

PHOTOJOURNALISM:

diverse concepts, uniform practices

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ABSTRACT - This paper is a review of the historical development of the concept of photojournalism. It presents thoughts on the field without trying to reconcile the differences or invalidate established ideas on the singularity of photojournalism knowledge and performance as it is connected to professional ethos or media norms. The conclusion was drawn that photojournalism is constituted as an object of theoretical discussion whose revision requires effort from the researcher to understand much of what is said about the field while the professionals within in the practice itself arm themselves with arguments against amateurs and their growing intervention in media. The bricolage which is presented, inspired by Lévi-Strauss, was formed with “what was at hand”; meaning a good part of its construction came from the remains of previous constructions (LÉVY-STRAUSS, 1989, p. 32-38).

Key words: Photojournalism. Practic. Profession.

FOTOJORNALISMO: diversidade de conceitos, uniformidade das práticas

RESUMO - O presente trabalho faz uma revisão do conceito de fotojornalismo em sua trajetória histórica. Expõe-se um pensamento sobre o campo, sem a pretensão de aplainar diferenças ou subjugar as ideias formuladas sobre a singularidade do saber e do fazer fotojornalístico vinculados ao ethos profissional ou à normatividade das mídias. Conclui-se que o fotojornalismo se configura em objeto de disputa teórica cuja revisão exige, por parte do pesquisador, um esforço em entender que muito se diz sobre o campo enquanto na prática os profissionais se armam de argumentos frente aos diletantes e sua crescente interferência nas mídias. A bricolagem apresentada, sob inspiração de Lévi-Strauss, foi formada com “aquilo que se tem à mão”, sendo boa parte dessa construção proveniente do que restou de construções anteriores (LÉVY-STRAUSS, 1989, p. 32-38).

Palavras-chave: Fotojornalismo. Prática. Profissão.

FOTOPERIODISMO: diversidad de conceptos, uniformidad en las prácticas

RESUMEN - Este artículo revisa el concepto de fotoperiodismo en su trayectoria histórica. Expone un pensamiento sobre el campo, sin pretensión de suavizar las diferencias o subyugar las ideas formuladas sobre la singularidad del saber y del hacer fotoperiódico relacionados con el *ethos* profesional o la normatividad de los medios de comunicación. Se concluye que el fotoperiodismo está configurado en objeto de disputas teóricas cuya revisión requiere, por parte del investigador, un esfuerzo por entender que se habla mucho el campo, mientras que en la práctica los profesionales están llenos de argumentos bajo a los diletantes y su creciente interferencia en los medios de comunicación. La *bricolage* presentada, bajo la inspiración de Levi-Strauss, se formó a “lo que está a la mano”, y gran parte de esta construcción de lo que quedó de las construcciones anteriores (LÉVY-STRAUSS, 1989, p. 32-38)..

Palabras clave: Fotoperiodismo. Práctica. Profesión.

Surviving positivism, the theory to which it has been connected since the beginning of journalism, photography has gone from being a mirror for reality, a symbol of the industrial age and a document to having more complex forms of visibility, particularly since the advent of digital technology which is primarily responsible for the repertoire of new images circulating in the media nowadays. The so-called “document crisis” or “representation crisis” led to questions about the status of photography within journalism. Old barriers that had pitted art against information, analog *versus* digital, and professional photographers versus “occasional photographers”¹ seem to have been broken.

A review made by scholars and professionals in which they defined the terms *photojournalism* and *photojournalist* did not hold exactly the same definition we provided above, but it does show how some have attempted to outline this field of activities by reinforcing the differences that separate them, recognizing information producers as subjects who deal with reality on a serious or pragmatic level and artists whose raw material for their work is fiction; the final result being the entertainment or pure aesthetic delight. There is a radical side to the opposition between both art and information and photojournalists and amateur/artist photographers. This opposition, often regarded as unnecessary or outdated, led us to organize a

bricolage with many of the other views and perspectives on the knowledge and practices of images in contemporary media. Frye describes the method as

creating a myth has the quality of what Lévi-Strauss calls *bricolage*, a mixture of parts and elements made by hand. Much earlier than Lévi-Strauss, T.S. Eliot, in an essay on William Blake, basically used the same image, talking about the Robinson Crusoe research method which Blake used to form a system of thought from his remaining readings (FRYE apud DENHAM, 2014, p. 33-34).

The first practical step in this unusual instrumental formation of bricolage is to take a look back at the theories and phenomenon which will be discussed. For Levi-Strauss (1989, p. 34), the researcher should use this methodology to “go back to a pre-built set, formed by utensils and materials, to make or remake his inventory” to “engage in dialogue with it, to list the possible answers the set offers to a problem before choosing between them”. This article provides a thought on the clash of theories behind defining the term photojournalism as well as a photojournalist’s work in order to symbolically map out the area where this battle for the definition of the field and its limits unfolds. In particular, the thought goes back to certain posits from various authors on the practice of photojournalism and other types of photography, whether artistic or documental.

