



## **Ombudsmen in Brazilian and Portuguese media: empirical study on activities between 1989 and 2012**

PAGE | 212

Fernando Oliveira Paulino<sup>1</sup>, Madalena Oliveira<sup>2</sup> y Joaquim Fidalgo<sup>3</sup>

### **Abstract:**

Appearing in the second half of the Twentieth Century, in the context of an intense debate on media ethics, media ombudsman is one of the most complex and ambitious media accountability instruments, at the same time acting as a kind of facilitator for the relation between the public and professionals. Intrinsically problematic, due to its function founded on the basis of an interception between self-regulation and audiences' awareness of media effects, media ombudsman is not only the reflex of an ethics understanding, but also a barometer of the ethics of society regarding media performance. The purpose of this paper is to examine the Portuguese and Brazilian experiences of media ombudsmen. Although practiced in the same language, ombudsmen's jobs are shaped by social, historical, political and even economical differences. The research carried out in the scope of this proposal intends to analyze these two cases based on the results of a survey applied to Portuguese and Brazilian media ombudsmen.

### **Resumo**

Criada na segunda metade do século XX, em contexto de debate sobre ética na mídia, auto-regulação e regulação, a atuação do ombudsman é um dos mais importantes instrumentos de prestação de contas/ responsabilidade social (accountability) das instituições de comunicação, sendo ao mesmo tempo facilitadora para as relações do público com e entre os profissionais.

Inicialmente, a atividade foi estabelecida como medida de auto-regulação para promover diálogo e transparência com o público sobre os efeitos das instituições de comunicação, sendo não só um reflexo de como a mídia e profissionais que desempenham a função percebem sua deontologia, mas também um barômetro da ética da sociedade na qual as instituições de comunicação desenvolvem sua atividade.

O estabelecimento do serviço de ombudsman também resulta de medidas de regulação. Em instituições públicas de comunicação do Brasil (EBC) e de Portugal (RTP e RDP), o serviço foi estabelecido por lei, gerando bases para a instituição de um canal entre o órgão de comunicação e o público. A criação dos provedores do ouvinte e do telespectador na rádio e na TV pública em Portugal e do ouvidor na Empresa Brasil de Comunicação foi fundada no propósito de promover o escrutínio dos órgãos de serviço público. Fazendo apelo a uma reflexão ética participada pelas próprias audiências (convidadas a interagir com o provedor/ouvidor), este mecanismo tem na sua base também o objetivo de fomentar uma melhor compreensão do funcionamento dos próprios meios e das suas práticas.

---

<sup>1</sup> University of Brasilia, Brazil. paulino@unb.br

<sup>2</sup> CECS, Universidade of Minho, Portugal. madalena.oliveira@ics.uminho.pt

<sup>3</sup> CECS, Universidade of Minho, Portugal. jfidalgo@ics.uminho.pt



Neste artigo, os autores procuram refletir sobre a missão dos ombudsmans nos dois países, registrando a história e o contexto da sua criação e refletindo sobre suas especificidades e os desafios inerentes a função. Embora praticadas em países de mesmo idioma e ligação história, existem relevantes diferenças de ordem social, política e econômica que fazem com que no Brasil a atividade seja mais relacionada a uma atividade de mediação e a experiência portuguesa se aproxime de ações de defensoria do público. A pesquisa foi desenvolvida a partir de questionário aplicado a ombudsmans que realizaram atividades entre 1989 e 2012.

PAGE | 213

O trabalho também utilizou pesquisa documental e a referências ilustrativas a colunas e a programas em ambos os países, problematizando o alcance e os limites da atuação dos ombudsman, também entendidos como provedor/ouvidor, e as coincidências e dissemelhanças desta função em Portugal e no Brasil, os únicos países do espaço lusófono com atividade neste domínio.

**Palavras chave:** Mídia; Ombudsman; Accountability; Responsabilidade Social; Prestação de Contas

### Introduction

Created to mediate the relationship between the media and their public, the ombudsman's job has in its roots the purpose of creating a mechanism of self-regulation, at the same time a way of engaging readers, listeners and viewers on the public scrutiny of media practices. Taking this intent into consideration, it could be said that an ombudsman has a virtuous function both in terms of ethics and citizenship. However, since its very beginning, the ombudsmanship has also been debated as a fragile and critical job.

