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Is the new *new* digital journalism a type of activism? An analysis of *Jot Down*, *Gatopardo* and *The New Yorker*

Abstract

Digitization and the economic crisis have led journalism to a new paradigm (Albalad, 2018). Contents and customs have changed, supporting media has changed, new journalistic models are hybrids and the mainstream media do not always deal with the issues that society demands (Sims, 2018). With a knowledge of tradition, but following the path of innovation, narrative journalism emerges as a possible response to this state of affairs. The objective of this analysis is to identify the challenges facing narrative journalism and narrative journalists themselves in this regard. We analyse their formats, routines and content, study how their digitally existence (Drok & Hermans, 2016) and ask ourselves if they constitute a platform for journalistic activism. Three magazines were identified for the selection of case studies: *Jot Down*, *Gatopardo* and *The New Yorker*. Their digital models, content and literary quality are the principal reasons for their selection, in addition to their different seniorities, geographical backgrounds and formats. By deploying a qualitative research methodology based on content analysis (Voutsina, 2018), in-depth interviews (Johnson, 2002), non-participant observation and document review, this analysis suggests that the new *new digital journalism* is a kind of activist journalism that upholds the traditions of reporting, narrative journalism and literary quality. This study is based on two theoretical premises: narrative journalism, exemplified by authors such as Sims (1996) and Herrscher (2012) and digital journalism, represented by writers such as Rost (2006) and Domingo & Heinonen (2008).

Keywords

Narrative journalism, digital journalism, activism, *Jot Down*, *Gatopardo*, *The New Yorker*.

1. Introduction

In the New York of the nineteen sixties, the highest aspiration of a journalist with a proven track record was to become a member of the literary elite by writing the novel that would catapult them to fame (Weingarten, 2013; Yagoda, 2000; Ross 1998; Kunkel, 1995; Wolfe, 1973; Grant, 1968). However, when we began to think that journalism could read like a novel,

journalism and literature began to become mutually suspicious of each other. It was labelled a “bastard form” and dubbed “parajournalism” (Wolfe, 1973).

What was branded as *new journalism* was not in fact new (Bak & Reynolds, 2011). Using literary devices to recounting reality (Herscherr, 2014; Schudson, 2003) is a practice that emerged from the realist novels by Zola and Balzac, stories from the Americas (originally called “The Indias” in Spanish), observational journalism, Shakespeare’s Theatre (Herrscher, 2012; Chillón, 2014) and Chinese social movements behind the *baogao wenxue*, the type of Chinese literary reporting journalism that simultaneously demanded reporting faithful to the truth as well as literature faithful to the art (Bak & Reynolds, 2011). As Wolfe (1973) describes:

And so all of a sudden, in the mid-Sixties, here comes a bunch of these lumpen proles, no less, a bunch of slick-magazine and Sunday supplement writers with no literary credentials whatsoever, in most cases –only they are using the techniques of the novelists, even the most sophisticated ones– and on top of that they’re helping themselves to the insights of the men of Charts while they’re at it –and at the same time they’re still doing their low-life legwork, their “digging”, their hustling, their damnable Locker Room Genre reporting– they’re taking of all of these roles at the same time –in other words, they’re ignoring literary class lines that were almost a century in the making (Tom Wolfe, 1973).

Among the authors who joined this tendency at the time were Talese, Didion, Breslin and Mailer, and this type of journalism also has its successors: Susan Orlean, Ted Conover and John McPhee (Boynton, 2012; Herrscher, 2012). Beyond working in a genre that created controversy by breaking the news reporting rules and trying to dethrone novels (Wolfe, 1973), the challenge of current narrative journalists is to exercise a journalism that also defies the rules of digitization. Given the brevity and immediacy required by on-line platforms (Micó, 2006), the new *new journalism* (Boynton, 2012) format remains lengthy and invokes slow journalism (Albalad, 2018).

Against this backdrop, our objective was to analyze journalism in the digital context, observe how it has grown within a social movement optic (Tarrow, 1997) and detect whether activist journalism has resisted the world of immediacy –in favour of a journalism based on research and literary quality.

The case studies were selected from *Jot Down*, *Gatopardo* and *The New Yorker*. Case studies in communication have been used as a technique that is well-adapted to the constraints of our investigation, given that it is a contemporary phenomenon and contributes to knowledge about an individual, group, or organization (Yin, 2014). The case studies are set in different geographical contexts –Spain, Mexico and the United States, respectively. Their publishers were established in different epochs, as *The New Yorker* in 1925, *Gatopardo* in 2001 and *Jot Down* in 2011. In addition, their origins vary depending on the type of media they are. *The New Yorker* and *Gatopardo* were created as a paper publications, but *Jot Down* started life as digital and the paper edition appeared later. All-in-all, it is a question of investigating the practice of some journalists, not only of simply resisting conventions, but also going further and challenging them.

2. The current state of the art

We have identified seven characterisations (Albalad, 2018; Marsh, 2010) referring to the kind of journalism analyzed. For Wolfe (1973), it is *new journalism* which for Capote (1965) is the *nonfiction novel*. Franklin calls it *narrative nonfiction* (1986) and *narrative journalism* (1996); Sims (1996) considers it to be *literary journalism*. Kirtz (1998), *long-form journalism* and Hartsock (2000), *narrative literary journalism*.

The most recent terminology is *new new journalism*, a concept coined by Boynton (2012) after comparing it to the American *new journalism* of the sixties, analyzing authors such as Lillian Ross, Gay Talese and Tom Wolfe, in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first, with names such as Susan Orlean, Ted Conover and Adrien Nicole LeBlanc. For this particular

author, a key difference is that the *new new journalism* incorporates elements of social sciences. According to Boynton (2012), this evolution of *new journalism* is noteworthy for being rigorously reported, psychologically astute, sociologically sophisticated and politically aware.

