THE RULE OF TRANSPARENCY:

as an element of democratization in the journalism production process

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ABSTRACT   This article´s purpose is to discuss the need for improving the knowledge of readers, listeners, TV spectators and people who use the Internet, mainly of the information process, focusing on the communication media in Brazil. Among the possibilities, it is important to understand information production behind the scenes, which is possible with a *Rule of Transparency*, one of the intellectual principles of the science of reporting called "Discipline of Verification" by journalists Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel. The existence of a place that officially relates the *making of*, through books, blogs, or other means of communication, contributes to the democratization of the access to the process used by journalists who are most of the time unable to speak out and publish their ideas because of the editorial demands or even due to the lack of time and space.
Key-Words: journalism, *Rule of Transparency*, *making of*, access, receptors

INTRODUTION

The demanding information processes developed by new technologies, which are associated with the commercialization and industrialization of journalism, gives rise to a new question of concern not only to journalists, who must be the coordinators of this new process, but especially to the receptor public[1], that many times has to believe what it hears, sees and reads without any precise knowledge about the information production process.

The public spirit must guide information production so it is important to disclose the mechanisms that develop this process. The transparent usage of the resources utilized by communication professionals can be a key to the receptors' comprehension, which is related to the final results published by newspapers, magazines, websites, radio and television companies, among others.

The 'task assignment' conception, use of sources, research and editing can be mentioned as good tools for the receptor's understanding. Journalism goes outside its 'glass house' and disseminates information that was once subject to private domination.

The International Center for Media and The Public Agenda (ICMPA)[2] recent research says that the world media are not that clear in information transparency. This study evaluated the 25 largest communication media in the world, using the following five criteria:

> 1. Which outlets post corrections to their stories?
> 2. Which ones provide details about their owners and offer information about any other media and non-media holdings of those owners?
> 3. Which ones publish their internal guidelines for reporters (such as how potential conflicts of interest by reporters or editors are handled)?
> 4. Which ones publish their internal standards for stories (such as how anonymous sources are handled or how politicized language is identified)?
> 5. Which ones actively seek readers' comments and complaints?[3]

The results of this study, considering the questions above, are really a cause for concern. Only 7 of the 25 researched groups have ombudsman or something similar, and 9 websites of the companies studied do not maintain any communication link between receptors and companies. Another important fact is that only 11 groups are concerned with correcting mistakes.

The research pointed to the newspapers *The Guardian* (British) and *The New York Times* (American) as the best in transparency, and it also indicated *Time* magazine (American) and the British TV channel *Sky News* as the worst ones. In an era of intense competition, editorial and administrative transparency can be a major criterion for the receptors to choose an information media. In the conclusions of this research, Sydney Schanberg, a 1976 Pulitzer winner, mentions a pertinent question:

> The press calls for transparency by government, corporations, and everyone else. But here the reporters reject transparency for themselves, and yet they say they are practicing good journalism. The public needs a fuller explanation, and that can only come from the reporters themselves[4].

Questioning by receptors regarding the information shown by the communication media is not usual in Brazil. When we talk about

television, which has the highest audience indexes, the discussion about procedures used for selecting information is not yet sufficient, and the same thing happens in the publishing of information. The "Homer Simpson" case[5] is very emblematic. Regardless of the different points of view, the important aspect of this case is that it made possible discussion about the decision power of an editor and about which really were the criteria used for choosing the information that would be shown to the public.

Numerous examples could be mentioned in this introduction with the objective of showing the lack of transparency of communications media, as well as the arrogant and inactive posture of the media. Nevertheless, many journalism professionals, perhaps with job limitations, try to perform their work in a responsible and ethical way. Showing this situation is the same as recognizing that Brazilian journalism, built on a capitalist base and therefore being a participant in the capitalist production system, still has some aspects that, if used very well, could contribute to the democratization of information receptors´ access.

The purpose of this research, given the complexity of its theme, is to identify some websites, national and foreign, as well as books and blogs that offer mechanisms of transparency in their execution, due to the technologies' amplification, at least potentially, of the possibilities of sharing and users´ interaction on the Web. This diagnosis suggests the usage of the so-called *Rule of Transparency* in the news production process, through the utilization of some mechanisms that lead to more democratic and plural journalistic practices, such as the *making of*, especially used at contests or blogs that detail the information production process or even reporting books that add complementary information about the research mechanisms for the readers.

