

Freie Universität Berlin



Fachbereich Politik- und Sozialwissenschaften  
Institut für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft

## Engaged Journalism

**Contesting Objectivity through Media Practices during the  
Alternative Coverage of Brazil's June Journeys**

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*Engaged Journalism:*

*Contesting Objectivity through Media Practices during the Alternative Coverage of Brazil's June Journeys*

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# Dedication

*To my mother*

# Declaration

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich diese Dissertation selbständig und lediglich unter Benutzung der angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel verfasst habe. Ich versichere außerdem, dass die vorliegende Arbeit keinem anderen Prüfungsverfahren zugrunde gelegen hat.

Berlin, 31.10.2019

Débora Maria Moura Medeiros

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## Abstract

In this study, I propose the concept of engaged journalism, focusing on a specific kind of alternative media: unlike some types of community or alternative journalism, engaged journalism is often done predominantly by media professionals. However, these practitioners pursue other goals than their colleagues working at commercial or state media outlets and are motivated by a strong media criticism.

Based on Shove, Pantzar, and Watson's (2012) analysis of how practices link elements encompassing material, meaning and competence, I regard engaged journalists as possessing the necessary materials and competences to perform professional journalism while, at the same time, attributing a different meaning to their practices. Engaged journalists seek to offer an alternative to the objectivity standard that marks traditional journalism and to actively counter traditional journalism's shortcomings, such as elite-based source selection. They also see their coverage as a forum for various social movements, constituting a specific form of counter public sphere.

I developed this concept as part of the answer to my two research questions. For research question (RQ 1), I ask: How do actors involved in the alternative coverage of protests adapt media practices to changes in the sociopolitical context? I answered RQ 1 by drawing from grounded theory's methodological resources, in particular expert interviews, in order to make patterns and processes in my specific case visible through my analysis, generating a model that can then be applied to similar cases.

In the current study, I applied this approach to the case of the protests that took place in the city of Fortaleza, Brazil, during 2013 and 2014. They were part of a broader, national context of protests against excessive government spending in the buildup for the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Two media collectives, *Nigéria* and *Na Rua*, were the main actors responsible for the alternative coverage of the protests in Fortaleza. Their members and the network around them were my interview partners.

Complementing this data, I performed a qualitative content analysis of the alternative coverage both collectives published online, guided by the following research question (RQ2): How do shifts in actors' media production during the alternative coverage of protests relate to the adaptation of media practices in a changing sociopolitical context? The multi-layered qualitative content analysis resulted in a model of categories that describes the material in terms of formats used, recurring elements of representation and argumentation.

At the intersection between challenges to journalism and media activism, engaged journalism makes a contribution to the field by conceptualizing the activities of alternative journalists that put their professional knowledge and skills at the service of social movements.

## Zusammenfassung

Diese Studie stellt das Konzept *Engaged Journalism* vor, das eine spezifische Form des alternativen Journalismus beschreibt: Im Gegensatz zu bestimmten Varianten von Community- oder alternativem Journalismus wird *Engaged Journalism* vor allem von professionellen Medienmacher\*innen betrieben. Diese Praktiker\*innen verfolgen andere Ziele als ihre Kolleg\*innen, die bei kommerziellen oder öffentlich-rechtlichen Medien arbeiten; ihre Motivation fußt auf einer ausgeprägten Medienkritik.

Basierend auf einer Definition von Shove u. a. (2012), die Praktiken als das Zusammenspiel zwischen materiellen, Kompetenz- und Bedeutungselementen definiert, begreife ich engagierte Journalist\*innen als Medienakteur\*innen, die über die nötigen Materialien und Kompetenzen verfügen, um professionellen Journalismus zu betreiben, während sie gleichzeitig ihren Praktiken andere Bedeutungen zuweisen. Engagierte Journalist\*innen streben eine Alternative zu dem für traditionellen Journalismus charakteristischen Objektivitätsstandard an. Sie versuchen, dessen Schwachpunkte – beispielsweise eine elitenbasierte Quellenauswahl – aktiv zu beheben. Durch ihre Berichterstattung soll eine spezifische Art Gegenöffentlichkeit für unterschiedliche soziale Bewegungen hergestellt werden.

Ich habe das Konzept vom engagierten Journalismus durch die Beantwortung von zwei Forschungsfragen entwickelt. Forschungsfrage 1 (FF 1) lautet: Wie passen Akteur\*innen, die alternativ über Proteste berichten, ihre Medien-Praktiken an Veränderungen im soziopolitischen Kontext an? Die Beantwortung von FF1 erfolgte durch die Auswertung von Experteninterviews, eine Methode aus dem Bereich der Grounded Theory, die Muster und Prozesse in diesem spezifischen Fall sichtbar machte. Sie wurden dann in einem Modell in Beziehung gesetzt, das auf ähnliche Fälle anwendbar ist.

Als Fallbeispiel dienten die Proteste, die sich in den Jahren 2013 und 2014 in der brasilianischen Stadt Fortaleza ereigneten. Sie waren Teil einer breiteren, nationalen Entwicklung, in der Proteste gegen zu hohe Ausgaben für die Vorbereitungen auf die FIFA Weltmeisterschaft 2014 vonseiten der Regierung stattfanden. Die beiden Hauptakteure der alternativen Protestberichterstattung in Fortaleza waren die Medienkollektive *Nigéria* und *Na Rua*. Ihre Mitglieder und deren Netzwerke waren meine Interviewpartner\*innen.

Diese Daten wurden ergänzt durch eine qualitative Inhaltsanalyse der alternativen Online-Berichterstattung beider Medienkollektive. Diese Analyse wurde von folgender Forschungsfrage (FF 2) geleitet: In welchem Zusammenhang stehen Veränderungen in der Medienproduktion alternativer Protestberichterstattung und die Anpassung von Medien-Praktiken inmitten von Veränderungen im soziopolitischen Kontext? Aus der mehrschichtigen qualitativen Inhaltsanalyse resultierte ein Modell, welches das Material im Hinblick auf Formate sowie wiederkehrende Repräsentations- und Argumentationselemente darstellt.

An der Schnittstelle von Journalismus und Medienaktivismus leistet das Konzept des engagierten Journalismus einen Beitrag, indem es sich auf die Aktivitäten alternativer Journalist\*innen fokussiert, die ihr professionelles Wissen und Können in den Dienst sozialer Bewegungen stellen.



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# List of Abbreviations

## **Abin**

Agência Brasileira de Inteligência (Brazilian Intelligence Agency)

## **Anatel**

Agência Nacional de Telecomunicações (Brazilian Agency of Telecommunications)

## **BRL**

Brazilian Reais

## **FIFA**

Fédération Internationale de Football Association

## **GATE**

Grupo de Ações Táticas Especiais (Special Actions and Tactics Group)

## **GDP**

Gross Domestic Product

## **HQ**

headquarters

## **ISPs**

Internet Service Providers

## **MPL**

Movimento Passe Livre (Free Fare Movement)

## **MST**

Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra (Landless Workers' Movement)

## **MTST**

Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto (Homeless Workers' Movement)

**Ninja**

Narrativas Independentes, Jornalismo e Ação (Independent Narratives, Journalism and Action)

**UN**

United Nations

**WFFM**

World Forum of Free Media

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

At the time I started this research, the world was immersed in a hopeful wave of protests. It seemed that long-suppressed calls for justice were finally being heard. It all started on 17 December 2010, when Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire, leading to the uprisings in Tunisia and to what became known as the Arab Spring. Protests in countries such as Jordan, Oman, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Lybia, Syria, among others, followed. People took to the streets in Europe shortly after. In Spain, the 15-M Movement started in May 2011, as protesters questioned the government's legitimacy amongst unpopular measures to fight the economic crisis and the country's high unemployment rates. Anti-austerity protests also took place in Greece in the same year, as well as in Portugal and the United Kingdom. From 2012 onwards, Romania witnessed anti-government protests (due to corruption and unpopular bills) and for environmental causes (in opposition to the Roşia Montană Project, a polemic mining plan). Anti-corruption protests also swept Bulgaria in 2013. Turkey saw protests in 2013 as well, sparked by the government's plans to build a shopping mall in one of Istanbul's few remaining green areas, the Gezi Park. And, at the beginning of 2014, protesters toppled Viktor Yanukovich's corrupt government in the Ukraine after months of demonstrations. In Asia, students started Hong Kong's Occupy Central, as part of the umbrella revolution in 2014, demanding real democracy in local elections. In the Americas, this decade was also marked by movements such as Occupy Wall Street, beginning in 2011 in the US and spreading to local protests all over the world; the student protests in Chile, also starting in 2011 and demanding reforms in the country's educational system; the 2012 student protests (Yo Soy 132) in Mexico, in opposition to candidate – and later president – Enrique Peña Nieto, among others.

The second half of the decade witnessed further protests, but hope was replaced by ambivalence after the shock of the wars in Syria, the Ukraine, Lybia and Yemen. After the rise of Nuit Debout, in which people gathered for nightly demonstrations against proposed labor law reforms in 2016, France witnessed, two years later, the massive yellow vests movement, initially sparked by a proposed tax on diesel fuel in October 2018 yet increasingly attracting political groups with diametrically opposed grievances and demands. In Sudan, protesters toppled dictator Omar al-Bashir in the beginning of 2019, but, at the time of writing, the country's armed forces are violently repressing the pro-democracy movement. While a strong feminist movement

has filled the streets in countries such as Argentina (#NiUnaMenos), Brazil (#EleNão) and the US (Women's March), a conservative rollback has also been getting stronger, with authoritarian and extreme right-wing governments coming to power since 2016 in the US, Italy, Austria, and the Philippines – to name a few –, supported by their own movements on the streets and online.

Apart from the temporality that connects these events, they are also embedded in a context marked by a multitude of changes in the way people relate to media, be as professional journalists, bloggers, citizen journalists, social media users, readers, listeners or viewers – roles that have also become increasingly fluid in many people's everyday lives. This was an important factor in the representation of protests, as not only professional journalists captured historic images, but an increasing amount of videos, testimonies and pictures recorded by protesters themselves circulated widely as well. Moreover, alternative media became important hubs of circulation and production of varied perspectives on events on the ground: for those interested in direct accounts of events, there was an array of Facebook pages, online archives, livestreams, Twitter profiles, among others, from practically all the movements I previously described. This contributed to a struggle around the prerogative of interpretation of events, with both protesters and their critics loudly adding their voices to the public sphere particularly through wide reach on social media. These actors often questioned traditional media's reporting on events, countering it with their own media production and testimonies.

Such developments are not entirely new, as alternative media have existed for over a century now. However, I believe digital communication technologies, which brought about a reduction of production costs and made media more intuitive and pervasive, have catalyzed their effects – and the protests the world has witnessed in the first half of the 2010s are among the best examples of the social and political effects this process may have. This leads to important discussions around journalistic standards, media legislation, freedom of speech, and credibility, with seemingly established beliefs coming into question again. These discussions continued on throughout the second half of the decade, becoming increasingly pressing as authoritarian forces seem to be gaining ground all over the globe and using digital technologies for their own goals. Acquiring a better understanding of how alternative journalism in the age of social media and worldwide protests works and how it relates to traditional journalism has become essential to face these many challenges, as both types of journalism may learn from each other and provide society with democratic solutions to today's conflicts. In this sense, I must emphasize that my definition of alternative media and alternative journalism, in particular, excludes media from the far-right, in consonance with authors that argue that thus type of media aim at an exacerbation of current inequalities (Downing, 1995b; Hackett & Zhao, 1998) instead of offering democratic alternatives to the status quo. I will make this point clearer in later chapters.

