

On the redefinitions of the notion of duration 'in the duration'

**Notes related to the launch of temporal anchors in
communicational analyses when living accelerated
times**

**Das redefinições da noção de duração 'na
duração'**

**Apontamentos para o lançamento de âncoras temporais nas
análises comunicacionais em tempos acelerados**

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Introduction

Do not think only about the short time, do not believe that only the actors that stand out are the most authentic; there are others, silent ones. (BRAUDEL, 1965, p. 276 – Translated from Portuguese)

Analyzes and reflections addressing the perception of daily acceleration are usual (and relevant) - especially as of the last decades of the twentieth century. Such analyzes and reflections contend, for example, the existence of an “ever faster pace of changes” (JAMESON, 1993, p. 25), which would provide the sensation that is lived “in a perpetual present and a perpetual change” (JAMESON, 1993, p. 43), culminating in the contemporary social actor's feeling that he/she would be inserted in “an unprecedented historicity regime located in the present” (HARTOG, 2014, p. 31), living a kind of endless presentism (HARTOG, 2014, p. 38) in which each and every instant “turns into a time of frenzy that lasts continuously” (BARBOSA, 2017, p. 20). This feeling of continued time, particularly when analyzed while associated with the media, is marked “by the continuous flow of

information, establishing a new time governed by the logic of the uninterrupted” (BARBOSA, 2017, p. 21).

The perception of acceleration and the continued present can be analyzed from the perspective of Norbert Elias (1998, p. 14), for whom time is an institution whose posture varies according to the stage of development reached by societies. Time would, in Elias' perspective, be a cultural object, since

the individual (,) as he grows up, he learns to interpret the temporal signs used in his society and to guide his conduct according to them (...). The mnemonic image and the representation of time in a given individual, therefore, depend on the level of development of the social institutions that represent time and spread their knowledge, as well as on the experiences that the individual has of them from an early age (1998, p. 15 – Translated from Portuguese).

To understand the relevance of this definition of time as a cultural object in the context of this article, it is necessary, initially, to highlight that culture is understood here as “common meanings, the product of an entire people and the individual meanings offered (...) (which) are constituted in life, made and remade” (WILLIAMS, 1989, p. 8). The aspect of defining and redefining cultural meanings contributes to understanding why the very notion of time would be redefined throughout history. Now, in the face of a cultural (and social) process that can be analyzed from perspectives (and redefinitions) that would be *long lasting* (or even *very long lasting*) like time, strictly speaking, Norbert Elias indicates the importance of integrating studies on the subject to the very history of humanity. Present in several communities and since more remote times, time is a social convention that has accompanied human development. Thus, what is possible to witness at the time when this text is written constitutes another change in relation to the acceleration of daily life (in the next section of this article some of these changes are pointed out). The fact is that the concept of what we call “time” has changed in the longstanding diachrony associated with a “learning process” (ELIAS, 1998, p. 33). It is, therefore, a category that should not be restricted to any particular discipline, but that is part of human knowledge as a whole: time challenges us in building means that can overcome the division of sciences and integrate man and time.

Incorporated in this learning process (related to cultural redefinitions), the concept of contemporaneity expands and acquires dimensions that are not only tied to the present time:

as much as contemporary is often used as an adjective for what is current, in the same way that something qualified as modern was, its meaning is not limited to what it is today, because when contemporary is used instead of today, current or present, there is a difference that marks this action

from another that refers to something that simply belongs to today. Therefore, being a specific adjective, it is assumed that this concept must contain a certain stylistic that becomes visible with its conceptual operation on the world. We cannot treat contemporary only as a synonym of present and current (COSTA; FONSECA, 2007, p. 115 – Translated from Portuguese).

Contributing to highlight the complexity in the definition of contemporary, Giorgio Agamben argues that contemporaneity

is a singular relationship with one's own time, which adheres to it and, at the same time, keeps a distance from it; more precisely, it is that relationship with time that adheres to it, through a disjunction and an anachronism. Those who coincide very much with the era, who adhere perfectly to it in all aspects, are not contemporary because, precisely for this reason, they cannot see it, cannot keep their eyes fixed on it (AGAMBEN, 2009, p. 59 – Translated from Portuguese).

