

MUTATIS MUTANDIS?

The stably evolving Portuguese Journalism

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ABSTRACT – This article offers a diachronic comparative examination of the different dimensions regarding the Portuguese journalists' role conceptions, autonomy, trust in social institutions, influences, as well as ideology. Based on more than 500 interviews over a five year period, it corroborates the state of change of journalism as a result of the combined technological innovation impact and market-related considerations, which amounts to a sub-stantive deterioration of the working conditions in the profession, its public credibility and ethical standards. However, and above all, it also concludes that the statistically significant but rather selective and modest changes found validate a general trend of stability in Portuguese journalists self-perception in line with the theory of homogeneity across time.

Keywords: Portuguese journalism. WOJ. Homogeneity across time. Longitudinal analysis. Changes in journalism.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS? A estabilidade evolutiva do jornalismo português

RESUMO – Este artigo oferece uma análise comparativa diacrónica das diferentes dimensões relativas à autopercepção dos jornalistas portugueses, do seu papel ou funções, da autonomia, da confiança nas instituições sociais, das influências, bem como das questões éticas. Baseado em mais de 500 entrevistas, ao longo de um período de cinco anos, constata o fluxo de mudança do jornalismo em resultado da combinação do impacto da inovação tecnológica com a dimensão comercial, redundando numa considerável deterioração tanto das condições de trabalho como a nível da credibilidade pública e dos padrões éticos. No entanto, e acima de tudo, conclui que as mudanças estatisticamente significativas verificadas, sendo selectivas e modestas, validam a tendência generalizada de estabilidade nas autopercepções dos jornalistas portugueses em consonância com a teoria da homogeneização ao longo do tempo.

Palavras-chave: Jornalismo português. WOJ. Homogeneização ao longo do tempo. Análise longitudinal. Mudanças no jornalismo.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS? La estabilidad evolutiva del periodismo portugués

RESUMEN – Este artículo consiste en un análisis comparado diacrónico acerca de las distintas dimensiones de la auto-percepción de los periodistas portugueses sobre su papel, la autonomía, la confianza en las instituciones sociales, las influencias, así como, las cuestiones éticas. Basado en más de 500 entrevistas, a lo largo de cinco años, constata un proceso de cambio del periodismo en resultado de la combinación del impacto de la innovación tecnológica y la dimensión comercial, con implicaciones en la deterioración de las condiciones de trabajo, de la credibilidad pública y los padrones éticos. Sin embargo, y sobre todo, concluye que los cambios estadísticamente significativos verificados, al ser selectivos y modestos, validan la tendencia generalizada de estabilidad en las auto-percepciones de los periodistas portugueses, en línea con la teoría de la homogeneidad a través del tiempo.

Palabras clave: Periodismo portugués. WOJ. Homogeneidad a través del tiempo. Análisis longitudinal. Cambios en periodismo

The rather tremendous recent change in journalism has been accompanied by a considerable progress in research. Despite witnessing an increasing awareness of the importance of comparative analysis in the last decade (Esser & Hanitzsch, 2012), less attention, however, has been paid to the importance of comparing across time (Strömbäck et al., p. 90). This holds particularly true for research on journalism (Hallin et al., 1993; Manning, 2001; Sigal, 1973), in general, and self-perceptions of news professionals, in particular. A similar point could be made concerning the Portuguese journalism since diachronic works are, not only rare, but virtually non-existent.

Indeed, there is a significant lack of longitudinal studies related to changes or stability in terms of the news practices, with the exception of the works of conducted by David Weaver and colleagues, either in a single country (Weaver, 2015; Willnat et al., 2017) or with a cross-national approach (Willnat et al., 2013). Of particular interest to this article, however, three recent ones stand out. Firstly, the invaluable data emanating from a consistent 50 year period (Willnat et al., 2017) which is revealing of the tremendous changes that have occurred in U.S. journalism in the past multi-decades. Notwithstanding the changing attitudes over time and the challenging environment as a result of the economic difficulties,

dwindling newsrooms, social media proliferation and public attacks on media credibility, the study ended with a generally optimistic note about the future of the profession and public service ideals remain an important motivation for today's journalists.

The second, one relied on cross-time qualitative research but on this occasion within regional newsrooms in the United States (Ryfe, 2012). It suggested that news practices remain 'stubbornly unchanged', either in terms of the reliance on official governmental sources alongside the definitions of news and newsworthiness remain in place, or the role conceptions revolving around traditional values of objectivity, facticity, balance, and neutrality (Ryfe, 2012).

