

# Event analysis: methodological possibilities<sup>1</sup>

## *Análise do acontecimento: possibilidades metodológicas*

■ VERA VEIGA FRANÇA<sup>a</sup>

Federal University of Minas Gerais, Post Graduation Program in Communication Belo Horizonte – MG, Brazil

SUZANA CUNHA LOPES<sup>b</sup>

Federal University of Minas Gerais, Post Graduation Program in Communication Belo Horizonte – MG, Brazil

### ABSTRACT

This article aims at reflecting about how the concept of event can be a methodological guide and/or operator in the Communication field. To do so, we started by presenting the pragmatist notion of event. Then, we highlighted some analytical standpoints: the hermeneutic power of the event in the search for meaning regarding temporalities and frameworks; the susceptibility of the event in analyses regarding experiences, effects and the setting of publics; the double life of the event to investigate the existential and symbolic dimensions of a phenomenon; spectacularization in the study of media events; and the individualization of the event to interpret its peculiarities and the social context it brings out.

**Keywords:** Event, methodology, pragmatism, communication

### RESUMO

A proposta deste artigo é refletir sobre como o conceito de acontecimento pode ser orientador e/ou operador metodológico na área da Comunicação. Para isso, começamos apresentando a noção pragmatista de acontecimento. Depois destacamos alguns vieses analíticos: o poder hermenêutico do acontecimento para busca de sentidos em jogos de temporalidades e enquadramentos; a passibilidade do acontecimento para análise de experiências, afetações e configuração de públicos; a dupla vida do acontecimento para investigar as dimensões existenciais e simbólicas de um fenômeno; a espetacularização para estudos de acontecimentos midiáticos; e a individualização do acontecimento para interpretar suas particularidades e o contexto social que faz emergir.

**Palavras-Chave:** Acontecimento, metodologia, pragmatismo, comunicação

<sup>1</sup> Reviewed and expanded version of the paper presented in the Work Group on Communication Epistemology of the XXV Compós Annual Meeting, held at the Federal University of Goiás (UFG), Goiânia, from 7 to 10 June 2016.

<sup>a</sup> Professor of the Post graduate Program in Social Communication of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG); founder and researcher of GRIS (Research Group in Image and Sociability of FAFICH/UFMG). Researcher 1-B of CNPq. Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6074-4333>. E-mail: [veravfranca@yahoo.com.br](mailto:veravfranca@yahoo.com.br)

<sup>b</sup> Doctoral Candidate in Social Communication in the Post Graduate Program in Social Communication of the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8363-7562>. E-mail: [suzanaclopes@yahoo.com.br](mailto:suzanaclopes@yahoo.com.br)

## INTRODUCTION

FROM OUR TEACHING and research experience in the Communication field, we unfortunately realized that many of our students and young researchers still have difficulties regarding the relation between theoretical-conceptual framework and methodology construction when developing a research project. Frequently, in a dissertation or thesis, after a good theoretical foundation of the subject, when carrying out the analysis of the knowledge not necessarily associated with the initial discussion, it seems that a second part of the study initiates in a relatively independent way (retrieving some reflective *insights* at the most). After writing the theoretical chapters, a common question comes up: “and now, how to analyze the object? There is the need to check some methodology books to see what to do...”.

What we want to defend here is that, when developing a research project, methodological reflection depends on theoretical reflection and on how it affects the empirical object; the methodology is a *natural unfolding* of the object problematization, it is the result of the *conducting of the guiding concepts*.

We need to consider the distinction between the problem and the questioning process (despite the use of these two words not being necessary, the movement they indicate is important). The problem is the question we make to the object we want to study. It comes from a real difficulty (“why the campaign against dengue is not taken seriously by society?”); a new and surprising phenomenon (“what explains the success of a small newspaper when the written media is in decline?”, “how can we measure the mobilizing power of Facebook in the context of social movements?”); and changes, etc. The purpose of the problem is to answer a lack of knowledge; it is a question that searches for a good answer (warning: we cannot question what we already know! We also must avoid complicated questions to which we will not have the ability to answer. Moreover, the question also needs to be relevant, both academically and socially. It is not about personal curiosity, it is about an answer that will interest a scientific community and influence the society that comprises this community).