In the perspective of Cultural Studies, when presenting part of his notion of a “feeling structure”, Raymond Williams developed an argument that can be articulated with that of Agamben, emphasizing that the culture of a period would be “more difficult to distinguish while it is still being lived” (1971, p. 18), because it is taken for granted. Williams's theoretical proposal further reinforces, to some extent, Elias' previous statement - for whom time would be a cultural object; after all, in order to be able to distinguish meanings *while they are being lived*, it is necessary to consider some cultural variation over time (or such meanings would be known *a priori*, which would potentially reduce the need to distinguish them from others).

The fact is that it seems possible to affirm that the complexity in the definition of *contemporary* helps us understand how the emphasis attributed to the *here* and *now* (or to the short time, associated with the *instant*) would promote, in line with the perception of acceleration mentioned at the beginning of this article (at least when this paper was written, at the end of the second decade of the 2000s), a feeling that “everything accelerates, everything happens as if media time was nothing more than a succession of moments in competition with each other.” (LIPOVETSKY, 2009, p. 246).

The scenario is especially critical when we observe that, when considering the *media time* mentioned in Lipovetsky's quote above, media can be analyzed more than the so-called traditional mass media: strictly speaking, media can be approached as “systems (symbolic or technological) that enable, structure or amplify communication between people” (DEUZE, 2012, p. xii). Thus, even technological devices such as mobile devices for personal communication are media. This kind of

analytical expansion (associated with also analyzing devices for personal communication as a means of communication) helps us understand the statement that we would live

in the media (in the means of communication). Who you are, what you do and what it all means to you does not exist outside the media. The means are for us as water is for fish. This does not mean that life is determined by the media - it just suggests that we like it or not, all aspects of our lives take place in the media (DEUZE, 2012, p. X).

The caveat related to this kind of *analytical expansion* is considered relevant in the context of this article because the aforementioned perception of acceleration, of perpetual present and perpetual change ends up being addressed (although eventually not in an explicit or planned way) in Communication research, since these researches investigate, *par excellence*, phenomena of the present (typically considering the use of technological communicational materialities that contribute to those perceptions).

In this scenario, it is necessary to consider the risk (especially in relation to initiating researchers) of understanding the communicational phenomena as *inaugural* (after all, the perception of acceleration and the presentism may end up obfuscating the need to search for potential previous references for the communicational phenomena investigated). It is when the notion of *duration* is understood (BRAUDEL, 1965) as the key in this article, due to the relation of the notion with the perception of time by History: more specifically, it is considered as appropriate to adopt a perspective like that suggested by the Annales School. Annales proposed an account “of secular breadth: the story of long, of very long duration” (BRAUDEL, 1965, p. 264)¹, instead of a story associated only with short time, which would constitute “the most capricious, the most misleading of durations” (BRAUDEL, 1965, p. 265).

In this article, we develop analyzes and reflections that seek to highlight the relevance of considering *duration* when developing research in Communication (particularly noting the need to define the *scope of what would constitute an appropriate duration* in accelerated times). The evident risk in not adopting a perspective like the one suggested here seems to be carrying out research that ends up being limited to just describing the observed communicational phenomena and practices (eventually limiting analyzes and reflections when privileging that description).

¹ In Braudel's quotations, the text was updated to the current grammatical rules at the time of submission of this article.