A third exception, concerns another study conducted across 10 years (2001, 2006, 2011) and resorting to face-to-face reconstruction interviews about samples of recently published items by news reporters at three leading national Israeli dailies (Reich, 2013). It concluded that news practices hardly changed, preserving the same journalistic paradigm and a similar media logic. Despite the existence of a connection between changes in the news environment and changes in the regimes of news production, the author argues that it is less direct, immediate, comprehensive and 'common-sensical' than conveyed in previous academic work. Journalists tend to adopt news practices and routines in an instrumental fashion and as customary actions and methods which tend to be change-resistant to the new technologies' transformative impact on news reporting (Reich, 2013).

This article adds to the short list of longitudinal studies by proposing an original examination comprising the evolving Portuguese journalistic reality. In fact, it wishes to enrich the rather limited spectrum of existing research, using a 5-year perspective on a number of the current trends in journalism studies, which are of particular interest to the present analysis. Firstly, the role conceptions related with its democratic justification. Then two related dimension concerning journalistic autonomy and both internal and external influences on the day-to-day job. Lastly, a number of issues regarding trust in social institutions and ethical ideology will also be considered. Indeed, these parameters of analysis constitute the basis of a new new model to analyze and define journalism advanced both within the framework of the *World of Journalism Study* (WOJ)¹ and elsewhere (Novais et al., 2013), which will be described in detail below.

The conceptual framework of the WJS Study

The conceptual framework of the *WOJ* is grounded in the notion of journalistic culture to denominate the differential articulations and manifestations of forms of journalism or 'worlds of journalism'. Journalistic cultures become discernable in the way journalists think and act, and can be defined as particular sets of ideas and practices by which journalists legitimate their role in society and render their work meaningful for themselves and others. In this article, particular attention is devoted to the journalistic culture as a sets of ideas (values, attitudes and beliefs) or self-perceptions about the practice of doing news alongside a set of selected five themes: two intrinsic dimensions - journalistic roles, journalistic ethics, and journalistic trust - as well as two extrinsic dimensions - perceived influences and editorial autonomy.

Journalistic roles articulate journalism's identity and position vis-à-vis society and broader public expectations. It refers to the concrete and normative functions of journalism in society. It may also involve the perceptions of the professional roles, news functions or the role of media (Hanitzsch, 2007). In this domain, it is possible to distinguish three different dimensions of institutional roles: interventionism (referring to the social committed journalist or, on the opposite side, the neutral, observant and objective one); power distance (journalism as the fourth estate or journalists who support and stand by the government, being collaborative); and, finally, market orientation (in terms of audience orientation or prioritizing the informative and political role of media).

Journalistic ethics is related to journalists' reporting practices, which hark back to a broader social consensus about what is generally believed to be morally desired and justifiable practice. Indeed, ethic ideologies examine how journalists respond to ethic dilemmas. Four perspectives are presented here: standard professional approach, when journalists refer to universal codes and editorial guidelines; liberal professional approach that criticizes the prior perspective through a set of arguments; cynical approach, which happens when journalists give no relevance to ethic dilemmas; and ethical relativists, that are people who promote ad hoc responses to ethic dilemmas. Another approach (Hanitzsch, 2007, pp. 371–379), organizes ethic ideologies into a couple of dimensions: relativism (belief or rejection of universal codes) and idealism (actions determined by means or outcomes). The intersection between both dimensions, however, results into four rather distinct perspectives: situacionism (people who reject universal

rules and stand by a case-by-case analysis); absolutism (also related to idealistic people, but who feel that the best outcome can be achieved by universal rules); subjectivists (people who sustain their judgments on personal values but are receptive to ponder negative means in order to achieve something good); and, finally, exceptionists (people who are guided by universal codes but are also receptive to open exceptions when they help to prevent negative consequences).

Journalistic trust tells a story about journalism's relationship with social institutions, as journalists act as intermediaries between institutions and the public. As a rule, a low trust on such institutions by journalists is connected to their perception of roles, such as considering important to watch and monitor the actions of the power elites. This was included bearing in mind that it is usually related to both the journalists' perceptions of their roles and media being frequently accused of playing a key role in the erosion of confidence in public institutions.

Editorial autonomy is conceptualized as the self-perceived latitude journalists have in carrying out their occupational duties. Indeed, autonomy is to be considered crucial in order that journalists be able to practice their job (Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011).