The techniques it deploys also defines narrative journalism. According to Wolfe (1973), there are four facets to a narrative journalism text: dialogue, detail, first/third person narrator and scene-by-scene construction. Sims (1996) goes further and states that the required features are: immersion, structure, rigour, voice, accountability and symbolic realities. According to Sharlet (2014), these are metaphors of life explained using literary techniques to transform them into stories.

Contursi & Ferro (2000) address these two questions when studying narratives. On one hand, there are differing opinions on what it is; on the other hand, we have become used to a specific meaning associated with it. According to these two authors, the notion of narrative is presented in a form which involves the use of a particular type of language, linked to a notion of the passage of time and to what the protagonists want to do that produce changes; in this way, they define a narrative as a story built along a timeline. According to Polkinghorne (1988), narrative is something in which a protagonist ties together logically –and chronologically– related events that some protagonists cause or experience when shifting from one state to another. Barthes & Duisit (1975) argue that narrative has a dominant character because there cannot be people without stories, while Polkinghorne (1988) defines it as the most significant element required to give meaning to human experience. According to Ricoeur (1999), the configuration of the narrative defines historical reality and is what constitutes the notion of society. Bal & Van Boheemen (2009) define narration as the set of theories of narrative texts, images, displays and cultural artefacts that tell a story. Defining the idea of story-telling in this manner facilitates the analysis of narratives. Bakhtin differentiates between monologues and dialogues and treats them as separate aspects of literature. Propp (1998) analyzes the structure of stories and reveals recurring attributes that characterise them.

Nevertheless, we need to distinguish between plain narrative (“storytelling” in its simplest form) and the text’s intrinsic narrative quality. Pier and García Landa (2008) consider that narrative quality is the set of characteristics that bestow storytelling status on a text. There is academic debate about the definition of this concept. On one hand, we consider that stories “are narratives,” but on the other hand, they may or may not “have narrative quality.” Phelan & Rabinowitz (2005) point out that narrative quality is the set of formal and contextual features that distinguishes narrative from non-narrative. Toolan & Cobley (2001) talk about the experience of narrative quality, relating it to the reading process itself rather than the reader’s reaction to the text.

There are several distinct groups involved with the study of narrative journalism in the digital era. The International Association for Literary Journalism incorporates the multidisciplinary analysis of the new *new Anglo-Saxon journalism*. In this group, Bak & Reynolds (2011) review the origins of the genre and point out that its roots go beyond the United States and the sixties (Sims, 2018; Chillón, 2014). In this framework, the contributions of Abrahamson (2006), Berning (2011) and Dowling and Vogan (2015), deal with the digitization of narrative journalism; Jacobson, Marino and Gutsche (2016) consider it to be an emerging genre. Belt and South (2016), Drok and Hermans (2016) and Le Masurier (2015) expand on the *slow journalism* concept. Neveu (2016) studies the business models used and stresses that they contravene the rules of capitalism. Sharlet (2014) and Palau (2017) discuss its application in topics such as religion and migration, and highlight the empathy that it can create. According to Hartsock (2000), good storytelling involves people, activates their thinking and ensnares them. Palau (2019), Albalad (2018), Angulo (2013), Herrscher (2012) and Chillón (2014) analyze *new journalism* in Spanish. The Foundation of New Latin American Journalism, promoted by García Márquez, focuses on its practical aspects.

In digital journalism, this research at hand takes into account the contributions of Micó (2006) on digital journalism, Deuze (2001), Pavlik (2001) and Rost (2006) on interactivity and contributions to the figure of the digital journalist of Cohen (2018), Sherwood and O'Donnell (2018), Johnston and Wallace (2017) and Wilentz (2014).

Broersma and Eldridge (2019) address the challenge of new trends in digital journalism and the rise of social networks, particularly in terms of dynamic information and authority. Lewis and Molyneux (2018) examine the influence of networks in journalistic practice. Pavlik, Dennis, Mersey and Gengler (2019) state that the shifting media environment promotes continuous adaptation to different platforms and also deploy techniques beyond networks, such as augmented reality. Hermida and Young (2019) and Zamith (2019) discuss data journalism. Novak (2018) analyzes the participation and co-creation of content.

These practices co-exist alongside *slow journalism* and furthermore go in search of committed readership. Broersma (2019) studies the concept of engaged audiences, referring to the cognitive, emotional and affective experience that users have with the content or recognised brands; this phenomenon can result in increased consumption of news, more interaction with the content and greater purchasing of products. *Clickbait*, on the contrary, (Bazaco, Redondo & Sánchez-García, 2019) is a strategy to increase the viral nature of the content.

According to Pew Research (2018), 7 out of 10 Americans are conscious of saturation, given the immediacy and volume of the news to which they are exposed. Bathke (2019) talks about the frustration that instant news can generate and defends slow digital journalism.

On the other hand, the conditions that Tarrow (1997) establishes as basic to social movements serve to analyze narrative journalism through the lens of sociology. The types of activism that Yang (2009) classifies as: cultural, social, political and nationalistic. Mishra and Anant (2006) define activism as a fourth institutional power that extends its mechanisms into decision-making. Cammaerts and Carpenter (2007) describe it as the ability to act to change history; this has been studied according to the theory of social movements, of social changes, and linked to the concepts of resistance and protest (Kling and Posner, 1990; Goodwin and Jasper, 2003). According to Butler (2011), it is about social movements organized in defence of an ideology, philosophy and strategy. According to the author and also to Bennett (2010), new communication channels have transformed the notion of activism. Butler (2011) and Lee and Hsieh (2013) compare the concept with *slacktivism*. Russell (2017) describes how, with digitalization, the boundaries between activism and journalism have become blurred and analyzes the concepts of power and authority of digital journalism. Bolaños (2017) and Olesen (2008) compare investigative journalism and activism.