Photojournalism: knowledge and practice

André Rouillé (2009) recognized that changes to the practice and production, to places and avenues of dissemination, as well as changes to the forms, values, uses and writers have all come about due to the rise of “expressive photography”. This kind of photography is in contrast to the “documental photography” representative of the industrial age and the prototype for journalistic images; it re-establishes principles into the process of photography that documents ignore: autonomy, subjectivity and alterity. We include poetry² along with these characteristics.

Lorenzo Vilches (1987) had earlier regarded media photography as a product determined by technical properties and the laws of visual perception. He based his definition on objective scientific pretenses through the use of psychoanalytic and semiotic

theories. Despite the temporal distance between these two thinkers, Vilches focused on the singularity of photojournalism: it is incapable of reflecting reality, it served as “an *impression of reality* which, within the press, translates into an *impression of the truth*” (VILCHES, 1987, p. 20). Photojournalism should then be understood as a product with protocols that must obey the reading contract established between medium and reader.

According to Rouillé (2009), the semiotic school of thought which Vilches (1987) adheres to nourishes an indifference to current practices and production of images. This thought means “ontological thinking reduces photography to its elementary function; the simple expression of bright print, an index, a registry mechanism” (ROUILLÉ, 2009, p. 190).

Even though he does not avoid semiotics entirely, Jorge Pedro Sousa (2011, 2004, 1998) built his thought on a historic and historiographic perspective. He claims that witness intent led to the emergence of the “first photojournalism without photojournalists” and defined photojournalism as a “product of the media, and for the media, both in paper and cyberspace” (SOUSA, 2011, p. 01). However, he also states that the specific characteristics of photojournalism get lost in the hybridization of the genre and objectives. He was adamant about the delimitation of the field of journalism when he said,

Journalism without boundaries or limits is uncharacteristic journalism which can only be forced to be seen as real journalism capable of providing useful and important information to the public and allow them to build relevant knowledge about reality (SOUSA, 2011, p. 04).

Further on in the same text, Jorge Pedro Sousa expanded the horizon of the discipline and defined photojournalism as an activity of complex nature capable of also generating complex works. Furthermore, “the enormous diversity of images claimed as belonging to the field of photojournalism makes the activity difficult to categorize and difficult to define what journalistic photography is” (SOUSA, 2011, p. 11).

Sousa’s (1998) book and doctoral thesis, *Uma história Crítica do Fotójornalismo Ocidental*, which he defended in 1997, established a differentiation between “photojournalism” and “photodocumentalism”. These descriptions had two dimensions: *lato senso* and *estrito senso*. *Lato senso* is the description of journalistic photography as an activity of producing “informative, interpretative,

documental or illustrative images for the media or other editorials producing current events” (SOUSA, 1998, p. 03). Estrito senso distinguishes photojournalism from photodocumentalism by temporality: ““While ‘news photography’ is generally of momentary importance and reports on ‘current events’, photodocumentalism tends to have a more timeless value to it” (SOUSA, 1998, p. 03). However, overall, he believes that the proposed separation is quite tenuous and that, in both the wide and restricted senses, photography will always aim to “testify” (SOUSA, 1998).

In another book of his published in 2004, he considered journalistic photographs as having “journalistic value” and are associated with news texts. This journalistic value, while he feels it is difficult to express, is linked to the active concept of “news value”³ in journalism.

This perspective is similar to that of Pierre-Jean Amar (2005). He sees the transformation of the applicability of photography, which went from being a mere illustration to testifying events, like an “evolution”. Amar also sees photojournalism as a trade and an information medium representative of “the vision of a person: the graphic reporter” (AMAR, 2005, p. 01).

Pepe Baeza (2007) thought along similar lines as Sousa (2004) in the search for differentiating between photojournalism and photodocumentalism. For him, photojournalism is a subset of photodocumentalism. “Photojournalism is one of the forms that photodocumentalism can adopt” yet it is “a type of documentalism that depends on media-defined actions or guidelines for issues (...) that are connected to the values of information or news” (BAEZA, 2007, p. 45). He believes that the hybridization of photography genres, prompted by post-modern forms of perception, are defiling photojournalism and making its results saturated and ephemeral.

The media ‘imagination’ feeds on the absence of an ‘iconic map’, of a clear classifying system to situate the different types of images in media either by how they are used or by their context. (...) Abolishing genres, rearranging styles, camouflaging the issuer, and dissipating content in the name of creating spectacles...these are factors that favor the development of a cultural mosaic prone to saturation, to secrecy and to ephemeral; dominant features of mass media (BAEZA, 2007, p. 19).

