

JOURNALISM AND CHANGE IN EXPERIENCE OF TIME IN WESTERN SOCIETIES

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Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Jornalismo

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this paper is to investigate the temporality produced by journalistic practice and the ways journalism has a privilege to build a specific type of social experience of the present time. This inquiry carries out a historical journey, but it is not our purpose to present a history of press in the sense of a history of institutions, particular genres and languages. Instead, this investigation develops a historical study in order to identify social temporal phenomena produced by journalism, and to express them in the form of descriptive categories, which give regularity to a diversity of temporal phenomena: instantaneity, simultaneity, periodicity, novelty, and public disclosure. Besides, we consider this work a theoretical study that uses historical elements to analyze, through a sociological approach, fundamental aspects of a social constitution of journalistic temporality.

KEY-WORDS journalism, history of journalism, temporality, present time, sociology of journalism

INTRODUCTION

Searching for a better understanding of the role played by journalism in modern and contemporary societies has been a task of researchers in different areas of Human Sciences, a consequence of the growing presence and influence of the media in the structuring of social relationships. Despite significant advances, many communicative phenomena still depend on a better delimitation, characterization, and description.

Media systems have been directly affecting the social experience of time, in particular journalistic institutions. Temporality is an essential component of a definition of journalism in modern societies. Journalism is a social practice that refers to the production of reports about events going on in the present time, acting as a reinforcement of a social temporality and enabling society to construct its own experience of the

present time. We point out journalism as one of the necessary means for the occurrence of such social experiences of the present time in some kinds of social relations.

The initial experiences of journalism in the 17th and 18th centuries in Western societies and their consolidation as an institutionalized social practice in the 19th century made the construction of a specific type of social experience of the present time possible. We will try to demonstrate in this paper that the present time is an essential dimension for journalism, not only as an attribute of a particular product, but as a social phenomenon composed of social practices and significant relationships. These features give temporality a concrete experience, which can be understood as a social object and is endowed with a content inter-subjectively shared by members of society.

We developed in this article a sociological study, using a historical approach (particularly a perspective of social history) as a methodological strategy to be able to visualize temporal phenomena and to elaborate descriptive categories about three orders of social experiences concerning journalistic institutions: a) Technological factors in transporting and transmitting information; b) Industrial aspects in the formation of journalistic organizations and their participation in an emerging market; c) The construction of new social behaviors as a result of accelerated urbanization and the development of reading habits and public discussion.

Besides this, we intend to show that journalistic temporality is composed of a plurality of aspects that can be better understood by analyzing their specificity as well as their relation with other social processes. Therefore, we will point out five types of temporal phenomena used by journalism, which will be proposed as descriptive categories. These are interconnected phenomena, and we do not intend, in this analytical effort, to separate them into independent parts. It is our intention to perceive, in their diversity, certain regularities that can give a theoretical outline to a notion of journalistic temporality.

We will propose five descriptive categories of temporality used by journalism that are related to actions, situations, and ways of approaching events in the present time: instantaneity, simultaneity, periodicity, novelty, and public disclosure. When considering these five descriptive categories, we tried to put them into a broad historical context that could describe the growth of journalism, as well as understand the internal movements of journalistic institutions, which gave them proper characterization as a social force.

1 ■ JOURNALISM IS AN ACTIVITY BASED ON THE PRESENT TIME

We intend to consider the present time as an essential aspect of journalistic activity in three ways:

1.1 ■ The development of a 'culture of the present time'

The first way can be identified by turning to historic studies to perceive that temporality became a decisive component for establishing new forms of relationships around the second half of the 17th century and beginning of the 18th century, particularly when increasing the importance of reports on daily events became socially necessary. Paul Hunter (1990) points out, for example, that the English cultural experience has developed a fixation with contemporary life and novelty, a sharp conscience of recent events and a desire for innovation and originality.

Newspapers and other periodicals became a new component of a written culture to deal with the transitory and mundane (Sommerville, 1996), innovating by offering "ephemeral short narratives of strange but true occurrences" (Lovell, 1992). The incorporation of the present time and daily facts, common in conversations and oral stories as a way of characterizing the temporality and the content of written discourse (particularly the printed one), marked a rudimentary understanding of journalism as a social product and practice.

