Public Perceptions, sport ideologies and journalism - PublicPerceptions3.

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Public perceptions, sports ideologies and journalism (III)

Sergio Ricardo Quiroga

ONE OF THE MAJOR POINTS about this question is the journalism sources.

By one side Wolf (1996:253) states that sources are "a decisive factor concerning the information produced by the media", and by another side, Pepe Rodríguez (1994:67) on *Periodismo de investigación: técnicas y estrategias* distinguishes sources as "every person who voluntarily and actively provides any kind of information to a journalist".

Journalism sources

On *Manual de Estilo Clarín* (1997:24-25), the sources are pointed out as follows: 1) personal testimonies belonging to protagonists, witnesses, officials and public people, 2) official or institutional documents, 3) correspondents, special correspondents, international agencies and foreign media exclusive services and 4) radio and television broadcastings, photographs, videos and recordings and Internet material.

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In the elaboration of information, we have on one hand the journalists' professional culture understood as "a confusing mixture of rhetoric facades and tactic tricks, codes, stereotypes, symbols, latent standardizations, roles representations, rituals and conventions concerning the functions of media and journalists in society and the conception of product-news and the modalities controlling their making" (Garbarino 1982:10); and on the other hand, the limitations belonging to their own journalistic work linked to the organization of work and professional conventions (Wolf, 1996: 215).

These restrictions and limitations in the journalistic work determine what is newsworthy and the quality and journalistic force an event has to be transformed into news. The notion of newsworthiness can be defines as "the set of elements through which the informative apparatus controls and negotiates the quantity and type of occurrences from which the select the news"

(Wolf, 1996: 222). Newsworthiness is also associated to the process of routinization and standardization of productive practices (Wolf, 1996: 216). A traditional and classic definition of mass communication characterizes it as an organization through which certain technical resources produce and transmit a public message addressed to a heterogeneous audience who is generally scattered geographically speaking (Dominick, 1999). Generally newsworthiness is influenced by conditions interns and externs at the newsroom:

a) the development of event in the mass media, and the possibility of their evolution (Gans, 1979);

b) the number of people implicated in the public event. (Gans, 1979, Wolf, 1996: 228-231-232);

c) the accessibility of the events in the mass media and the journalists (Wolf, 1996:232);

d) the news as result of process of production and negotiating;

e) the power of the sources in journalism;

f) the journalists and emitter´s tensions and interactions;

g) the increased of institutionalization of journalist front of audiences;

h) the influences of other media in the conformation of journalistic agenda;

i) the effects of public's images of journalists (Quiroga, 2008).

Publics' images

The topic about audiences has constantly worried the specialists in communication and the studies about reception.

We have gone from receptors highly influenced by the transmitter's message (hypodermic theory) to an absolutely opposite idea where the public carries out semiotic terrorism using the messages of media.

Another current concern is to know whether the media and the programs are in line with their publics or we witness nomadic and carefree audiences who employ the radio or television zapping when they have to choose their media proposals. The effects of the publics' images on the journalist and its influence on the news production have been a topic not deserving the privileged attention by communication specialists. Regarding this topic, Stevenson (1998:144) points out in *Culturas Mediáticas* that "*transmitters constantly make suppositions about the way in which audiences organize their day, and most important, about who belongs to their public*". Journalists hardly know their public, they present their news report and they do not try to satisfy their public, and as they hardly know the public, they put more emphasis and attention on the news (Gans, 1979).

Not only journalists show this ignorance. Frequently, directors themselves, managers and owners of the media ignore the distinctive characteristics of their audiences and this information is vital and strategic for the media organization in a complex, dynamic and restless world. Knowing the audience's nature, the media will be able to characterize its programming according to the audience's demands and will be able to offer an appropriate channel for the media announcers. Reality fragmentation and mediatic representation serve as images of the world and reference for different publics. Bettetini and Fumagalli (2001) called this media procedure reinforcements and mirrors game.

Future studies

The influence of sport ideology in the agenda must be a thematic to future studies.

The ideology and social cognitions shared by members of a group, that is, systems of ideas and especially the social, political or religious ideas. In it the social dimension explains what groups and what relationships exist between the groups and institutions involved in the development and reproduction of ideologies in which plays a key role discourse, structures whose levels are determined by the same (Kaenel S/F). Jean Marie Brohm (1982) in *Political Sociology of Sport* argues, since the positions of Western Marxism that the process of historical formation of modern sport that has developed a global sports system where there is a sports institution regulated under mode capitalist industrial production.

