As novas territorialidades da informação e o não-lugar da notícia

The new territorialities of information and the non-place of news

João Guilherme da Costa Franco Silva D'Arcadia[1]
Juliano Maurício de Carvalho[2]

Resumo: *Este artigo busca relacionar o novo campo de fruição dos conteúdos noticiosos, aqui definidos como "novas territorialidades da informação", com o crescente avanço das mídias sociais. Para tanto, apresenta os conceitos de territorialidade e não-lugar e os articula com os resultados da pesquisa de consumo de mídia Digital News Report, do Reuters Institute, em suas edições de 2019 e 2020. Partindo da hipótese de que esses ambientes se efetivam como um espaço fluido e disperso de veiculação de conteúdos noticiosos e não noticiosos, o artigo busca contribuir com uma reflexão a respeito dos impactos dos novos espaços de fruição da informação, que, dadas suas características peculiares, tendem a estimular a disseminação não apenas de relatos factuais apurados, mas também de conteúdos enganosos ou materializados de maneira não profissional.*

Palavras-chave: *jornalismo; mídias sociais; consumo de mídia; territorialidades.*

Abstract: *This article seeks to relate the new field of enjoyment of news content, here defined as "new territorialities of information", with the growing advance of social. To this end, it presents the concepts of territoriality and non-place interacts with the results of the Reuters Institute's Digital News Report consumer survey, released in June 2019 and June 2020. Based on the hypothesis that these environments become effective as a fluid and dispersed space for the dissemination of*

1   Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (UNESP). Bauru, SP, Brazil.
     https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2801-9611. E-mail: joao.darcadia@unesp.br.
2   Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (UNESP). Bauru, SP, Brazil.
     https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8515-2457. E-mail: juliano.mauricio@unesp.br.

news and non-news content, the article seeks to contribute to a reflection about the impacts of the new spaces for the enjoyment of information, given their peculiar characteristics, they tend to stimulate the dissemination not only of factual reports but also of misleading or unprofessional materialized content.

Keywords: *journalism; social media; media consumption; territorialities.*

Introduction

The popularization of digital and social media energized the debate about the new possibilities of sharing content. Traditional platforms – press, radio and TV – are going through a deep process of re-signification derived from this scenario. Even the internet is not the same as when it was developed by the end of the last century. The worldwide web stopped being trapped to computers and to the www to be subsumed into a wider network which includes mobile devices and other forums of consumption and debate, of which the browser corresponds only to a part of it.[3]

Beyond the evident consequences of the reposition of the market of media corporations, the configuration (still uncertain) of these new environments has provoked expressive changes in relation of users with the symbolic processes coming from this transformation – which also happens in consumption relations, the access to cultural goods, etc. In this article, we seek to evaluate that impact on the public debate, reflecting about how its preferential professional catalyst since the 19th century – journalism – has been dialoguing with what we will call new territorialities of information. Coming from the hypothesis that social media have dislocated the spotlight of factual information linked by the conventional press, we intend to understand the consequences of this gap portrait for misinformation and/or delegitimation of the professional verification of data.

The contributions exposed here have as theoretic base the concepts of territoriality (MEDEIROS, 2009; LITLLE, 2002) and non-place (AUGÉ, 1992), considered fundamental for the understanding of fluid spaces now occupied by informative dispersion. Such reflections come from the methodic contrast between the results of three recent world reports about media consumption. Brazilian Media Research (Brazil, 2017), Digital News Report (Reuters Institute, 2019 and 2020)

---

3   It became known the research result from Quartz/Mozilla in 2017, according to which 55% of the Brazilians interviewed considered that "Facebook is the Internet". Available at https://d20x8vt12bnfa2.cloudfront.net/InternetHealthReport_v01.pdf. Accessed in: July 31st, 2019.

and Yearbook of Communication (OberCom, 2018). For this article, we chose in a synthetic manner the conclusions of studies by Reuters, co-relating it to events whose role in social media seem to be decisive in this period.