In his book *Before Novels - The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (1990), Hunter dedicated his time to study the appearance of novels as a specific genre in English literature in the 18th century, linking the novel to a modern metropolitan culture in that period, fascinated by the contemporary (Fowler, 1993: 351). For him, journalism and novel are two forms of writing about the present time, about an isolated instant, part of a concern that exists in politics, theology, psychology and education - aspects that made Hunter call that period the "age of moment-centered consciousness" (Hunter, 1990: 108-109). The English novel had several cultural sources. Among them, Hunter highlighted the role of journalism: newspapers helped to create and enlarge a 'culture of now'. The modern novel would seem unimaginable without a peculiar combination of "News, and new Things" that became an obsession for that English culture (Hunter, 1988: 515).

In Paul Hunter's studies, as well as in Benedict Anderson's work (1991) analyzing the creation of an idea of national community in the 18th century Western Europe, journalism consolidates itself as a writing of events, issues and situations happening in the present moment, which are far from the direct experience of a collectivity, contributing to the creation of social and cultural relations referred to the present time.

1.2▪ Temporality guides the ways of journalistic institutionalization

A second perspective to understand journalistic temporality considers the ways journalistic values and practices became institutionalized in social organizations, as a collective work and a result of industrial processes controlled by companies and directed to a specific market. Journalistic organizations developed a strict control of time processes in order to assure their own identity as an activity linked to the present time. As a consequence, the present time became a principle of organizing and planning tasks, structuring routines and the distribution of its products.

Technological innovations helped journalistic production to be organized into functions and tasks and to reach an industrial scale later on. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the handling of print machines required qualified 'printers', that constituted a technical team acting with relative autonomy (Sutherland, 1986: 228) in relation to the reporters ('news writers'), who had to be subject to the skills and operational conditions of the former. This machinery operation generated a kind of control over heavy machines, as well as over the time limits of production: from the composition of boards that would be printed out to the rhythm of the circulation of paper in the printing machines.

Printers and news writers formed two important social groups in the constitution of a journalistic organization, but other workers joined them, as professionals concerned with administration and business tasks in the 19th century. Lucy Brown (1985, 7) notes that improvements in productivity also derived from a conception of technical and administrative efficiency in companies, even if this improvement represented increased costs.

Journalistic temporality institutionalizes itself as an element of identity and tension. Temporality gives a cultural form to news, the main journalistic product, making it recognizable and establishing its limits of meaning, performance and social existence. News has an ephemeral existence, either as a consequence of the speed of the world's movements

which outdate journalistic stories, or the ways journalistic organizations use this volatility to produce perishable products that must be exchanged in short intervals, and, for this reason, reinforce a social necessity of news. The news brings, usually in an explicit form, marks of the present time which emphasize its temporal singularity, its short duration in a present that expires briefly.

Contrary to that, journalistic temporality is an experience of stress between two movements: on the one hand, there is the speed of a changing world, so fast, unequal, and irregular; on the other hand, the speed of journalistic discourse production about this. Journalism faces a permanent risk of having the sense of time of its discourse detached from the timing of the world. At the same time, the journalistic institution developed procedures and techniques of legitimization and affirmation of its capacity to overcome the risk of disconnection from the timing of the world and the timing of journalistic production. Journalism is a report about something that belongs to the present time, a temporality defined by habitual and symbolic relations of reference to human actions, even if one event happened some moments ago.

1.3 Journalism contributes to the social construction of the present time

Understanding journalistic temporality as a central aspect of journalism consists, regarding a third aspect, of stressing journalism not only as stories about events in the present time, but as a social force which acts in the construction process of the social experience of the present time. The institutional characteristic of journalism offers to society specific forms through which different publics produce their experience of the present time. In some situations, journalistic production is a necessary condition for the construction of some kinds of relationships, such as public discussion and the definition of several actions.

This is to say then that the present is the time of reference for human action to be taken. Journalism is connected with events, issues and situations that are in action, under construction, in motion, and, in order to make reports of them, journalists need to cut off the flux of events, even giving a transitory end to the stories and giving them a narrative structure. In reaching a public level with its circulation, the news supplies society with a set of information for scheduling action, stimulating debates, formulating and making public decisions. Thus, the present time can be understood as the central aspect of journalism, while

seeming to have a basic synchronism between the timing of journalism and the timing of a series of public actions under construction (Park, 1955).

