History and photojournalism: reflections on the concept and research in the area

Abstract

This article aims to think through historical research with press photography and photojournalism in the 1970-80s in Brazil by means of some reflection axes: the photographic image statute, the concept of photojournalism, the construction of a specific photojournalistic language on the pages of the media, the temporality of production and consumption of the various types of press photography, the forms of image circulation and reception.

Keywords: Photojournalism; Photography; History and press.

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História e fotojornalismo: reflexões sobre o conceito e a pesquisa na área

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é refletir sobre a pesquisa histórica com a fotografia de imprensa e o fotojornalismo nos anos 1970-80 no Brasil a partir de alguns eixos de reflexão: o estatuto da imagem fotográfica, o conceito de fotojornalismo, a construção de uma linguagem fotojornalística própria nas páginas dos veículos, a temporalidade de produção e consumo dos diferentes tipos de fotografia de imprensa, as formas de circulação e de recepção das imagens.

Palavras-chave: Fotojornalismo; Fotografia; História e Imprensa.

1. Photography and event production in photojournalism

Photography is a member of the image community, but it is also distinguished by the production technique (mechanical), reproducibility (production of copies), and large circulation capacity (press, book, billboards, etc.) and appropriation by various social groups. It provides a time section, freezing a moment in time and a space section through the frame. However, photography is an 'event' and the insertion of a subject in the length of time through image production (DURAND, 1998, p. 64). It produces a photographic real world.

According to Dubois (1993, p. 61), photography is distinguished from other representation systems, such as painting and drawing (the icons), as well as from language systems themselves (the symbols), while it is very similar to sign systems such as smoke (index of fire), shadow (reach), dust (time deposit), scar (injury mark), and ruins (remains of something that was there).

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According to this author, photography is not even a 'real-world mirror,' as intended in the late 19th century in the press and common sense, nor just the 'real-world change' understood as a reduction and distortion of such a reality, as the false neutrality of the photographic message in the 20th century has already been denounced. Photography is an index, because it might keep a physical link to its reference.

Rouillé (2009, p. 190) argues that the 'index theory' advocated by Philippe Dubois, André Bazin, Rosalind Krauss, and Roland Barthes, among others, promotes a reduced interpretation of the photography scope by focusing rather on the device than the images themselves. First, this theory might seek to be an ontology, an approach to the essence of photography, instead of emphasizing the images and social practices. Second, because it might appreciate the index instead of the icon (the similarity), aiming to oppose the perspective of photography as a real-world mirror. As conceived by Rouillé, though, it might be more interesting to think of the 'tension between the index and the icon' as a factor of photography vitality, strength, and wealth. Thirdly, the 'chemical device' is privileged instead of the 'optical device,' designating the photo frame as "the purest expression of the index theory" (ROUILLÉ, 2009, p. 192). Fourth, it provides a technicist reduction by focussing attention on the support, the microscopic, instead of the macroscopic aspects of the social, economic, cultural, and aesthetic functions of photography. Fifthly, the reduction of photographic time at the instant of capturing instead of producing the event and its subsequent uses. According to Soulages (2010, p. 31-35):

> Photography is not a restitution of the world object, but the production of images that interpret some visible and photographable phenomena, of a particular way existing in a certain space and a history: real revolution in relation to the ideology of [Henry] Luce [Director of the Life magazine, 1934], which hides the diversity of realities, the historical society where the photos are shot, the processes for producing and communicating such photos and the role of the subject who shoots photos; there are many factors determining the photo of an object to be photographed. An event exits not only due to its recognition by a witness, but mainly because of its constitution as an event by this witness, either a photographer or a historian. There is no event existing prior to its recognition. There is no object-reality to be photographed nor a subject who turns a visible phenomenon into a sign of an object to be photographed.

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According to Rouillé (2009, p. 206), photography does not just show or stick to things, but it designates (bodies, things, state of affairs) and expresses (events, meanings). And the author adds: "It is due to the enormous ability to designate and express that photography and the media can create the event by means of the most trivial things" (Rouillé, 2009, p. 207). Both Rouillé (2009) and Soulages (2010) claim that we should not dissociate the analysis of the device and the medium from the study of the photographic field and its transformations. Shooting photos might be updating an event that would not exist outside the image that expresses it.

Photojournalists work by using a symbolic system in their daily activity through a 'truth standard.' According to Picado (2013, p. 31):

> [...] what defines it as a 'truth standard' of the visual representation, associating it with an 'eyewitness principle,' whose origin is much older than what may be said about the documentary vocations rather specific to the photographic medium; in fact, the conditions of this discourse, where the image evokes (or even establishes) events, must be explained not so much by variables associated with empirical criteria of their significance, but linked to the dramatic nature of pictorial representation.

