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MEDIA DIVERSITY IN PORTUGAL: POLITICAL FRAMEWORK AND CURRENT CHALLENGES

DIVERSIDADE NOS MEDIA EM PORTUGAL: ENQUADRAMENTO POLÍTICO E DESAFIOS ATUAIS

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RESUMO

Este artigo pretende constituir-se como um “estado da arte” das políticas públicas no que toca à diversidade nos media em Portugal, com um foco particular no domínio da inclusão social no âmbito do serviço público de media. Os indicadores utilizados dizem respeito às salvaguardas legais e políticas públicas referentes aos media comunitários, ao acesso de minorias, comunidades locais, mulheres e pessoas com deficiência aos media, bem como aos contextos de literacia mediática. Ainda que a maioria destes indicadores estejam consagrados na lei ou beneficiem de políticas públicas específicas, concluímos que há ainda trabalho considerável por fazer, nomeadamente no que concerne à literacia mediática e à representação de grupos minoritários e mulheres nos media.

Este artigo resulta de uma investigação em curso que complementa dados e revisão de literatura no âmbito dos projetos: Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM), implementado pelo Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF) no European University Institute e financiado pela Comissão Europeia; e DIVinTV – Televisão Pública e Diversidade Cultural em Portugal, financiado pela FCT.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Diversidade nos media; Portugal; serviço público; media locais; género, minorias; literacia mediática

ABSTRACT

This article addresses the current “state of the art” in Portuguese media diversity policy, focusing on the social inclusiveness domain within public service media. The indicators assess regulatory and policy safeguards for community media, access to media by minorities, local and regional communities, women and people with disabilities, as well as the country’s media literacy environment. Although the majority of these in-

dicators have legal safeguards or benefit from specific policies, we concluded there is still considerable work to be done, particularly in the realms of media literacy and the representation of minority groups and women in the media.

This article results from an on-going research, gathering data and literature review from the following projects: Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) project, implemented by the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF) at the European University Institute and funded by the European Commission; and DiViNTV - Public Television and Cultural Diversity in Portugal, funded by FCT.

KEYWORDS

Media diversity; Portugal; public service media; local media; gender; minorities; media literacy

1. MEDIA DIVERSITY: A CONCEPTUAL CONSTRUCT

Media policies and regulations rely on the belief that media systems should be representative of the communities that it serves. However, media diversity is a complex concept and comprises several dimensions: the content (what we see and hear), the production level (who writes, reports and produces), and the media ownership structure. Diversity goals need to be addressed through a continuous scrutiny of all these dimensions, which is a considerable task requiring a systematic approach and presenting several conceptual and methodological problems. Despite the fact that diversity is spotted as one of the key issues in media studies, it remains a vague theoretical concept.

Academics are still struggling with a universal definition or reliable measuring instruments of diversity. Media diversity and pluralism are often used synonymously, referring simultaneously to an underlying orientation and a societal value. According to McLennan (1995:7), the “constitutive vagueness” of pluralism and its “ideological flexibility” allows it to embody reactionary as well as progressive tendencies. Karppinen (2007:9) notes “the resonance of pluralistic discourses has been exploited accordingly in arguments for various and often incompatible objectives: for free market competition as well as further public interventions and public service obligations.”

The absence of media diversity is sensed as an undemocratic trace and a source of social and political concern and turbulence. Diversity, freedom of expression and democracy are closely connected and the relationship between the three concepts is established in normative theories. As van Cuilbergen (1998:38) puts it, “in promoting diversity of opinions, democracy foremost is a way of truth finding in society.”

Karppinen (2007:11) stresses “pluralism, in whatever field of inquiry, refers to a theorized preference for multiplicity over unicity and diversity over uniformity.” The prevailing “pluralistic consensus” doesn’t solve the difficulty of “how to conceptualize the need for pluralism and diversity, inherent in all normative accounts of the public sphere, without falling into the trap of relativism, indifference and an unquestioning acceptance of market-driven difference and consumerism” (*ibidem*:12).

In democratic and multicultural societies, diversity is a basic construct of tolerance. According to van Cuilbergen (1998:40) “diverse information on different cultures and different patterns of values, norms and ideas may contribute to mutual

respect and acceptance. However, diversity of information can only contribute to tolerance if people have a receptive mind and are willing to accept the fallibility of their own opinions and ideas.”

Media academics, regulators, and citizens often point to the fact media are not encouraging a compassionate dialogue that would help to reduce political or religious fanaticism and cultural narrowness. Most claims are related to an inaccurate and stereotyped representation of minorities, gender and people with disabilities. The homogeneity of voices in mainstream media is also a recurrent issue, supporting the metaphor of the “spiral of silence” (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). According to Neumann, the term refers “to the increasing pressure people feel to conceal their views when they think they are in the minority”. Fear of isolation is precisely the centrifugal force that accelerates the spiral of silence.

