"TVI and SIC news websites: public participation and editorial criteria"

Helena Dias Lima*, Ana Isabel Reis**

* Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto
** Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto

Abstract

Internet produced new forms of newsmaking and new technologies play now a central role in newsrooms. A great diversion of participation is now possible and news sites are used by the public to express opinions, debate the subjects of the agenda, and include their own material. Still, journalists' attitude towards public participation tends to be framed by their perceptions of professional roles. Television has a tradition of public participation but it's not clear if the TV sites mirror this practice, particularly in the news organization. This study is a first attempt to understand the relation between the news published and the publics' participation. In order to establish that correlation, news were divided in sections: Politics, Economy, International, Society, and the public participation was measured according to the number of comments under each of them. The aim of this study is to try to indentify if there is a similar behavior by the TV news agenda and the public's reaction. The sample will comprehend the study of the two TV news sites for a month period recorded daily at a given hour, and the published comments in the three following hours.

Keywords: television news websites, interactivity, newsvalues, comments

1 - Contexts

Portuguese national TV began with RTP in 1957, and it was the sole broadcast company until 1992. Following the same model around TV Europe system, RTP belongs to the Portuguese Sate and it couldn´t be else different since until 1974, Portugal lived under a dictatorship and a severe controlling regime over all the news sector. Yet, the changes brought by the democratic revolution didn´t enable the private sector on the TV broadcast, by the contrary almost all the media were nationalized. It was only in the 90's decade that political measures allowed a turn on the nationalizations and a general interest by private investors in media in general. Still, the maintenance of a monopoly regime in the TV broadcast system followed the European trend even if the process in Portugal took a little longer.

In a short chronology, SIC - Sociedade Independente de Comunicação - began broadcasting on 6 October 1992, as the first private channel ending 35 years of state monopoly in the Portuguese television market. In 1993, TVI – Televisão Independente began its broadcast and since then those are the three TV companies operating both on open signal transmission and on cable. The evolution of the companies determined several changes in terms of organization and contents. The cable allowed the offer of thematic channels for all of them, but RTP is the one that is more powerful on the traditional broadcast system. RTP belongs to a

national audiovisual group owned by the State (Portugal Global, SGPS, S.A.) that also includes Radiodifusão Portuguesa (RDP), the public radio station and also the LUSA (the Portuguese news agency). RTP has channels 1 and 2 in open signal and has several thematic channels on the cable, including RTPN, the news channel. This broadcast system corresponds to the public service model and it is highly criticized by politicians and the private sector.

SIC and TVI made depend their progress on the national broadcast according to the evolution of both companies. Since they are supported by private investors the success of their initiative depends on their holders. SIC's capital is held entirely by the PRESS - SGPS, SA, the largest private media group in Portugal led by Francisco Pinto Balsemão, through its subsidiaries Soincom - SGPS, SA SOLO - Invest. Communication, SGPS, SA and ZOOM MEDIA - Serv. Technicians and Prod. Multimedia, Inc. and in three years it was able to up stand the RTP's audiences. Still it was TVI that gradually gained the first position in the audience's ranking, even if that didn't last long. "SIC was able to capture very diverse publics of various ages, social class and the various regions of the country. However, it has a predominantly female audience. The diversification of viewers relates to the fact that the SIC is a generalist television.

TVI began as a feeble project owned by the Portuguese Catholic Church and after a troubled beginning two investors held its capital: Media Capital in 1997, and Sonae in 1998. After a few changes TVI was finally integrated in the PRISA, the Spanish Media Group, since 2005. The turning point in terms of audiences was in 2000, when the broadcast of Big Brother gave TVI a new boost in terms of general audiences. Since then, TVI opted by a very popular style directed to the audiences with less cultural formation, even if its previous director definition was: "A generalist profile station open to all audiences, with ambition, stability, and an enormous capacity for haste.

Since there are only 4 open channels, the only opportunity to diversify the offer of contents had to be the cable. This strategy was followed earlier by SIC in 2000, initiating   the broadcast of several thematic channels that didn't last long. Still, SIC Notícias that began in 2001, and became a mark on the TV news recent history. TVI took a different path and consolidated its position on the generalist channel and only recently invested on the cable with its own news channel TVI24, in 2008. This delay was due to the owner of the cable system, TELECOM, that didn't allow TVI to open the new channel for 8 years.

The Portuguese television entered in the internet in the 1990, and although giving it a big importance and publicity, such advertising was not proportional to the investment made in sites mainly at the level of journalistic content. Internet always occupied a smaller role relegating the information for the prime-time television.

Between 1995 and 2001, the Portuguese television companies limited themselves to ensure the presence on the internet (Cardoso *et al*, 2009: 249), postponing the investment in this area. In 2006, Cardoso and

Espanha, classified the different models of internet TV channels by placing the SIC in "Deepening news" in which the dominant features are the deepening of themes treated in informative blocks and the promotion of entertainment. TVI and RTP are inserted in the template "Institutional Television Portal," which, as the name indicates, contains institutional information on programming, and creates some interactivity during the traditional issue via chat, information and entertainment site (Cardoso *et al*, 2009: 249). The remaining models assure their presence on the internet through specific content produced by online or integrated newsrooms, and by a greater interactivity in the Web which does not happen in any of the other channels.

The strategy for online would change only in 2005/2006 due to a combination of factors: the evolution of media online, the increasing of the number of users and the coverage of broadband in Portugal, and especially the evolution of the visitors' behavior related to interactivity, participation and social networks. The emergence and popularization of YouTube was another decisive factor for the national televisions to change their strategy because it allowed the creation of new habits of consumption of audiovisual content: contents from television are now also in computer and mobile devices. The time of the hearings is divided between three screens: TV, computer and mobile devices. According to this new strategy audiences are simultaneously the viewers and the programmers since they can accede to different channels, select and display them on different platforms depending on the availability of each of them. This evolution in behavior of audiences is reflected in how the televisions regard the web capacities.

