logic, and are thereby interactional rather than simply transmissive".

Dalmonte (2009) draws attention to the fact that establishing specific discursive marks is fundamental for mass media due to the "rules of competition" that exist within a scenario of innumerable different constraints. The institutional positioning of vehicles that establish specific reading modes and proposals must constantly be reevaluated and repositioned, as Verón (1985) reminds us. Dalmonte distinguishes between the contract modes (reading and communication) and believes that there are similarities and that they overlap.

> The set of strategies constitutes what is known as a communication contract (Charaudeau, 1994) and reading contract (Verón, 1985). Although there are differences in how the communication institutions handle their contracts, there are similarities regarding the level of relationship between enunciator and co-enunciator, the media being a fundamental element of this interface. (Dalmonte, 2009, p. 28).

Some of the possible difficulties we might face in our study are the overestimation of the impacts that technological reshaping may have on the logics and dynamics of communication and journalism. It is the very complexity of this context that tells us that such changes cannot be ignored, but at the same time it is not possible to believe everything, much less to believe that everything has changed. On the other hand, we should not overlook the risks that this technocentric shift can have on journalism studies and research, which often considers journalism as a social actor and its contribution to everyday knowledge to be of secondary importance – including its cultural and ideological origins – and the complex networks of power which have historically always participated in different ways.

2 Reshaping contracts: new meanings?

The word 'contract' reminds us of an agreement, a commitment, of executing a negotiation, and the origin of the term is no different. When we talk about contracts, we generally refer to the clauses that govern relationships – the prohibitions, permissions, compensations, long-term expectations and even terms for a possible annulment. Contracts are a result of agreements, substantiated and sustained by common and immediate interests and, above all, they help to maintain regulatory procedures. It comes from the Latin word *contractus*, meaning a sense of agreement or accordance. It is the perfect passive participle of the verb *contrahere* or "to bring together" (*com* = together and *trahere* = bring or draw together). Basically, it is saying it takes both parts to come to an agreement. This is quite effective for regulating *media* contracts, whether communication or reading clauses.

But what do we mean when we refer to contracting in media? Apart from its general application of supposedly indistinct forms of relationship and interaction between receivers and/or users and the supports and environments they access, we understand that these contracts are mostly procedural and relational in nature, able to be realized in broader spheres (communication contracts) – the presence of *media* in society and the implications of its presence – or in situations which are more intrinsic to *media*, in particular the clauses regulating media vehicles, their identity and what they offer (concerning their proposed meanings).

Media contracting is a powerful form of analyzing and understanding the communication processes that shape the many aspects and meanings of media work. In a word, it seems to be more reasonable to understand communication contracts as different aspects of the overall functioning of different media – television, radio, newspapers, portals, blogs, just to name a few – and their presence in society. Reading contracts help more towards understanding the clauses that establish relationships between the vehicles and their public.

For our approach, we have chosen to base our reflection on three perspectives. The first one is technologies, platforms, and their languages, which only persist and develop because society sees current and effective meanings for interacting with them. They are forms for viewing, speaking about and interpreting a world that is constantly being changed by our endless networks of mediations and their processes and consequences. They use strategies for approaching

and connecting, and sometimes escaping, from this world. We seem to always want an ever-increasing number of devices and supports, channels and their configurations, formats and languages, because just one is never, and has never, been enough.

The second perspective is the reason, at this stage of mediations and interactional processes and mediatization, that our analysis separates the products, their constant reshapings, and recreated language of circulation. We refer to Fausto Neto (2007), who believes it is not the product that circulates, but actors and aesthetic-discursive forms. Styles, formats, genres, narratives, and transmedia strategies are reshaped into adaptations, approximations, hybridizations and asymmetric rearrangements. They need to be differentiated, to move forward and leave the old forms of mediatization behind.