However, if a certain question starts the process, it will not be able to take us far enough without considering previous knowledge aiming at enhancing its reflections and potentials. And this is the time to consider the theoretical framework. The theoretical discussion is not part of a project only to show the researcher’s knowledge, but to support and guide our problem. It transforms the problem into a *problematic*. Then, if the problem is a question, the problematic is the broader framework that locates and organizes the perceptions on the problem (Laville; Dionne, 1999).

So far, we are in the first half of the developing process of a project: the subject's formulation and the definition of the problem. Despite finding a good question being a tough task sometimes, this first part – the subject's formulation and the definition of its problem – is not the hardest thing in the job. Often the big challenge is defining the *how*, i.e., the methodological design that will express the relations between the question within its theoretical framework, and the way to answer it.

However, the questions from which we have formulated the problems are abstract and need some support. “The mobilizing role of Facebook”, “the charisma of a certain celebrity” – what is that, exactly, and how to measure such a thing? How to translate the abstract language of concepts (mobilization, charisma) in the concrete language of empirical observation? And here is what we must do: specifying the observable manifestations of the concept and its tangible dimensions: in short, translating the concepts into indicators.

This phase is what we call *operational framework*, conduction of concepts, definition of operating concepts. We have to figure out how to use them, how to transform them into our *reading tools*.

We do not aim at developing a reflection and a wider exposure on the methodological construction of a project. In a few words, we can say that translating the problem into tangible dimensions and choosing its indicators (the *categories* that need investigation) are the first steps of the job. Next, there is the need to choose the data collection techniques (the indicators and categories that will guide us towards where and how to find them). Then, the collected data and the opened question will guide us in the definition of the analytical techniques.

This short script on how to develop a project gives an idea on the objectives of this study: to discuss the methodological possibilities of the concept of event (which is very common in our analyses<sup>2</sup>), i.e, the ways in which this concept can turn itself into a concept-operator and generate analytical indicators. What operations of such concept can guide the investigations on the object under analysis? Sometimes an event calls everyone's attention: the focus of “Operação Lava-Jato” and the media on triplex in Guarujá, for example. How can we proceed from here? How can we develop an analysis by considering this fact as an *event*?

From a pragmatist perspective, the event is a concrete fact of everyday life with great power of affectation, thus causing concerns and demanding choices and actions, which orientates and reveals meanings of the society in which it occurs. When discussing the concept of event, we reflect on the methodological and epistemological matters in the Communication field, considering that

<sup>2</sup> The concept of event has been conducting the works we have been developing in our research group. From theoretical, methodological and empirical discussions about the event, we have carried out monographs, dissertations, theses and research and extension projects.

when thinking about its administration, we also define our relation regarding Communication, our object and the ways to address our questions.

As suggested previously, to question our object of study to achieve a good formulation of the research problem and methodological indicators implies an elaboration work. There is the need to explore the potentials of the concept, and to define our question according to what they indicate. The concept of event offers us many possibilities; each one of them allows us to follow different questioning and methodological paths. Next, we present an experimental exercise to explore some of these possibilities.

### **OF WHAT EVENTS ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?**

Before going any further with this exercise, there is the need to better highlight which event we are talking about, given the different fields that work with the term. From philosophy to journalism and history, the concept has already been explored from several perspectives.

In history, the event as an object of study works in the construction of the society considering temporalities, the notions of present, past, and future provided by the event (Koselleck, 2006). When it comes to time, Koselleck (2006) points out that the present story always manifests itself from experience and expectation, two interdependent and complementary categories that, according to him, constitute our sensitivity of time when studying or experiencing an historical event.

Philosophers such as Arendt (2008), Ricoeur (1991) and Foucault (2014) meaningfully contribute to the concept and see it as a key factor in the understanding of different aspects of human relationships. Ricoeur and Foucault treated the event as a linguistic phenomenon, a social manifestation given through narrative and discourse. While Arendt found in the event a way of searching for understanding:

Understanding, unlike correct information and scientific knowledge, is a complex process that never generates clear results. It is a never-ending activity under constant changes through which we get into an agreement with reality, i.e, we try to feel the world as our home. (Arendt, 2008: 330)

In communication studies, we also find different approaches of the event, especially in journalism, in which the term designates both the substrate of the news and its discursive elaboration by massive media – the event as a social phenomenon presented by the media (Charaudeau, 2006; Mouillaud, 2002) – and

as a way of understanding journalism as one of the current grammars of social writing (Meditsch, 2010).