However, it should be noted that the present article is not suggesting the definition of an investigative method - also because the Annales perspective discussed here was presented in the 1960s. Strictly speaking, what the authors of this article suggest is only finding alternatives for application, in Communication research, from a historiographical perspective, as it is understood that such an approach would tend to contribute to the complexity of the investigations. However, it should also be noted that when considering the acceleration experienced in everyday life, the time dedicated to research ends up being *victimized* by the perception of acceleration. Such perception, in the communicational investigative context, makes it difficult to "distinguish between long and brief impetus movements, these taken from their immediate sources, those in the impulse of a distant time" (BRAUDEL, 1965, p. 272). And here it is worth mentioning a complementary observation for a better understanding of the relationship that we seek to establish: considering the aspect of technological changes,² this article considers that there is a risk of analytical simplification (in addition to the merely descriptive aspect, also of anachronism) when carrying out communicational analyzes (including in the case of those associated with digital technologies) observing only the phenomenon under investigation, with a punctual perspective and associated with the short time in research in Communication - even though we recognize the difficulty in contemporaneity in applying the option of "a dozen years, a quarter of a century and, in the extreme limit, the half-century" (BRAUDEL, 1965, p. 266). In other words: we argue that it is complex (but necessary) to apply analyzes in the Area's research that address the *duration* even in *accelerated times*. But it should be noted that it is undoubtedly a challenge to direct an investigative look at the researched phenomena looking for elements in the past that can be articulated with them (especially because the Communication researcher also lives and generates meanings in accelerated times).

Despite the difficulties, it is necessary to consider that since "the history of structures - economic systems, states, societies, civilizations and mutant forms of war (...) moves at a slower pace than the (history) of events" (BURKE, 2010, p. 52), it is necessary to historically analyze alternatives that contribute to the establishment of context for those phenomena; it is when, it is

² When addressing the perception of acceleration, constant changes and a logic of the uninterrupted, it is inevitable to mention the increasing shortening of periods of programmed obsolescence that can be observed with annual releases of hardware models by major global manufacturers (especially at the moment when this article is written, it is worth noting such shortcuts in relation to mobile phone devices of the smartphone type).

understood here, that there would be a need to search for previous references. To try to assist with understanding the relevance of the approach, it is worth noting that

We 'see' in certain ways – i.e., we interpret sensory information according to certain rules - as a way of living. But these ways - these rules and interpretations - are, as a whole, neither fixed nor constant. We can learn new rules and new interpretations and, as a result, we can literally see in new ways (WILLIAMS, 2001, p. 34 – Translated from Portuguese):

: according to the perspective adopted in the present work, variations in the way of seeing *in the duration* tend to contribute to the development of complex analyzes and reflections.

To organize the development of the proposal's argument briefly presented in this Introduction throughout this article, the authors have chosen to divide it into two sections. In *For analyzes beyond the present time: the duration towards the past*, we argue (performing a kind of adaptation and updating of the perspective of the Annales School for the context of research in Communication) that the researcher who investigates a phenomenon could resort potential previous references to that phenomenon (trying to consider what is investigated as the result of a *process*) trying to minimize the risks of analytical simplifications. In *The need to launch a temporal anchor: alternatives for fixing comparative elements in accelerated times that are in perpetual change* the metaphor of the temporal anchor (and the *launch* of that *anchor*) is presented as an alternative for not only considering the notion of *duration* in Communication research, but also how to apply the notion of “cultural forms” to try to constitute *durations* compatible with the restrictions (of time and resources) of each investigation.

For analyzes beyond³ the present time: the *duration* towards the past

The 'now', therefore, is not instantaneous, it is a greater or lesser amount of time, a point that still needs to be examined more carefully by contemporary thought (WELLS, (1895) 2018, p. 161 – Translated from Portuguese).

The hypothesis presented in the Introduction to this article is that the search for potential previous references for the investigated phenomena can minimize the risks of analytical simplification in Communication research. Strictly speaking, we consider here that such a hypothesis

³ It is worth briefly highlighting an aspect that the authors consider relevant: although the use of the term *beyond* (*além*) is typically linked to a perspective of the future, in the context suggested in this article, the term *beyond* would be associated with the observation of previous history of the investigated phenomenon (thus, *beyond* here is related to the past). The option is justified because the use of the term *behind* (*aquém*) could possibly generate a meaning different from that desired by the authors.

is associated with what would constitute the application of a historiographical approach - particularly an adaptation and updating of the perspective proposed by the Annales School.

