

“My own news”: journalism and the Brazilian and Portuguese young public in a digital context¹

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Abstract

The aim of this work is to investigate the consumption of general news by Brazilian and Portuguese adolescents and older children who have access to digital technologies, in a comparative perspective. By doing interviews and focus groups, we identify that the term “news” is sometimes understood as something that goes beyond the journalism sphere (but is always linked to something new, interesting and true to the children). The youngest also reject or neglect traditional press sometimes. From this, we argue that journalistic products should be more transparent in constructing news discourse, as this may help younger readers to better understand the basic elements (and hence the social role) of journalism, mainly in the digital environment.

Keywords: Childhood. Adolescence. Audience. News. Internet.

Introduction

There’s a YouTube channel about celebrities and stuff. I think you don’t know it. It is cool for you to look for it [talking with her colleagues in the discussion], it’s called Ok Ok². They post a lot of *news* and talk about what is going on, on the Internet, mostly, not much outside that [...] And there is also *some news*. For example, I think it’s cool to watch tutorials where someone teaches you to do some stuff. (DANIELA³, Brazilian, group interview n.1, oct. 2014 – Our translation).

1 Part of the discussions of this study were presented in the II Simpósio Internacional sobre a Juventude Brasileira (2nd International Symposium about Brazilian Youth), which took place from August 12th to 15th 2017 in Fortaleza (CE), in a study entitled “Reconfigurações do conceito de notícia na recepção do jornalismo por crianças e adolescentes brasileiros e portugueses” (Reconfigurations of the news concept in the journalism reception by Brazilian and Portuguese children and adolescents).

2 The channel’s description is: “Celebrities, gossip, paparazzi and the main news in the celebrity world”. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/canalokok>. Accessed on: 21 jun. 2018.

3 The names of the interviewees are fictional, to preserve their anonymity.

Daniela is a 11-year old Brazilian girl. Studying in a private school in São Paulo, she has access to a smartphone and Internet. In a group conversation with two more girls who study with her and have the same age, she tells that a “tutorial” in video format, posted in a channel within the YouTube platform, with a non-indicated authorship, is, according to her, a type of “news”. She does not show the same enthusiasm with any other form of material consumption of mainstream journalism, beyond what you see in the web: “TV news are more for grown-ups”.

This research, part of a PhD thesis⁴, approaches the consumption of general news by teenagers and pre-teens such as Daniela, in a comparative perspective in Brazil and in Portugal. In 2014, we’ve interviewed, in individual and group conversations, 50 children ranging from nine to 16 years of age⁵ in both countries (capitals and countryside), in middle-class or in upper-middle class. All interviewees must have access to digital technologies (Internet, smartphone or tablet) - hence the social economic cropping - though its use can present different intensities (according to their social status or to the parental, educational and guardian supervision). That came about because the research had the objective to understand the implications of this digital consumption in the informative diet of interviewees.

In a previous study (DORETTO; PONTE, 2015), we’ve already demonstrated that, in the network, boys and girls are mainly dedicated to do communication activities with their peers and entertainment actions, like playing and watching videos, in addition to school activities. In this daily activity, boys and girls also have access to journalistic content, or so they call. The quantitative research TIC Kids Online Brazil on 2016, developed by the Regional Center for the Development of Information Society, from the Internet Management Committee in Brazil, shows that 46% of the Internet users between nine and 17 years of age, in Brazil, say they read the news or watch it online. The study interviewed 3,068 kids and teens, but its methodology (with probability sampling) allows the data to be understood as valid for the entirety of the Brazilian population of this age range and with this profile. Through a reception study, we seek to understand how this consumption of journalistic information identified in the research described above, therefore, what children and teens from both countries consider as “news” and how they seek to know them. In this text, we approach boys and girls in their pre-teens, in addition to older teenagers, because we’ve perceived similar behavior in relation to this concept and also in relation to the news like channels referred, as we will see in the next sections.