Straightly connoted with journalism ethics, an ombudsman became a more or less common job in quality newspapers during the second half of the 20th Century. Some previous experiences have been recognized, however, the growth of this activity occurred only after the Hutchins Commission report published in 1947. Originating from Ancient Rome, the ombudsman is inspired in the 'general-listener' job, which consisted of listening to the citizens on public issues. Reconsidered later in a political context, the ombudsman was re-created in the Swedish Parliament to 'protect' citizens. It was essentially an administrative position, according to Nemeth (2000), oriented to listen to citizens' complaints against unfair decisions assumed by the executive power. Adopted by the press, the concept gained a new meaning – ombudsman as a kind of 'readers' protector'.

Although it is impossible to indicate a consensual reference to the first news ombudsman, as a regular job, ombudsmanship started in 1967 at 'The Louisville Courier-Journal', in the USA. In the lusophone context, the ombudsman job first appeared in Brazil, then later in Portugal. The first Brazilian ombudsman was appointed in 1989 in the 'Folha de São Paulo' where this position has been a regular one. The first ombudsman would appear in Portugal only one decade later, in the 'Diário de Notícias' (1997).

Today, in addition to some quality papers, there are also ombudsman in public radio and TV both in Portugal and Brazil. They focus not only on concerns of journalism, but more widely on programming and entertainment. Constituted by specific legislation (Law 2/February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006), the ombudsmen for Portuguese public radio



and TV broadcasters (RDP and RTP) was established in 2006 and were defended by the government under the understanding in which public service should constitute a pattern for private companies. In Brazil, there was a first experience on TV Cultura, currently suspended. In Brazil, the initiative of introducing the ombudsmanship was a part of the public broadcasting service (Agência Brasil, TV Brasil, and public radio network broadcasters) (Law 11.652/2008).

In spite of some governments' recent policies (not only Portuguese or Brazilian, but Spanish, too) in order to create this job for public broadcasters, the truth is that, at least in the press, ombudsmanship seems to gather less and less enthusiasm. Is the job in crisis? During his speech at the Annual Conference of the Organization of News Ombudsmen (ONO), in May 2012, Jacob Mollerup (president of this association) recognized that ombudsmen "are still a rare species", admitting at the same time that they "still do important work"<sup>4</sup>. To identify the weaknesses and the strengths of the ombudsman's function is the main purpose of this paper, focusing particularly on the Portuguese-speaking countries' experience. The principal goal is to register how the ombudsmen themselves view the position and to discuss whether the changing media landscape is weakening the ombudsman's role.

### **Ombudsman's Role: Function and Ambiguities**

Does a different designation mean a different concept? Although always referred to here as ombudsman, this position has acquired different names in Brazil and Portugal. In Brazil, the word 'ombudsman' is generally used, but the term 'ouvidor' is also used, which means something like 'listener' (not as someone who listens to radio but as someone specifically voted to listen to the audience). In Portugal, on the other hand, the word used to refer to ombudsman is 'provedor', which, translated into English, would be something like 'trustee' or 'provider' (not in the sense of a legal administrator but as someone that provides information or comments on something).

In spite of this dissimilarity, in both countries the ombudsman refers to someone who promotes a kind of arbitration between the media and the audience. This means that, notwithstanding some differences, the ombudsman job in Brazil and in Portugal corresponds to the general mission of this position.

Speaking specifically about ombudsmen in the press, Victoria Camps (quoted by Mesquita, 1998) defines three functions for ombudsmen: 1) the duty of avoiding corporatism of journalists; 2) to facilitate the relation between the newspaper and its audience; and 3) to contribute to opinion making. In more institutional terms, the Organization of News Ombudsmen (established in 1980) justifies the pertinence of an ombudsman in a newspaper or broadcast, listing at least five general purposes: "1) to improve the quality of news reporting by monitoring accuracy, fairness, and balance; 2) to help his or her news provider to become more accessible and accountable to readers or audience members and, thus, becoming more credible; 3) to increase the awareness of its news professionals about the public's concerns; 4) to save time for publishers and senior editors, or broadcasters and news directors, by channeling complaints and other inquiries to one responsible individual; 5) to resolve some complaints that might otherwise be sent to attorneys and become costly lawsuits"<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> The entire report is available at this link: <http://newsombudsmen.org/articles/ono-presidents-report>

<sup>5</sup> <http://newsombudsmen.org/about>



Considering that it is to preserve the legitimacy of journalism from journalists' own failures that an ombudsman may be useful, Bernier explained that "the role of ombudsman is neither to criticize nor to reform the basis of journalistic practices. He studies essentially the real behaviors, case to case, analyzing them and deciding about them. Generally there are no penal or financial sanctions. Simply a moral judgment that is published and constitutes so a form of sanction" (Bernier, 1995: 156-157).