To understand why the perspective of that School can contribute to the application of the hypothesis presented, it is worth noting initially that variations related to the perception of time are not exclusive to contemporary times: in relation to the French Revolution, it is possible to mention “the feeling of acceleration in history that followed. Associated with a new sense of the past, there was a new sense of the future, which especially revolutionaries considered malleable, subject to human control” (BURKE, 2012, p. 321). The very definition of the *age of the world* has undergone redefinitions: while in the year 1750 it was believed that the world would have 6,000 years of existence, over the centuries, when considering geography, estimates of life on the planet refer to 4.5 billion years; there are those who point out the Big Bang as having occurred 10 billion years ago (BURKE, 2012, p. 33-34).

On the perception of historical time in the mid-1960s, Fernand Braudel (member of the Annales who coined the term long-term) explained that

One day, one year, they might have seemed like good measures to a political historian, in the old days. Time was a sum of days. But a price curve, a demographic increase, the movement of wages, changes in interest rates, the study (more dreamed than carried out) of production, a severe analysis of circulation calls for much broader measures (BRAUDEL, 1965, p. 266 – Translated from Portuguese).

For Braudel, a *long duration* would correspond to that which changes very slowly (or whose mutation can be perceived as very slow); on the other hand, a *short time* would correspond (i) to the fast pace of states of being that change more or less quickly, and (ii) the succession of events one after the other imposing on those who perceive them the sensation of incessant and continuous change (instead of the feeling of *permanence*). It is at this point that the perception of acceleration (or even the feeling of “*perpetual change*”) related to contemporaneity is understood here as necessary in Communication research: although it is stated that “every historical phenomenon has to be explained in terms of its time, and not because of previous times” (BURKE, 2010, p. 43), previous times are an interesting alternative to minimize the risk of analyzes that are also hurried (such as the perception of time itself). Thus, even though in Communication researches the phenomenon investigated is typically explained in terms of its time, there is an evident risk of

anachronism when minimizing the relevance of (or, in a threshold situation, ignoring) the *process* covered until the moment lived. In other words: in addition to the productivist requirements, even considering the speed in offering and using Information and Communication Technologies (and with the factor - mentioned before - the researcher himself also experiencing the context of acceleration he investigates, which tends to make the analysis more complex), it seems relevant to define alternatives to address the phenomena considering a time that is broader than that of short - or very short - duration.

But it is understood here that such alternatives do not simply involve defining what would be considered, for all cases, an *appropriate duration* in contemporary times. Thus, more than stating that the notion of long duration can be updated due to the perception of acceleration in daily life referenced since the last decades of the 20th century, it seems necessary to point out alternatives to enable a kind of *construction of an appropriate duration* for each case. After all, at least in relation to the practices and processes analyzed in the Communication, it is necessary to consider that periods of analysis that (in the Annales' perspective), could be classified as very short duration, are typically used. When considering that “long-term trends can gain reinforcement or face opposition from short-term trends - and, from a historian's perspective, a period of fifty years can be considered 'short'” (BURKE, 2012, p. 316), analyzing alternatives for establishing (or *constructing*) a period that enables an appropriate duration to analyze the phenomenon in a specific research project becomes effectively necessary.

Thus, to make research more complex (particularly seeking an analytical rather than descriptive approach in the reflections developed), considering the past seems relevant and necessary. The *extent* of the past to be considered during investigations is a fundamental and complex definition. Especially when observing some of the references presented still in the Introduction of the work - when it was pointed out that time itself would be a cultural object - a theoretical alternative that tends to provide meaningful content to analyze the communicational materialities beyond the moment being lived is the notion of “cultural forms” (WILLIAMS, 2005, p. 39-76):

The ‘cultural form’ is the conceptual element that organizes cultural patterns (...): ‘cultural forms’ make current cultural patterns amenable to understanding. It turns out that cultural artifacts (in function of the very notion of culture) are under reconfiguration, 'unfinished', also because new technologies influence the ways in which materialities are used - uses that then tend to originate new artifacts

(which, although they have their own laws or tendencies, also carry references to their origins) (MARQUIONI, 2016, p. 34-35 – Translated from Portuguese).