Lastly, seeking to refine the reflection proposed in this article, we use a stimulating question proposed by José Luiz Braga (2012) when opposing the ideas of fields and circuits. The facts and processes of communication are becoming less and less restricted to media fields; they are already events and processes in society which intensively and extensively take place through a complex network of multiple interaction circuits, which increasingly affect and reshape media itself. As José Luiz Braga says (2012):

> The use of technologically driven processes for interaction is no longer a "fact of media" (social field) - just as written culture is not a fact of publishers, authors and schools, exclusively. These two great cultural processes (now with strong interpenetrations) are, above all, communicative facts of society. Thus, in social practice, we mainly find circuits. Each sector or process of society participates in multiple circuits. With increasing mediatization, social fields, which previously were able to interact with other fields through processes marked by their own logics and somewhat specific negotiations of boundaries, are increasingly crossed by different circuits. These contemporary circuits involve dialogic moments, "specialized" moments, single moments – the world circulates within our self - and techno-distanced moments are diffused. All of these moments get in the way - they support each other sometimes, but they certainly get in the way. A perception of such processes is that they are often characterized as "dull circuits", precisely because they are tentative. (Braga, 2012, p.44).

With an *infinitum* of informative content being produced and circulated, journalism is forced to reposition itself in terms of its relationship with environments, new platforms, and digital devices, using them as sources of information or as interactional strategies. It is within this new context that journalistic blogs, local and regional

news portals, and also social media profiles like *Instagram*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube* channels and digital influencers reach audiences on a massive scale. But it is an adaptive audience, one that executes commands, that makes impactful comments, and that ultimately becomes a co-enunciator. Journalism, certainly the social, political and cultural concepts of the field – has not become obsolete. Of course, what has happened is it is now crossed by the frantic and complex dynamics of a global circulation of messages and content.

This is directly linked to our first premise: exactly how far and when will it be possible to identify what characterizes and establishes journalism in the amount of information that we receive and seek? The years spent discussing what journalism would look like after the advent of the web seems, to us, to have become somewhat of a symptom of a future disorder, that is, our taxonomic obsession with defining what journalism and news on the web should be and what it should called: *online* journalism, digital journalism, web journalism, etc. And what should determine whether the on-demand and live offer of a particular piece of information or information entertainment is still considered an experience of the journalistic field? We have come across a conceptual crossroad: what are the genes from journalism's DNA that confirm whether an intervention shapes a news/journalistic event or not? In contemporary times, how does journalism, while reshaping itself, deal with the concept of the present, which has always determined how it sees and narrates the world? The following excerpt summarizes our idea:

> The so-called presentism of journalism reminds us of the sensation of an infinite gift, of time that seems to never flow, strengthened by the intensity of the experience; a present that is disconnected from the past that preceded it and the constant immediate future. The underlining idea that journalism is orchestrated in present time (Antunes, 2007; Benetti, 2009; Dalmonte, 2009; Dias, 2011) confirms the historical purpose of news as a device for enunciation (Bruck, 2015) that has a communicative contract (Charaudeau, 2006) for visualizing everyday events through discursive operations with their own aesthetic-sociotechnical limits. Antunes draws attention to the current journalistic texts and the prevalence of their constant search for and building of presentism. (Bruck & Oliveira, 2017, P. 127).

These aspects can be observed in the post-internet phases of journalism. It was in this period that we saw thousands of websites and portals appear on the web. The old editorial models of printed press had to be updated to meet the internet and establish new modes for presenting news, one which has been varied and repositioned not

only by journalistic criteria and parameters, but by new modes of understanding news and newsworthy criteria. Several links for the same headlines, entertainment, advertising, and other content are made available on one page.

The phases proposed by Mielniczuk (2003) in the early 2000s help toward understanding the dispersion and reconditioning of journalism in a digital culture. Yet, fewer than fifteen years later, and they are in definite need of updating due to new processes, dynamics and communication protocols that the digital web has been undergoing. Mielniczuk proposes three phases of journalism in the electronic age: electronic journalism (which uses electronic resources), digital journalism (which uses digital technology for its production and circulation) and cyber journalism (which is released in cyberspace) using web technologies and strategies.

The following matter is of special interest to us: the moment when newspapers, TVs and radios understood that they would have to transpose the, up until that time, unique, exclusive, socially legitimized and very powerful traditional field of *media*. The moment when they realized that society was itself managing the multiple circuits of mediation and social interaction. A discussion that can certainly shed light on the complex changes we are still experiencing and, the way we see it, are only beginning.