Territorialities of information

The concept of territoriality is intimately related to the symbolic appropriation made of territory. Originally applied in studies in Geography, Anthropology and Urbanism, it was usually limited to physical spaces – the village, the field, the city – only to then be incorporated to non-physical spaces – symbolic exchanges, virtuality, the digital environment.

Either in geography (SPOSITO, 2009) or in anthropology (LITTLE, 2002), the concept of territoriality, for effects of this study, dialogues with the need for concretizing a physical or virtual space that projects to its frequenters a system of utility. As Sposito defines, territoriality "designates the quality gained by the territory according to its use or apprehension by the human being" (SPOSITO, 2009, p. 11).

Risério (2013), by proposing a systemic analysis of construction of Brazil based in the ideologies projected in their cities, understands that territoriality is founded by fine mechanisms of interference in the urban space – from the Amerindian country to the property speculation nowadays, passing by the Portuguese colonization, slavery and migratory flows. Territoriality, applied to this context, is given through the relations built in certain territory: native, if constituted as a genuine object of communities, but also exotic, if sedimented by new dominant people or by the economic power.

> Territoriality, in addition to the generic meaning or the broader sense, where it is seen as the simple "quality of being a territory", is often conceived in a strict sense as the symbolic dimension of territory. When talking of territoriality, we would be emphasizing the symbolic character, even if it isn't the dominant element nor it exhausts the characteristics of territory (COSTA, 2004, p. 74).

In this first point of view, territoriality is linked to the space through which there is fruition in human relations, in which symbolic exchanges are established. To do so, it needs to be incorporated by its inhabitants through identity markers – in a constant exchange between recognition and distinction.

By identifying this path as an effect of "supermodernity", Augé (1992) details what he considers to be a non-place: a space deprived of a clear identity, generic and transitory. Comfortable, by similarity with other similar environments.

> If a place can be defined as identitary, relational and historic, a space that cannot be defined by identitary, or relational or historic will be defined as a non-place. The hypothesis defended here is that the supermodernity is producing non-places, in other words, spaces that are not, in itself, anthropologic places and that, contrary to Baudelaire's modernity do not integrate old spaces. (AUGÉ, 1992, p. 61)

At that point, the best examples of non-places were enterprises that were multiplying in the western world: airports, highways, duty free shops, hotel chains and theme parks. Equal everywhere, they promote the detachment of the time-space relation – in a way it is possible to spend hours in these environments without realizing how much time was actually spent, as well as the climate changes that happened in that period.

Even in an embryonic stage, Augé was anticipating that the advance of communication technologies could establish non-places, in what he called "cable or wireless networks, which mobilize the extraterrestrial space for a communication so strange that often only puts the individual in touch with another image of himself" (1992, p. 74). In 2019, in an interview to the newspaper *El País*, the author revisited his concept by reinforcing that the internet had put humanity in a state of permanent non-place.

Before verifying these implications in the contemporary communicational environment, object of this reflection, we must see other

contributions about the de-territorialization provoked by globalizing phenomena.

Recognizing the term as "increasingly uncomfortable", Canclini (2006) observes that one of the signs of post-modernity is *transterritoriality*. While in modern societies, identities were territorial and monolinguistic, in the following periods, what we've seen was the eruption of transterritorial and multilingual communities.

The phenomenon can be observed, for the author, in the search for "un-urbanized itineraries" which would contract the city fruition of a tour ride, for example. Franchise theme parks, such as Disney, take the place of historic itineraries marked by the fruition, unicity and authenticity.

The dissemination of new technologies, in the other hand, would dislocate citizenship manifestation from their classic spaces of political participation for the approaches made by the media.

> These electronic media that made popular masses erupt in the public sphere dislocating the performance of citizenship towards consumption practices. There were established other ways of getting informed, of understanding the communities which we belong to, of conceiving and exercising rights (CANCLINI, 2006, p. 39).

The de-territorialization becomes a cultural perception. Consumption goods stop having a place of evidenced origin – the chain of production, often times, includes dozens of countries until it receives a fashion brand. Multinational and transnational corporations share their products in all western nations, distributed in equally standardized supermarket chains: non-things, sold in non-places.