It is here that some authors say there is a “crisis” in photojournalism and the where “post-photography” was born. Baeza (2007, p. 13) is categorical about the “general crisis in journalism”

that gradually converted the media into a product and its content into merchandise. He asks: "What role do journalistic images play here?" (BAEZA, 2007, p. 14). He follows that up by responding to his own question: "The necessary role of partner [*to publicity*]". He concludes: "(...) in addition, post-modern aesthetic thinking considers documentalism obsolete and "boring" (loose translation, BAEZA, 2007, p. 14).

The Spaniard Hugo Doménech Fabregat (2005) defends a different viewpoint than Baeza in his thesis. According to Fabregat (2005, p. 32), journalistic photography has long been considered an objective and reliable representation of reality, even after communication companies started adopting digital technology en masse. This perception has its roots firmly set in the bases of "Western information culture"; heir to the concept of positivism developed in the nineteenth century.

However, Fabregat (2005) places this supposed period of crisis in photojournalism to the 1990s, essentially breaking from its traditional concept. In other words, once again we see the development of digital technology most responsible for changing the nature of the operation and production of photojournalism. The new information context, where "video, authorizer and capturing images" all meet are, according to Fabregat, "shaking the foundations of modern photojournalism as we know them" (FABREGAT, 2005, p. 68).

Another Spanish researcher dedicated to discussing the transfer from analog to digital is Joan Fontcuberta. He asks: "Between silver salt photography and digital photography, should we talk about transition or breaking?" (FONTCUBERTA, 2010, p. 11). Fontcuberta's reflections go beyond technological advances, they lie in the available production forms from each age, reflecting political-economic changes and consolidating a new regime of social visibility. If silver salt photography provides the images of an industrial society, then digital photography answers the expectations of a globalized society.

[...] each society needs an image in its likeness. [...]. The material for argentic photography meets the chemical universe, the invention of steel and railways, machinery, and colonial expansion brought on by the capitalist economy. Conversely, digital photography is a consequence of an economy where information is valued as merchandise, capital is unclear and telecommunication transactions are invisible. [...]. It is the answer to a nonstop world where incredible speed, urgency and globalization reign supreme. (FONTCUBERTA, 2010, p. 11-12)

Anglo-Saxon literature also addressed the possible “photography crisis”. Asking the question *Where is the photograph?*, professor of Art History and Theory, David Green (2007) from Brighton University invited a group of authors to try and answer exactly this question. One of the researchers, Peter Osborne, believes that the crisis has not reached the level of the concept. In order to realize a true “ontological inversion” you would need to first arrive at a synthesis of changes in relation to the practices and forms of image distribution after its fusion with digital technology. This dialectic view marks how important the processes are to the emergence of a new paradigm. “The eventual impact on the concept of photography (...) questions the kind of relationships which the old and new forms have established in practice” (OSBORNE, In: GREEN, 2007, p. 75-76).

Olivier Richon claimed Green’s questioning presupposes that photography in general has been left by the wayside or left without any purpose in the contemporary world, that “it remains in a place, without objection, in any trade of lost cultural objects” (2007, p. 77). Pavel Büchler, another author who had accepted Green’s (2007) challenge formulated his thought out of a different question: “What happened?” For him, photography ended up “desperately confused” in its attempt to break free from the progressive programs to which it has been linked with since its arrival. He concluded: “Photos nowadays appear to be contemporary simply by default” (BÜCHLER, In: GREEN, 2007, p. 88).

David Company (In: GREEN, 2007) refers to current photography as “late photographs”, like another type of default. In an escape from the Bressonian dogma of the “decisive moment”, photographs published in periodicals, especially in print, “are already one step ahead of the circuit” (COMPANY In: GREEN, 2007, p. 140). Yet this characteristic does not depreciate the trade nor the images. For Company (In: GREEN, 2007), news of the death of photojournalism was premature because, just like a phoenix, it is capable of reinventing itself. “Late photography” was converted into a persuasive style of contemporary photojournalism as both the public and the actual photographers broke away from the belief that in a world of dispersed and fragmented images “a rectangle with a clear, sharp, detailed and static can *appear* to be a category of superior image” (free translation. COMPANY In: GREEN, 2007, p. 46).

Despite all these arguments, publications like the guide for the *Associated Press* (AP), one of the largest photojournalism agencies on the planet, counts on the strength of the Bressonian myth to strengthen

the canons of photojournalistic activity. "It's all photojournalism. Telling a story with a picture, (...) recording a moment in time, the fleeting instant when an image sums up a story. Henri Cartier-Bresson called it the *decisive moment*" (HORTON, 2001, p. 14).