---

 PAGE | 215

Traditionally more frequent in the press than in the radio or television (a tendency that might be inverted since in 2010 the majority of ombudsmen who attended the ONO Annual Conference were from radio and TV), the ombudsman's position was created for an explicit objective: to be a vigilant of the ethics and professional proceedings of journalists. The Organization of News Ombudsmen explains that "a news ombudsman receives and investigates complaints from newspaper readers or listeners or viewers of radio and television stations about accuracy, fairness, balance and good taste in news coverage. He or she recommends appropriate remedies or responses to correct or clarify news reports".

Notwithstanding the apparent intrinsic worth defining an ombudsman's job, this activity has always been faced with some distrust. Based on some ambiguities, the ombudsman's position is at the centre of a strong debate on how media corporations deal with the demand for accountability and on how the public understands media ethical scrutiny. Two main questions can be pointed out in this discussion: 1) the reason why the ombudsman's position was created (just a kind of marketing attempt to gain the public's trust or a genuine effort to improve media quality? A commercial strategy or an authentic plan to assure transparency, citizens' engagement, and self-criticism?) 2) the real efficiency of an ombudsman's intervention (does he/she have legitimacy to question journalists and other media professionals? If there is no effective consequence of this job, is an ombudsman really useful?)

Generally speaking, the institution of media ombudsmen runs on five critical principles: independence, autonomy, power, utility, and effectiveness. These items, which feed controversial discussions, can also be presented in terms of the following questions, here taken as research questions: 1) What kind of institutional status does the ombudsman actually have? 2) What is his relationship with the media enterprise? 3) What kind of relationship does he/she maintain with the public? 4) How is the ombudsman seen by the public? 5) Is there a future for the ombudsman position? To reach an answer to these questions, almost 30 ombudsmen were inquired, as described in the next topic.

### **Ombudsmen's Self-perception: Empirical Approach**

After their experiences as news ombudsman, some former Portuguese and Brazilian ombudsmen have published books with a kind of collection of their work in the press. Generally speaking, these books put together a selection of weekly articles written by these ombudsmen (Mesquita, 1998); (Wemans, 1999); (Aur lio, 2001); (Fidalgo, 2004); (Serrano, 2006); (Abrantes, 2008); COSTA(2006), S  (1998), contributing as such to extend the memory of their work. In a certain sense, these publications reflect not only an archive of ombudsmen's production but also their impressions on what an ombudsman position should be, seeing as how they have occasionally written on this topic. In the audiovisual context, ombudsmen have been publishing an annual report on their activities. Anyway, these documents don't represent any



kind of study of Portuguese History. This is actually an insufficiently portrayed and analysed field.

Despite more than two decades of 'ombudsmanship' history in Brazil and Portugal, the research on this area has been as discrete as the ombudsmen's impact itself. Although some theoretical approaches have already reflected on the ombudsman position in general, both in Portugal and Brazil, (Mata, 2002) (Fidalgo, 2002; 2009) (Oliveira, 2006; 2010) (Brittos & Brown, 2007), (Maia, 2003), in empirical terms, only a few studies are known in Brazilian and Portuguese practice. And even these studies focus more on the journalists' perceptions about ombudsmen (see for example Fidalgo, 2002) or on the function in terms of media political economy than on ombudsmen themselves. This lack of research drove us to the intention of listening to those whose role it is to 'listen' to the public's protests.

Continuing a study started last year on Portuguese media ombudsmen, the authors extended the research to Brazil, where a questionnaire previously applied to Portuguese ombudsmen was also used to better understand this experience in the Brazilian media. The purpose was to explore the status of news ombudsman in two different continents, which also means two different sides of the world.