YouTube became a competitor to traditional channels by publishing videos of the programs they broadcast. Quickly television managements concluded that they could keep audiences to the station's brand by publishing their programs of entertainment and information in this audiovisual site. So, for TV, internet strategy is based on a platform of content distribution, and a logic of networked interactivity (Cardoso *et al*, 2009: 252) and it 's now increasingly, being seen as directed to an intended audience. A multiplatform television, made not to a mass of spectators, but to each one of them, i.e. thought out and planned for customizing, sharing and participating.

In the past two years the Portuguese television sites have been restructuring in order to adapt to the new realities of consumption of information and entertainment. They invested not only in renewing the image of sites but they also made available contents for the latest mobile devices (versions for iPhone, iPad, etc). Along with these, other features and tools provide a simple and quick access to the most popular social networks.

In terms audience, the profile of the viewer of the two stations is substantially different. SIC is mostly seen by men, although there is a technical tie between the two genders. The largest percentage of the audience has secondary or higher education, and the occupancy is mostly unqualified students or workers. The

audience of TVI is formed mainly by women, with basic or secondary education, and half of their viewers indicates the domestic profession.

1992 is the year that SIC was launched and when the rising of its audiences began. It reached the top share within three years and remained in place until the first decade of this century, when it was overtaken by TVI, the current leader in Portuguese television. SIC was later overtaken by RTP that occupies the third place of the share, although in a near place.
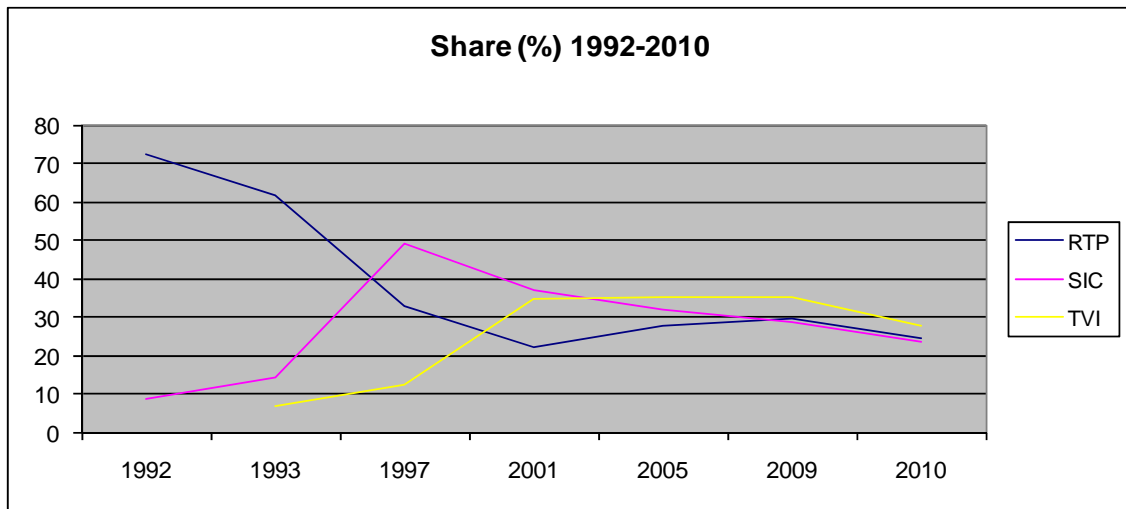

Graphic 1 – Portuguese TV audiences

In the month of this currant analysis, February 2011, TVI was the leading station and RTP and SIC have exactly the same share but they are in a third place due to the cable offer that are increasingly contributes to the fragmentation of audiences
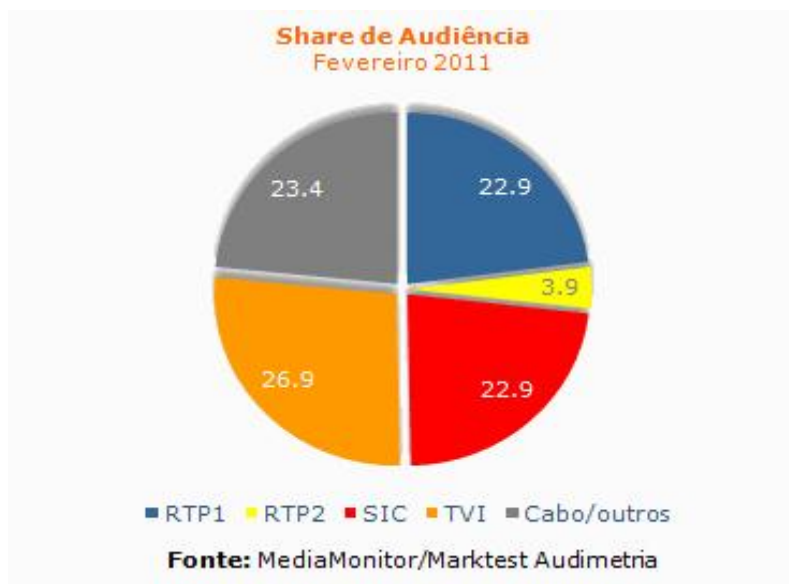
Graphic 2 – Portuguese TV audiences, February, 2011

TVI leads the national news at 20 o'clock which is at the same time, the sixth most watched television program. The RTP news Telejornal is the 10th and Jornal da Noite SIC is the 13th.

In online, TVI was the most watched television site in 2010, with 61 million visits and 4 million page views. The RTP group site that aggregates the public radio, appears in second place with 41 million visits, while SIC has 35 million visits.

