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Local Journalism and Social Journalism- Isomorphism and Proximity

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Abstract

The researchers have shown that local publications share common values, such as the desire not only to produce local news but also to be active members of their community, to give voice to those who cannot be heard otherwise, to assume a role in preserving democracy, building bridges between cultural differences. Moreover, local media challenges are: neighborhood, content built on solutions, not on conflict, difficulty in selling space / advertising time. In this context, Jankowski admits four major themes that circumscribe the local press: democratic processes, cultural identity, the concept of community (local), and the prospect to communicate. Social journalism is an umbrella concept that covers the types of journalistic material that do not fall into the classical fields (politics, economy, health, education) or denotes charity or cause journalism. In our study we aim to analyze the way in which local journalism is a form of social journalism, rather than generalist journalism.

Keywords: *journalism; proximity ; civism ; education.*

1. Introduction

The philosophy of blurring boundaries and borders, the ideological pillars of globalization, and also of the global village, have effects in the ontology of journalism. Our thesis is that we can already think of a journalism of proximity, a reconsideration and reinvention of this type of journalistic expression, after the age of curiosity and taste for exotism, and of the need for inclusion and acceptance of the status of a planetary citizen.

Dominique Wolton spoke once about "the revenge of geography" [1]. Despite universalisation enthusiasm, after the fulfillment of the nostalgia for the planetary village, of the global communion, the distance still

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produces its natural effects. A concrete result of this universalisation is a rapprochement of the alterity, of the Other, namely the removal of the "stranger" from the semantic area of fear, suspicion, rejection.

The globalization has produced a clarification of concepts such as distance, difference, limit. From the perspective of rationalizing these terms, we have also taken over the syntagm "the geography recoil" quoted above.

On the other hand, as the same researcher has pointed out, openness, globalization, universalisation came with a kind of call action. The information was sent along with the invitation to intervene, to change, to help. As Wolton notes, "Indignation remains, in the case of humanitarian intervention, the main motto of political action". From this perspective, we have also made the observation that a new reconsideration of proximity has come to the receiver and then to the issuers.

"Global accountability" instead of global knowledge, or that's why it has led to a trembling refusal of the two media products. The French sociologist spoke even about media diplomacy (Wolton [1]). However, the liaison function, recognized as such by researchers, cannot become an interventionist function.

The audience gradually returned to the status of information receiver, and the use of this information returned to the area of the individual decision. The knowledge, the critical and utilitarian thinking, as receptive attitudes, replaced curiosity, astonishment, indignation, action.

And that is why we think the themes of immediateness, locality, proximity, of the social sphere have regained their place among the constructions of summaries.

2. Terminological delimitations

The scholars have operated numerous terminological distinctions in an attempt to map the mutations in the contemporary media space. We refer to local journalism, metropolitan journalism, regional journalism, civic journalism [18],[19], community journalism, as aspects of social journalism. Social journalism is built on the axes and the laws of proximity [2].

The researchers have not agreed on a single term that includes the press that does not have a national audience [3],[4],[5],[6]. Beyond the geographic criteria, extensive discussions are also on the springs of functioning this type of journalism [7].

Appeared from a determinant community, proximity journalism depends on interacting with its audience, from the establishment of the agenda to the way the subject is approached. Folker Hanusch presented the field of scientific discussion and analysis to clarify the role of this type of

journalism inseparable from the community it serves. Therefore, the relationship between press and Establishment, for example, only in exceptional cases will attain a very high level of radicalization [8],[9],[10],[11],[12],[13].

Researchers assess local and proximity journalism with the same tools they use for assessing the type of journalism that addresses an amorphous audience [14],[15], rather intuited than researched, with a formula of communication in which the two actors have no clearly established identity, as the mutual expectations are quite ambiguous. The role of national press is primarily to oversee the national administrative units.

Many times, in national journalism, surveillance and analysis are abandoned in favor of militant and even propaganda positions. The local and proximity journalist, through its very existence, is quite close to both the administrative apparatus and the audience that can not be removed from the facility and supervision [7]. There are researchers who talk about "monitoring citizenship" [16], covering the part of the audience "ready for action if action is needed", as Michael Schudson [17] puts it.

From our point of view, this fair observation relates rather to the effects of media in general, not just nationally or locally. Information gathered in the press leads to action - common or individual, radical or emancipatory. Journalism of the audience segments we refer to in this study is customized by the type of relationship with the audience and the type of subjects. We have not reached conclusions worthy of being exposed in terms of roles and effects.

3. Expansion, Accessibility, Identity, the New Coordinates of Proximity Journalism

The expansion of informational horizon was followed by explosive opening of spatial spatiality, of digital environment, respectively. In the open, unlimited field of access to information, the audience experiences, in our opinion, a retreat, a return to self, to immediate, to proximity. Thus, the fundamental question of our study is: *What power relations and influences occur between geographic coordinates and accessibility online?*

Our hypothesis is that proximity in the digital age may be a form of reconsidering and recalibrating journalistic discursive structures.

News sites, online journalistic entities just by the virtue of a new type of interaction with the audience set their agenda and type of rhetoric, taking much more into the audience's interest in reading.

