



Timeliness as news value:

- looking at 50 years of concept and practice
on the Portuguese PBS main news bulletin

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Study context

- 50th anniversary of ‘Telejornal’, the oldest television program, that crossed dictatorship, revolution and democracy (in monopoly and market context)
- Preliminary results of an analysis of the news bulletin content.



Timeliness as a social construction



- Every society has a specific, ruling relation regarding time (which is meaning-maker for individual and social life and can also change throughout time):
 - **Past-oriented** (Lost paradise; *in illo tempore*; great History facts or heroes' memory; tradition)
 - **Present-oriented** (“live the moment”; “*Don't worry, be happy*”, *carpe diem*)
 - **Future-oriented** (collective dreams or projects, great narratives, utopias, messianisms, eschatologies, prophetisms)



Timeliness as a social construction



- Social, historic time is a complex one: it is composed of **different velocities** and integrates **simultaneous durations** (Braudel, 1969) :
 - **Events** - temporality of events
 - **Conjunctures** - intermediary duration
 - **Structures** - long-term structural time
- Each kind of duration can be seen as a specific pace and as a particular relation and awareness of (social) time.

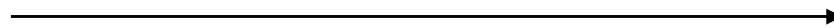




Approaching timeliness

- Time is at the core of journalism (vg. etymology) but neither a self-evident nor an unchangeable concept
- Enunciation time (referring either to the storytelling or to the story told)
- Timeliness as referring to the gap between the occurrences/events and their enunciation / publication

Occurrences
(Social world)



GAP

Publicity
(Media)





How TV / media deal with time

- Time construction regarding the relationship journalism-society:
 - News in time (context)
 - Time in the news
 - Time of news (duration)
 - Schedule of news services
- TV time construction
 - Self-referential and self-promotional time (what's happening in the TV world)





Research questions

- How Telejornal has dealt with expected /unexpected events
- Intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing news timeliness (political, cultural, technological ...)
- How the evolution of time-related aspects express (television) journalism – society interactions.