Additionally, the perceived influences on news work are also object of analysis. Therefore, a number of different factors have been put forward as cross-cultural indicators of the limited impact of external forces upon journalists' personal liberties. More concretely, six domains of influence are advanced (Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011, pp. 406-407) comprising political influences (government, politicians, censorship); economic influences (profit expectations, market research, audience); organizational influences (editorial decisions or journalistic routines, such as the influence of media ownership on supervisors and higher editors); procedural influences (common constraints, such as lack of resources, space, established standards and routines); professional influences (media conventions, laws, editorial guidelines); and reference groups (colleagues in other media, competing news organizations, audience or friends, acquaintances and family).

Perceived influences refer to journalists' individual perceptions of the various forces that shape the process of news production. In order to systematically assess these contextual forces in a consistent manner, we defined three hierarchical layers of influence – the individual, organizational and societal levels.

The individual level matters because journalists constantly have to make perceptual decisions. Potential determinants on

this level originate from journalists' personal and professional backgrounds, their occupational and political orientations, as well as from their specific roles and position within the news organization. The organizational level is relevant because despite the growing presence of freelancers, most news is still produced within highly organized contexts, notably within the newsroom and media organization. Known sources of organizational influence are media ownership, revenue structures, profit expectations, editorial policy, the allocation of time and editorial resources, and newsroom culture.

The societal level has long been recognized as a force that substantially shapes journalism culture in a variety of ways, most notably with regards to the relevant social, cultural and ideological contexts within which journalists work.

Methodology

The data of this study is part of the *Worlds of Journalism Research*. Originally planned as a pilot project and fielded in 2007-2011, it has carried out interviews with 2.100 journalists from more than 400 news organizations in 21 countries. As in the larger project, interviews in Portugal at the time were conducted with a quota sample of 100 working journalists drawn from 20 news organizations, comprising five professionals in each newsroom which had some "editorial responsibility" for the produced content. Furthermore, the interviewed comprised journalists from different types of media: national and local/regional ones; public, state- owned or private; quality (citizen-oriented) and popular (consumer- oriented). The pilot questionnaires started being carried out in 2010 but were mostly finished in 2011. A grant received the Science Foundation in Portugal, provided the funds that contributed to the research outcome.

Breaking all records in comparative communication research, the *WOJ* study brought together researchers from 67 countries from around the world growing into an immensely robust global data-set. It was based on a common collaboratively developed Field Manual that comprised a methodological framework which allowed for tight, cross-national comparison. Thus, all national teams were required to use the same questionnaire, which they translated into their respective languages, that contained both mandatory key questions and optional items which the national teams were free to add. The common questionnaire elicited views of journalists on several issues journalists and news organizations

face today, such as journalism's place in society, ethics, autonomy and influences on newsmaking, journalistic trust in public institutions, and the transformation of journalism in the broadest sense.

In response to the shortcomings of the 2010-2011 study, namely the small representativeness in a statistical sense of the one hundred journalists interviewed in each country' (Hanitzsch et al., 2011), the new enlarged study of 2015 required some key, non-negotiable parameters. Of particular interest to the present work, mention should be made to the conduction of representative surveys of working journalists from all kinds of media and news beats by all participating teams. Indeed, the global data included nationally representative samples for all countries comprised of a stratified random sampling for newsrooms and systematic sampling for journalists within newsrooms, although there was some degree of variation of sampling strategies across countries depending on contextual conditions (availability of media directories or of lists of journalists, etc.). Country samples had to stay within a maximum error margin of five percent in order to be accepted for the *WJS*. This size sample did not exceed a 5 % margin of error at 95 % confidence. In the case of Portugal, it eventually resulted in a sample of 407 working journalists that were interviewed (48% of response rate) - 7% of the universe of journalists in the country. The interviews were conducted through mixed mode: either via telephone or online-survey from November 2013 to August 2014.

Despite the unprecedented number of countries included in both studies, and the potential for comparisons across countries and individual geographic, political, linguistic or economic aspects, there is also room for single country analysis. This will be done in this article by firstly bringing into the light the results of the most recent data (2013-14), followed by a comparative analysis with the previous wave of interviews (2010-2011). To achieve it, it will include but the parameters which were common in both studies. The comparative research enables the study of a "wide range of subject matter and operates from diverse methodological standpoints" aiming "to search for similarity and variance" (Mills et al., 2006, p.620). This research method is thus useful for revealing "unique aspects of a particular entity that should be virtually impossible to detect otherwise" (Mills et al., 2006, p. 621).

Before dwelling on the findings of the longitudinal analysis, however, an insight look into both the most recent background and the changes comprised in the current evolving Portuguese journalism is proposed.