The communication professional has great importance, although it is a very difficult area to work in, mainly because of the demands of the press. But there are also good opportunities. The production of reporting books and the existence of blogs can show the public the procedures adopted in certain reporting activities. They make it possible for receptors to get to know the *making of* the reports, which represents a positive communication attitude related to the technological development achieved by society in recent decades. This has contributed to Internet cooperation, for example, and also to the development of the so-called citizen-journalism that makes it possible to bring together "contemporaneous anonymous narrators" (CUNHA FILHO, 2007: 101).

Journalism can also begin a movement concomitant with the cinematographic industry by using the recurrent *making of* found in movie resources. The innumerable possibilities created by information technologies could be better used, since the information process has been maturing and presents a new perspective in which readers, listeners, TV spectators and Internet users must achieve the Right of Access not only to information, but to its production mechanisms as well.

The Right of Access

Some Rights are well known and therefore consensual. The Rights to Life, Education, Health, among others, represent the mechanisms for the support of human existence. Nonetheless, other Rights, less concrete, deserve special attention, because they make up part of the public domain. The Right to Communication is one of them, existing in democratic societies where there is widespread free usage of information.

According to Desmond Fischer (1982), the Right to Communication belongs to the human being as something inherent to his life. The formulation of this author expresses a broad view that is not related only to the published content, but mainly to the person´s inter-relational presence:

> This concept emphasizes the communication process more than the content of a message. Participation is implied. It suggests an interactive information transfer. And, subjacent to this concept, there is an ethical or humanitarian suggestion about the responsibility of holding a global, fair distribution of necessary resources, making communication possible. (1982:16)

Being part of the communication process, however, does not consist only of having the Right to receive and transmit information, but also of the legitimate Right to seek new ways and processes for a report or news. Besides, if the receptor succeeds in dominating this process, there will be a more critical look, a capability for discerning choices and even contributing with information publishing[6].

The development of new information technologies, associated with research in the informatics and telecommunication areas, shows a reality in constant evolution, where time and space notions suffer constant variations. While there used to be a need for the geographic movement of journalistic staffs to cover an event, today it is possible to achieve the result by calling a mobile phone. So, in a certain way, information webs are created, organized or not, and this affects the entire communicative

flux of society.

The conventional opening of communication media to the participation of society is still recent in Brazil. Some experiences offer some opportunities which enable the population to share information and images, like the "*FotoRepórter*" offered by the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*. In this case, receptors can send journalistic pictures to the newspaper's website, and can also be remunerated if the material is published or if it is sent to the news agencies[7]. With the same idea, the newspaper *O Globo* also created the "*Eu-Repórter*" project, in which content sent by registered readers who agree to cede their copyrights can be published not only in *O Globo Online*, but also in other newspapers such as *O Globo*, *Extra*, *Expresso* and *Diário de São Paulo*[8]. Another project, different in using *Creative Commons*[9], is *Radar Cultura*, maintained by the Padre Anchieta Foundation in São Paulo, which intends to provide an opportunity for the listeners, for instance, to help define part of *Rádio Cultura´s AM* programming, with prospects for expansion to other web communication media[10].

This opening for receptors, in any event, demonstrates the communication media's centrality nowadays. We cannot avoid considering that new social organization forms that resulted from the globalization process, such as the labor movement, changes in family structure, leisure and religion (COSTA, 2004; PAIVA, 1998) have enabled the creation of relationships inside the media processes. Raquel Paiva, in her discussion about traditional communities in society, affirms:

> When there is supposed to be one common type of individual (the mass), the mass media discourse consolidates speaking the same way all the time, simulating a nonexistent way, giving an impression of reality and formulating a behavior relation parameter. (1998:18).

The identification process is replaced by personal contact; a *sine qua non* condition of traditional communities, organized according to local or regional logic and now articulated by the communication media. They offer attractive discourses calling for participation, with a certain sensation of belonging to that media which calls, proclaims, and is helped especially by the advances in informatics and telecommunications.

Everything that can be considered as an important democratic advance related to the dissemination of information, however, must always be questioned, because it is necessary to consider the advance of mergers among the largest media corporations in recent decades, which try to centralize this process. In Brazil, we can see an increase in

foreign capital participation that was not permitted by the legislation before 2002[11].