3. Methodology

Qualitative research techniques were used in this study: content analysis, in-depth interviews, non-participant observation and literature review (Busquet, Medina & Sort, 2006). Content analysis was applied to a total of 45 articles in the 3 selected media: *ŷot Down*, *Gatopardo* and *The New Yorker*. The case study of these media was made in this manner. Case study in communication was used because we are investigating a contemporary phenomenon to contribute to the knowledge about an individual, group, organization and their associated elements. This involved focusing on three cases and establishing a holistic perspective from them (Yin, 2014).

We defend our selection particularly because of their diversity: they were created in different places, in different epochs and in different formats. *ŷot Down* is Spanish, created in 2011 and is a digital native. *Gatopardo* is Mexican, born in Colombia in 2001 on paper. Also created on paper, in 1925 and in New York is *The New Yorker*. This variety of origins allows our research to contemplate the evolution of three different cultural aspects of narrative journalism, by geography, generation and format. Their comparison allows the character of

each medium to be differentiated and how they foster their narrative journalism according to this.

As regards the content analysis, a piece from each of the sections of each medium was chosen to have a selection of case studies representative of all the topics covered. In total, 15 pieces from each medium were examined. The selection of pieces was based on a table of characteristics that included the main categories of analysis to detect the elements of narrative journalism and digital journalism that appeared in the pieces. The purpose was to detect to what extent these types of articles and the journalists who wrote them exert resistance that could be construed as activism within journalism.

These aforementioned categories were grouped into four parts: identification, form, content and audience. The first part places the piece according to its section, author and publisher. In the second part, the elements, part and structure of each piece of news are evaluated, taking into account its presence and its aspect digitally and on paper. The specified fields correspond to the elements to be analyzed: subtitles, multimedia complements, images, positioning and volume strategies (measured by the number of on-line page scrolls or physical paper pages). As regards the content, in the table the typology and appearance of the narrative are deepened, and the four main elements that Wolfe (1973) considered that a text should possess to be considered narrative journalism: dialogue, use of the first or third person singular, detail and scene-by-scene construction. Wolfe (1973) proposes a hybrid profile. He is not a narrative theorist, although his work *The New Journalism* describes the foundations of a genre that he, and others such as Breslin or Talese, put into practice. This research takes into account the contributions mentioned in a theoretical framework, although it takes this particular work of Wolfe (1973) as a reference for content analysis as it is a reflection from a practical point of view, establishing patterns for classifying texts, and also takes into account that he is considered to be the founding author of the genre (Chillón, 2014; Herrscher, 2012).

In addition to the four mentioned, the content category includes an analysis of the presence of the journalist, the use of adjectives, the narrative point of view and the verb tense. Accordingly, topic and tense are identified separately. Audience identification is based on the interactions with the pieces on the social networks in which it was published and the comments obtained. Examining each of these categories allows us to ascertain to what extent the elements of narrative journalism and those of digital journalism are present in each piece, and to analyze which are the dominant ones (see Annex 1).

Content analysis (Van Dijk, 2013) is supported by research on narrative journalism such as that of Jacobson, Marino and Gutsche (2016) and Domingo and Heinonen (2008).

In-depth interviews (Voutsina, 2018; Johnson, 2002) contribute by providing context and also help us understand the attitudes and motivations of the subjects. This technique was used in similar research such as Albalad (2018), Angulo (2013) and Berning (2011). In-depth interviews were held with 34 narrative journalism professionals, related to any of the three journals that are part of the case studies selection, or were associated with an academic institution. Of the 34 interviews, 22 were conducted in person, the rest by videoconference or telephone. The face-to-face interviews were held in the workplaces of the narrative journalists consulted. In the case of the editors of *The New Yorker*, we visited the publisher in person for interviews and non-participant observation. Questionnaires were designed to answer the questions that this research raises from an individual point of view. The questionnaire consisted of fifteen questions; some were common for all interviewees, but others were customised according to the interviewee's career, medium and position. The issues were classified into three groups: individual experience of the journalist in the media, writing dynamics and analysis of narrative journalism. A broad variety of profiles was chosen in an attempt to ensure that all criteria produced a statistically significant number of results. The list of journalists interviewed is as follows:

1. Jacqui Banaszynski, editor of the Nieman Storyboard (Harvard University).
2. Joshua Benton, director of the Nieman Lab (Harvard University).
3. Carla Blumenkranz, online director of *The New Yorker*.
4. Mark Bowden, writer and narrative journalist.
5. Robert Boynton, journalist at *The New Yorker* (interviewed in 2014 and 2018).
6. Nathan Burstein, managing editor of *The New Yorker*.
7. Joshua Clover, professor of non-fiction (University of California Davis).
8. Lauren Collins, journalist at *The New Yorker*.
9. Ted Conover, freelance writer and contributor at *The New Yorker*.
10. Rubén Díaz, deputy director of *ŷot Down*.
11. John Durham Peters, Professor of Media Studies (Yale University).
12. Carles Foguet, communication director of *ŷot Down*.
13. Ángel Fernández, director of *ŷot Down*.
14. Zoe Greenberg, long-form Journalist at The New York Times.
15. Eliza Griswold, editor of *The New Yorker*.
16. Leila Guerriero, editor of *Gatopardo*.
17. Roberto Herrscher, collaborator at *Gatopardo*.
18. Ricardo Jonás, co-founder of *ŷot Down*.
19. Carolyn Kormann, editor of *The New Yorker*.
20. Jon Lee Anderson, journalist at *The New Yorker*.
21. Ramón Lobo, freelance journalist, writer at *ŷot Down*.
22. Larissa MacFarquhar, journalist at *The New Yorker*.
23. Monica Račić, multimedia editor at *The New Yorker*.
24. William Reynolds, president of the International Association for Literary Journalism.
25. Noah Rosenberg, director of *Narratively*.
26. Carlo Rotella, freelance writer at *The New Yorker*.
27. Emiliano Ruiz, freelance journalist for *Gatopardo*.
28. Alberto Salcedo Ramos, professor at the Gabriel García Márquez Foundation of New Ibero-American Journalism.
29. Susy Schultz, director of *Public Narrative*.
30. Jeffrey Sharlet, narrative journalist, professor at Dartmouth University.
31. Norman Sims, former president of the International Association for Literary Journalism.
32. McKenna Stayner, editor of *The New Yorker*.
33. Marcela Vargas, digital ex-editor of *Gatopardo*.
34. Julio Villanueva Chang, director of *Black Label*.