What children think about mainstream news

For a better understanding of how the relationship between the Brazilian and Portuguese kids and teens interviewed comes about, it is necessary to go back and look

4 Capes Scholarship 0860-13-1.

5 The age cut-out reflected the main age group of the journalism outlets geared towards children in Brazil and in Portugal, object of our thesis, but it also sought former readers of this type of product, according to our research outline.

towards what is already being studied in the field of Communication, in both countries, about the reception of news by the age group that is interesting to us. In both target-countries of our study, we've found, above all, investigations that observe kids inserted in the networks of their peers (with shared technologies and cultural codes) and seek to analyze the consequences of these interactions in the way boys and girls build meaning while getting in touch with journalistic discourse.

In Brazil, Orofino (2013) worked with children with low social income, from nine to 11 years old in the city of São Paulo. The investigator wanted to study the perceptions of children about advertisement, however, in her early studies, she observed that her interviewees mainly quoted the Brazilian show "Cidade Alerta", a police-driven newscast with a strong sensationalist character, as an important media reference (known by all of them, in detail). She shows that kids with a lower income end up watching more popular TV newscast with violent character, due to their parent's habit: "The reception of Cidade Alerta with low-income families [...] [happens] in multiple forms, while they're cooking, having dinner, talking about life, work, school and they are actually not glued to the TV screen" (OROFINO, 2013 – Our translation). In addition, she says that, for popular classes, the police-driven newscast is closer to their daily lives, as well as mainstream newscasts translate concerns of the middle-class - hence its success.

In Portugal, the investigation project "Children and youth in news", developed between 2005 and 2007, in addition of analyzing the representation of Portuguese children and teenagers in news like pieces, also sought to hear the child audience, in their relationship with news directed to adults, "in the scarcity or even inexistence of news like information driven towards younger segments of the population" (PONTE, 2009, p.10). In this project, we will analyze the work of Malho, Pato and Tomé (2009), who interviewed 246 children of the 4th grade (from eight to 14 years old), in Lisbon and Castelo Branco (medium-sized city located in the center of the country), in 2007. The authors say that just over a half of the children (56%) say they have the habit of reading newspapers, but 55% out of the 107 that answered the question do not talk about the texts they read with anybody. "Although many children do not remember news⁶, among those that made them dominate the subject of Social Risk, which coincides with the most referred themes in the news" (MALHO; PATO; TOMÉ, 2009, p. 174 – Our translation).

Also, inside the project "Children and youth in news", Carvalho, Cadeço, Costa and Linha (2009) work with children that are provisionally in institutions of protection (i.e., children that were taken from the safeguard of their guardians due to surviving negligence, abuse or exploitation). The researchers sought to map the perceptions of these boys and girls in relation with the news presented in newspapers and television channels, in addition to studying possible experiences they may have in direct contact with journalists or communication channels. Twenty-six interviews were made with children of both genders

6 The research didn't have a clear number of how many children remembered; it only says that there were 89 references to News, which indicates that an interviewee can remember more than one news.

with ages between 6 and 13 years old; the interviewees also made drawings as a way of narrating marks of subjectivity and memories of news like facts.

We’ve concluded that television is the main means of access of these children to news, not only due to the more frequent presence in institutions of protection (in comparison with newspapers and magazines) but also due to the preference of the boys and girls that live there. “They highlight the power of image and the temporality associated with it, which, according to them, gives credibility to the discourse” (CARVALHO et al, 2009, p.186 – Our translation). Among the types of news that they commented the most are the stories not geared towards the children, especially those related to sport, cultural subjects, consumption and behavior, in addition to tragic events, like tsunamis, 9/11 and plane crashes. News like stories about children in risk only appear in talks after these subjects, which the researcher attributes to the interviewees’ experience, who lived similar cases and seek to avoid contact with these memories.