To understand the potential relevance of applying the notion of “cultural form” with an example, we mention the case of the reconfigured way of watching TV known as the second screen (or multi-screen experience). Instead of considering only the use of a gadget connected to the Internet while watching TV in the analysis of the phenomenon, an alternative to make the analysis more complex involves considering the previous steps that can be observed in the ways of watching TV over the years (complementing the perspective of only previous communicational materialities that contributed to redefining the way of watching television in a multi-screen experience). The approach even establishes some conceptual alignment with the aforementioned “learning process” proposed by Norbert Elias and referenced in the Introduction to this article: over the years, the social actor would have *learned culturally* to interact with the content broadcast on TV, including handling gadgets while watch television. In the case of this televisual experience, one can understand the

'cultural form' as a key element of the reading contract (which was defined) since the first television broadcasts, when 'cultural forms', which existed before television (in the newspaper, radio, cinema, public meetings, etc.) contributed with the generation of meaning related to the content broadcast on TV (MARQUIONI, 2018, p. 42 – Translated from Portuguese).

For an overview of the variations in the way we watch TV and alternatives to search for potential previous references to the phenomenon of the multi-screen experience, we were able to list (a) the interaction with the contents of the programs through letters from the audience (between the 1950s and 1970s), (b) the use of the remote control (in the 1980s) and the zapping effect constituting a mosaic between channels (after all, the experience of multiple screens can be analyzed while constituting a mosaic between screens), (c) interaction with program content through letters at the request of the broadcaster (also in the 1980s), (d) audience interaction using a landline (in the 1990s), (e) interaction using the Internet (especially starting in the 2000s), (f) the promise (not fulfilled) of interactivity directly via digital TV in Brazil (between the 2000s and 2010), among others.⁴

A question related to the proposed approach that inevitably emerges at this point involves defining *when* (in relation to the past) the investigation should *go back* in the search for potential

⁴ For a detailed analysis of the listed alternatives, see Marquioni (2016, p. 86-99).

previous references for the investigated phenomena. In the case of the multi-screen experience example, which (or how many) of the items listed - from (a) to (f) - would make sense in an ongoing investigation. It is understood here that the metaphor of the *temporal anchor* presented later in this article tends to constitute an alternative that would contribute especially in the sense of minimizing the risk of incurring analytical simplifications. It is trying to present alternatives to answer the question mentioned above and to present, in general lines, the metaphor of the *temporal anchor* that advances the next section.

The need to launch a *temporal anchor*: alternatives for fixing comparative elements in accelerated times that are in perpetual change

Pardon me for asking, what is long lasting today? (BAUMAN, 2012, p. 16 – Translated from Portuguese)

In this article we suggest that the use of a metaphor related to a *temporal anchor* could contribute to the search for potential previous references for investigated communicational phenomena. More specifically, what constitutes the *launching of temporal anchors* would define the *extent of returning to the past* during the search for previous references. Thus, in the approach using the suggested metaphor, the so-called *temporal anchor* should be *launched* not downwards (as in the case of anchored vessels), but *towards the past* in research on Communication. In order to understand what is understood here as a *temporal anchor* (and its *launch*), it is necessary to present initially what is classified as a paradox experienced at the time when this article is written; with the highlight that such a paradox is directly related to debates related to the so-called end of history.

The end of history proposed by Francis Fukuyama (1992), as well as the criticism of the Fukuyama proposal developed by Perry Anderson (1992) - which deepens and complexifies the different formats with which this end of history was announced - can be understood as relevant to the metaphor proposed in this section. It turns out that if there is an effective end of history, it is understood that the Communication researcher should try to identify alternatives so that he could equate and contextualize the communicational phenomena he/she analyzes (or there would be a risk of incurring analyzes in which there would either be a descriptive approach, or anachronism would be practiced). It is in this sense that the *launch of temporal anchors* is suggested: essentially the proposal seeks to define the need to establish reference contexts to contribute to the complexification of analyzes, articulating/combining “a long-term study with that of a complex

interaction between the economy, society, politics, culture and events ”(BURKE, 2010, p. 61). The approach is advocated because

the past is initially the means of *making a difference*. The historical operation consists of approaching the data according to a present law, which is distinguished from its 'other' (past), distancing itself in relation to an acquired situation and thus marking, through a discourse, the effective change that allowed this distancing. Thus, the historical operation (...) historicizes the current. Speaking more properly, it represents a lived situation. It forces us to explain the relationship of the reigning reason with a proper *place* that, **in opposition to a 'past', becomes the present** (CERTEAU, 2017, p. 88; italics in the original quote; highlighted in bold by authors – Translated from Portuguese).

