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Professionalization of the television journalism workforce in Imperatriz-MA

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Abstract

In the municipality of Imperatriz, in Maranhão, television is one of the media with the largest coverage and the possibility of broadcasting news. This research aims to understand how the process of professionalization of television journalism professionals took place in the city. For this purpose, a qualitative research was conducted, with data collection through in-depth interviews and content analysis from seven categories. As a result, empirical professionalization is the main form of professionals' entry into journalistic practice, despite the conventional training of the interviewees. In addition, as advantages, the love of journalism and social contributions to the region. On the other hand, the drop in the requirement of a diploma, low salary and current labor market as negatives points that need to be discussed.

Keywords: Journalism. Communication. Professionalization.

Introduction

The professionalization of the Brazilian journalism workforce has been a source of debate since the beginning of the 20th century. At the time, the concern was relevant due to the importance of the journalist in disseminating essential information to the population (BARBOSA, 2013). Such debates continued throughout the 20th century, even after the

requirement for a diploma to exercise the profession, and were strengthened in the 21st century, mainly in 2009, when the Federal Superior Court (STF) decided to withdraw the obligation to have the university degree to work as a journalist (OLIVEIRA, 2009).

The scenario of the relationship between work and journalism is fragile in Brazil and in Imperatriz it is not any different. The city does not have local records on the number of professionals in broadcast journalism, according to the category's union. The Industry Federation of the State of Rio de Janeiro (FIRJAN) index (2015) of the creative industry, which accounts for the number of formal jobs in the creative economy sectors, shows a number of jobs in the journalism category that does not match the number of media companies present in the city. There are sixteen TV concessions, seven with daily programming, according to Anatel (2018), considering all broadcasting categories, however, only one presenter appears in the database of FIRJAN.

The situation is aggravated by the new hiring models in journalism, which range from legal entities, instead of individuals, and more subcontracts, temporary contracts and other forms that weaken the job security of professionals (OLIVEIRA; GROHMANN, 2015).

The basis of journalism is the news, and it is through it that the professional must work, according to Lage (2001). This function is of great responsibility, because the better informed a population is, the more aware of its rights and duties it tends to be, including in the search for improvements in the quality of life, thus being able to establish the relationship between communication and the development of a region (SERENO *et al.*, 2009).

Imperatriz was chosen in this study because it is the second largest city in the state of Maranhão, according to IBGE (2018), and because it has televisions working based on journalism, disseminating information to the entire region that has Imperatriz as its headquarters. Dallabrida (2015), when characterizing the dimensions that influence the development of a territory, presents the intellectual, cultural and social heritage as components of a territory. When disseminating journalistic information, the critical sense is sharpened, in addition to having social and cultural issues linked to news values.

In this context, the general objective of the research is presented, which was to analyze how the process of professionalization of the television journalism workforce in Imperatriz took place. Therefore, the specific objectives were: (a) to trace the sociodemographic profile of professionals in television journalism in Imperatriz; (b) to understand the process of formal and empirical training of the workforce; (c) to identify the potentialities and barriers faced by professionals and (d) to identify the professional paths and perspectives of professionals in television journalism in Imperatriz.

Professionalization of journalists in Brazil

The Brazilian media structure has changed significantly, especially in the last six decades. Different phases took place around the regulatory processes and technological innovations, which had an impact on the world of communication professionals' work. Grohmann (2016)

affirms that Brazil is experiencing a process of flexibilization of the forms of contract and work of the journalist. It is a reorganization in the face of changes that have occurred nationally and globally in the world of work. To understand such changes, it is necessary to go back to history.

In the 19th century, in Brazil as a colony of Portugal, the first texts written with the aim of informing were almost always produced informally. Journalism in Brazil was basically made up of professionals from other areas, such as literature and philosophy, who appreciated writing and had a more accurate critical sense (SPANNENBERG; BARROS, 2016).

In that period, according to Barbosa (2013), journalism had a role related to politics, whether as an ally or an opponent. Even due to political party seasonality, journalism was not seen as a main profession, but as a momentary contribution to an increase in income or an opportunity to do politics.

Even though the profession was not fully recognized at the time, organizations had begun to discuss the importance of professionalizing journalists, a process that could contribute to the insertion of more responsible professionals in terms of techniques and reflections on the factors involved in news. Such characteristics would be approached by the study of disciplines in the areas of Human and Social Sciences, present in the higher education course of Social Communication, with qualification in Journalism.