Still in Portugal, Marôpo (2014) interviewed children and teenagers of African ethnicities residing in the peripheral areas of Lisbon with the goal of identifying how the news like discourse works in “its identity negotiations” (MARÔPO, 2014, p.203 – Our translation). Fifteen children (with age between nine and 16 years old) participated in the study, which lasted nine months and involved observation, informal interaction and five focal groups. As in Carvalho et al study (2009), interviewees showed to be refractory to the news that presented similar situations as what they are living in, but, at the same time, the children and teenagers interviewed in the study believe that the negative representation of their community in media, in addition to being excessive and detached from the real violence rates of the place, is the main cause of the negative stigma the region presents beyond its walls. The author says that this fact contributes “for the strength, especially among the older ones, of a steady local identity, a feeling of distrust regarding media and other external social agents faced by the community” (MARÔPO, 2014, p.210 – Our translation).

In the investigations described above, we can draw some general conclusions: the television centrality in children’s contact with journalism stands out, fact that mirrors the importance of television media - free, with easy access and reading - in Portuguese and Brazilian societies. There is still a clear feeling of belonging, that acts in the constant edification of identities: children, when they see news about their community, their country (especially when it is about peripheral or marginalized groups) put themselves as belonging to that place, and show a critical posture facing representations that, for them, do not match the diversity and complexity they experience in their daily lives.

It is also clear in this point of view that the journalistic discourse, especially the television discourse, is very present in the routine of these boys and girls, helping them build meanings about their routine: creating observations about situations and agents that threaten them, tranquilize them, gather and separate them from other children and adults. Issues that involve national, adult context, however, do not appear as much. These researches, however, do not detect the new relations that children and teenagers face with journalism through

digital apparatuses, as well as its consequences for the meanings of world they build and for their participation in social life - object of our study, with results that we will see next.

“My own news”

In the discourse of our interviewees, the “newsfeed” or the timeline from Facebook, Twitter or even Instagram appears as one of the structuring elements of their daily news like “supply”, mainly amongst teenagers, in the Portuguese context. In Brazil, the influence of social media strongly appears even in interviews with 11-year-old children. Through texts and links published by “friends” on social media or pages of organizations or celebrities (mainly official profiles of their idols), boys and girls read information that are new to them. In addition, apps installed on smartphones, mainly with articles about sports, stand out in the boys’ discourse (not the girls’). In addition, in Portugal, Google News, a gatherer of journalistic texts, is another popular tool amongst teens, while in Brazil were reported generic researchers in Google’s research portal, but also with the intention of receiving information (about celebrities, in the case of 11 to 13-year-old girls, and about other subjects of interest with other teenagers).

For a part of the children and teens interviewed, it is the novelty of the fact - in relation to their knowledge, not the journalistic timing where the event is located - that defines them as news on the Internet. In other words, the originality, in relation to the perception of world of these youngsters, that makes the text or video be considered as something in the sphere of “journalism”, not the recognition of that source as journalistic (in fact, often times the young reader doesn’t even know what is the origin of the information). Fontcuberta (2010, p.8) says that the news is an “open concept”, that arises as the final product of a process, whose most important point is the beginning: “That [moment] where someone has this power defines, or better yet, rates, names what is news”. If journalism is power, it resides here: point what, in each moment, in each day, is news” (p.8 – Our translation). He continues: “Could it be different? There were never theories or practices of other kind. [...]The alterations remain to locate the level of criteria and outlines, in this case, of the journalistic genre” (p.8 – Our translation). The author says that “for an information to be considered news it is important to gather three factors: a) to be recent; b) to be immediate; c) to be shared (p.18 – Our translation). The third factor is intimately linked to the second one: the timing of the fact is linked to the notion that it, in itself (or its discovery) is recent and that the period in which this occurrence and its propagation as news, for a massive audience, is the shortest possible. It is this time interval that tells us if the fact is recent or even immediate.

The children heard in this study, however, make “another strategy” to retrieve Fontcuberta (2010)’s words, and sometimes give themselves the right to define, themselves, what is and what isn’t news for them. The information remains recent and shared, as the author proposes, but not mandatorily built by the mainstream journalistic field, even if the qualities associated to journalism can also be present: the notion of news as something believable

remains. The informative consumption of these youngsters remains to be structured based on the news like routine of their families, which are mostly centered around the TV (reinforcing what showed the literature review above), but they also understand that an information can receive the name of news, even if journalism did not name it as such. In this case, we also note a clear association of children and teenagers of journalism with traditional news outlets in both countries and a difficulty in defining online sources as journalistic or not.