The objectives of such a proposal were: a) to depict the history of this job in two different contexts (the European on one hand and the South-American on the other); b) to explore the way ombudsmen, acting in two distinct continents, face the role they are supposed to carry out; c) to question the viability of this function in countries with different economic situations; d) to search for similarities and dissimilarities in style/language; e) to put into perspective the standards of media accountability in two Portuguese-speaking countries. Actually, although practiced in the same language, an ombudsman's job is shaped by social, historical, political, and even economic differences. In this context, our proposal concerns the objective of comparing the way ombudsmen from each country see themselves and the representations they make about their social role.

Organized in 36 questions on five main chapters (some multiple choice or checklist, others open to a more wide and extensive comment) (1. Institutional status; 2. Relationship with the media organization; 3. Relationship with the public; 4. Ombudsman seen by ombudsmen; 5. Position's future). The questionnaire was applied in 2011 to 16 Portuguese ombudsmen (that is to say, all people who had worked as ombudsmen since 1997<sup>6</sup>). Only one did not answer the questionnaire. The same questionnaire was answered by 12 Brazilian ombudsmen in 2012. Being much larger geographically and also in terms of media business than Portugal, it is almost impossible to assure how many people have already worked as ombudsman in Brazil. Some occasional experiences are known of in regional media, but for this study only national quality newspapers and the public broadcasting service were considered. According to Jairo Faria Mendes (2002), in Brazil, only two enterprises should be considered as having consolidated the ombudsman job: the daily newspapers 'Folha de São Paulo', and 'O Povo' and 'Radio Povo'. The first one has had 11 ombudsmen since 1989; the second one has had 12 ombudsmen since 1993).

---

<sup>6</sup> There were actually 17 ombudsmen between 1997 and 2011. However, one of them died in 2010.



Table 1

	<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>Total ombudsmen</b>	<b>Ombudsmen that answered the questionnaire</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	<i>Newspaper</i> Folha de São Paulo	11 (since 1989)	7
	<i>Newspaper</i> O Povo	12 (since 1993)	1
	<i>Radio and TV</i> EBC	2 (since 2009)	2
	<i>Radio and TV</i> Others (TV Cultura and Radiobrás)	2	2
<b>Portugal</b>	<i>Newspaper</i> Diário de Notícias	4 (since 1997)	3
	<i>Newspaper</i> Jornal de Notícias	3 (since 2001)	3
	<i>Newspaper</i> Público	5 (since 1998)	5
	<i>TV</i> RTP	2 (since 2006)	2
	<i>Radio</i> RDP	3 (since 2006)	3

According to this table, about 45% of Brazilian ombudsmen answered the questionnaire. In Portugal, this percentage increased to 88%.

The questionnaire was designed online (using Google tools) and all ombudsmen surveyed were personally contacted to answer it online, too. This means that the questionnaire was used as a direct application, in other words, the ombudsmen were asked to answer the online form by themselves. The same method was used in both countries.

### **Ombudsmen's Self-perception: Comparing Two Portuguese-Speaking Countries**

#### **Institutional Status**

If it is not a controversial question, it is at least a sensitive one: Where should the ombudsman come from? From the newsroom/media company, or from outside the newsroom/media company? The majority of those who have already worked as ombudsmen in Portugal believe that it can be more efficient and more comfortable if the news ombudsman comes from other institutions. Only 4 out of 15 ombudsmen surveyed understand that it is better when an ombudsman is someone contracted within the newsroom. In their opinion, when an ombudsman comes from the enterprise, it is a given that he has a better knowledge of the enterprise, its culture and its routines. On the other hand, some proximity between the ombudsman and those who are affected by his/her job may facilitate the dialog. A very different opinion is expressed by the Brazilian ombudsmen. 8 out of 12 believe that it is preferable that the ombudsman comes from the newsroom/media company. One thinks that this is not a big question and it doesn't make any difference if the ombudsman comes from inside or outside. Arguments that support the option for someone from inside point out complicity, transparency, and a better knowledge of





the enterprise in order to justify why an insider person would be more appropriate. “Recruited outside the company, the ombudsman takes the risk of transforming himself into a mere media critic”, states a Brazilian ombudsman.

