TRENDS AND NEW CHALLENGES IN JOURNALISM RESEARCH IN BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT
The first part of this article is a cross section analysis of Brazilian communication research produced by postgraduate level (doctor and master programs) of the Journalism Department, School of Communication and Art (ECA) of the São Paulo State University (USP), Brazil, between 1989 and the beginning of 2004. ECA/USP is one of the most ancient and influential school of journalism in Brazil. An analysis of its production may reveal an illustration of journalism research in the country. In the first three decades of ECA’s existence, the field of journalism studies accounted for around 22% of the School’s production of theses and dissertations. The second part of the article presents some data – mostly quantitative and partially qualitative – based on a content analysis of the journal Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação. The period considered ranges from January 2000 to December 2004 (five years, ten issues).

KEY-WORDS
Journalism research; Brazilian journalism research; research trends.

1 **ECA/USP RESEARCH PRODUCTION**

The first part of this text is based on a cross section of Brazilian scientific production in the area, by locating and analyzing the research works developed at the postgraduate level of the Journalism Department, School of Communication and Art of the São Paulo State University (USP), Brazil, between 1989 and the beginning of 2004. Founded under the name of School of Cultural Communication in 1967, the ECA began its postgraduate activities in 1972, when it organized the first examining boards in order to prepare its own professors. Eight years later, in 1980, it implemented its doctorate program. And at the close of that same decade, the development agencies recognized Communication as an autonomous research field.
In the postgraduate area, two programs were implemented: that of Art and that of Communication Sciences. The areas of concentration – bringing together the various lines of research – were established under the departmental umbrella. For this reason, the development of postgraduate work in Communication at USP came about directly connected to the undergraduate area and marked by each department's professional training area. In the first three decades of ECA's existence, the field of Journalism studies accounted for around 22% of the School's production of theses and dissertations, surpassed only by the Communication and Audiovisual (Movies, Radio and TV) areas and ahead of the Public Relations, Advertising, and Tourism and Information Sciences studies. During the period the training took place of Brazilian and Latin American professors and professional people obtained their postgraduate degrees at USP.

The source of the material presented here is Dedalus, the on-line program of the University Libraries System, in which is gathered general information on authors, supervisors, subjects and dates of presentation of masters dissertations, doctorate theses and postdoctoral theses. Since the period analyzed covers 15 years, from 1989 to the first semester of 2004, in order to better visualize the academic production in almost a decade and a half of Journalism studies at USP, the works were divided into three groups: the first one relating to the period between 1989 and 1995; the second between 1996 and 2000 and the third including the works carried out and defended between 2001 and the first three months of 2004.

The 227 entries found under the subject "Journalism" presented the following result: in overall quantitative terms, the preponderance may be noted, as would be natural in an area undergoing development, of masters' dissertations, which amounted to 144 titles, followed by 74 doctorate theses and nine postdoctoral theses. (See the following graph). In the first group, the postgraduate studies were divided into 34 dissertations, 24 doctorate theses and 6 postdoctoral theses. In the period of 1996 to 2000, 46 dissertations, 15 doctorate theses and one postdoctoral thesis were recorded. Between 2001 and the beginning of 2004 there were 64 dissertations, 35 doctorate theses and two postdoctoral theses.
From a first evaluation of these figures, the growth that occurred in scientific production in the Journalism field in USP can be seen, which in a certain way represents the progress in the research of topics related to that area in Brazil. If we take into consideration only the most recent period, between 2001 and 2004, we see that just in masters dissertations the number is equivalent to the total number of research works presented between the years of 1989 and 1995:64. Another interesting data item to be highlighted is the equilibrium in the initial 11 years of postgraduate research in this sector: 64 studies carried out from 1989 to 1995 and 62 studies from 1996 to 2000 – which afterwards showed a significant jump between 2001 and 2004, when 101 dissertations, doctorate theses and postdoctoral theses were approved.