Now forced to interact, to make themselves present in the infinite digital environment, the newspapers and journalism of traditional broadcasters realized that the pseudo-interactivity of public participation, previously represented in columns and reader spaces, or even as characters in news reports (where the public's discourses were used by reporters) was no longer enough. It used to be an interaction which was completely controlled or even simulated.

Going back to the question: how can mass *media*, that being print and radio, effectively join the circuit, the general circulation, and produce and encourage interaction? By promoting their presence on the Internet, especially in social networks, traditional vehicles have already proven that extrapolating the *media* field was unavoidable and essential for their survival. Television realized this and also realized that game applications mean that a large number of viewers no longer need to conform to TV times and schedules. The public wants to watch the news, or parts of it, when and how they want to. If they want to watch today's news and last week's news all in one sitting, they can do that. There's no need to watch one episode from a television series

today and then have to wait a week to watch the other. Entertainment goes one step further: *binge watching* is almost a presupposition, a determining clause in communication and reading contracts between producers/broadcasters and the public/users.

The second point we will look at is what seems to prevail now is not the product that circulates, but aesthetic-discursive actors and formulas that find a system of circulation in which they are feasible and can feed off of. They are to becoming interdependent of interactional processes. The recipient now becomes an empowered audience member, a participant. You could even call it interacting or an interacting agent which, according to its description, issues commands, intervenes, and reorganizes, basically acting directly and decisively in the production and distribution of content. It also seeks and interferes in the dynamics on new ways of seeing the very notion of time. Rosseti (2017) draws attention to the fact that "built under the protection of information and communication technologies, this new network society seeks immediate results in instant actions" (Rosseti, 2017, p.95). For the author, it is this search for immediacy where mediatized society seeks to shorten time as much as possible and, in doing so, ends up rejecting the temporal condition of existence.

> Traditional mass media has a chronological temporality. When watching a soap opera, the viewer is forced to accept the chronological order in which the broadcaster releases the chapters. (...) With the advent of digital media and the internet, temporal flows have changed; the user can watch any episode or chapter in the order they wish to. Linear time is no longer being imposed. Media processes are immediate and instantaneous, without having to wait, which leads to the expectation of the existence of a timeless time. (Rosseti, 2017, p.94).

The last aspect of our approach is the idea that communicational facts and processes are becoming decreasingly restricted to so-called *media* fields, yet are already events and processes of society. More and more, they take place within a complex network of multiple circuits of interaction that mix with and reshape the field of media. They pose many difficulties to communication research and how communication is done; our objects of study and work are changing and reshaping. An unstoppable and rapid change that results in ubiquitous media environments, channels, platforms, and circulation strategies in society, breaking down the historical and traditional models of media and journalism.

3 Contracting in Journalism

There are different perceptions of how communication and reading contracts should be defined, but one prevailing understanding seems to be that contracts are substantiated by the general conditions and regulating clauses for exchanges carried out within communication processes. That is, communication is always established in a contractual way between the parties involved. Lopes (2004) points out that what characterizes the existence of the contract is the confirmation of the passage of messages between the parties involved in a framework of prior culture; one that is built on the "socio-historic obligation" (Lopes, 2004, p.42). These contracts are formally established, with previously agreed on rules of behavior and different codifications, yet always with some space for informality.

According to Charaudeau (2006), there is a necessary and reciprocal recognition of restrictions by the agents involved that the language exchanges occur within specific restrictions, defined in the communication situation itself. Thus, prior to any particular strategy or intention, the players in that game must sign a contract of recognition and accept the terms of a communication contract.

Charaudeau (2006) understands that it is within the sphere of information discourse where identity recognition is established in societies. Interested and directly involved in this set of practices that lead to communicative processes, the media creates and circulates these discourses through its many vehicles. For Charaudeau (2006), it is through the media that linguistic activity is realized and, through this communicational act, that daily reality is also constructed. The constraints in terms of offers, circulation and forms of meaning in this context – which represent social practices themselves – are regulated by the agents themselves. The conventions and rules that describe the linguistic behaviors that they substantiate are used as parameters, through which communication occurs between individuals. Here, Charaudeau is emphasizing that communicative interaction results from the way in which the discursive aspects are arranged and the context within which the linguistic exchange occurs.