Let's see what these 16-year-old Portuguese boys⁷ from Sintra (city next to Lisbon), which participated in a discussion group talked about.

Researcher: Just to understand a little how are you guys talking about the use you make of... Sport websites? Which websites do you like to access?

Gabriel: Record [sports newspaper].

A lot of boys: A Bola [sports newspaper].

Gabriel: Zerozero.

Antônio: There's a website called Zerozero⁸, that also talks about sports, it is very good.

Researcher: It's sites, is it a news website?

A lot of boys: Yes.

Researcher: It's a...

Antônio: Where all the information is.

Researcher: But is it journalism? Isn't it a fans website?

Antônio: Ahm... in fact, I don't even know who does that.

Hélio: I don't know either... But I think they are journalists, but... Because that has good and always true news.

Antônio: Updated.

Hélio: They must get their money from advertisement.

Researcher: News like A Bola website or...?

Antônio: Yes, only that a website that doesn't have a physical newspaper.

Gabriel: I have a sports app in my tablet, I don't have to go to the Internet, I only need to go to the app and there is all the news. (HÉLIO; GABRIEL; ANTÔNIO, Portuguese boys, group interview n.2, feb. 2014 – Our translation).

The debate transcribed above shows the lack of knowledge of the boys regarding the source of the information they consume with certain regularity, in a questioning that seem to be unheard of to them (*in fact, I don't even know who does that*). At the same

7 All names of the children and teenagers interviewed are fictional to preserve their identity, as exposed in the informed consent signed by them and their guardians.

8 In the section "About us" it is described as: "First, we are adept to everything... Always excited as the true adepts, at times irrational as the real adept, impartial, but above all, always demanding as the real adept". Access in jun. 2018. In the "credits" section, however, it is described: "it is a form of editorial information, written and produced by journalists, with a source component in the statistic issue". Available at: <http://www.zerozero.pt>. Accessed on: 21 jun. 2018.

time, they show knowledge of the industrial process of journalistic production (*they must get their money from advertisement*) and associate professional news to always true and updated information: in a moment of reflection, generated by the discussion, they evaluate the site in discussion as “journalism” due to the veracity and timing of the data supplied by it, but it is noted that that wasn’t a primary concern.

In Brazil, the group of discussion with 11-year-olds, in which participated Daniela, quoted above, the variety of informative sources of the girls are clear about the view that “news” to them is linked to curiosity (not utility); the information they desire is not necessarily found on traditional platforms of journalism, but on social media or research platforms.

Researcher: And you, where do you get the news you are interested in?

Ana: *On Google, on Instagram*. There, I see things that are not useful for anything, but I like to know. Like *Fatos Interessantes* (Interesting Facts).

Researcher: *Fatos Interessantes* is on Instagram?

Ana: On Facebook as well. And they also have a website⁹. (ANA, Brazilian girl, group interview n.1, oct. 2014– Our translation).

In some cases, even if they know the names of important newspapers and magazines in the journalistic context of their country, some youngsters do not always quote them as sources, even in the on-line version. The posts on social media or an app are enough for them as digital informative source. It is the case of the interview with Mateus, a shy Portuguese 15-year-old boy, from Lisbon:

Researcher: What happened with Facebook, why people don’t use it anymore?

Mateus: Because... [thinking]. I don’t know, I use Facebook a lot to arrange things with my friends and to speak, say anything to my friends who changed schools or something like that. But in general, I use it more because it also has information and videos and such.

Researcher: Of sports as well?

Mateus: As well.

Researcher: What kind of information calls your attention, only football?

Mateus: Football and some curiosities, *more general news*.

Researcher: Newspapers, newspaper pages?

Mateus: Actually, not much on newspapers...