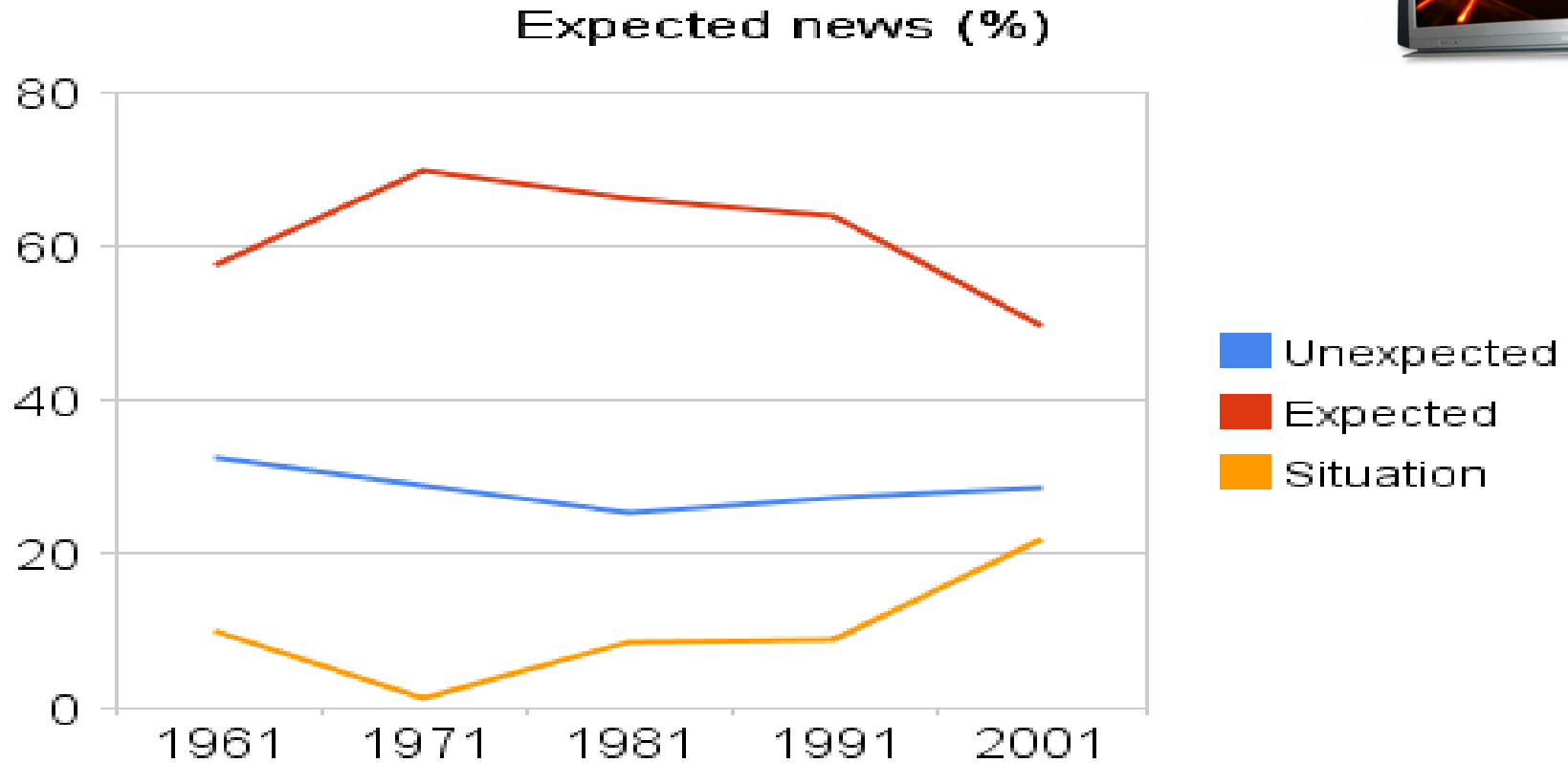
Sample



- **Sample:** Telejornal's news items of 1961, -71, -81, -91 and 2001
- **Total news items considered:** 3293 (workdays of two weeks of every March, August and October)
- **Database:** broadcasting day; order of news items; type of item; event time-lag; news expectedness