Under an array of images produced in the name *of* and *for* the press, the AP's position is completely conservative and does not break what is historically relegated to photojournalism even though having an apparently thorough perspective:

Photojournalism isn't just a spot news picture made in a war in an exotic location far away. Datelines don't change the quality of a picture. It's also the local city council meeting, or state legislature, where members are arguing about a tax increase or a new law. It's not just a national magazine cover picture showing the key play from the Super Bowl. It's also the local high school team, anywhere in America, playing for the town's glory. It's not just an essay on rafting down the Mekong River in Asia. It's also people keeping cool under a water spray on a hot day in your town (HORTON, 2001, p. 14).

Já Reue Golden, author of the book *Photojournalism: 150 years of outstanding press photography* (2008), coined this definition as being simplistic at the very least. In his own words, "At its most basic definition, photojournalism is the presentation of stories through photographs - photojournalists are journalists with cameras" (GOLDEN, 2008, p. 08). In addition, Golden understands photographs as "serious" when compared to others circulating in society. There is a future for photojournalism even if people have declared its "death" with the invention of the television. "As long as there are newspapers, current affairs magazines and web sites, there will always be a space for serious news photographs" (GOLDEN, 2008, p. 08).

This issue has also generated debate in Brazil. A well-known text written by Simonetta Persichetti (2006) describes 1980s photojournalism as being at a "crossroads" because there is fear of the new on one side, and new forms of producing and consuming images on the other. The supposed crisis, in the author's opinion, "cannot be credited to technology, but instead to the lack of interest editors and photographers have for parting ways with the conventional, (...) from the *obvious efficient* as photographer Hélio Campos Melo so fondly remembers" (PERSICHETTI, 2006, p. 182). He continues: "Press photos have not disappeared, the concept of informing by images has disappeared. (...)The photographs on the front page of a newspaper are no longer the most informative or important; they are the most *beautiful*" (PERSICHETTI, 2006, p. 185).

Another Brazilian researcher, Dulcília Buitoni (2011), started releasing studies on photography and the press a few years later also questioning the specific nature of photojournalism. “The question that always arises is: what makes a photograph journalistic?” (BUITONI, 2011, p. 54). “Maybe this visceral adherence referred to is the main epistemological justification for journalistic photos” (BUITONI, 2011, p. 57). Nonetheless, Buitoni (2011) recalls the concept of “complex image” by Spaniard Josep M. Catalá as an epistemological switch to present transformations to the status of current images encompassing journalistic photographs. Catalá defends, according to Buitoni (2011, p. 161), “having a complex look at images, which means going much beyond the ruling epidermal vision in media”. In the words of the Spanish author,

The complex image breaks from the copycat ties that image has traditionally had with reality, substituting it for a hermeneutic tie: instead of an epistemology of thought, it proposes an epistemology of inquiry. Images no longer take on reality passively (...) (CATALÀ, 2005 apud BUITONI, 2011, p. 162).

If we compare the thinking of Persichetti (2006) to that of Buitoni (2011), you can see that while the latter credits the new forms of production and circulation to the complexity of photography, the former alludes to the noticeable dichotomy that preaches the radical separation of aesthetic and intellectual experience, information and entertainment, leading once again to the realist status of photojournalism.

Photojournalists: conceptualizing the practices

It is in a photojournalist's very character in which photojournalism is personified, in which it becomes an action. That is why the most basic definition is that photojournalists are people who work with photojournalism, in other words, “journalists collect news with a photographic camera while their reporter colleagues use a pen” (LIMA, 1989, p. 24). However, many authors list the skills necessary for a “simple” photographer to become a “photojournalist”. These qualities are mostly forged in the practice of photojournalism, but there are authors who uphold the mandatory diploma as a condition for good professional performance.

While reflecting on photojournalism, we encounter the battle between “professionals” and “amateurs”, the borders of which are more

and more porous and the public's participation in news elaboration increasingly in demand from companies, whether as a strategy to increase their audience or to cut down on production costs. The bibliography consulted in this paper defends the professional field both as a discourse and an ideological position.

Focusing our attention on the producers of images *of* and *for* companies, we verified that production routines in photojournalism are not neutral; they are organized according to hierarchy and complex processes in order to determine the performance and justify it. The performance of the activities ends up constituting a professional *ethos* found in both the content and form of photographs, and the actions and thoughts of each photograph about its action. Much more than just a mere camera operator freezing frames of reality, "behind every lens there is a man with convictions and conditioning, selecting the issues and frameworks for which images will be printed" (CHAVES, 1998, p. 63).

At the beginning of the last century, Nadar mocked how photographs did not have any qualifications, the trade did not even demand any skills.