Thus, the contextualization resulting from the *launch* of the *temporal anchor* would provide, at least, analytical possibilities that consider the fundamental difference between the observed phenomenon and its potential references - including addressing variations in communicational practices and processes between cases.

Moving along in the development of what is classified here as a contemporary paradox, it is possible to mention that associated with the announced end of history (in fact, in apparent dialectical tension with this end), “our era seems to be dominated by the obsession of memory (...) (,) an authentic vocation for memory, a kind of archival craze that permeates culture and technological evolution together” (COLOMBO, 1996, p. 17). Such *archival craze* can be noticed, for example, with the amount of photographic records kept on mobile devices. As a paradox, associated with the end of history, there would be

a sort of obsession with memory, archives, records and museums. There seems to be a fear of forgetting: an apprehension in the face of possible memory failures, a fear suggested by the threat that our memories can be erased and that, thus, the past will disappear for good (SIBILIA, 2016, p. 155-156 – Translated from Portuguese).

In fact, the utility of creating records and continuously archiving is questionable when considering a context in which there would be no more history (to require the retrieval of this archived content). However, in addition to the obsession with records in archives, the paradox is also based on what would characterize a search for references that has been observed in relation to times considered as *solid* (here the term *solid* is used as a reference to the notion of *liquid modernity* proposed by Zygmunt Bauman). Throughout his work, Bauman uses the terms *liquid* and *solid* to analyze the observable changes in society (especially those that adopt a Western way of life). In Bauman's perspective, there would have been a

moving from the 'solid' phase of modernity to the 'liquid' (phase) – i.e., to a condition in which social organizations (structures that limit individual choices, institutions that ensure the repetition of routines,

patterns of acceptable behavior) can no longer keep their shape for a long time (they are not expected to do so), because they **decompose and dissolve faster than the time it takes to shape them** and, once reorganized, to establish themselves (2007, p. 07; highlighted in bold by authors – Translated from Portuguese).

The *liquidity* of the times we are living in, thus, would be directly related to the perception of acceleration in daily life mentioned in the Introduction of this article.

The *anchor* metaphor seeks, in the context of *liquid modernity*, to indicate the need to set references, from which a communicational phenomenon under investigation would be analyzed. More specifically, the metaphor tries to indicate the need for *fixation* at a defined moment in time so that it is possible, with a certain historiographical perspective, to “*represent a difference*” (CERTEAU, 2017, p. 88; italics in the original). Hence the option to associate the complement *temporal* to the term *anchor*. The use of *launch* seeks to indicate that the *temporal anchor* can reach/arrive at different moments in relation to the past. The definition of how far in time the *anchor* will reach in the search for references would depend on the researcher's decisions; such decisions would be associated, for example, with the time or resources available for research. In this sense, there could be other *launches* of an *anchor* in relation to the same communicational phenomenon (*reaching* different moments in the past, when the researcher had additional time or resources): similarly to the case of *anchors* that fix vessels in various places over the years, the suggested *temporal anchor* would also have possibilities of displacement (in the case of the metaphor suggested in this article, the *displacement* would occur in time). It would be as if the *duration* itself to be considered for obtaining potential references for communicational phenomena were constituted in the *duration*.