Researcher: [...] A message, a post of some curiosity a friend shares, that type of curiosity?

Mateus: Yes, yes, some things people post...

9 On Facebook, the page has pictures, memes, YouTube vídeos and shares a variety of posts. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/fatosinteressantesnaweb>. Accessed on: 21 jun. 2018.

Researcher: You don't look exactly for a specific page of a magazine or a newspaper. You go through Facebook and...

Mateus: Yes, looking for stuff.

Researcher: Even of sports? Or is there any newspaper you access?

Mateus: No.

[...]

Researcher: What type of apps do you use the most?

Mateus: In the smartphone I can even see here... Mostly YouTube, games, football news.

Researcher: What app do you use for football news?

Mateus: This one.

Researcher: How does it call? “Live Football¹⁰?”

Mateus: Yes. (MATEUS, Portuguese boy, personal interview n.1, jan. 2014 – Our translation).

Mateus tells us that he always watches the news on the television with his parents, *by the dinnertime*. Despite that, on the Internet, he is not concerned about whether the origin of the sports information, area he is most interested in, is a journalistic product. Posts on Facebook are enough for him (not from specialized newspapers and an app that he has on his smartphone, which tells him about the matches results, which he differentiates from a news like text (*In fact, that is not so much about news. It gives an update on the matches*).

Portuguese 13-year-old Ricardo, from Lisbon, on the other hand, who makes featurettes and posts them on YouTube, says that, despite watching the news with his mother, the news only draws his attention on specific areas, like the environment (about the cold wave on America, for example), recurring theme that brings children's and teen's interest in news. About sports, even if it is a subject of his appreciation, journalistic products geared towards the theme do not draw his attention, the same way it occurs with Mateus. He is only interested in following the matches results through the Internet, without quoting specific sources:

Researcher: You told me you only watch the news if it was about...

Ricardo: Football.

Researcher: And what do you watch?

Ricardo: Hum... for instance, if there's a match on... I have to see the results of the game and who scored the goals, in which minute, in which way.

Researcher: But you look in sites of... Sports websites or newspaper websites?

Ricardo: No, I only accessed Correio da Manhã [Portuguese newspaper] once to make a Geography assignment.

Researcher: Aren't you interested in these types of websites?

10 Description of the service on Google Play, platform that offers the app: “Your PF Live TV with the latest sports news! Receive live reports, exclusive content access, as live ticker, game highlights, video clips and video reports”.

Ricardo: It depends.
Researcher: Only if you are interested in a very specific thing...
Ricardo: Yes.
[...]
Researcher: Your mom buys newspapers or magazines at home?
Ricardo: No. It is already rare to buy magazines, but before we bought more.
Researcher: Now you read through the Internet?
Ricardo: Yes, we read through the Internet and also sometimes we read books.
Researcher: What about the news on TV, do you watch it with your mom?
Ricardo: Yes.
Researcher: Almost every day?
Ricardo: Every day.
Researcher: And do you like to watch it?
Ricardo: It depends... When it's interesting news, yes. For example, that thing about the cold wave in America is something that I think it is more interesting.
(RICARDO, Portuguese boy, group interview n.2, feb. 2014 – Our translation).

In Brazil, news portals and newspapers website appeared with certain frequency in the interviews amongst the teens, and, in some cases, these pages fill the social media feed of the interviewees - even if the consultation of these sources is sporadic. In this sense, we register here the testimony of Júnior, a 12-year old boy from São Paulo, that says he doesn't watch the news carefully, but he sees in traditional news outlets a source to confirm the authenticity of "absurd news" (as he defines the news with curious or surprising facts) which he reads on other online pages, like "news blogs". Which reinforces the idea of news as being something "believable":

Researcher: Do you remember any news that called your attention?
Júnior: When someone dies, usually. When the actor... That died recently...
From suicide...
Researcher: Robin Williams.
Júnior: Yes. [...]
Researcher: The news came from where?
Júnior: *Catraca Livre*¹¹.
Researcher: On Facebook?
Júnior: Yes. After that I checked at UOL¹² [news outlet he does not follow on Facebook].
Researcher: You didn't believe when you read on *Catraca Livre*?