According to Oliveira (2009), the Brazilian Press Association, established in 1908, since the beginning of the 20th century, defended professionalization as a way to increase responsibility in news production. Such professionalization, according to the author, should occur through theoretical and practical training.

Spannenberg and Barros (2016) reinforce that, between the 19th and 20th centuries, with the changes in the political regime, from monarchy to republic, journalism ceased to have a purely craft character.

Journalism became a large business initiative that, for market survival, required high investments. The opinionated character, cultivated since its inception for the political and ideological loyalty of the reader, began to give way to the informative bias that is still cultivated today (SPANNENBERG; BARROS, 2016, p. 3, our translation¹).

For Prado (2005), the broadcasting of TV in Brazil, from 1950 to the end of the 1960s, made the journalist's work more noticeable, due to the notoriety that came with television in the first newscasts. According to Paternostro (2006), despite being an expensive device, the TV became popular in the period. The big businessmen, who owned the stations, bought TVs, and installed them in strategic points in the main cities, making the newscasts more watched by the general public.

1 All the quotes present in this text, written originally in Portuguese have been freely translated.

Prado (2005) also adds that, in the early years, newscasts were made mainly by broadcasters who managed to get an opportunity on television, thanks to experience in radio newscasts, regardless of technical or intellectual training for that. However, from the end of the 1960s, there was a greater expectation of quality from television news professionals. The programs began to include interviews in the programming, which required more intellectual preparation.

In 1969, the diploma began to be required as a requirement for professional journalism in Brazil. “With Decree-Law 972/69, enacted during the military regime, the activity began to have professional training requirements delimited by the State, based on an academic credential” (OLIVEIRA, 2009, p. 1). For Melo (2013, p. 17), the first years of the diploma requirement began to dictate a professional standard. “The industrialization of the press and the transformation of journalism into a craft that assumes a multimedia aspect, requiring specialized training from its practitioners”.

According to Alves (2016, p. 2), the mandatory decree of the diploma was necessary to pressure companies to invest in professional quality and, consequently, impacting on improvements in news production. “Through a moralizing bias, institutions began to claim ethical and professional discourses from journalism, as it was common for semi-literate journalists to exist, and employers who did not honor their salary payments”.

With the need to establish hiring based on a diploma, the job market in Brazilian journalism began a dispute over the word professional. It was a symbolic struggle and placed between two sides those who had studied journalism and, on the other, those considered professionals for their day-to-day practice of news production (ALVES, 2016).

The obligation lasted 40 years. In 2009, however, the Justices of the Superior Federal Court (STF) finally decided that a diploma should not be mandatory for practicing the profession of journalist (OLIVEIRA, 2009). Alves (2016, p. 4) summarizes the facts and legal documents that influenced the decision of the STF.

The constitutional bias that surrounds the discussions about the mandatory higher education for the exercise of journalism in Brazil has been present since its origin. This had begun when the Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office filed a Public Civil Action – arising from administrative procedures No. 1.34.001.002285/2001-69 and No. 1.34.001.001683/2001-68 – with a request for injunctive relief, against the Union, in which it defended the non-reception, by the Constitution of 1988 (art. 5, IX and XIII, and art. 220, caput and § 1), of art. 4, item V, of Decree-Law No. 972, of October 17, 1969. In June 2009, by majority vote, the Federal Supreme Court (STF) understood that article 4, item V, of Decree-Law 972/1969, not approved by the Constitution of 1988. Even though 40 years have passed, 21 years of the current Brazilian constitutional charter. According to the STF, this decree, created during the Military Dictatorship, violates press freedom, and contravenes the right to free expression of thought.

With the decision of the Superior Federal Court, the Ministry of Labor was instructed to suspend inspections around the diploma for the exercise of the function of journalist. The Ministry of Labor had to annul the infraction notices drawn up, up to that date, which regulated charges around the mandatory diploma for producing news as a journalist (ALVES, 2016).

Oliveira and Grohmann (2015) state that the drop of mandatory higher education in the specific area opened possibilities for underemployment within communication. To survive in the market, the professional accepts until he/she loses labor rights.

Through the increasing flexibilization of the conditions of use and mobilization of the productive force, the number of journalists submitted to diversified contractual work relations rose. Outsourcing, fixed-term employment contracts, legal entity (PJ), cooperative members and freelancers are recurring figures in the professional market (OLIVEIRA; GROHMANN, 2015, p. 124).

