Scientific Journal of **Applied Social and Clinical Science**

NEWBIE JOURNALISTS AND CAREER PLANNING: TRAVERSING NETWORKS OF COOPERATION, NEGOTIATION AND CONVENTION IN THE WORLD OF JOURNALISTS

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Abstract: Based on the accounts of four professionals who have recently entered the journalistic job market, this study seeks to understand how these individuals plan their careers (Figaro, 2012; Rosenberg, 2019). Their impressions of negotiations, cooperation networks and conventions are analyzed from the theoretical framework of social worlds (Becker, 1999) and, more specifically, the world of journalism (Pereira, 2017; Pereira, 2018; Pereira, Tredan & Langonné, 2018). The interview with the interlocutors was collected through a structured interview and the information was categorized based on four axes based on the theoretical argument: professional insertion, cooperation network, conventions and progression n the career.
Keywords: World of journalism. Careers. Young journalists.

WORLDS OF JOURNALISM

This study aims to report on the entry of four journalists into the job market in order to understand how they plan their careers (Travancas, 1993; Figaro, 2012; Rosenberg, 2019). In the background, it seeks to identify how these young journalists perceive negotiations in networks of cooperation and conventions.

The analysis of the negotiations that take place in the cooperation networks of the professional environment is constructed in the light of the social worlds approach (Becker, 1999), specifically journalism worlds (Pereira, 2018; Pereira, Tredan, Langonné, 2018).

The concept of social worlds adopted in this study comes from the Beckerian approach, for which, in a social world - in the specific case of this analysis, the world of journalism - all negotiations take place through a network of cooperation and are partly due to conventions that have been previously established by the actors belonging to the various social worlds (Becker, 1999).

The study by Pereira, Tredan & Langonné (2018), aimed at investigating the worlds of journalism from a Beckerian perspective, points out that the conventions involve not only the journalist, but a network that makes it possible for the work to be carried out, so that various worlds intersect, which can include "technology, communication, human resources management, art, literature, university, etc." (Pereira, Tredan & Langonné, 2018, p. 103).

At the crossroads of network actions, a series of conventions are built up. These are generally norms that make the work standardized and systematized. Knowing the conventions means not only having the notions to carry out the activity, but above all to negotiate changes when deemed necessary.

> A considerable part of the system of conventions is socialized to all members of the social world, and is not limited only to those people directly linked to the production of the activities that make up its core. They are extended to the different members of the world's network of collaborators, in order to coordinate the activities of different members. In this way, conventions provide the basis for individual and collective choices. These choices may or may not be verbalized and always take into account the existence of an interlocutor. It is from these that the conventional system is put into practice, and may or may not be accepted, leading to innovations, segmentations or changes in the social world (Pereira, 2018, p. 396).

Rosenberg (2019), discussing the careers of young journalists, as is also proposed in this research, points out:

> Individual and collective strategies, the channels of entry and permanence that the world of work itself provides, the explicit and implicit norms of work and the permanent game of interaction with the members of this universe, collaborate in the task of reconstructing the socialization process that young people go through (Rosenberg, 2019, p. 26).

The theoretical framework of social worlds, as well as allowing us to reflect on journalism as a collective activity, contributes to thinking about the journalist's career as an individual and collective process.

In the research presented here, we sought to understand their motivations, their plans for progression, how they perceive the job market and how they relate to each other in the worlds of journalism as social worlds, seen as a space for cooperation.

ORGANIZATION OF THE *CORPUS*

Methodologically, the analysis was built on the accounts generated through structured interviews with four professionals who had recently graduated in journalism and were starting out in their careers. The subjects who make up the *corpus* graduated at the end of 2018 from the same higher education institution and were chosen because they were working in the field of communication/journalism. They are young people aged between 22 and 24, one male (Respondent 1) and three females (Respondents 2, 3 and 4).

The young professionals who are the subjects of this research work in different cities/states with particular economic, cultural and social characteristics: Belo Horizonte/MG, the capital of Minas Gerais, which is on the list of the most promising cities in the world and among the most connected in Brazil; Rondonópolis/MT, a city in the Central-West region, which is emerging as a benchmark in Mato Grosso; Ariquemes/RO, a city in the northern region with just over 100,000 inhabitants and São Paulo/SP, the country's largest metropolis.

The method used to collect the data was a structured interview, carried out using the *WhatsApp* messaging app. The interviewees were asked to send their answers recorded on audio, as they assumed that they would be more concise in their answers in writing.

The structured interview script was divided into categories that allowed us to understand how these new journalists plan their career progression and how they understand cooperation networks, negotiations and conventions in the world of journalists. The pre-defined categories for organizing the questions are: 1. Professional insertion; 2. Cooperation network; 3. Conventions; and 4. Career progression.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN THE WORLD OF JOURNALISM

PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

The four young journalists who are the subjects of this study are all graduates of journalism courses. They began their careers at the same time as completing the course. For them, like the subjects of Rosenberg's research (2019), "entering the world of work is a *sine qua non* condition for being considered a journalist" (Rosenberg, 2019, p. 25). All of them sought to enter the job market based on their initial career plans, which were primarily based on their desire to gain practical experience.