Anyone can be a photographer: a writer who arrived late on collection day; an out-of-tune concert tenor; a doorman with a longing for art; frustrated painters; poor sculptors; even a chef (NADAR, 1990 apud SORLIN, 2004, p. 110-111).

Following this pattern makes it easy to understand why the status of photographers was looked at as inferior for almost half a century. Even after they started working in the press they were seen as lacking initiatives and restricted to technical work. "But even today, many people still overlook this trade, and those who work within it are treated with a certain disdain and doubt"⁴ (FREUND, 2010, p. 109-110). The disqualification is so obvious that it was included in the Folha de São Paulo Style Guide (2001, p. 32): "Newsrooms have always had some type of resistance to further understanding photography, generally shielded in technical specifications", which requires "a redoubled effort on the part of photojournalists against being isolated (...) considered 'natural' by many". Even though photographers have reached a level of being "a crucial part of newsroom operations", over the passing years there have been reservations made on those who take up the profession, for example, they have a minimal amount of "general culture" and keep themselves informed about not only their own activities but also "all its contexts and implications" (MANUAL, 2001, p. 33).

For Pedroso (2008, p. 55), the lack of qualification for photographers is evident and is responsible for making the activity “marginal and undervalued” within its own field. He goes on to say that in order to register as a photojournalist “only” an average level of education is required, proof of two years publishing material and taking general knowledge and technical knowledge exams⁵. This is because newsrooms nowadays function like a school for photojournalists, even though the discipline has been included in journalism courses in Brazil since the 1960s. “Opposite from text journalism, photojournalism is more technical and is not required at the university level”⁶ (LIMA, 1989, p. 23).

The current situation is worse because digital production in journalistic companies, which have less time for capturing and circulating images, increases the demand for images which can be taken by anyone. Photographers claimed as “professionals” no longer hold a monopoly on photojournalistic knowledge, and amateurs are being taken seriously. Sorlin (2004, p. 71) believes that the differences between them come from the distance in relation to “education and evaluation”. It is therefore necessary that professionals are represented as “synonymous with excellence”, and serve as a parameter of performance, like a “mirror for an amateur” (SORLIN, 2004, p. 96). In this regard, images produced by amateurs are nothing more than reproductions of photographs circulating in the daily press, their normative standards are established by the photojournalists themselves (SORLIN, 2004).

Vera Simonetti Racy, a photojournalism professor at PUC-SP for 26 years, claims that the current panorama of journalism “relativized the dominion of information from a few to many” (2007 apud BUITONI, 2011, p. 138). But who are the *many*? “Normal citizens and their cell phone cameras”, she states (2007 apud BUITONI, 2001, p. 138).

Sorlin (2004, p. 80) also asks: “How should we account for a persistent opposition between who works the trade and who does something else without getting distracted?” He points to two characteristics to show the difference: regularity and profit. Amateurs do not initially see the financial return and produce images intermittently although the increased media demand ends up giving them images market value. These images, however, might not generate money, but they do have a highly symbolic capital.

There is nothing to fear since, according to Persichetti (2006, p. 187-188), the photojournalists still have command of the techniques

and amateurs only make images that other reporters didn't have time to do. After all, "they can't be everywhere all the time" (PERSICHETTI, 2006, p. 187-188). Furthermore, Persichetti is emphatic when saying that photojournalists do not have a monopoly on the photos and amateurs can also transmit them. The press receives a flood of these type of images every day from their readers, online users or "whoever expresses their opinion or has bad intentions or is incompetent" (PERSICHETTI, 2006, p. 187-188). It is of further interest that item VII of Article 7º of the Code of Ethics in Journalism (2007) goes against this trend, and highlights that journalists cannot "allow untrained people to exercise the profession".

Jorge Pedro Sousa (2011, p. 14) questions the current situation: "Is it necessary to be a photojournalist in order to do photojournalism? Will the activity only be developed by professionals?". Just like changing a lightbulb does not make us electricians, Sousa affirms that the subject who occasionally produces newsworthy images cannot be called a photojournalist. Also, having a journalism company's identification card and being paid does not encapsulate the job. "A photojournalist follows the laws, codes, editorial lines and news conventions which the 'citizen reporter' does not need to, or (...) even need to know" (SOUSA, 2011, p. 14).

Felizardo (2010, p. 54-56) considers the affirmation "inadequate or unnecessary", not serving to qualify nor demarcate the field of either one of the sides. He summarizes his opinion as: "Paid or not, meeting demands or not, artists or not, is there any reason to differentiate amateurs from professionals in terms of an always dubious judgement?"

Professors Erivam Morais de Oliveira and Ari Vicentini (2009, p. 122) also try to define the professional profile through a series of questions: "Journalist or artist?". "Generally both", they respond, since photojournalists meet the requirements of two forms of expression; they have the social task of informing as well as sticking to the aesthetics.