**Visits (milion)
2010**
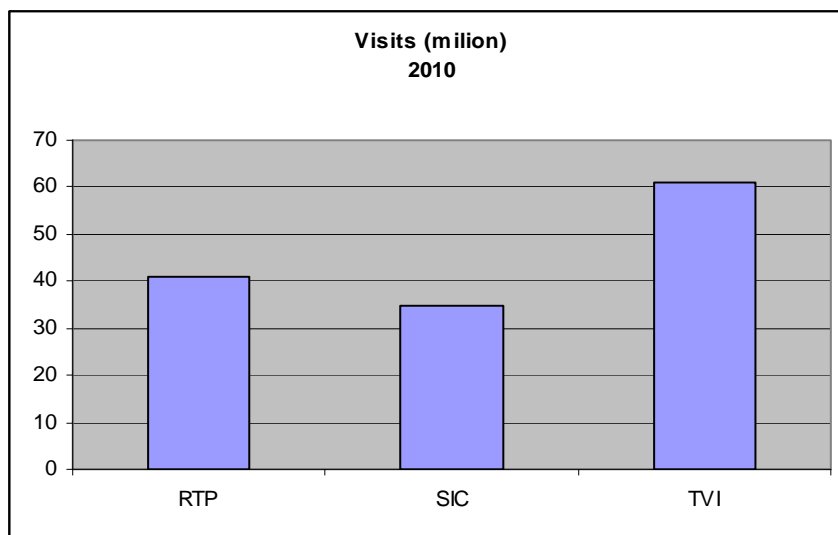
Graphic 3 – Visits in Portuguese TV sites

In 2010, the TVI was the 9th most visited in Portuguese ranking, RTP is the 14th and SIC the 19th.

2 - Methodology

This study is a first attempt to understand the articulation between the relevance of news in Portuguese television websites and the publics' participation in order to confirm if the hierarchy established by journalists has an equal response given by the readers' comments or others. For this purpose it was chosen a month, February, 2011, during which two television sites, SIC and TVI, were photographed at the same hour of the day: the headlines at 21:00 and the comments at 00:00. The other national television RTP couldn't be part of this study because it doesn't allow comments in the same way as the others do. The organization of the site doesn't match the same criteria because RDP and RTP have an experience of convergence of contents. They share news in different segments like audio, video and text, and comments are allowed only on the text news.

In this analysis we chose only the headlines and the related comments in order to establish the public's behavior towards the hierarchy of news decided by journalists. Apart from this main criteria the study is based on the inclusion of the news in sections/ subjects in order to better understand the editorial profile of each news organization and, furthermore, to try to find a connection between these subjects and the public's choices.

It was also made an interview to the chief editors of both sites in order to better understand the editorial orientation towards the public participation but only TVI24 editor was available to respond.

3 - Interactivity and television

One could say that interactivity is not an alien concept to the medium television, still, the public's participation is not one of its original features, at least not as usual as it became nowadays. The initial TV model began with a triple purpose: entertaining, educating and informing, the Public Service Broadcasting (PSB). This tripod was the very heart of the model that prevailed in Europe until the 80's. Umberto Eco (1985) called it paleo-television in opposition to the new coming model the neo-television. In the first stage the roles of producers and viewers were clearly apart, given that the emission had the total control of contents, and audiences had little options in interfering with programs. It was also described as a pedagogic programming (Odin, Casseti, Wolton, Missika) were viewers are described as a major classroom to whom TV producers should be the teachers.

Technology and the extent of the TV market to the private sector produced a change in the initial paradigm. In the neo-television era viewers became the center of the action, instead of the hosts/ anchors as representatives of the institutional TV. As such, the viewer became the decider, the evaluator and the participant (Casseti, Odin, 1990). These new attributes were only possible because private channels allowed a diversified programming and the possibilities of choice were highly increased. Besides the inclusion of public on several shows and in different levels granted interactivity and their capacity to assess contents. According to the new profile there's a closer relationship between the viewers and the TV through several communicational strategies such as contact interaction and socialization, and the living room is considered the extension of the set. In the same sense, the line between information and entertainment grew thinner and, in spite of the journalists standard procedures, TV news are also seen as a deliverance of a show (Bourdieu, 2005). Infotainment became a goal in several levels of the news process.

But the television offer became even more complex due to the evolution of transmissions and platforms. In fact, the multiplication of options gave an enormous power to the viewer that became the ultimate decider of the viability of programs. The traditional channels have to compete with the cable thematic logic in order to keep audiences and advertising, but the fragmentation of publics in a multi-offering environment is jeopardizing the maintenance of the traditional generalists TVs. The weakening of television previous roles can also be enhanced by the internet factor, in a sense that it allows the access to a even more varied offer of contents. The migration of TV contents to social media raised new forms of interactivity facilitated by the mobile devices, through comments and other inputs (Montpetit, 2009). Besides the Web produces a strong

appeal to a particular audience target and, therefore, young people preferably browse the net in demand of their particular and individual choices, instead of watching TV. Still, internet and its multiple possibilities in terms of contents can perform a way of the consolidation of the brand and interactivity developed under particular formats may strengthen the audiences fidelity (Bowling; Chan-Olmstead 2001, Chan-Olmstead; Jung 2001). Furthermore, the users contents can generate new forms of collaboration that in online journalism can be referred as crowdsourcing and that on television social media plataforms may evolve towards co-authoring contents (Carter, 2009).

The actual scenario may lead to a new paradigm where, apparently, the constrains imposed by zapping and internet competition   announce the end of television (Missika. 2006). But apart from the multiples options and the hyper-fragmentation, the roles of producers and consumers can also be considered as a problem in the future, since Missika sees the growing and pressing public participation as the remission of the editorial power.

Can this be a real demanding problem? Can the anonymous citizen menace the center of decision in TV contents, particularly in news sector? History says that the role played by the public became more and more important, in terms of certain formats and in terms of participation in live news. In popular TV, public has a central role in new genres such as talk shows, reality TV, and lifestyle TV which don't match the idea of an educational purpose subjacent to the public service and they don't fulfill the capacity of creating social cohesion. Actual PSB assimilated these popular genres in a combined system, which doesn't necessary means the total lack of educational purposes or the information values, even if it's now according to a different approach than the previous perspective sustained by a political and cultural elite (Lunt, 2009). In the actual TV model, news production also have to adjust to the influence of popular formats. The inclusion of live information gained a relevant role enhancing the rhythm of the news sequence and providing the sense of actualization and immediacy. Breaking news also emphasizes these notions. Though, when reporters do actualizations live, they seldom include the participation of public. In reports and live information, TV journalists generally regard public as sources and little more than that, even if with some exceptions. But the public participation in other news formats is not excluded and the transmission of big events or mega events (Dayan, Katz, 1999)   show otherwise. In important sports events, occasions involving public acts of important people, etc., editors welcome the contribution of anonymous people even if it is often pre-arranged.