We can conclude that the growth in the production of the School of Communication and Art at USP is in some way related to the increase in postgraduate Communication courses in Brazil in recent decades. In the last evaluation of postgraduate courses (which was conducted on the basis of a three-year period, the last one corresponding to 2001/2003), the general area of Applied Social Sciences I, in which the Communication area is included, was made up of 19 postgraduate programs in Communication and seven in Information Sciences. Precisely in 2003, the postgraduate studies in the Communication area were composed of 7 masters’ courses and 12 courses offering masters and doctors’ degrees, comprising 417 teaching staff personnel and 2,277 students. In the period under review (2001-2003), these programs granted 1,398 masters degrees and
455 doctors degrees. The results show that the Communication area was among those areas that recorded the most significant growth in the eight-year period, after remaining stagnated between the nineteen eighties and nineties. In 1996 there were eight postgraduate programs in Communication in Brazil; in 2003, there were 19 programs. The contrast is greater in the number of doctorate courses; from four in 1996 they jumped to 12 courses in 2003. In a general way, the figures showed that with the academic training carried out in recent years, Brazil was able to count on a group of doctoral degree holders sufficient to promote, in a relatively short time, an even greater expansion in research and in postgraduate courses in the Communication area.

Returning to the 15 years of scientific production in the postgraduate courses in Journalism at ECA-USP and also taking into consideration the quantitative breakdown of the studies along the time line, it is interesting to emphasize that the data refer first to a period of six years; then to a period of four years and finally to a period of two years and three months. That is, as the years pass by, the scientific production has increased inversely to the period of time lapsed. Just by itself, this would be encouraging information with relation to the advance of journalism research in our country. (See the following graph).

In addition to the quantitative analysis, however, it is essential to know the content of the selected production. Which were the topics covered with greater or lesser frequency by journalism researchers at the time of their academic training, within the universe selected here
and that serve not only as a cross section but also represent a gender of “showcase” of journalism research, a significant portion of the scientific production in this area of specific knowledge?

In general it is clear that at least five topics appear with greater frequency between 1989 and 1995, and among them the works dealing with print journalism stand out, as a kind of main line among the studies developed during the period. Segmented journalistic production, studies on the regional press, journalism and politics and personalities of the Brazilian press are the four subjects that complete the first phase of the material analyzed. Case studies and analyses of content predominate as methodological resources utilized in these six years of production in the field of journalism at the School of Communication and Art. Among the works actually produced in these six years and classified according to the categories identified, the following subjects can be mentioned as examples:

- **Print journalism** – the book-report as an extension of print journalism; journalistic readings of cultural supplements; editorial line; report text structure; analysis of the discourse and documental analysis; subjectivity in editorials; columnists in the press; content analysis of a São Paulo newspaper; photojournalism in *O Cruzeiro* magazine.

- **Regional press** – the advertiser's identity in newspapers; professional working conditions in the press in the interior of the State of São Paulo; press and development in the State of Paraíba; journalism in Porto Velho, State of Rondônia; cooperative press in the State of Rio Grande do Sul; journalistic practice in the State of Paraná; the photographic reporter in the interior; the popular classes’ voice in the State of Minas Gerais.

- **Segmented journalism** – scientific journalism; communication and proletarian press; children's newspapers; sensationalist press; business journalism; journalism and the environment; economic journalism; trade union press; school newspapers; popular journalism.

- **Journalism and politics** – ideology, news and market; journalists and revolutionaries; press and constituent assembly; press and elections; press and power; citizenship and information; press and authoritarian regimes.

- **Personalities in Brazilian journalism** – Clarice Lispector, journalist; Mario de Andrade, newspaper columnist; Luiz Beltrão; Claudio Abramo; Quintino Bocaiúva and Silva Jardim, but also old citizens portrayed in newspaper pages.

Among the characteristics of this phase, it is interesting to note that the production in this period includes the largest number of postdoctoral theses presented during the 15 years considered and also represents the...
time in which the percentages of dissertations (53%) and of doctorate theses (37.5%) were proportionately closer in all the periods analyzed.

From 1996 to 2000, the predominant topic remained in the field of print journalism and here the studies of journalistic discourse and genders of journalism stood out. It is also important to note the novelty that occurred during those years: the first studies on journalism and the web.

- **Print journalism** – press media conglomerates; the news section in the Brazilian press; the Sunday editions; journalism magazines.