> If the new century reveals six out of ten old traditional media groups still under the command of the same families (Abravanel, Civita, Frias, Marinho, Saad and Sirotsky), three of these survivors began to share part of their capital with foreign companies. Grupo Abril sold 13.8% of its shares to American investment funds managed by Capital International Inc. Grupo *Globo* has become a minority partner of Rupert Murdoch in Sky Brazil and sold 36.5% of its share in NET (cable TV) to Telmex, a Mexican telecommunication group. Grupo Folha transferred 20% of its entire capital to Portugal Telecom (PT), which had previously been its partner only in Internet operations (UOL). (COSTA, 2005: 181)

Translating the economic aspect of the Brazilian legislative area, it is possible to affirm that the Constitution is broad and democratic. In Chapter V, concerning Social Communication, article 220, paragraph 5 says that "the means of social communication are not allowed, directly or indirectly, to be the subjects of monopoly or oligopoly". The right to communication, really updated, is also guaranteed, even in generic ways (subject to jurisprudence), by the Constitution´s Chapter on Individual and Collective Rights and Duties, whose article 5, section IX guarantees: "freedom of expression for intellectual, artistic, and scientific activity and communication, free from censorship or license".

If the press has to inform and the population has the right to be informed, new mechanisms are needed for that new possibility to occur in practice, because the preceding paragraph´s safeguards are not reflected in the Brazilian economic structure.

The development of democracy is also linked to access to the Right to Public Information, assured by the Constitution. Section 33 of article 5 defines that "everybody has the right to receive from public organizations some information regarding his particular interests, or general interests". In practice, what really occurs is that there is no law that directly assures this Right, and it has been in effect for a short time in Brazil[12]. Journalist Fernando Rodrigues published the book called "*Políticos do Brasil*" (Politicians of Brazil), furthering this discussion; besides giving systematized facts about politicians´ assets in two national elections (1998 and 2002), it also presents the difficulties in obtaining information from some Regional Electoral Tribunals.

Another journalist concerned about the lack of information is the director of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, Rosental Calmon Alves. He mentions the United States FOIA (Freedom of

Information Act) and the Mexican Transparency Law as examples of this legislation; these countries developed this aspect which made it possible for professionals and for any citizen to make requests to government bodies with the goal of achieving information. He also says that "Brazil is lacking a culture with the right of access to information or the so-called 'right to know' in the United States". (PONTO FINAL, 2006: 11).

The journalistic diagnosis is not very attractive: out-dated legislation, because the Brazilian Telecommunications Code dates from 1962, and an absence of effective mechanisms for production accompaniment and of strong marketing competition. Reflecting on and analyzing these questions, though, can be good signs of maturity, as Caio Túlio Costa mentions: "journalism has to be transparent, bringing more expertise and making the flash area lighter". (2005: 188).

Objectivity and Caption

Getting to know the methodology used by the journalist in his work should make the receptor reflect more because the intense flux of information most of the time can confound more than clarify. For better comprehension it is necessary to consider, even in a brief way, the objectivity concept in this area.

Many communication media neither take care with specific details nor check the information, balance and diversification of the sources, in addition to their objectivity. Objectivity is comprehended not as neutral or impartial, since comprehension of the facts is necessary, but as a way to present reality, which, due to its complexity, cannot be shown in a unique manner. Journalist Perseu Abramo helps to make this discussion clearer:

> The realm of objectivity is information, news, coverage, reporting, analysis, while the realm of opinion is position, comments, articles, editorials. It is relevant to separate and distinguish information from opinion, indicating the differences between content and journalistic genre forms, and present all the journalistic production to the reader / TV spectator in a way in which he perceives immediately what is the presentation of reality and what is value judgment (2003:41).

As Felipe Pena (2005) affirms, objectivity cannot be defined as the opposite of subjectivity; on the contrary, it represents a method of assuring scientific rigor when it deals with reality. It is worthwhile, nonetheless, to focus on one aspect that comes before the reporter´s intervention in his day-by-day work, which is his capacity for observation. This aspect

is relevant as objectivity not only does not exist in an absolute way, but also subjectivity occurs only as a relational process. If the journalist looks attentively at what happens around him, if he is aware of the limits of his professional activities, when organizing his experience he will have a more reflective attitude about his activity and may even have some different attitudes in similar situations. His capacity for self-criticism could contribute to a greater precision in his work methods.