Professional backgrounds

The typical journalist in Portugal is male, in his late 30s and holds a university degree in a journalism or communication field. Of the 407 interviewed journalists, 186 were women, making for a proportion of 45.9% of the overall sample. On average, Portuguese journalists were 39 years old ($s=8.81$). Journalists tend to be well educated: 14.3% of the respondents held a degree from a graduate program and 70.0 % held a Bachelor's degree. Another 1.5 % of the journalists had obtained a doctoral degree, and 6.9 % had undertaken some university studies but did not complete their studies. Of those respondents who held a university degree, a vast majority (75.9%) had specialized in communication or journalism. Across the whole sample of Portuguese journalists, 55.5 % had specialized in journalism, 6.9 % had studied in another communication field, and 12.5 % had specialized in both journalism and another communication field.

The majority of journalists interviewed in Portugal held a full-time position (91.6%), whereas scarce 0.2 % of the respondents indicated that they had part-time employments, and 6.6 % worked as freelance journalist. Of those with full or part-time employment, 90.0 % said they held permanent positions, and 10.0 % worked on a temporary contract.

Portuguese journalists are fairly experienced. On average, they had worked as journalists for 14 years. Most journalists worked on a specific desk (59.9%), such as politics, local news, or sports. The remaining 40.1 % of the respondents indicated that they worked on various topics and subjects. On the whole, Portuguese journalists worked for 1.70 newsrooms ($s=1.45$); 17.2 % of them had additional jobs outside the area of journalism. A slight majority of the interviewed journalists were members of a professional association (53.4%).

Across the whole sample, 25.3 % of the interviewees were true multimedia journalists, as they indicated to work for various media types simultaneously. The majority of Portuguese journalists in the sample worked for print media: 26.1 % contributed to daily newspapers, 6.6 % to weekly newspapers, and 14.3 % to magazines. Another 7.2 % of the journalists worked for private or public service television, and 11.0% for private or public radio. Few journalists in the sample reported they worked for news agencies (3.5%), for online newsrooms of traditional media (4.3%), and for stand-alone online news sites (1.8%).

Transition in the field

Journalism is currently in a state of change. According to Portuguese journalists, the “use of search engine” and “competition” had most profoundly changed over the last five years (see Table 1). Overall, the journalists’ responses point to a substantive deterioration of working conditions in the profession. A large majority of respondents reported an “increase in their average working hours”, the “importance of technical skills” and “profit making pressures”. Furthermore, most interviewed journalists felt that the “time available for researching stories” had dropped. Another major concern for Portuguese journalists was the decrease in “journalism’s public credibility” and “ethical standards”.

Influences on journalism and news production have changed as well. With the exception of “ethical standards”, influences on journalists have increased for all sources mentioned in Table 2. Here, it was especially the influence of “social media”, “competition” and “profit making pressures” that had strengthened the most during the past five years. A majority of Portuguese journalists reported an increase for other market-related influences – such as “advertising considerations”, “audience research” – as well as for “user generated contents”, “audience feedback” and “education of the audience”.

By contrast, “ethical standards” were the only source of influence that had substantively weakened over the years.

Table 1 – Changes in journalism

| | N | % age saying has “increased” | % age saying has “decreased” |
|--|-----|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Technical skills | 319 | 78.1 | 7.2 |
| The use of search engines | 320 | 94.7 | .0 |
| Average working hours of journalists | 317 | 77.5 | 1.6 |
| Interactions of journalists with their audiences | 319 | 64.9 | 10.7 |
| Having a university degree | 314 | 50.6 | 8.0 |
| The relevance of journalism for society | 319 | 38.9 | 26.3 |
| Having a degree in journalism or a related field | 320 | 43.1 | 11.3 |
| Journalists’ freedom to make editorial decisions | 320 | 25.6 | 40.9 |
| The credibility of journalism | 316 | 20.6 | 48.4 |
| Time available for researching stories | 317 | 6.6 | 83.3 |

Question: Please tell me whether you think there has been an increase or a

decrease in the importance of following aspects of work in Portugal. 5 means they have increased a lot, 4 means they have somewhat increased, 3 means there has been no change, 2 means they have somewhat decreased, and 1 means they have decreased a lot.

The questions about changes in journalism were only presented to journalists who had five years or more of professional experience.