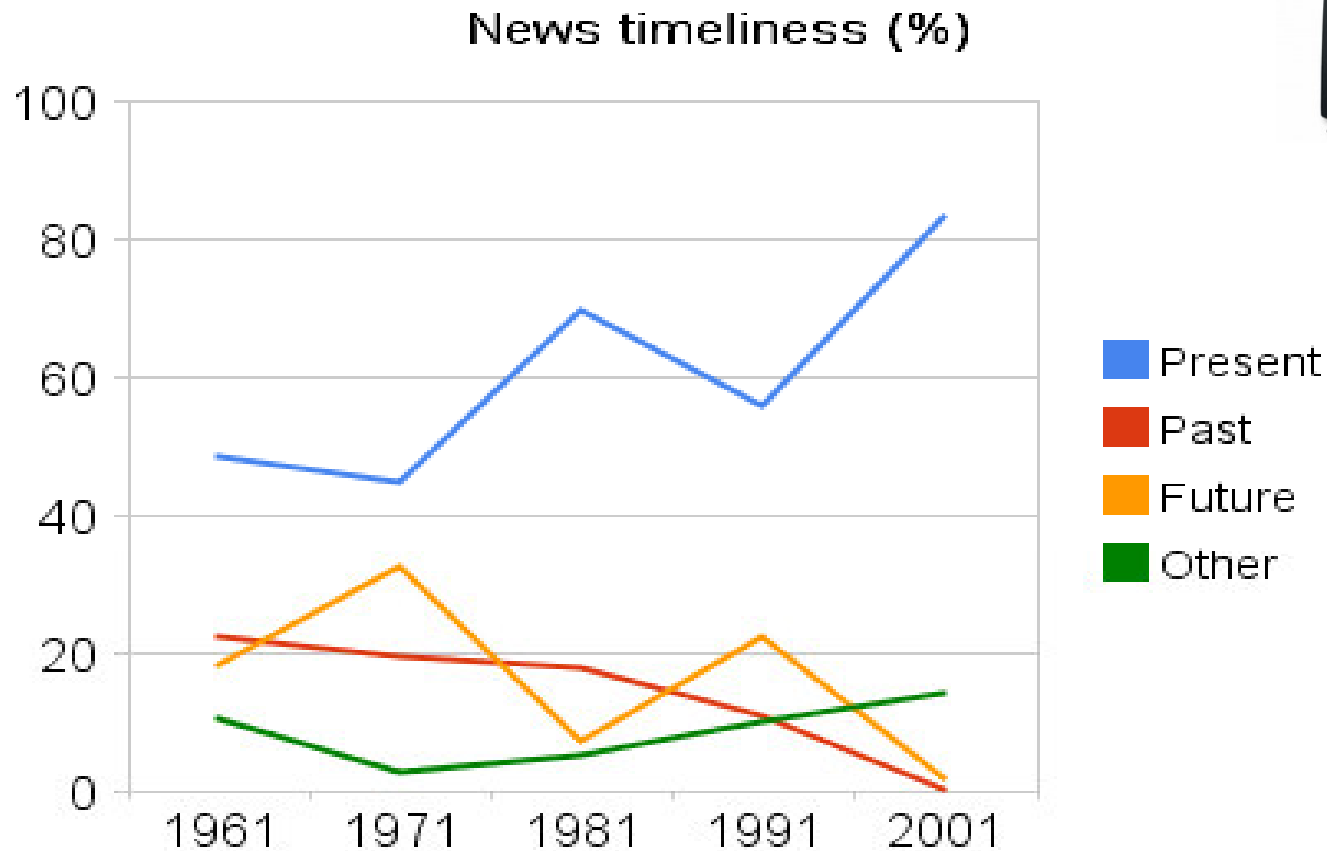
Results



- Dominance of expected /planned events (with mild decrease)
- Growing attention to 'situations' reports
- Growing balance between the 3 variables



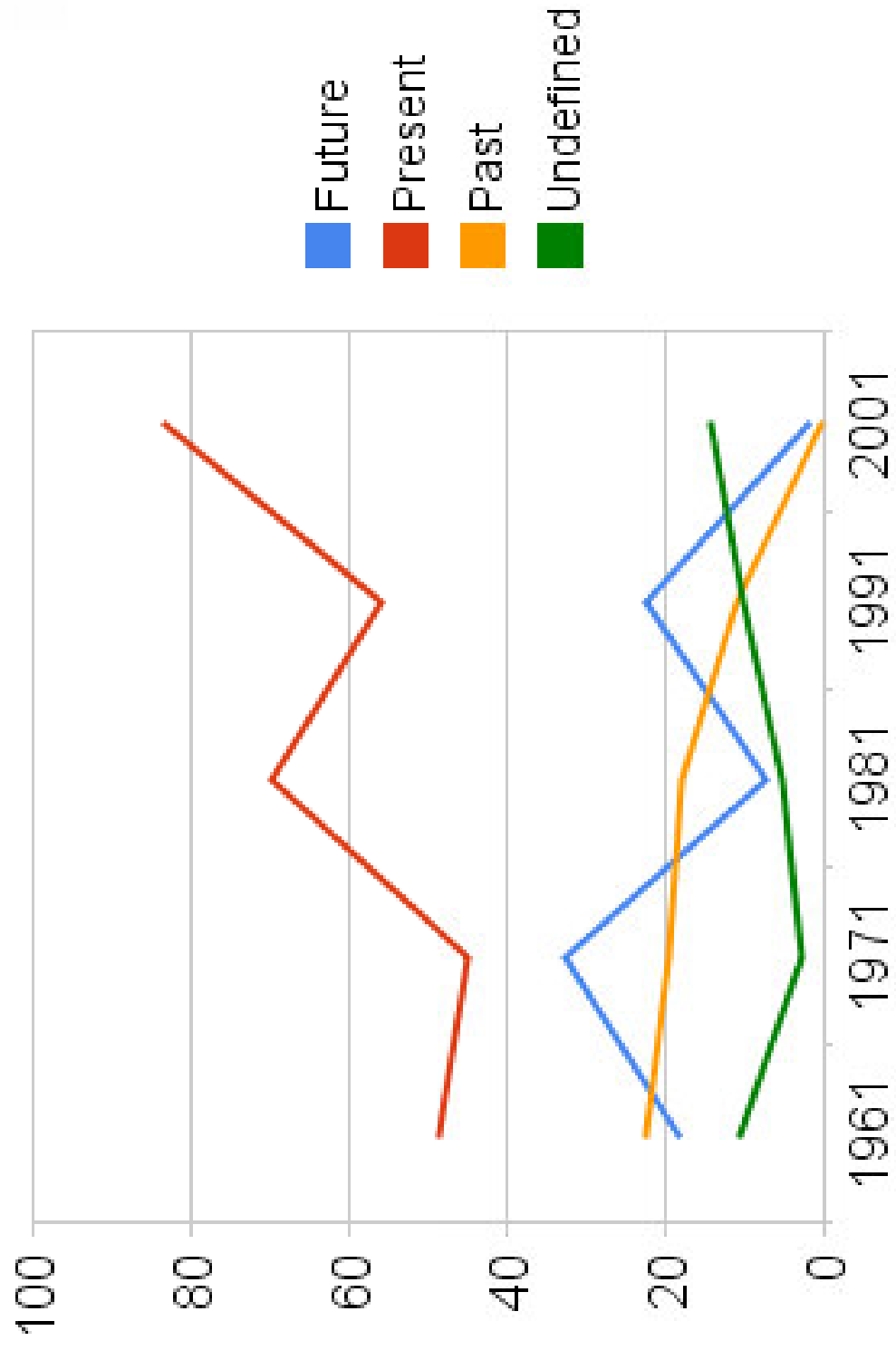
News timeliness



- Increasing emphasis in present time (news of the day)
- Past and future slowing down