In this discussion, an ethical dimension appears, since the tension between sources, companies, journalists and the public is a real fact. Private interests try to replace collective interests nowadays. As Michael Kunczik says, "the unscrupulous methods of collecting information put rights and personal privacy in danger". (2002:48). Relating information which was previously restricted to the professionals' area can contribute now to a democratic culture of public interest.

The "*Discipline of Verification*" and the *Rule of Transparency*

Concerned about journalism goals in the U.S.A, a group of journalists which called themselves "Worried Journalists Committee" developed a broad diagnosis of 21 public discussions during a three-year period, with around three thousand speeches by citizens, in addition to three hundred journalists' testimony. The very name that resulted from this study, "The elements of journalism", synthesizes some principles that should guide this activity. They should be relevant to what the authors call "Discipline of Verification"[13], which represents the essential principles of a science of reporting.

Defining journalism practice as scientific means that it is possible to use specific verification methods, and the authors discuss which mechanisms should be used by professionals for better precision in their daily work.

The proliferation of radical, independent media – strengthened by the emerging new technologies – opens up new areas of activity. However this phenomenon does not eliminate the strength of the largest media in the society. Even with the limits on professional practice, largely because of the huge economic concentration of communication media, it is possible to say that there are alternatives within these conglomerates, because they still maintain great influence on the receptors' decision power. Among these possibilities is the importance of revealing the behind-the-scenes production of information, what is called *making of*[14].

The existence of a space, formal or not, for methods utilized

in information production permits the receptor to know certain facts and ideas that could not be published because of the communication company's editorial policy or even because of lack of time and/or space. As the authors of "Journalism elements" put it:

> The unique practical way to tell the public how much we know is to show our methods and sources as far as possible. How do we know what we know? Who are our sources? How much do they know? What misconceptions do they show? What don't we know? We call this process Transparency. We consider this rule as the most important element in the creation of a better discipline for verification. (KOVACH; ROSENSTIEL, 2003: 126)

This *rule of transparency* is often hard to implement in professional practice for many reasons. However it could be implemented by the usage of the *making of*, which could show the behind-the-scenes of a report, including the subject definition, research and caption up through the editing, thus making it possible to identify interesting aspects of the reporter's discourse. There is much criticism of so-called structural journalism, which depends on the telephone and the Internet more than on personal contact. Revealing the procedures can identify the presence or absence of this kind of journalism.

The Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism (ABRAJI) has today as one of its goals the inclusion of a clause on journalists´ usage of the *making of* reports as another required item for hiring. The purpose of this is to contribute to journalists' training, permitting the socialization of knowledge production, besides making this activity clearer.

Assuring people that another type of journalism is possible might imply that the economic base cannot afford, literally, this possibility, although this discussion can be explained in some cases. It is possible to show at least two interesting perspectives related to journalism and to mechanisms of transparency in professional practice. One of them involves the direct transmission of the facts: the lesser the intermediation – especially the author's – the closer the information can be to reality. The other is just the formation of a more critical and conscientious public.

Innumerable journalistic companies' websites in the entire world have begun to make space available for their readers´ participation, as in the case of the *Wisconsin State Journal*[15], an American newspaper that uses the so-called "Democracy Starts Here", in which five reports are offered the reader and he may choose which ones should be in the headlines in the newspaper the next day.

Another interesting example is *The Wall Street Journal*, another American newspaper that for some relevant events keeps a diary in real-time, which makes the information production process clearer to the user[16].

The *BBC London* case is also pertinent. This British website created a space called "Reporter's Log"[17] in which the reporters transmit information in the form of a diary, which makes possible the idea of information in the original raw state, reducing the interference of other people.

In Brazil, a qualified example is journalist Elvira Lobato´s book, "*Instinto de Repórter*" (Reporter Instinct) (2005). This book describes in a detailed way the entire production process of 11 reports of the investigative type. This *making of* the texts enables the reader to know, as the author says, what the origin of the sources is, how they are developed and how it is possible to reach them.