Sommerville considers that journalism disseminates a fact-centered discourse throughout cultures. Even in hybrid 'corantos' at the beginning of 17th century in England, periodic reports on events could be identified with a precise location in time and space, a tendency to write straightforward and exact reports, with the identification of sources. Numeric data, lists and other resources were used by reporters to give a sense of objectivity to the news (Sommerville, 1996: 11; 66). At the same time where journalistic news would have an abrupt closure created by the reporter's view point (the 'final episode of the day or week'), it could also bring a reference or invitation for the reader to look for the next edition and to accompany the sequence of a story the next day or following week.

Besides a temporal definition of journalistic events, journalism produces a temporal meaning in the exact moment of the social circulation of news, because journalistic content intervenes in consequent processes of discussion, formulation and execution of social actions happening in the present time. The news subsidizes the construction of social actions, whether in definition of the social agenda of public affairs, or in motivating debates, formulation and conduction of public decisions.

Daniel Woolf investigated the formation of a sense of the present moment in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries and attributed to newspapers a role of 'building' a 'zone' between past and future, which offered, according to Woolf's definition, a space for the discussion of current events. Raymond (1999, 133) and Barker (2000, 1) noticed from the 17th to 19th centuries in England a high degree of dependence on newspapers in public debates by the population. Harris (1996: 97-98) noted how the press became a forum for the presentation of rational arguments, thus contributing to the development of a policy of respectability, characterized by order and peaceful persuasion. Thus, the present time can be understood as a central aspect of journalism when we realize there is a fundamental synchronism between journalistic timing and the timing of a series of public actions in the making (Park, 1955), both linked to a sprouting of the present world.

2 ■ JOURNALISM AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRESENT TIME

By analyzing journalism from a historical perspective, we can identify five types of temporal aspects related to the journalistic activity, which can be better understood through the description of five categories: instantaneity, simultaneity, periodicity, novelty and public disclosure.

We know those phenomena are linked and we are not intending, with this methodology, to separate them into independent parts. But in our view this analytical effort can help us to perceive mechanisms and relations established by differentiated social actors (journalists, journalistic organizations, social institutions, and their audience).

2.1 ■ Instantaneity

The category of instantaneity in journalism was based on two main references. The purpose of the first was to underscore the dimension of physical materiality of instantaneity, referring to an absence of a time span between an event and its record, transmission, and reception by a public. From a historical perspective, instantaneity was not an effective achievement in the early centuries of journalism. However, the time span between the occurrence and reporting became shorter as the process of production and distribution of news became faster.

A second historical reference of instantaneity had a social-cultural dimension. Instantaneity became a norm of journalistic practices in order to guarantee that the news must refer to “the present time”. As technological and production transformations were driving journalism to an acceleration of its production and a consequent reduction of the time interval between an occurrence and its reception by the public, this process made one feel that the ‘present instant’ of events that were not directly experienced was closer and closer to the reader’s daily experience – and this surprising capacity of placing readers on the ‘time of events’ only became possible through the historical development of journalism.

At the same time, it is unthinkable, to our contemporary conception of time, that the term ‘instantaneity’ could be used in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries, for example, to refer to the act of reporting foreign news, when foreign correspondents needed to send manuscript letters by regular mail to newspapers reporting recent events that had happened countries back, when one traveled by ships, horses, or trains. Besides, it also depended on the irregularity of the means of transportation

(in the case of England, marine transportation carrying the news from the continent). Some newspapers only obtained the news after they were printed by other foreign periodicals, a situation that caused considerable delay the time an event took place and the time one could actually read about it (Barker, 2000).

Before railroads existed, travelers had to confront the uncertainty of roads and rivers in precarious vehicles, which made them more exposed to the adversity of the weather. The emergence of railroads and locomotives in the 19th century brought three direct advantages to newspapers: 1) reaching the public in far-off places and gathering the news throughout national territories; 2) reducing the time for the transportation of newspapers; 3) giving a better regularity to transportation, with the appearance of the control of time schedules for the departure and arrival of trains (Brown, 1985: 7; Whitrow, 1993: 181). Even so, none of those factors drove us to an 'instantaneity meaning' for journalism and communications.