Some of these approaches have a constructivist perspective on the event, i.e., treat it like an object of language and human thinking, before considering (or even neglecting) the existential and factual dimension of the event. This differs from the pragmatism notion of the concept studied by the sociologist Louis Quéré – the reference that we will propose different methodological uses of the concept.

For Quéré (2011a), before or after a process of symbolization through language, the events are occurrences in the material world that can affect our senses. “According to pragmatism, we understand the events as concrete things before considering it as part of the speech. Events are things that happen” (Ibid.: 179). It is this *dimension of experience* in the event that seems exciting, because it enables us to identify the elements that constitute our interactions with other human beings and other parts of everyday life affected by the unexpected, by emerging episodes that disturb and (re)organize the social environment.

It is with this in mind that the event is not simply an object to be explained, or a linguistic construction that comprises reality, but as something from which we can see ourselves as a society. In the perspective defended by Quéré, there is an inversion regarding the ones previously mentioned, which, for us, grants a more promising hermeneutical power to the concept.

Instead of being the context in which the event occurred the responsible for explaining the event itself, the event becomes the one that clarifies its context, modifies its understanding, or previous experiences, to reveal a situation from its perspective, discover “an unexpected landscape of actions and passions” (Arendt), bring up surprising possibilities, and cast its light on what precedes it and what can follow it. (Ibid.: 2005: 67)

As we have already highlighted in other opportunities (França, 2012), the potentiality of the event lies on the challenge of identifying, from its occurrences, the trends that lead to the preservation and/or renovation of social life.

## DIFFERENT METHODOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

Starting from a pragmatist perspective of the event, now we will explore the analytical possibilities of the concept regarding its methodology, i.e, the way it can be conducted in scientific research – remembering that what defines the paths

to be followed is the question, the formulation of the problem. The conduction of the concept occurs according to the matter that needs to be answered.

It is worth to mention that, as any other theoretical-methodological operator, the event must establish a dialogue with empirical research in a process of mutual understanding and comparison, not being used as a tie or simple application. Otherwise, it weakens its analytical capability of becoming a bureaucratic instrument. After these considerations, we detail below the several possible approaches of the event.

### **The hermeneutical power of the event**

When emerging in daily life, the event brings forward meanings, speeches and symbolizations capable of understanding it and reporting it. Quéré calls this power of generating meanings hermeneutical power: “on the one hand, it claims for comprehension, and not only explanation; on the other hand, it makes things understandable – it has, therefore, a revelation power” (Quéré, 2005: 60).

In this perspective, the event also highlights the temporality movements. According to Quéré (2005: 69), the event “is not only produced in time: it also gives ‘time to see’”. Located in the present, it recalls and (re)builds the past and suggests possible future scenarios. Mead highlights that: a given situation “becomes a history and a prophecy” (Mead, 1932: 52 apud Quéré, 2005: 62). Thus, when it happens, the event reveals its past and broadens its future possibilities.

As a establisher of new horizons, the event, therefore, has a founding character that “necessarily presents something new or that has never happened before” (Ibid.: 61).

On other occasions, we approach the potentiality of the event to bring out veiled public issues, as well as to point out possibilities and mobilize changes (França, 2011). It is by following this method that the concept can be used as an analytical operator, besides structuring the procedural choices and analytical techniques from these assumptions.

Hence, the event offers rich theoretical elements for research that question the produced social meanings and emerge from a certain occurrence. A political factor, as the inauguration of a new president, a street demonstration, or the implementation of a public policy generates different meanings materialized in several discursive forms such as chats at the bus stop (oral) or images and words broadcast by the media (printed).

When observing these changes in the meanings of the events and electing the materials from which it can be analyzed, the researcher will try to catch the meanings under circulation and its variations, settings and contractions, by

analyzing what they reveal about the event itself and the society. This way, it is possible to identify what emerged or was disturbed by the event, its respective implications and new perspectives and points of view.

Another possibility is to analyze the different frameworks of an event, not only by identifying the perspectives adopted by the news, but also by realizing the use of meaning frameworks (Goffman, 2012), i.e, the insertion of the event within certain settings, the definition of interactive situations, and the positioning of the subject in the context of the event. When trying to understand the frameworks of the Pope's visit to Brazil, for example, the researcher will analyze the several produced meanings by identifying the frameworks, the subjects involved and their interactions.

