

JOURNALISM, THE PUBLIC AND ITS SOCIAL FUNCTION CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

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PROFESSOR SILVIO WAISBORD, A SPECIAL GUEST AT THE SBPJOR ENCOUNTER which took place in São Bernardo at the close of 2008, emphasizes that for the press to really function as a platform for the expression of the citizens' interests, it is necessary to maintain strong ties to civic society. In the author's opinion, in the Latin American democracies these ties are compromised, since the States and the markets have a much stronger influence on the press.

In the dossier of this edition, Waisbord develops his idea regarding this topic and other Brazilian authors debate some aspects of the relationship between the citizen and the media. Carlos d'Andrea, for example, discusses the possibilities and the challenges of the citizen's collaborative participation and the role of the professionals in the production processes of a journalistic organization. Emerson Cervi, a journalist and professor at the Federal University of Paraná and at the State University of Ponta Grossa, observes how newspapers consider the social context to explain journalistic production. If the media should promote the debate in the public sphere, the author's case studies point out that the political theme and mediatic democracy based on the discussion of themes of interest to the public are prejudiced. Fernando Resende, a professor at the Fluminense Federal University, discusses journalistic production of discourses from an epistemological perspective. For the author, the media field constituted by the triad discourse/narrative/machines has already proved to be incomplete. Based on two journalistic documentaries, he studies the differences in representation of the Brazilian journalistic discourse.

Among the articles in this edition, we would like to point out that the discussion regarding the role of the press in contemporary society has concerned many researchers. Professors Bráulio Neves from Unicamp

and Rousiley Maia from the Federal University of Minas Gerais study how the potential of images in video is utilized in order to provoke public debates. In the case studies, the authors analyze how TV newscasts construct denunciations of police brutality and how violent images can even degenerate the public sphere.

For Heloiza G. Hercovitz, professor at the University of California in Long Beach, certain social topics, such as that of education, are little explored by the reference portals. She observes that news of the economy is at the top of the headlines of four Brazilian portals.

The business model in the era of media convergence is studied by Spanish professors Josep Lluís Micó and Pere Masip from the Ramon Llull University in Barcelona, and by the Brazilian professor Suzana Barbosa from the Fluminense Federal University. Members of a research group that studies Brazilian and Spanish cybermedia, with the support of both countries' governments, they present some models of journalistic convergence in their entrepreneurial dimension.

If the drop in the circulation of printed newspapers has been an international trend which also contributes to the implementation of business models that promote media integration, we need to analyze other measures taken by the market. In Brazil, the number of newspapers directed toward the lower classes is growing. Professor Laura Seligman from Univali studied, by means of content analysis, a sampling of these newspapers in the State of Santa Catarina. The author emphasizes that in these publications there is a preference for local news and for service to the community. Without sensationalism, these newspapers are classified as Quality Popular Journalism.

The editorial board of *BJR – Brazilian Journalism Research*, in the editing of the first issue in 2009, hopes that the results of these research works can contribute to the development of society. Since 2005, the *BJR* has published important scientific investigations concerning journalism. These research works, in most cases, are performed by professionals linked to the teaching of journalism. In this connection, we could not fail to express once more our inconformity with respect to the decision of the Federal Supreme Court which in its session on June 17, 2009, canceled the obligatory requirement of a University Journalism Course diploma for the professional practice of journalistic activity.

Enjoy your reading!