The editing of the public's contribution can take place in other infotainment formats when some issues are debated in front of a live audience. In the Portuguese RTP there´s a show where the most controversial subjects of the national agenda have a weekly show "Pros and Cons" with live transmission, in a theatre. Still, the audience participation is clearly organized by producers. Moreover, there's a clear distinction in the

several levels of players. The first level is represented by the host and the chosen panels at the set, then some particular figures seated on the front rows that are institutionally involved in the subjects in discussion, and last, some opinions given by other people related to debate in some degree, but these are also pre-arranged participations. This example shows that somehow the power of the public in the new era of news television is not so overwhelming as it apparently seems.

In fact, there are several aspects that underline the power of producers and journalists. The other more typical forums of debate in TV news channels also present a host and one or more invited experts, and the audience can contribute with questions and opinion by phone or email, with a certain capacity to drive some of the issues raised in these programs. In any of the cases pointed before, the news organization keeps the deciding capacity through the mediating process that journalists and editors still centralize, through the TV production processes and ultimately, through the editing (Canavilhas, 2001), the particular field of the gatekeeping power.

In order to adjust to the new digital era, TV companies are sharing their different contents in multiplatform solutions rearranging or re-editing the original formats or even in a shovelware process (Doyle, 2010). The convergence models were adapted by television, more or less successfully, and internet is used as one of the inevitable means of sharing contents. There are few studies approaching the specific characteristics of TV sites and in particular the role and organization of news in them. Therefore this study tries to establish the importance of interactivity in TV Portuguese news sites, one of the main features pointed by companies, users and authors.

Considering the kind of participation that is allowed, the center of this study is the relation between news hierarchy criteria and the public's comments. This choice is due to the fact that the news TV sites don't show much possibilities in the study of this area. Their organization of news has a double logic. By one hand they highlight news according to traditional TV reports but they also try to give breaking news. That is to say that the headlines follow the news previously broadcasted in the national 13 or 20 o'clock news. If immediacy demands actualization of contents, the format is similar to other news sites. That means that these news sites don't create TV formats in these circumstances and they are kept for the prime time editions, in open signal. Therefore there is a shovelware tendency in the news contents and a certain submission to the interests of the traditional broadcast channels.

The public's participation in TV news sites behaves according to this formatting of news. Since there are no open online programs that involve debates, forums or other types of spaces as in traditional TV, the participation is limited to emails to the editors, the commenting of news and the sending of footage or some braking news. Still, the importance of these means is yet to be determined and, according to Amaral and Cardoso (2008),   journalists tend to disregard the public influence provided by the interactivity that

internet allows. Furthermore, these authors argue that the most relevant form of public participation for journalists it's the email even if in many cases journalists' emails are not available to the main public. Considering this scenario, the connection between TV news sites and their audiences is not that different from other news sites, and the study of the public participation is very restrained by all the problems presented above.

4 - Theoretical approach

Online journalism raised again the debate on organizational analysis in terms of how journalists decide what's news and the way the public respond to the way they select daily facts and organize them. Professional practices established long ago contribute for framing processes that define the way news are constructed according to worthiness criteria and a hierarchy of values supposedly validated by the public's choice, through audience measurement. But the nature of news is also defined by the organizational constrains regarding the company's policy which leads to an articulation between these boundaries and the professional procedures (Soloski, 1999). Therefore the news construction is a social process defined by the trans-organizational dimension represented by the encounter of personal professional practices and the companies' strategies, as means to accomplish the goal of newsmaking (Tuchman, 1980, Soloski,1999 Gans, 1972).

New technologies produced major transformations in newsrooms and had journalists' practices altered due to changes in terms of speed of newsgather and publishing, validation procedures and ethics (Hermans et al, 2009; Noci, Arriaga, 2003). These changes were regarded with concern by practitioners that welcomed some aspects that internet provides, being speed the most underlined quality. But the new medium led to negative responses in terms of professional chores related with the pressure that results from immediacy. It has several consequences in validating procedures, fonts access and unoriginal work, since these newsrooms rely mostly on indoors work (Fortunati et al 2009). According to Nguyen (2010) a defensive attitude persists in online newsrooms resulting from the menace brought by internet which is related to professional roles or, better said, by the effacing of journalism as a well demarked activity. These fears are due to two kinds of reasons. In a first level, the new technologies demand a renovated professional profile, where multitasking and speed play a crucial factor. Companies expect from professionals these capacities but with low costs and, therefore, they prefer younger and differently prepared journalists.

Newsrooms became a mix of professional attitudes and senior journalists' fear that the technological argument may put in danger endured social and professional values, as well as the nature of news (Witschge, Nygren, 2009). The second level of concern regarding journalists' professional roles is related

with interactivity, remarkably one of the positive features enhanced by journalists when they evaluate the internet impact in their work (Fortunati et al 2009). Public's participation is well accepted mostly as a form of validation of news production and, in this sense, the digital environment is regarded as traditional media, where the line that separates news producers and consumers is clear. In fact, participation is a well accepted feature in newspapers, and more so in radio and television. Interactivity in digital media should not, therefore, represent the disappearance of boundaries between news producers and the contents that are included in sites by readers, whatever they might be. These inputs are not in the same level as news productions, that remain as an exclusive professional domain. Several studies point out this more conservative regard towards public participation even though interactivity is not uniform, nor is the journalists' acceptance of various levels of public involvement (Chung, 2007; Wardle, Williams, 2010; Witschge, Nygren, 2009).

Several types of participation may be included by digital media also described as UGC (user generated content): "breaking news footage, audience comments, audience experiences, collaborative journalism (community reporters, digital stories), networked journalism (BBC journalists tapping into expert communities online), and non-news content included in news output." (Wardle, Williams, 2010: 783) This diversity is hardly found in Portuguese sites where the most common forms are forums, comments and breaking news footage, photos, poles. Journalists have a cautious attitude mostly towards comments and forums since they are often used with offensive purposes and online newsrooms are now confronted with an extra editorial function. That is to say that the initial enthusiasm regarding audience contents decreased and the level of participation is now constrained by pure common sense.