The analytical processing of the interviews was carried out in three sequential stages: (1) transcription, (2) classification of answers by topics and (3) definition of results. These steps allowed the answers from the in-depth interviews to be sorted and individual criteria counted. The transcription phase was carried out as interviews progressed. Because of this, the most recent interviews obtained more concrete answers than the initial ones, as in the life cycle of in-depth interviews (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). The classification and drafting of results phases are presented combined, based on the results obtained during all interviews. The number of respondents and the volume of accumulated material obliged researchers to select only the essential aspects; otherwise, the total number of responses obtained would have exceeded the length of the usual results dissemination formats.

As regards the non-participative observation, this was undertaken in only one of the media, *The New Yorker*, being the only one that has permanent staff with many of its writers working there physically. *Gatopardo* has writers at the Travesías Media headquarters, where the professionals in charge of management and administration are located, although many of the journalists work externally (Vargas, 2014). *ŷot Down* has no physical office at all and all its

professionals, including administrative staff, work on their own. Because of this, the non-participant observation was conducted only in *The New Yorker*. This non-participant observation took place after the in-depth interviews and was carried out on three different days. The results of this technique allow the conclusions of the interviews to be contrasted and reinforced, particularly as regards the writing routines and the role of narrative journalists in their organisations. The observation time did not extend beyond these three days, being what the medium accepted as a maximum for allowing the presence of researchers on their facilities.

4. Results

The principal result of this research is that contemporary media is a phenomenon that incites new models in narrative journalism (*New new digital journalism*) to emerge because of:

- Economic crises: –and also political instability– in their own environment, one of the reasons why the general public demand independent media (Foguet, 2014).
- The lack of knowledgeable voices: causing people to demand coverage of issues that are not always present in the general media (Jonás, 2014).
- Digitization: which has facilitated a broader media reach (Herrscher, 2014) and has given rise to a new platform in which citizen activism has broadened and combined with journalism (Russell, 2017).
- Languages: in the case of the media analyzed, written in English and Spanish, two of the three most spoken languages globally. Together with digitalization, this factor makes it easier for new narrative journalism media to broadcast farther, specifically, to all Anglo-Saxon and Spanish-speaking countries everywhere (Herrscher, 2014). This condition allows the creation of large communities centred on these particular media and their publications.
- Changes in the accepted concept of communicative: as a direct consequence of digitalization, increasing interactivity and the emergence of new business models (Albalad, 2018; Schultz, 2018).

In this regard, narrative journalism appeared as a new type of activism within the professional world. The media dedicated to it sprang up in response to moments of economic, political and social crises (Durham Peters, 2018; Benton, 2018). Given the complex realities that need to be explained in detail, crises engender new means of narrative journalism. The more the public know about the world, the better they can understand and empathize with it (Griswold, 2018; Reynolds, 2018; Sharlet, 2018). Given that narrative journalism is more necessary in times of crises, this type of media often emerges in convulsed contexts. The content of magazines analyzed corroborate this.

The New Yorker dates from 1925 and started out in a New York prior to the Great Depression, by the hand of a group of intellectuals who wanted to embrace new media spaces (Weingarten, 2013; Kunkel, 1995; Yagoda, 2000). *Gatopardo* comes from Colombia. It was founded in 1999, in the midst of a social crisis caused by the effects of the earthquake that wiped out 2,000 lives. *Jot Down* dates from May 2011, when Spanish society had a need to express its outrage at the country's social and economic crisis. *Jot Down* thus emerged hand-in-hand with the 15M movement (of citizens indignant with the economic crisis, imbued with the spirit of this movement, avowing to change the established order and give a voice to those who did not have one (Foguet, 2014; Jonás, 2014).

Digitalization has blurred the lines between journalism and activism (Russell, 2017) and on both sides, particularly the information professionals that strive to set themselves apart from the rest. Narrative journalism is not social activism as such (Salcedo Ramos, 2018; Sharlet, 2018). Nevertheless, reporting does have an agenda-setting effect (Olesen, 2008). The activism exercised by narrative journalism can be considered as activism within journalism.

It has a cause, followers and militants, platforms on which it broadcasts, a history that it maintains, in addition to an on-going action on which it is based.

This type of journalism and the individuals that practice it appear as a social movement that exercises a specific journalistic activism and exhibits the following properties that Tarrow (1997) established as the basis of social movements:

- **Collective challenge:** the author talks about disruptive actions characterized by the obstruction of activities of others, which might be groups of leaders or other cultural groups or codes. Narrative journalism has been disruptive since its inception (Benton, 2018; Ruiz, 2014). The main disruptive action of this genre is to break with the classical norms of news journalism, and currently, of digital journalism. The conditions expounded by Wolfe (1973) and Sims (1996) are based more on literary writing techniques rather than on journalist's manuals on how to write. This format is indeed disruptive, although it does not go so far as to obstruct the activity of the majority groups of informative journalism. The digital journalism case is the same.