Brazil, the country I focus on in this study, has witnessed the global developments I described through the lenses of its own national protests. Shortly before the Confederations Cup in the country, in June 2013, people initially took to the streets to protest against public transportation fare hikes in São Paulo. However, as the demonstrations grew and spread all over the country in the weeks that followed, the slogan "It is not just about 20 Cents", which protesters wrote on their shields in reference to the fare hikes, became an accurate summary of the move-

ment. Protesters felt that the government was investing too many public funds in the buildup for the 2014 FIFA World Cup while neglecting essential areas such as public education and health services. More general grievances, such as corruption, also gained prominence in the demonstrations over time, which became known as the June Journeys. With the end of the 2013 Confederations Cup, protests took on a more local character, with groups organizing actions that brought awareness to local issues in many Brazilian cities. In 2014, during the World Cup, less people took to the streets, but the government reacted with much higher police presence and repressive legislation to the demonstrations that occurred. These were marked by police violence and numerous arrests. At the same time, traditional social movements and worker unions mobilized their own supporters, using the international attention turned towards the World Cup as leverage to negotiate specific demands with the government.

Throughout these two years, the innovative coverage that media collectives such as *Mídia Ninja* carried out caught the public's attention. Their coverage combined high technical quality, featuring professionally shot pictures and journalistic pieces, with more instant, raw formats such as the livestreamed coverage of protests. It also showcased a perspective from inside the protests, with collective members interviewing people at the scene and showing the action from up close. This brought the collective an impressive following on the social media platforms it used to disseminate its media production. While protesters often expelled traditional media representatives from demonstrations because they felt that many media outlets covered protests in a criminalizing way, alternative collectives such as *Mídia Ninja* became the go-to media source for a growing counterpublic.

Following *Mídia Ninja* and many other collective's coverage from my home in Berlin at the time, I perceived the developments in Brazil to be part of a broader trend, seen in many countries, of massive demonstrations and well-organized alternative media collectives covering them and raising important questions about the future of journalism through their work: Will objectivity standards survive the current political moment? Are there sustainable and democratic alternatives to objectivity in journalism? Who is a journalist in times of cheaper yet sophisticated mass communication? How do increasingly polarized counterpublics interact with each other in a broader public sphere? Are alternative media inherently pluralistic? By looking into the alternative coverage of protests in the city of Fortaleza in particular, where my field research took place, I set out to make my own contribution to answering some of these questions, employing my in-depth knowledge of the country's history and sociopolitical context to make an analysis that takes Brazil's particularities as well as its commonalities with other contexts into account.

Especially since extreme right-wing politician Jair Bolsonaro got elected as the country's President in 2018, the fragility of Brazil's democracy has become apparent. The country is marked by a highly concentrated media landscape, with few families owning large media conglomerates and often directly acting in the political arena as well. At the same time, despite very high social inequality, the Brazilian population is becoming increasingly connected, with the number of individuals accessing the internet from their computers or mobile phones increasing every year. These were promising settings for alternative media such as the media collectives that covered the 2013 and 2014 protests, as many Brazilians seemed tired of the homogeneity of perspectives

on traditional media, caused by concentration of media ownership. This context continues to play an important role, as Bolsonaro's supporters and opponents alike take it to the web to question traditional media and assert their own interpretation of events. On the other hand, even countries with more pluralistic media landscapes seem to be experiencing similar criticism and counterdiscourses towards their traditional media, which makes Brazil part of a worldwide trend. Strongly influenced by the implementation of objectivity standards in journalism that originated in the US, Brazilian traditional journalism also represents an emblematic case for the journalistic field's recent debates around professional practices and norms based on objectivity.

Four streams of scholarship provided the theoretical background for my research. Given the hybrid nature of alternative media, I drew both from social movement studies and from journalism studies, in order to understand the contexts most alternative media straddle. The literature on social movement studies was particularly helpful to retrace movements and activists' strategies towards traditional media, which range from cooperation to hostility, as well as media's role in their mobilization processes. Particularly social media have acquired a central role in these strategies in the past decade, with commercial platforms offering a tempting yet dangerous trade-off: movements may now reach significantly more people through social media accounts yet are subject to platforms' monetization strategies and cooperation with national governments. Thus, I took a closer look at what authors say about the chances and risks social media pose for activism. Finally, the concept of the protest paradigm, which uncovers patterns in traditional media's coverage of many demonstrations, was central for conceptualizing both my interview partners as well as their sources' criticism towards traditional media and their representation of protests.

Journalism studies, for their part, provided the grounds for comparison between traditional journalism and alternative journalism, zooming in on this particular media strategy employed by social movements, namely creating their own media or acting as sources for allied alternative journalists. I retraced the application of Bourdieu's (2005) concept of fields to journalism, showing how disputes around who gets to claim belonging to this field have been changing as the media landscape itself transforms, with more and more authors arguing for a broader understanding of the journalistic field, going beyond traditional newsrooms. Literature on the objectivity regime, which guides journalistic practice and norms in most countries today and is part of how the journalistic field defines its boundaries, was another central element for my research, as I sought to understand how alternative journalists deal with this regime in their coverage of protests that they personally support.

Starting from Habermas's concept of the public sphere, I explored the growing literature that criticizes some of its normative points, such as the bracketing out of social inequalities and the strict division between public and private contained in his model. Some of these criticisms generated alternative models of how the public sphere or, as many authors argue, various public spheres can be organized. Particularly Fraser's (1992) concept of counterpublics provided the basis for understanding actors' relationship with their sources and alternative journalism's role in mediating counter public spheres, providing discussion spaces for various groups inside the counter public sphere to exchange arguments, which they then may defend in the broader public sphere.

Finally, practice theory was essential for acquiring a more open perspective over what, to paraphrase Couldry (2010), actors performing an alternative coverage of protests do in relation to media. The concept of media practices provided a guideline for my analysis of the other three strands of literature, avoiding an excessive focus on technological shifts or newsroom-centric understandings of journalism. By looking into practices, I was also able to develop a research design that approached alternative journalism in Fortaleza with an open definition of how actors dealt with media on the ground. In the next section, I detail how I structured all four strands of scholarship in the present text, as well as offer a brief summary of the chapters containing my empirical results.

## About this Study

The overall structure of this study takes the form of nine chapters, including this introduction. Throughout these chapters, I have translated direct citations from sources in other languages myself, making the original passages available in the footnotes. The second chapter delineates the context in which the protests my interlocutors reported on happened, retracing the sociopolitical situation in Brazil at the time, the country's political system, its media landscape, as well as its alternative media tradition. This chapter also contains a detailed chronology of how the protests unfolded in 2013 and 2014 in Fortaleza and in other parts of Brazil.

Chapter 3 contains a critical literature review of the scholarship on practice theory, as well as its specific applications to the fields of media studies and social movements studies. A second strand of literature contained in this chapter pertains to research on social movements' media strategies in general. I proceed to review two other areas of scholarship that were also key for my work in chapter 4, which is dedicated to journalism studies, in particular to the objectivity regime's effects both on norms and practices in the journalistic field as well as alternative journalism's attempts to counter it. Moreover, in this chapter, I also focus on Habermas's theory of the public sphere and the criticism towards it, as well as theories around counter public spheres developed upon this criticism. Such theories place journalism in its traditional and alternative forms in the bigger picture of societal deliberation and decision-making processes.

After this detailed and necessary discussion of the Brazilian context and the four scholarship areas I intend to contribute to with my work, I delineate how I applied the grounded theory approach to my empirical study in chapter 5. This chapter starts with broader reflections on the grounded theory methodology and its possible contribution to the study of practices. Then, in the sections that follow this discussion, I describe the context of my field research in Fortaleza, introduce my research questions and delineate how I performed the methods of expert interviews and qualitative content analysis as well as assessed the data acquired during my empirical research. Here, I propose a combination between both methods embedded in the grounded theory approach, in order to achieve a high abstraction to describe my results. In chapter 6, I present my first findings, featuring a detailed analysis of all practice categories that compose the model conceptualizing the alternative coverage of protests as a complex of practices. In chapters 7 and 8, I analyze the results of the qualitative content analysis I performed in order to answer

RQ 2, outlining the format and content categories that emerged through the analysis as well as applying them to 11 typical cases from the overall material.

Both empirical findings converge in chapter 9, in which I interpret them in light of the concept of engaged journalism, which I developed through the grounded theory approach, drawing from overarching aspects in my expert interviews as well as from literature on alternative media, the journalistic field and how the objectivity standard plays out in journalistic practices both in and outside of traditional newsrooms. In short, engaged journalism describes a specific form of alternative journalism, performed by actors that possess a formal or professional journalistic background yet carry out their coverage in alternative structures, motivated by a strong media criticism and the goal of countering authorities' versions of events and highlighting marginalized voices especially from social movements. I explore the concept's potential for generalization and how it relates to other existing concepts further in chapter 9 and then conclude by pointing out this study's main contributions and limitations, taking into account the various changes in the sociopolitical context that took place in Brazil and in many other countries since I started my research.

## Chapter 2

# Brazilian Context and the 2013–2014 Protests

In the months of June and July 2013 alone, over one million Brazilians took to the streets of more than 380 cities, surprising everyone, including the government. As Bartelt (2013a, p. 1) humorously puts it, Agência Brasileira de Inteligência (Brazilian Intelligence Agency) (Abin), the Brazilian secret service, must have taken quite some flak for being unable to predict such a large mobilization. The last massive protests had happened in Brazil over 20 years ago, when millions of people demanded president Fernando Collor de Mello be impeached due to corruption charges – they were heard, and Collor lost his mandate that same year (Saad Filho, 2013; Lingenthal, Zeller, & Ryan, 2013; Sweet, 2014).

Ever since the first thousands marched in São Paulo, there have been many attempts to explain what caused the protests, from global perspectives that insert them in the context of uprisings against capitalism and a State apparatus that reinforces inequalities (Žižek, 2013) to conspiracy theory-like analyses that see the protests as a result of a US plot to take control over Brazilian markets and counterbalance the country's growing proximity with Russia and China (Ó Colmáin, 2013). However, the reasons are not as simple as either one of these analyses try to make them appear. Getting to the root of the protests remains a challenging endeavor to this day and this chapter would be too short for that. Instead, it focuses on providing a necessary contextualization to understand the case study at hand. In order to do that, I draw from various sources, such as reports by national and international NGOs and foundations, opinion polls conducted at the time, articles published by foreign and domestic media outlets, as well as various scientific studies. Texts written at the time, with authors seeking to understand the events happening on the ground, share these pages with studies written later, looking back at the protests and analyzing their repercussion and ramifications in the years that followed.

This chapter is structured around two broad themes: the first part covers the events that took place in 2013 and 2014, while the second part focuses on the complexities that make up the country's media landscape. In section 2.1, I provide relevant background information on Brazil's history and political system. Then, in section 2.2, I describe Brazil's economic and sociopolitical situation before the June 2013 protests erupted, as well as systemic factors that might have led to

dissatisfaction among the population. Sections 2.3 and 2.4 retrace the most significant protests between the Confederations Cup and the 2014 FIFA World Cup, detailing changes in the context as the protests unfolded and reflecting on the reactions of various sectors of society to these events. I then make a small detour to retrace events on a local level, in Fortaleza, in section 2.5. Section 2.6 provides a closer look at Brazil's media landscape, the many issues that permeate it and how they might have contributed to protesters' harsh criticism of traditional media<sup>1</sup> in 2013 and 2014. Then, in section 2.7, I focus on Brazilians' online habits and on issues of digital inclusion prevalent at the time. Finally, section 2.8 summarizes the history of alternative media in Brazil and how the elements described in the previous sections feed into the rise to prominence of alternative media groups since June 2013.

## 2.1 Brazil's History and Political System: Key Facts

This section contains a brief overview of Brazil's recent history, necessary to understand the sociopolitical context in which the events in 2013 and 2014 were embedded<sup>2</sup>.

The country's recent authoritarian past is one of these key facts, since it influenced the constitution of its media system, as I will detail in section 2.6. During the 20th century, Brazil experienced two dictatorships. The first one, known as *Estado Novo* (New State) (1937–1945) marked president Getúlio Vargas's authoritarian rule. Vargas had been in power since 1931, as interim-president after a military coup overthrew the previous administration. In 1937, he consolidated his position as president by calling off the presidential elections scheduled for the following year under the pretense of preventing a communist complot to take over the country's government. The New State period was characterized by strong nationalistic and anti-communist discourses, social welfare policies and media policies that combined technical development of the sector, especially of radio stations, with a powerful censorship apparatus (de Oliveira, da Silva, de Castro, & Mestrando; 2018, p. 136–140). Having stepped down after the end of World War II, Vargas returned to power through democratic elections in 1951, remaining in office until his suicide in 1954, which was caused by political pressures and growing discontent with his policies.