Source: elaborated by the author

Table 2 – Changes in influences on journalism

| | N | %age saying has "strengthened" | %age saying has "weakened" |
|--|-----|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter | 316 | 92.4 | .9 |
| Competition | 316 | 83.5 | 4.4 |
| User-generated contents, such as blogs | 319 | 75.9 | 6.0 |
| Profit making pressures | 317 | 77.6 | 2.8 |
| Advertising considerations | 316 | 70.3 | 4.4 |
| Audience feedback | 317 | 70.7 | 5.0 |
| Audience research | 315 | 66.0 | 4.4 |
| Pressure toward sensational news | 316 | 52.5 | 13.9 |
| Public relations | 316 | 63.0 | 7.3 |
| Audience involvement in news production | 317 | 60.9 | 6.6 |

Question: Please tell me to what extent these influences have become stronger or weaker during the past five years in Portugal. 5 means they have strengthened a lot, 4 means they have somewhat strengthened, 3 means they did not change, 2 means they have somewhat weakened, and 1 means they have weakened a lot.

Source: elaborated by the author

Results of the (longitudinal) analysis

With regards to professional role orientations, Portuguese journalists found it most important to "report things as they are", to "be a detached observer", to "provide analysis of current affairs", and to "monitor and scrutinize political leaders" (see Table 3). The relevance of these 'classic' roles was fairly undisputed among the interviewed journalists as the relatively low standard deviations indicate.

Likewise, there was a strong consensus among the respondents over the need to “promote tolerance and cultural diversity”, to “monitor and scrutinize business” and letting “people express their views”.

Still, a majority of journalists in Portugal found it important to “tell stories about the world”, to “provide information people need to make political decisions”, to “support national development” as well as to “educate the audience”.

Other more assertive roles which are also perceived to be pivotal such as “advocating for social change”, “motivating people to participate in political activity”, “setting the political agenda” and “influencing public opinion”, feature alongside to “provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life” and to “offer entertainment and relaxation”.

Only a minority of respondents pointed out “conveying a positive image of political leadership” and the “support of the government policy”.

When compared with the data of the previous World of Journalism wave, it is possible to conclude that Portuguese journalists guide themselves by the ideals of power distance and neutral observation. Indeed they display reservations towards the power elites by believing that monitoring their activities should be a priority. Additionally, they aim to provide citizens with interesting information that may inform their political decisions.

While comparing the country’s ranking across time it was verified that results were significantly equal in most of the variables: “Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience”, “set the political agenda”, “support national development”, “advocate for social change”, “monitor and scrutinize business” and “influence public opinion”.

The most noticeable difference concerned “provide information people need to make political decisions”, which was given far more importance in the recent study as compared to the 2011 results.

A closer look at the mean scores is revealing that some significantly different results were also found. Indeed, overall the categories were considered on a more positive tone in terms of the 2015 results (67%) against the ones that lost importance in terms of the journalists’ self impression (33%). “Monitor and scrutinize business”, in particular, increased from somewhat important to a very important role, whereas “support national development” and “advocate for social change” both went both from little important to a somewhat important role.

Quite the opposite in what regards “motivate people to participate in political activity” almost considered very important in 2011 in contrast with the little importance on the 2105 results.

Table 3 – Roles of journalists

| | N | %age saying “extremely” and “very important” | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|-----|--|------|-----------------------|
| Report things as they are | 401 | 94.8 | 4.71 | .63 |
| Provide analysis of current affairs | 402 | 83.3 | 4.22 | .81 |
| Be a detached observer | 405 | 85.9 | 4.42 | .89 |
| Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience | 403 | 24.6 | 2.77 | 1.12 |
| Promote tolerance and cultural diversity | 406 | 75.6 | 4.12 | 1.07 |
| Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life | 403 | 31.3 | 2.98 | 1.16 |
| Educate the audience | 406 | 51.7 | 3.44 | 1.20 |
| Tell stories about the world | 403 | 69.0 | 3.88 | 1.05 |
| Provide information people need to make political decisions | 405 | 62.7 | 3.71 | 1.21 |
| Provide entertainment and relaxation | 402 | 17.2 | 2.44 | 1.14 |
| Motivate people to participate in political activity | 401 | 33.4 | 2.91 | 1.26 |
| Let people express their views | 406 | 71.7 | 4.01 | 1.01 |
| Monitor and scrutinize political leaders | 402 | 78.4 | 4.14 | 1.03 |
| Monitor and scrutinize business | 406 | 75.1 | 4.06 | 1.04 |
| Advocate for social change | 405 | 47.9 | 3.35 | 1.19 |
| Influence public opinion | 401 | 28.9 | 2.83 | 1.15 |
| Support national development | 403 | 54.8 | 3.52 | 1.21 |
| Set the political agenda | 405 | 29.1 | 2.86 | 1.11 |
| Convey a positive image of political leadership | 403 | 4.7 | 1.64 | .94 |
| Support government policy | 402 | 1.7 | 1.37 | .72 |

Question: Please tell me how important each of these things is in your work. 5 means you find them extremely important, 4 means very important, 3 means somewhat important, 2 means little importance, and 1 means unimportant.