Both the photographer and the viewer of photos resort to their iconothecas – someone's stock of images within the set of images socially shared at a given time – to produce meaning and interpret an image, respectively.

2. The concept of press photography and photojournalism

According to Costa (1992, p. 70), photoreport is a journalistic way determined on a historical basis, which had its origins in the German press in the late 1920s and the early 30s. This is a narrative based on a new type of relationship between text and image, which finds in illustrated magazines the optimal vehicle for its expression. The 1950-60s were the golden age of magazine photojournalism, with *Life*, *Paris Match*, *L'Express*, *Der Spigel*, *Stern*, *Caras y Caretas*, and *O Cruzeiro*, among many others circulating in Europe and America. Within this period the myth of war hero photographer and the concept of 'decisive moment' were created by Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004) in 1952. The late 1960s

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and the Vietnam War marked the apogee and the beginning of the crisis of photojournalism, due to competition with television and governments restricted the access of journalists to the war front (SOUSA, 2004a). The 1970s and 80s marked a growing monopolization of information media in the hands of large companies, as well as industrialization and homogenization of the photojournalistic language around the world, dominated by major news agencies (UPI, Reuters, AFP) and photo agencies like Magnum, Rapho, Gamma, Sigma, Sipa, etc. (ROUILLÉ, 2009, p. 139-159; SOUSA, 2004a, MOREL, 2006, p. 17-25).

According to Baeza (2001, p. 35-36), amid the great diversity of image types conveyed in the media – photos of recipes, decoration, fashion, etc. – there is a need to define what is meant as press photography. This author suggests starting by disregarding advertising photos and all others that just 'rent' space on the pages of a serial publication, but are not derived from its editorial content. Thus, he proposes to focus the analysis on photos that the press plans and produces or purchases and publishes as a content of its own. This set of images may be termed as 'press photography.' This, in turn, might consist of two main groups of images: photojournalism and photo-illustration. The author thinks that the photojournalistic image is produced or acquired by the press with editorial content of its own, which might be related to the values of information, topicality, and news about events of social, political, economic relevance, and this may be associated with the usual press classifications and its various sections (BAEZA, 2001, p. 36).

The term photojournalism could designate both a professional position pursued in the press and an image type used by it. In this regard, it is distinguished from the advertising image that is observed in the press, as it does not share the same values or deontological ethics involving commitment to the truth. In the 1940s, the early deontological codes of photojournalism emerged in the United States and Canada. According Lavoie (2010, p. 3),

> "the deontology codes are intended to define and explain the rules and responsibilities of the members of an order or a professional category. They have a normative value and formalize the conditions to be fulfilled in order to maintain the integrity of a practice".

It also differs from photo-illustration, which might be an image consisting of a photo, combined photos (collage or montage, digital or conventional), or photo associated with other graphic elements in order to illustrate a text. Photo-illustration is an image linked to and dependent on a text, with a strong didactic vocation, related to service-based journalism: cuisine, leisure, fashion, sport, etc. (BAEZA, 2001, p. 39).

Photojournalism has developed its particular forms of classification to name the image types circulating in the press. Among its traditional genres there are in the poles *current affairs photography* itself (predominant in the major daily newspapers), determined by information immediacy, and *photoreport*, where photography has a rather interpretive, sequential, and narrative approach (more commonly seen in major weekly magazines).

Sousa (2004b, p. 87-108) classifies the various photography types more usually observed in photojournalism as: *spot news*, pseudoevents, *photo-illustration, feature-photos, mug-shot, picture stories*, and photoessay. *Spot news* are single non-plannable photos that condense an event or its meaning, a 'scoop' or journalistic evidence also related to the *hot news* obtained in the heat of events (fires, large-scale accidents, terrorist attacks, etc.). *Pseudoevents* are semi-plannable photographs, such as opening ceremonies, award giving ceremonies, summit conferences, etc. They establish a different relationship between photographer and photographed subject, because the latter, being aware of press coverage, can interfere through her/his position, pose, gestures, etc., in order to play an active role in the image. *Photo-illustrations* are conceptual images produced 'as if there were a painting,' often used in editorials in tourism, decoration, cuisine, fashion, nature, etc. *Feature-photos* are current affairs photos that provide a unique or surprising perspective caught by a photographer to illustrate fluid and casual instants of human interest. To produce them, the photographer should go unnoticed. Sometimes, they are associated with 'candid photography.' *Mug shots* are small-sized photographs of faces found in large numbers in the media, which seek to highlight a subject's physiognomy or character trait. In Brazil, it is often named as 'puppet,' with a pejorative connotation, because it is regarded as a minor work, which does not require great technical mastery and creativity of an photographer. In turn, in

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environment portraits, individuals are portrayed in their workplaces or any other space associated with their tasks (office, library, laboratory, etc.).