Considering the case of the commemorations of the 500 years of the Portuguese arrival in Brazil<sup>3</sup>, we see that the analysis of the different discursive productions developed throughout this event highlights the diversity of meanings that emerge from the date and from festivities and/or social movements conducted in 2000. What past was evoked both for the celebrations and the arrival of Cabral? How this time (500 years) was measured – what chronology was opened? What actors, employing what roles, were part of this event?

<sup>3</sup> See the collection of studies produced by researchers of four groups about the commemorations of the 500 years, *Imagens do Brasil – modos de ver, modos de conviver* (França; Guimarães; Vaz, 2002).

The conduction of the hermeneutical power of the event, as illustrated in the examples above, aims at identifying the different reading possibilities brought by the event to understand the several meanings opened by it.

### **The susceptibility of the event**

Another important aspect regarding the concept of event is its susceptible dimension, which Quéré calls power of affectation: “the way these occurrences [events] affect the subject's experience” (Simões, 2014: 191) and its ability of generating consequences. Here we highlight the fact that the event can affect someone, thus promoting an experience. We start from the pragmatics' notion of experience, especially the one by Dewey (2010), when they start to see the experience as a consequence of the interaction between the subjects, the world and themselves, in a way that an action always generates another action, in a non-linear and non-transmissive process, but of mutual affectation:

The real event is not only of the order of what occurs, of what is going on and what it produced, but also of what happens to someone. If it happens to someone, this means that someone has to deal with it, fortunately or unfortunately. It means that it affects someone, one way or another, which causes reactions and more or less appropriate responses. (Quéré, 2005: 61)

Quéré refers to the double reflex of construction of experience that, according to Dewey (2010), is characterized by the undergoing and acting in consequence, also present in situations of social interaction.

Studies about public find, in the conception of event, an analytic operator to unveil what the individuals are affected by a particular social emergency, the context of these individuals and how they act as part of a public, what are their (re)actions and affectations. Babo (2013) observes that it is always possible to perceive the public through events, which, depending on the forms of affectation and individuals' (re)actions, can lead to public issues of wide social discussion.

Events of violence against women, for example, can imply the configuration of different publics, which, consequently, put into circulation several speeches that can potentially initiate a public debate on the issue, involving different political perspectives.

In addition to the analysis of public, the susceptibility of events can contribute to the translation of communicative experiences. Coming back to the example of the Pope's visit to Brazil during the World Youth Day, we could also carry out a communicative analysis by observing the participants' interactions in several environments of this event. In this case, the researcher would try to understand the affectation of the subjects in interaction moment and identify the manifestations (verbalized or not) of this affectation.

Frequently, some television programs, when undergoing an important moment, become real events – the final chapters of certain soap operas, or the decisive voting in the reality show Big Brother Brazil (BBB). Almeida (2008), when analyzing the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of BBB, showed how a romantic relationship that emerged during the program created public adhesion, and how a participant known as “Cowboy”, seen as the villain, was the object of the public's aversion. The involvement of the public evolved into aggressive demonstrations towards the former participant and his family.

The conduction of the concept of event through susceptibility guides the identification of publics created and affected by it and the forms of behavior and actions that arise from it.

### **The double life of the event**

One of the main elements of the pragmatist notion of the event that we work with is its double dimension or, the way Quéré (2012) calls it, the “double life”. The first one is the existential life of the event, one of the main aspects that distinguish this theoretical approach from the other conceptions. This dimension shows the moment when the event emerges and becomes an experience, affecting

the collective daily life and the subject's sensibility: "the existential is simply what exists, what we experience as existing with its immediate qualities" (Quéré, 2012: 23).

When generating affection in individuals and groups of people, the event also brings up meanings in the search for its own definition and understanding. In this context, the event shows its second half, of high symbolic potential, which turns an existential phenomenon into a knowledge object that can be identified (delimited, even if not definitive) and interpreted. According to Simões (2014: 190), "the existential-event gains a new dimension when symbolized through language, thus becoming an object-event". The nature of object of the events is associated with the possibility of "domestication" aimed at understanding, revealing possible pasts and futures (Quéré, 2012).

There is need to highlight, however, that despite being theoretically different, these two lives are still connected in a way that it is impossible to break them apart. And this is not an analytic proposition. It is also necessary to highlight these two sides to avoid losing sight of them as articulated dimensions, even in the case of an analysis being focused on the symbolic dimension, of meaning production of an event, or on its dimension as an experience.