- **Journalistic discourse** – discourse on biodiversity in the press; journalistic narrative; journalistic discourses; journalistic process; morphological study of graphic projects; analysis of discourse in weekly publication; the utilization of information; journalism as an authorial mediation.

- **Genders of journalism** – women’s pages; the production of meaning in the printed image; literary reporting; black press; youths and newspapers; pioneering reporters.

- **Journalism and the web** – journalism in the digital era, Brazilian journalism on the internet, the internet’s impact.

Among the topics that appear with greater frequency in this period, it is worth noting that between 1996 and 2000 the studies on segmented journalism immigrated from the economic, ecological and trade union areas recorded in the previous period to the areas of culture (cultural sections, cultural agenda) and of health (approach to AIDS in the press, health coverage by the press). In this respect, the two periods have in common the fact that the thematic approach is based on the same gender of support: print. Another point to note is the growing trend toward production of research on radio journalism and television journalism, an indication of the interest with relation to journalistic practice in the electronic media. The methodological resource displayed at this time involved comparative studies, which stood out among the texts observed.

The third and last group of journalistic studies refers to the period between 2001 and 2004, which amounts to three years and three months. The first observation at this point about the academic production in journalism at ECA-USP concerns the quantitative jump: despite being the shortest period of time considered here, it is the one that offers the largest number of studies – 45% of the postgraduate works at the School of Communication and Art as a whole, compared to 28% in the first period and 27% in the second. The numerical superiority considering
the previous periods led qualitatively to diversity in the areas of thematic interest of this group of dissertations and theses, which are divided into varied categories. Technological mediation; segmentation in journalism; journalism and social movements; journalism theory; journalism and politics; history of journalism and teaching of journalism are the main categories that stand out in this three years period, as can be observed from the following detailed analysis:

- **Technological mediation** – usability of portal format; impact of the new media; influences of hypertext in interpretative journalism; network production processes; usability on the internet; network journalism; journalistic practices in new areas; journalism and public sphere on the internet; on-line journalism in Brazil; journalism and journalists on the internet; informative report in a time of transformation.

- **Segmentation in journalism** – feminine press; environmental journalism; scientific journalism; literary journalism; sports journalism; international journalism; business journalism; trade union journalism; journalism and tourism; immigrants’ press; violence and the press.

- **Journalism and social movements** – internet and trade union action; citizenship in supplements; the memory of contestation; trade union, political party and religious press; NGOs and social movements; social movements and the press.

- **Theoretical aspects** – semiotics and journalistic creation; neologisms on the agenda; production of reality in the press; trans-subjective territory in journalism; imaginary items in the newspaper.

- **Journalism and politics** – building life stories; history of the alternative press; press and authoritarian regimes; press; from the democratic regime to the military regime.

- **History of journalism** – integralist (fascist) movement and workers in the media; Dunschee de Abrantes, journalist of the First Republic; the Realidade (Reality) magazine; trajectory of scientific disclosure.

- **Journalism education** – pedagogy for the newspaper-laboratory; school newspaper; journalism, internet and education; university periodicals; journalism curriculum.

In addition, the interest of researchers in the process of academic qualification in this group of studies produced during this period also extended to subjects such as: media conglomerates; investigative journalism and interpretative journalism; the newspaper as a pedagogic resource; the professional journalist’s profile. Regarding the methodology utilized by the studies developed during the period, case studies and studies of content and of language are encountered more frequently.
Another characteristic of the academic production of that time is the intersection between two or more areas and/or categories, in multiple approaches such as history, content and gender; or regionalism, segmentation and media support.

**Partial conclusion: some prospects for academic studies**

Taking as a basis the scientific production in one of the most traditional schools in the postgraduate field of Communication in Brazil, it can be concluded that studies of digital media; media and politics; segmentation of content; narrative; discourses and genders constituted areas of special interest for a significant portion of researchers from various regions who graduated from the School of Communication and Art in almost a decade and a half. The group of academic works demonstrates, in addition to the areas of interest, a reality of the accumulated knowledge. If we take into consideration the dissertations and theses analyzed, one prospect is that the studies in this area should grow in the fields mentioned.