The second dictatorial period followed a few decades later, as Brazil's military took power in 1964, again under the pretense of averting an alleged communist threat and counting with the support of the US government (Pereira, 2012, p. 115–116). In total, five military generals governed the country until 1985, when the dictatorship ended after a transitional period overseen by the military. By controlling the return to democracy, the military assured its members would not be prosecuted for the human rights abuses they committed when in power by issuing a general amnesty "that prevented the investigation and prosecution of political crimes, both by the state and its opponents" (Pereira, 2012, p. 124). In terms of media, the military also invested in modernizing the sector, especially through television channels, granting broadcasting licenses to supporters of the regime.

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<sup>1</sup>I adopt the term "traditional media" to describe legacy media outlets, i.e. those with a wide reach and mostly commercial or state-funded structures.

<sup>2</sup>For a more thorough analysis of Brazil's sociopolitical and historical reality, see Bastian (2019, chapter 2).



Since 1988, after a short period of indirect elections, Brazil is again a democracy, holding presidential elections every four years. The 1988 Constitution, written by a Constitutional Assembly after the return of democracy, contains several articles that should regulate the communication sector in the country, as well as guarantee freedom of expression, which I explore in detail throughout this chapter.

Brazil's presidential regime has some peculiarities that are typical of Latin American young democracies, such as the president's need to form broad coalitions in order to ensure governability. This is known as coalitional presidentialism:

“In this version of presidential democracy, the directly elected president works as a “coalition builder” and makes use of his or her right to make nominations to recruit ministers from various parties and build a legislative cartel, which supports his or her recommendations in Congress. (...) In Brazil, heading various coalitions throughout their time in office has become routine for presidents, in order to guarantee support in Congress. In addition to the distribution of cabinet posts, presidents can use other mechanisms to avoid conflicts between coalition partners and retain control over the legislative process; among these mechanisms are their power to control the political agenda, but also clientelistic practices.” (Llanos & Nolte, 2016, p. 5)<sup>3</sup>

In this regime, the president in particular is subject to volatile dynamics that can threaten the coalition's stability and thus his or her ability to govern, such as crisis, scandals and protests. Gonçalves (2014, p. 45–46) defends that coalitional presidentialism also played a role in the 2013 protests, as it presents a mismatch to Brazilians' expectations towards democracy, especially in terms of transparency and accountability. This is, in part, also a result of Brazil's electoral system, based on the proportion of votes each party, not each individual candidate, gets. In practice, however, Brazilians vote for people, not for parties. Parties that get a significant amount of votes have the right to a certain amount of seats in Congress, regardless of whether all candidates got enough votes individually or one or two popular candidates got so many votes that they can bring in party colleagues that received an insignificant amount of votes themselves and would not be able to secure a seat individually. As a result, Brazilians do not feel represented by their Congress, which is populated by candidates that did not receive enough popular support. On top of that, electoral coalitions and government coalitions are different: parties that supported each other during the elections can become rivals in Congress and the president forms new coalitions once in power. This leads to lack of accountability, as Brazilians, when they cast their votes,

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<sup>3</sup>“In dieser Variante präsidentieller Demokratie fungiert der direkt gewählte Präsident als “Koalitionsbildernd und benutzt seine Ernennungsrechte dazu, Minister aus verschiedenen Parteien zu rekrutieren und ein Gesetzgebungskartell zu bilden, das seine Vorschläge im Kongress unterstützt. (...) In Brasilien ist es mittlerweile für Präsidenten Routine, während ihrer Amtszeit wechselnden Koalitionsregierungen vorzustehen, um ihren Rückhalt im Kongress zu sichern. Neben der Verteilung von Kabinettsposten haben Präsidenten auch auf andere Mechanismen zurückgegriffen, um Konflikte zwischen Koalitionspartnern beizulegen und die Kontrolle über den Gesetzgebungsprozess aufrechtzuerhalten; dazu gehören ihre Befugnisse zur Kontrolle und Steuerung der politischen Agenda, aber auch klientelistische Praktiken” (Llanos & Nolte, 2016, p. 5).

cannot know which parties will actually form a coalition to govern the country (Gonçalves, 2014, p. 44–45). Given that corruption and lack of accountability were among the main cries during the protests, it is important to keep such structural components in mind.

## 2.2 Brazil in the Lead-Up to June 2013

Before the first major protests, President Dilma Rousseff's government still enjoyed an approval rate of 65%<sup>4</sup>, which declined to 30% at the end of June (Datafolha, 2013). Unlike her predecessor, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Rousseff could no longer rely on a booming economy to maintain her popularity. While Lula da Silva ended his second term in office with an increase in 7.5% in Brazil's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Rousseff took office among the first signs of the economic crisis that would shake Brazil some years later, "including low levels of overall investment, a trade balance deficit, fiscal deficit, the menace of inflation and sustained low growth" (Sweet, 2014, p. 64). This was paired with an unfavorable global conjuncture, in which major trade partners such as China slowed down their commodities imports from Brazil. As a result, the year of 2012 brought the second-lowest growth in GDP Brazil had seen in ten years: only 0.9% (Economist Research Unit, 2013).

Despite already existing signs of economic stagnation, unemployment rates remained under control, at 4.3% at the end of 2013, a decrease of 0.3% in comparison to 2012 (IBGE, 2013). Two might have contributed for that: an increase in the percentage of young Brazilians (between 15 and 24 years old) who were not in the labor market, as they invested additional years in pursuing higher education; and an expanding commerce sector, which had received an injection of new clients from the so called "class C" (Sweet, 2014, p. 67).

The term "class C" comes from Brazilian policymakers and marketers' classification of citizens according to their income, in alphabetical order: the upper and middle classes are labeled classes A and B, respectively, and low-income households are labeled D and E. The class C comprises people who ascended economically from classes D and E, thus constituting a "new middle class", with increased buying power, but marked differences towards the traditional middle class in terms of education, income and place of residence, with many members of the new middle class still living in slums or areas with poor housing conditions (Stolte, 2014, p. 2)<sup>5</sup>. The class C was among the most visible results of Lula da Silva and Rousseff's social policies, based on conditional cash transfer programs such as Bolsa Família (Family Stipend), instituted by Lula da Silva through a presidential decree in 2004 (Brasil. Presidência da República, 2004). The Family Stipend provides low-income households with an additional monthly payment of up to 140 Brazilian Reais (BRL)<sup>6</sup>, as long as they meet some requirements, such as assuring their children's regular school attendance and vaccination (Morton, 2015; Sweet, 2014). Recipients also

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<sup>4</sup>As measured in March 2013 by Datafolha (2013).

<sup>5</sup>In more recent years, millions of members of the class C have slipped back into poverty due to increasing levels of unemployment particularly among the youth and individuals with less formal education (Neri, 2019, p. 7–9). Some researchers regard this as a factor that led to Jair Bolsonaro's election in 2018, arguing that the lower middle-classes suffered the effects of the crisis quite directly and hoped the far-right candidate could provide a solution to their troubles (Pinheiro-Machado & Scalco, 2018).

<sup>6</sup>Around 50 US dollars at the average exchange rate in 2004 (Investing.com, 2019).

had access to additional programs, covering issues from housing through the program *Minha Casa Minha Vida* (My House, My Life), access to home improvement funds through the program *Minha Casa Melhor* (My Better House) to support during pregnancy with *Bolsa Gestante* (Expectant Mother Stipend). However, the bureaucratic apparatus made it difficult for individuals to even know about all offers, much less whether they met the criteria to receive them (Morton, 2015, p. 1295–1296). Nevertheless, shortly before it celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2014, *Bolsa Família* was highly praised by the World Bank, which considered the program “a global success story, a reference point for social policy around the world” (Wetzel, 2013)<sup>7</sup>. However, this success story alone was not enough. The increase in buying power among the class C was not accompanied by access to better public services. Lingenthal et al. (2013) describe the precarious conditions of those public services and how they affected the lives of millions of Brazilians:

“Everyday, many inhabitants of big cities such as São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro spend hours in overcrowded buses on the way to work. The lines at hospitals also demand quite a lot of patience from the patients. Brazil’s health care system is constantly overwhelmed and does not possess — not even in the big cities — enough technical infrastructure or personnel. Much too often urgent operations do not take place. Routine operations must be booked months in advance, bearing the risk that routine becomes an emergency as well.” (Lingenthal et al., 2013, p. 1)<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, wealthier Brazilians who used to escape a failed public infrastructure by using private services were confronted with an influx of new clients to these services, leading to a decrease in their quality. The frustration at the fact that the economic boom had not brought significant improvements in the quality of public services, especially in the health, education and public transportation sectors, could be felt across all social classes. As people started feeling the first signs of economic stagnation in everyday life, the eruption of protests seemed only a matter of time (Saad Filho, 2013; Stolte, 2014).

Another source of frustration was the gaping disparity between governmental investment in public services and the amounts reserved for the projects connected to upcoming mega events, such as the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. Even though president Lula da Silva had promised the mega events would be financed mostly by private companies, the 2014 FIFA World Cup ended up costing the government more than the previous two tournaments, in South Africa and Germany, together, cost: estimated 28 billion BRL<sup>9</sup>, only 20% of which came from private

<sup>7</sup>There is criticism to *Bolsa Família*, due to the fact it was not combined with necessary tax reforms that could have faced resistance from wealthier Brazilians. That way, *Bolsa Família* could be seen as part of a populist set of policies to gain favor among all sectors of society (Bartelt, 2013a, p. 4). For numbers on *Bolsa Família*’s reach by 2014, see IG São Paulo (2013).

<sup>8</sup>“In den Großstädten wie São Paulo oder Rio de Janeiro verbringen viele Bewohner jeden Tag Stunden in überfüllten Bussen auf dem Weg zur Arbeit. Auch die Warteschlangen in den Krankenhäusern verlangen ihren Patienten einiges an Geduld ab. Brasiliens Gesundheitssystem ist konstant überfordert und verfügt selbst in den großen Städten weder über ausreichende technische Ausstattung noch über genügend qualifiziertes Personal. Notoperationen kommen allzu oft nicht zustande. Routineoperationen müssen Monate im Voraus terminiert werden bis hin zu dem Risiko, dass aus der Routine dann ein Notfall wird” (Lingenthal et al., 2013, p. 1).

<sup>9</sup>Around 11 billion US dollars at the average exchange rate in 2014 (Investing.com, 2019).

partner companies (Fatheuer, 2014, p. 10–11). In addition, not even 30% of the infrastructure projects that could have benefited the general population had been delivered by 2014 (Dane, 2014, p. 1).