Journalist Fernando Morais gathered 12 reports produced throughout his forty-year career in the book "*Cem quilos de ouro – E outras histórias de um repórter*" (One hundred kilos of gold – And other stories of a reporter). All of them contain a brief *making of*, produced by the author himself, which discloses the production process for each text. Experiences like this, besides contributing to better understanding by the readers, are also important, for instance, for students and even for beginners in this profession.

Autobiographies of journalists can also be another important factor for understanding the *making of* some reports.. Ricardo Kotscho's book "*Do golpe ao Planalto: uma vida de repórter*" (From the coup to the Presidential Palace: a reporter's life) (2006), presents the recent history of Brazil and shows the *making of* some reports such as the "*Diretas Já*" (Direct Elections Now) campaign that occurred in 1984. A book in an autobiographic format is a result of personal observations and in this way can be more tendentious than any other book of this kind. However it should be mentioned that subjectivity appears in any intellectual production field, because "no knowledge is a 'mirror' of the objective world. Knowledge is always a translation and construction. Therefore the result comes from every observation and every conception must include the receptor's knowledge" (MORIN, 1997: 201). In the case of autobiographies, the problem is the timing, because the reader will have access to the information only after a certain time, and this kind of book is usually the result of hard work.

On the other hand, when reports are not being shown but a biography is produced, there is a book by journalist José Castello, "João Cabral de

Melo Neto: *O homem sem alma*" (the man without a soul). In the second version, published in 2006, the journalist added a chapter called "Diary of everything", in which he related his impressions of 21 meetings that he had had with the poet between March 1991 and April 1992. The reader of the book has the opportunity to get to know the strong points of a communication professional. And the journalist also discloses his concerns.

Academic research can also help in this area. The doctorate thesis of Sandra Moura resulted in the publication of the book "*Caco Barcellos: o repórter e o método*" (the reporter and his method). The researcher was able to access that reporter´s entire research material and also explained the methodology used in the production of the book "*Rota 66: a história da polícia que mata*" (Route 66: the story of the police that kills). The author shows some key words that emphasize the procedures adopted by the journalist in his investigations.

The Internet is also another important factor in revelations. The website of journalist Luiz Carlos Azenha[18], for example, expresses more than one attempt to raise questions that do not appear frequently in the communication media. In this space, the journalist with vast professional experience presents versions of events, besides maintaining a specific space for the *making of* the reports. According to him, there is a specific atmosphere around an event which makes its reproduction on TV more difficult: "Chatting with a person, the other's emotion, the information is only checked afterwards. They are like stones inside shoes, words stuck in the throat, images recorded in memory. Nothing goes on the air"[19]. In virtual space, there is the meeting of other stories.

Journalistic blogs have also been much used in the entire world. A research work developed in the United States in 2006 showed that blogs were used in 86% of the 100 largest American newspapers on the Internet (PALACIOS, 2006). The major Brazilian newspapers also follow this trend and make space available for blogs, but try to unite their journalists more, which really represents a good advance in dissemination. But many still resist the usage of tools which in general blogs present, linked to the notion of *feeding back* the information, like the linkbacks[20], for example.

Another interesting movement is the creation of a database containing methodologies used in many researches, such as that of the *Instituto Prensa y Sociedad* (IPYS)[21], in Peru, which shows the behind-the-scenes of various reports produced in Latin America. Mechanisms like this contribute to showing the procedures adopted, because "journalists

must make transparent, systematic usage of verification". (KOVACH; ROSENSTIEL, 2003: 143)

These few experiences, besides being consistent, show that the transparency of the process results mainly from the initiatives of journalists, editors and specific institutions (instead of companies) which keep trying to disclose the mechanisms used in news production. If professional practice could follow some parameters contained in the book "*Os elementos do Jornalismo*" (The elements of Journalism), for example, the perspective of the *Rule of Transparency* would not have any meaning, because when news and reporting are produced it is possible to show these mechanisms in the article. That is the issue, because the search for the headline, associated with the immediacy, in addition to the marketing interests, makes this a distant possibility for journalism.