But it is fundamental to emphasize that – as important as the analysis of the content, of the possibilities for the use and the trajectory of the means and of journalistic practice – one of the outlines that can be transformed in the immediate future into one of the most urgent aspects to be explored as a topic for research in the area is perhaps the basis of journalism education and the countless inferences that can arise in a field as broad as Communication.

I refer here to the importance for the academic world to learn, by means of meticulous multiple studies, the theoretical profile being constructed both in ECA-USP as well as in the postgraduate courses in Communication in general. The curriculum of each institution constitutes a vast field for research because, in its establishment, it reflects contemporary realities and also the trends in the journalism area. In this connection, an old question continues to be valid: in the context of the proliferation of undergraduate courses, would there be any common traits in the profile of the professional journalists whom these courses aim to train? And it would be possible to add another question: following the vertiginous expansion of the postgraduate courses in the last decade, what actually appears to be the contribution of journalism studies to contemporary Brazilian scientific production? The pertinent nature of these questions refers to the fact that academic research is directly related to the quality of the teaching on the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Professors
who are researchers have the chance to simultaneously qualify both their scientific work as well as their education activity.

Some schools, institutes, courses and departments are already working in directions that can lead to interesting responses for postgraduate training. On pondering the various factors that in some way have influenced journalists and Brazilian journalism researchers, it is interesting to recover a passage dating from 1935, almost 70 years ago, in which the educator Anísio Teixeira presented his proposal at the installation of the pioneer course in journalism at the University of the Federal District in Rio de Janeiro:

“From the schools our country needs in order to train its staff of intellectuals, of those at the service of intelligence and of culture, of professors, writers, journalists, artists and politicians, there is a whole world to be spanned. (…) This university is precisely a center of high intellectuality, of guidance of intelligence and of knowledge, of training professors, writers, journalists, artists and politicians, not just in the limited preparation and practice of doctors, lawyers and engineers. It will prepare the cultured man, who is different from the man with a diploma”.4

This challenge continues today: to prepare beyond someone with a diploma. We know that the challenge is not restricted to the academic world, but it is the responsibility of the researchers in this area to face it in their daily lives, observe attentively the situation presented now. One possible action would perhaps be to move ahead in the identification and organization of the subjects of scientific production in the area, which will influence the definition of new supplementary fields of research. With this, scientific production will be able to overcome dilemmas and problems in order, who knows, to at last overcome a scientific provocation – that of the theoretical construction of the area reflected in the quality of research and of the work carried out in training.

2 CONTENT ANALYSIS: JOURNALISM STUDIES IN A BRAZILIAN SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL

In an attempt to perceive how the publicizing of journalism studies aimed at the Portuguese-speaking community is being achieved, since the language is not a barrier to the circulation of information, one possible approach is to present here some data – mostly quantitative and partially qualitative – based on a content analysis of the Revista Brasileira
The knowledge produced in the journalism area both by the School of Communication and Art as well as in other postgraduate courses in Brazil has encountered in this journal an opportunity for circulation in the area's scientific publications. Published as the official scientific periodical of the Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares – Intercom (Brazilian Society for Interdisciplinary Studies in Communication) for the last 27 years, the Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação (Brazilian Journal of Communication Sciences) is one of the most traditional among publications of its kind. Its two annual issues (it is published at semester intervals) contain articles, scientific communications, interviews and summaries of books and of postgraduate studies. With its space occupied by articles of members and non-members, the magazine has as its main mission to make possible the publicizing (encouraging knowledge) of scientific research results and also by means of comments and essays on various topics pertinent to the field of Communication. Its contents are authored specially by Brazilian researchers, although it is open to contributions from other countries – mainly from Portuguese-speaking or Latin American nations, but also from European or American researchers.

It is interesting to emphasize that the journal is among the scientific publications evaluated by Qualis – Classification System of Periodicals, Annals, Newspapers and Magazines – a system established by Capes (Foundation for Coordination of Improvement on the University Level). This system takes into consideration the publications utilized as references in universities and colleges, especially in postgraduate programs, which are most interested in publicizing the intellectual production of their professors and postgraduate students. According to Qualis data from 2003, the Intercom magazine is among the 51 periodicals rated ‘National A’ in the area of Applied Social Sciences I, which includes postgraduate courses in the areas of Communication, Information Science, Law, Administration, Accounting, Economics, Tourism and Hotel Management. In this way, having a text published in a periodical classified as “A” is indicative of the quality of the scientific work of professors, researchers, and postgraduate students.