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the international governing body for soccer and other sport modalities, was seen as the biggest winner in this process, making a record of at least 3.3 billion Euros in untaxed profits (Fatheuer, 2014, p. 13) and imposing various pre-conditions for Brazil to meet the “FIFA quality standard”, in order to host the tournament. Among the most notorious concessions made by the government was a temporary suspension of the prohibition of sales of alcoholic drinks inside stadiums, in order to please one of the tournament’s major sponsors, the US American beer company Anheuser–Busch InBev, which produces the beer Budweiser. Brazil signed away some of its sovereignty in laws such as the General World Cup Law (Brasil. Presidência da República, 2012), which not only includes the exception made for Budweiser, but also restrictions to students and pensioners’ right to reduced ticket fees to the matches, visa guarantees to FIFA officials, among others. Many of those points contradicted previously existing Brazilian legislation (Articulação Nacional dos Comitês Populares da Copa e Olimpíadas, 2014, p. 114–119; Fatheuer, 2014, p. 11). These and many other concessions, made under political and time pressures generated by the upcoming mega events had a direct impact on the lives of millions of citizens:

“At 2014 World Cup sites throughout Brazil, construction workers are being advised that their normal collective bargaining rights have been suspended because of the urgency of the projects. Traditional food-sellers in one World Cup host city, Belo Horizonte, were summarily evicted from the stadium-adjacent area where they held the right to work for years, and where generations of families have gone for a pre-game churrasco. In another city, Natal, mandatory environmental analyses have been ignored as the city speeds ahead with transportation projects that threaten the environment around the city’s world-famous beach dunes. (...) With major sporting events approaching, the official narrative seems to go, there simply is not time for the human rights protections enshrined in national and international law.” (Corrarino, 2014, p. 180–181)

These violations are not particular to the Brazilian case, fitting into a global pattern that accompanies global events, especially major sport competitions<sup>10</sup>. Mega events such as the FIFA World Cup, but also international political summits or commercial events, serve as a pretext for the authorities to commit various human rights abuses and ignore existing national and international legislation, with appalling lack of accountability. In Brazil, this became particularly apparent in the issue of housing rights. At least since the buildup to the 2007 Pan American Games, which took place in Rio de Janeiro, families that had lived for years in slums and peripheral communities have been forcefully evicted from their homes, in order to make room for infrastructure projects or sport venues (Zibechi, 2013). This led to the creation of the Comitês

<sup>10</sup>FIFA’s image worldwide took a major blow after British journalist Andrew Jennings’ investigations on corrupt behavior among its officials, in various pieces for the *BBC* and *The Sunday Times*. He is said to have sparked the US indictments of FIFA officials in 2015 (Jenkins, 2015).

Populares da Copa (Popular Committees for the World Cup) in all 12 host cities (Zibechi, 2013)<sup>11</sup>. The Popular Committees set out to monitor and fight housing rights violations in the build up to the 2014 World Cup and, in Rio de Janeiro's case, to the 2016 Olympics. According to their estimates, around 250,000 people were forcefully evicted all over Brazil due to projects connected to the upcoming mega events, from stadiums being built nearby to streets or infrastructure projects, such as public transportation (*Articulação Nacional dos Comitês Populares da Copa e Olimpíadas*, 2014, p. 21). In 2014, the government released much soberer numbers: in its own account, 13,558 families were forcefully evicted or relocated in the build up to the World Cup (*Brasil. Secretaria-Geral da Presidência da República*, 2014). It is not implausible to think that the real number lies somewhere between both pieces of data. Bartelt (2013b) describes vividly how these forced evictions usually happened (and continue to happen):

“The local housing authorities mark, during the night, the houses that are to be demolished with big letters in whitewash paint. Then the officials from the municipal administration show up and tell the inhabitants that they have one or two weeks to pack up and leave their houses; they say there is a relocation or compensation offer and it would be wise to take it, because those that refuse to do so might not receive anything. Others first read about the eviction of their home in the newspapers. The municipal administration mostly ignores collective representatives and negotiates on an individual basis, in order to convince individuals to give up their houses. The excavator comes the moment this happens.” (Bartelt, 2013b)<sup>12</sup>

As this description shows, the housing rights safeguarded by the Brazilian Constitution (*Brasil. Presidência da República*, 1988), as well as various other laws and international treaties signed by the country, were typically disregarded in most forced evictions happening in the context of the 2014 World Cup. Brazilian Architecture professor Raquel Rolnik, then United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on adequate housing and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, confirmed she had received reports from communities in various host cities involving lack of consultation with the authorities before evictions and very low compensations, which could lead to the creation of new informal settlements and an increase in homelessness (*Direito à Moradia*, 2013).

Many protesters demanded a “FIFA quality standard” for public schools and hospitals, instead of major investments in stadiums and other efforts to appease the powerful soccer federation (Bartelt, 2013a). Protesters holding signs with messages such as “FIFA go home!” or “There will be no World Cup” could often be spotted during the 2013 protests, but experts believe their anger

<sup>11</sup>These cities were: Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brasília, Belo Horizonte, Cuiabá, Curitiba, Fortaleza, Manaus, Natal, Porto Alegre, Recife and Salvador, all of them state capitals, except Brasília, which is the country's capital.

<sup>12</sup>“Über Nacht markiert die lokale Wohnungsbehörde die zum Abriss bestimmten Häuser mit Riesenlettern in weißer Kalkfarbe. Dann erscheinen Mitarbeiter der Stadtverwaltung und eröffnen den Bewohnern, sie hätten eine oder zwei Wochen Zeit, ihre Häuser zu räumen; es gebe ein Umsiedlungs- oder Entschädigungsangebot, und es sei doch sehr ratsam, dies anzunehmen, denn wer sich weigere, laufe Gefahr, gar nichts zu bekommen. Andere erfahren von der Räumung ihres Heims erst aus der Zeitung. Die Stadtverwaltung ignoriert zumeist gewählte Kollektivvertretungen und verhandelt individuell, um Einzelne zur Aufgabe ihrer Wohnung zu bewegen. Sobald dies geschehen ist, kommt der Bagger” (Bartelt, 2013b).

was mostly directed at the government and its twisted priorities, investing millions in stadiums while the quality of public services suffered due to lack of funds (Bartelt, 2013b; Fraundorfer, 2013; Lingenthal et al., 2013; Dane, 2014). As Benzaquen (2014, p. 88) emphasizes, the economic and sociopolitical contexts are just part of the picture. It is also necessary to focus on the dynamics inherent to the protests themselves, how protesters articulated their demands and formed networks of individuals that took to the streets. The next section focuses on this aspect.

## 2.3 The Many Faces of the June Journeys

The 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup, which took place between 15 and 30 June in Brazil, was marked by nationwide protests, as well as solidarity demonstrations organized abroad. These events became known as *Jornadas de Junho* (June Journeys). The initial protests took place in São Paulo on 6 June, as people took to the streets against a 20 cent increase in public transportation fares. The event was organized by the Free Fare Movement or *Movimento Passe Livre* (Free Fare Movement) (MPL). MPL has been active in various Brazilian cities since its foundation in 2005 at the World Social Forum and has expanded its goals from free fares for students to the right to free public transportation for all. Other Brazilian cities had seen protests against public transportation fare hikes since the end of 2012 (Giroto Neto, 2014, p. 12-13). São Paulo itself had experienced smaller protests in its periphery<sup>13</sup>, but, on 6 June, police reacted with particular brutality, beating protesters up and arresting at least 15 of them (Artigo 19, 2013, p. 18). Increasingly larger protests followed on 7, 11 and 13 June, a day which is known as *Bloody Thursday*, as police repression reached its peak (Costa, Rotabi, Murnane, & Choudhury, 2015, p. 4), with 241 arrests and 100 wounded, among them seven journalists from the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* alone (UOL, 2013b). Photographer Sergio Silva went blind due to a rubber bullet that hit his eye while he was covering the action on the ground that day (Artigo 19, 2013, p. 106).

Many see this disproportionate use of force by the police as a catalyst to the massive protests that followed (Fraundorfer, 2013; Sweet, 2014; Borelli, 2016). While the first protest organized by MPL on 6 June had brought between 2,000 and 5,000 people to the streets (O Estado de São Paulo, 2013b), attendance of the protest on 17 June, after the *Bloody Thursday*, hit 100,000 in Rio de Janeiro, with further thousands showing their indignation against police violence in various other Brazilian capitals, such as Belém, Belo Horizonte and Brasília (CartaCapital, 2013).

At that time, the name *Vinegar Revolution* became a popular designation to the June protests, as police officers arrested individuals for carrying a bottle of vinegar, under the pretense that it could be used to make explosives. In fact, protesters used vinegar to attenuate the effects of the countless liters of tear gas employed by the police during the protests (Artigo 19, 2013, p. 117–118). Along with tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets, batons and aggressive tactics of dispersion were part of the police's arsenal during the protests. The reasons alleged by the police for arresting protesters varied from preventive detentions, when individuals were taken to a police precinct to be interviewed due to a supposed probability of them committing a crime, to

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<sup>13</sup>de Sousa (2015, p. 142) provides a table with protests on public transportation that took place since the early 2000s all over Brazil, showing the topic was not new to civil society.

various types of crime described in Brazil's Penal Code that often did not apply to the situations of arrest. During the 696 protests that took place in 2013, NGO Artigo 19 counted 2,608 detentions (Artigo 19, 2013, p. 28).

The rapid increase in the number of protesters from 17 June onwards is also attributed to a shift in traditional media's coverage. While São Paulo's biggest newspapers, *Folha de São Paulo* and *O Estado de São Paulo* initially reacted by publishing editorials that accused the protesters of committing vandalism (O Estado de São Paulo, 2013a), highlighted negative aspects such as stopping traffic at São Paulo's Paulista Avenue and the destruction of bank agencies (Folha de São Paulo, 2013a) and called for more severe police action, the tone of the coverage became more favorable towards protesters and critical of the actions of the police after the abuses of the Bloody Thursday (Borelli, 2016, p. 49–48). The criminalizing editorials were replaced by live coverage of the marches and analyses that tried to set the mobilization's agenda according to media conglomerate's interests (Secco, 2013, p. 164–165). According to Saad Filho (2013, p. 658–659) this approach led to a de-radicalization of the protests and also to the cacophony of demands that characterized the mass protests from then on. There are various possible explanations for this shift, ranging from strategical reasons, as Brazil's mostly conservative media conglomerates recognized the protests as a chance to attack the left-wing federal government (Mourão, 2019, p. 2; Saad Filho, 2013, p. 658–659), to the individual experiences of their reporters on the ground, as they felt in their own bodies the extent of the abuses committed by the police (Artigo 19, 2013, p. 153–154)<sup>14</sup>.

Politicians also started to react to the growing numbers on the streets. São Paulo's mayor Fernando Haddad met with a member of the Free Fare Movement on 17 June (G1 São Paulo, 2013). Two days later, he and São Paulo's governor Geraldo Alckmin announced the fare hikes would be canceled. MPL did not call for further protests after that (Artigo 19, 2013, p. 25), but it no longer mattered. Starting on 17 June, the initial organizers of the protests lost control over the framing and mobilization of the marches (Moraes et al., 2013, p. 12).

On 21 June, president Dilma Rousseff gave a televised speech acknowledging the protests' legitimacy and promising reforms to address protesters' concerns (Rousseff, 2013). After a meeting with Brazil's 27 state governors and the mayors of all capital cities, the president proposed five "national pacts" to improve public transportation, public health care and public schools, as well as political reforms to fight corruption and fiscal measures to keep the country's economy stable. She also intended to organize a Constitutional Assembly, in order to carry out political reforms, but that never took place due to resistance amongst public opinion.

Nevertheless, throughout the Confederations Cup, protests continued to erupt all over the country, especially in the six cities where the matches took place<sup>15</sup>. The causes became more and more diverse, encompassing demands for better public transportation, higher quality standards for the public health care and education systems, the fight against corruption, as well as opposition to polemic bills that were about to be voted in Congress at the time, among them the

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<sup>14</sup>Russell (2016, p. 46–47) describes a similar positive turn in traditional media's coverage of Occupy Wall Street after police violence towards journalists took place.

<sup>15</sup>These cities were: Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Recife, Fortaleza, Brasília and Salvador. They were also among the 12 World Cup host cities one year later.

PEC 37, which would limit the Public Ministry's investigative powers, and the PDC 234, which would make it legal for psychologists to conduct treatments to cure homosexuality<sup>16</sup>. Both bills were tabled a few weeks later.

As protests kept growing in numbers, reaching a total of over 1 million people on the streets of 388 cities on 20 June (UOL, 2013a), the masses became more heterogeneous and demands grew contradictory, ranging from lower taxes to more investments in public services (Pujol, Rocha, & Sampaio, 2014, p. 16–17). Characteristic of this second period were the lack of clear leaders or organizers of the protests, which were often started on social media (Artigo 19, 2013; Binetti, 2015; Carneiro, 2014; Lingenthal et al., 2013; Saad Filho, 2013), and a rejection of political parties and traditional movements, which manifested itself, at times, quite aggressively: supporters of political parties that showed up to the protests wearing t-shirts or carrying flags with the party's logo were harassed by other protesters, prevented from taking part in the event or had their flags torn by others (Winters & Weitz-Shapiro, 2014, p. 140). A survey published one day after the Bloody Thursday by Folha de São Paulo (2013b) captures this shift, as 84% of respondents claimed no party affiliation, and MPL's goal of universal free transportation was only mentioned by 14% of respondents, overshadowed by the fight against corruption (40%) and indignation against State repression (31%). The fare hikes (56%) and demands for better public transportation (27%) were nevertheless also among respondents' reasons to protest.