The digital communication companies “Comunique-se” and “Apex”, specialized in strategic content for the labor market, conduct research on defining the profile of Brazilian journalists. The data released in 2018 are in line with the theory presented by Oliveira and Grohmann (2015). The survey was published in the e-book “The profile of the Brazilian journalist” (2018).

According to the survey, carried out with 26 thousand journalists from all Brazilian states, the number of journalists with a Legal Entity (PJ) contract represents 15.8% of the total, freelancers are 7.9% and the self-employed 7.5%. In this universe surveyed, formal contracts (with registration in the work booklet) are 36.5%. In general, adding the new forms of contract presented, it is possible to sum 31.2% of professionals, a total almost equal to that of those who maintain formal contracts.

The survey also reveals the challenge surrounding the low remuneration of journalists, regardless of the communication means in which they work. According to the data released, almost half of Brazilian journalists (45.1%) earn up to BLR 3,000.00 per month, that is, less than 3 minimum wages considering the value practiced in 2019, BLR 1,006.00.

The Code of Ethics for Journalists in Brazil, in view of the changes in the labor market in recent decades, presents criteria for the abuse of the profession to be vetoed. The code prohibits, for example, professionals from accepting wages below the wage floor of the category.

Art. 10 – The journalist cannot:

- Accept a paid job offer that does not comply with the wage floor of the category or with the table set by the professional association;
- Submit to directives contrary to the correct disclosure of information;

- Frustrate the expression of divergent opinions or preventing free debate;
- Agree with the practice of persecution or discrimination on social, political, religious, racial, gender and sexual orientation grounds;
- Exercise journalistic coverage, by the agency in which he/she works, in public and private institutions where he/she is an employee, advisor or employee. On the Professional Responsibility of the Journalist (CODE OF ETHICS FOR JOURNALISTS IN BRAZIL, 2019, emphasis added).

By analyzing the profile of journalists in the face of new forms of hiring and work, information on the television journalism market in Imperatriz is available. The data are released by the Industry Federation of the State of Rio de Janeiro (FIRJAN), which collects and disseminates indicators on work in cities across Brazil, based on the indexes of the General Register of Employees and Unemployed, of the Federal Government.

To analyze the numbers, it is necessary to understand that Imperatriz has seven television stations in operation, according to Anatel (2019). The functions directly presented as acting in television journalism are in the audiovisual and editorial segments, within the creative industry bias (FIRJAN, 2019).

In Charts 1 and 2, constructed from FIRJAN data, functions, official and professional numbers and average remuneration are listed.

Chart 1 – Functions of television journalism – Audiovisual segment

Function	Formalized workers	Average salary
Television program director	01	BRL 1,801.62
TV and Video Editor	12	BRL 1,683.65
Radio and TV Announcer	27	BRL 1,783.23
Television producer	03	BRL 1,702.58
Radio and television reporter	06	BRL 2,396.76

Source: adapted from FIRJAN (2019).

Chart 2 – Functions of television journalism – Editorial segment

Function	Formalized workers	Average salary
Editorial director	01	BRL 4,530.32
Text and image editor	05	BRL 1,425.54
Journalist	09	BRL 2,208.50

Source: adapted from FIRJAN (2019).

When analyzing the indicators and thinking about the reality of the operation of seven television stations with daily programming, the numbers of professionals are not enough. This feature places Imperatriz in a group similar to the information in the survey Profile of the Brazilian journalist (2018), with the presentation of flexible forms of labor relations, in view of the profession and functions related to television journalism.

Grohmann (2016) states that this trend began to be characterized in Brazil in the 1990s, with the downsizing of newsrooms, said to be traditional, and the diversification of relational forms of work. The author explains that, initially, the idea of “freedom” was sold to the worker, who could undertake or have various forms of work in the profession, however, this “freedom” is often forced by the impositions of the concession owners.

These changes in the labor market raise concerns about the quality of news production. Wolf (2009) defines that the journalistic production process is systematized and needs to be thought through for the transformation of information into news in the journalistic industry. The process is called *newsmaking*.

Data are collected by the researcher in the environment that is the object of study, either by systematic observation of everything that happens there, or through conversations, more or less informal and occasional, or real interviews with the people who put the productive processes into practice. (WOLF, 2009, p. 191).

Thus, the journalist needs space and productive capacity to carry out the production of news with adequate responsibility, knowing that a disclosed information will influence the formation of the opinion of entire communities, therefore, in *newsmaking* the value-public interest news is considered.