In Portugal, three ombudsmen don't have a clear opinion on this issue, and eight do understand that news ombudsmen should come from outside of the media company. Five reasons explain why it would be better to be 'an outsider' in the media organization. In their own words, ombudsmen consider that personal relationships may become a problem when negative appreciations have to be published. In the same sense, they say that when an ombudsman is not an ex-colleague he is in a better position to criticize in a more detached way. Besides that, there are better conditions of independence. Thinking in relation to comfort, some have also pointed out that it is more comfortable in terms of future relationships and what concerns the ombudsman's public image, the idea of credibility is more acceptable, than if there were no previous working relationship with the journalists. It is very interesting to notice that only three ombudsmen in Brazil think that ombudsmen should come from outside the company. The argument has to do with the engagement between the ombudsman and the journalists, which is to say that ombudsmen have better conditions of independence if they have had no previous relation with the enterprise.

Anyway, should he be, or have been, a journalist? In terms of professional background, four Portuguese ombudsmen think an ombudsman should be a journalist. The majority consider that he should have been a journalist in the past (but not anymore). This question, however, demands a particular remark to distinguish radio and TV context from the press field. As a matter of fact, ombudsmen for audiovisual media in Portugal (for the public radio and TV broadcasting) perform their action in terms of information and in terms of entertainment. For this reason, it is understandable that for TV and radio it is not that important if ombudsmen are or were journalists, since they are expected to examine the media group as a whole (concerning its different channels), both in terms of journalism and in terms of general programming. At any rate, ombudsmen for audiovisual media recognize that it is still important to have someone sensitive to media system, culture, and social effects.

In Brazil, we found a different answer again. 11 in 12 answers indicate that an ombudsman should be (or have been) a journalist. In fact, for some ombudsmen “journalism experience is fundamental to carrying out the job”, because “only he who knows the activity can criticise it in a way that gets the respect of the criticised journalists”. Only one ombudsman declares to be indifferent to this question. Even those who admit that a researcher can also be an ombudsman feel that he/she should at least have worked as a journalist in the past.

Currently or in the past, all tend to agree that ombudsmen should have a journalistic background and that this fact represents some advantages. Although as a Portuguese ombudsman pointed out, there is a risk of corporatism, the majority understand that the a journalistic background better guarantees that the ombudsman knows the profession specifics, knows the journalistic routines, has ethical concerns and professional maturity. Surveyed ombudsmen also agree on the mandate limit topic. Only one (a Portuguese ombudsman) thinks that mandates shouldn't have a limit. The majority indicate three years as a reasonable limit in Portugal and four years in Brazil.



### **Relationship between Ombudsmen and the Media Company**

The relationship with the internal side of the media organization always runs into the idea of independence. As a matter of fact, ombudsmen are hired by the media they are supposed to criticize (or defend). Some academic debates tend to question whether this institutional relationship may threaten the independence and autonomy of the ombudsmen when analysing the media performance. Confronted with their own experience, the Portuguese ombudsmen said they didn't feel their independence was threatened while their mandates. Nevertheless, some of them admit that administration or the executive board of the enterprise was sometimes hostile. However, in Brazil, 4 of the 12 ombudsmen surveyed admitted that their independence was threatened.

### **Relationship between Ombudsman and the Public**

In this field, the questionnaire focused on two main aspects: 1) the tone of the correspondence sent by the public concerning what constitutes an ombudsman's role; 2) the way ombudsmen understand the messages received from the public.

With readers, listeners and viewers, it wouldn't be inaccurate to say that the ombudsmen's relationship is ambiguous. Some of the common citizens understand that their complaints are not sufficiently efficient and have no practical effect. For this reason, some people question what ombudsmen are for. In spite of these doubts, some ombudsmen state that on a whole, readers, listeners and viewers tend to express their own satisfaction for ombudsmen's job. They seem to feel that the media has someone to listen to them and to answer their questions. In Brazil, the majority of contentment manifestations for ombudsmen's job comes from the public.

Regarding the public's complaints towards journalists, the ombudsmen think that they are globally fair, although a significant part of the received correspondence focuses on particular sensibilities and not really on essential questions. Only three Portuguese ombudsmen and two in Brazil think the messages coming from the public are too negative and unfair for journalists.