Many protesters' aggressive rejection of parties could be due to the failure of traditional parties and social movements at taking control over the messaging and mobilization of protests (Secco, 2013, p. 133–134), or to an exacerbated dissatisfaction with the State, as criticism of the government became criticism of all parties (Winters & Weitz-Shapiro, 2014, p. 139) and representative democracy itself was disregarded as a corrupt system (Artigo 19, 2013, p. 25). Animosity towards the political system might have led to a conservative turn in the protests. Protesters dressed in green and yellow, the colors of the Brazilian flag, chanting nationalist lyrics such as "I'm Brazilian, with much love and pride"<sup>17</sup> started coming out to the streets, their numbers growing exponentially (Pinto, 2013, p. 153–154). Under the umbrella of an end to corruption, a demand heard among protesters both from the left and the right, the right-wing camp also called for president Dilma Rousseff's impeachment and, in some cases, for a military intervention (Saad Filho, 2013, p. 659). Fatheuer (2014, p. 16) sees in that a manifestation of hate against the government, not so much because of its corruption, but due to the right camp's rejection of its broad social policies.

Although the protests started decreasing in numbers after the end of the Confederations Cup, local mobilizations continued for months in many cities, focusing on specific causes such as housing rights and the preservation of public spaces against real estate speculation<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup>The infographic *The Signs of the Brazilian Protests*, published by *The New York Times* offers a visualization of the plurality of messages on the signs held by protesters: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/06/21/world/americas/brazil-protest-signs.html> (The New York Times, 2013).

<sup>17</sup>"Eu sou brasileiro/Com muito orgulho/Com muito amor".

<sup>18</sup>For a compilation of local experiences during and after the protests, see Moraes et al. (2013).



## 2.4 More Unexpected Changes in the 2014 Protests

During the World Cup, between 12 June and 13 July 2014, protests occurred throughout Brazil, yet the turnout was much lower than in 2013, with only 1,000 protesters in Rio de Janeiro and around 730 attendees in São Paulo on 12 June, the day of the kickoff match between Brazil and Croatia (G1 São Paulo, 2014). As a result, police officers often outnumbered protesters (Fatheuer, 2014, p. 16).

While the protests of June 2013 caught the authorities by surprise, they made massive investments in equipment and personnel to prevent and control protests that might take place in 2014, amounting to 1.9 billion BRL<sup>19</sup> (Ramil, 2014). The police changed its repression tactics, often dispersing protests at the meeting points, before they even began, through the use of tear gas, pepper spray and other less-lethal weapons<sup>20</sup>, also making numerous arrests (Artigo 19, 2015, p. 152). Surveillance grew in importance as a tool, with the implementation of “virtual patrols” (“ronda virtual”), during which investigators collected “incriminating” material, such as personal Facebook profiles’ likes to pages supporting the protests or connections to social movements, to determine who could potentially become the target of a formal investigation. Combined with preventive detentions and images of protesters captured on video by the police during previous demonstrations, this led to the issuing of warrants, monitoring of phone calls and, ultimately, arrests and prosecution<sup>21</sup> (Artigo 19, 2015, p. 49–51).

In addition to such institutional measures, impunity also played a role, as police officers involved in abuses during the 2013 protests rarely faced prosecution — some of them even got promoted. The Brazilian Judiciary mostly ignored videos of abuses recorded by citizens as proof for prosecution, contributing to the lack of accountability and impunity<sup>22</sup>. Impunity led to an escalation in the forms of transgressions and human rights violations committed by the police between 2013 and 2014, with most violations that Artigo 19 had observed in 2013 happening at a larger scale and even incorporated to police’s practices in 2014 (Artigo 19, 2015, p. 168–169).

Governments passed legislation on various levels as an attempt to curb protests. The state of Rio de Janeiro was the pioneer, approving, on September 2013, a law that forbade the use of masks or other means of concealing a person’s identity and determined that demonstrations had to be communicated to the police at least 48 hours in advance — other cities and states soon followed

<sup>19</sup>Around 760.000 US dollars at the average exchange rate in 2014 (Investing.com, 2019).

<sup>20</sup>I employ the term “less-lethal weapons” instead of non-lethal weapons in accordance to the assessment that human rights organizations such as Artigo 19 (2013, p. 105) make that such weapons can not only cause serious wounds, but also kill, albeit not as easily as weapons classified as lethal. According to critics, the term “non-lethal weapons”, more commonly employed, is misleading. The Brazilian collective *Menos Letais* (2019) lists some cases of deaths provoked by the police’s employment of less-lethal weapons around the world.

<sup>21</sup>One of the most prominent cases of activists facing prosecution after the June Journeys involves 23 individuals in Rio de Janeiro who were accused of forming a criminal group with the intent of committing crimes during the protests. The evidence was based on information collected by an infiltrated police officer (Dias & Felizardo, 2018; Viana, 2017a, 2017b). They were sentenced to seven years in prison in 2018 and are currently appealing in court (Rezende, 2018). Another prominent case, known as the “Black Bloc investigation”, in São Paulo, resulted in 300 subpoenas against individuals who were selected by police after an analysis of protesters’ social media posts and likes (Mota, Barros, Fonseca, & Afiune, 2014). The investigation ended in 2015 without any indictments (Ferraz, 2016).

<sup>22</sup>For more details on legal cases involving police abuse see Artigo 19 (2015, p. 164–169).

(Fatheuer, 2014, p. 19). The General World Cup Law (Brasil. Presidência da República, 2012), mentioned earlier, also provided a framework to penalize anyone who disrupted the surroundings of stadiums or other FIFA event venues, such as the FIFA FanFest, an official public viewing of the matches set in popular landmarks of all 12 host cities.

All these moves by the authorities seem to fit a wider trend, as Elmer and Opel (2008) describe, in which a “logic of preemption” guides governments and police forces worldwide towards suppressing public dissent through tactics such as massive arrests, the zoning of protesters and the heavy use of less-lethal weapons, supported by legislation passed with the goal of preventing protests and dissent in general from even taking place.

While an increase in State repression might be a factor that could explain the considerable decrease in the number of people who took to the streets in 2014, it was not the only factor at play, as a member of *Na Rua*, one of the collectives analyzed in this study, summarizes:

“We, the collectives and other political forces, thought the protests might be close to what had happened in 2013, we thought there would also be a lot of strength and volume. In fact, there was not, because the right wing did not protest. In 2013, the right was very mixed among the protests and we did not know that at first. (...) But in 2014, the right-wing was not around. The black blocs also drove many people away from the streets, for fear of their violence and the violent response from the State. So it was actually decreasing as the games went on. The first demonstration was still quite big, 2,000 people [attended]. But in the end, when Brazil was advancing and the World Cup atmosphere was spreading, and police repression was also very heavy — many arrests, we counted more than 100 — the context was very complicated. The protests were beginning to wane.” (NR4, 15 December 2015, 272–282)<sup>23</sup>

This quote exemplifies the complexities of the context that protesters faced in 2014. In addition to police repression, the absence of nationalist and conservative groups on the streets, more moderate protesters’ fears of violence both from the police and from other protesters performing direct action and the general, cheerful mood as Brazil won the first matches during the World Cup present other important factors for the low attendance at demonstrations in 2014.

Instead of the massive protests with diffuse demands seen in 2013, 2014 witnessed a resurgence of traditional protest forms, such as strikes and road blocks, spearheaded by social movements that predated 2013 and had clearer organizational structures, such as trade unions and the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto (Homeless Workers’ Movement) (MTST), the urban

<sup>23</sup>“Só que a gente, os coletivos e outras forças políticas, achava que talvez fosse próximo do que tinha acontecido em 2013, que teria também muita força e muito volume. De fato, não teve, porque a direita não foi protestar. Em 2013, ela estava muito misturada nos protestos e a gente não sabia no começo. (...) Mas, em 2014, a direita não tava. Os black blocs também afastaram muita gente das ruas, dos protestos, com medo da violência e da resposta da violência também do Estado. Então, realmente foi diminuindo à medida que os jogos iam acontecendo. A primeira manifestação foi até grande: 2 mil pessoas. Mas, no final, quando o Brasil foi avançando e o clima de Copa mesmo foi tomando conta e a repressão policial também tava muito pesada — muitas prisões, a gente contabilizou mais de 100 —, o cenário estava bem complicado. Isso foi começando a minguar”(NR4, 15 December 2015, 272–282).

counterpart to the rural Landless Movement, known as Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra (Landless Workers' Movement) (MST). Already in August 2013, Rio de Janeiro's school teachers struck for two months, demanding better working conditions and higher salaries and achieving partial victories (Mello, 2014). The city's garbage collectors struck in 2014 during Carnival, achieving a 37% salary raise and ample support from the public (Fatheuer, 2014, p. 14–15). In São Paulo, 10,000 people connected to the MTST occupied a piece of land in the surroundings of São Paulo's stadium Itaquerao, where the World Cup's opening match would take place 20 days later. The occupation, called Copa do Povo (People's World Cup), demanded a piece of land where they could build their homes. President Dilma Rousseff herself visited the families at the occupation and promised to meet their demands (Fatheuer, 2014, p. 14).

As Fatheuer (2014, p. 4) observes, for those protest movements, “it was not about protesting against the World Cup, but rather about asserting concrete demands. Obviously, there was the – completely understandable – assessment that the World Cup itself was no good time for such mobilizations”<sup>24</sup>.

While these traditional protest forms experienced a renaissance at the end of 2013 and throughout 2014, another relatively old protest tactic gained in popularity in the Brazilian protest repertoire in 2013: the black bloc. The term “black bloc” describes a direct action tactic that originated in the *Autonomen* scene in Berlin in the 1980s. Black blocs are formed mostly spontaneously during protests and, by wearing black clothes, as well as hoodies or bandannas to cover their faces, individuals that join it retain anonymity. “The primary objective of a Black Bloc is to embody within a demonstration a radical critique of the economic and political system” (Dupuis-Déri, 2013, p. 2–3). Attacks on private property, especially what members of black blocs consider symbols of the capitalist system such as banks and stores, became increasingly frequent as part of the tactic, as it gained a more anti-system and anarchist character during the anti-globalization protests in the 1990s (Artigo 19, 2013, p. 24–25). The term black bloc arrived in Brazil as part of the coverage of the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999 (Pineiro, 2015, p. 169), but most traditional media outlets were still using the term “vandals” or “troublemakers” to describe protesters dressed in black and performing direct action in the 2013 protests. The term “black bloc” became more disseminated in their coverage of the 2014 protests, with media adopting the plural form, “black blocs”, as a shorthand description of the individuals performing the tactics.

In both years, traditional media and the police criminalized the black blocs, and they served as an excuse for an escalation of police violence (Artigo 19, 2015, p. 169), a trend that seems to happen worldwide, as Dupuis-Déri (2013, pp. 10–12) describes. The narrative often focused on a “vandal minority” (“*minoría vândala*”) that caused clashes with the police in an otherwise peaceful protest<sup>25</sup> As Borelli (2016, p. 48) summarizes, “mainstream media outlets payed an exaggerated focus on property damage and protesters' violence rather than the movement itself”.

<sup>24</sup>“es ging dabei weniger um Proteste gegen die WM als um die Durchsetzung konkreter Forderungen. Offensichtlich gab es die – durchaus nachvollziehbare – Einschätzung, dass die WM selbst kein günstiger Moment für solche Mobilisierungen sei” (Fatheuer, 2014, p. 4).

<sup>25</sup>For examples of this kind of coverage, see O Estado de São Paulo (2013b), Araújo, Triginelli, Freitas, and Stochero (2013), Valor Econômico (2014).