Charaudeau proposes that the organization of data on enunciation strategies of communication contracts takes two forms: external and internal. He believes the external data of the contract refers to the way the information exchange occurs, while the internal data refers to the discursive forms of enunciation. External data relates to the

behaviour of the individuals involved in the exchange and the context in which information is organized. They are not primarily linguistic in nature, "but they are semioticized because they correspond to indices that, taken from the set of social behaviors, present a convergence, shaping themselves into constants" (Charaudeau, 2006, p.68). There are four categories of external forms that illustrate the conditions under which linguistic enunciations are produced: condition of identity, condition of intention, condition of purpose, and condition of device[3].

Another form of organizing enunciative strategies relates to internal data, meaning the perception of how the message will be enunciated; that is, the linguistic forms used in relation to situational restrictions perceived and recognized through external data. Charaudeau divides the internal forms into three behavioral language spaces: the *space of speech* (which directly influences the manner in which the discourse will be constructed, since it is within this space that the speaker legitimizes himself as the speaking subject and his right to speak); the *space of relationship* (how the broadcaster builds its relationship with the recipient, meaning, the relations of approach or withdrawal, exclusion or inclusion); and the *thematic space* (where the speaking subject organizes the issue to be communicated). It is within this space where information defines how the content and its respective projection mode will be projected, how the knowledge will be projected, as it is detailed by the external restrictions of communication or by the subjects involved in the communicative act.

When referring to discourse, genres and media contracts in journalism, Benetti (2008) points out that Charaudeau's notion is of great importance to the field, "because it offers a framework in which intersubjectivity can be debated and the actors in the process can be considered" (2008, p.14). However, he draws attention to the fact that Charaudeau's reflection on communication contracts did not incorporate the "theoretical perspectives of journalism, without which an adequate conceptual environment to debate power cannot be established – one that is based on the interests of the subjects involved and the places of enunciation granted to these subjects" (p.14).

> The production of journalistic discourse takes place in an environment with very specific configurations. We arrive at what Charaudeau calls the condition of a *device*, that is, the conditions under which a discourse is constituted. Journalists are subjected to a number of political, economic, structural, hierarchical and temporal constraints in their work routine (Breed 1993, Soloski 1993, Serra, 2004) that affect their choices. In addition, technical issues relative to supporting discourse production (Maingueneau,

2001), as well as providing access to sources (Santos, 1997, 2004), are also decisive for constituting the genre. What is lesser known in journalism studies are the conditions that constitute a discourse in the reader's interpretation of the environment. As discourse only occurs between subjects, what we have so far is the understanding of the relationship between the journalist and the virtual reader, but not much data towards understanding the position of the real reader in this communication contract. (Benetti, 2008, p.23).

In line with Benetti's perception (2008), it should be noted that communication and reading contracts also regulate media relationships. They seem to establish when a receiver recognizes a set of elements in a chosen vehicle which shape connections of proximity and identification. And perhaps the sum of these aspects (the aesthetic investment, imaginations or views one has of what is "real", forms for handling content, the place the vehicle offers the public, etc.) is what translates this equation, the formula the receiver uses to define what broadcasters, blogs, portals or newspapers call "conditions and determinants for reading a vehicle". They can thus be understood as an emotional-intellective agreement the media and public establish between each other. Contracts reveal how a receiver sees the world, but they also denote definitions based on identifications and representations based on politics and ideology, from ethics and morals to aesthetics and psychology.

Within the communicational *praxis*, the reading contracts are revealed in the credibility that certain vehicles have; the concessions they are obliged to make in their programming according to the demands of the public, the requirement to establish an *aesthetic identity*, and to explain the ways of approaching the things of the world. The search for identifying and connecting with the receiver is one of the ways in which the *media* permanently renews their contracts.