Picture stories consist of a series of images that seek to tell a story or present the various facets of a theme. They are a noble genre of photojournalism, which we may associate with photoreport. Producing it requires more time and commitment of a photographer to the subject matter. Usually, this is a social issue addressed in greater detail. They tend to show five photography types: general contextualization frames; mid-sized frames on the main action/activities in focus; large-sized frames with significant details of the environment, subjects, and actions; portraits of the subjects involved; and a closing photo. In Brazil, photojournalists often name this type of work published in the press as 'portfolio.' In a major news medium (newspaper or magazine), it is usually in charge of an experienced and critically acclaimed photojournalist, who gets professional visibility and invitations for exhibitions and independent projects through this kind of work. It is worth saying many photojournalists in the 1970-80s were employees of the press media, although the collaboration of freelance photographers was frequent and helped constituting, along with images bought from news agencies, the photographic visuality of media.

Photoessay was also characterized as a narrative with photos in which the photographer/team/medium openly proposes a visual interpretation of the theme addressed. In this case, the text is a very important element and it occupies a significant space in the report. There is a clear distinction between the advocates of single photo (decisive moment), which might require greater technical skill and photographer's sense of opportunity to synthesize the event in an image (like Cartier-Bresson's style), and the supporters of photoessay. The latter claim a greater commitment of the subjects to the theme photographed, allowing them to approach the various angles of the issue with more time and creativity to produce an interpretation through images with greater depth on the subject matter.

In this regard, photoessay dialogues with the style and operating modes of another photography field: photo-documentary making. Photo-documentary making shares with photojournalism the commitment to reality, but it might differ from photojournalism by preferably addressing structural phenomena instead of the news

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environment, thus it moves away from shorter production times provided in the daily press. So, it is also open to the most varied circuits of distribution, such as the gallery, museum, and book for the expression of subjectivity, creativity, and visual poetics of a photographer.

According to Ritchin (1988, p. 596), 'the U.S. style' photojournalism might aim to produce 'the photo,' the document-shock to compete immediately and superficially with television images. In turn, 'the French style' photojournalism might assume a photographic closeness to events at a slower pace aiming to affirm a photographer's subjectivity. Photoreport cannot be published immediately after the event, so the image must have a wider appeal, suggesting an atmosphere and a rather extended duration. The example given by the author is the photographic coverage of the coronation of the English King George VI (1895-1952) by Henri Cartier-Bresson in 1937. Instead of approaching the monarch to portrait him, he photographs the faces in the crowd gathered in the streets, jostling and pushing each other to see the event better[1]. That is, the public impact and atmosphere of the 'event' that was taking place and also being produced by media coverage.

According to Sousa (2004a, p. 12), photojournalism in the strict sense of the term might be characterized as an activity that seeks to "inform, contextualize, provide knowledge, educate, explain, or 'state an opinion' through photography about the events and coverage of subject matters of journalistic interest." Photojournalism meets the production demand of a communication medium and joins its editorial line, seeking to present in a clear, unmistakable, and objective way an event aimed at immediate consumption in the newspaper/magazine by a wide audience. A photojournalist works with current affairs, in order to show what is happening in the heat of the moment and using the 'language of the moment.' The author's view supports the photographer's commitment to truth and reality.

However, photojournalism is also a cultural product in the market of symbolic goods. In this market, the media try to retain and expand their reading audience by using

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[1] Henri Cartier-Bresson's photos of the coronation can be viewed on the website of the agency Magnum: http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&ALID=2K1HRGRDL32 Accessed on: February 8, 2016.

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many editorial and marketing resources, including the impact photography combined with sensationalist headlines on the front pages of serial publications.

To do this, the press photography often resorts to stereotypes to illustrate reports and provide readers with an easily comprehensible meaning. According to Baeza (2001, p. 36), the editors-in-chief in charge of selecting the images brought to the office by photographers with regard to a particular agenda do not seek to know something they did not know beforehand, but to illustrate a perception already anchored in the readers' spirits that they could see immediately through the image. In the essay 'The Decisive Moment', published in 1952, the photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, one of the founders of the agency Magnum, already recognized this dilemma:

> The camera allows us to produce a sort of visual chronicle [of the present]. We, photographic journalists, are people providing information to a rushed world, overwhelmed by concerns, prone to cacophony, full of human beings who need the company of images. The shortcut of thought that is the photographic language has great power, but we assess what we see and this implies a great responsibility. Between the public and us, there is the press, which is the means to distribute our thinking; we are the craftsmen who deliver the raw material of illustrated magazines (CARTIER-BRESSON, 1981, p. 386).