The death of cameraman Santiago de Andrade at a protest against public transportation fare hikes in Rio de Janeiro on February 2014 fueled this trend. While covering the action on the ground for a TV network, Andrade was hit by fireworks that protesters had fired and died shortly after<sup>26</sup>. Traditional media, such as the outlets that form the *Globo* conglomerate, took the criminalizing coverage of the protests to a whole new level after that: the pictures of the two suspects were splashed across newspaper and magazine coverages, and the protests were dubbed terrorist acts, while politicians that supported them, such as Rio de Janeiro's state deputy and human rights activist Marcelo Freixo, were said to be condoning terrorism (Fatheuer, 2014, p. 5).

Many protesters were upset with traditional media's coverage of their actions, which, despite the shift that happened after 13 June 2013, still tended towards the protest paradigm (McLeod & Detenber, 1999, p. 4–5), with journalists prioritizing official sources and their take on the events over protester voices, focusing on violence (especially by the black blocs) and unrest during the protests instead of their causes and de-moralizing protesters.

While many protesters turned to alternative media to counter this narrative and produce their own, criticism and even physical hostility towards traditional media outlets during the protests were also a common reaction both in 2013 and 2014. Reporters identified as working for media conglomerates often suffered physical or verbal aggression from protesters and were sometimes even kicked out of the protests (Carneiro, 2014, p. 37). They were "often directly targeted by demonstrators, who identify them with the owners of the media they work for" (Reporters without Borders, 2016a), making reporters on the ground mere substitutes to their employers, who are out of reach. Chants such as "the truth is tough: *Globo Network* supported the dictatorship"<sup>27</sup> were part of the regular repertoire in many demonstrations (Benzaquen, 2014, p. 97). Both in 2013 and in 2014, the *Globo* conglomerate was targeted directly in various actions, from critical laser projections directed at its São Paulo studios, which appeared in the network's own live broadcasts (Fonsêca, 2013, p. 17) to protesters actually storming *Globo's* headquarters in Rio de Janeiro to demand more balanced coverage (Whitworth-Smith, 2014, p. 233).

In addition to protesters' dissatisfaction with traditional media's coverage, violence towards journalists could also be explained as a reaction to the current Brazilian media landscape, which is marked by concentration of ownership and clientelism (Artigo 19, 2013, p. 151–152). After looking more closely into the specific context in Fortaleza at the time in the next section, I explore the Brazilian media landscape and its main issues in section 2.6.

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<sup>26</sup>Two young men were prosecuted for his death. At the time of writing, the latest development had been that a court in Rio de Janeiro had cleared them of first-degree murder charges, after ruling that they had no intention of killing Andrade when they directed the fireworks at the crowd. They had been released from custody, but could still be sentenced to up to 8 years in prison for manslaughter at a criminal court. As they were also included in the process against 23 activists accused of forming a criminal group with the intent of committing crimes during the protests, they were sentenced to seven years in prison for being part of this alleged criminal organization (Rezende, 2018).

<sup>27</sup>"a verdade é dura, a *Rede Globo* apoiou a ditadura", in reference to the network's close ties to the military dictatorship.

## 2.5 Zooming in on Fortaleza

In this section, I zoom in on the most relevant events that transpired between 2013 and 2014 in Fortaleza, the 2,6 million people capital city of the Northeastern state of Ceará and the city my study focuses on. As one of the host cities of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, Fortaleza faced many of the same issues that drove people to the streets during the June Journeys: forced evictions, major spending on projects for the mega sports event, and governmental neglect towards public services. At the same time, as the summary of events I delineate in this section shows, protesters also mobilized around intrinsically local issues, fitting the nationwide trend of regionalization after the first massive protests in 2013. As Moraes et al. (2013) assert, “the June Journeys put each region’s local problems on the table. Urban problems, tensions with the predatory regional elites that penalize the common good. The necessary connections emerged, affecting everyone” (Moraes et al., 2013, p. 21)<sup>28</sup>. By looking into the interplay between these local issues and the Brazilian overall sociopolitical context, this contextualization provides the basis later needed for navigating the specific situations actors faced when performing media practices during the alternative coverage of protests as described in chapter 6 as well as the topics covered in their media production, which I will analyze in chapters 7 and 8.

The first protest in Fortaleza took place on 17 June, as 5,000 protesters marched across the city to the hotel where the Brazilian soccer team was staying (G1 Ceará, 2013). Two days later, as Brazil and Mexico played in the city’s soccer stadium, between 80,000 and 100,000 people took to the streets (O Povo Online, 2013), marching to the surroundings of the stadium, where police created an isolation cordon to keep protesters from reaching the venue. Police officers fired rubber bullets and employed tear gas, claiming it was a reaction to stones the protesters had thrown. Among those arrested, there were 10 journalists and, as Fonsêca (2013, p. 21) points out, “many have been detained, ‘mistaken’ for demonstrators, as if that could justify such practices”. On 20 June and 21 June 2013, a crowd of mostly school and university students took to the streets to demand better education, gathering around 10,000 protesters at the city center on 21 June (Redação O POVO Online, 2013a). Around 5,000 people attended the last protest during the Confederations Cup to take place in the city, on 27 June 2013 (Redação O POVO Online, 2013b). Protesters gathered at the surroundings of the Castelão Stadium, where the semifinal soccer match between Spain and Italy was playing out. The police dispersed the demonstration after clashes with the protesters and 92 people were detained (Redação O POVO Online, 2013b).

With the end of the Confederations Cup, two local movements, intrinsically connected to each other, dominated the discussions in the city over the second half of 2013. The first one was #OcupeAcquário (#OccupyAcquarium): between 12 and 13 July 2013, around 40 activists camped near the construction site of a polemic project conducted by state government (Redação O POVO Online, 2013c). The occupation echoed larger mobilizations from the previous year, as activists had expressed their rejection to the government’s plans of building an aquarium by the coastal area, cutting a low-income community’s access to the beach (Medeiros, 2012). Out of

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<sup>28</sup>“As Jornadas de Junho colocaram sobre a mesa de cada região os problemas locais. Problemas urbanos, tensões contra as elites predatórias regionais que castigam o comum, as necessárias conexões emergiram afetando a todos e todas” (Moraes et al., 2013, p. 21).

this camp, activists articulated another camp at the city's largest green area, the Cocó Park, to protest against the cutting of 100 native trees for the construction of an overpass in one of the city's busiest streets near the park. Known as #OcupeCocó (#OccupyCocó), the movement became one of the most significant mobilizations in the city's history. The camp resisted for almost four months, among legal battles, various attempts of eviction by the police and negotiations with the local government (Lima, 2013). On 4 October 2013, campers received a final order of eviction, which the police violently carried out. The construction of the overpass was almost immediately resumed. The project was completed and came up one year later as an example of the corrupt relationship between government and construction contractors during Operação Lava Jato (Car Wash Operation), a police investigation that uncovered a major corruption scheme involving dozens of companies and politicians (Pontes, 2014). Pinheiro (2013, p. 101) sees a direct connection between #OcupeCocó and the June protests, as the latter represented the first experience in political mobilization for many youths, fueling their engagement for the park.

On 7 September 2013, protesters mobilized to counter the usual celebrations of Brazil's Independence Day, usually marked by a lot of pathos and military marches. Police reacted with 30 arrests at meeting points in the morning, yet around 4,000 people managed to march through the city in the afternoon (G1, 2013). It was the first massive demonstration in Fortaleza after the June Journeys.

The beginning of 2014 was marked by the traumatic eviction of the Alto da Paz community on 20 February 2014. During the eviction, around 150 police officers, as well as municipal government representatives forced around 396 families to abandon their homes, which they had built illegally at a previously abandoned plot of land in possession of the municipal government (Nigéria, 2014a). Among tear gas and barking police dogs, residents witnessed as excavators demolished their homes. The eviction was a first step to build a public housing project for another community that needed to be relocated due to the government's plans to open a port for cruise ships on its plot of land<sup>29</sup>. Due to their coverage of housing rights movements, both collectives analyzed in this study reported extensively on this event.

On 15 May 2014, around 300 students took to the streets of Fortaleza as part of nationwide mobilizations under the name 15M (Jornal Nacional, 2014), demanding free fares like during the initial 2013 movements and criticizing the World Cup and its many consequences, among other demands (Tokarnia, 2014). The protest, which was marked by police violence, kick started that year's anti-World Cup demonstrations. On 12 June 2014, as the World Cup's opening ceremony took place in São Paulo, around 200 people marched on one of Fortaleza's main touristic sites, where the official public viewing venue, the FIFA FanFest, was also located (G1 CE, 2014). Other protests mostly coincided with the days soccer matches took place in the city, and their attendance was much lower than in 2013. The protest on the day of the first soccer match in Fortaleza, 14 June 2014, counted only 300 people and was quickly dispersed by over 1,000 police officers (Gazeta do Povo, 2014). 300 people attended the next protest, on 17 June 2014, as Brazil and Mexico were playing in the city's stadium. Police used a water cannon to disperse protesters for the first time, making 30 arrests (G1 CE, 2014). The turnout was even lower during the demon-

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<sup>29</sup>For a timeline of the events leading up to the eviction of the Alto da Paz, see Oliveira (2015).

strations on 24 June — 30 attendees (Na Rua, 2014b) —, and on 4 July 2014 — around 33 protesters (Na Rua, 2014d)<sup>30</sup>.

Much like in other Brazilian cities, more traditional social movements took the chance to organize their own mobilizations, using the international attention the World Cup drew as leverage to negotiate their demands with the government. Fortaleza, as well as other 14 cities, experienced a major construction workers' strike in the middle of the World Cup, from 23 June until 2 July 2014. Various workers' unions organized the movement, demanding higher salaries and health insurance (Rodrigues, 2014; G1 Ceara, 2014). At the end of the strike, their demands were mostly met. The Homeless Workers' Movement, MTST, organized its first occupation in the state of Ceará, called *Copa do Povo* (People's World Cup), with 2,000 families occupying an abandoned plot of land in the neighborhood Paupina, at the outskirts of Fortaleza, between 4 and 19 July 2014 (Martins, 2014; MTST Brasil, 2014). The movements' demands were also successful, as it reached an agreement with the local government that later resulted in 400 public housing unities (Brigada de Comunicação, 2017).

Although part of the Brazilian context at the time, events in Fortaleza also had their own particularities, such as a strong environmental focus. This section retraces the events that stood out both in actors' interviews and in their media production, as a way of understanding the context they were embedded in. Due to most nationwide media outlets' location in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, this chronology was possible mostly due to media collectives' own published material and local traditional media outlets' coverage. As I describe in the next section, this concentration of major media outlets in just one of the five Brazilian regions is one of the many issues that pervade the country's media landscape.

## 2.6 The Brazilian Media Landscape

In the context of comparative studies of media systems, Brazil and other Latin American countries present a challenge to scholars looking for a clear-cut classification. Most definitions seem to be based on the many issues that permeate these media systems, such as Hallin and Papathanasopoulos's (2002, p. 184) attempt to define Latin American media systems through a comparison with media systems in Southern Europe, as both regions share a late democratization process and a media system deeply affected by clientelism. More recently, Guerrero and Márquez-Ramírez's (2014) description of the media systems in countries such as Brazil and Mexico as "captured liberal" adds more complexity to the debate, highlighting the role of national and local elites' interests in shaping the media system. The term describes "a predominantly liberal commercial model whose regulations and/or policy-making process is biased in favor of specific economic and political interests" (Guerrero & Márquez-Ramírez, 2014, p. 9), with economic and political elites cooperating to shape the media landscape and achieve common goals. Bastian (2019, p. 63–64) summarizes what this means concretely: "Private media often belongs to influential families and dominates the media landscapes; few laws are in place to prevent cross-ownership; the po-

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<sup>30</sup>The police detained all 33 protesters at some point, in order to determine the authorship of a graffiti sprayed on a police car (Na Rua, 2014b). All but one protester were released on the evening of 5 July 2015 (Na Rua, 2014a).

litical elites influence agenda setting; and the media engages with the political sector (...).” In this section, I detail how this situation plays out in Brazil and what it means for the context my research focuses on.