According to Woolf, this was literally impossible before the advent of the telegraph, after which an event could be captured at a great distance almost immediately (2001: 83). Telegraph was also clearly limited: only the sending of the signal was simultaneous, depending on the existence of a network of cables connecting two transmission stations, although it was common to have breaks in connections. The telegraph was constituted, in the beginning, just by the resource of connecting reporters to the headquarters of newspapers, and the instantaneity brought by the telegraph only changed a small portion of journalistic work. Using the telegraph was still significantly time-consuming, because it required encoding/decoding informative text into telegraphic signals, an activity that took a long time to complete and that could be expensive if the text was long (Blondheim, 1994: 12).

In other words, the appearance of telegraph accelerated the production of news, because it established a resource for instantaneous transmission from one point to another, but that instantaneity was not expanded to other stages of production and distribution of newspapers. Even so, social and cultural effects of that acceleration of transmission were fantastic for creating a new feeling of recentness and brevity, reinforcing the idea of perceiving events in the present time unfolding in front of the public's eyes.

The progress of technologies for the transmission of information and its usefulness to journalism created, for reporters and editors, new possibilities and challenges for the modernization of newspapers in the

last decades of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. In Fedler (2000), Berger (1951) and in Brown (1985: 11), we can identify four innovations that brought intense changes to journalistic work in addition to the telegraph, the telephone, the linotype and the typewriter.

Interestingly, reporters had different reactions to the telephone: distrust of this new tool at first, because few journalistic sources had phone sets; and reporters believed that they could obtain better interviews through face-to-face contact with sources. This culture was particularly modified by the contribution of the telephone to the control of time: reporters, in keeping the schedules and deadlines of editions, began to use the new resource to send reports to newsrooms from remote locations (Fedler, 2000: 143).

The adoption of the telephone into journalistic routines of companies happened a few years after its discovery, bringing about a gradual change of practices and work routines. The main American newspaper in the end of the 19th century, The New York Times, had, in 1896, just two telephones in the whole company: one connecting the city editor with police headquarters and another one for the commercial department (Berger, 1951: 185-6). The introduction of the linotype and the typewriter in the two last decades of the 19th century helped reporters, editors and printers to accelerate the process of reading and composing journalistic texts for printing, and to print new editions of a newspaper on the same day (Fedler, 2000: 145-146).

Thus, a meaning of instantaneity built by newspapers was limited to the ability to present the reports of events occurring some hours before the circulation of a newspaper, in its daily regular edition or through 'extra' editions. This way of producing and circulating newspapers was to continue to stimulate a specific kind of instantaneity conception until radio technology and, subsequently, television made it possible to have live coverage, linking journalists, events and their public, thus overcoming gaps in the transmission and distribution of news. Both of these will redefine the sense of instantaneity in journalism and introduce new forms of journalistic work.

2.2 ■ Simultaneity

The category of simultaneity demarcated a new possibility to experience time: the ability to synchronize actions or events that were happening at the same moment, even if they had small differences in terms of duration or consequences. Such experience was initially obtained

from calendars and clocks, whose popularity gave to societies a sense that distant events could happen simultaneously.

Simultaneity meant, on the one hand, a technical capacity of synchronizing complex events and applying this to economic production. On the other hand, an experience of simultaneity produced a cultural and social significance, creating ways of establishing new relationships and social actions, as well as defining some kinds of cultural objects. Benedict Anderson (1991) researched the sense of simultaneity from the 17th to 19th centuries as a social-cultural construction of a public sense of community of a population that inhabits a specific time and space (the 'nation') and noted that newspapers played a particular role in that relationship: the act of reading newspapers constituted a social habit (a ritual) at certain moments of the day, and journalism made individuals feel they participated (in a real or imaginary way) in the actions and decisions that involved the whole community.

Newspapers in the 17th century created new bonds of simultaneity among people, according to Anderson (1991), such as an enhancement of newspaper readers' consciousness, which is brought about and reconstructed at every moment a newspaper reaches the public on a daily basis. Anderson uses the anthropological term "mass ceremony" to describe this paradoxical act: on the one hand, an almost repetitive, customary and habitual movement of receiving newspapers every morning, sitting down and reading them avidly; on the other hand, a consciousness that such reading act is accomplished by a wide public. That reading act will produce or contribute to specific ways of interpreting events, situations and issues, and it will also be questioned or modified, whether in private or public discussions.