> *Even before I finished, I was always looking for certifications, mainly because this other area of communication, digital marketing, is very much on the rise. I started researching and pursuing and I did some web content production certifications and some Google certifications too, GoogleAnalytics, GoogleAds. How this area of digital marketing and paid media worked, programmatic media, and I went on to specialize by taking these certifications that were required in most of the vacancies and I prepared myself and I succeeded. In fact, press relations, this area of corporate communication, wasn't the area I wanted. I didn't really like it during my degree, but I ended up going into it. Today what I do, although I don't just do press relations, I'm also a communications analyst, managing a team of interns and producing web content. In short, analyzing communication pieces, a lot of things."* (Respondent 1)

Identification	Age	Area of activity	Workplace	Type of link	Time since entering the career
Respondent1	22 years old	Communications and Press Office Analyst	*Startup*	Celetista (CLT)	7 months
Respondent2	22 years old	Communications Department	*Home Office*	*Free lancer*	3 months
Respondent3	24 years old	Social Media	*Home Office*	Individual Micro Entrepreneur (M.E.I)	8 months
Respondent4	24 years old	Marketing, communications and events assistant	Association	Celetista (CLT)	2 months

Table 1: Sample characteristics

First experiences are often seen as a challenge, especially when they are not exactly in the area in which they want to establish themselves professionally.

> *My idea is, and always has been, to work in the sports section, but unfortunately in my region there are very few sports events, which made it impossible to follow the plan, but until May I managed to contribute to sites in the field. I've worked for a few soccer sites on an informal basis and I'm currently working on another collaborative site. It's the area I want to die working in (laughs).* (Respondent 3)

> *I planned my career throughout university, but when I hit the job market, my plans took a different direction. There was a specific area I wanted to dedicate myself to. I really would have liked to have dedicated myself to Telejournalism. I would have liked to leave university in telejournalism or in press relations for events. It was something I always wanted to do, but it's not the area I'm working in. I'm not working in these areas, because the demand has been a little small. There are vacancies in the press office, but the vacancies require you to be a journalist, speak English and have Spanish as a plus. They ask for a lot of things, a lot of requirements that as a recent graduate I don't have yet, for example: experience. So that's why I'm not in any of the areas I'd like to be. I don't intend to stay in this job for long. I want to follow my plans."* (Respondent 4)

Even with less experience, there are cases of young professionals taking on management roles. According to Fígaro's research (2012), "today, older people are replaced by younger people in charge [...] With new technologies, the generation born with the Internet is more in demand to deal with the challenges of information" (Fígaro, 2012, p. 119). This is the case with Respondent 1, who joined the *Startup* as a *trainee* and soon became a *full* employee, with responsibility for supervising the team:

> *I sent my CV by email first, because I was already a member of a Facebook group where they advertised vacancies in the communications area and they replied, they liked my CV. In fact, I sent it as a trainee. But since I'd already finished and they liked my CV, they invited me for an interview. So I did the interview and passed. My routine is basically looking after the press. I take care of press relations, sending out releases, follow-ups, as well as acting as a communications analyst. I analyze all the communication pieces before they are published, in short, I also automate the content that is produced by the trainees so that it is automated, I see what needs to be improved, I analyze the design pieces, the audiovisual videomaker, social media, I take care of all that, as well as managing the team of trainees.* (Respondent 1)

COOPERATION NETWORK

As stated by Pereira, Tredan & Langonné (2018, p. 104), "journalism can therefore be seen as a set composed of distinct cooperation networks". The accounts of the subjects of this research show that they recognize that there is a need to establish relationships with other professionals, understanding, even

partially, the dimension of these relationships as a network of cooperation, which goes beyond the simple fact that each person does their activity (who does what), but which encompasses several actors who determine the entire process and outcome.

> Within communication, I had already realized this at university, nobody does anything alone. My work depends a lot on the participation of other people, because it depends on the event to close. To finalize the venue, to finalize the speakers, to finalize everything and make it ready for publicity. Before publicizing, I depend on someone who is responsible for creating the artwork and videos. So my work depends 100% on other people. They collaborate in their own way. The events where I work are super agile, they do things very quickly and the creation takes a little while, but I think that's because of the demand. There's only one person working on creation, so, due to the demand, it takes a while, which also makes me a bit anxious, a bit annoyed. It wouldn't be possible to carry out my work without the participation of other employees because, in fact, my job is the last one. It's the last stage of other stages. So I wouldn't be able to do it without the participation of other people. (Respondent 4)

> It's a team, most of them are trainees and they collaborate by helping each other. They each take care of one part. There's the PR person who takes care of customer service. There's the videomaker, there's the designer, there's the social media guy who manages the social networks and I monitor all of this. They also produce pieces, produce content for me (sic) to analyze, review and publish on the blog. It's all a joint effort. It wouldn't be possible to do the activities that are assigned without the participation of other collaborators. It wouldn't be feasible." (Respondent 1)

> As I said, I work from home, so... people need to bring me the content or the necessary information or contacts, so that I can go after them, or even do my own mailing and distribute content, ask questions. But I do need other people to make sure that everything goes well, that everything works out. I don't go out

> on the street on my own to do things. I need them all to collaborate. (Respondent 2)

The respondents agree that "in the case of journalists, these networks are essential for the development of daily work". (Rosenberg, 2019, p. 27).