According to de Lima (2013, p. 166–168), traditional media in their current form play an essential role in the political system’s credibility crisis, not only in Brazil. Due to issues such as concentration of ownership and their pursuit of an own political agenda, they give no room in the public debate to a plurality of voices from society. Two phenomena contribute to this state of affairs in Brazil: a high concentration of media ownership and politicians’ illegal ownership of media outlets. Both issues are deeply intertwined and have, in turn, their own roots in the country’s recent history, as well as important ramifications to its present.

The very first Brazilian media conglomerate, *Diários Associados*, founded in 1924 by Assis Chateaubriandt, already presents a trajectory common to its successors: it started with a newspaper from Rio de Janeiro, *O Jornal*, and gradually expanded to a massive conglomerate, encompassing, at its best moment, 34 newspapers, 36 radio stations, 18 television channels, a news agency, a weekly news magazine, and a publishing house (Moreira & Rodrigues Helal, 2009, p. 92). However, while *Diários Associados* was a lone enterprise, losing most of its power and properties after Chateaubriandt died in 1968, other media conglomerates are family businesses. They also started with newspapers, but gradually founded or acquired radio and TV stations, publishing houses, news agencies and, since the 1990s, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) as well as other online services (Moreira, 2016, p. 6). Nowadays, these families dominate the media market in Brazil, their influence varying from state to national level:

“The shape of media ownership in Brazil directly affects the free flow of news and information and obstructs pluralism. Ten leading business groups owned by as many families still control the mass media market. Broadcasting is dominated by the Rio-based Globo group, owned by the Marinho family, followed by the Sistema Brasileiro de Televisão (SBT), owned by the Silvio Santos group, Rede Bandeirantes owned by the Saad group, and Record (owned by the evangelical protestant bishop Edir Macedo [...]). In the print media, the pack is again led by the Globo group, with the Globo daily, which is rivalled at the national level by the Folha de São Paulo group, owned by the Frias Filho family, the O Estado de São Paulo group, owned by the Mesquita family, and by Editora Abril, which publishes the weekly *Veja* and other magazines.” (Reporters without Borders, 2013, p. 7)<sup>31</sup>

Various factors contributed to this development, going back as far as the beginning of the 20th century, when newspapers went from short-lived political pamphlets written by a single individual or a small group of people and with very low distribution to businesses run by companies with clear commercial interests (Sodré, 1999, p. 275). The military dictatorship (1964–1985), however, played a key role in exacerbating concentration of media ownership in the country, as it established the current network system. The term network system “refers to the continuous,

<sup>31</sup>Five years after this quote was published, in 2018, Reporters without Borders and its Brazilian partner Intervenções describe mostly the same ownership situation in their *Media Ownership Monitor* (Reporters without Borders & Intervenções, 2018).



complete, and permanent transmission via satellite, microwaves, and cable of one broadcasting station – the flagship station of a network – to wholly owned stations, affiliated stations, and a large number of repeater stations covering the country” (Amaral & Guimarães, 1994, p. 26–27) and, in practice, it meant the triumph of the stations based in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo over regional stations, now reduced to mere repeaters with very few own productions. This, the military regime hoped, would strengthen national integration, as mass media would unite Brazilians around one entertainment and news offer coming from the powerful Southeastern urban centers, instead of various regional ones (Amaral & Guimarães, 1994, p. 26).

Irineu Marinho’s Globo Group was one of the media conglomerates that benefitted the most from the network system and the military rule in general. *TV Globo*, the conglomerate’s major TV channel, with 52.4% of Brazil’s TV broadcasting market share (Moreira, 2016, p. 19), was founded in 1965 under the military regime’s auspices: when the US company Time-Life Inc. signed a contract with the Globo Group and invested millions of US dollars in its new TV channel, the government looked the other way and ignored legislation that prohibited foreign investments in the country’s media sector (Moreira, 2016, p. 19–20). This probably contributed to Globo Group’s mostly favorable instance towards the military dictatorship, which went beyond the usual approach of cooperation instead of confrontation adopted by most major media outlets at the time (Matos, 2007, p. 4). The group’s largest newspaper, *O Globo*, showed clear sympathy towards the regime, only employing a more critical tone when the dictatorship was already coming to an end (de Araujo & de Albuquerque, 2010, p. 16). In an editorial published in 2013, *O Globo* admits to supporting the military regime at the time and declares that it was a mistake, but that the decision was made under particular historical circumstances (*O Globo*, 2013). Despite the changes brought by redemocratization in 1985, Globo Group’s power became even greater, as the network system that sustained it was not broken down, despite the fact that the Brazilian 1988 Constitution clearly prohibited the concentration of so many channels in one company’s hands (Amaral & Guimarães, 1994, p. 29).

Brazil’s media legislation is outdated and emphasizes the federal government’s sole power to grant broadcasting licenses, first established during president Getúlio Vargas’ dictatorial rule in the 1930s (Matos, 2012, pp. 8–9). This was reinforced by the 1988 Constitution, which attributed to Congress additional powers in granting broadcasting licenses (Moreira & Rodrigues Helal, 2009, p. 98–98). What could be seen as a necessary counterbalance to the Executive branch’s power has, in reality, only aggravated the problem of concentration of media ownership, especially at the regional level, with members of parliament using broadcasting licenses as political currency. Combined with the network system, in which repeater stations of major players like *TV Globo* became valuable assets for regional media tycoons often connected to the local political elites, the ability to grant broadcasting licenses led to the growth of many politicians’ illegal media empires. In a report from 2013, Reporters without Borders (2013), described Brazil as “the country of thirty Berlusconi”, in a reference to the Italian politician who ascended to power with the help of his media empire and even expanded it while in office. However, there are many more than 30 Berlusconis: during the 2019 legislative period, 32 deputies and 8 senators own broadcast stations, to stay only on the national level (Reporters without Borders & Intervezes, 2018).

Much like Berlusconi, many politicians use their media outlets to boost their own careers. Fernando Collor de Mello, the first president to be democratically elected after the dictatorship, in 1989, poses a particularly interesting example<sup>32</sup>. Various studies analyze the media's influence over the outcome of the 1989 presidential elections (de Aguiar, 1995; Conti, 1999; Tavares, 1998). However, Collor not only received the support of the Globo Group and of the second largest network at the time, *SBT* (Paiva, 2010, p. 121), but his own family also controls the local affiliate of the Globo Network in his home state of Alagoas, in addition to newspapers and radio stations – all of which supported his candidacy.

Article 54 of the Brazilian Constitution (Brasil. Presidência da República, 1988) explicitly forbids politicians of owning media companies, but there are many ways around that, the most common of which is registering a friend or relative as the official owner and controlling the TV or radio station behind the scenes (Reporters without Borders, 2013, p. 7). This instrumentalization of the media for political means is just one of the symptoms of the clientelism that marks the Brazilian landscape. Clientelism, also known as *coronelismo*, lives from the confusion between public resources and private interests, which is at the root of most corruption scandals in the country. Treating information as a private resource used for leverage, “clientelism tends to break down the autonomy of social institutions, and journalism is no exception. It forces the logic of journalism to merge with other social logics – of party politics and family privilege, for instance” (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002, p. 189). In a media landscape where many politicians and a handful of families control media companies, it is easy for clientelism to thrive. Professionalism, as a means of protecting journalistic values and reporting that serves the public interest (Matos, 2007, p. 5), is then undermined, as journalists' work becomes a tool to serve their companies' political agenda<sup>33</sup>.

The lack of editorial independence journalists experience is one of the threats to freedom of expression in Brazil. In the course of nine years, between 2010 and 2019, the country has fallen almost 50 positions in Reporters Without Borders' *World Press Freedom Index* (Reporters without Borders, 2019), ranked 105th among 180 countries. The organization attributes this to multiple factors: the country's high concentration of media ownership, hostility towards journalists from the police and from protesters since 2013 and frequent murders of journalists, in addition to now president Jair Bolsonaro's aggressive rhetoric against journalists. Between 2012 and 2016, 22 journalists have been killed for reasons linked to their investigate work in sensitive issues such as organized crime or political corruption (Reporters without Borders, 2016b), another dangerous side-effect of clientelism.

There have been attempts to reform legislation concerning the media and address issues such as concentration of media ownership or the illegal possession of media outlets by politicians. Among them are the Supreme Court's decision to repeal the Press Law in 2009, a remain of the military dictatorship passed in 1967 that penalized libel, slander and insult with prison sentences.

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<sup>32</sup>Collor remained in power only until 1992, when he was impeached due to corruption charges after major protests all over the country (as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter). Nevertheless, he returned to Brazilian politics in 2006, elected senator of Alagoas, and has been in office ever since.

<sup>33</sup>Waisbord (2013b, p. 155–163) summarizes well how patrimonialism and clientelism affect journalism in different parts of the world, interacting with local economic and political contexts in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

It was one of the favorite tools of the powerful to harass critical journalists, threatening them with lawsuits under the Press Law. Efforts to replace it with more modern — and democratic — legislation have been fruitless so far, as none of the hundreds of drafts proposed in Congress has made it very far in the voting process, leaving a legal vacuum (Reporters without Borders, 2013, p. 18).

During president Lula's second term, in 2009, the first National Conference on Communications (Confecom) took place in Brasília, to discuss concrete measures that could have led to more democratization of communication in the country. Among the conference's 1,163 attendees there were representatives of the government, social movements, members of civil society, small media entrepreneurs, and experts (Brasil. Ministério das Comunicações, 2012). They focused on three main themes: content production, means of distribution and citizenship. At the end of the conference, 672 proposals were approved. The sheer number of proposals alone made their implementation quite difficult. The heavy criticism from major media outlets, such as the newspapers *O Globo* and *O Estado de São Paulo*, that described the proposals and the Confecom itself as a governmental attempt to censor the media (Matos, 2012, p. 10) increased the project's inviability. Most major media conglomerates boycotted the conference, refusing to send their own representatives and barely covering it (Brittos, Rocha, & Nazário, 2010, p. 2–3). These cases show how difficult it is to reform the media system in Brazil<sup>34</sup>. As former Minister of Communication Paulo Bernardo declared once, "it is easier to vote to impeach a president than to revoke a broadcasting license"<sup>35</sup> (Agência Brasil, 2011), referring to the power of media-owning politicians and family media conglomerates over the government, even though the latter formally retains the power over licenses and legislation. As Mizukami, Reia, and Varon (2013) summarized in a report published by the Open Society Foundation, the Brazilian media sector is still largely unregulated and constitutional guarantees are not enforced:

"Traditional media tend to frame every attempt at media reform as an attack on freedom of expression, and the federal government has consistently avoided the issue. Consequently, many relevant articles of the Constitution continue without proper legislative attention: Article 220/5 (prohibition of monopolies and oligopolies in the means of communication), Article 221/1 (preference for educational, cultural, and informative goals in media), Article 222/2 (incentives for the production of independent content), Article 222/3 (the protection of regional culture through the regionalization of content production), and Article 223 (the complementarity of public, state, and private broadcasting)." (Mizukami et al., 2013, p. 126)

There were hopes that the rapid increase in internet penetration in the country over the past decade would help address these issues by providing a technological shortcut. However, reality looks much more complex than that.

<sup>34</sup>This section only summarizes some of these difficulties, namely the ones relevant for the case study at hand. I have written more in-depth elsewhere about the Brazilian media landscape (Medeiros, 2015) and, the country's public broadcasting system (Medeiros, 2016).

<sup>35</sup>"(...) é mais fácil votar o impeachment de um presidente do que a revogação de uma concessão de rádio e TV" (Agência Brasil, 2011).