Does this mean that interactivity lost its appeal and that digital news media developed an absolute negative response? Surely audiences' response to online news contents is still regarded as one of the central features taken in consideration by both professionals and companies. Media companies grabbed the chance to measure the users reaction to their products by metric systems but also by the interactivity revealed by public participation in different levels and various forms, therefore it will surely prevail as a main characteristic even if some aspects will need further evaluation.

As it was pointed out before, online news organizations regard the public interaction mostly as a means of validating the production of contents, but news production obeys to procedures other than the public's acceptance. Daily news organizations establish a grid of issues that they consider to be the most relevant and that fulfil the public interest. The media agenda (McCombs, Shaw, 2000) corresponds to an organization of subjects that has its roots in the sections of newspapers and, thus, journalists frame reality according to this categorization, but also to a ranking that defines the most relevant facts. The worthiness

of news is determined by a criteria like immediacy, novelty, impact, proximity, conflict (Brooks; Kennedy; Moen; Ranly, 1988).

Among this values some news gain a particular importance and therefore they are emphasized by the editorial organization. In newspapers they make the front page and the main headline if they are considered the most relevant. Somehow this hierarchy was adapted to online support and the relevance can now be given by the size of the title but it is also emphasized by a picture or even a video, thanks to multimedia tools. In television websites, headline news have a determined space in the top of the page and are emphasised by a title or a teaser that works as a lead within a frame, as if they were the titles, with the following news report developments. The hierarchy of news is determined by the importance and not by the sections/ subjects they are inserted in.

Still, the choices made by journalists in terms of top stories of the day always tend to give some subjects a particular relevance and a lesser evaluation to subjects like fait diverts. In a daily basis, news are organized according to an hierarchy where politics, international and economics are in the top of news professionals' choices. Society, crime, sports and other less serious subjects seem to make the readers' preferences. That reveals a gap between what journalists think as news relevant and what the audiences really like, even though if this correspondence is not always levelled and shows different behaviours according to a major impact in particular political periods (Boczkowski, Mitchelstein, 2010). If so, the debate may now be centred on how online news organizations articulate their agenda setting processes and if interactivity plays a role in it.

## 5 - News on Portuguese web TV sites and public's comments

Our analysis comprehends a month period – February 2011- and it includes 140 news in SIC's site and the same number in TVI's site because the organization of the webpage is identical and they both present five headlines. These main news are clearly indentified because they are the imported from the traditional broadcast, and presented by hierarchic order, distinguished from the other minor news by size and location. Sic news website includes 752 comments in the headlines and TVI24 allows 111 comments in the same criteria, in total 280 news to 863 comments.

The graphic below gives the distribution of the headlines in SIC website according to the sections, and shows a certain balance in this distribution.
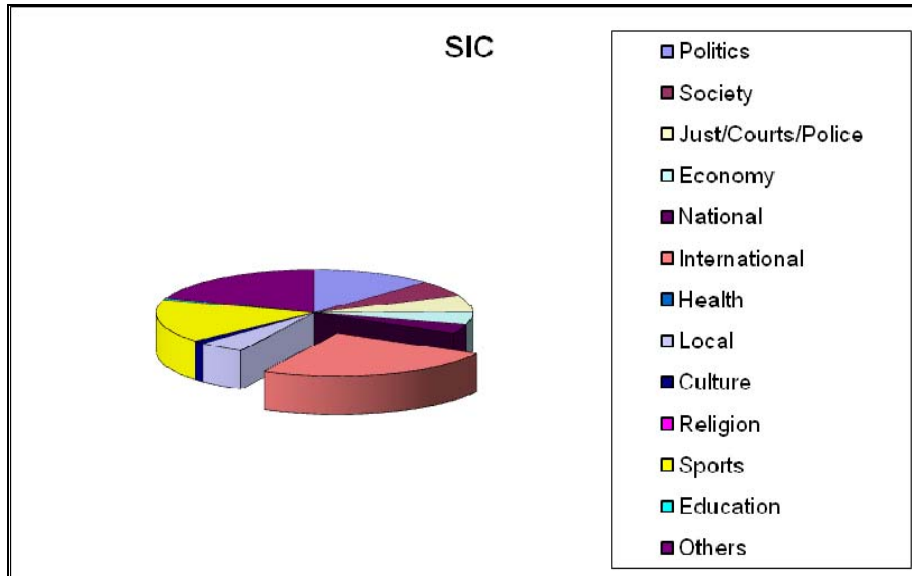
Graphic 4 - Weight of sections in SIC online headlines

Even so, there's a clear hierarchy represented by the weight of International news (30%) in this period. This result maybe striking even if SIC TV has a target audience with a higher cultural and economical level, because this section gains such a relevance in the general scenario. The second category Others (23%) with themes that are not included in normal sections, such as fait-divers, unusual events and so on, generally correspond to minor subjects, which may seem odd, but in digital environment they can engage more clicks and, therefore it might explain the excessive weight in the global criteria. The third level of hierarchy is Sports (20%), not surprisingly, and represents the normal behavior in other news sites. The other sections present very similar behavior.
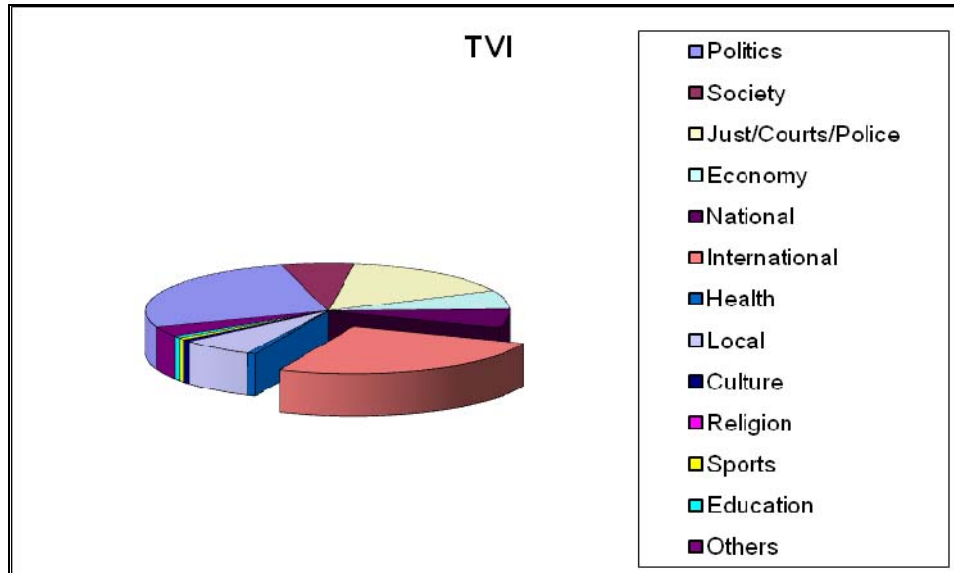
Graphic 5 - Weight of sections in TVI online headlines