It is worthwhile mentioning a research work done in England in which 2,000 news articles were evaluated, and the result showed that in only 12% were checking procedures used in their production. The data and the analysis of this material were presented by journalist Nick Davies in the book "Flat Earth News", published only in the beginning of the year 2008. The term that Davies uses to characterize current journalism helps in understanding the reality: "churnalism". For journalist Marcelo Soares, this pun comes from the expression "churn out". "The word 'churn' is also used in economic jargon to describe the process in which jobs are regularly created and destroyed according to the changes in technology. That also applies (…) to website work. 'Churn' also means rotation". Nick Davies analyzes journalism by accompanying his local journalist colleagues and also by means of the research mentioned above: "No reporter who spends nearly 95 per cent of the time crouched over a desk can possibly develop enough good leads or build enough good contacts. No reporter who speaks to so few people in researching 48 stories can possibly be checking their truth"[22].

The search for truth requires checking methods that were not always provided by the journalistic companies. The search for transparency, both in acquiring information and news editing, implies a discussion about truth in journalism. Even if truth is not totally considered, since the real is not just a transposition of reality, it is necessary to consider the fact that an objective method assures journalism an approximation of the truth (although relative). The problem is that the diagnosis demonstrates the difficulty in this professional field, illustrated by this quotation in which Nick Davies states the case well:

I think the most common reason for our failure to tell the truth is simply that we don't know what the truth is. And Flat Earth News suggests that now, more than ever in the past, we are likely to engage in the mass production of ignorance because the corporations and the accountants who have taken us over have stripped out our staffing, increased our output and ended up chaining us to our desks so that generally we are simply no longer able to go out and make contacts or find stories or even check facts.[23]

Another study that analyzed the media coverage of genetic engineering in New Zealand (RUPAR, 2006) indicated the absence of any explanation of how the information had been obtained. The author says:

When the newsgathering process is explained, the reader can determine the value of information. If there is clear indication that the story is based on an interview, the rule of the game is that the journalist raises questions which the reader is expected to ask. Unasked questions are a loss for the newspaper. If there is clear indication that the article is based on a press release, the reader 'is told' there are source interests attached to the story. Such factual certainty produces transparency and clarity of news and is relevant for public debates on important issues in society. (134)

This shows that the transparency process can be more recognized when the news mechanisms appear clearly and directly, when it is possible to understand how the news was produced.

Conclusions

It is necessary to consider that the journalistic area belongs to the economic field which is based on capital, but as every company depends on the public, it must also take the latter into consideration, and thus it must deal with the contradictions of this situation. Luiz Gonzaga Motta, when discussing the differences between the mediacentric and sociocentric paradigms[24], mentions an aspect that may be considered in this discussion: "The contents of Brazilian journalism are full of tensions, they echo social struggles and contradictions, and they open and close spaces according to the circumstances" (2005: 69). It is in this negotiating context, however, that the function of transparency in the media environment can be discussed.

The media´s lack of transparency with regard to its own corporate organization – which currently maintains distinct economic aspects differing from the public interest - and the lack of disclosure of the

information production process is a relevant point. Nonetheless, when questioning the asymmetrical relation between the excess information flux and the lesser accessibility of the working mechanisms despite the social necessity, the importance of the public´s Right of access to the information production processes is evident. It is possible to imagine a more effective, participative and inclusive communicational culture.

The centralizing phenomenon of the communication media that has arisen in the XXI century makes the discussion of this subject very important, because the members of the public use the information that comes from diverse media to evaluate the facts and thus make decisions influencing their lives.

If there still are difficulties in obtaining this kind of space (*making of*) inside the press, this means that journalists must propose these tools and in this way achieve certain autonomy, by publishing reporting books and through blog maintenance, by investigative reports that make it possible to show society the cases of corruption, violence, etc. Persistence, an important professional attitude, must be always one of journalism's goals.

In addition to the important mechanism involving the checking of information, transparency also contributes to combating a vicious circle called 'denuncismo' (exaggerated use of denunciations) existing inside the press, involving the lack of sources, the excessive usage of off-the-record sources and the so-called declaratory journalism, among other problems.

As the public gets to know this process and to comprehend the media in a more critical way, it is possible that the media will be scrutinized more rigorously, which is a good way to minimize its capitalist articulation between industry and entertainment. Society also has the Right to access public information, private or governmental, researched by journalists.

Another aspect that must be taken into consideration is that the journalistic material produced nowadays can also serve as a reference for future researchers in public or private databases, so that these new professionals may become familiar with the difficulties and facilities within the communication area. Information availability could also contribute to the creation of new survey parameters in communication studies.