Without media regulation to enhance diversity, corporate logics impose themselves and corrupt the communicative and social process of shared information. Journalism tends to be privatized by corporate interests, dominant sources of information or manipulative political agendas. Overall, the perception of journalism as a “public good” entitled to public trust is negatively affected and the media system becomes dysfunctional.

In our digitized societies, a significant amount of political dispute migrated to media spaces. The media can be positioned as virtualized argumentative territories and perceived as modern arenas where individuals and groups express and perform subjectivity, engage collectively and develop civic participation. A diverse media system has the potential to foster a more inclusive political decision process and is expected to promote citizenship, agency and lead to better governance.

As any other social space, the media are impacted by power dynamics. They tend to reproduce hegemonic logics established inside and outside media spheres. A complex set of questions must be taken into account when assessing the roles played by the media in presenting different versions and negotiating collective consensus. We wish to prioritize questions related to access privileges (which voices are dominant, which are excluded); questions related to news values and frames (what is considered notable and what is considered irrelevant) and journalistic storytelling (how people and events are represented).

Other issues, like limited corporate mergers and the concentration of ownership and cross-media ownership, are central towards the definition of media diversity. The majority of media policies and regulations, including in highly commercialized environments, agrees that concentrated ownership constricts the number and kind of speakers. This presupposition is generally framed under the principle of “safeguarding a diversity of owners or maintaining a diversity of voices” (Horwits, 2004).

In this article, we argue the metaphor of a free and diverse “marketplace of ideas” is constantly threatened by the media tendency to reproduce prevailing structures of power and dominant cultural norms. We address media impact at the level of the community, following the original Jefferson ideal: the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech and of the press it’s not based on any presumed power of the newspaper to persuade individuals and change their attitudes. Rather, it assumes the diversity of voices resulting from the existence of press freedom contributes to more informed judgments on public issues and

therefore to a better political system. It also assumes “the media audience should be concerned with those issues stressed in the news (...) and there should be a diversity of perceptions of public issues.” (Chaffee and Wilson, 1977: 467). The level of “media richness” of a local community correlates with its metropolitanism and the diversity of public opinion.

Media make sense of social events and are important framers of reality in a very complex process of social interactions. Stuart Hall (1980) described how the dominant ideology is inscribed as the “preferred reading”, without excluding different stances: from dominant to negotiated and even oppositional readings. The digital paradigm increasingly improved the potential for dissent and plurality, as people are now more able to produce their own versions and comments in the same process of consuming and sharing information. In 1995 Nicholas Negroponte predicted “the Daily Me”, described as the possibility of any individual to become his/her own editor. The prediction evolved in our immersive multiplatform contemporary media environment with unplanned effects, such as to insulate us in hermetically sealed political chambers. Sunstein (2007) claims the social media fragmentation fuels the spiral of silence dynamics and recent debates on electoral coverage and post-truth journalism seem to aggravate Negroponte initial reflection.

Based on the importance the media have in terms of constructing the public perceptions of social events, there is special concern about preventing gross misrepresentations of people and their views. The “media diversity agenda” is a political agenda for social change, based on the normative idea that media should contribute to a more democratic and inclusive society. Under this perspective, voicing the citizens becomes one of the media primary duties. But which citizens, based on what news values and at what risks, remains one of the most complicated theoretical, ethical and professional challenges to academics and journalists.

2. THE MEDIA DIVERSITY AGENDA: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The majority of the journalists’ ethical codes highlight the importance of a fair, inclusive, accurate and accountable coverage. The experience of diversity, so intense in the “real life”, in terms of income, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or political affiliation, should translate into media discourses in a balanced proportion. Responsible media coverage is expected to foster inclusion and cultural dialogue and fight inequality, prejudice, and discrimination. The rational supporting this norm is the powerful influence of the media in social life and its ability to shape the collective experience of diversity.

The media potential to do good (promote democracy) equals its potential to do harm (promote bias and hate). Media regulations towards the fostering of diversity are informed by continuous public claims about the faults and sins of media organizations, namely concerning the historical under-representation of minorities (in the newsrooms and in media content) and the stereotyping of women and other less privileged groups. The basic questions underlying any diversity promotion policy are to achieve more accurate portrays of social groups, to reject prejudice and, moreover, to present fairly and proportionally the views and voices representative of the communities that would, otherwise, be barred from the media.

Karppinen (2007:13) situates the use of the term media pluralism within the debates about deregulation of electronic media that began in Europe in the 1980s, arguing the need to re-discover the “contested nature” of these values and des-construct the general de-politicization and technocratization of public policy. The business of news media production and distribution has changed dramatically, and so has the social and cultural environment in which news is originated and consumed. Cammaerts (2007:5) notes the continuous struggle, in a post-monopoly era, to politicize media debates in terms of communication rights and to position diversity as a “counter-hegemonic reaction against the commoditization of information and communication tools”.