Ortiz (2000) talks about the concept of re-territorialization in the context of internationalization of culture and symbolic consumption goods. The author highlights that the redesign of territorialities is an ontological premise of mass media.

> The media contain a dimension that transcends their territorialities. A technical circuit about which messages are supported is also responsible

for a type of civilization that is internationalized. Movies, advertisement pieces, popular genres of music and TV shows are forms of expression that circulate within them, regardless of their origins (ORTIZ, 2000, p. 60).

Belochio (2009) remind us that journalism also had an institutionalized territory, whose relative stability was shaken by the arrival and dissemination of new technologies, in a process of de-territorialization. After the period of rupture, the structures are reorganized in a process of re-territorialization, "understood as the reorganization of a system that mixes characteristics of your traditional identity with different parameters of operation" (BELOCHIO, 2009, p. 205).

The map of news consumption

In order to outline what we call new territorialities of information, we loan the data supplied by the 2019 and 2020 edition of the Reuters Digital News Report, which analyze the consumption of media products, by platform, in 38 countries of the Americas, Europe and Asia. It is the 8th edition of the study, considered very important for presenting quantitative and qualitative aspects. For effect of this article, we used the data verified in Brazil.[4]

In the historic series observed since 2013, the configuration of the news outlets checked by most Brazilians already demonstrated a tendency of crystallization of new spaces for consumption of factual information, led especially by social media.

4   2.013 people in the country were heard. In all the study, over 73 thousand researches were performed..

Graph 1 - Sources of news in Brazil, by platform
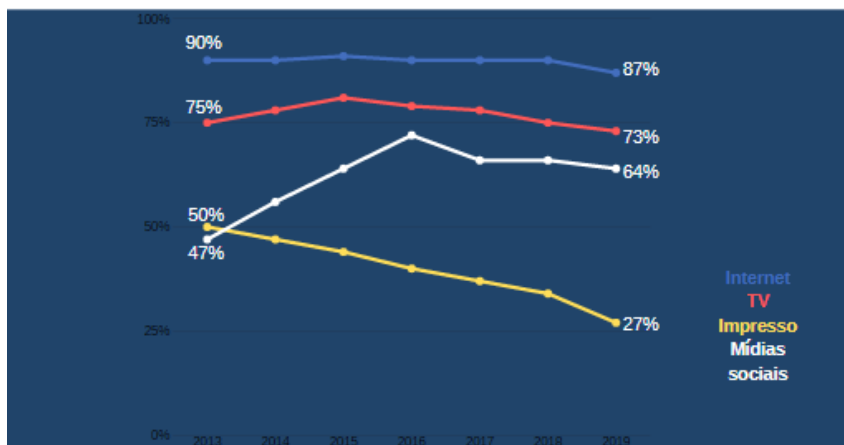
As observed, in the interval of seven years, the internet (including social media) was kept at the top as the most accessed platforms with the goal of getting news. TV, which still has an important role in Brazil, was for the first time outshined by social media, even if they were practically tied. The press has been suffering successive downfalls and today is followed by 23% of the interviewed population. Radio is not on this list, [5] but 51% of the interviewees in the 2019 research said to have listened to any podcast in the previous month, which has been understood as a manifestation of a redefinition of the audio-phonic culture.[6]

The rise of social media for news consumption is interesting because, in this sense, there weren't included interviewees that access the internet through browsers (*www*), but rather the ones who use the network exclusively to access their personal pages. Reuter's report dedicates a specific section to present the exponential growth of message apps for obtaining news – emphasis on WhatsApp in Brazil (48% of the interviewees, 5%

5   Research performed by Ibope in 2019 in thirteen metropolitan regions indicates that 89% of the interviewees say to listen to radio every day. Available at: http://www.acaert.com.br/ibope-media-divulga-infografico-que-detalha-o-consumo-de-radio-no-brasil#.XVmmJuNKjIUAccessed in Aug. 13, 2019.
6   In August, 2019, Globo Organizations, the biggest media group from Brazil, announced the creation of sixteen podcasts available in their News portal G1 and in platforms on demand.

less than in 2019). According to the document, Brazilians continue to be frequent users of social media. About social media and message apps, WhatsApp is only 6 points behind Facebook on preference of Brazilian users.