The creation of this democratic culture of access also includes the responsibility for developing new professionals. It would be interesting if journalism courses began to incorporate this new transparency method in their laboratory practice[25], that is, the *making of*, trying to prepare future journalists and making them reflect on the transparency of journalism procedures. This reflective spirit will contribute to improving

the students´ professional capability.

In view of the media´s influence on the public, it becomes necessary for the public to know the mechanisms used by the media to transmit information, and it is also important to evaluate their impacts on society. The circulation of information alone does not guarantee a democratic communicational flux. To the extent that journalism acquires a more scientific character, it gives the citizens, according to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2003), the possibility of forming validating judgments of the information, being familiar with the procedures adopted. On adopting these procedures – although limited by the journalism area´s configuration – the professionals gain more respect from the receptors, who acquire a capability for greater discernment by knowing, evaluating and discussing the media production, thus taking the form of an initiative that might help to improve the democratic process in Brazil.

| NOTES

1   The term refers in a generic way to readers, TV spectators, listeners and Internet users.

2   ICMPA was created in 2006 by Maryland University, in the USA.

3   Available at http://www.icmpa.umd.edu/pages/studies/transparency/z_study_conclusions.html.

4   Available at http://www.icmpa.umd.edu/pages/studies/transparency/z_study_conclusions.html.

5   After a task assignment meeting at *Jornal Nacional* (the most popular TV newscast in Brazil) in November 2005, journalist Laurindo Lalo Leal Filho wrote to *Carta Capital* magazine revealing that newscaster William Bonner compared the Brazilian TV spectator to Homer Simpson, a famous American cartoon character, which started a great debate among professionals of the area.

6   An emblematic case in Brazil involved the 'retired woman', 80 years old, who in 2005 filmed from her own apartment all the drug traffic operations in the Ladeira dos Tabajaras in Copacabana, in the south zone of Rio de Janeiro, contributing in this way to reports published

by the newspaper *Extra*. It also made possible a police investigation, resulting in the arrest of hundreds of policemen and drug dealers.

7   Available at http://www.estadao.com.br/imagens/fotoreporter/index.htm.

8   Available at http://oglobo.globo.com/participe/

9   This license guarantees the copyright; however it enables the author to permit his article to be republished or reproduced by other media.

10 Available at http://www.radarcultura.com.br/capa.

11 There was a constitutional change in 2008 which, among other things, modified article 222 of the Constitution that used to allow "only native Brazilians or those naturalized for more than 10 years" to be the owners of communication companies. This made it possible for foreign capital to participate with up to 30% of the companies' voting stock in this area.

12 The *Fórum de Direito de Acesso a Informações Públicas* (The Right of Access to Public Information Forum) is the group that is currently involved in this discussion in Brazil.

13 The authors define five basic concepts at the verification of Discipline: 1) Never add anything that does not exist; 2) Never lie to the public; 3) Be as transparent as possible about your methods and reasons; 4) Trust only in your own work and reporting; 5) Be a simple person.

14 It is important to mention that this is a recent discussion, with no specific bibliography yet.

15 Available at http://www.madison.com/wsj/

16 The coverage of hurricane Rita in Texas, USA in 2005 is an example along this line: http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB112731385505947351-6hfWpvnjff4vIa9rCGthTgD6Yok_20060922.html.

17 Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/6168777.stm.

18 Available at http://viomundo.globo.com.

19 Available at http://viomundo.globo.com/site.php?nome=EmDestaque&edicao=44

20 There are lots of resources that can notify the blog's owner that his post

was commented on in another blog, assuring, in this way, the feedback of information, characteristic of the blogs.

21 Available at http://www.ipys.org/investigacion_br.php.

22 Available at http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=1&storycode=40117

23 Available at http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=1&storycode=40117

24 For the author, the hegemonic paradigm of research on journalism in Brazil is "mediacentric", which is focused on the media. Great attention is paid to observing what journalism does with society when showing an authoritarian "world view", through the professional and institutional culture, besides the marketing criteria. On the other hand, the "sociocentric" paradigm recognizes the mediation in society, but "considers journalism as permeable to social contradictions and to civil society´s pressures, vulnerable to countless negotiations".

25 Interesting experience by a laboratory newspaper in a journalism course in the State of São Paulo:
http://reposcom.portcom.intercom.org.br/bitstream/1904/19332/1/

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