3. A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH: THE MPM EXPERIENCE AND DATA

This article relies on data and experience resulting from a recent assessment of the Portuguese public service media sector conducted by national experts under the Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) project¹. This study was taken under the Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) project, implemented by the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF) at the European University Institute and funded by the European Commission. Francisco Rui Cádima (coordinator), Carla Baptista, Marisa Torres da Silva and Luís Oliveira Martins, all from CIC.Digital/FCSH/NOVA, formed the Portuguese team of this project.

Our focus is to describe generically how Portuguese public service media perform in the social inclusiveness domain and identify potential risks. Adopting the MPM terminology, social inclusiveness indicators are concerned “with access to and availability of media for different, and particularly vulnerable, groups of population. They assess regulatory and policy safeguards for access to media by various cultural and social groups, by local communities and by people with disabilities (...) the centralization of the media system and the quality of the country’s media literacy policy.”²

We will also consider data collected under the Basic Protection domain, referring to indicators as “the existence and effectiveness of implementation of regulatory safeguards for freedom of expression and the right to information; the status of journalists, including their protection and ability to work”.³

Recent developments in the understanding of how increasing job precariousness is eroding journalists autonomy and preventing them to act as reliable watchdogs of the political and economic powers justify a sceptical view about the sustainability of media diversity goals. In Portugal, the most recent sociological inquiry (2017)⁴ regarding labour relationships in journalism clearly links economic constrains, such as low income and weak social protection, to potential risks, such as a perceived vulnerability towards power abuses, a frail self-professional regulation and the degradation of ethical standards. To conclude, the protection of journalists as part of a media policy supporting a pluralistic public sphere needs to be considered in relation to overall socio-political goals.

1 <http://monitor.cmpf.eui.eu/mpm2015/results/>

2 <http://monitor.cmpf.eui.eu/mpm2015/results/inclusiveness/>

3 <http://monitor.cmpf.eui.eu/mpm2015/results/basic/>

4 http://www.jornalistas.eu/ficheiros/1444784272_2017_OBERCOM_Profissao_Jornalista.pdf

4. MEDIA DIVERSITY IN PORTUGAL: OLD PROBLEMS AND NEW CHALLENGES

Portugal is a small country homogeneous in cultural and linguistic terms. The only recognized linguistic minority is a small community (around 7000 people) in the north of the country, speaking *mirandês*, a Romanic language. The immigrant community is mostly originated in the former Portuguese colonies, namely Angola, Cabo Verde, Brazil, Moçambique and Guiné Bissau. Non-Portuguese speakers originated in a more recent immigration, from the 1990s, with Eastern Europe and China being the most representative countries.

Sousa & Costa e Silva (2009) considers the incorporation of media diversity in political discourses and legal texts, since the abolition of the authoritarian regime in 1974, to be rather “vague and inoperative”. The authors use the expression “keeping up with appearances” to express the general feeling that the progressive alignment with the renewed international interest in diversity lacks implementation tools and monitoring instruments.

The absence of recent academic studies focused on diverse media content and articulated with questions of social and ethnic discrimination, vulnerable publics and economic exclusion, supports this view. Some dimensions of the media diversity agenda, such as media literacy policies, are particularly neglected in terms of national coordination. The economic weakness of regional media indicates the need for a more supportive and proactive policy. The research project *DIVinTV – Public Television and Cultural Diversity in Portugal* (PTDC/IVC-COM/4968/2014), funded by FCT and coordinated by Francisco Rui Cádima, is expected to fill the knowledge gap and inform future measures, but it’s restricted to public television. This article follows by addressing the current “state of the art” in Portuguese media diversity policy.

a) Regional and Local Media

Regional and local media play a crucial role in the construction and consolidation of a community’s identity (Ewart, 2000:1). Besides potentially cementing social cohesion and inclusion, they are paramount to media pluralism, since they generate a “closer proximity” in the belonging feelings towards a community and/or a region (Camponez, 2002:118). Although regional media in Portugal have been facing structural problems in what concerns not only business models and management but also the excessive dependence towards State incentives, they seem to be gaining more and more importance in the Portuguese media landscape when promoting information diversity (Faustino & Carvalho, 2012:2-3). However, we must refer the absence of concrete and updated information about, for instance, the percentage of daily newspapers published regionally or the audience share of local and regional TV and of local/regional radio stations.