METHODOLOGY, RESULTS AND SOME CONCLUSIONS

We employed qualitative tools on this research: participating observation and questionnaires done to sport journalists belonging to the most important written media, radio and television from one group of sport journalist in San Luis during 2014-2015.

The entering journalists answered that the most consulted sources are the athletes themselves and the sports managers and other sources. The most used institutional sources are firs the institutions' press news items and second the press news items coming from state organizations. The third position is hold by public officials. When inquired about spontaneous sources, most journalists said they did not use them and more than 60 % of the interviewees answered they did not employ confidential sources. Inasmuch as the use of alternative sources they mentioned the most important newspapers of the region, the official information and their own colleagues.

SPORT IDEOLOGY

The predominant sport definitions that we can connect with the sport ideology are the following:

Sport is a profitable, regulated, organized and growing activity. It is a beneficial physical activity.

It is a physical-mental activity whose aims are competence and distension.

It is an activity to be respected, cared and improved in order to grow.w

It the best physical and cultural expression, a policy that joins different cultures by means of competition. It can be divided into competitive or highly performed and amusing and healthy activities.

It is a competitive and non-competitive activity that generally benefits society.

It is a very healthy activity that should be performed as such, without drugs and without violence. It has to transmit joyfulness, feelings, passions and festivity.

It is a physical activity that can be performed individually or in a group.

Sport appears as a physical-mental, healthy, organized, beneficial, competitive and non-competitive activity.

Brohm describes the sports system as a total institution, combining all sports, political, social, ideological and symbolic instances of social relations of production.

The sports system in terms of Brohm constitute a network of equivalence between values and actions, a system of symbolic relationships sorted, which condenses specifically the set of objective social relations of capitalist society (Mederos Aguirre, 2013).

It is possible think that the influence of sport ideology in of sport journalist in the building their mass media agendas.

Influences on the sport news elaboration

Journalists recognize as the most important influences on the news elaboration the following factors: the quantity of daily information, the local information, the sport agenda – fixtures, events – journalistic needs, people's opinion and the idea that the program contents have to satisfy everyone. Journalists had different opinions about the sponsors' influence on the news production. In our research work more than a half answered it did not influence, but a high percentage of them pointed out that sponsors do influence on the news elaboration of their programs. They also pointed out that the influence of the public's alleged sport preferences is taken into account when elaborating the programs and think the sports audience has a higher preference for "traditional" sports (soccer, basketball, volleyball) and their local perspective.

The public's idea influences on the dairy, the contents, the granting of a longer or shorter segment given to any information and even the way of informing itself.

The participant journalists declared that there exists a strong relation between sport and community and that this relation refers to the population's health, the possibility of social promotion and the cultural growth but consider that spectacle or elite sport are the most important in the screens.

The presence on their programs of local sport as opposed to national and international sport is the consequence of a lack of resources and support for local sportsmen and organizations; local sport is amateur and improvised whereas it has

a superior growth in bigger metropolis. It was curious to know that local sportsmen's are seen as weird and amateur people who fight to stand out in an adverse environment with scarce recognition and a lack of conscientiousness about training, health, prevention, etc.; who have outstanding conditions but they lack the necessary mentality to make the big step into the national level. Journalists also stated that local athletes are courageous and vigorous fighters who have to perform their sport activity as well as their job lacking in almost all cases of support.

More than a half of the journalists answered affirmatively about each ideologies of sport as opposed to the ideas of sport broadcasted on the program. Besides it was pointed out that although there is no any noticeable group imaginary, local sport journalism does not think about it; each journalist has an idea of sport that talks about a regulated, competitive activity with fixtures that

eventually lengthen and each one of them tries to exhibit this idea on the sport program.

Sports ideologies and public image of sports journalists have an influence on the construction of the agenda and content of sports programs. The ideology that organized sport or elite sport (sport screens) is very strong in the sports journalists, as well as the perception that audiences expect more information on popular sports.

The "publics' perception" of sport journalism are present. The perception that the public watches and pays attention to the more well-known sports and that the audience interested in sports is mainly made up of men – data not checked by the media where this type of programs are broadcasted – causes that the dairy and contents of the sport proposals of written media, radio and television are directed towards this sense denying the diversity of agenda, contents and culture of a journalistic specialization in constant growth like sport. ■

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