Englishwoman Charlotte Cotton (2013) proposes classifying photographic practices as artistic, differentiating between the set of images she selected and photographs considered as "documents, relics or by-products of a previously occurred event" (COTTON, 2013, p. 09). These characteristics belong to photojournalism even with the growth of the use of documental capacity in art photography, a movement which the author calls "photography of consequences" (COTTON, 2013, p. 10). She claims there is an "anti-reporting position"

(COTTON, 2013, p. 167) on art photography because “it deals with the work of professionals who arrive in ecological and social disaster areas after the destruction has already occurred” offering “allegories of consequences from horrible politics and humans” through exploiting the limits of conventions of photojournalism. These limits are contrary to the Bressonian school as they place themselves outside the nucleus of events, prioritizing the decision after the decisive moment. This is because “in a time when support for intense documentation projects at magazine editorials and newspapers have dwindled, the gallery ended up becoming the showcase for these documentations of human life” (COTTON, 2013, p. 11). These changes in the forms of dissemination and circulation of documental and artistic photography was equally important for “eliminating photography courses from vocational and professional skills, such as photojournalism” (COTTON, 2013, p. 82). Instead, photographs are encouraged to guide their works for “creating independent and predominantly artistic images” (COTTON, 2013, p. 82).

His opening debate on professional journalism in his book *Fotojornalismo Brasileiro: realidade e linguagem*, Ivan Lima (1989, p. 23) also uses a question for identifying professionals: “Are they photojournalists or company photographers?”. He believes the main motive behind why company photographers are called photojournalists is the legislation which regulated reporters before photographers. Lima (1989) goes on to say that denominating them will only restrict photojournalist activities on the arc traced between graphic artists and image editors.

Erausquin (1995, p. 09) renews the differentiation proposed by some of his contemporaries between “press photographer” and “photojournalist”. The former is responsible for large impact photos, referred to as *hard news*. The latter is more interested in producing narrative photography, solid reports built on carefully selected images. In a departure from this premise, image editor Hora Ricardo Chaves “Kadão” (1998, p. 64) supports that “old and good photojournalism in a report are unrivalled”. “Maybe only a photographer is capable of understanding what I am talking about” (CHAVES, 1998, p. 65). He clearly attempts to defend the field when distinguishing photojournalists from “illustrative photographers”. Although these illustrative photographers “help synthesize readers with various forms of contemporary expression, making publications more attractive”, their work should be restricted to stories or tales as

“building images (...) on computers, cutting or pasting what is found” (CHAVES, 1998, p. 64-65).

Image journalists are generalists. But the digital era and the tyranny of speed have made them multimedia. As of the 1990s, flexibility and polyvalence have been required of journalists in general, and of photographers in particular. For Sousa (2004, p. 28), this led to the specific nature of photojournalism. Furthermore, technologies which convert fixed and moving images have brought cutbacks to each area, something journalism companies see as economically important. However, “one single photojournalist can provide visual registers for newspapers and magazines, for television, for online media, etc” (SOUSA, 2004, p. 28).

Silva Junior (2011) echoes the abovementioned main objectives of companies’ convergence strategies: increase dissemination, consumption and business through multiplatform production. “Which translates into (...) greater reach, increased visibility, presentation quality and, ultimately, financial return” (SILVA JÚNIOR, 2011, p. 41-42).

Due to the experience he has acquired from many years of teaching photojournalism courses, Castellanos (2003) has compiled ten characteristics which he considers essential to being a good professional: 1) Interest in photography; 2) technical knowhow; 3) visual sensitivity; 4) general culture and information; 5) maintaining and surpassing daily achievements; 6) a feeling of opportunity; 7) ability to synthesize; 8) complete availability; 9) ethics; 10) experience in individual projects (CASTELLANOS, 2003, p. 110-111).

About the specific abilities of multimedia photojournalists, Paulo Fehlauer (apud Alonso, 2011, p. 91), one of the photographers from the Garapa group (garapa.org)⁷ and ex-*freelance* photojournalist for the Folha de S. Paulo, resumes the distinction between “visual arts” and photojournalism, as well as touches on photographic objectivity when he says:

More multimedia, less journalists, unless the definition of the term is broadened. Our work is heavily based on documents, but nowadays it is more connected to the world of visual arts than journalism per se. Therefore, the link with “so-called reality” is becoming more and more subtle. Either we question the boundaries of journalism or we distance ourselves from them.