2019 and 2020 reports show the great impact of these services in decision-making processes, such as the 2018 presidential elections. Months before, during the strike of truck drivers that stopped most of the transport networks in the country, the app became a parallel environment for the exchange of information, diffusing fake stories and bringing out panic among those who believe that the supplies were ending.

The sense of urgency in sharing fake content gained a new wave of concern with the Coronavirus pandemic registered in the first semester of 2020. Research led by the Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública (National School of Public Health - ENSP/Fiocruz/2020) indicates that most of the fake news that were spread about the illness were shared through WhatsApp – what makes it harder to identify its origin, given the private character of the message app.

About how the adhesion of new environments grew, the trust of "news overall" decreased by 11% between the reports of 2018 and 2019, and increased 3% between 2019 and 2020, getting the mark of 51%. The disbelief in mainstream media was stimulated in the electoral plea, draining supports from both of the most expressive candidacies to the informative environments that we will call *quasi-journalistic*. We adopt the prefix quasi- which means near, because, even though message apps knowingly do not have as primary goal to share news, its informative use ends up orbiting other features.

The non-place of news

Known for their flexibility and dynamic among their participants (MARTINO, 2015), social media and messaging apps, took on an important role in sharing content, according to what we talked thus far. Its unpredictability of reach and the possibility of anonymity engender what we consider to be the *non-place of news* nowadays.

Unlike what is advocated in deontological manuals (BERTRAND, 1999; FENAJ, 2007), the information circulating these environments often do not resist a basic protocol of measurement about its trustworthiness: content aren't signed, and, therefore, there are no authors being responsible for the exposed material. The date of publication cannot be verified, and the basic tripod of verification (interview, data collection and investigation) is not always effective. More dramatic is the lack of distinction among genre (informative, opinative and interpretative) and the indefinition about the journalistic and publieditorial content, which, although present in mainstream platforms, are less perceptible in social media.

This confluence of factors leads to the dissemination of what is usually called *fake news* which according to Träsel (2018) represents an oxymoron: a figure of speech in which conflicting words appear juxtaposed, in a way of mutually excluding each other. Again, the dissemination of fake news is not a prerogative of the new environments, but in them it was found a necessary capillarization to manifest with more freedom and less sanctions.[7]

Although there are no data available for this finding, it is possible to foresee that many users of new technologies of circulation of content are no longer contumacious consumers of news produced by mainstream media.

According to the Indicator of Functional Alphabetization (Inaf/2018), only 12% of the Economically Active Population has conditions to understand and elaborate texts of different types, such as a message or an argument – editorial and newspaper texts, according to the example mentioned by the own study.

The abilities of understanding codes, that make the individual proficient in his language, are considered indispensable for the fruition of minimally complex texts, as for example the news content.

---

7   In 2017, the National Electoral Court (TSE) created a consultive council to evaluate the impacts of fake news and avoid dissemination. The work group did not present practical results until the 2018 election.

However, these same skills are not required for the basic under-standing of verbal and non-verbal productions exposed in a fragmented manner in social media and message apps. The non-place provided by these environments, we can say, was filled by a type of content that did not find support in the mainstream journalistic production: rudimenta-ry, truncated, fake, timeless materials, among other characteristics.

Naturally, we cannot judge this capillarity only as a problem of the functional lack of literacy in the country, since the phenomenon of adhesion of fake content is observed all around the world, including developed countries.

We can attribute this universal adhesion to quasi-journalistic mate-rial also to the newslike architecture (CANAVILHAS, 2014) of part of the fake news – very similar to the construction of a news text (Title, lead, photo and even interviews, for example) –, to the relation of that the fake news establish with preconceived ideas of the interlocutors – or the bias of confirmation (VALLONE et al., 1985) – and even to a certain disfavor that the search of an objective identification of facts ex-perience in the contemporary world, what was consecrated as post-truth (D'ANCONA, 2018). This conjunction of factors is strengthened by the ubiquity of digital communication technologies.