Joly (2009, p. 160) claims it is reasonable to assume that photos have functional 'dominants' and that press photography might have informing as its main function. According to the author, "in fact, it must 'witness, illustrate, touch, sell,' but above all it should 'inform'" (JOLY, 2009, p. 170). She also emphasizes the ambiguity of the meaning of press photos and their compelling properties. The author discusses the rhetoric of press images and the possibility to associate it with the myth, as well as the symbol, metaphor, and allegory. The notion of information itself could be very complex. She says:

> The notion of 'information' in the press is also particular. It does not have the same meaning for the professional and the researcher. If for the journalist, in order to go faster, 'info' means 'news' in the traditional sense of the term, a researcher like Gérard Leblanc can show that information was usually synonymous with event, and that event was what broke with the allegedly peaceful course of life: floods, wars, all kinds of accidents, then the very notion information was, in this case, strongly ideological (JOLY, 2009, p. 173).

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The production of photojournalistic images implies the work of many professionals in a wide set of photographic practices, which involves not only the photographer, but a group of professionals in a company or institution linked to the field of communication: newsroom directors, editor-in-chief, photo editors, newspaper writers, photographers, visual designers, archivists, etc. (PROENÇA; MONTEIRO, 2016). It is not always easy to identify the authorship of photographic images on the pages of serial publications. In the 1950s, in illustrated magazines, the photographer's name appeared next to the reporter's name. In the 1970s, the name of the photographer or the agency appeared on the photo margin in major weekly magazines like *Veja* and *Isto É*. However, in Brazilian daily newspapers the practice of assigning credits to the image producer only applies since the late 1970s, after a great mobilization of photographers' associations (ARFOCs) and journalists' unions for the regulation and appreciation of the profession (COELHO, 2006, 2012; SOUSA JÚNIOR, 2014). Usually, newspaper editorials showed the name of the journalism team, highlighting the editors and mentioning all photographers together. On the newspaper pages, the credit for images was assigned only to the agency. Occasionally, the photographers' names appeared on the margin of photos published on the front page until the late 1970s. In this case, the authorship of images was assigned to the team under the leadership of the producing entity or agency, which is the vehicle itself with its editorial line and political and economic commitments.

Photojournalism may be understood as the product of the work by a professional team, but also by the action of other social subjects that exert pressure on this field of communication, such as: government, businessmen, advertisers, politicians, censors, etc. To do this, there is a need to compare works on photojournalism to works on History of the Press/History of the Media, in order to grasp the pathways, positions, tensions, and disputes going through the field of journalism.

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3. Photography and the dialogues it establishes on the the page of a serial publication

Photoreport is an activity pursued by a photographer (hired or freelancer) or a team of photographers organized into an agency (gathering photographers or providing news) and also the product of this activity visible on the pages of a serial publication (newspaper or magazine). Its structure involves a dialogue between the text and the image on the page space within the context of a daily, weekly, monthly publication, etc. Reader's perception of the picture(s) is related to this context as a whole that encompasses this(these) picture(s): name of the publication, frequency, editorial line, format, sections, professionals, and occasional contributors. Each communication medium proposes a reading of the world, through an attempt to circumscribe the real world and shape the horizon of readers' knowledge about a particular set of current or past facts and prospects for the future (TAVARES; VAZ, 2005, p. 125-126).

According to Gunthert (2013, p.4), in the media system, the visibility of a photo depends solely on the place intended for it in the information hierarchy. As a system for selecting and enhancing information, the media tool must organize its operations in the competitive environment that constitutes its ecology, whose absence produces only noise. The imperative of information hierarchy is logically derived from this principle. In the media space, each piece of content published is associated with an indication of scale, which participates in the publication and allows the distribution to be generated from it. The importance of some information is assessed through its space and location on the page. Some information in a larger size is more important than in a smaller size – an indication of relative and contextual nature, whose interpretation lies on the assimilation of an evolving set of editorial codes. Numerous factors, such as reiteration, author's notoriety, send a correspondent, etc., complete this value assignment by scale effect, which may, therefore, be named as scale value.

Some theorists propose pathways for interpreting the photos published on the pages of serial publications. Vilches (1997a), seeking to build a methodology to analyze the photo inserted on the serial publication page, helps understanding the various functions of photography, both at the level of content and in terms of formal expression:

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framing, different perspectives, angulation, focus, visual contrasts, etc. A proposal that is resumed and adopted by Sousa (2004a, 2004b) and Mauad (2005). In Brazil, Ana Mauad (1990, 2005, 2008) was the pioneer in preparing a strict methodological proposal in the field of History for interpreting images in the press (photojournalism) and their way of building social meanings. Her article "Na mira do olhar" (MAUAD, 2005) proposes a theoretical reflection on the press photography and a pathway for constructing its interpretation: the choice of serial publications, the building of series, the development of forms to interpret images, and the way how data must be crossed to grasp the visual patterns and sociopolitical meanings proposed by the press in a given context. In this case, photoreports about the city and society in Rio de Janeiro in the major Brazilian illustrated magazines in the 1920s and 1950s.