[...] We were moving beyond the conventional limits of journalism, but not merely in terms of technique. The kind of reporting we were doing struck us as far more ambitious, too. It was more intense, more detailed, and certainly more time-consuming than anything that newspaper or magazine reporters, including investigative reporters, were accustomed to... (Tom Wolfe, 1973).

- **Common objective:** according to Tarrow (1997), this is about a statement of demands made of the "opponents" that has a straightforward purpose. Excellent reporting and writing are an absolute requirement in narrative journalism. It is the defence of these journalistic values that defines narrative journalism and becomes the way for it to differentiate itself from instant journalism (Le Masurier, 2015). Not only is quality a requisite, but also narrative journalism has the mundane objective of gaining readership, making their publisher profitable, that is to say, the means by which narrative journalists get paid a salary. Beyond this goal, the objective is to make complex realities understood by giving the public the necessary elements to do so (Griswold, 2018; Reynolds, 2018; Sharlet, 2018).
- **Solidarity:** this is the recognition of a convergence of interests that incites the prospective movement into collective action. Tarrow (1997) emphasizes that leaders can only create social movements when deeply rooted feelings of solidarity or identity burst out. These are reliable bases on which to organise social movements. In this respect, narrative is identity journalism (Banaszynski, 2018; Benton, 2018) and even constituting an elite (Albalad, 2018) of people with the ability to exercise it (Blumenkranz, 2018; Lee Anderson, 2018; Lobo, 2018).
- **Persistence over time:** this is about the collective action of this social movement being sustained despite the opposition to it in an environment of contrary values. In this case, the resistance in an environment saturated with instant news options and the full democratization of journalism in an era of citizen journalism. In this regard, narrative journalism not only survives, but indeed flourishes. In recent decades, above all in the Latin American and North American settings, there has been a boom in the creation of these media (Albalad & Rodríguez, 2012). Collins (2018) and Albalad (2018) talk about a balanced media diet, in which informational journalism and narrative journalism are consumed at different times. This need, together with the complexity of the environment (Reynolds, 2018), explains that fact that narrative journalism developed as an alternative journalistic movement. According to Salcedo Ramos (2018), the chronicles of narrative journalism allow us to understand reality.

This socio-journalistic movement that we have presented, which additionally also displays the characteristics of a social movement (Tarrow, 2017), takes on a role of journalistic activism in defence of its own cause. Compared to informational and digital journalism, narrative journalism exercises the following types of activism within journalism:

4.1. Formal activism

The form of the media analyzed was compared to that of generalist media, detecting formal activism expressing itself in the following ways and means:

- Thematic sections: their section structure does not conform to standard news media classifications. This is demonstrated by those that comprise the media analyzed (see Table 1) and are testimony to one type of this movement’s activism. “We created *Jot Down* to write about the topics we wanted to read about,” says Foguet (2014). Rosenberg (2018) reiterates the same thing about *Narratively*.

Table 1: Sections of the media analyzed.

<i>Jot Down</i>	<i>Gatopardo</i>	<i>The New Yorker</i>
Art and literature	Articles	News
Science	Current affairs	Culture
Cinema-TV	Opinion	Books
Sports	Culture	Business & Tech
Interviews	Artist’s studios	Humour
Music	Drinks	Cartoons
Leisure and Vice	Cars	Magazine
Politics	Newsletter	Video
Society		Podcasts
		Archives
		What’s On

Source: Own elaboration.

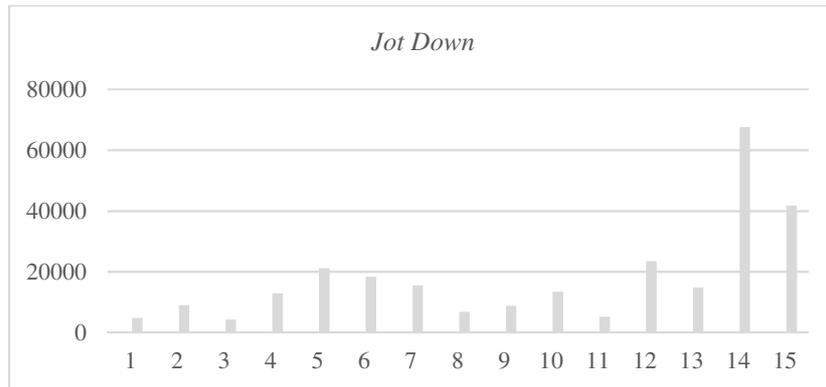
- Images: their use is not simply informative, but also forms a part of the medium’s identity (Díaz Caviedes, 2014). In *Jot Down*, they are in black and white. *Gatopardo* combines black and white with colour to highlight prominent themes. *The New Yorker* frequently uses illustrations.

- Multimedia elements: the use of infographics, interactive graphics and audios is sparse. Video is the only item detected in the articles. It is a sought-after feature (Foguet, 2014), in the conviction that too many multimedia elements could detract from the reader’s immersion (MacFarquhar, 2018; Schultz, 2018).

- Role of the web: at a time when the media is working towards its own digital adaptation, narrative journalism works the other way around, adapting web formats to paper (Albalad & Rodríguez, 2012). In *Jot Down*, this role is intentional. It manifests itself in: sparse use of multimedia resources, references to paper publications (with sections such as the newspaper’s past editions library), formal elements similar to the printed version (such as the digital cover of *Gatopardo*), numbered structure (the digital article numbering is identical to that on paper) and author acknowledgement (who usually has a relevant presence).