The increased speed of social processes and new technologies of transmission of information at the end of the 19th century transformed simultaneity into a complex social and cultural experience. Events seemed to multiply to society's eyes under technologies that facilitated simultaneity situations, and expressions as the "thickened present" (Kern, 1995) and the "compression of time-space" (Harvey, 1993) are coined to describe that amplification of the horizon of possible experiences in the present time.

Another social factor of wide impact at the end of the 19th century was the introduction of a uniform time schedule for the whole world, affecting several different activities, such as communications, the industry and even wars. Standard time stimulated a control of punctuality, synchronicity and uniformity of instruments for time measurement (Whitrow, 1993: 185).

Kern uses the category of simultaneity to demonstrate how new technologies or artistic techniques can spatially expand the present as experienced by an individual or a collectivity. If there is a capacity for overlapping, synchronizing or accessing more than one environment or physical relationship at the same moment, the present time is multiplied, making it possible for some experiences to be undertaken in the same instant, simultaneously - the sense that the present time could be lived by different groups or societies located in different places (Kern, 1983: 81-2).

If cultural experiences of simultaneity in the passage of the 19th to 20th century showed new possibilities of combining "discourses", with polyphony of voices, collages of narratives and a breaking of linear reporting, according to Kern (1983), journalism does not apply such a deep 'deconstruction' and reconstruction of impressions, images and events to the same extent as poetry, music, painting, literature or the movies do. Even so, newspaper pages carry characteristics that resemble those aesthetic experiences and, at the same time, the newspaper is a particular aesthetic experience.

The newspaper works with a temporary factor that guides toward an initial point of cohesion of the newspaper page: as a whole, journalistic texts talk about events that happened simultaneously. But this 'coexistence' in the space of the page does have some tension. To make it intelligible and harmonic, the journalist looks to establish several relationships among events that, at the beginning, perhaps do not have a direct relationship.

2.3 ■ Periodicity

Periodicity is one of the most important temporal phenomena in the early days of journalism. The establishment of a journalistic production in regular and defined intervals by incipient companies in the 17th and 18th centuries redefined and reshaped ways of tinkering with time socially. The regular production of news gave to society continuous involvement with events, developing memory patterns that enabled the follow-up of events at the time they were unfolding and, perhaps, to identify causal relationships (Raymond, 1999). Besides this, the regularity in the offering of news guaranteed a continuous feeding of information to be used in debates and public decisions.

To define the initial moment in which publications with journalistic content began to spread with regular intervals is not an easy task,

because we would have to consider from the 'corantos' to the 'newsbooks' publications in England at the beginning of the 17th century, some monthly or bi-monthly publications, and other weekly publications. However, this periodicity was irregular, because it oscillated according to the volume of news available (Raymond, 1996: 8). Schröder (2001) analyzed the German case to point out that the absence of periodicity before the 16th century caused publications with diversified information not to be considered 'newspapers'. Vittu studied the appearance of newspapers in France to show that the 17th century was a period of "periodic press" (2001: 160). In the same way, Daniel Woolf interprets that the regularity of 'newsbooks' appeared in the middle of the 17th century, as a result of the necessity of such publications to follow the unfolding of political events in England.

Perhaps one of the most systematic historical studies that have been developed about journalistic periodicity is the one by John Sommerville in his book *The News Revolution in England - Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (1996), in which the author analyzes the temporal aspect in the development of English journalism in the 17th and 18th centuries. The beginning of the 17th century was a time in which English publications with journalistic content had an irregular periodicity, with high intervals of time between each edition: an average of one publication every two or three weeks between the decades of 1620 to 1640, with oscillations. In the two following decades, weekly periodicity became dominant and the 'key' for those publications to achieve reader's loyalty and commercial success. Publishers preferentially opted for placing new editions into circulation on Mondays, because they could be sent to inner cities using the weekly regular postal services on Tuesdays. Mondays became, then, days of competition among those products (Sommerville, 1996: 37).

This picture of emerging periodicity is not, for Sommerville, a positive social change in society. Quite the contrary, the author interprets it from a pessimistic perspective, because he understands that transformation is a consequence of a preponderant commercial interest that would affect other social relationships. Joad Raymond contests Sommerville's thesis, arguing that periodicity became an essential attribute of the 'newsbooks' and 'newspapers' to guarantee continuity of circulation of information and, therefore, of debate. For this author, periodicity developed memory patterns and the readers' active involvement in events and debates (Raymond, 1999: 131-2).