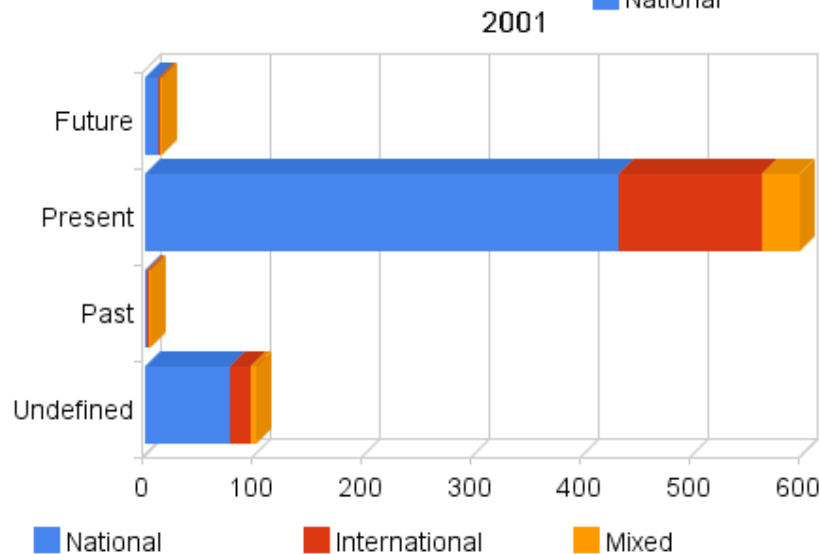
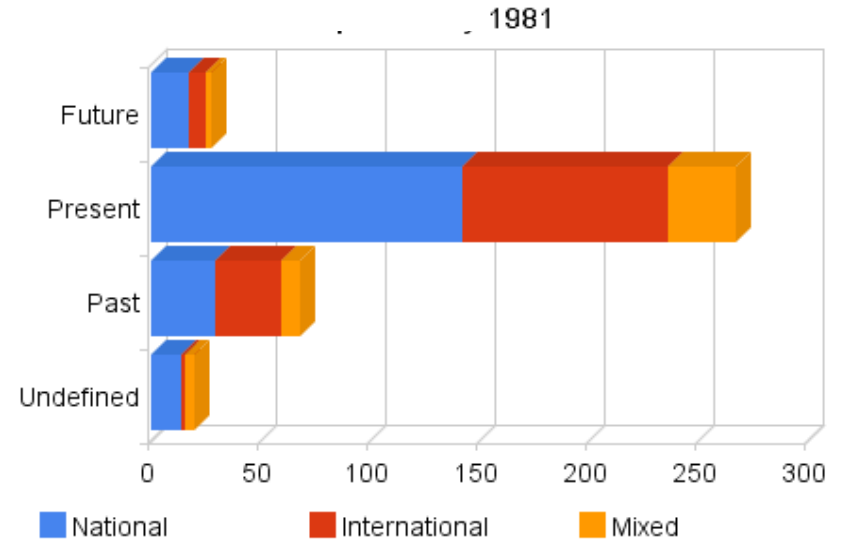
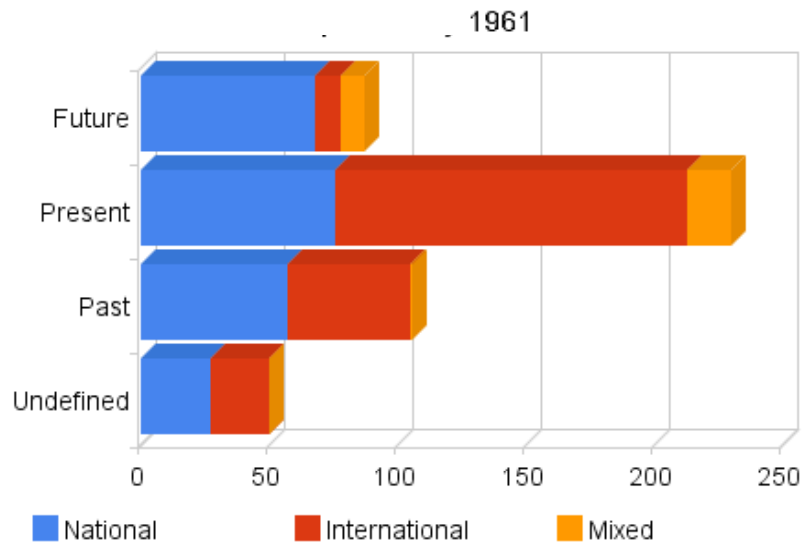
News expectability (%)