Source: elaborated by the author

Journalistic Trust

Analyzing journalists' role perception also contemplates the trust on social institutions. As a rule, a low trust on such institutions by journalists is connected to their perception of roles, such as considering important to watch and monitor the actions of the power elites. Furthermore, it was also included against the backdrop that it is usually related to the media being frequently accused of playing a key role in the erosion of confidence in public institutions.

Regarding trust in public institutions, Portuguese journalists turned out to have reasonable faith in three institutions: their own – the “news media”, followed by the security forces: “police” and the “military” (see Table 4). The “parliament” and the “courts” were also found somewhat trustworthy by Portuguese journalists. Respondents did not hold in particularly high esteem both the “religious leaders” and the “trade unions”, and displayed relatively little confidence in the “govern”, “political parties” and “politicians” in general.

This is somewhat in line with previous results, since the majority of the institutions (55%) scored similarly back in the 2011 wave of the *WOJ* study. Having said this, mention should be made to the fact that there is not a single match regarding the first three institution between the two different sets of data. Back in 2011, it was the “military” that scored higher, to the detriment of both the “media” and the “religious leaders” in the most recent study.

Overall, only residual differences were found when cross compared the two sets of data with the exception of the “religious leaders” and the “parliament” and “government” which were all considered less trustworthy than in previous occasions. Curiously enough, there is no such a decrease when valuing the trust in “politicians” in general and “political parties”, perhaps due to the fact that they already scored so modestly in the study.

Table 4 - Journalistic trust in institutions

| | N | %age saying “complete” and “a great deal of trust” | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--------------------------|-----|--|------|--------------------|
| The judiciary/the courts | 398 | 20.6 | 2.80 | .92 |
| The news media | 398 | 44.7 | 3.37 | .73 |
| The police | 398 | 35.4 | 3.19 | .90 |
| The parliament | 400 | 22.3 | 2.85 | .91 |
| Trade unions | 398 | 13.3 | 2.63 | .89 |
| The government | 400 | 7.8 | 2.30 | .91 |
| The military | 382 | 32.7 | 3.17 | .89 |
| Religious leaders | 395 | 13.7 | 2.54 | .97 |
| Political parties | 397 | 3.8 | 2.16 | .85 |
| Politicians in general | 399 | 2.8 | 2.20 | .81 |

Question: Please tell me on a scale of 5 to 1 how much you personally trust each of the following institutions. 5 means you have complete trust, 4 means you have a great deal of trust, 3 means you have some trust, 2 means you have little trust, and 1 means you have no trust at all.

Source: elaborated by the author

Professional Ethics

Portuguese journalists generally demonstrated a strong commitment to professional standards of ethics. The respondents almost unanimously agreed that journalists should “always adhere to the codes of professional ethics, regardless of situation and context” (see Table 5). Furthermore, almost nine out of ten journalists disagreed with the view their “ethical decisions are a matter of personal judgment” whereas roughly the double of them considered it to be “sometimes acceptable to set aside moral standards if extraordinary circumstances require it”. However, less than half of the interviewees subscribed to the idea that journalists’ ethical decisions “depend on the specific situation”.

The picture was mixed with regards to a selected number of potentially controversial reporting techniques. A large majority of journalists in Portugal found the “use of hidden microphones or cameras”, and “confidential business or government documents without authorization” as well as use “re-creations or

dramatizations of news by actors”, justifiable on occasion (see Table 6). Still, most journalists thought it was acceptable to “get employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information”, and “exerting pressure on unwilling informants to get a story” or “claiming to be somebody else”. Only a minority of journalists found it permissible to both “altering photographs” or “quotes from sources”.

The practice of ‘brown envelope journalism’ – that is, journalists “taking money from sources, presumably in return for positive coverage” – was almost unanimously condemned by Portuguese journalists.