It is in this context that these two lives of the event contribute to research in Communication. On the one hand, it allows the identification and the analysis of individual and collective experiences, of affectation and factuality of the phenomena. On the other hand, it makes it possible to see the construction process of narratives about an event, its conflicts of meaning, and the spectacularization of a certain event thanks to the speeches disseminated by the media, not forgetting that these dimensions relate to each other.

Sport events are meaningful empirical phenomena in Brazilian culture and can be object of event study from different perspectives. The engagement and the experience of football fans during a football match; the watching and participation practice in football matches; the spectacularization of the sport in occasions such as the World Cup and the Olympics; the mediatization (Hjarvard, 2014) of some sports are some of the examples that can be analyzed both by the existential dimension and the production and conflicts of meaning.

As already emphasized, what will define the approach chosen is the formulation of the problem of research and the nature of the event. Events such as carnival, football, religious festivities, offer both experimental and symbolical elements. Other events are more expressive through the language, without losing sight of its power of affectation in the concrete world, such as political scandals, electoral disputes, the end of a soap opera or reality show, among others.

Simões (2012a) approaches the double life of the event to study the construction of the public image of the former football player Ronaldo, considering him a celebrity-event with hermeneutical and affectation power, capable of convening publics and promoting the production and circulation of meanings between the subjects. Trindade (2012), however, works with magazine covers as meaning potentials, analyzing the events during the presidential election of 2010 regarding its power of affectation and conflicts of meaning.

### The spectacularization of the event

This theme has two distinct theoretical matrices: the concept of society of the spectacle, by Guy Debord (1997), and what is known as *media events*.

The perspective by Debord and by the *Internazionale Situazionista*<sup>4</sup> developed during a moment of dissatisfaction that culminated in the French May 1968, highlights the consumption dimension of the event: everything has turned into a show, in a representation; we live oppressive times of image commercialization of all aspects of life. To analyze the events according to this point of view is to demonstrate how they are exploited and spectacularized by the media as an alienation product.

In a very distinct way, and from a more anthropological perspective, *media events* (which have been especially studied by American research, having previous background from decades ago<sup>5</sup>), earn projection with works by Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz in the 80's (until 1992). In short, it can be translated as a double-sided relationship between the media and events. On the one hand, it emphasizes the analysis of mass communication, focusing on the covering of big events<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, it highlights the new quality that the events acquire when disseminated by the media; they turn into big spectacles and fulfill social functions.

According to Dayan and Katz (1992), media events can be grouped into three main scripts: competitions (such as the World Cup); achievements (achievements carried out by heroes and science, such as the case of Dolly the sheep, the first mammal clone); coronations and decisive moments in the career of charismatic figures (the death of Ayrton Senna). According to the authors (in a Durkheim's perspective), above all, events perform a function of social integration.

These studies were reviewed by current authors and Dayan himself (2006), who highlighted other dimensions: its association with power and competitive and polemic situations (Dayan analyzes September 11, 2001);

<sup>4</sup> *La société du spectacle*, a true accusation against capitalism and the society of consumption, was released on November 1967, anticipating and casting the spirit of May 1968. A critic about this concept was carried out by Freire (2008).

<sup>5</sup> Here we can mention the pioneering work of Cantril (1985) published on 1940, which analyses the great public commotion caused by Orson Welles' radio program *The invasion from Mars*, produced in 1938, on the United States. A portion of the public understood that the invasion was real, which caused a widespread panic.

<sup>6</sup> Dayan and Katz (1992) define *media events* as *high holidays of mass communication*.

the scandals and natural disasters; national and international news (Kellner, 2003), and the “thickening” of the world’s media culture (Couldry; Hepp; Krotz, 2010).

From this literature, three aspects or analytical dimensions stand out as central axes of the event: the ritualistic dimension; the performative dimension; the relationship between events and social values.

The first dimension, with the help of the concept of ritual, allow us to understand how some events comprise formal and symbolic dimensions because of religious and/or traditional values, almost resembling sacralization. Sport competitions, especially when at the finals, are expressive examples of contemporary rituals. The delivery of medals with National Anthems playing in the background and waving flags in the presence of a leader or figure of great recognition becomes an emotional moment, a ritual that strengthens nationalism. In funerals, coronations and inauguration of leaders, it is possible to observe and identify what elements comprise the event as a ritual. Different analyses of the death of Tancredo Neves (Prata; Campelo, 2011) highlighted the ritual aspect of that event (from authorities, family members and the media) contained in the death of a martyr and a hero.