Historically, the first journalistic periodicity to get consolidated in Western societies was the weekly one: most newspapers at the beginning

of the 17th century were printed once a week in Europe. Even with the appearance of three weekly editions, newspapers with only one weekly edition continued during the century, because they used, as a competitive strategy, the printing of a larger number of pages (six pages, against two in tri-weekly newspapers) (Sutherland, 1986: 227). Such a weekly interval between editions was gradually reduced during the period: by the end of the same century, 64% of German newspapers circulated twice a week, and another 7% had three or more editions a week (Popkin, 1989: 6).

Journalistic periodicity institutionalized itself as a way of ordering social time, whether as a form of control and normalization, or as the creation of material or symbolic social contents, practices and processes. Within journalistic companies, periodicity contributed to creating internal relationships with journalistic organizations, thus marking a precise control of time and production stages and a planning of actions based on rigid schedules. That normalization of time penetrated the perceptions and individual forms of time usage by reporters, casting individuals and the organization into a harmonic and conflicting movement at the same time.

The periodicity of newspapers determined ways of defining and giving form to the news. The interval of time between two successive editions appears as a border to demarcate the present time of events, indicating its temporary validity for the purpose of news making. Thus, producing news implied breaking events into time fragments according to the periodicity of a publication. This approach to the timing of events contributes to a redefinition of the public perception of time, with the journalistic content being associated to the rhythms of the daily life of societies.

Daily periodicity

Intense urbanization was a general phenomenon in the development of European countries and the United States in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, mainly if we consider that its growth was interlinked to complex social changes, such as industrialization, commercial growth, expansion of transportation and communications, and immigration. Cities that concentrated these transformations more intensely became metropolises, like London (Brown, 1985: 36).

The daily rhythm of life, one of the principal units of organization and measurement of time, achieved a series of time demarcations as the routines and dynamism of the urban environment increased, as described

Alain Corbin, when investigating the case of France in the 19th century. Social institutions like schools and companies concentrated mainly in the metropolises played a prominent role in the social regulation of time. Schools developed pedagogic models based on strict control of time, which became a reference for the development of rigid disciplines. Rigid management of time became an obsession for administrators in prisons, hospitals, industries and even asylums, where supervision of time constituted an essential element of therapies (Corbin, 1995: 5).

Factories also became a model of time control for other companies. Their time-based rationalization of practices and norms gave a model for individuals that previously had private temporal references, as new workers emerged from rural areas. Governments created laws to determine the duration and distribution of work time for children, women, and for the entire working class (Corbin, 1995: 4-8).

Improvements in transportation gave a dynamic rhythm to the big city landscape. Public transportation gradually changed the habits of the working class, who used to walk to work and now could use urban trains, as described by Schudson (1978: 102-3), referring to American cities at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. That fact, for Schudson, brought deep consequences to newspapers. People in middle classes, when taking buses or trains to work, were freed from worrying about their routes. "Their eyes and their hands were free; they could read on the bus" (1978, 103). Lucy Brown describes that the idleness imposed on passengers of trains was also an incentive for reading (1985, 29).

The daily periodicity of newspapers (the main time stamp of journalistic circulation) was not achieved until the 18th century, and it began with *The Daily Courant* in 1702 (Raymond, 1996: 15). In the case of the United States, the first two daily newspapers appeared in 1784 (*The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser* and *The South Carolina Gazette General and Advertiser*) (Lee, 1923: 118-120).

The circulation of newspapers also produced a specific time-based relationship according to the time of the day when they circulated on the streets. The regular appearance of morning and evening newspapers was an adaptation to the readers' habits, as well as to the increasing competition for the possibility of giving the public the most recent news. The dynamics of the daily rhythm of life in the big cities contaminated newspapers in such a way that even the existence of two daily circulations didn't inhibit uses of 'extra' editions when necessary and convenient. According to Blondheim (1994, 23), an extra edition could make the competitor paper become out-of-date as well as give the extra edition

prestige. Such movement helped to motivate the 'speed' as a valuable element of news production.