Portuguese media legislation recognizes regional or local media as a specific category of media with special mission and obligations. Articles 7 and 9 of Radio Law (Assembly of the Portuguese Republic, 2010) acknowledge the existence of radio programme services at local level and foresee the existence of local educational radio stations focused on persons attending higher education; the article 7 of Television and On-Demand Audiovisual Services Law (Assembly of the Portuguese Republic, 2007) similarly defines the existence of international, national, regional or local television programmes depending on whether they are respectively aimed

at other countries, national territory, metropolitan and municipal areas. Also, article 14 n.º 2 of Press Law (Assembly of the Portuguese Republic, 1999) identifies press publications of regional scope the ones intended to regional and local communities in their content and distribution. There is a specific decree law dedicated to regional press that specifically underlines its cultural role in promoting regional identity and access to information about local communities, thus establishing State's support to this media category (Council of Ministers Presidency, 1988).

The radio sub-sector has several specific thresholds based on objective criteria (Assembly of the Portuguese Republic, 2010). For local radio licenses, no individual or collective entity is authorised to control more than 10% of the total number of licenses granted in the country. For regional radio licenses, no individual or collective entity is authorised to control, in the same regional area, more than 50% of the total number of licenses that are eligible for that geographical limit.

Nevertheless, although there is a public tender for operating licenses to local/regional radio stations, there are no frequencies for other Digital Video Broadcasting – Terrestrial (DVB – T) regional/local emissions aside from public service media (Rádio e Televisão de Portugal – RTP) RTP Azores and RTP Madeira. Besides that, with respect to television, the existent availability of open signal / free-to-air channels (both public and private) at the regional level through the digital terrestrial television system is also “clearly below of what could be expected and desirable” (AdC, 2013: 48).

More recently, in 2015, the state implemented a new policy of subsidies for the support of the regional/local press, which may constitute a positive development for the media system, despite keeping the focus on regional/local press as the main collector of the available subsidies and incentives. The financial support goes from the promotion of media literacy and media education policies to the fostering of partnerships between local and national media, such as innovation and modernization, digital development and learning, as well as the connection to other subsidies supported by European funds (Diário da República, 2015a)⁵. Also in 2015, the State's subsidies in the postal expedition were increased, in order to promote readership of the periodical press (Diário da República, 2015b) and in 2014, the Council of Ministers Presidency had also approved legislation in order to promote the development of local/regional media companies.

The Regional Press Portal constitutes another state measure that supports regional and local press, lodging these media, for free, in an online platform. The Regional Press Portal, launched in June 2015, is framed under a broader legislation intended to promote and support readership⁶ and aims promote the use of new technologies to spread news and informative content.

We underline that also in 2015 the Coordinating Commissions for Regional Development (CCDR) became to be the official body entitled by governmental attribution with the authority to execute measures regarding State incentives due to regional

5 More info can be found in:

<http://www.conclusao.pt/pdf/INCENTIVOS%20DO%20ESTADO%20A%20COMUNICACAO%20SOCIAL.pdf>. See also Law 3112/2014 - promotes the development of local/regional media companies, already consigned in the Law 7/2005 (January 6th), in the articles 8, 10 and 11.

6 See Decree Law 98/2007 (April 2nd).

and local media⁷. The CCDR additional competences include receiving, evaluating and approving applications and ensuring the supervision of respective compliance. The constitution of the CCDRs followed the extinction of the former Cabinet for the Media (Gabinete para os Meios de Comunicação Social – GMCS) in the same year, whose powers were transferred to the General Secretary of the Council of Ministers Presidency, the CCDRs and the National Agency for Development and Cohesion. However, the extinction of GMCS in 2015 created some confusion among the stakeholders, namely in terms of information gathering and coordination.

b) Community Media

According to the Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE), an NGO for networks and projects active within the so-called “third media sector”, community media can be defined as clearly distinct from private commercial media and may share some of the following characteristics: “independence from government, commercial and religious institutions and political parties; a not-for-profit nature; voluntary participation of members of civil society in the devising and management of programmes; activities aiming at social gain and community benefit; ownership by and accountability to the communities of place and/or of interest which they serve; commitment to inclusive and intercultural practices.”

However, the concept of community media, being based on participatory communication, is “highly elusive”, as may entail a wide range of media practices that differ according to geographical and cultural context – for instance, in respect to radio, community radio is often called associative radio, neighbourhood radio or free radio in Europe, while in Asia it is labelled as radio for development (Carpentier, 2007:001, 003). Moreover, in Europe, the attention paid to diversity and ethnic minority issues called for recognition of a specific branch of community media, which defined minority community media as often local initiatives with a strong participatory element, associated with a dissatisfaction with mainstream media (Deuze, 2006:265-267).

Contrary to European countries such as the United Kingdom or The Netherlands, community media are not defined as a separate category in Portugal and the format is not legally defined. There is no specific public funding, nor legal recognition/status, nor organization representing for community media, in a country with a strong tradition of public service broadcasting (Lewis, 2008:17; Jędrzejewski & Oliveira, 2015:264). According to Community Media Forum Europe (2013), Portugal scored only 1 point in the Community Media Index.