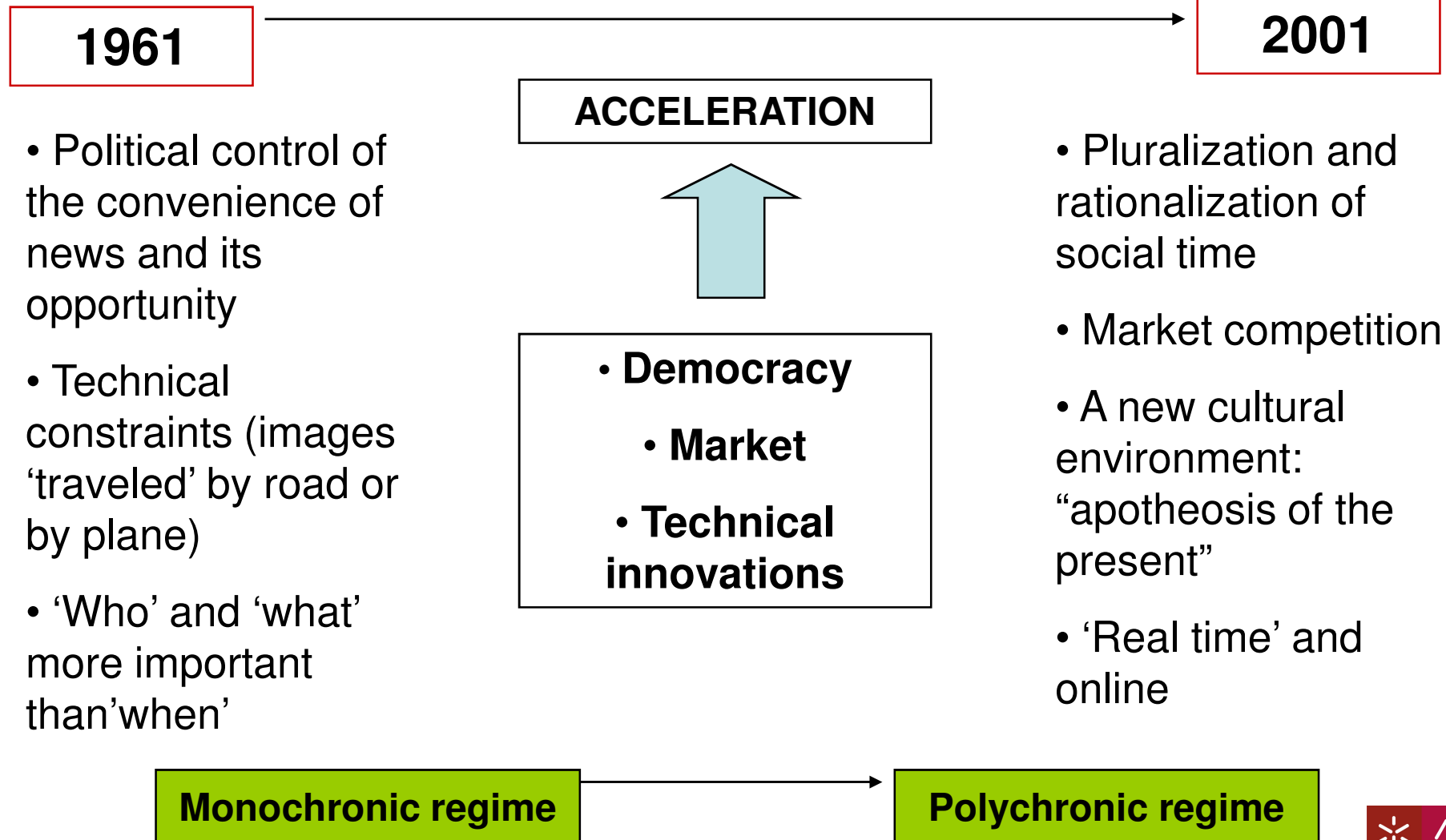
- Future
- Present
- Past
- Undefined



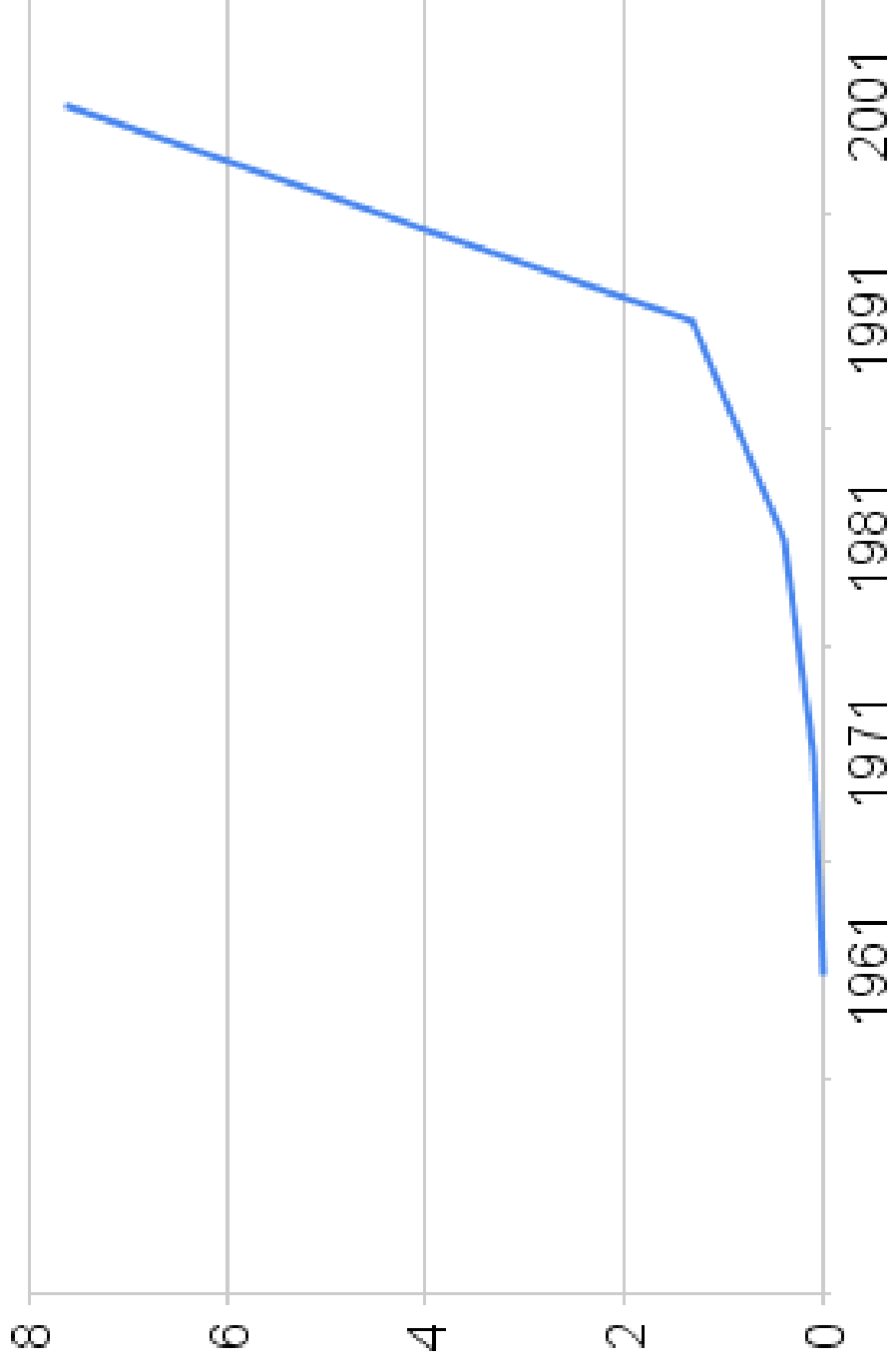
News of the day according to national and international issues



Discussion topics



Live news in Telejornal (%)





For the debate

- What is the nature of the mentioned ‘polichronic time’? In what extent is this diversity represented in the news?
- Real-time reporting: questions about the mediation and editorial roles of journalism – which impact?
- Journalism: forgetting the past; anticipating and emptying out the future?
- What are the pre-requisites for a balanced notion of timeliness?