2.4 ■ Novelty

We can realize that, from the first regular experiences of journalism in the 17th century, reporting an event has meant to take to the public a report about something new that just appeared in the social environment and generated importance or curiosity for a collectivity. That characteristic of news has been named 'novelty', and historians of journalism have identified novelty of news as 'freshness' or 'recentness', thus marking a peculiar feature adapted to several situations: the daily life of communities, relevant issues and social involvement, state actions and private details of aristocracy life.

Proposing a category of 'novelty' to describe a specific aspect of journalistic timing intends to show that the news is tied to a logic of innovation, originality or renewal, which standardizes a way of recognizing and defining events, as well as reporting them according to journalistic conventions. Novelty drives us to consider an idea of 'new' (new events occurring now, in the present time) as an inherent characteristic of journalistic texts.

Journalistic novelty is standardized to facilitate a complex process of news production: it is a 'factoring' process initiated from a raw material (the 'new' event unfolding) in order to achieve a social-cultural identity as a journalistic product. Journalism depends on novelty as a way of orientation and recognition, both for journalists and readers of events that are just breaking out in a social environment and must be reported.

Journalistic institutions were historically developed in order to make available regular and operational public novelty as a form of response to a social expectation of enlarging the social and cultural experience of the present time. However, this characteristic of 'institutional construction' is not easily perceptible by readers, and novelty seems to be naturalized in events, as a spontaneous eruption.

Researches of the history of journalism describe a growing interest in the news about daily life, relevant issues and social involvement, governmental actions, and aspects of the private life of aristocracies in the 17th century. Raymond (1996), Schröder (2001), Blondheim (1994) and Woolf (2001) tell us about readers' behaviors, whether motivated by an excessive curiosity of other people's private lives, concerns with important issues of their nation, or interest in knowing facts about social

and state development in order to feel more involved and integrated into social and political life. On average, 'freshness' and 'recentness' could mean responding with an amazement for the new capacity of having access to facts of the present time happening simultaneously, to a state of anxiety or distrust for this intense exposure of present life.

Since historical texts in that period had a greater density and authority than journalistic reports, the news was regarded with strong distrust, for a lack of demonstration and confirmation and for the difficulty of checking. When the news was orally transmitted in the 17th and 18th centuries, whether in public squares or coffee houses, one could hardly tell the difference between these contents and rumors. Even printed texts could not get the same credibility as handwritten text (Woolf, 2001: 100).

In spite of that, this distrust was not enough to eliminate the 'appetite' for 'novelties' brought by journalistic texts. Editors used strategies to try to prevent detractors from disclosing false or old contents. Those strategies were part of a concern newspapers had to try to avoid mistaken information, something common in publications of the 17th century, particularly with a notorious 'determination to be first' (printing news before competitor newspapers), which stimulated search for the most recent news, even if it could lead to lack of precision and reliability. Such reality transformed rumor and the journalistic mistake into two 'public institutions', according to Daniel Woolf's interpretation (2001, 106).

2.5 ■ Public disclosure

We proposed a category of 'public disclosure' with the objective of showing that journalism is not just a record of events in the present time, but a way of constructing this time in its inherent discourse. Journalistic discourse does not just bring a sense of containing the present time recorded in the traces of its products, but it intervenes in the construction of the present time in its enunciation by means of discursive rules shared among speakers (journalists, journalistic institutions and their publics). The enunciation of a journalistic report is per se reinforcement of the 'present time' of its content.

Some situations described in the history of journalism are good references to mark a specific component of the journalistic present time: enunciation is a privileged moment of the establishment of an interaction in the present time. In journalism, the time of enunciation is a 'zero point' at the moment of the public circulation of news, from which the journalistic product becomes a "public document" (Park, 1955).

Thus, the term “public disclosure” emphasizes that journalism carries out a procedure of bringing to a public environment (or ‘public sphere’, according to Habermas) a new content to readers in order to give them a means of knowing something that was out of public knowledge. This public ignorance can be due to the peculiarity of an event that breaks out in society, but it can also be the consequence of an event or situation that occurred in a private sphere (maybe in a space of ‘secrecy’) and that was brought to a public sphere as a consequence of journalistic work.