Accordingly, the analysis of ten issues of the Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação (from volume XXIII, nº 1, January-June 2000, to volume XXVII, nº 2, July-December 2004) highlighted the texts that dealt with specific issues of journalism or of media processes that, in
some way, emphasized particularities of the journalism field. The result of the survey refers to the journal’s main sections – articles, scientific communications, interviews, comments, book summaries and summaries of theses and dissertations.

In general, 30 texts dealing with different aspects of journalism were encountered, broken down into 10 thematic areas. Among the latter, texts on history (a total of six, published every year except 2001) and on professional training (four, published in 2000, 2002 and 2003) predominated. Studies relating to genders, use of technology in the profession, radio journalism, journalistic coverage (international, cultural, popular) and theory accounted for three texts each. Ethics was the subject of two articles: in 2000 and in 2002. Professional profile, press advisory services and photojournalism had one text each.

In the detailed analysis of the quantitative percentage of the texts (see the following graph) we observe that the production based on historical aspects predominated during the period, accounting for 21% of the material analyzed, followed professional training with 13%. Genders, technologies, radio journalism, coverage and theory represented 10% of the texts, with each category accounting for 10%. Professional ethics was the topic of 7% of the texts, while advisory services, profile of journalists and photojournalism came up to 3% each (or less than 10% of the grand total of the texts).

**Graphic 3. Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação: Breakdown of Texts by Thematic Approach**
Several inferences can be derived from the overall percentages encountered. Grouped by sections, the texts clearly indicate the origin of the material published: historical records of journalism, for example, were published equally in two sections of the journal – comments and scientific communications (the latter was discontinued in 2004). There is more than just equilibrium to consider, but also the fact that it reveals the authors’ scientific production, since the two sections routinely presented works resulting from research already finished or still in progress (in this latter case, with the presentation of partial results of the research undertaken in order to obtain an academic diploma in postgraduate courses).

The texts relating to genders of journalism also varied between the comments and scientific communications sections, however without the same equilibrium observed in the material based on media history. Subjects such as journalism theory, professional profile, technologies and areas of segmented coverage were published mainly in the form of articles. Material on radio journalism and ethics was found to a greater extent in the comments section and in the summaries of books and of theses and dissertations.

In the general tally of the areas identified in this survey, it is worthwhile noting also that the texts on history of journalism, professional training, genders and theory confirm a trend observed in the classification by thematic categories of the theses and dissertations presented in the postgraduate course in Journalism at the School of Communication and Art of the University of São Paulo (ECA-USP) from 1989 and 2004. An examination of the graduate students’ scientific production during those years indicates that studies on print journalism (especially personalities, politics and genders), professional training and theory stand out as areas of growing interest in the last decade. At this point it is relevant to ponder that, regarding the Brazilian authors, the Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação reflects to a large extent the main trends of Brazilian journalism’s scientific production, an area that stands out among those grouped in Brazil in a broader field identified as Social Communication, most of it derived from postgraduate course assignments or activities.

For a better idea of the analyzed material’s characteristics, the titles selected for analysis are listed according to the areas identified as shown below. In order to facilitate the reading, only the titles of the texts are listed, grouped by area, without mentioning the author or the institution of origin.
History
- Costa Rego, the first full professor of Journalism in Brazil
- Polemist: the forgotten character of journalism
- Brief history of the press in Cuba until the XIX century
- Two hundred years of press and the search for the time lost
- Luiz Beltrão: from journalism to literature
- Memory and power: the coup of 1964 in the Juiz de Fora (State of Minas Gerais) press

Professional training
- Journalism education and curriculum reform: the Methodist University experience
- Elements for an epistemology of journalism
- A plus B, the technique of the news

Genders
- Phileas Fogg: Josué Guimarães travels in a newspaper column
- Ibrahim Sued’s column: a journalistic gender
- The teens’ supplements in the Brazilian press