In the traditional press, there was a fairly clear distinction between the national press and the proximity press, namely regional, local media, or built on various other axes of proximity (affective, social). So, the local press has been rewarded with the task of covering seemingly high-stakes topics. On the other hand, the national press, by the virtue of geographic location in the proximity of the decision areas, has come to build a national media reality through metonymy, e.g. through the perspective of the events in the administrative capital.

Gradually, by eliminating the physical barriers of the printed newspaper, the local press has gained increasing freedom of relevance in addressing the public agenda and topics. After taking over the national agenda, the local press has gradually become a selection field for the national media agenda, usually through the perspective of the exotic, unusual, amusing criteria. We would call this an intermediate stage in the process of moving the attention of the public from the national press to the local press.

These changes are made on the basis of the expectations the receiving public has in the press institutions. And these expectations change roles. The public is interested in a media appearance as far as the information they receive directly affects their existence. That is why, exoticism, the information about very distant geographic areas is almost totally lost, and the great national themes penetrate the "territory" only if they meet the criteria of novelty and / or a very high threshold.

More and more, routine information from the area of national administrative institutions is losing relevance in favor of the information from the area of local administrative institutions. As they are no longer just mere extensions or points of implementation of the decisions taken in the capital, they have replaced the national institutions in the summary of the local press. Also, by the virtue of the same principle of proximity, the local press brings together positive messages about exemplary destinies with teaching relevance.

Local journalists are professionals of balance. The set of articles reflects the awareness that positive development can only occur when news is addressed from a reducible perspective to the idea that "everyone is part of the same community," as opposed to the motto of other newspapers, "we vs. them." The last part of the statement of the mission excludes any form of elitism [5]. The readers of a local newspaper will tell about the social space in which they live, they are interested in utilitarian and instrumental information that improves the quality of life. Ideological struggles and vanities are not in their reading interest.

4. Geography, Affectivity, Interaction - Discursive Principles

Proximity means accessibility, it means accessibility. More than a national generalist publication, the proximity publication is perceived as belonging to the audience. It is the audience that determines the importance of a topic, the areas of interest, and the values that are needed for the good of the community. Therefore, we can speak of a relationship of rather partnership between the two actors of communication, in which the two have a constant and substantial dialogue, with immediate effects on the quality of community life.

Local media is no longer the image of a province, of a second-tier space, of a peripheral space, but it is the integral picture of the reality of the space it represents. The life of the community, not the life of the province, is the theme of any publication subsumed to localism. Heroic characters, exceptional characters, glorification of humanity, argumentation of some principles of cohesion such as solitude and communion are the types of subjects frequently found in local press.

Approach angles, selection principles, and editorial policies are built on the same principles of promoting cohesion, promoting community values. From this perspective, we can make a first observation that in the local and proximity press the education function that *volens nolen* the press exerts is much more pronounced and more aware compared to the national press, where the pressure of mass audiences often sacrifices the informational value in favor of the entertainment function and in favor of the creation of informational shows (infotainment).

Moreover, the credibility of local media is harder to question. Due to this strong and unbundled relationship between the issuer and the recipient, verifying the information no longer seems potential, even unrealistic, but it becomes an operation at the expense of any audience member, precisely because of the spatial and / or professional limitations. That is why a great advantage of the local press is that the responsibility of the journalists no longer depends exclusively on their good faith.

Both thanks to the technology that generated the so-called digital era - which means instant and simultaneous access to a plurality of perspectives on the same subject, and to the simple geographic, professional, and social proximity, the journalism changes permanently. This is all the more possible since the digital era has also meant professional and institutional liberalization. Thus, the local / professional / social press no longer means a single title for a particular region or area, and the local press has gained another characteristic, namely competition, a feature unimaginable two decades ago, for example.

The credibility is also supported by the relationship of organic contiguity between the press and the community. Jock Lauterer [5] analyzed this aspect and even spoke of a stylistic overlap between the community and the local press. At present, there are sufficient technological, procedural and professional arguments for the local journalist - community relationship to overcome the barrier of exclusivity, complicity and authoritarian control. Liberalization, the plurality generated by digitization has profoundly restructured local journalism, and a small, quiet community without too much economic and political challenges does not automatically entail an inertial press that is irrelevant in the information market. Never before the creativity and the spirit of initiative represented such a strong capital in journalism, both national-generalist and local.

5. Conclusions

A feature that we have identified at this stage of public life in the digital age is the much greater focus on identity and immediateness. The notion of "local press" has undergone some of the most substantial changes. Thus, we believe there has been a structural mutation, from determinants as "periphery" and "provincialism" to others, such as "emancipation" and "identity".

The local journal remains an isomorphism of proximity journalism, but takes over many of its categories. Affective and social proximity become indispensable categories for a journalism that has the objective of emancipation and, among mobiles, the maintaining of a vital interaction with its own audience. Local journalism is also a form of affirmation of identity, not only local, of community, but also individual, precisely through the subjects that make up its agenda.

Thus, we observe that localism is still supported only by the geographical argumentation and mentality. By increasing its relevance at an early stage, future studies could follow the way in which proximity marks a new stage in the evolution of general media expression because the increasingly fragmented audience is causing more and more specialized press.

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