Table 5 – Ethical orientations of journalists

| | N | %age saying “strongly” and “somewhat agree” | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|-----|---|------|--------------------|
| Journalists should always adhere to codes of professional ethics, regardless of situation and context | 403 | 94.5 | 4.60 | .67 |
| What is ethical in journalism depends on the specific situation | 403 | 33.5 | 2.58 | 1.38 |
| What is ethical in journalism is a matter of personal judgment | 401 | 12.5 | 1.98 | 1.12 |
| It is acceptable to set aside moral standards if extraordinary circumstances require it | 402 | 21.6 | 2.40 | 1.24 |

Question: The following statements describe different approaches to journalism. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree. 5 means you strongly agree, 4 means somewhat agree, 3 means undecided, 2 means somewhat disagree, and 1 means strongly disagree.

Source: elaborated by the author

Table 6 – Justification of controversial reporting methods by journalists

| | N | % age saying | % age saying |
|--|-----|--------------------|-------------------------|
| | | “always justified” | “justified on occasion” |
| Using confidential business or government documents without authorization | 401 | 20.2 | 28.4 |
| Getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information | 405 | 21.0 | 43.5 |
| Using re-creations or dramatizations of news by actors | 402 | 23.4 | 41.5 |
| Paying people for confidential information | 401 | 20.2 | 28.4 |
| Using hidden microphones or cameras | 403 | 11.9 | 68.7 |
| Claiming to be somebody else | 403 | 24.6 | 34.0 |
| Publishing stories with unverified content | 405 | 28.9 | 18.3 |
| Exerting pressure on unwilling informants to get a story | 402 | 22.9 | 39.3 |
| Making use of personal documents such as letters and pictures without permission | 403 | 24.8 | 28.5 |
| Accepting money from sources | 404 | 34.2 | 7.0 |
| Altering or fabricating quotes from sources | 404 | 33.7 | 2.7 |
| Altering photographs | 404 | 31.2 | 9.9 |

Question: Given an important story, which of the following, if any, do you think may be justified on occasion and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?

Source: elaborated by the author

Autonomy and Influences

Journalists in Portugal reported a fairly high degree of professional autonomy. Three out of four respondents (76.3%) said that they had complete or a great deal of “freedom in their selection of stories”. With a total of 84.9 %, the number of respondents who had complete or a great deal of freedom in “deciding over what aspects to emphasize in a news story” was even higher. Yet a minority of journalists (44.1%) reported that they “participated in editorial coordination activities” (such as meetings and news management).

News production is influenced by a variety of factors. Among the potential sources of influences mentioned in the interview, “journalism ethics” fared on top of the list among Portuguese respondents (see Table 7). A majority of journalists found their work substantively constrained by “information access” (or lack thereof), by “time limits”, and by “editorial policy considerations”. Also, more than half of the respondents admitted their work was influenced by their “personal values and beliefs” as well as by the “availability (or non-availability) of news-gathering resources”.

Overall, internal factors were found to be more influential than external constraints. Portuguese journalists felt little influenced by sources from within the political and civic realm: the “government”, “pressure groups”, “military”, “police and state security”, “business people”, “public relations”, “politicians”, “censorship” and “religious considerations”. They also reported only minor influence from “friends, acquaintances and family” as well as from “colleagues in other media”. Likewise, economic influences – stemming from “profit expectations”, “owners and managers”, as well as “market competition” and “advertising” – seem to have little relevance in Portuguese newsrooms.

Table 7 – Perceived influences

| | N | %age saying “extremely” and “very influential” | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|-----|--|------|-----------------------|
| Journalism ethics | 398 | 92.7 | 4.60 | .71 |
| Information access | 404 | 78.2 | 4.10 | .92 |
| Time limits | 400 | 73.3 | 3.98 | .96 |
| Your personal values and beliefs | 377 | 62.1 | 3.82 | 1.14 |
| Availability of news-gathering resources | 393 | 58.8 | 3.73 | .97 |
| Editorial policy | 400 | 63.3 | 3.81 | .94 |
| Editorial supervisors and higher editors | 392 | 47.4 | 3.41 | .94 |
| Relationships with news sources | 403 | 47.9 | 3.38 | 1.12 |
| Media laws and regulation | 402 | 27.1 | 2.78 | 1.15 |
| Feedback from the audience | 405 | 35.8 | 2.99 | 1.14 |
| Your peers on the staff | 370 | 30.5 | 3.03 | .89 |
| Audience research and data | 326 | 21.8 | 2.63 | 1.12 |
| Profit expectations | 270 | 17.8 | 2.36 | 1.11 |
| Managers of the news organization | 323 | 24.1 | 2.70 | 1.11 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|------|------|------|
| Advertising considerations | 267 | 12.0 | 2.09 | 1.04 |
| Competing news organizations | 403 | 30.0 | 2.94 | 1.01 |
| Owners of the news organization | 297 | 18.5 | 2.45 | 1.13 |
| Public relations | 396 | 4.8 | 1.82 | .89 |
| Colleagues in other media | 406 | 15.3 | 2.33 | 1.05 |
| Business people | 402 | 4.7 | 1.62 | .90 |
| Pressure groups | 405 | 4.4 | 1.61 | .88 |
| Friends, acquaintances and family | 406 | 14.3 | 2.25 | 1.10 |
| Military, police and state security | 398 | 4.5 | 1.56 | .89 |
| Religious considerations | 196 | 15.8 | 2.04 | 1.27 |
| Censorship | 405 | 6.7 | 1.5 | 1.00 |
| Politicians | 403 | 5.0 | 1.60 | .89 |
| Government officials | 400 | 3.5 | 1.54 | .84 |