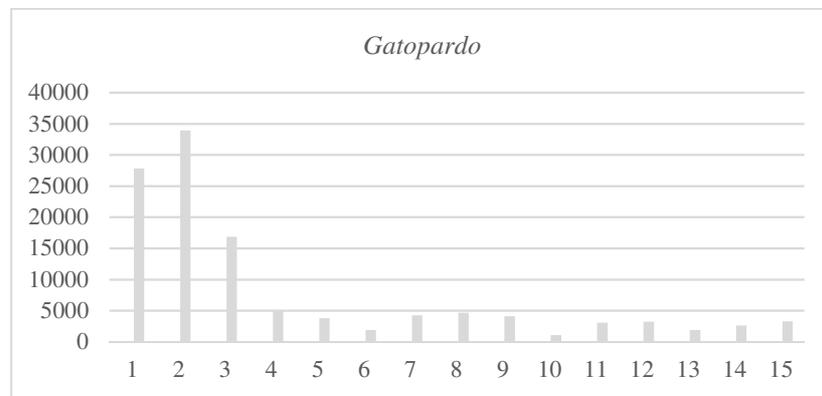
- Length: the customary brevity of digital journalism style (Micó, 2006) is not maintained in the texts we analyzed. Specific piece lengths are not stipulated through an editorial standard, but rather depends on what each topic requires (Burstein, 2018; Račić, 2018). Of the 45 texts studied, 19 have more than 10,000 characters; The range of lengths varies between 1,062 characters to 67,634.

Figure 1: Length in characters of the articles analyzed in *Jot Down*.



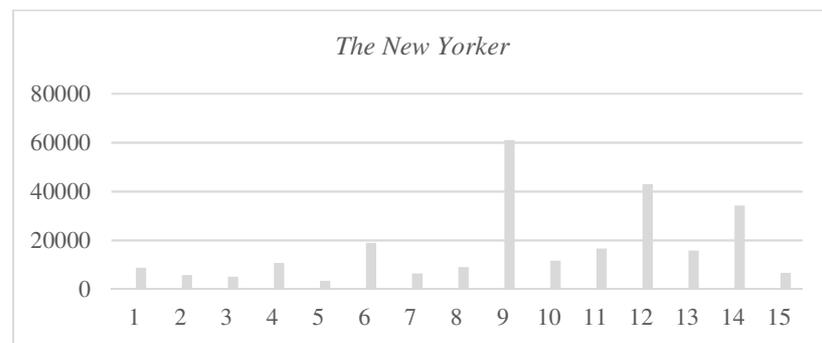
Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 2: Length in characters of the articles analyzed in *Gatopardo*.



Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 3: Length in characters of the articles analyzed in *The New Yorker*.



Source: Own elaboration.

4.2. Activism in the content

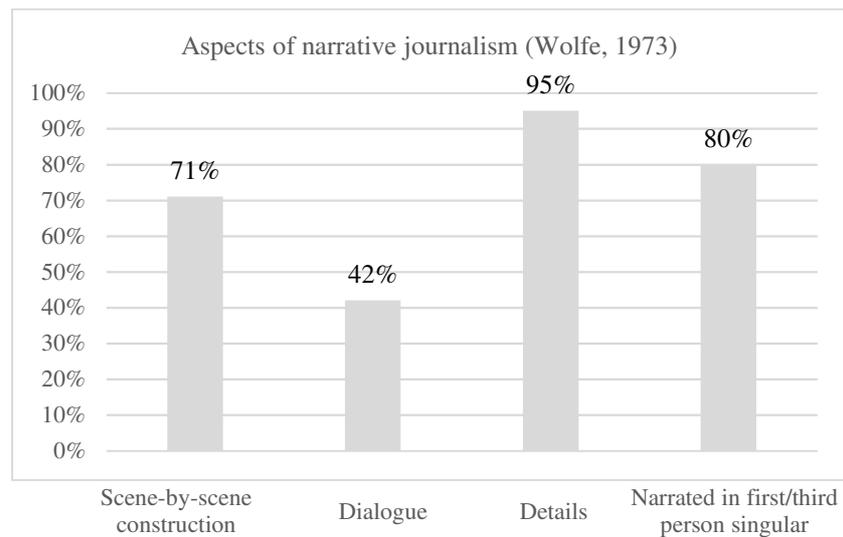
The section titles mentioned previously reveal that the informative spaces covered by this type of journalism do not always coincide with those of the generalist media. We detected a thematic specialization that would result in a segmentation of the public (see Table 1).

Beyond the specific theme in question, content activism is also perpetrated in using literary resources to talk about non-fiction issues. According to Wolfe (1973), the main ones are: dialogue, detail, scene-by-scene construction and use of the first/third person. In the articles studied, 32 use scene-by-scene construction, 19 use dialogue, 43 use detail and in 36 of them, the narration is in the first or third person singular. The use of literary tools has

called the objectivity and rigour of narrative journalism into question. According to Salcedo Ramos (2018), this journalism combines narration and interpretation: the former allows the facts to be recounted, the latter allows the author's vision to be expressed.

In parallel, the articles studied did not conform to the digital journalism standards as defined by Micó (2006). According to him, they are: accuracy, clarity, conciseness, density, precision, simplicity, naturalness, originality, brevity, variety, attraction, rhythm, colour, resonance, detail and property.

Figure 4: Presence of the elements of narrative journalism according to Wolfe (1973).



Source: Own elaboration.