11 Website which seeks, according to the definition posted in the page itself, to offer the "biggest number of information that showcase accessible and quality possibilities, online or offline, in all areas of human activity." Available at: <https://www.catracalivre.com.br>. Accessed on: 21 jun. 2018.

12 One of the most important news portals in Brazil. Available at: www.uol.com.br. Accessed on: 21 jun. 2018.

Júnior: I did, but I wanted to check if that really happened or *it was some kind of exclusive news*, if they posted without being sure or if actually happened.

[...]

Researcher: Do you think the information on these websites is more reliable?

Júnior: Yes. [...] They aren't websites like "*news blogs*", you know. There the guy puts anything. G1 [news portal] is from Globo, and they won't publish something without thinking a little bit about what they are publishing. (JÚNIOR, Brazilian boy, group interview n.3, aug. 2014 – Our translation).

It is also noted that, among teenage girls, in Portugal and in Brazil, a certain disregard in relation to traditional channels of journalism when they publish negative facts about their idols, like involvements with drugs and alcohol (highlighting, in the interviews made, the Canadian singer Justin Bieber). Let's see the focus group with 16-year-old girls in Sintra (Portugal):

Sandra: Because he is my idol and because the Internet is the only way to get news about him...

Researcher: More than TV...

Soraia: TV only tells lies.

Researcher: More than magazines...

Sandra: TV and magazines are not worth it, *because in the Internet we know things first hand...* And we know what happened at that moment. When it appears on TV and magazines the story is twisted, so it's easier to see things through the Internet.

Researcher: So, you are saying that TV only lies, and when the story is published in papers and magazines, it is already twisted. The Internet is a more trustworthy source? In the sense that... Is it more reliable?

Sandra: Yes, because *we know things that happen at that exact moment...* And what happened a day before...

Soraia: And sometimes they tell us, write about what happened, but it is not the same people writing on the news...

Sandra: Exactly. (SORAIA; SANDRA, Portuguese girls, group interview n.3, feb. 2014 – Our translation).

In other words, journalism tells the story, but in a negative light: for them, there is manipulation of data and a tendency of the media to criticize these artists. The “real” and more recent news (*what happens in the moment*) - reinforcing the idea of “novelty” - would only be in the official pages of these idols or in profiles of people they personally met. 13-year-old Camila, from São Paulo, told us she has a similar belief, in relation to what

happens with the same singer (drug consumption), which shows a fan culture very similar amongst teens from both countries:

Carolina: We [the fans] already knew, but they made things worse. On Instagram he is very open.

Researcher: Who made things worse?

Carolina: Media. He was arrested, but how many other artists have been arrested? There were people [in school] that knew we liked him and bullied us. I defended him [sic] until my last breath. [...]He made a mistake, but *media made things worse*. He does not use it as much as they said. (CAROLINA, Brazilian girl, Group interview n.4, aug. 2014 – Our translation).

Her distance in relation to mainstream media is so large that, in her interview, she told that, when she has doubts about what she sees in these channels of information, she asks her mother. And she narrates one of these situations, which happened when the presidency candidate Eduardo Campos died in a plane accident. She says that: “*It was on the TV. He died, he died. I called my mom to know about who had died, what had happened.* In addition to that, her relationship with generic newscast also goes through the mediation of her friends.

Researcher: And television, do you watch it?

Carolina: Yes.

Researcher: What do you like to watch?

Carolina: MTV, Fox...

Researcher: News?

Carolina: No... It's so sad... So depressing... Always bad news... We already know the world is like that, we don't need to see it...

Researcher: But do you have that concern of knowing what is going on, even because of school?

Carolina: Some of my friends know because *some watch the news and tell the whole class*, that is why it is not my concern to watch the news every single day. (CAROLINA, Brazilian girl, group interview n.4, aug. 2014 – Our translation).