For instance, community radio is described as “alegal” – neither exists against the law, nor appears within any specific legal framework (Jędrzejewski & Oliveira, 2015:255-257; Prina et al., 2013; Midões, 2016), although some radio stations can be said to be community-oriented (Lewis, 2008:17). Only a small number of community radio projects are well known in Portugal, all of which are on the Internet (Jędrzejewski & Oliveira, 2015:255-257), as community media projects are using the web to complement their activity (Lewis, 2008: 25). “Without legal support, FM broadcasts are normally forced to take place as online community projects” (Midões, 2016:14). In fact, nowadays, community radio in Portugal “represents more or less what pirate

7 See Decree-Laws n.º 24/2015, 22/2015 and 23/2015

radio did in the 1980s (...). They flourish from private initiative, are very often started by amateurs, are not intended to be profitable and represent a certain emancipation of the audience" (Jedrzejewski & Oliveira, 2015: 257). The same can be said of minority community media: although there are "ethnic media" in Portugal, that have as target audiences immigrant communities in the country, there are no specific legal provisions granting access and availability of media platforms to minority media.

c) Media and Gender

Gender labour equality is safeguarded in Portugal by national and communitarian/European legislation. It is part of the Constituency concerning the "principle of equality" in the article nº 13 (Assembly of the Portuguese Republic, 2005), stating that no one may be privileged, favoured, harmed, deprived of any right or exempted from any duty due, among other factors, to gender. The article 58, on the right to work, entrusts the State with the responsibility to ensure that access to no post, work or professional category is ever prohibited or limited based on gender. The constitutional provisions are reflected in the Labour Code and in the Code for the Labour Process, which was amended by the Decree-Law nº 295/2009 to include new enforcements regarding gender equality and the protection of pregnant working women and family rights.

According to the Portuguese judicial system, conflicts regarding gender discriminations are settled in common courts of law. In terms of regulation, gender equality is a sensitive topic, as it raises increasing awareness among stakeholders and disposes of several valuable monitoring instruments. Despite legal safeguards, gender equality is still a mission to accomplish in Portuguese society. The 2016 Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2016) shows that, regarding salary gender impairment, Portugal scores in the 97th position among the 144 countries included in the study. This is a strong indicator of how vital is to continue the effort to promote a gender agenda.

Gender equality in the PSM

The Portuguese legal framework concerning gender labour equality regulates all organizations, including media organizations. Besides that, the V National Plan for Gender Equality, Citizenship and Non-Discrimination 2014-2017 (Diário da República, 2013) constitutes a public policy containing a strategic area dedicated to the media, with an exclusive focus on content (advertising, information and entertainment), but does not address the issues of gender equality in media organisations (the market work is treated in a general chapter on this subject).

In order to promote a coherent link between the implementation of the V National Plan and media companies in Portugal, under the horizon of European strategy 2020, the Commission for Labour and Employment Equality (CITE)⁸ developed an initiative

8 Aiming to monitor and develop gender equality, as well as fight discrimination in the fields of labour, employment and professional training, CITE is a national collegial body, existing from 1979, including representatives of several ministries (Employment, Social Security, Public Administration, Equality), union confederations and employers' association. The CITE website (<http://www.cite.gov.pt/pt/acite/quemsomos.html>) provides a very systematic overview of the "state of the art" regarding gender equality in Portugal, including a compilation of legislation and the most relevant academic studies.

called Forum IGEN (Companies for Gender Equality), a group of companies that voluntarily joins the forum in order to express its commitment to gender equality and share experiences and practices. The initiative was launched on 18 February 2013 with 18 founders, including PSM Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (RTP). The sustainability report of 2014 (RTP, 2014) describes diverse supportive measures of gender equality. Two examples are the partnerships with UMAR, a women organization campaigning against sexual harassment, and with the European Council campaign against violence towards women.

Despite the fact that the mission of gender equality can be found stated in several PSM strategic documents (also following a growing gender concern in political national and European strategic guidelines), gender balance in the management body is still not a reality in Portuguese PSM, although the current management board was already nominated within a legal apparatus framework that strongly recommends a gender equality policy. The gender gap in relation to leading positions applies to not only to PSM but also to Portuguese media organizations in general, which still are dominated by men, even though journalism is becoming an increasingly female profession (Subtil, 2000; Miranda, 2015). "In 1995, there was one female executive director and 20 years later there are two: one at a national daily newspaper (*Público*) and one at the Portuguese monthly edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique*" (Lobo *et al.*, 2015: 2). This goes along with the glass ceilings for women identified all over the world in what refers to leading positions: an extensive research in more than 500 media companies in nearly 60 countries showed that 73% of the top management jobs are occupied by men compared to 27% occupied by women (IWMF, 2011: 9).