Some of the digital features do indeed coincide with narrative journalism: accuracy, originality, attraction, rhythm, colour, resonance and detail. However, the differences between narrative journalism and digital journalism are to be found in the ways used to achieve them. In digital journalism, multimedia elements cohabit with the written word, whereas in narrative journalism, words alone are everything. Aspects that differ between models were detected. Narrative journalism is not characterized by its brevity (see Figures 1, 2 and 3), neither simplicity, neither conciseness nor clarity (MacFarquhar, 2018; Vargas, 2014).

4.3. *Activism in the professional figure*

The Digital narrative journalist is the figure that responds to the demands of this type of journalism. The narrative journalism movement comprises professionals with specific characteristics (Reynolds, 2018; Guerriero, 2014). According to the interviews we held, the specific characteristics that define the narrative journalist are currently:

- Own point of view: this is about telling the stories differently from standard news reporting, (Díaz Caviades, 2014), through the narrator's eyes (Salcedo Ramos, 2018; Herrscher, 2014). This is where the originality of the narrative journalist comes into play, the narrator own vision which they use to define their own reality (Angulo, 2013).

-Patience: in the modern context based on immediacy (*instant everything*), narrative journalists are regarded as rebels (Reynolds, 2018) who dedicate whatever amount of time the piece requires (Račić, 2018). According to Bowden (2018), Conover (2018) and Guerriero (2014), writing a particular piece might take months. According to Boynton (2018), this is the challenge of our instant world. Burstein (2018), Kormann (2018) of *The New Yorker*, and Greenberg (2018), of *The New York Times* (2018), began as fact-checkers at their publishers; they emphasize that it is a common assignment for young journalists and during which they develop the necessary resistance to be able to report rigorously.

- Curiosity: this is defined as an obsessive interest in what is going on around them (Banaszynski, 2018; Collins, 2018; Lee Anderson, 2018; Reynolds, 2018; Rosenberg, 2018) and people “in action” (Salcedo Ramos, 2018). According to Sharlet (2018), the peculiarity of narrative journalism is that it demands a level of fidelity to the subject in professionals that is comparable to that of people who have religious faith. Some of the authors interviewed speak of passion (Collins, 2018; Rosenberg, 2018).

- Writing excellence: the form has to be without reproach (Kormann, 2018; Sims, 2018; Guerriero, 2014) and the vocabulary precise, to ensure that the reader sticks with the text (Banaszynski, 2018; Villanueva Chang, 2017). According to Lobo (2018), good reporting is in itself not enough if the writing is less than perfect.

- Presence of the journalist: this aspect is not always invoked, although it may be necessary in some stories to legitimize the voice of the journalist and give value to the chronicle’s composition (Salcedo Ramos, 2018). According to Schultz (2018), journalism has to be transparent in its processes, to reinforce the authority of its voice among the public, and more so in our digital era. Lobo (2018) differentiates the United States and Latin America in this regard. He points out that in North America, this is a more accepted practice. In fact, the journalist has presence in 50% of the *The New Yorker* articles analyzed.

-Specialized versatility: in the 34 interviews held, the journalists were asked what the characteristics that digital narrative journalism requires were. Technical knowledge and digital tools were not mentioned by the respondents. The versatility (Sánchez & Micó, 2014) demanded in the generalist media is not required in narrative journalism - specialization is preferred (Bowden, 2018; Conover, 2018; MacFarquhar, 2018).

The abovementioned characteristics produce professionals who are more narrative than digital, few in number and belong to a select group to which only those having the requisite abilities belong. Not all narrative journalism skills can be learned (Banaszynski, 2018; Lobo, 2018).

4.4. *Activism in the writing*

As a social movement, narrative journalism is also disruptive in its writing processes. In this respect, it is part of the “*slow movement*” (David, Blumtritt & Köhler, 2010), whose promulgation turned out to be a turning point in the digital informative debauchery. However, this movement does not contend that journalism must always be slow; it vindicates the public’s freedom to choose the rhythm appropriate to them at all times (Albalad, 2018; Collins, 2018). In narrative journalism, writing stints are variable (Guerriero, 2014); they might be months or years (Rotella, 2018; Račić, 2018; Stayner, 2018). The time devoted to a topic is not determined by the journalist, rather, by the topic itself and the demands it entails. Quality, reporting, substantiation and literary composition are not enemies of deadlines. A text would only be published when all of these conditions had been satisfied (Blumenkranz, 2018; Conover, 2018). This pace is advantageous for the journalist, but it is a privilege that not all professionals are able to enjoy (Rotella, 2018; Díaz Caviedes, 2014). Nevertheless, there is a tacit agreement (Salcedo Ramos, 2018; Villanueva Chang, 2017) in narrative journalism in which the reader accepts having to wait, in exchange for feeling privileged to obtain a quality product.

This slow pace also translates into adding new content on the websites of the magazines analyzed. None exceeds ten new digital pieces daily. Therefore, time is not the main concern, nor the fact that something is happening right now a criterion of newsworthiness (Craig, 2015). In fact, the publication date is not shown in most of the articles examined. This non-time-determined search is something the theme itself permits, so long as it is within the limits of the writing world (Guerriero, 2014).

Durham Peters (2018) defends narrative journalism as a “consecrated space” of knowledge concentration. For the teacher, slow journalism is a type of activism because it is “shock absorbing” for a complex society in which immediacy abounds.

Boynton’s (2018) judgement is: “When you sit down and write something over a long period of time and dedicate yourself to it and to the importance of it, you know that importance in your own mind and you are kind of resisting the larger society and the pace of that society”.

4.5. Activism in business models

The media companies analyzed go about their business following hybrid business models. These are deployed as an alternative to the publicity-based model prevailing in previous decades (Albalad, 2018; Villanueva Chang, 2017; Fernández, 2014). Rosenberg (2018) talks about possible alternative ways of financing that are explored in *Narratively*, related to communication and culture –podcasts, videos, advert copywriting...