Some historical records made it possible to highlight a time-related aspect of discursive interactions. We can describe some discussions in European coffee houses in the 18th and 19th centuries, which used journalistic contents as objects to stimulate public debates: reading news aloud, as well as attentive listening and different types of discussion, reinforced a set of operations within the present time, in which the journalistic product had a relevant role in the process of building its identity in terms of interests, conceptions and values. Also, journalism could contribute to or guide people in the process of choosing or defining current actions (Raymond, 1999; Hunter, 1988). Those aspects meant that the time of discursive interaction stimulated by journalism marked a sense of the present time to its public, not only at the time of its enunciation, but also in its public discussion.

Newspapers became a way of establishing discursive interactions based on the facts of daily life in communities. The ways the journalistic contents were spread were a factor of marking the present time. Using newspapers as reading objects meant that discussions and even collective actions were motivated by current events that were predominant in the journalistic contents. News describing an event in the present time was a time reference to visitors to those places (Hunter, 1988: 501-2).

Thus, the purpose of the “public disclosure” category was to describe some kinds of relationships between newspapers, society and the state. In Habermas’ work, newspapers became an “institution for excellence” (1984, 213) in the public sphere because they had the function of supplying readers with contents about governmental and social issues, as well as providing an arena for the debate of ideas and for the definition of actions. The press gave transparency to the actions of the state, breaking a domain of ‘secrecy’.

Raymond’s research (1996, 131) about ‘newsbooks’ in the 17th century reinforces this role: by that time, those publications had brought to the public many actions and decisions that had happened in the English Parliament, which were inaccessible to the general public. Raymond also

identified in readers a rational capacity to formulate arguments based on printed texts – this task is supposed to have been, according to Raymond, the largest contribution given by newspapers for the construction of a critical debate in 17th-century England.

Newspapers became a means of information, monitoring, and manifestation of inquiry into governmental actions, which fed an obsession for breaking the spirit of secrecy in which acts of public administration could be involved. The newspaper gathered a major part of this new frame ‘mind’ because it developed mechanisms to bring hidden contents to public knowledge and to expose them to readers that were anxious about being informed about daily life issues. Besides this, other contents were objects of public disclosure: the private life of public personalities, such as members of the royalty, as well as tragic, funny or exotic situations in communities.

Then, the category of public disclosure helps us to describe a specific aspect of the notion of journalistic timing. A dual movement is involved in journalistic work: first, to disclose something located in a ‘secret sphere’; secondly, to give it a public attribute, seeking to promote its circulation in public spaces. Both moments occur in the present time, whether as journalistic reports or as social practices resulting from the circulation of news.

CONCLUSIONS

The intention of this entire paper was to demonstrate that transformations to the social experience of the present time in the 17th to 19th centuries brought about by journalism facilitated the construction of a kind of ‘map’ of time phenomena, allowing us to separate it into descriptive categories. We proposed a group of five categories, which can define the main temporal manifestations of journalism: instantaneity, simultaneity, periodicity, novelty and public disclosure. This is not to say that this is the only way we can theoretically consider a social dimension of time when analyzing journalism, but our intention is to point out that this sort of approach enlightens an understanding of journalism with considerable success.

The categories presented above cannot be understood only in isolation, but should be interrelated. Journalistic timing is not a sum of individual temporal characteristics, but an interconnection of them, because they are particular manifestations of a common way of living the present time. However, there is a difference of importance in some

phenomena to demarcate this temporal experience and, as a result, to show that some aspects have been more decisive than others in certain periods for the journalistic construction of a sense of the present time.

Our bibliographical sources allow us to indicate a prominence of categories of novelty and periodicity in the initial experiences of journalism. Novelty was a manifestation of a more primal sense of timing, starting from an expectation of producing and distributing reports of new events in societies. Periodicity arose from technological advances in the printing process, appearing as a procedure for the construction of regularities in the journalistic activity. After that, it gave organizations some parameters of production in searching for a further industrial process. Besides this, periodicity modified social relationships because it generated reading habits and the readers' involvement with social events that were unfolding in the present time.

We proposed five categories for a notion of journalistic sense of timing because we consider that there is an absence of conceptual construction in journalism studies. For us, it is difficult to consider the time dimension of journalism without resorting to the phenomena described above. Without convergence and interconnection of those temporal characteristics, it seems precarious to consider more substantive and theoretical journalistic activity.

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