In this graphic Politics (26%) has the main treatment followed closely by International (25%) which may also be surprising. In traditional broadcast TVI is considered a very popular TV channel and the audiences have a less demanding level of than the news of record. Still, TVI24 chooses the headlines according to a different type of audience which appears to contradict the idea of a tabloid format of news generally related to this TV channel. But the weight of a more popular audience is shown by the third section Justice/Courts/Police (15%), which represents a normal behavior in the global scenario. These three sections are clearly separated from the others which, somehow, creates two major levels of hierarchy of news.
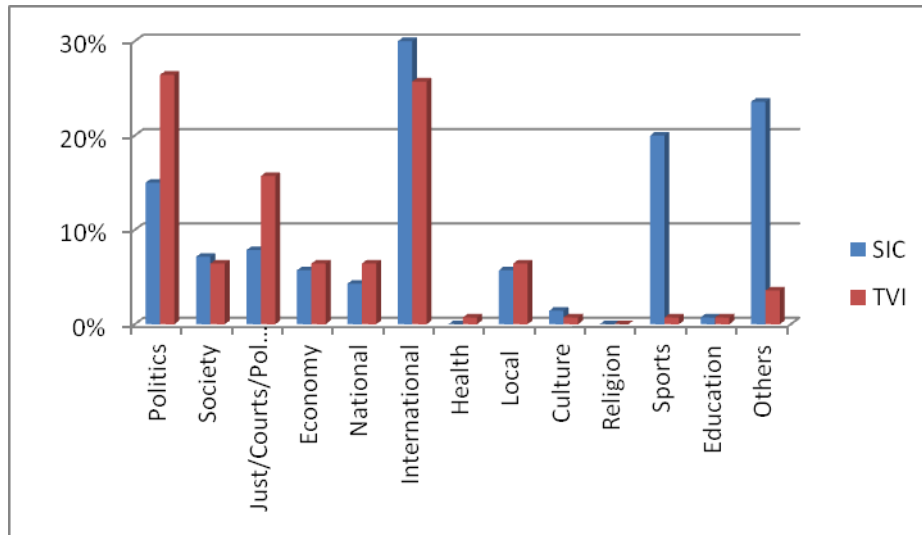
Graphic 6 - Weight of sections in SIC and TVI web news sites

In this period both TV news sites show that International is a very enphasized subject which can be explained by the uprise of the "Arab Spring" and the cadence of conflicts in the Middle East. Apart from the news relevance, another aspect can clarefy this weight: Portuguese TV stations sent several correspondents to the conflicts which granted original news reports, other than the flow of information sent by agencies.

The major differences are patent in Sports and Others that have a great relevance in SIC. This latter value was already explained, but Sports have an editorial justification. In spite of normal TV news reports on traditional broadcast, in online envoronment Prisa Group has a specific site for sports news (MaisFutebol) and titles under this subject have a link to that particular site. Another surprising result is Politics which show a difference of a bit more than 10% betwen the two websites. During this period, TVI gives a higher importance to these subjects which can be considered awkward, according to the mentioned public profile. The only section that correspondes to a tipical behavior is Justice/Courts/Police, that in TVI has the expected relevance and it's the double of cases of SIC. In fact, distribution of news by sections and hierarquy during this particular month don´t match the general evaluation of each Television profile considering their audience's targets.

In terms of interactivity, the results on both sites are overwhelming dominated by the inclusion of comments and other type of contents seldom appear in this period.
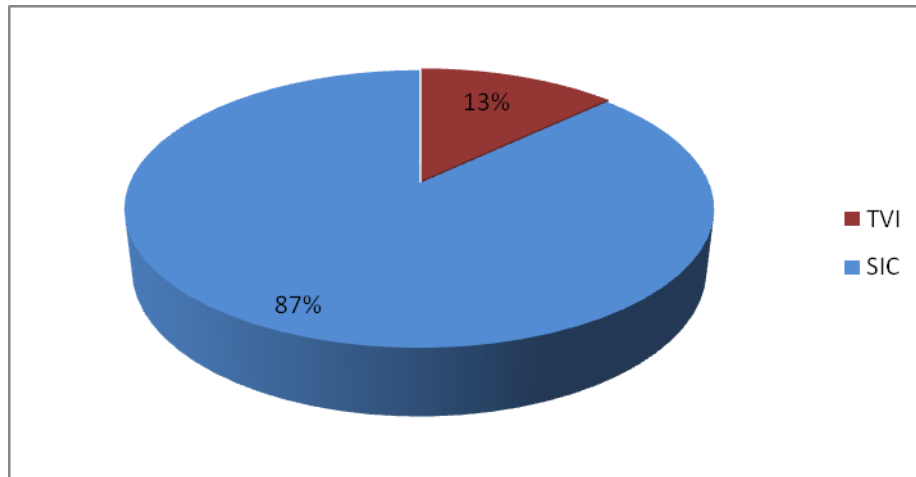
Graphic 7 – Percentege of comments in SIC and TVI sites