According to Gombrich (2002, p. 136), the images are not self-explanatory, because "the interpretation by the image author must always be corresponded by the interpretation by the viewer. No image tells its own story." The interpretation of an image must relate three variables: the code, the text, and the context (GOMBRICH, 2002, p. 133). That is, the image itself, the texts accompanying it, and the sociopolitical context as a whole where it operates. We may also add the dialogue that these images have with a stock of images inherited from the past and conveyed through various media (painting, sculpture, architecture, books, etc.). Baeza (2001, p. 172-187) gives a great emphasis to this dialogue by proposing an interpretation of photojournalistic images through the iconography and iconology by Erwin Panofsky (1991).

 Iconography is the description by the researcher of the history of specific themes or concepts as they are conveyed through topical literary sources observed in the images. In turn, iconology is the interpretation of 'symbolic' values underlying the images, which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, period, social class, and religious or philosophical belief – embodied by a personality and condensed into a work (cf. PANOFSKY, 1991, p. 50).

It is believed that the more the reader is informed about the world as a whole and about the particular motif for photos, the greater her/his ability to extract meaning and aesthetic pleasure (BAEZA, 2001, p. 174).

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Photojournalism is the construction of a narrative in images by combining photos and texts on the mosaic of page layout in the magazine or newspaper. Meaning is produced through dialogue between these two languages, photography and texts (headline, legend, lead[2], credits), in a complex and dynamic structure. According to Sousa (2004b, p. 66), in photojournalism the text has several functions: drawing attention to the photo, providing the photo with additional information, anchoring the meaning of a photo, opening a range of possible meanings, and finally commenting or interpreting the photo or its contents.

According to Lima (1989, p. 31), the relation between photography and writing takes place at three levels: photo-legend, photo-headline, and photo-text. Legend is a link between photo and text in a report, it may both enhance or restrict the meanings of an image. The second alternative is the most common in daily press, since the need for information objectivity, clarity, and speed urge us to reduce the polysemy and ambiguity inherent to images. In this case, the reporter or editor points out to the reader what she/he should see in that image. In war photography, for instance, where we see soldiers and tanks, we should explain the reader what this war is about, who is fighting whom and why.

However, it is very common that an image can bring additional meanings and even opposed to what is proposed in the legend. According to Gurand (1992, p. 58), the legend should be an invitation for the reader to explore the image and discover other meanings or connections less obvious at first glance. That is, inciting the reader to go beyond the mere identification of the subject matter discussed in the photo, trying to decipher the viewpoint from which the photographer is bringing that event to light.

The headlines, titles, and subtitles occupy a prominent place on the page of a newspaper or magazine and they play a role similar to that of legends by proposing a first reading and meaning of the event to the reader. Looking at the page of a serial publication, attention is drawn by the headlines and images due to the privileged space they occupy on the page organization and hierarchy in relation to other elements.

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[2] *Lead* is the opening sentence of a short composition or the first paragraph of a longer article or essay. It is a formula used to compel the reader to read that piece of news until the end.

Between image and text there is a relationship of complementarity and dialogue in the construction of meanings and senses that the medium intends to propose to its reader. Sometimes, it is the image that plays the role of headline, becoming an image-headline, which aims to capture the reader's attention and play the role of visual synthesis of the report.

It opens a series of photos that explore various aspects of the event, building a visual narrative through the sequence of alternating positions, sizes, and image formats on the mosaic of page layout. According to Costa (1992, p. 82), if there seems to be a predominance of the photo over the text at first, the lure of the image might be derived from the 'invisible editing work.' In the golden age of photoreport in illustrated magazines in the 1950s, referring to *O Cruzeiro*, Peregrino (1991, p. 62) claims that:

> Layout standards are determined by arranging the photos, which produces the meaning and significance through the various associations between the margins. Operating by blows and breaks, this arrangement concentrates photos on entire pages, especially in the beginning, middle, and end of the report, alternating with the other images distributed into varying sequences...

According to Costa (1992, p. 83), "the photographic sequence tries to resume motion and, at the same time, it provides an analytical approach to it (...) by enhancing and condensing temporality." If the photo is a fragment, freezing an instant in time, a photographic series allows us to create a narrative (following the film tradition by switching perspectives, framing, viewpoints, and camera direction) and explore certain aspects and meanings of the event. Usually, photoreport begins with an image synthesis, large-sized (full page or half page), followed by a series of smaller images that explore the details of the event by getting closer and switching the focus, framing, and direction. Detailed perspective is used (approach to facial expressions, objects) to provide the narrative with intensity and drama, something which might allow the reader/viewer to feel that the event unfolds under her/his eyes and invite her/him to explore its various aspects.