Traquina (2005) also argues that *newsmaking* occurs from the process of perception, selection, and transformation of events into news, which is the product that the journalist’s work offers to the public. Therefore, in the case of TV, the professional helps design the reality that is disseminated through the channels.

By studying details and analyzing the ethical, technical and conceptual criteria of journalistic work, the journalist who undergoes formal training has the possibility of learning about the contents, while still in college, to then use them in practice, while the others learn on a day-to-day basis, generally based on the criteria presented by the communication companies, which may involve political or commercial preferences, and thus exclude points of view that are important for news production.

When analyzing the current job market, the concern of who is a professional journalist is aroused. Miranda (2018) reports changes in newsrooms, the environment where part of *newsmaking* takes place. With the popularization of social networks and messaging applications, information reaches professionals and, at the same time, the public faster and faster.

These new environments that we are used to live in are structured in cyberspace, on the internet. In this place, information is mobile, it does not have a specific territory, not only the communication means work the news, but the public also has the freedom to report, disseminate. Thus, new market and interest niches are found (MIRANDA, 2018, p. 6).

In this way, the traditional newsroom, the one in which each professional occupies a single predetermined role, has less space in the current molds of *newsmaking*. A single professional, with access to the internet, is able to carry out investigations and productions previously carried out by large groups of workers. “In the midst of this, technological changes, mainly from mobile devices, provide greater ease in the production of journalistic material” (GROHMANN, 2016, p. 3).

Despite the strong technological influence in the new scenarios of the journalist’s labor market, the author reflects that this was not the only cause of so many changes in the news production process in recent decades.

Method

The method adopted in the research is characterized as exploratory, with a qualitative approach. The *locus* of study is the municipality of Imperatriz. According to the Brazilian Statistics Institute (IBGE) in 2018, the municipality has an estimated population of 258,016 inhabitants and is bathed by the Tocantins River, the second largest river in Brazil among those with its source and mouth in national territory. Imperatriz also has the second largest economy in the state of Maranhão and ranks 101st among the 5570 Brazilian municipalities. The IBGE (2018) also highlights that the municipality is the main one, in terms of economy and provision of services, in the Imperatriz micro-region, which has 16 municipalities and is popularly known as the *Tocantina* Region.

The population of interest for the research is composed of professionals working in television journalism and who act as news producers and selectors (OLIVEIRA; GROHMANN, 2015). 24 professionals were selected, 12 of which have been working in television journalism in Imperatriz since before 2008, and the other group that started their career after 2008. The milestone of 2008 is justified by the beginning of the Journalism course in the city, offered by a public university. The sample was defined by saturation, according to Falqueto and Farias (2016) who explain that the theoretical saturation point, in social research like this, is usually achieved in the 12th interview, as there is a relevant amount of information to carry out analyses.

Data collection took place through an interview form instrument with 17 questions, including closed, semi-open and open questions, through an in-depth interview (DUARTE; BARROS, 2006). The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee and followed the guidelines of CNS resolution No. 510/2016.

Data analysis was by content analysis, based on Bardin (1977) and Franco (2005), with categories and subcategories of analysis. The categories are presented.

Chart 3 - Data analysis

Sociodemographic profile of professionals	Gender, age, origin, schooling, working time.
Early career	How the work began, how they learned to practice journalism.
Functions performed at work	Description of the routine, whether or not the functions are described in the employment contract, whether or not there is accumulation of function.
Professional income	Presentation of the income range and whether it is considered fair and sufficient. If they do any work to supplement their and if so, what this activity is.

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Results and discussion

The presentation of the results begins with the profile of the professionals who participated in the research. Among professionals who started their career before 2008, empirical training is observed, without regular higher education, as reported by most respondents. This characteristic is reminiscent of the formation process of the Brazilian media, still in the 19th and early 20th centuries, reported by Barbosa (2013), in which news production, in many cases, followed the seasonality of politics, and it used the labor of social actors who understood or were part of the process. In general, they started in journalism as an income supplement or a job opportunity, even if there was no training for it.

Aware that TV started operating in Imperatriz in the 1980s, the formation of the television journalism workforce in the city went through a process similar to that described by Barbosa (2013), especially among professionals who started their careers before from 2008.

Spannenberg and Barros (2016) state that, at the beginning of the process of training the workforce in Brazilian journalism, many professionals migrated from other areas to work in news production. A similar process is also observed when reflecting on the sociodemographic profile of the results of this research.