The obvious finding of this recollection is that SIC publishes a lot more public comments than TVI. In their editorial rules for publication of comments both sites indicate that they are mediated and in TVI it also says that registration allows authomatic publication. These guidelines are clearly insufficient since the results are so dispar. After interviewing the editor of TVI24, Filipe Caetano, some answers to these numbers can be found. The editorial policy is inhereted from two previous sites that merged and gave place to the actual plataform that sticks to some principles. To begin with, TVI24 sustains a very strict policy towards public's comments. They created a strainer with a thorough vocabulary list that excludes several kind of ofenses and not only spam and rudness. Apart from this authomatic correction TVI24 also has a team of several journalists that rotate during the day and carefuly read the comments and decide if they can be published. SIC wasn´t available to respond to our interview in time. Still, the kind of comments that are published point to lot a less careful policy towards these matters.
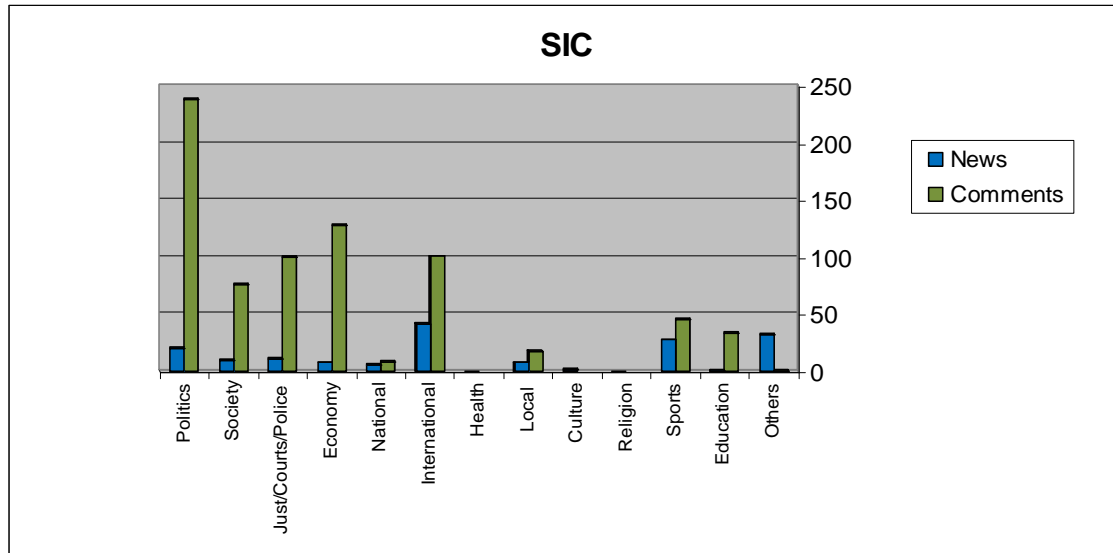
Graphic 8 - Relation between news hierarchy and public's comments in SIC's site

The section with more comments in SIC is Politics even if it's not clearly the most relevant in hierarchy news. Economy with 5% of total news follows the same tendency because it has 17% of comments, clearly not matching the editorial criteria. By the other hand International that is in the higher ranking almost has no correspondence by the public's participation. The other particularity is given by Justice/Court/Police because it has a low news treatment, 7%, but registers almost of the double of percentage with 13% of total comments. Nevertheless this last ratio is hardly a surprise since these kind of news always raise the urge to comment.
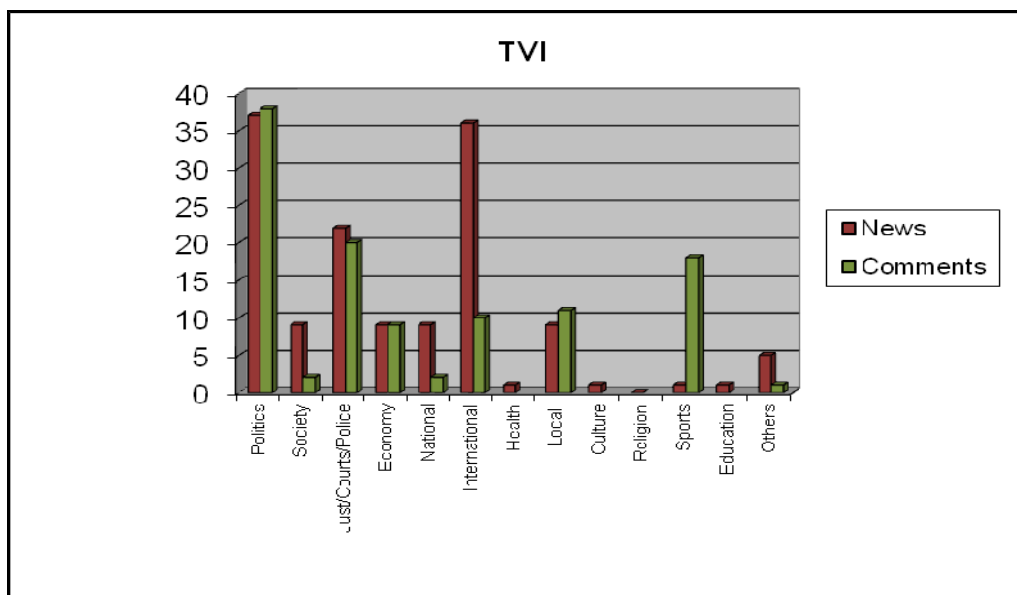
Graphic 9 - Relation between news hierarchy and public's comments in TVI's site

In TVI this relation between the public's comments (18%) and the section Justice/Courts/Police (15%) is also curious because it has a high number of news and an almost corresponding match in terms of public participation. In this case, the relation is more even than the previous situation. Nevertheless, there was a particular situation that shocked the Portuguese public opinion and it was one of the headlines in both sites. It refers to a brutal assassination of a gay public figure in a hotel in New York by his young boyfriend. These news had strong follow up in all Portuguese media and TV news in particular. Still, the sole news included in the headlines in the analyzed period had no comments, whatsoever. When asked on about this purpose TVI's editor answered that all the comments were considered offensive and they couldn't be published. One can assume that SIC would have opted by the same criteria.