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4. Framing, perspectives, and composition

According to Sousa (2004b, p. 67), framing corresponds to a section of visible reality provided by the photographer and depicted in the photo, which is put down on the plane section. There are four major types of plane sections with various levels of photographic expression: *general plane section*, *overall plane section*, *midplane section*, and *big plane section*. *General plane sections* are open perspectives that aim to contextualize the event, showing the landscape (urban or rural) where it occurs and the subjects (communities or individuals) who participate in the event. *Overall plane sections* are a little more closed and they allow us to identify the action altogether. A *midplane section* gets closer to the subjects and objects, corresponding to the American ¾, which might be close to an 'objective view' of reality. *Big plane sections* emphasize details and provide great expressiveness and intensity to represented faces, objects, and actions. Switching plane sections gives dynamism, intensity, and even drama to the visual narrative of the event.

They are added with change in the angle to capture the images in relation to the soil surface, which modifies the hierarchy and meaning of images. A *normal plane section* is that perpendicular to the ground at the eye level. That is, photographer and photographed subject are at the same level. And this assigned a sense of equality, leveling, and 'objectivity' to what is presented in relation to the photographer/viewer's perspective. In turn, *plongée plane section*, i.e. from top to bottom, might tend to devalue the photographed subject or subject matter. A child might tend to be in a position of inferiority in relation to an adult's viewpoint. Lewis Hine (1874-1940), when shooting photos of children working in U.S. factories in the 1910s, was kneeling to photograph them in order to provide the viewer with images from the same angle that a child looks at the world, but also to show their small size in front of the huge textile machines which they operated. In *contre-plongée plane section* the image is taken from bottom to top, tending to appreciate the photographed subject matter. Under the European fascist regimes, political leaders were often photographed delivering speeches from a balcony, through a window, or on a tribune high above the ground level and before the eyes of the crowd, which gathered 'at their feet' to listen to them. And this implies a positive

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hierarchy of the subject and the construction of a sense of superiority of the subject matter photographed in relation to the viewer.

Composition is the ordering or arrangement of the photographed elements within the photo space. Photojournalists tend to put the subject matter in the center or slightly displaced from the central axis to facilitate that the reader/viewer identifies the theme addressed. The relevance of the subject matter in the center of the image is highlighted. A harmonic division of the photographic rectangle, divided into halves, thirds, and fourths is a tradition that dates back to Renaissance and Classicism. This type of composition with framing of symmetrical subject matters (coinciding with the skyline and the photo center) creates a balanced and harmonious image. Photographers tend to use the rule of thirds (dividing the image into horizontal and vertical thirds), placing the main motif for the photo in the golden section, where the theme becomes stronger. It is also possible to create unbalanced compositions, producing dynamic effects when reversing or using disproportionate scales on opposite sides of the rectangle or empty spaces between the photographed elements.

According to the perception psychology (Gestalt), the observer perceives the different elements in a photo as a whole, establishing relationships between them within the photographic space. By observing a person or object in front of a wall or a set of buildings, the viewer establishes a relationship between figure and ground. That is, what is in the background adds meaning to what appears in the foreground. For instance, an individual standing in front of a mansion. Perception tends to relate and associate the two elements, assuming he lives in or owns that dwelling. Intellectuals are usually photographed behind a desk and in front of bookshelves in their libraries (stock of knowledge, knowledge they apply to their professional activities, intellectual capital, etc.) as a distinguishing element in relation to the ordinary reader. The photos of a businessman along with his industrial workers in front of the factory in the 19th century might construct the sense of wealth through ownership of production means: men, buildings, machinery, and products. There are also photos of small immigrant farmers sitting in front of their houses along with the fruit harvest.

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The focus is the zone providing the highest image definition, the privileged subject matter of photography, something which is achieved by adjusting the lens type, the shutter aperture, and exposure time in analog cameras (non-digital). We may have an individual in focus in the foreground and others out in the background, as well as the focus may lie on the second or third plane sections (background). The photographer can bring closer two people distant in space and give the idea they are talking to each other through the focus, the choice of shooting angle, aperture, and lens type. A procedure widely used in photojournalism to put political rivals side by side as if they were having a private conversation.

There are also morphological elements of analogical photography that contribute to produce meaning in photography, too, such as: grain, spot, dots, lines, textures, pattern, and color (SOUSA, 2004b, p. 73-76). A photo containing a small grain can create the effect of realism (small grains) and large grains of disintegration. Spots can create shadows and provide a threatening effect to the subject matter represented. A person can be a dot in space, several people form a line and create effects of photographic space arrangement. The repetition of elements (people, trees, poles, bushes) in space creates lines, defining directions and targets to the viewer's eye within the photographic framing. Sometimes, contrary to the traditional direction of left-right image reading, they can also serve to construct senses of unity or antagonism between two subjects matters or subjects photographed. Patterns are created by repeating the same motif in the image that produce a space and looking arrangement.