We can characterize the stories told until here as a profile of a youngster (or pre-teen, in the Brazilian's case), whose interest by journalistic news is circumstantial (“I see it when it's interesting to me”, it's the line that recurrently appears in their discourse) and/or limited to a theme of interest (fashion, sport, environment and celebrities). That desire of knowing is fed, digitally, with a “click” on a post that calls their attention on social media, with a consultation on an app or a quick Google research (in the news portal or in the main page) - which fits into an understanding of what comes to be news as something new and interesting

(not necessarily a narrative produced within the canon of journalism, even if in some of the narrated cases it is, despite the lack of knowledge of that fact by the youngsters).

In addition to that one, we identified another group, that not only consume news in a more *systematic* way (with emphasis on websites or on television) but also are more *careful* with the source of information in the virtual world. In these cases, boys and girls consider worthy of knowing what happens in their country and in the world, even if, in some cases, they may also present a view of the “news” that send only an original information that is curious to them, as we’ve seen in the previous group. It is interesting that many interviewees with this profile said they were relatively frequent readers of journalistic products while kids, in an indication that child journalism consumption can turn into interest by general journalism in the future.

As examples in this profile, we have a 16-year-old girl, Débora. She said, in the group discussion performed in Sintra (Portugal), that reading the news for her is a habit, especially science-related news, and she looks for that on Google News: “*It is a thing I am used to doing, I am interested by the news of the world*” (Group interview #3, February 2014). Another case is Patrício, Portuguese 12-year-old boy, resident of Lisbon: his parents, university-graduated, influence his news routine by bringing a newspaper home, but the boy sometimes changes the physical reading into the screen of a mobile device:

Researcher: Do you have the habit of reading the news or magazines?

Patrício: Yes, I like being informed.

Researcher: Which newspaper or magazine do you like to read?

Patrício: O Público [daily newspaper]. I think... I like O Público.

Researcher: Is there any part that calls your attention the most, that you like reading the best?

Patrício: I think it is a good newspaper. I am no expert in newspapers, however.

Researcher: Is it a newspaper you receive at home or do you read on the Internet, on the website?

Patrício: My father usually buys it, as well, because of that...

Researcher: So, on the Internet, you don’t read as much?

Patrício: Sometimes I have the app, do I can read from there, the first page and all this stuff. (PATRÍCIO, Portuguese boy, personal interview n.5, dec. 2013 – Our translation).

In the Portuguese countryside (city of Estremoz), João, a 14-year-old boy, whose speech stands out due to his dedication to learn music, shows the influence of his parents’ habits (both with high school degree) since his infancy regarding the news. In his house, the family watched the news during the meals, and, according to the boy, it is an interest of the whole family. Contrary to what happens to Ricardo, a Portuguese 13-year-old boy quoted above, which, despite watching the news with his mother, pays attention only to

the news of his interest, João says that it's his 'responsibility' to know what happens in his country. Again, sport appears as a theme of interest, which occurs in a recurrent form in the interviews with boys: however, João recurs to journalism to inform himself about the subject:

Researcher: News? Interesting things...

João: Yes, I read the news. I go to Sapo¹³ to read the news. More about sports, I like to read news about sports. And I like to research about sports news. See what is going on, yes.

[...]

Researcher: And the news? Do you watch the news on TV?

João: Yes.

Researcher: Every day?

João: Sometimes. I watch when I eat lunch and dinner. Usually, when we are having lunch and dinner, we watch the news on the television.

Researcher: Everyone?

João: Yes, everyone. And all of us have a great interest for the news.

Researcher: Do you like to watch the news? Why?

João: I like to know our situation, what happened during the day, interesting facts. That also is a part of our responsibility to know what...

Researcher: Uh uh. More than only sports, other stuff too?

João: Yes, other stuff as well, right? I like to watch what is going on in the country, for example.

Researcher: Do you remember when did you start having this interest for the news?