The performance analysis replaces the concept of ritual by the one of performance; more than symbolism and sacralization, it identifies the performances, the formal and the aesthetic dimension around it that was incorporated into the event-spectacle. When analyzing the celebration of the 500 years since the Portuguese arrival in Brazil, in April 22, 2000, we could identify several performances rehearsed and executed by authorities (Portuguese authorities; failure of the vessel) or social movements (presence and intervention of indigenous and black groups).

Following these two dimensions, and by adding something to them, we can also develop an analysis of values: what social, cultural and religious values were expressed and highlighted by the event-spectacle? *Criança Esperança*, a media event annually promoted by Rede Globo, can be mentioned as an example. From the performances, the profile of the guests, the type of disseminated speeches, slogans and examples, it is possible to understand which values, besides children’s care, the event promotes and sells.

### **The individualization of the event**

The individualization of an event implies its singular character when compared to others. This method wants to promote understanding despite not being the only one to try to do so, considering other approaches are

# D

## Event analysis

also good. For Quéré (2011b), understanding the dynamic is essential to comprehend the process itself and its social nature. To individualize is to separate, to search for singularities; this differentiation, however, does not come alone: is part of a genus or a species. In other words, it refers to the individual (implying a unit dimension and an identity dimension) and the context in which he is inserted.

The meanings of the event come from its singularities, but are also brought to light and confronted by the meanings of the context in which they are. “If individualization is differentiation, segregation, unification, qualification, it is also structuring, integration, and resolution of tensions and contradictions” (Ibid.: 14). For this reason, the individualization of an event, the analysis of how it has become so huge compared to the others is a way to better interpret its meanings, and highlight the social ties exposed by it: individualization operations show that it “undergoes socialization, is part of the social world (of established meanings, institutions, habits and actions etc.)” (Ibid.: 14).

For Quéré, the individualization results from *prise de forme*; in two articles (1995, 2011b), he suggests the use of analytical operations to allow us to understand the formation and the process of social inscription of the event. These operations can be more or less extended; in a previous study (França, 2011), we presented a synthesis containing five steps: description; narrativization; identification of pragmatic background; characterization of the public issue; and normalization<sup>7</sup>, which we will briefly address soon.

<sup>7</sup> Simões (2012b) presented a synthesis of three stages of the process of individualization:

- 1) description, in which the event is identified and described, relating it to others to perceive its singularity;
- 2) narration, in which is organized the narrative of the event, placing it in time;
- 3) pragmatic background, in which the involvement and the positioning of individuals are perceived in relation to the event.

The *description* has the most obvious characteristics of the event, considering it contains the facts, but, above all, identifies how it was categorized, i.e, its frames or frameworks. As an example, we have the intervention of black blocks during a manifestation in the year of 2013: was it understood as an *action of vandals*, as *political confrontation*, a *direct action* from the protesters? This descriptive stage is decisive to gather all the facts and how they were understood by the media and/or the society.

The *narrativization* is the articulation of its several moments, the identification of the agents, and the structuring of time. It is conducted after the completion of the several stages of the event, but usually the media already has some narrative models ready, and the upcoming event just needs to be fitted in the available schemes. Analyzing the construction of the narrative is important to understand its focus (what actions were privileged?), its place in time (what was the starting point of a certain corruption scandal according to history?), its agents and respective roles (what kind of action?).

The *identification of the pragmatic background* corresponds to the experience level and lead as to the analysis of reception of the event: how it was received, the actions and reactions caused by it. Considering the pragmatic background is fed by the common sense and the normative structures of a culture: the commotion, prayers, feelings of outrage caused by the death of Isabella Nardoni<sup>8</sup>, for example, resemble behavior and cultural patterns of the Brazilian society.

While the *characterization of a public issue* not only depends on the event; it is about recognizing that specific event is part of a broader category that affects/damages the society as a whole, and should undergo special handling or some sort of retaliation. Car accidents caused by alcoholism are a public issue and have been intensifying the law against the use of alcohol while driving. Recurring murders of women in Brazil are often disseminated by the media as crimes of passion, explained by the partner's jealousy and emotional imbalance. Feminist movements and sectors of the Brazilian Federal Government, based on the actions of the currently extinct Ministry of Women, Racial Equality and Human Rights, have been fighting to make these occurrences be recognized as cases of crime of gender and as a public issue that demands deep interventions.