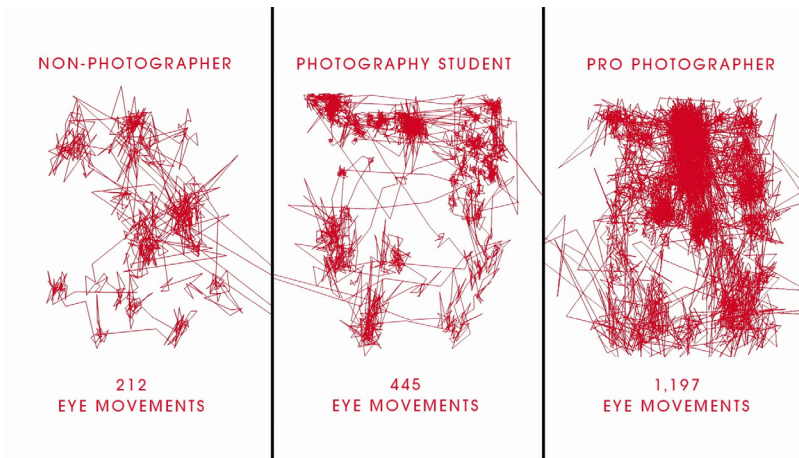
Elson Sempé Pedroso (2008, p. 48) categorically expresses the importance of the trade and its role in journalism and society as a whole,

Photojournalists will continue to need to meet the demand of seeing and telling their stories/news with enthusiasm and interest in an intelligent, different, understandable, and

stimulating way. If they do not, then anybody could do their job, replacing heavy equipment for a cellular phone with a camera and a thinking mind for a mind that thinks of pressing a button and letting the others do the rest.

Outside of the definitions proposed by the aforementioned authors, the Canon commercial broadcast in November 2015 reinforces the duality between professional photographers and amateurs. Contrary to studies guaranteeing the dilution of work boundaries between these photographers, the question surrounding the world famous brand's campaign is: "When a normal person and a professional photographer look at the same image, do they see the same thing?" The answer from the PROGRAF PRO-1000 commercial for the new professional Canon printer is, no. In the commercial, three people analyze an image: first a woman with no knowledge of photography, then a photography student and lastly, a professional photographer. Using "eye-tracking" technology it is possible to follow the path that the user's eye follows while looking at an image. Each individual look has its own design and the differences in tracings are used to highlight the differences between the participants. The objective of the campaign is to draw attention to the sharpness and level of details of the professional printer which is on par with those of professional photographers who see the minute details of an image, as in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1 – Eye movement for Canon printer commercial



Source: 30/05/2016 - <http://www.diyphotography.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Canon-EyeMovements.jpg>

The above case illustrates the problem well: between professional photographers and “occasional photographers” we see what Bourdieu (2007) called “symbolic fights”; the mechanism that generates conflicts of opposable skills to guarantee that a position or field receives recognition. Therefore, a field authorized with the capability to “better tell stories” gives photojournalists the right to a legitimate profession. The material and symbolic aptitude of certain characteristics make them “naturally” better than other individuals who try to fulfill the same role. Getting the public to accept that a profession has a monopoly on the market is not difficult to achieve, according to Soloski (1993, p. 93-94), especially if the profession is an optimum service to the society. Through the eyes of the public, a professional is a person who has an innate skill even if their success depends on how that skill is used.

Final considerations

Is it possible to define a photojournalist and a photographic reporter given these theoretical professional reflections?

The positions on the profession show the development of two opposable movements: one assimilated the idea that photojournalists are eyewitnesses of history on a positive aspect, especially with their direct connection to the technical and analogical processes in photography; the other movement sees the profession as breaking this mould, trying to extrapolate the attachment to the index through the exploration of virtual possibilities. Both reflect different forms of understanding the profession, but they both leave their marks as to how they are perceived nowadays.

Following this path, we observed that the thinking about photojournalism was met by foundations in established, modern ways of life and, even with the introduction of contemporary theories and technology, the impact on the trade did not indicate exactly a complete break from the past, instead it indicated new approaches and articulations⁸. In contrast to the emerging “attack” of amateurs armed with increasingly connected and powerful cellular phones, it is experience and polyvalence that seem to be the last support for journalistic photography professionals.

Within these possibilities, the emergence of the difference between witness and construct, between document and consumer

strategy, which summarize the displacement of signs of positivism to a complex form of visibility, focus very little on the everyday journalistic photography that keeps a straight relationship with objectivity through a process built on history and sustained by the field of journalism itself, which justifies the permanence of the same in the media. Meddling with this was, for many people, triggered the crisis which had been foreseen since the invention of the television and was responsible for weakening photography. A more optimistic view has the break from realism as a driving force towards developing new forms of visibility, new forms of producing and consuming images, as well as making changes to media work conditions.