In order to clarify the statement, it is possible to refer again to the example presented in the previous section that addressed the experience of multiple screens, and in which six - from (a) to (f) - alternatives of potential previous references for that phenomenon were indicated.⁵ Now, according to the perspective of the *temporal anchor*, in an investigation, the researcher could make a *launch*

⁵ The following were pointed out as alternatives (highlighting that it would be possible to identify others): (a) the interaction with program contents through letters from the audience (between the 1950s and 1970s), (b) the use of the remote control (1980) and the zapping effect constituting a mosaic between channels, (c) interaction with program content through letters at the request of the broadcaster (1980), (d) audience interaction using a landline (1990), (e) interaction using the Internet (2000), (f) the promise (not fulfilled) of interactivity directly via digital TV in Brazil (between the decades of 2000 and 2010).

reaching in time (in relation to the past) references (a) and (b); in another, it could expand the historiographical perspective, with another *launch reaching* (c), and so on.

A final complementary comment is also worth mentioning here (to minimize the risk that the reader will infer the existence of a conceptual inconsistency in the presented argument): it may seem strange that the use of a historiographical approach in an associated context is suggested as being the end of history. In fact, what the authors of this article seek to highlight here is that, regardless of whether the researcher agrees with the perspectives of Fukuyama (1992) or Anderson (1992), the perception of daily acceleration and the change in the understanding of time have associated the risk that researchers will focus their investigations during the research project they are conducting in relation to communicational phenomena *per se*, eventually without a greater complexity associated with a contextualization of the phenomena.⁶ What was sought to argue here is that when considering the perspective of presentism without observing the mentioned paradox, there is a risk of purely descriptive or anachronistic analyzes. To minimize such risk, the launch of a *temporal anchor* up to a *moment in time* (or even a *duration* in relation to the past) when it is possible to fix the investigation in a *place* that makes sense for the communicational materiality analyzed (considering the research restrictions) it seems like an alternative to consider - including in terms of the “cultural forms” mentioned in the previous section: in fact, the “cultural forms” make it possible to understand the *sharing of experiences* that would constitute the very definition of Communication.⁷ In other words: “cultural forms” would contain, in their own definition based on the notion of culture, *traces* of the previous references of communicational phenomena to contribute to the analysis. To illustrate the statement, it is possible to resort to Raymond Williams' analysis in which the Welsh researcher presents an analysis of the “cultural form” that he calls “News” (2005,

⁶ To illustrate how eventually even established and experienced researchers can eventually focus their analysis on the present time (and the criticality of the lack of context) the reference case that Henry Jenkins makes related to American interactive digital TV in the 1990s can be mentioned. In the work *Convergence Culture*, Jenkins states that “initial experiments with interactive television, in the mid-1990s, were largely dismissed as failures (...) (since) nobody wanted to stop watching television to buy the clothes they saw one of the Friends' cast members wearing (...)” (JENKINS, 2008, p. 93 – Translated from Portuguese). A quick historical context clarifies that in the mid-1990s, Internet purchases were still limited. Considering the term proposed by Elias, eventually the cultural “learning process” (1998, p. 33) for making that type of purchase would not have occurred yet. In a search for previous references, eventually catalog purchases (or door-to-door sales, such as those carried out by Avon representatives) may be relevant even for analyzing e-commerce operations over the Network - and these actions themselves as a reference for purchase directly through television (or t-commerce).

⁷ “Communication is the process of making unique experience into common experience. (...) Since our way of looking at things is literally our way of living, the process of communication is, in fact, the process of the community: the sharing of meanings, in addition to common activities and purposes; (also) offering, receiving and comparing new meanings, leading to tensions and achievements of growth and change” (WILLIAMS, 2001, p. 55 – Translated from Portuguese).

p. 40-45) in a historiographical perspective. More specifically, the relevance of considering the development of the newspaper prior to broadcast news, and the relevance of the World Wars in the general context. Indeed, in *Television: Technology and cultural form* Williams not only analyzes television itself, but seeks - in previous “cultural forms” - for potential references to the technology under investigation.

Final considerations

The transient nature of ourselves, our technologies and even our ideas of community and society can be a characteristic of our time (...) (.) Thus, an integrated perspective relating means and society helps us to think of the means as a part of the complete fabric of the routine and practice of daily life (DEUZE, 2012, p. 48-49 – Translated from Portuguese).