Finally, *normalization* is the observation of that moment when the curve of interest and mobilization around an event goes down, and the effect caused by it decreases or disappears, and everything comes back to normal. It is the time when the event is absorbed by everyday life.

By following this analysis, we aimed at highlighting the singularities of a particular event, what makes it stand out, and how it becomes part of everyday life after a while.

## CONCLUSION

One of the current challenges of our field is the search for possible methods of understanding of a very complex object study: the communication itself. As said by Braga (2011), we believe the education process of a researcher needs to include knowledge on the methodology not just as a set of techniques, but as constant decisions supported by a guiding theoretical perspective that does not limit the empirical object. Research must be open to dialogue and comparisons between the theoretical framework of reference and the focus of reflection. Which is possible thanks to methodology.

It is from this perspective that, in our research, the use of the concept of event as a guiding and analytical operator has proven to be quite useful,

<sup>8</sup> Isabella Nardoni, a five-year-old girl, was killed and thrown through a window on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of a building, in 2008. This hideous crime was presumably executed by her father and stepmother.

considering it enables the approach of different communicative aspects: interaction between subjects in the context of the everyday experiences; the production, circulation and conflicts of meaning and the several sides of social life; the values that are accepted and those that are questioned; what society wants to preserve when normality is broken; the agents and the direction they follow; the movement of time in the context of communication, among other things.

However, in this text, more than highlighting the potential of the concept of event, we try to show how it unfolds itself in different analytical possibilities, and how our questions around the object of study indicate several paths to follow. There are several methodologies of analysis of the event of promising methodological designs.

Thus, our purpose here was not to offer research techniques, but to present some possibilities that have been studied by us. This synthesis is the result of our engagement with the concept in specific contexts, in the orientation and conduction of researches. Reporting this path seemed a good idea to discuss the event and its methodological potential in Communication. At the same time, we want to contribute to researchers undergoing different education and research phases that might consider this concept in their theoretical-methodological path.

A research based on the several studies already developed in the area and guided by the concept of event might indicate other approaches and elements of analysis. The proposed synthesis does not end here; this might be the starting point of a methodological discussion of a concept that, according to different authors and theoretical perspectives, has been relevant. ■

## REFERENCES

- ALMEIDA, R. E. *A performance dos públicos e a constituição social de valores: o caso Alberto Cowboy*. 2008. 176 f. Master Thesis (Master in Social Communication) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação Social, Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, 2008.
- ARENDT, H. Compreensão e política. In: \_\_\_\_\_. *Compreender: formação, exílio e totalitarismos (ensaios) 1930-54*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras; Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2008. p. 330-346.
- BABO, I. O acontecimento e os seus públicos. *Comunicação e Sociedade*, Braga, v. 23, p. 218-235, 2013. DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.17231/comsoc.23\(2013\).1623](http://dx.doi.org/10.17231/comsoc.23(2013).1623).

- BRAGA, J. L. A prática da pesquisa em comunicação: abordagem metodológica como tomada de decisões. *Revista da Associação Nacional de Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação – E-compós*, Brasília, DF, v. 14, n. 1, p. 1-33, jan./abr. 2011.
- CANTRIL, H. La invasión desde Marte. In: MORAGAS, M. (Org.). *Sociología de la comunicación de masas. II. Estructura, funciones y efectos*. Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 1985. p. 91-110.
- CHARAUDEAU, P. A construção da notícia: um mundo filtrado. In: \_\_\_\_\_. *Discurso das mídias*. São Paulo: Contexto, 2006. p. 131-142.
- COULDRY, N.; HEPP, A.; KROTZ, F. (Orgs.). *Media events in a global age*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- DAYAN, D. (Org.). *La terreur spectacle. Terrorisme et télévision*. Bruxelas: De Boeck, 2006.
- DAYAN, D.; KATZ, E. *Media events: the live broadcasting of history*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- DEBORD, G. *A sociedade do espetáculo. Comentários sobre a sociedade do espetáculo*. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto, 1997.
- DEWEY, J. *Arte como experiência*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2010.
- FOUCAULT, M. *A ordem do discurso: aula inaugural no Collège de France, pronunciada em 2 de dezembro de 1970*. 24. ed. São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 2014.
- FRANÇA, V. R. V. O crime e o trabalho de individuação do acontecimento no espaço midiático. *Caleidoscópio*, Lisbon, v. 10, p. 59-72, 2011.
- \_\_\_\_\_. O acontecimento para além do acontecimento: uma ferramenta heurística. In: FRANÇA, V. R. V.; OLIVEIRA, L. (Orgs.). *Acontecimento: reverberações*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2012. p. 39-51.
- FRANÇA, V. R. V.; GUIMARÃES, C.; VAZ, P. B. *Imagens do Brasil – modos de ver, modos de conviver*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2002.
- FREIRE FILHO, J. A sociedade do espetáculo revisitada. *Famecos*, Porto Alegre, v. 22, p. 33-45, 2003. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15448/1980-3729.2003.22.3230>.
- GOFFMAN, E. *Os quadros da experiência social: uma perspectiva de análise*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes. 2012.
- HJARVARD, S. Midiatização: conceituando a mudança social e cultural. *MATRIZES*, São Paulo, v. 8, n. 1, p. 21-44, jan./jun. 2014. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.11606/issn.1982-8160.v8i1p21-44>.
- KELLNER, D. *Media Spectacle*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- KOSELLECK, R. *Futuro passado: contribuição à semântica dos tempos históricos*. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto; PUC-Rio, 2006.

