

**BOOK
REVIEW**

***Metodologia de
pesquisa em
jornalismo***

CLÁUDIA LAGO & MARCIA BENETTI (ORGS.).
Petrópolis: Vozes, 2007

REVIEWED BY **VIRGINIA PRADELINA DA SILVEIRA FONSECA**

The methodological perspectives from which it is possible to outline journalism as an object of study is the central theme of the book organized by the professors, researchers and journalists Cláudia Lago, from Universidade Anhembi-Morumbi, and Marcia Benetti, from Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, released in the second semester of 2007. The book congregates 15 articles by authors who have relevant scientific production, who have contributed decisively to the constitution of an academic field of journalism, and who, in some way, summon master's and doctorate students to better qualify themselves as researchers.

With a preface by professor José Marques de Melo, the book joins the bibliography which follows the historical trajectory of journalism as an object of study. In Brazil, according to Marques de Melo (2007), this trajectory has developed in three phases, ¹ and has been renewing itself with a growing organization and systematization of the intellectual production of professors and researchers of the field. As a bibliographic source, related to the phase of the studies institutionalized by the undergraduate and graduate courses of universities, the authors of the articles do not make the book a manual of methodology, neither do they intend to finish the discussion about the various possibilities of approaching journalism as an object of study – as the organizers of the book clarify in the *Presentation* –, but try to contribute with their experience to more rigor in the research procedures, which are essential to the improvement and legitimation of the academic field.

Therefore, the articles aim at helping advisors and students of undergraduate and graduate courses in the articulation of theory, object and method, and also provide reflections on the relations

between Journalism and other disciplines, about methods and their applications, without forgetting, as the organizers warn, that “the elaboration and execution of a research work is inserted in a complex process of logical construction, methodological search and technical choices, which always demand an epistemological attitude” (LAGO; BENETTI, 2007: 17). Choosing methods is more than the selection of research techniques; it implies the circumscription to matrices of thought, to scientific paradigms, which condition not only the construction of objects of study, but also their analysis and interpretation.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first one, the authors relate Journalism to other areas of scientific knowledge, such as Anthropology (CLÁUDIA LAGO) and History (RICHARD ROMANCINI), and to theoretical perspectives of interdisciplinary nature, such as Political Economy of Communication (SÔNIA SERRA) and the public sphere in the studies on agenda setting, the media and society (LUIS MARTINS SILVA). In the second part, there are texts which discuss about the methods themselves, such as Content Analysis (HELOIZA HERSCOVITZ), Discourse Analysis (MARCIA BENETTI), Pragmatic Analysis of the Journalistic Narrative (LUIZ GONZAGA MOTTA) and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences – SPSS² (ISABEL FERIN CUNHA). In the third and last part, there are articles which describe methodologies applied in researches on the various instances of the journalistic object. This is the case of the hybrid model, methodology applied by the Group of Research on Online Journalism (ELIAS MACHADO AND MARCOS PALÁCIOS), of newsmaking and its corresponding ethnographic model (ALFREDO VIZEU), of memory in relation to instantaneity of online journalism (ZÉLIA LEAL ADGHIRNI e FRANCILAINE DE MORAES) and of semiotics (JOSÉ LUIZ AIDAR PRADO e SÉRGIO BAIRON).

The relevance of the book *Metodologia de Pesquisa em Jornalismo*, which should become a compulsory reference to the researchers of the area, is in the way it organizes and makes public the experience and knowledge which have been accumulated along the course of institutionalized research in Brazil, mainly in the scope of the studies in Communication, which have not had the due consideration in the journals of the area. General rule, appropriate theories and methods to analyze themes related to journalism are limited to one or two chapters in the books about theories of communication and methodologies of

research in communication, when they are not mere indications of readings. The situation configures a paradox, because of the demand in graduate courses by advisors,³ to which a significant number of journalists appeal when interested in developing researches related to this social and professional practice.

For this reason, the initiative of professors Marcia Benetti and Cláudia Lago in releasing a collection of texts about methodologies of research in journalism is not only opportune – it was a necessity, essential condition to face the questions related to the presumed methodological fragility exposed by the critics and/or detractors of the area.

By knowing the various possibilities of reading and interpreting the object, as well as the procedures adopted by the researchers in their investigations, the field will progressively consolidate and enrich itself. In this sense, I point out the text written by professor Sônia Serra, in which she writes about a relation between Political Economy of Communication and the studies about journalism. I take this article as an example because it deals with an approach with few registers in bibliography which is specific about communication, despite the relevance and present importance of the analysis made by this perspective.

After a necessary bibliographic review on the subject, the author warns to the importance of knowledge, concepts and works on this theoretical and methodological tendency to understand the contemporary journalistic media. She says:

The political economy of communication may be useful to both a historical analysis of traditional journalism and to the study of digital journalism, organized in Brazil and in many other countries as a business. Its critical perspective also implies pointing out alternatives and policies to organize the media, what is a fundamental contribution to the debate about democratization of information, communication and culture in the 21st century (SERRA, 2007:.81)

The implementation of the technology of digital television in the country, expected to 2008, as well as the public television system, with all the corresponding implications and consequences, besides the changes that continuously happen in the media conglomerates (which congregate press, radio, television and internet), in a way to adjust to the logics of the global monopoly phase of international

capitalism⁴, are examples of subjects which may call for an analysis and an intervention (praxis) of researchers of the field in this moment. Political economy – for it is a realistic, inclusivist and critical theory (MOSCO, 1996) – may be an important entering portal to this field.

It is because it gives prominence to the possibilities of researches like this one in Journalism, without any demerit to the other alternatives presented throughout its 286 pages, that the book organized by Cláudia Lago and Marcia Benetti may be included in the list of important releases of the year.

NOTES

- 1 The first phase of constitution of journalism as an object of study must have occurred in the 1930s, with the appearance of the first universities and press as sources for the human sciences. The second one, in the 1940s, with the inclusion of journalism as a universitarian discipline and the foundation of the first courses aiming at qualifying professionals to this social practice. And the third one, after 1967, with the institutionalization of research on the theme in universities, what began in the Faculty of Cultural Communications of the Universidade de São Paulo (presently ECA-USP) with the opening of undergraduate and graduate courses in Journalism (MARQUES DE MELO, 2007:9)
- 2 SPSS – Software which permits making statistical calculations in the domain of Social Sciences, information technology tool that permits combining qualitative and quantitative analyses (CUNHA, 2007, p. 168).
- 3 An example: in 12 years of existence, 43% of the theses and dissertations defended in the Program of Post-Graduation in Communication and Information of UFRGS had journalism as their object of study.
- 4 See PhD dissertation approved by PPGCOM/UFRGS in 2005, in which an analysis is made to figure out the ways the post-fordist logics, hegemonic in contemporary capitalism, expresses itself in communication and journalism companies (FONSECA, 2005).

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