

BOOK REVIEW

Jornalismo Solidário

BEATRIZ DORNELLES & OSVALDO BIZ
Porto Alegre, Ed. GCI, 2006, 118 pgs.

REVIEWED BY **Flávio Porcello**

It may appear to be paradoxical: the more space there is to report the news, the less news there is to give. It is a question of quality rather than of quantity. Modern technology has eliminated distances and shortened time. Today it is possible to speak from any place in the world to any other point on the planet. And even in space.

But what is there to say?

There are lots of spaces; what is lacking is content to fill these spaces. Since the theme of this edition of Brazilian Journalism Research is freedom of the press, it is timely to speak about the book *Jornalismo Solidário* (Responsible Journalism), by Beatriz Dornelles and Osvaldo Biz.

The authors quote John Thompson to remind us that authoritarian governments silence the press. But this is not the only cause for censoring information:

A more satisfactory explanation of the institutional conditions of freedom of expression at the close of the XX century must take into consideration that this liberty is threatened not just by the unrestricted exercising of Power by the State, but also by the uncontrolled growth of Media organizations in the private sector (THOMPSON, 1995: 327).

Spanish journalist Xavier Mas de Xaxás points out that

The news has excessive ideology and lacks originality and precision. (...) Why is the news so similar? Can it be because all news reflect truth and there is no more than one truth? Would it not be more logical to realize that the news coincide because it have been produced in factories which have optimized the assembly line to the maximum? There is not so much difference between the conception, production, commercialization and consumption of a car and of a news item (Xaxás, 2005:43). (EYSENCK, 1990, p. 82).

The quotations from European authors are utilized here to reinforce the content offered by Dornelles and Biz in *Jornalismo Solidário*. The book also points out that since electronic media is a public service concession, the society must know who the concessionaires are and when the concession period expires. But this information is not readily available to the public. The authors say: "Citizenship also means having the capability of reading the Media and questioning their strategies, so as not to simply repeat what they succeed in transforming into common sense" (Dornelles and Biz, 2006:45).

The book constitutes an important contribution for those who work in or study the contemporary Media and their social influence. It is important to hail the expansion of the Media but it is also necessary to question and critically examine this growth. Journalism is a discursive mediation practice. It exists to tell us what happened, how and why it happened. But, without any doubt, one tells what one saw following a point of view. There are ideological lenses and filters that decide choices and cuts in news production and dissemination. The more we seek the truth, the more we encounter the truth they want to show us. And the book *Jornalismo Solidário* provides excellent resources to help us not just to "read", but also to "comprehend" what the Media show us.

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Flávio Porcello is PhD and Professor of Telejournalism at the Library Science and Communication Faculty (FABICO) of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS).

E-mail: flavioporcello@uol.com.br