It is observed among professionals who started work before 2008 that, more than training in Social Communication - Journalism, most present themselves without higher education to work in the area, that is, with empirical training, or higher training in areas linked to Human and Social Sciences, such as Theology, Law and Pedagogy. Thus, the group of professionals did not have access to the theoretical incentive for the development of cognitive and reflective skills for building the relationship between society, the news and professional ethics. "We

learned as the day went on. For example, as we didn't have a degree, a degree in the area" (INTERVIEWEE 5).

On the other hand, when presenting the sociodemographic profile of professionals who started their career after 2008, there is a marked difference when analyzing the training criterion. Among the 12 professionals who make up the "post 2008" sample, 10 are trained in Social Communication – Journalism. "I started doing an internship in the television journalism laboratory, so that's when I started to like it and to have this practice. Then I got my first paid internship, on TV" (INTERVIEWEE 9). It is observed that these professionals started their careers during the peak of the discussion about the obligation of a higher education diploma to practice journalism and, even so, they completed their training. It is important to remember that the Federal Superior Court ended the mandatory diploma for the function of journalist in the year 2009. The order ended the inspections and infraction notices to the companies that hired labor without proper training for the functions, such as summarized (ALVES, 2016).

Melo (2013), however, states that in the years when the mandatory journalism degree was in effect, a production profile was created that defined much about what quality, or lack thereof, was in productions, and calls *news industrialization* the process of formation of production profiles. This assertion may be one of the explanations why, even with the drop in the requirement, professionals in Imperatriz continued to seek formal training.

When analyzing the beginning of the career between the two groups presented in the research sample, one can see marked differences between the older professionals and those who started work after 2008.

Analyzing the responses of interviewees from the group that started their careers before 2008, migration from radio to television and practical experiences are the main aspects that define the beginning of training. Prado (2005) explains that due to the popularization of radio in Brazil in the 20th century, the language and profile of professionals were guided by radio culture, in the period of strengthening of television as new means of communication across the country. Thus, with the need to have reporters and TV presenters and the lack of professionals with the training to do so, radio was used as a source of workers.

On the radio we came to entertainment and later we started to migrate to journalism with carnival broadcasts, sports championships broadcast, and then we focused on it. And then, in 1997, we arrived on television with the mission of presenting one of the biggest programs in the house (INTERVIEWEE 8).

Despite the migration between means of communication, presented as a strong characteristic of the beginning of the career among professionals entering TV before 2008, most mention that it was necessary to study to stay in television, even if, in most cases, it was not the conventional higher education. This is a feature presented by Melo (2013) and which was part of the process of training the workforce in Brazilian television journalism, especially in the 1960s

and 1970s. At the time, journalism courses were a demand on the part of professionals and started to get stronger. The author recalls that, the more formal professionalization was sought, the more a standard was employed that, to be achieved, also required theoretical preparation, even if it was not higher education.

Unlike the group before 2008, the professionals who started after, in general, did not go through the migration from radio to TV, effectively. Most started working as a complement to higher education, through internships or searching for practice as a differential to enter the market.

Beltrão (2016) presents the characteristic of reconciling theory and practice as important for the training process and the beginning of a career. The author states, for example, that, at the time when the formalization of journalism courses was being discussed, the defense was that theory and practice would provide a more complete training for professionals, mainly in view of the social dynamics presented in the profession. Respondents from the post-2008 group agree. Only the theory studied in college does not prepare for the job market.

Grohmann (2016, p. 7) says yet that “changes in the professional profile or in journalistic practices are not something that stems only from recent years”. That is, direct practice with the market is essential for starting a career and its future consolidation, as advocated by national guidelines, knowing that journalism is a market in constant transformation.

In the analysis of the answers about the functions performed at work, there is a great similarity between the answers and reflections presented by both the older professionals, who started their careers before 2008, and the younger ones, who started working on TV after 2008. In both cases, the interviewees claim to be multifunctional in the news production process.

Today we have 10 people to produce content for all these television newscasts. So, you effectively need to do everything. You can't sit here in the chair and say like this: okay, let's go, guys! You have to be participating in the process. Then you're a producer, you're a driver... I've already driven for people to do stories. You are what you need to be for the content to be on air (INTERVIEWEE 5).