### **Ombudsman Seen by the Ombudsman?**

When asked to express their own impressions on what ombudsmen should be, there is a curious difference between Portugal and Brazil in terms of focus. In Portugal, almost all ombudsmen refer to a mediation function. In Brazil, however, the majority points out that an ombudsman is someone who represents the readers/listeners and viewers. More than an image of a kind of *go-between*, Brazilian ombudsmen view the job as a kind of 'defender' of the public. One of them, for example, says that the ombudsman "is someone who can express what the reader is thinking about media coverage". Another one states that the ombudsman "is the reader's defender in the journalistic enterprise and the newsroom" or, in another ombudsman's words, "an independent interpreter of the readers' critics and desires". This idea of 'defence' brings Brazilian ombudsmen closer to the Spanish experience (where the ombudsman is called 'Defensor') than to the French or the Portuguese one (where the designations have more to do with the idea of 'mediation'). For this reason, in Brazil, to 'defend the readers' interests' appears as a fundamental role of the ombudsman job, "even when readers don't manifest their own interests". Concomitant to this role, ombudsmen are also expected to criticise the media practices regularly and transparently.





When questioned about the role ombudsman should play, the respondents mentioned mainly three aspects: media literacy, ethical debate, and readers' defence (this last one is formulated particularly by the Brazilian ombudsmen). Summing up the aspects pointed out in the questionnaire, the ombudsmen's role should include: 1) To promote a citizenship culture; 2) To give voice to readers/listeners/viewers (Brazilian ombudsmen use the verb 'to represent' or 'to defend' the readers/listeners/viewers); 3) To make a critical reading of the media corporation; 4) To promote an ethical and deontological responsibility; 5) To clarify citizens on editorial options and concrete conditions of journalistic work; 6) To listen to the public's complaints and answer them; 7) To keep the connection to the newsroom; 8) To promote media literacy; 9) To debate the media's role; 10) To scrutinise deontological practices; 11) To defend citizens' interests; 12) To work as an instance of reflection and self-criticism for journalists; 13) To evaluate the communication processes; 14) To formulate suggestions.

To reach these objectives, an ombudsman should fit a particular profile for the Portuguese respondents as: a) having professional experience; b) being a sensible person; c) having independence and the capacity to listen to others, d) being mature, e) having great knowledge of the media system in general and of the journalistic field in particular; f) having a wide civic and cultural education, as well as recognized prestige; g) having intellectual honesty and frankness. Brazilian ombudsmen tend to underline some other characteristics: a) deep knowledge of the function; b) serenity and balance, patience; c) technical capacity to judge; d) leadership; e) emotional balance; f) institutional authority.

Even with strong personal qualities, news ombudsmen deal frequently with some difficulties that might constraint their job. On one hand, some professionals refuse to be criticised (there is a traditional image of impunity). A Brazilian ombudsman refers specifically to the fact of the journalist's vanity. On the other hand, sometimes ombudsmen face some obstacles while in contact with the administration and editors. Besides, there is a public tendency to question minor matters (a third of Brazilian respondents refer that people are specially focused on individual sensibilities).

### **Future**

All Portuguese ombudsmen weight up their actions as being globally positive and defend the continuity of this position. But there is a large risk of extinction. According to the Portuguese ombudsmen, some reasons may determine the end of ombudsmen: in a way, journalism's world has changed and journalism is treated more and more as merchandise. Globally, one of the stronger factors that contributes to this decrease is the economic crisis affecting all sectors, particularly the media. One ex-ombudsman also points out that there was a certain incapacity of ombudsmen to prove their real value as a professional and moral judgment institution, which in another respondent's words states the reason why the ombudsmen's position didn't become something relevant for the majority of readers. For the Brazilian ombudsmen, some apprehension towards the owners may also justify the reduced number of ombudsmen in that country. There are also ombudsmen who consider that Brazilian media does not admit criticism, because they consider themselves as being above society.

In what concerns the influence of new technologies, electronic technologies of communication, the development of social networks doesn't seem to contribute



unequivocally to the improvement of the ombudsmen's role. Although they might approach people to the ombudsmen, they represent an illusion of participation and are making media criticism become vague and disperse through web blogs and other online platforms. Furthermore, it could be pointed out that there is a general lack of sensibility for the value of criticism and self-criticism.

### **Conclusion: the Delicate Condition of Media Ombudsmen within a Society of Ethics**

Although very similar in both countries, it could be said that two main aspects distinguish ombudsmen's self-perception between Portugal and Brazil. First, the main tone of the job: for Brazilian ombudsmen, they are first and foremost representatives of the public, expected to defend readers, listeners and viewers against bad media performances; for Portuguese ombudsmen, the job seems to be more related to a mediation function. It might seem irrelevant, but there is a significant difference in meaning intrinsic to this topic. Being expectably impartial in both countries and being someone who works on behalf of the public. The truth is that there is a deeper understanding of mediation in Portugal. As far as ombudsmen express themselves, the word mediation is used more often by Portuguese ombudsmen and the word representation/defence is used more by Brazilian ombudsmen.