CONVENTIONS

The cooperation network mentioned by the respondents includes not only journalists, but also non-journalists. All of them follow a system of conventions in order to carry out their functions in the network.

> Conventions represent the stabilization of a set of agreements that allow cooperation between actors in the production of a social act. These agreements can be tacit or codified through manuals or codes of ethics. These agreements can be temporary or they can be so internalized in the social world that they come to be seen as part of everyday experience (Pereira, 2018, p. 411).

As newcomers to their careers, the young journalists reveal some particularities when they talk about how they deal when they have to negotiate changes to already standardized conventions.

> It's not just me, the whole team tries to bring about changes in order to have more effective results, but unfortunately they don't really take to it. They're afraid to accept it, because we're still new, in short, they think that because they've had many years of experience in this area, they think they know everything and end up having a very closed mind, because the younger people are presenting. So it's quite complicated." (Respondent 1)

> So... I've adapted to the demands of the company itself. (Respondent 4)

Even knowing that conventions are subject to change, this seems to be the professionals' weak point. In part, this can be explained by their lack of experience in the market and also by their short time in the companies, since they have all been in their jobs for less than a year.

CAREER PROGRESSION

Beginning their careers, new professionals experience daily discoveries that make them feel that they really are journalists, professionals in a social world in which there must be progression.

> *I want to work, but I don't want to work madly. I want to work and be able to balance it, and I also want to be a reference in my field. I want to specialize in social media marketing. It's something I like and that's why I want to specialize. And I want to become a reference in it. For example, why can't I be a media reference here in my city? Why can't I be a media reference in the state a few years from now? I want to be a professional remembered for good work, for a job well done. Not so much for money, but for prestige. I think it's nice to be remembered for that. I really hope this becomes possible. As far as I'm concerned, I hope it does, I just need to study a bit more and I'm going to study a lot!* (Respondent 2)

> *I see myself working with sports in some journalistic company or advising a private company in the field. I believe that although the area has opened up many opportunities, there are still spaces and gaps that need people with more than understanding, but love.* (Respondent 3)

In the midst of plans come uncertainties, insecurities and changes of course.

> *I don't know my future in the job market. I don't know what it's going to be like. I don't even know if I'll still be employed. I still intend to stay in the market for a while, gain new experiences, see how our market is today and then move on to an academic career, although this area is also complicated. But I intend to, I like the area, I want to research it. I think I see myself in a teaching career in the future. Well, I don't know, in ten years' time, but I intend to pursue an academic career in the future.* (Respondent 1).

> *I still believe in my plans for journalism. In a few years' time I imagine myself working in something I really enjoy, whether it's television, press relations or radio, discovering a new passion.* (Respondent 4).

Other reflections can be drawn from the corpus. In their reports, the respondents show a cautious enthusiasm for their careers, due to the precarious situation and devaluation of the profession in Brazil. They partly understand the characteristics of the market and seek to take advantage of the opportunities for progression that arise at the start of their professional lives. They are critical of the need to seek qualifications, understanding that this first experience in the job market as professionals will not only provide them with practical knowledge, but will also insert them into cooperation networks, learning to negotiate conventions and positioning themselves as professionals.

JOURNALISM PERMEATES DIFFERENT WORLDS

Paraphrasing Becker (1999), it can be said that the journalistic product "is the collective product of all those who have played a role, whatever it may be, in its realization" (Becker, 1999, p.14). In this research, the four young journalists, new to their careers, have a definite understanding that the worlds of journalism, like other social worlds, are made up of activities carried out by multiple actors, in other words, collectively, and among these actors, there are not only journalists, there are a diversity of actors involved, who are part not only of journalism, but of various worlds. Everyone involved, whether in the primary or secondary activity, cooperates so that the material is produced. As part of this ecosystem, they seek to integrate into the cooperation network and get to know the conventions that make the activities possible.

They are also incisive in arguing that young professionals should not shrink back from the demands that the worlds of journalism impose. They talk about believing in potential, about seeking recognition in a career that demands a multitasking professional and at the same time puts them in a network.

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The reports allow us to go beyond the analysis we have constructed here, so there is room for other revisions to be made, based on the testimonies given in the interviews. In addition to thinking about the worlds of journalism, as has been proposed, based on the discussion of cooperation networks, conventions and careers, they provide rich material for discussing professional training in journalism, a topic that could be explored later.

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