In what concerns PSM, the Administration Council of RTP (public radio and television) includes 3 members, 2 men, and 1 woman. RTP has two more management boards: one is the General Independent Council (CGI), with 6 members (4 men and 2 women) and the Fiscal Council, with 4 members (3 men and 1 woman, but with the condition of "surrogate"). The Opinion Council is a more extensive and advisory board composed of 30 members (21 men and 9 women).

The whole human resources structure of RTP is not gendered balanced. According to the 2014 sustainability report (RTP, 2014), 61% of the workers are men and 39% are women. Gender imbalance is particularly strong at the management functions (105 male and 58 female workers), the multimedia sector (24 male and 8 female workers) and the specialists (70 male and 55 female). As for the newsroom, against the generic trend in Portugal, it is still dominated by men: 250 journalists are men and 188 are women.

As for the public news agency LUSA, the Administration Council has 5 members (3 are men and the president is a woman); the Fiscal Council has 4 members (2 men and 2 women) and the General Assembly Board includes 3 members (2 women and 1 man).

Programming content

The television activity - regardless of its public or commercial nature - follows the Television Law in the obligation to ensure pluralism and political, social and cultural diversity. However, the public service media (PSM) is bound to more specific obligations. The Concession Contract for Public Service Television (AAVV, 2015) includes a set of norms related to gender equality in what concerns broadcast content: for

instance, excluding, inter alia, gender-based hatred; or ensuring that the information spaces contribute to the awareness of the public to gender equality issues.

The media regulatory body “Entidade Reguladora para a Comunicação Social” (ERC) is charged annually with the PSM auditing report and the regulatory report, which also include the television private channels. Regarding the presence of women as protagonists in the news, data show there is gender inequality. According to the 2015 ERC Regulation Report, in the evening news services of the general channels of public service RTP1 and RTP2, as well as the commercial channels SIC and TVI, a significant share of the protagonists of the news items are men (over 70%). The “Telejornal” of RTP1 is the news service that accentuates this overall trend, resulting in a higher weight of masculine protagonists in the news and a more marginal presence of women.

The main area of origin of the female protagonists of the news is national politics (the main theme of the news services of the night). The news also highlights female protagonists of society, culture (artists and other creators), internal affairs, economy, finance and business (especially small and medium businesses and individual entrepreneurs), and health and social action. Women from the area of society are mainly portrayed as family members, common citizens or public figures and “celebrities” whereas women associated with internal affairs are mostly portrayed as victims. In the view of Juana Gallego (2009:45), from Autonomía University of Barcelona (Spain), news media usually follow and reproduce the dominant point of view in society, with women being often portrayed as the “observed objects” (and not as “active subjects” as men). Plus, women are not only underrepresented but also portrayed with a stereotypical representation (Gallego, 2002:2).

Based on data provided by ERC, Carla Martins, a professor at University Lusófona of Lisbon and researcher at CIEG (Interdisciplinary Gender Studies), interviewed by email on May 30th 2016 by the Portuguese team of Media Pluralism Monitor (2016), concludes that women continue to be a minority as protagonists of the news. Although they stand out in the political arena, where they have acquired increasing importance, “are still associated with traditional roles and areas, which may be questioned as a reproduction of gender stereotypes still deeply rooted in Portuguese society”.

Maria João Silveirinha, professor at University of Coimbra and a senior researcher in gender and media studies, interviewed by email on May 28th 2016, also underlined how the most recent international study concerning women representation in the news, the Global Media Monitoring Project (2015), notes the pervasive “invisibility” of women in news and gender bias in media content all around the world. At this point, new media (the Internet and Twitter news) also “offer little comfort. Here too, women were only 26% of people in the news in 2015” (GMMP, 2015:1).

Issues of gendered representation in media content have been well researched by feminist media scholars but new research is still necessary (Lobo *et al.*, 2015:5). There is a general deficit of academic research specifically targeting gender and media, especially one that can relate gender questions with the changing media and journalistic landscape (North, 2009) and one that analyses the lived experiences of gender in media and journalism, in order to move beyond the “what” and the mere “body count” (De Bruin, 2000:225) into the “why” of news media gendered

representation, examining what is actually taking place on the work floor (Lobo *et al.*, *ibidem*:4). A more clear assessment of PSM responsibilities and performance towards gender is also part of this broad knowledge deficit problem.

d) Media and Minorities

The Portuguese Constitutional Law guarantees access to airtime on PSM channels to different social and cultural groups. The Concession Contract between the state and *RTP* (Public Television and Radio) contains obligation clauses referring to the access to different social and cultural groups and the TV Law states PSM must “provide a varied and comprehensive programming, promote cultural diversity and take into account the interests of minorities”. Portugal has no national minorities and is the only country in Europe whose frontiers as a state and as a nation have been coincident in the last 800 years. This fact does not collide with the phenomenon of immigration, and the existence of one ethnic minority, the Roma community.