Question: Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work. 5 means it is extremely influential, 4 means very influential, 3 means somewhat influential, 2 means little influential, and 1 means not influential.

Source: elaborated by the author

As far as the comparative analysis of the 2011 data concerns, it is revealing of a somewhat change in terms of the influences on the work of the Portuguese journalist across time. Indeed, only three of the common 18 (17%) influences scored similarly in terms of the general ranking: “Editorial supervisors and higher editors”, “availability of news-gathering resources” on the high end as well as “censorship” right at the very bottom. Amongst the contrasting 73% of the categories, mention should be made to “time limits” which did not constitute such influential factor back in 2011 as in 2015.

Furthermore, a cross analysis based on the mean values also displays a number of significant increases from not influential to little influential: “Friends, acquaintances and family”, “religious considerations” and “peers on the staff”. On the contrary, the influence of “managers of the news organization” was downgraded from somewhat influential to little influential across time.

Discussion

Analysing journalism across time is of pivotal importance, to the point that it may be indicative of the extent to which journalists and news organizations all over the world are adapting to the ever changing news ecosystem.

Based upon the latest wave of results of the *WOJ* study regarding Portugal, this article, firstly, corroborates the state of change of journalism prevailing somewhat everywhere. In the particular case of the Southern European country, the flux of change is the result of a number of combined influences (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). To start with, influences from outside media organizations, that is technological innovation impact and market-related considerations. Furthermore, such evolving scenario of the country's journalism features alongside organizational and routine influences: a substantive deterioration of both the working conditions in the profession - increasing average working hours and profit making pressures to the detriment of the time available for researching stories. Lastly, influences from individual media workers also impact upon the Portuguese journalists in view of the decrease in its public credibility and ethical standards.

This study is also of interest, to the extent that it makes a contribution to the domain of scarce and yet inconclusive research which attempt to map whether the journalistic self-perception of their professional practices and roles is also changing across time. Against the backdrop of the still incomplete and provisional literature, both in national terms and systematic comparison across time, this article makes a contribution to try to better understand both the extent, and the direction and implications of the changes undergoing journalism. It does so, by proposing an unprecedented longitudinal study of the Portuguese journalistic reality, which resorts to a five-year examination on the evolving professional self-perception based upon some of the current trends in journalism studies. Indeed, the role conceptions related with its democratic justification, journalistic autonomy and trust in social institutions, internal and external influences and ethical considerations, considered altogether form the basis of a new new model to analyze and define journalism.

When comparing the two situations prevailing back in 2010-11 and 2013-14, thus, it sums up to a rather *mutatis mutandis* scenario, since the necessary alterations over a five year period in

Portugal did not affect the main point at issue, that is: the stably evolving self-perception of the journalists. Indeed, the differences across all parameter of analysis throughout the period of the study only amount to rather selective and modest changes in view of the time frame involved and the contextual circumstances surrounding journalism.. Put differently, as far as the longitudinal comparison is concerned, there are some statistically significant differences to point out which, nevertheless, do not put into question a general trend of stability in the Portuguese journalists' self-perception, in line with previous findings (Bourdieu, 1998; Cook, 1998; Gans, 2004; O'Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008; Quandt, 2008; Reich, 2013; Ryfe, 2006, 2012a, 2012b; Schultz, 2007)

In conclusion, notwithstanding the slight fluctuations in the study's results within the context of the state of change that has taken place in journalism, as mentioned above, it is rather safe to conclude that Portugal is still preserving the journalistic paradigm. The latter tends to be both change-resistant and quite constant or homogeneous over time (Reich, 2013) conveying a somewhat optimistic prospect about the future of the profession (Willnat et al. 2017).

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