The magazines analyzed are encased within profitable business models, although with different income sources. *Jot Down* belongs to Wabi Sabi Investments, which also markets books and organizes events. *Gatopardo* is owned by Travesías Media, which also publishes travel guides. *The New Yorker* is part of Condé Nast, a long-standing holding company, now owned by Advance Publications which also publishes *Vogueo Wired*.

All converge in a structure composed of staff narrative journalists together with freelance associates. Of the 34 journalists interviewed, only the editors of *The New Yorker* admit to being able to subsist solely on the income from narrative journalism. Therefore, most professionals combine this type of writing with other activities (Salcedo Ramos, 2018) to reach a combined income that allows them to survive (Rotella, 2018; Ruiz, 2014; Vargas, 2014).

In this aspect, the activism is the resistance of those professionals who are able to exercise a journalism that they believe in, despite the occupational difficulties caused. Thus, activism is not deployed so much in the hybrid business model with a profitability-centred purpose. Rather, it is more to be found in the working conditions afforded to their journalists. In *Jot Down* and *Gatopardo*, narrative journalists have flexible schedules and are integrated into horizontal structures. *Jot Down* does not have a headquarters, *Gatopardo* has the administrative portion of its staff located in the Travesías Media offices, and *The New Yorker* is the only one of the three that does have editorial offices where most of its journalists work. Moreover, this particular American publication does have a vertical-pyramidal structure, in which each group of writers report to an editor; together the individual editors report to the director (Blumenkranz, 2018; Kormann, 2018; MacFarquhar, 2018; Stayner, 2018). It is here where the generational differences between the media analyzed manifests themselves.

The pro-profession activism in the business model also appears at the time when these conditions facilitate the integration of new authors who otherwise could not have written for the media in question (Díaz Caviedes, 2014; Fernández, 2014; Jonás, 2014). Above all, this case occurs in the digital hybrid models of *Jot Down* and *Gatopardo*. According to Banaszynski (2018) and Greenberg (2018), this type of structure does not make it easy for young journalists to work together in person with experienced experts.

5. Conclusions

The new *new digital journalism* brings about journalistic activism on Internet, promoting the rigorous, profound and well-written content that narrative journalism has implemented since its inception. The digital era, in addition to the challenge of sustainability, has given rise to this type of journalism and to the movement of professionals who act as a new “resistance” (Tarrow, 1997).

If in the mid-twentieth century, the “resistance” was against news and novels, currently this resistance is directed against digitalization and the immediacy of news in a society characterised by postmodern fluency (Clover, 2018; Durham Peters, 2018).

In this research, we asked the question whether or not the new *new journalism* is a form of journalistic activism. One of the factors supporting the media dedicated to this type of journalism is the social context appears that it contains. In this respect, the emergence of digital narrative journalism publishers during the last few decades is related to the social and economic crises in the countries in which they appeared at particular moments in time, during which society had a need for media spokespeople on issues that did not always exist on generalists platforms. *Jot Down* is an example of this situation, created as a response to the 15M movement in Spain. Prior to digitalization, *The New Yorker* was created in a similar context, before the Great Depression (Yagoda, 2000; Gill, 1975).

Being conceived in convulsed contexts and creating new means to respond to them, narrative journalism can be regarded as activism for journalism in general. According to Tarrow (1997), the narrative journalists’ movement exhibits the same basic characteristics that define a social movement. They are: collective challenge, common objective, solidarity and persistence over time. This movement brings to bear several types of activism simultaneously:

- In its appearance: as explained in previous sections, the use of images, sparseness of multimedia elements, unspecified length and moving from web- to paper-based (Albalad, 2018).

- In its content: by covering topics that are not found in the ordinary media (Fernández, 2014; Foguet, 2014) and doing so with a style more based on narrative journalism than on digital.

- In the figure of the professional writer: that responds to the traditional requirements of narrative journalism and not to the versatility demanded in the digital world (Burstein, 2018; Clover, 2018).

- In the mechanism of writing: the routines of the new digital journalism are an example of “slow activism” within journalism. Immediacy is not a priority and issues are matured during whatever time may be necessary (Burstein, 2018; Račić, 2018).

- In the business model: narrative journalism journals make use of business models that do not depend on income from publicity. These are publishers that diversify their sources of revenue and endow job flexibility on their journalists, if not job stability. *The New Yorker* is the exception in this regard. Its editors are among the few who can subsist only from narrative journalism income (Collins, 2018; Račić, 2018; Stayner, 2018). Thus, although journalists who work in new media need to find more sources of income in addition to narrative journalism, in recompense they enjoy increased flexibility in working conditions (Herrscher, 2014; Ruiz, 2014). In contrast, journalists who do have stable conditions, such as at *The New Yorker*, work within more traditional employment structures. Only a few, such as Lee Anderson (2018) and Collins (2018), claim to have both flexibility and the ability to survive only on narrative journalism.

As a result, we have revealed how narrative journalism has the greater goal of promoting and opting for a journalism of quality and rigour. This has attracted a select group of allies, narrative journalists, who robustly resist traditional journalism. Nonetheless, the resources available to this movement to stay the course and move forward are not available to everyone (Boynton, 2018; Villanueva Chang, 2017). The narrative journalists movement pursues this path despite its difficulties (Salcedo Ramos, 2018). Future analyses might pose the question whether, given its slower pace and its other constraints, public demand encourages this narrative journalism, and if it represents a way forward which the general media might adopt, and to which more resources should be dedicated. Narrative journalism activism has existed for centuries, and recently its own intrinsic values and digitalization have only strengthened it.

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Appendix 1

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Number		Headline	
Author			
Section			
FORM			
Subtitle			
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Positioning elements			
Scroll pages			
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