- LAVILLE, C.; DIONNE, J. *A construção do saber. Manual de metodologia da pesquisa em ciências humanas*. Porto Alegre: Artmed; Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 1999.
- MEDITSCH, E. Jornalismo e construção social do acontecimento. In: BENETTI, M.; FONSECA, V. P. S. (Orgs.). *Jornalismo e acontecimento: mapeamentos críticos*. Florianópolis: Insular, 2010. p. 19-42.
- MOUILLAUD, M. A crítica do acontecimento ou o fato em questão. In: MOUILLAUD, M.; PORTO, S. D. (Orgs.). *O jornal: da forma ao sentido*. 2. ed. Brasília, DF: Editora da UnB, 2002. p. 49-83.
- PRATA, N.; CAMPELO, W. (Orgs.). *Tancredo Neves: a travessia midiática*. Florianópolis: Insular, 2011.
- QUÉRÉ, L. L'espace public comme forme et comme événement. In: JOSEPH, I. (Org.). *Prendre place. Espace publique et culture dramatique. Colloque de Céziry*. Paris: Ed. Recherches. 1995. p. 93-110.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Entre o facto e o sentido: a dualidade do acontecimento. *Trajectos, Revista de Comunicação, Cultura e Educação*, Lisbon, v. 6, 2005, p. 59-75.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Por uma abordagem pragmatista dos acontecimentos. *Eco-Pós*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 14, n. 2, p. 176-183, 2011a. Entrevista concedida a Leandro Rodrigues Lage e Tiago Barcelos Pereira Salgado.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A individualização do acontecimento no quadro da experiência pública. *Caleidoscópio*, Lisbon, v. 10, p. 13-37, 2011b.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A dupla vida do acontecimento: por um realismo pragmatista. In: FRANÇA, V. R. V.; OLIVEIRA, L. (Orgs.). *Acontecimento: reverberações*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2012. p. 21-38.
- RICOEUR, P. Événement et sens. *Raisons pratiques*, Paris, n. 2, p. 41-56, 1991.
- SIMÕES, P. G. *O acontecimento Ronaldo: a imagem pública de uma celebridade no contexto social contemporâneo*. 2012. 283 f. Ph.D. Thesis (Ph.D. in Social Communication) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação Social, Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, 2012a.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Ronaldo e a Copa de 2002: dons e valores na construção de uma celebridade carismática. *Dispositiva*, Belo Horizonte, v. 1, n. 2, p. 107-121, 2012b.
- \_\_\_\_\_. O acontecimento e o campo da comunicação. In: FRANÇA, V. R. V.; ALDÉ, A.; RAMOS, M. C. *Teorias da comunicação no Brasil: reflexões contemporâneas*. Salvador: Edufba, 2014. p. 173-195.
- TRINDADE, V. C. *Capa de revista e produção de sentidos: possibilidades de leitura a partir do acontecimento Serra X Dilma*. 2012. 127 f. Master Thesis (Master

in Social Communication – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação Social, Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, 2012.

---

Article received on October 3, 2017 and approved in November 8, 2017.