The other cases that have a similar correspondence are Politics (26% to 34%), Economy (6% to 8%) and Local (6% to 10%). The latter can be justified by news of proximity that tend to create identification phenomena and therefore promote more participation. Nevertheless, a particular situation increased the participation even if not the comments. There was a very bad weather day that lead to floods all over the country and TVI site asked for the public's footage and the editors included 6 videos with images of the storm consequences, which is very common.

Politics and Economy are moreover the noble sections highly praised by journalists (Boczkowski, Mitchelstein, 2010) but not by public in general. However, politics and economical problems are strongly

linked in the daily agenda in Portugal, and tend to make the headlines and, furthermore, they generate a strong reaction from publics of all social sectors. So, in this case the editorial criteria matches the public participation, against the usual behavior pointed out by several authors. In this period an extreme left party was about to propose a motion of censure to the government at the parliament. This news was debated by several comments, but only two grabbed the opportunity to express coherent ideas in favor or against it. The short opinions were rather strange and expressed mostly hate against capitalism: "The capitalism at its best."; "Anyone who dies of starvation is because he doesn't want to eat"; "The pig thief who kept the power of capitalism thinks that all the women should be like his mother, a big *prestitute* that wasn't able to give an education to their children". These attacks are incoherent, poorly written or offensive, being the last one a mix of all these items. An example of a personal attack is "you want a perch" directed to Freitas do Amaral a senior politician, a metaphor that implies that he wants a place of power, a higher place to be upon the others.

The main differences in the journalists options and the audience's are Sports and International. The latter shows a similarity to SIC's case and, therefore, agrees with the general opinion towards the difference between the editorial hierarchy of values and the public's choices. One particular comment about the Arab Spring congratulates this revolutionary wave and compares it with the Portuguese revolution of 1974. Still, the author gives warning of how the actual political situation failed the democratic principles that the "April Captains" fought for. On the other hand, several short comments under this same news have nothing to do with it such as: "This trout has a twist of a sour flavor just like the Socrates engineer", referring to Kaddafi and relating him with the Portuguese prime minister. Other comments only express personal attacks against other users. A news about a train workers strike had the following comment about another user: "hey (VR) your godfather must be Fidel Castro, whom you love so much, and from a broke country that is now begging for bread to the United States, and to screw who wants to work it's your combat, so you're more of a undertaker". Another strong example is related to a dialogue concerning the arrest of a hooligan that killed a person with a very light during a game: "A hero was arrested" which resulted on the comment "The sun of a b*** that wrote that a hero was arrested should have a very light p his ***". The comments are not indentified in both examples and the inclusion of this kind of insulting messages can't be avoid if editors use only the straining software.

This last example can explain why Sports is a very sensitive matter. In TVI24 there is a great gap in news (0.7%) and comments (16%), and this singularity is underlined by the fact that this headline was the most commented. It was about a referee decision and the comments debated the justice of it. "Here's the site MaisFutebol at its best. There's a polemic news about the truth in sports the and comments from registered users that are normally published right away, just don't show up. Are they afraid that it overruns the 200

comments? So it is our media that bows easily to pressure. I'm yet to find if this is censorship or if they're just waiting for the news to drop from the headline." This user accused the site of censorship and the reference to 200 comments implies that the publishers were trying to avoid them in order to keep the news from the headlines for a longer period.

The public's participation content was analyzed according to a sample of five comments chosen at random in each headline, in a total of 327 entrances. The examples pointed out above indicate that there's little relationship between the news and the users inputs. In the selection the comments that actually concern the news are 177and the others 150 may be considered spam or insulting.

In spite of what was stated by Filipe Caetano, the TVI24's editor, this site presented some insulting comments, mostly in the Politics section. Globally this is the section that presents more offensive expressions in both sites. The other sections that present this characteristics are Economy, which is justified by the national situation, and Justice, which is also justified by the emotions involved in some of cases, mostly related to corruption trials and influence peddling.

6 - Discussion of results

This study shows that the editorial criteria in this month period shouldn't be considered as a typical behavior. This awkwardness comes from the fact that the International section has such a strong weight in the global hierarchy of both TV news websites. In SIC the hierarchy presents Others and Sports as the following sections, which contradicts the editorial profile. This paradox is enhanced by the fact that the public's comments preferences rather match SIC's audience target.

By the other hand, TVI24 hierarchy news gives a great relevance to Politics and International which is also contradictory to their natural audience profile, but in this site the comments follow the same trend as in the first case. The other main comments are normally related to the minor subjects as expected.

One more oddity comes from the fact that Politics have such a higher result than usual and, in particular, in TVI24, the site of the television with a more popular profile. The sections considered with less news worthiness, such as Justice, Local and Society present a high number of comments which agrees with the idea that journalists have a different notion of news importance and hierarchy than the public's appreciation (Boczkowski, Mitchelstein, 2010).

It is also strange that the section Health shows so feeble results in terms of news and participation, since it's a subject that has a good level of acceptance and tends to give place to public's participation, in forums for instance. Nevertheless, one of the unrelated comments referred the price of medicines, but was clearly

misplaced. But then again, the results for this month period are probably not entirely representative of the dispersion of news through thematic sections, nor the correspondence given by the audience's reactions.

A global appreciation of the relationship between the news subjects and the comments under each headline confirms the general trend shown by several studies in this matter: most of the content given by the users is considered spam or offensive in spite of the strainers tools, and furthermore, most of them are not related with the news that they were supposed to comment.

Another particular format of interactivity was available under a forum and it was presented by SIC's website. It was a unique situation celebrating the newspaper Expresso's anniversary. In this occasion a forum online was held simultaneously in SIC Notícias, and a in political blog connected by a link in the website. This triple forum included several guests such as politicians, journalists, experts, and it allowed the public's participation online. This was an isolated case of an example of "dialogical space" providing an effort of participation in a balanced environment (Oblak, 2005). This particular forum shows that these interactivity spaces are possible and needed, more so, if we consider that the subject in debate was the history of the newspaper in an effort of self-promotion. The discussion of urgent national matters would surely engage broader audiences in terms of variety of social profiles, given the chance of the public's interactivity in traditional broadcast system and internet users.

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