Technologies
- The impact of information technologies on the practice of journalism
- Media criticism in Brazil: The Press Observatory
- The internet and journalists’ future

Radio journalism
- The orphans of Radio Jornal do Brasil
- From prescribed work to real work: transforming information into radio news
- Stories from the Renner/Aplub correspondent: a veteran on the air

Segmented coverage
- Images of Brazil in the wide-circulation Portuguese press
- Proposal for production of popular newspapers
- Culture is also news. Cultural journalism in print and on TV

Theory
- For an anthropology of the news
- News and building meanings: analysis of journalistic narrative
- Journalism studies

Ethics
- Ethics as a resistance factor in journalism
- Ethics, press freedom, democracy and citizenship

Profile
- São Paulo journalists: who they are and what they think in comparison with American and French journalists
Advisory Services
- Press advisory service: a Brazilian case

Photojournalism
- The German influence in the development of photojournalism

One element that was taken into account in the evaluation of the content was the insertion of the texts according to the journal sections. While the articles, scientific communications and interviews explore in a more obvious and complete way the subject in question, we cannot fail to take into consideration the fact that the sections of comments, book summaries and summaries of theses or dissertations, even with shorter presentation when compared to those of the other sections, lead to a more profound analysis of the subject covered. In comments, as it was mentioned previously, there are often parts of researches in progress; in summaries, as the name explicitly indicates, there are critical summaries of works already published in book form or presented for obtaining an academic degree.

Examination of the texts contained in a journal published by a scientific association of nationwide extent demonstrates, therefore, that journalism constitutes an important field for Brazilian Communication research. Furthermore, a comparison between the material selected for publication in the journal and the production originating in various Brazilian graduate courses (and a few overseas) suggests the existence of resonance between the producers of the knowledge and the scientific publication open to the academic community, without any special or direct link to educational institutions or geographic regions in particular – conditions that reinforce the opportunity for publicizing the scientific work performed.

3 CONCLUSION

The evidence presented, as well as the considerations formulated here, leads to the confirmation that, in the Communication area, the particular field of journalism studies can be considered an exceptional research sector. The various manifestations – of the media, of science, of the social organizations – lead to the demarcation of contexts in which countless aspects of matters of public interest can be considered. It is undeniable that in countries of western or oriental culture the citizens are obtaining more importance and chances for participation. Technological devices such as the internet and satellites dissolve geographic and
knowledge borders, shorten distances, function as bridges between peoples, ideologies, religions. Except for the areas of isolation resulting from political omission, financial restrictions, ideological exceptions, religious impediments, physical deficiencies or personal decisions, the paths open to information cannot be ignored. For this reason it is difficult to disassociate public interest from the orbit of any activity. In this connection, it is the role of the universities as educational cells to agglutinate ideas – those already tested and those being formed – because future learning is defined by the recurring or initial manifestations of academic-scientific development. Therefore the public interest should be treated as a compass to guide curriculums and research in the field of Communication and, in particular, of journalism. Considering the public interest as part of the curriculum and of academic research may result in decisive influences for the future of the area’s scientific production. It is also an exercise on how to face pedagogic challenges. In this way the probability of a better world takes shape, in which interests, besides being public, are mutual and shared.

NOTES

1 Invited to substitute for Professor José Marques de Melo at the round table discussion on journalism research in Brazil at the 2nd National Meeting of Journalism Researchers in the city of Salvador (2º Encontro Nacional de Pesquisadores em Jornalismo), State of Bahia, Brazil, I opted for making a survey of ECA/USP research production during 15 years (1989-2004). In some way, the survey shows the academic participation of professor Marques de Melo for more than three decades as both the head of the Journalism Department and director of the School of Communication and Art (ECA) at the University of São Paulo and his contribution to advance and consolidate journalism studies in the country.

2 PROENÇA, José Luiz; Jornal da USP (USP Newspaper) nº 670, 12/15/2003 issue.


5 Capes classified scientific periodicals according to categories indicating quality – A, B or C – and area of circulation – local, national or international. The combinations of these categories comprise nine alternatives, which represent the relative position of the publication.

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