On the other hand, Brazilian ombudsmen seem to be more convinced of the journalistic background that ombudsmen should have. And they tend to admit longer mandates than the Portuguese ombudsmen.

### **References**

- BRITTOS, Valério e BROWN, Marcela (2007). "Ombudsman de mídia: a fiscalização dos conteúdos televisivos". In Revista Eletronica Internacional de Economia Política de las Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación, vol. 9, nº 3.
- COSTA, Caio Túlio (2006). *Ombudsman. O Relógio de Pascoal*. São Paulo: Editora Geração
- FIDALGO, Joaquim (2004). *Em nome do leitor – as colunas do provedor do Público*. Coimbra: Minerva
- FIGUEIREDO, Mário (2012). *Relatório Final do Provedor do Ouvinte – 2011*. Lisboa: RTP
- GOMES, Adelino (2009). *Relatório do Provedor do Ouvinte – 2008*. Lisboa: RTP
- LIMA, Regina (2012). *Relatório Anual das Atividades da Ouvidoria em 2011*. Brasília: EBC
- MACIÁ BARBER, Carlos (2006). "Un modelo de Defensor del Lector, del Oyente y del Telespectador para el perfeccionamiento del ejercicio del periodismo en España". In Comunicación y Sociedad, vol. XIX, nº 1, 2006, pp. 47-66.
- MAIA, Kênia (2006). "O ombudsman na Folha de S. Paulo: entre a crítica da mídia e as reclamações dos leitores". In: IV SBPJor, 2006, Porto Alegre. Anais do IV SBPJor, 2006.
- MARTINS, José Nuno (2008). *Relatório Final de Atividade do Provedor do Ouvinte do Serviço Público de Radiodifusão Sonora – 2006-2008*. Lisboa: RTP
- MARTINS, José Nuno (2007). *Relatório do Provedor do Ouvinte do Serviço Público de Radiodifusão Sonora – 2006*. Lisboa: RTP
- MATA, Maria José (2002). *A autocrítica no jornalismo*. Coimbra: Minerva
- MESQUITA, Mário (1998). *O Jornalismo em Análise – a coluna do Provedor dos Leitores em análise*. Coimbra: Minerva
- OLIVEIRA, José Paquete (2011). *Relatório do Provedor do Telespetador da RTP – 2010*. Lisboa: RTP



- OLIVEIRA, José Paquete (2007). *Relatório do Provedor do Telespetador da RTP – 2006*. Lisboa: RTP
- OLIVEIRA, Madalena (2010) *Metajornalismo: quando o jornalismo é sujeito do próprio discurso*. Coimbra: Grácio Editor
- OLIVEIRA, Madalena (2006) 'O provedor nos operadores públicos de rádio e de televisão: para um padrão de referência' – *Anuário 2006 A comunicação e os media em análise*. Braga. CECS (eBook) (61-65). Available on: <<http://www.lasics.uminho.pt/ojs/index.php/anuario2006/article/view/383>>
- PAULINO, Fernando Oliveira (2010). "De Ouvinte a Ouvidor: responsabilidade social da mídia e parâmetros de atuação da Ouvidoria das Rádios da Empresa Brasil de Comunicação (EBC)". In Rogério Chistofolletti. (Org.) (2010). *Vitrine e vidraça: Crítica de Mídia e Qualidade no Jornalismo*. Covilhã: Livros LabCom, p. 95-110. Available on: <<http://www.livroslabcom.ubi.pt/book/5>>
- PAULINO, Fernando Oliveira (2008). *Responsabilidade social da mídia: análise conceitual e perspectivas de aplicação no Brasil, Portugal e Espanha*. 348 f. Tese (Doutorado em Comunicação)-Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, 2008. Available on: <<http://hdl.handle.net/10482/5175>>.
- SILVA, Luiz Martins; PAULINO, F. O. (2007). "Media accountability systems: models, proposals and outlooks". *Brazilian Journalism Research*, v. 3, p. 137-153. Available on: <<http://bjr.sbpjor.org.br/bjr/article/view/103/102>>.