Verón (2005) understands reading contracts as enunciation devices. He believes it is the contracts that create the bonds between the support and its reader. But such a notion assumes that the discourse is shaped as an imaginary space, one in which paths are proposed to the reader:

A situation in which the reader can somehow choose his path with somewhat freedom, where there are areas in which he risks losing himself, or, on the contrary, are perfectly signalized. (...) Throughout his journey, the reader finds different characters who propose different activities and with whom he feels more or less the desire to establish a relationship, according to the image they give him, the way they treat him, the distance or the intimacy that they propose. (Verón, 2005, p. 236).

The notion of a reading contract that Verón evokes is used in an attempt to translate the theoretical construction of J.L. Austin, *Quand lire, c'est faire*. For Verón, the idea that reading is doing, substantiates the logic that speech is an inhabited space, "full of actors, scenarios and objects, and reading is what moves this universe, investing more or less effort, listening with one ear or with both" (Verón, 2005, p.236).

Verón's perception is that the success of a vehicle, outside of other elements and contractual clauses, is through its ability to propose a contract that correctly articulates the expectations, motivations, interests, and content of the target. Another necessary competence would be to develop a reading contract in order to "follow" the sociocultural evolution of the readers. Lastly, he believes the contract will be more effective and survive if the vehicle is able to modify its reading contract according to the competition, and do so in a coherent way. Verón also points out that the reading contract has a strong potential in terms of understanding media operations as it helps us understand how vehicles build connections with the public, allowing it "to rescue the specificity of a vehicle, to highlight the dimensions that constitute the particular way it has of building this relationship".

Fausto Neto (2007), on the other hand, sees reading contracts from an enunciative perspective, placing the *media* in contact with the world of reception. According to Fausto Neto, they are the "rules, strategies and policies of meaning that organize the forms of connecting between offering and receiving media discourses (...)" (Fausto Neto, 2007, p.10). In a manner of speaking, it is a set of norms and prescriptions that a discourse in production proposes and predicts so the receiver is able to observe them as a condition of interpretation.

One question that the contract tools attempt to answer is: why and how does the receiver choose vehicles that, generally speaking, offer similar messages? Antônio Fausto Neto argues that the relations between reception and products are not only structured in content, "but in the ways and strategies of saying" (Fausto Neto, 2007, p.10). Thus, the receiver's choices are not made based on the content, but on the strategies of the contracts they have. In short, the reading contracts mobilize clauses which are outlined essentially by *pathos*, *logos* and *ethos*.

Thinking about the workings of communication contracts in journalism reminds us to reflect on aspects such as legitimacy and

credibility; key determinants of contracts. In a previous work on contracts in which we compare contractual clauses and propositions from two radio stations (Bruck & Castro, 2013)[4], we state that the discourses produced by the broadcasters revolved around the virtues of legitimacy and credibility. In terms of the legitimacy of the speaking subject, Charaudeau (2006) warns that it is predetermined and non-negotiable, based on the place it occupies, that is, it is within and from it that the enunciator is established. There is no credibility given here, it is acquired and can be re-discussed and reshaped at any moment.

It is argued that the notion of reading contracts, not only as regulators of the audience, but in terms of their content and form and the fact they act as a diagnosis of how these relations between contracting parties works, is broadly applied as a tool for research in the field of communication, and not just the media. Wherever mediation and connection between the public and the media are shaped, reading contracts can be an important element for the theoretical-empirical approach of observables.

In this sense, the reshaping of contracting in journalism cannot be overlooked; it must take into account the importance of the transformation of news consumers, who are not just a receiver (target), they are users who interact on the platforms and in the environments where content circulates. As El Jaber (2010) points out, the reader is also a user and "this new, unavoidable context of editorial tendencies means journalism has to adapt to new reading habits: fast and sustained by the growing number of internet users" (El Jaber, 2010, p.73).

4 Final considerations

In a context where the production, circulation and consumption of journalistic products is being reshaped, one of the new challenges in journalism as a field and as objects of study is certainly understanding how new reading and communication contracts and contracting that readers/users/collaborators and the mass and digital media establish are being redesigned. How to think of these contracts in new realities where the discourse of journalism – pronouncedly institutional – is distributed amid a myriad of news and non-news information without even making a distinction between content which is journalistic and that which is simply informative.