Portugal signed in 1995 and ratified in 2002 the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and has thus a legal obligation to promote the full equality of persons belonging to minorities. There isn’t any political party with parliamentary representation possessing a racist or xenophobic rhetoric. However, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance noted in its last report on Portugal (2013) that steps should be taken to put in place a monitoring system enabling the collection of data which may indicate whether particular groups may be disadvantaged or discriminated against on the basis of “race”, ethnicity, religion or membership of Roma or other vulnerable communities.⁹

The last study commissioned by the NGO Observatório das Migrações (<http://www.om.acm.gov.pt/>) on Media, Immigration and Ethnic Minorities dates from 2008¹⁰. A similar study, on Immigration and Ethnic Diversity was commissioned by ERC also in 2008¹¹. The commitment to promote cultural diversity and respond to the multilingual and multicultural contemporary reality of Portuguese society is expressed in several documents, including the annual report on the sustainability of PSM¹² but the analysis provided is scarce and lacks comprehensibility. The ERC annual regulation report (2016:45) refers to 3 programmes in *RTP1* specifically aimed at promoting the cultural diversity of minority groups, in a total of 39 annual emissions and 36 hours of programming – which represents a very significant decrease in comparison to the year before (8 programmes, 234 annual emissions, 127 hours of programming). According to ERC, *RTP2* is the television channel offering more diverse content, with 9 programmes, totalizing 586 annual emissions (80.4% of the 729 emissions spotted in all the 4 open signal channels - two public and two private

9 <https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Portugal/PRT-CbC-IV-2013-020-ENG.pdf>

10 http://www.om.acm.gov.pt/documents/58428/177157/OI_28.pdf/a83bb35f-dc15-4b33-9fbb-c92f26a5a436

11 <http://www.erc.pt/pt/estudos-e-publicacoes/diversidade/imigracao-e-diversidade-etnica-linguistica-religiosa-e-cultural-na-imprensa-e-televisao-2008>

12 http://media.rtp.pt/institucional/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2015/07/RelatorioSustentabilidade2014_2602.pdf

- and 74,3% of the total emission hours). However, this data does not discriminate among religious, cultural information and educational programmes.

ERC methodology does not specifically categorize the presence of ethnic or other minorities in the news protagonists, the information sources or the themes presented. According to Isabel Ferin, a professor at University of Coimbra and senior researcher on minorities and media, interviewed by email on April 30th 2016, Roma people are the most discriminated and Roma women are at particular risk of marginalisation and exclusion. The annual report of International Amnesty on Portugal¹³ corroborates this view, although it doesn't include a specific analysis of media content – but it does condemn cases of discrimination against Roma citizens.

e) Media Accessibility to People with Disabilities

The Portugal Digital Agenda (2012)¹⁴ puts great emphasis in the thematic of accessibility and digital inclusion, recommending that barrier-free access to audiovisual content should be envisaged as a fundamental human rights issue. There are two main policy areas: To promote the availability of e-books adapted for people with special needs; and to define an accessibility policy for digital content and Portuguese digital platforms in several key-sectors, such as public and local administration, learning institutions, banking, services, shopping and the media.

The obligation to take into account the special needs of people with disabilities is part of the license agreement and mandatory for the registration process. Integrative public policies exist but are not consolidated. The current offer includes subtitling, audio description and signing. Video searching, double screen and vocalisation are available on the websites. PSM are forced to a minimum of hours of emissions adapted with subtitling, audio description and signing. The on-demand audiovisual services obligations remain to regulate in terms of minimal standards.

Following a set of continuous legislation under the accessibility topic (including the Law n^o 27/2007, from 30 July (Law on Television and On-Demand Audiovisual Services), and also the legal European framing (Directive 2010/13/EU from the European Parliament and the European Council, from 10 March 2010), the Media Regulatory Body (ERC) approved, through the Deliberation 4/2014, from 2 January, a "Pluriannual plan defining the obligations related to the access to television programs and audiovisual services on demand to people with disabilities". This plan was designed after consultation with a large number of stakeholders, including representatives of the National Rehabilitation Institute, schools, associations in the field and the 3 generic television channels (RTP, SIC and TVI) and lead to the creation of a *think tank* group on Media and Disability (<http://www.mediaedeficiencia.com/grupo-de-reflexao>).