The photographer can create textured effects when shooting faces and wrinkled hands or silty walls to suggest the passage of time. Color provides an image with meaning. Warm and strong colors can suggest conflict or dynamism, in turn soft colors suggest harmony and stability. We may recall the famous case of deliberate darkening of the face of the black player and actor O. J. Simpson on the cover of *Time* magazine (in the June 27, 1994 issue), during his trial, to make him more threatening, something which severely put into question the racial standpoint of the magazine (MIRZOEFF, 1999, p. 135).

It is possible to create truth standards by resorting to "communicational values we assign to gestures, body posture, appearance of elements in the scene, and agents'

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momentary facial expression, as well as the relation these elements have to each other and to the space as a whole" (PICADO, 2013, p. 31).

To think of image reception, a historian has few traces she/he can resort to, such as reader letters published in the media (above all by illustrated magazines), along with the editorial and data on cover price and circulation of serial publications (number of copies, estimated number of readers), which enable estimating circulation (spatial reach – international, national, regional, or local) and social penetration. Reusing a photo in other photoreports, its publication in a book or exhibition in museums/festivals also indicates the ability to visually synthesize/represent/express an event over time. That is, the persistence of an image in several media and circuits indicates that it was able to condense social meanings or social imagery about a particular event, context, or social process. Such a capacity is usually due not only to the image content (subject matter, situation, subjects involved), but also to the image aesthetic quality (composition, framing, dynamic plane sections, focus, lighting, etc.), in addition to its dialogue with a visual tradition capable of updating and generating new meanings. However, often the circulation spaces and the controversy this image raises (critical fortune) help it to perpetuate and achieve the status of photo-icon in the history of photojournalism, such as the image of a militiaman killed in the Spanish Civil War (1936), by Robert Capa, and a photo by Nick Ut of the naked girl Kim Phuc fleeing the bombardment of her village in Vietnam (1972).

5. Final remarks

There are several issues to take into account when interpreting photojournalistic images in serial publications, but I believe we should start by the image itself, then go to page structure (images and texts), then relate it to the serial publication as a whole (images and texts from other sections with which it dialogues), and finally consider the context and the broader social, political, and economic structures involved in its production that affect its social reception. Thus, we emphasize the image power to

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produce senses and social meanings about the world instead of subordinating it to the role of sounding board of the political, economic, and social context.

As stated by Debray (1994), image has a power that refers to the various time and experience layers it carries. The strength of an image is also related to its ability to evoke other images observed in tradition and imagination. For instance, several authors have already referred to the lure of Christian iconography in the form of image composition by photojournalists, such as Sebastião Salgado (cf. STALLABRAS, 1997; MRAZ, 2005).

Photojournalism changed after the 1980s, due to mass communication, the news industrialization, and the recurrent appeal to sensationalism. The documentary vocation associated with the idea of realism and the idea of reference attachment to the photo went into decline. Photography began to be regarded as a producer of the event, as a way of interpreting, recreating, and updating the real world.

Major daily newspapers in the 1970s were not spaces for free expression of creativity, renewal of photographic language, and affirmation of photographers' author status. In daily newspapers, photographers are subject to a prior agenda set by the publisher, they have little autonomy to propose agendas of their own, little time to pursue their tasks and deliver a photo in the newsroom, their images are often cut and reframed to fit the page layout, and many times they are completely subordinate to the textual narrative. The exception may be weekly magazines, such as *Realidade* (1966-1979), which hired photographers to produce photoessays, *Veja* magazine, in its early years of operation, and subsequently *Isto É*, which tried to be different by means of a rather critical and author-driven approach. By seeking greater autonomy, in order to produce a markedly original work and get financial recognition, photographers created photographers' agencies like *Focontexto*, *F4*, *Angular*, *Agil*, and *Ponto de Vista*, among others. Initially, they worked as groups of photographers who discussed the preparation of news agendas and the way the coverage of events would be carried out, but also provided professionals with freedom, so that they add a personal touch in their photographic work.

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There were also, in the context of the 1970s and 80s, the so-called 'dwarf' newspapers, produced by trade unions and cooperatives, which allowed a greater creative freedom for photographers. An example of this was *Coojornal*, published in Porto Alegre by a cooperative of journalists between 1974 and 1983. Operating as a cooperative, news agendas and image choice were the result of discussion and agreement between publishers, editors, and photojournalists.