The process felt by professionals in Imperatriz is also present in the rest of the country, as explained by Oliveira and Grohmann (2015, p. 123):

The profession of journalist has undergone significant changes in the last two decades due to the introduction of new technologies and the redesign of the productive organization that took place in the world of work, changes that are associated, at a broader level, with the process of macroeconomic restructuring.

Unemployment in the country, the global economic situation and current legislation impacted changes in the conception of functions in journalism. Alves (2016) recalls that, with

the drop in the requirement for a higher education diploma to exercise functions in journalism, the possibilities of labor inspections in newsrooms also decreased. Thus, the market became even more flexible.

Introducing the analysis between the 24 interviewees of the two groups regarding the income obtained from television journalism, all of them revealed that they have salaries between BLR 999.00 and BLR 9,998.00. Exactly, six professionals reported that they receive a monthly salary, with television journalism, between BLR 999.00 and BLR 1,998.00. Most interviewees reported an intermediate value. From BLR 1,999.00 to BLR 4,990.00 was the response of 17 research participants. Only one professional reported earning between BLR 4,991.00 and BLR 9,998.00 as a salary. It is important to inform that this was the only one interviewee to state to be completely satisfied with the remuneration.

To understand the level of satisfaction, it is important to compare the values to the wage floor reported by the National Federation of Journalists (FENAJ, 2019). According to the federation, in the state of Maranhão, the wage floor is BLR 2,725.00. Thus, it is possible to state that more than half of the professionals interviewed earn below the minimum wage or be on the threshold of it. Among Brazilian cities and regions, FENAJ (2019) presents a variation in salary floors between BLR 1,388.00, in cities in the interior of Pernambuco as the lowest, and BLR 3,631.16, in Londrina, in Paraná, as the highest wage floor in the country.

Another data to be compared is the average salary presented to journalists, in Imperatriz, by the FIRJAN indicator (2019): TV program director, average salary of BLR 1801.62; television producer, BLR 1,702.58 and television or radio reporter, with an average salary of BLR 2,396.76. That is, all average salary values for the functions presented in the FIRJAN indicator (2019) are below the wage floor stipulated for the category, in Maranhão.

The Code of Ethics for Journalists in Brazil (2019,) as Article 10, makes it clear that journalists should not accept remuneration that does not comply with the salary floor defined by professional associations. However, as Grohmann (2016) warns, the world of work in journalism is experiencing a phase of downsizing and cost containment in newsrooms and, therefore, the professional ends up submitting to accept jobs with salaries below the minimum wage.

Final considerations

The journalist's professionalization process in Brazil went through obstacles that left a legacy of challenges for the professional category. Among them are the empirical processes of learning journalistic practice, flexible hiring, the devaluation of the profession in terms of salary.

The Brazilian media has gone through phases of commitment by professionals with the intention of strengthening the profession, encouraging formalization through higher education, and guaranteeing better working conditions and remuneration. The 1988 Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil provides for respect for the news production process and the

professional, as a way of guaranteeing that the population has access to accurate information, with responsibility.

However, even with the current national regulations, professionals and the profession of journalist are in a moment of fragility, especially after 2009, when the Federal Supreme Court overturned the obligation of a diploma for the exercise of journalism.

The labor market was impacted by flexible forms of hiring that include outsourcing, for example, and, in Imperatriz, the reality of professional instability is present. The local television journalism workforce, especially among professionals who started their career before 2008, is made up of people who started working on TV before any type of higher education. The word “practice” is present in the testimonies as a way of defining how the professional learned to produce news, that is, focusing on techniques, mainly, of presenting news and without the development of skills and competences of reflection and professional ethics.

Among the younger ones, who started their careers after 2008, higher education in Journalism is seen as the starting point for entering the job market for the majority. Even so, these professionals, for the most part, credit the market with a large part of the learning they had for effective work, which indicates that, in the perception of the interviewees, the traditional training only in college was not enough for the process of professionalization of the hand of television journalism work, in Imperatriz, Maranhão, even among those who had access to it.

The influence of journalism on citizens’ lives, despite the professionals’ difficulties, is mentioned by everyone, from the youngest to the most experienced, as one of the advantages of the profession and, at the same time, as a concern, since Imperatriz is the main city of a region comprising 16 municipalities. Television and the internet are seen by professionals as allies in the news production process, in order to provide the viewer with more elements for intellectual, critical, social and cultural training, factors that directly impact the development of the region.

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Brandão, M. B.: conceptualization, methodology, data curation, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review e editing; Carniello, M. F.: conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing – review e editing.

Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the authors upon request.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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