The bias of confirmation express life perspectives that are already so-lidified by the life story and social context of the interlocutor, in a way that external postulations are that presented gain a bigger permeability when they are in sync with these beliefs and find a bigger resistance in situations in which there are disagreements with this previous point of view – even when the confrontation becomes irrefutable. Instead of interpreting the daily signs as a possibility of personal and intellectual development or even as an invitation of changing the paradigm, the interlocutor believes he uses external stimuli only to confirm his worl-dviews or to conspire against those who manifest something that speaks against their personal and innate convictions. The tautological reason-ing can be faced as a symptom of that perspective.

Defined in a synthetic manner as a "useless discourse" by Abbagnano (2002) in his Philosophy Dictionary, tautology is manifested in redundant and illogical reasonings, by distorting the relations of cause and consequence or simply by proposing an intellectual economy by giving up the systematic reflection. In the example of the author, we have the sentence: "fifteen minutes before he died, he was still alive" – in other words, an unnecessary obviousness, unless it has an aesthetic value in the context of literature.

In Barthes (2001, p. 172), tautology is "a verbal procedure that consists in defining the same by the same". It is a refuge, to whom does not find sufficient explanation to comprise the complexity of the events around them. "Well, all the refusal of language is a type of death. Tautology fundaments a dead, motionless world" (2001, p. 173). The tautological proposition is one of the components of the Barthesian myth, a "stolen line" that provokes an economy of meanings by presenting a new sign, erected from many other characteristics (such as omission of story, quantification of qualities, among others). We relate the bias of confirmation to the tautology because both seek spaces of comfort facing a polyhedral nature of events, a type of intellectual shortcut that doesn't deny the lies nor admit the truths, because it simply gives up on elaborating that type of judgement.

On our way to re-territorialization?

What this article sought to defend is that the main characteristics of social media – understood by the flexibility and the dynamism among their users – provoke a new relation of consumption of information that is no longer linked to their conventional spaces of materialization – newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and web. In these territorialities, the codes of usage and conduct are still not well-defined, nor the public policies for regulation, that are not the object of this study.

Facing the crescent preference by social media to obtain information – news or not – we observe increasingly more frequent attempts of the mainstream media of repositioning themselves in these spaces, such

as the creation of newsletter lists on WhatsApp, the creation of news in other formats (interactive, immersive, collaborative and transmedia) and the maintenance of fact-checking agencies. Still, the efforts arrive after the establishment of the non-place of news, permeated by a lot of quasi-journalistic misinformation – fake content that orbit the news architecture – and cacophony.

The definitive repositioning is urgent, less for issues linked to the reservation of market, and more for the civilization need of offering to the public debate stories compatible with the balanced representation of facts.

References

ABBAGNANO, Nicola. *Dicionário de filosofia*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1998.

AGÊNCIA FIOCRUZ DE NOTÍCIAS (2020). Pesquisa revela dados sobre "fake news" relacionadas à Covid-19. Disponível em: https://agencia.fiocruz.br/pesquisa-revela-da-dos-sobre-fake-news-relacionadas-covid-19. Acesso em: 18 maio 2020.

AUGÉ, Marc. *Não Lugares: introdução a uma antropologia da supermodernidade*. Campinas: Papirus, 1994.

BARTHES, Roland. *Mitologias*. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 2001.

BELOCHIO, Vivian. Jornalismo digital e colaboração: sinais da desterritorialização. *Estudos em Jornalismo e Mídia*, ano VI, n. 2, p. 203-216. Florianópolis, UFSC, jul.-dez. 2009.

BERTRAND, Claude-Jean. *A deontologia das mídias*. Bauru: Edusc, 1999.

BRASIL. Presidência da República, Secretaria de Comunicação Social. *Pesquisa brasileira de mídia 2016: hábitos de consumo de mídia pela população brasileira*. Brasília: Secom, 2016.