Undoubtedly, it is a significant challenge to analyze communication practices and processes in accelerated times - especially when technologies are constantly updated, and the uses of these technologies also contribute to the updating of cultural meanings almost on a daily basis.

This article sought to argue that while Braudel argued in the mid-1960s that “the *long duration* seems to us (...) the most useful line for observation and reflection common to the social sciences” (BRAUDEL, 1965, p 291), as we approach the end of the second decade of the 2000s, the identification of what would constitute a *long duration* for investigations in the area of Communication characterizes a significant difficulty. In addition, this definition seems to be key to minimizing the risks of investigations being limited to descriptions of the phenomena analyzed, rather than analyzes and reflections that develop and make the redefinitions more complex in communication practices and processes that transform *unique experiences into common experiences*.

Due to the cultural character (including the notion of time itself), the notion of “cultural forms” seems to be an interesting alternative to investigate the historical origins of the communicational phenomena analyzed in the research on the theme. Especially since it seems possible to make use of *returns to the past* that can be *expanded* in future research: the very aspect of cultural *unfinishedness* must enable the search for “cultural forms” that are ever more ancestral, as research advances (or restrictions of the research project are overcome, such as time and resources for research). At the very least, the approach suggests thinking about communicational materialities beyond a *here and now*, in a potential definition of *duration* that can be as long as each research project allows (but, culturally, always capable of being expanded). For that, the metaphor of the

temporal anchor seems to be an interesting alternative: according to the metaphor presented, the very duration to be used in Communication research could be defined *in duration*.

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Abstract

The perception of acceleration of everyday life, as well as the related time's understanding change are facts of contemporaneity. This paper points out the need to look for potential previous references for the investigated phenomena on communicational researches, defending the application of a historiographical approach in the Communication' researches due to the premise that the theoretical

notion of “long duration” (Fernand Braudel) is impacted in accelerated times. To articulate such a demand, it is presented the metaphor of the *temporal anchor* that seems to be a particularly relevant approach in the “*media life*” (Mark Deuze) context. The “cultural forms” (Raymond Williams) are suggested as an alternative to define what would constitute an *appropriate duration* to be considered in the researches.

Keywords: Long duration. Annales school. Acceleration of everyday life. Cultural forms. Communication.

Resumo

A percepção de aceleração do cotidiano, e a correlata mudança no entendimento do tempo constituem fatos da contemporaneidade. Defendendo a aplicação de abordagem historiográfica nas pesquisas em Comunicação, e considerando que a noção teórica de “longa duração” (Fernand Braudel) é impactada em tempos acelerados, o artigo aponta a necessidade de procurar por referências anteriores potenciais para os fenômenos comunicacionais investigados. Para articular tal procura, é apresentada a metáfora *da âncora temporal*, em abordagem que parece ser particularmente relevante no contexto da “*media life*” (Mark Deuze). As “formas culturais” (Raymond Williams) são sugeridas como alternativa na definição do que constituiria uma *duração apropriada* a considerar nas pesquisas conduzidas.

Palavras-chave: Longa duração. Escola dos Annales. Aceleração do cotidiano. Formas culturais. Comunicação.

Resumen

La percepción de la aceleración de la vida cotidiana, así como el cambio de comprensión del tiempo relacionado son hechos de contemporaneidad. Este artículo señala la necesidad de buscar referencias previas potenciales para los fenómenos investigados en investigaciones comunicacionales, defendiendo la aplicación de un enfoque historiográfico en la Comunicación, en especial porque a la premisa de que la noción teórica de “larga duración” (Fernand Braudel) es impactada en tiempos acelerados. Para articular tal demanda, se presenta la metáfora del ancla temporal que parece ser un enfoque particularmente relevante en el contexto de la “*media life*” (Mark Deuze). Las “formas culturales” (Raymond Williams) se sugieren como una alternativa para definir lo que constituiría una duración apropiada para ser considerada.

Palabras clave: Larga duración. Escuela de los Annales. Aceleración de la vida cotidiana. Formas culturales. Comunicación.