The ERC strategy predicts the implementation of measures like subtitling, sign language interpretation, audio description, comprehensible navigation measures and other adequate techniques "in a gradual process that takes into account the technical market conditions in each moment". The obligations inscribed in the plan differentiate between PSM and private media, imposing larger hours of program-

13 http://www.amnistia-internacional.pt/files/relatorioanual/RA_2016/AI_AR20152016_Country_Portugal.pdf

14 <https://www.anacom.pt/render.jsp?contentId=1150167>

ming (both in entertainment and information) available for people with disability to PSM. The 2015 ERC regulation report (ERC, 2016) comprises an assessment of this item and concludes that PSM failed to always fulfil the minimal obligations (in some weeks it didn't manage to offer the minimal of 8/10 hours of subtitled programs), although it also recognizes indicators show some progress in time.

ERC recognizes that more should be done, namely with a continuous effort to implement new technological facilities. But one can hardly impose media companies the sole fault for failing a more comprehensive accessibility policy. In 2011, FCT (National Foundation for Science and Technology), which is also represented in the group on Media and Disability, conducted an extensive analysis¹⁵ of the most representative Portuguese media websites, concluding, "none could even receive the minimal conformity level according to *W3C*" (*Conformance Evaluation of Web Sites for Accessibility*. <http://www.w3.org/WAI/eval/conformance.html>). According to the Access Unit from FCT (testing the electronic accessibility for citizens with special needs), in a study from 2013 concerning the accessibility of public and local administration websites, Portugal scores on the average among the 27 member states.¹⁶

f) Media Literacy

There is no consistent policy towards media literacy, rather it is fragmented and dispersed in the field, lacking national coordination. Vítor Reia Baptista, a professor at University of Algarve and a senior researcher on media literacy, interviewed by phone on April 30th 2016, points the absence of a national strategy that takes into account the media system and relies on critical thinking. The Portuguese media literacy policy is aligned with international standards, namely the European Council Conclusions on Literacy, from 26 November 2012, and European resolutions (Directive 2010/13/UE from the European Parliament and from the European Council of 10 March 2010), but not sufficiently committed in the field.

One example is the creation of the Portal for Media Literacy, in 2010,¹⁷ to aggregate reference documents and resources. It is not updated regularly and fails to provide a useful tool for educators, researchers and citizens. Another positive measure was the development of the National Plan for Cinema, to foster filmmaking and film criticism skills among students. However, the number of schools involved is still very limited and most schools lack the resources to develop the proposed activities.

There are also some activities promoted by the government in articulation with different stakeholders, like the Congress on Media Literacy and Citizenship and the initiative Seven Days with the Media. This happens every year, always starting at May 3 (World Press Freedom Day set by the UNESCO), involving schools, libraries, the media and civic society in activities concerning media literacy. According to information gathered by consultation with experts working at the National Education Secretary – DGE (special team on Resources and Educational Technologies),

15 http://www.aceso.umic.pt/media/media_internet.doc

"Os Media Portugueses na Internet: Acessibilidade dos conteúdos Web da imprensa escrita, radiofónica e televisiva segundo as WCAG 1.0 do W3C".

16 <http://www.acessibilidade.gov.pt/arquivo/683places>

17 <http://www.literaciamediatca.pt/pt/o-que-e-o-portal-da-literacia>

all the initiatives concerning media literacy, either conducted autonomously or in partnership, are compiled in the following website: <http://erte.dge.mec.pt/educacao-para-os-media>.

Media literacy is officially known in Portugal as “education for the media” and falls under the broader category of “education for citizenship”. The public schools are proposing media literacy contents in the context of education for citizenship (curricular revision published in *Diary da República*, Decree-Law nº139/2012 from 5 July) and following the curricular framing that launched the Education for the Media Referential in 2014¹⁸. This document constitutes the main landmark to implement media literacy in schooling and can be used in various teaching levels.

The Referential includes teaching recommendations and guidelines for the schools wishing to integrate media literacy into its educational projects and was designed to be a working tool for media educators. But media literacy is not a formal topic included in schooling goals and curricula, excluding the curricular unit of Information and Communication Technologies, where topics concerning digital security and digital gaming are formally included. The remaining curricular areas may include dispersing approaches.

5. FINAL REMARKS

In the realm of media diversity policies and social inclusiveness in Portugal, areas such as access to media for minorities and women, as well as media literacy policies, still require a considerable amount of work.

Access to media for minorities is legally safeguarded and expressed in several documents, but more programming promoting cultural diversity is necessary. Additionally, we suggest a reinforcement of academic research focused on media and minorities, in order to create instruments to critically think about media representations of minority groups. It is also crucial to pursue the mission of gender equality in the media, where men still dominate leading positions in media organizations and in the news. Finally, since media literacy policies are fragmented in the field we recommend a consistent national strategy that can take advantage of the already existent critical thinking, namely building a stronger focus on cognitively demanding literacy instruction in school curricula.

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¹⁸ <http://www.dge.mec.pt/educacao-para-os-media>

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