CANAVILHAS, João (Org.). *Webjornalismo: 7 caraterísticas que marcam a diferença*. Covilhã: Livros Labcom, 2014.

CANCLINI, Néstor García. *Consumidores e cidadãos: conflitos multiculturais da globalização*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora URFJ, 2006.

CARDOSO, G.; BALDI, V. et al. *Relatórios-Obercom-Fake-News*. 2018.

COSTA, Rogério Haesbaert. *O mito da desterritorialização: do "fim dos territórios" à multiterritorialidade*. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 2004.

D'ANCONA, Matthew. *Pós-verdade: a nova guerra contra os fatos em tempos de* fake news. Barueri: Faro, 2018.

FEDERAÇÃO NACIONAL DOS JORNALISTAS – Fenaj. *Código de Ética dos Jornalistas Brasileiros*. 2007. Disponível em: http://www.fenaj.org.br/federacao/cometica/codigo_de_etica_dos_jornalistas_brasileiros.pdf. Acesso em: 17 ago. 2019.

INSTITUTO PAULO MONTENEGRO. *INAF Brasil 2018: resultados preliminares*. São Paulo, 2018.

LITTLE, P. E. *Territórios sociais e povos tradicionais no Brasil: por uma antropologia da territorialidade*. Série Antropologia, n. 322, Brasília, 2002.

MARTINO, L. *Teoria das mídias digitais*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2015.

MEDEIROS, R. M. V. Território, espaço de identidade. In: SAQUET, M. A.; SPOSI-TO, E. S. *Territórios e territorialidades: teorias, processos e conflitos*. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2009, cap. 10, p. 217-227.

ORTIZ, Renato. *Mundialização e cultura*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2000.

REUTERS INSTITUTE. Digital News Report 2020. Disponível em: https://bit.ly/2C7uv4m. Acesso em: 15 jul. 2020.

REUTERS INSTITUTE. Digital News Report 2019. Disponível em: https://bit.ly/3eA2vDo. Acesso em: 15 jul. 2020.

RISÉRIO, Antonio. *A cidade no Brasil*. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2013.

TRÄSEL, M.; LISBOA, S.; REIS, G. Indicadores de credibilidade no jornalismo: uma análise dos produtores de conteúdo político brasileiros. *27º ENCONTRO ANUAL DA COMPÓS*, 2018, Belo Horizonte, Brasil.

VALONNE, R.; LEE, R.; MARK, R. L. The Hostile Media Phenomenon: Biased Perception and Perceptions of Media Bias in Coverage of the Beirut Massacre. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. v. 49, n. 3,p. 577-585, set. 1985.

WARDLE, Claire. *Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policy Making*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2017.

About the authors

João Guilherme da Costa Franco Silva D'Arcadia - PhD student from the Graduate Program in Media and Technology at the School of Architecture, Arts and Communication (FAAC) at the Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (Unesp). Master's in Communication (Unesp) and Graduate in Social Communication/Journalism (Unesp). In the present article, the two researchers worked together in the definition of what they consider "new territorialities of information and the non-place of news", exposed in the reflection. João D'Arcadia conducted the elaboration of the text, with the support of Juliano Maurício de Carvalho in the interpretation of research findings linked to the analysis of data and the final redaction.

Juliano Maurício de Carvalho - Professor in Communication Policies, Media and Creative Industry. Post-doctorate by the University of Sevilha (2011) and University Carlos III from Madrid (2009). He is a vice-coordinator of the PhD Course of the Graduate Program in Media and Technology, professor of the Graduate Program of Media Communication at the Course of Architecture, Arts and Communication (FAAC) at Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (Unesp). PhD in Social Communication at Universidade Metodista de São Paulo (Umesp), Master's in Political Science at Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp) and BA in Journalism at Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Campinas (PUC-Campinas). In the present article, the two researchers worked together in the definition of what they consider "new territorialities of information and the non-place of news", exposed in the reflection. João D'Arcadia conducted the elaboration of the text, with the support of Juliano Maurício de Carvalho in the interpretation of research findings linked to the analysis of data and the final redaction.