For this reason, we have seen changes to the market, to companies, to the academy and the journalists themselves, encouraging major artistic and amateur intervention in photojournalism. But the conceptual revision of the theory of the area revealed that the adhesions rarely surpassed the discursive plan. The main achievement of the status quo initiated here is to dissipate the consensual illusion on the specific nature and direction that media photojournalism has taken after digital technology had been incorporated, and question the available texts on the topic, in addition to opening a space for thoughts on the knowledge and practice of photojournalists.

Photojournalism is shaped within an object under theoretic discussion whose revision turns it both clear and cloudy, requiring an epistemological effort from zero. As we understand it, the changes observed to the field of photojournalism should not be seen as evolutionary because they do not obey any specific chronology. They belong to relatively unsafe, anachronic, broken sets that also depend on the conservation of previous models. Before putting things in their place, these changes demonstrated how fragile the concept of journalism was. Therefore, apart from the academics and professionals invited to participate in this study, our intention was to review concepts in photojournalism which are most certainly incomplete and are an object of theoretical discussion.

If the authors who participated in this study see photojournalism as a knowledge and justify this through the eternal search for the truth, without necessarily achieving that truth, then what we observe here is that professionals who work in and for

the media must follow codes of conduct and direction which other photographers do not necessarily need to follow, rooted in the positive aspect of media and valued by the documental field of photography. Both amateurs and “registered” photojournalists are artists who express themselves through images, but the normative standards which regulate the trade and work of one side, do not need to be followed by the other. Photojournalists are ascribed with being responsible for confirming the legitimacy of the field, the activity, the discourse and the opus: professional ethics, a sharp eye, social appeal/complaints and a method consistent of the search for truth.

* This paper was translated by Lee Sharp

NOTES

- 1 A term used by José Rebelo (2006), quoting André Gunthert, in order to designate “a carrier of a mobile device you might see on the London underground, on a beach in the Pacific, in cities which were victims of hurricane Katrina, or people who torture others in Iraqi prisons; this is the contemporary *occasional photographer*. (...) it is not limited to family or a group of close relatives. It is directed to a global universe. Instead of filling up family photo albums, it intervenes in the field of *media*” (REBELO, 2006, p. 23).
- 2 Soulages (2010, p. 14) asks: “Who is able to think of a photo as proof?” For him, a photo does not stop being a sign, and for this reason, it is poetry. The conclusion is inspired on the poem by René Char (apud SOULAGES, 2010, p. 14), who says: “a poet should leave traces of his time, not proofs. Only traces make a dream”.
- 3 They are seen as newsworthy or criteria of news aspects which journalists decide on when selecting a topic or event. See Traquina (1993: 44) for more on this, and especially, Henn (1996, p. 79). For more on the specific criteria for photojournalism, see Giacomelli (2008) and Sallet (2011).
- 4 The arrival of a new generation of photojournalists was needed for the trade to gain some recognition. The period between the two world

wars is known as the “golden age” of modern photojournalism, and some of these photographers are still models of professionalism and excellence today. Writing on the status of these new photographers, holders of vast artistic and cultural knowledge, Sousa (1998, p. 31) asserts that “besides Erich Solomon, who insisted on being called ‘Herr Doktor’ due to the fact he held a lawyer’s license, all new photojournalists break from the idea that photographic reporters were little more than simple servants (...). The new photojournalists were educated people, many of them aristocrats or bourgeois who, even though they were broke, maintained a higher social status and strong posture and presence”.

- 5 The data is also available on the website for the Journalists’ Union of Rio Grande do Sul. Available at: < <http://www.jornalistas-rs.org.br/index.php/registro-profissional.html>>. Access on: May 10, 2015.
- 6 Even though the obligation to have a university diploma has not been reinstated for journalists, journalism companies nowadays generally favour professionals with diplomas and, sometimes, require them as a pre-requisite for employment.
- 7 According to the description on the site, Garapa was born with the “objective of thinking and producing visual narratives, integrating multiple formats and languages together, thinking of images and documental language as hybrid fields of activity (...) We have developed projects for specific environments, from static photography to multiplatform interaction, from video to specific site installation. We have produced and directed institutional, publicity and documentary films, developed multimedia platforms, photo essays and exhibitions. Garapa was founded in 2008 by journalists and photographers Leo Caobelli, Paulo Fehlauer and Rodrigo Marcondes, and today is made up of an extensive network of partners and collaborators” (GARAPA, 2015). Available at: <<http://garapa.org/quem-somos/>>. Access on: May 12, 2015.
- 8 “At the exact moment in which convergence also points to devices, where cameras also record videos, one interesting fact is noticeable: most photographers who go on to make films generally make documentaries. This is not by accident. It is more than a choice, it is being in tune with reading reality” (SILVA JÚNIOR, 2012, p. 46).

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