João: When I was little... My parents... My father watched the news a lot. My father is always watching, as soon as he arrives, he turns on the TV and watch the news. Yep. Maybe I was sitting by his side and started to have an interest in that as well, you know? (JOÃO, Portuguese boy, personal interview n.6, feb. 2014 – Our translation).

In Brazil, Mario's story, a 11-year-old boy who lives in São Paulo and his parents are teachers, is clear about the interference of parent's opinions in their news like habits, at the same time they develop the habit of seeking what he calls his "own news", marked by interesting facts and humor (elements that will stand out in other interviews performed, which normally are not found by him in mainstream journalistic sources, but in YouTube channels that have a vein for humor. In addition, he tells in his interview that he follows, frequently, the magazine "Mundo Estranho", which talks about scientific facts.

13 Portuguese news portal.

Mário: I don't like the newspaper. I like looking for *my own news*. Because I think that, in TV, especially at Globo, they try to manipulate the way they give the news. So, I like to read in websites [ahead, he says that he mainly reads UOL]. Where I find it easier to understand. With my Internet I can open many tabs, to see what the difference is, to analyze everything. Because, if you watch it at Globo, and then at Record, the news is completely different.

Researcher: Who told you that from Globo?

Mário: My parents do not like Globo. My family is against Globo.

Researcher: Do you watch other channels' news?

Mário: What I watch is absurd news. Not absurd, but news that are important. *I watch vloggers on YouTube*, and they post a lot of *videos of news*. That time that had a whole in Northern Russia. And it is funny, because they talk about that in a comedy manner. But they inform a lot as well. (MÁRIO, Brazilian boy, personal interview n.7, set. 2014 – Our translation).

Final considerations

Summarizing what was discussed in this study, we identified in children and teenager's speeches that their news like consumption goes beyond newscast images which they and their parents watch, the news broadcast on the radio (which boys and girls sometimes listen on their way to school, in the car) or magazines and newspapers the family might have. Therefore, what boys and girls consider as news does not necessarily come from so-called mainstream journalistic sources, especially the “big media”. For the youth interviewed, the term “news” is associated to the original or more believable (according to their standards) character of facts seen on the Internet and the mainstream journalistic source in certain cases is neglected or rejected.

The references to news as something that goes beyond the traditional sphere of journalism happened when youngsters talked about their following of social media and smartphone and tablet apps, which takes us to deeper discussions about this type of content gatherer. These platforms provoke, firstly, alterations in the way of consuming journalistic products created by mainstream media companies, since it falls away into these news forms of propagation of the news like hierarchy structured by editors in homepages - which mainly involves the criteria of definition of theme relevance to the audience reading it. In addition, these digital intermediaries have increasingly more space in the informative “diet” of the society of a variety of countries, in comparison of original websites of communication vehicles, offering the audience information coming from sources whose creators are not identified (and that often emulate the journalistic textual structure, in the case of “fake news”). That can be an obstacle for the informative plurality, since some algorithms used by social media, for instance, tend to concentrate the content offered to the user according

to their previous visits to other profiles of the same platform or consultation on web pages. Thus, in case the receptor does not seek to vary their journalistic sources, dodging the way indicated by these intermediaries, “we can be facing a ‘threat’, especially because of what it can mean in terms of conditioning of the news and the plurality of information” (CÁDIMA, 2013, p.30).

It is also necessary that the journalistic products to be more transparent in the process of construction of the news discourse, which involves, for example, being clear about the steps of gathering this information and revealing something that was not possible to prove, instead of their obliteration in the text structure. That can help the readers (not only the children) to better understand the criteria that can help the proof of veracity of a fact turned into news, mainly in the digital environment. This scenario would also help young readers that show interest for the news (which is mainly due to family mediation), but that still demonstrate some resistance to the work of the press (as we’ve seen in our interviews, but also in previous studies of the area). To inform children and teens that can begin to follow the news about the basal elements of journalism can help them have more autonomy and safety to navigate the thick stew of information that circles around the Internet and have more support to analyze journalism in an even more critical manner, and, thus, actively participate in the transformation of their daily lives.

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