There is a change in the status of photojournalistic images when they are published in a book, exhibited in museums, festivals, photography festivals, and art galleries. From testimony of a historical context they turned into a visual delight object, open to other possibilities for interpreting images that go beyond their connection to the event. They also started being assessed on technical mastery (light, framing, aperture, tones, color, etc.) and the unique photographer's look at the subject matter, which may also be occasionally related to a nostalgic behavior towards the past.

A Brazilian example is the work by the photojournalist Evandro Teixeira (1935), who covered the backstage of the Military Coup, the 1968 student demonstrations in Rio de Janeiro, and also the political opening process for *Jornal do Brasil*. Coming from the newspaper pages, his photos went to the book *Fotojornalismo* (TEIXEIRA, 1982), and then to art museums. It is worth noticing the recent 2015 retrospective exhibition to celebrate his 60 years in the profession at the Museu de Arte do Rio de Janeiro (MAR): "Evandro Teixeira: a constituição do mundo."

In this regard, we may think of the *Mostra da Galeria da FUNARTE* (1979-1980) and the books published by Orlando Brito (*Perfil do Poder*, 1981) and Evandro Teixeira (*Fotojornalismo*, 1982), which provide photojournalistic images with a new status.

Photographic exhibitions and the publication of catalogues and, above all, photo books by independent publishers were alternatives to affirm the photographer as an 'author' (GAËLLE, 2008, p. 113). This new conception of an author's photo might open space for expressing the photojournalists' subjectivity and experiences in some major daily newspapers, such as, for instance, the newspaper *Libération* (Paris, France) in the

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1970s. In Brazil, these experiences would occur later, as in the collective work *Cia. de Foto* in *Folha de São Paulo* (Brasil), in the 2010s.

This also ends up bringing photojournalism closer to the field of art in the 1970s in Europe and the 1990s in Brazil as a means to affirm subjectivity and a photographer's personal language in face of the increasing restrictions on the creative exercise of photography in most of the major media companies (ROUILLÉ, 2009; POIVERT, 2008). It can be observed in the selection of photos awarded in *Word Press Photo* and *The International Photojournalism Festival of Perpignan - Visa pour l'Image*; the photographers awarded do not only address major global current affairs, but they also deal with the aesthetic dimension of images, both putting reality into question and providing their readers/viewers with visual delight[3]. In Brazil, pursuing their everyday tasks, photojournalists end up producing images for the press according to the mass production codes of image for immediate consumption and, in parallel, personal projects or public announcements, documentary or artistic photography works, aiming to circulate in other media and circuits (exhibitions, galleries, and photo books).

However, the images published in the media are only a tiny part of the images produced by photojournalists, the others lie forgotten in the archives of photographers and agencies and they might be reused in a report in the press or a retrospective exhibition of a photographer. Poivert (2013) argues that research on photojournalism should include the contact sheets[4] to think through the construction of meanings by the photographer before selection, reframing, and association to a text (headline, lead, legend) by the photo editor and its publication[5]. But how could a historian, during her/his

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[3] The *World Press Photo Foundation* aims to promote the work by visual journalists with a range of activities and initiatives that cover the world as a whole. We were established in 1955, when a group of Dutch photographers organized a contest to expose their work to colleagues from other countries. The annual contest has since grown and it became one of the most prestigious awards in photojournalism and multimedia. The exhibition is seen by more than three and a half million people worldwide each year. Text available at the website: http://www.worldpressphoto.org/about. See also the website of The International Photojournalism Festival of Perpignan - Visa pour l'Image at: http://www.visapourlimage.com/index.do.

[4] Contact sheet is a small-sized photographic copy, produced by direct contact of the negative strips to the photographic paper in the laboratory, used to select the photos to be enlarged.

[5] We tried to partly apply this work proposal on the contact sheet when interpreting the photoreport by the photographer Ricardo Chaves to *Veja* magazine about the students' movement in Porto Alegre, in 1977 (PROENÇA; MONTEIRO, 2016).

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survey, have access to such a mass of images that have not been published and are owned by photographers and communication agencies under the copyright laws?

To conclude, we might ask to what extent History is prepared to think through and discuss the huge collection of images published in the press, included in the serial publications' databases and the photographers' personal archives, circulating through blogs and social media on the internet today. And how could we educate the common citizen and the prospective professor-researcher in order to interpret such images within a visuality regime marked by the digital, virtual, resources, self-promotion (selfies), and the event spectacularization which we experience nowadays?

Historians should address these themes in dialogue with other social scientists, aiming to grasp the 'visual turn' that emerged in the 1990s, which is still experienced today (MIRZOEFF, 1999). It is up to historians thinking of what the 'history workshop' can do and should seek in other fields of expertise to meet the current social demands for knowledge on everyday life and to keep acting in a significant way in order to achieve democratization in the information society.

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