The history of journalism, as a field of knowledge and a social actor, in the Western world has been met by inconsistencies, ambiguities, and internal and external conflicts. Journalism has an undeniable place and participation in the (dis)continuities of the most distinct political, social, economic and cultural processes. For this reason, there are a large variety of enunciative operations proposed by the enunciator and clauses of relationship offered to the receiver – a result of the nature of their perspectives, narrative modes and contracts promising impartiality and objectivity – a contractual base on which modern journalism is founded. There are enunciative operations that constantly seek to reinforce and renew these contracts, which are ratified every time producers, reporters, writers and editors build an enunciation that represents a very particular view of the world, defined by the projection of reception.

In *What is the device?* Deleuze (1996) states that the new is the current, but that the new is not what we are, it is what we are becoming and what we should become. For those born post-Internet, in the mid-1990s, they know no other logic than the many forms of interaction in a plenitude of content: the large circulation of texts, images, memes, *fake news*, interesting, amusing and instructive texts, formative discussions, and also trivialities, oddities, prejudices, crimes of honor, intolerances and other absurdities.

On the other hand, the massive and vertical model of media is becoming outdated. It knows that it can no longer impose schedules, ways of seeing, much less moral values, ideological and political points of view, and especially life routines, as it once did powerfully from the 1940s until almost the end of the twentieth century. Now, traditional media knows that adopting modes and practices of interaction is essential and unavoidable. They must now circulate as those who were born post-internet do, those who reject and feel free from the exclusively vertical model. Media-centrism in the modern world, one in which traditional media is powerful and very influential, is now a reality of extremely complex, converging and unstable processes of mediation and interaction.

At any rate, we can say that investing in new configurations, languages and platforms is no longer an *avant-garde* position. It is now obligatory for those entering the field in order to be within the circuits and the circulation instituted by the new standards of mediations and interaction. For those who were already here, creating their niche in the analog and linear standard, they now need

to find their space, to quickly reinvent themselves using effective and attractive models of mediation and proposals for interaction. It is either this or fade away. The field seems to have been completely flooded with circulation.

NOTES

1 Preliminary version of this article was presented at the XIV Congress of the Latin American Association of Communication Researchers (ALAIC) in July 2018, in Costa Rica. It includes changes made based on the discussions on GT Journalism Studies.

2 These conversations occurred via email in 2017.

3 The condition of identity is shown as one of the most important conditions for information exchanges to occur because it identifies those involved in the act of language that interfere in the construction of discourse which is to be circulated. "Who speaks to whom?" Is one of the answers to the social and psychological nature of the actants. The condition of intention refers to that which represents the objective for building a given communicational act, defined by the expectation of meaning to be caused in the receiver. The third condition is the condition of purpose. According to the author, it refers to the thematization of discourse, which presupposes a way of separating the world of action, of events into domains of knowledge. The subjects that make up the exchange should recognize the theme in order to construct their interpretations around a certain purpose, which can lead to other themes and subtopics derived from the initial one proposed in the communicational act. Lastly, we have the fourth condition, the condition of device. It concerns the material conditions in which the act is inserted, the environment in which it is established, along with the individuals that compose them and who are responsible for transmitting the discourse. The definition of this category of device lies in answering questions about the environment in which the communicative act belongs to; the spaces where the actants of the discursive exchange are installed and the medium in which the discourse is transmitted.

4 In the text, Radio broadcasting: rhetoric and social ties (Bruck & Castro, 2013), a comparison is made of the reading contracts from two radio broadcasters in Belo Horizonte (MG); Rádio Itatiaia and Rádio CBN.

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MOZAHIR SALOMÃO BRUCK. PQ2 Researcher at CNPq. Currently works in the Post-Graduate Program of Social Communication at Pontifícia Catholic University, Minas Gerais. His main areas of scientific investigation are journalism as a field and object of study; studies on the relations between media and memory, and the notions of devices in Communication. E-mail: mozahir@uol.com.br

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