## 2.7 Internet Use and Digital Inclusion

As of 2016, internet penetration was at 67.5% in Brazil, covering almost 140 million of its 206 million inhabitants, and the numbers for social media were just as impressive, with Facebook reporting 111 million users in 2016 (Internet World Stats, 2016)<sup>36</sup>. The messaging app WhatsApp, acquired by Facebook in 2014, came at a close second, with 100 million users (Newman, Fletcher, David A. L. Levy, & Nielsen, 2016, p. 82). Social media were also the main source of news for 70% of Brazilians living in urban areas, with Facebook ranking first, followed by WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram (Newman et al., 2016, p. 83). 59% of those users shared news stories via email or social media, placing Brazil at the top of the rank of participation among 12 countries analyzed by the Reuters Institute (Newman, Levy, & Nielsen, 2015, p. 41).

Although these stats might suggest more decentralization, as users share news from various sources with each other, the same media conglomerates described in section 2.6 control the online news market as well: the groups Folha and Globo together make up over 45% of this market (Moreira, 2016, p. 44). This dominance is also clear in the Reuters Institute's rank of news sites mentioned by Brazilians living in urban areas: Globo Group's news portal *G1* ranked at the top, followed by Folha Group's *UOL*, then *Globo.com*, *Yahoo News* and various portals connected to major newspapers or broadcasting companies (Newman et al., 2016, p. 83). The *BBC* was the only foreign player in this rank, in part due to its strategy of publishing in popular news portals such as *UOL* and *G1* (Newman et al., 2015, p. 40)<sup>37</sup>. Digital-born companies, such as *Buzzfeed* and the *Huffington Post*, started their own websites in Portuguese between 2012 and 2013, hoping to gain traction in the market, especially through social media, but they still could not compete in popularity with the domestic brands connected to media conglomerates (Newman et al., 2015, p. 40).

Despite the effects of concentration of media ownership over news consumption, Freedom House ranked Brazil as free in its *Freedom of the Net* 2015 report, especially due to the fact that authorities had not made any attempts to limit access to content or filter messages exchanged online, even among social unrest, as was the case during the 2013 and 2014 protests (Freedom House, 2015, p. 157–158)<sup>38</sup>. In addition, the Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for the Internet, known as Marco Civil, represents a landmark in internet regulation worldwide since it was sanctioned by president Rousseff in 2014<sup>39</sup>. However, the Marco Civil alone does not solve all of Brazil's internet problems:

“This law, which contains key provisions governing net neutrality and ensuring

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<sup>36</sup>Due to the fast pace these data change, I decided to keep some less recent stats, as they are closer to the context in 2013 and 2014. I cite data on those years when those were still available and provide more recent numbers in the footnotes whenever major shifts became visible in the data since then.

<sup>37</sup>This ranking remained the same in 2018, however the emergence of partisan blogs from the pro and anti-Bolsonaro camps is also noted, with some of these websites reaching over 10% of users weekly (Carro, 2019, p. 123).

<sup>38</sup>Brazil's status has since changed to partly free in the *Freedom of the Net* 2018 report, mostly due to issues with the implementation of the Civil Rights Framework for the Internet and threats to journalism and digital activism (Freedom House, 2018).

<sup>39</sup>An accurate English translation of the Marco Civil can be found here: <https://www.publicknowledge.org/assets/uploads/documents/APPROVED-MARCO-CIVIL-MAY-2014.pdf>.

strong privacy protections and which further touches on regulation for intermediary liability, has received significant international attention as a new type of legislation predicated on ensuring individuals' rights as they pertain to the internet. Nevertheless, despite boasting some of the most progressive and comprehensive legislation on the rights of internet users, violence against bloggers, criminal defamation laws, restrictions on anonymity, and restrictive limits on content related to elections all continue to limit internet freedom in Brazil." (Freedom House, 2015, p. 151)

While the government did not seem to make any attempts to censor content during the protests, the same cannot be said of online surveillance, as described in section 2.4. In addition, Brazil's electoral law presents a major restriction to freedom of speech online, as it prohibits content found to be defaming candidates in the months previous to an election. In the 2014 polarized presidential elections, the electoral law served as a basis for hundreds of lawsuits and requests for content removal (Freedom House, 2015, p. 152). Google's *Transparency Report* showed a peak in content removal requests in the election years of 2012 and 2014, especially on the grounds of defamation (Google, 2016). A significant amount of those requests was directed at Google's blogging service Blogger, showing a broader trend towards the persecution of bloggers. Much like journalists, they may even get killed in connection with investigative work<sup>40</sup>. This is a particularly strong trend in the countryside:

"Online bloggers and journalists who work in poor or rural areas and are not linked to major urban media outlets may face more harassment because they lack visibility and the support of colleagues on a national level. Under such circumstances, authorities feel little pressure to solve attacks on the provincial press. Unsolved attacks on journalists may also dissuade provincial reporters from investigating crime and corruption in their regions, resulting in pockets of self-censorship throughout the country." (Freedom House, 2015, p. 168)

The disparity between rural and urban areas is also clear when it comes to internet access, with rural areas having much less connectivity than urban centers (Mizukami et al., 2013, p. 126). Sorj (2013, p. 110) attributes this not only to the fact that these areas tend to be poorer, but also to the fact that private telecom companies do not find it profitable to expand their coverage to the sparsely populated countryside and governmental policies for universal internet access are progressing very slowly. This trend reveals another barrier for a freer and more plural internet in Brazil: social inequality, expressed in the form of the digital divide, which "refers to the social consequences of the unequal distribution of access and users' capabilities of information and communication technologies among countries and within societies" (Sorj, 2013, p. 107). In other words, although internet penetration is on the rise in the country, it does not mean that every person with internet access uses the web to its full potential.

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<sup>40</sup>Reporters without Borders (2016c) features two bloggers in its description of five emblematic murder cases in which journalists were killed due to their work in Brazil.

The digital divide manifests itself in various ways, with members of marginalized communities worldwide barely scratching the surface of the web: they can check their emails and maybe post on Facebook, but often do not reach Web 2.0's more sophisticated tools for collaboration and dissemination of information (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001). This results in a social divide, in which large parts of society are prevented from accessing digital technologies “not only physically but also economically and mentally” (Martin-Barbero, 2011, p. 56). In societies that increasingly organize their economic, politic, social and cultural activities through the internet, the digital divide results in many other forms of exclusion (Castells, 2001, p. 17). Thus, “a clear link emerges between education (a marker of prestige and economic influence) and the ability to transform knowledge (via digital fluency) into social, economic, or political influence” (Ragnedda & Muschert, 2013, p. 4), making digital inclusion policies alone ineffective. In order for them to work, they must come hand in hand with other policies of inclusion, especially basic education, as the skills it provides are essential to use the internet to its fullest (Sorj, 2013, p. 113).

In Brazil, policies for digital inclusion in the past years seem to have been focusing mostly on providing internet access, not only through investments in infrastructure, especially broadband and mobile phone networks, but also the creation of public places for internet access, such as LAN houses or public schools equipped with computers<sup>41</sup>. Tax breaks for information and technology suppliers were also frequent, in order to make their products more accessible to the wider public (Freedom House, 2015, p. 151–152). Access through mobile phones has also been increasing rapidly, with around 149 million Brazilians having access to 3G services as of April 2015 (Freedom House, 2015, p. 153).

While access alone does not solve deeper social inequality issues, it creates new opportunities and modifies practices in low-income communities as well, as Horst's (2011, p. 454) concept of networked sociality makes clear. She describes the use of social media as part of a mix between local, offline relationships and online information exchange. This reinforces relationships and adds a new dimension to them, with people informing each other of crime and other issues in their neighborhood, writing to each other to figure out a time and place to meet, sharing pictures of community events, among other uses. Custódio's (2017) study on media activism in Rio de Janeiro's slums seems to corroborate these findings, as he describes how favela residents employ digital media technologies to exchange information and mobilize their communities against police violence, intertwining online and offline aspects of their everyday lives.

The quotidian link between online and offline is also expressed in the fact that Facebook (60.7%) and online news sites (38.5%) were the primary news source for protesters and the place where they first heard about the 2013 demonstrations before joining themselves (CNT/MDA, 2013). This echoes data previously mentioned in this section, such as the increasing importance of online media in Brazilians' news diet and the use of social media in their everyday lives. The next section explores the trajectory of alternative media in the country and how they fit the panorama traced so far.

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<sup>41</sup>In 2018, public wi-fi hotspots have also emerged as steps towards more internet access. However, some services, such as the one provided by the public administration of São Paulo also raise privacy concerns, as terms of service demand access to swaths of user data (Freedom House, 2018).

## 2.8 Alternative Media as Aggregators of Resistance

Brazilian alternative media have adopted various formats throughout history. Under the authoritarian military rule between 1964 and 1985, for example, it blossomed, with around 150 alternative print publications — particularly newspapers with a tabloid format — circulating at some point (Kucinski, 2001, p. 5). They had a clear political nature of opposition to the regime, near-artisanal fabrication and an absence of commercial goals. To Kucinski (2001, p. 10), these characteristics mark them as descendants of the 19th century pamphlets that Sodré (1999) describes and of industrial workers' anarchist newspapers, produced between 1880 and 1920, offering a perspective that questioned the official discourse and allowed for a counter public sphere to thrive, despite its necessary clandestine character. This applied to alternative media especially throughout the military dictatorship's most repressive years:

“(...) each newspaper functioned like a spiritual meeting point, a virtual aggregation pole in the hostile and disaggregating environment of the dictatorship. We can trace, thus, a line between the conventional press and the alternative press in Brazil based on their opposing roles as aggregators or disaggregators of civil society, in particular of intellectuals, journalists and political activists.” (Kucinski, 2001, p. 10)<sup>42</sup>.

As previously described in this chapter, most traditional media outlets aligned themselves with the military government's discourse or at least tried not to confront it directly. The alternative press countered the ruling authorities' nationalist and overly optimistic tone by demanding the return of democracy, criticizing the official economic model and highlighting human rights abuses. Driven by a need for freer production spaces than what newspapers and universities could provide at the time, journalists and intellectuals converged to the alternative press, forming a kind of underground network where actors knew each other from various common projects. “It was almost always the same people that appeared and re-appeared in different newspapers and situations”, summarizes Kucinski (2001, p. 19)<sup>43</sup>.

These networks explain why the alternative press was not only of journalistic significance, as a space of aesthetic and textual experimentation, but also a sphere of political reorganization: until the return of democracy in 1985, the alternative press played an important role in bringing various actors together and helping them prepare to leave clandestinity and return to the public sphere when the dictatorship was over, as a recognized part of the re-emerging civil society. Thus, it comes as no surprise that most publications also disappeared with the return of democracy, as the people behind them were reintegrated into traditional newsrooms, NGOs, universities and other organizations and could influence the public debate more openly — the counter public

<sup>42</sup>“Nos períodos de maior repressão das esquerdas e dos intelectuais, cada jornal funcionava como ponto de encontro espiritual, como polo virtual de agregação no ambiente hostil e desagregador da ditadura. Pode-se traçar, assim, uma demarcação entre imprensa convencional e imprensa alternativa no Brasil pelos seus papéis opostos como agregadores ou desagregadores da sociedade civil, em especial, dos intelectuais, jornalistas e ativistas políticos” (Kucinski, 2001, p. 10).

<sup>43</sup>“Eram quase sempre as mesmas pessoas que apareciam e reapareciam em diferentes jornais e situações” (Kucinski, 2001, p. 19).

sphere created by the alternative press seemed to be no longer needed in that form (Kucinski, 2001, p. 12–14).

The 1990s witnessed the rise of community radio — and, to a lesser extent, — community TV stations. Custódio lists some of the main characteristics that mark these stations, contrasting them with traditional media:

“Differently from their mainstream counterparts in Brazil, community media do not treat journalism reporting or other forms of content production as business. Instead, they act as types of grassroots public media and/or platforms for political actions on behalf of or together with the social groups in which they are embedded. (...) Due to the physical proximity of the media and their target audience, the interactions between practitioners, journalists, and the social groups tend to be very intense and personal.” (Custódio, 2017, p. 87)

As the next paragraphs will show, however, this is, in part, a normative definition, as community media face many challenges in practice that keep them from fulfilling their mission as grassroots stations. One major issue, for instance, are broadcasting licenses. It is difficult to say exactly how many stations operated in community media’s initial period, the early 1990s, as the sector was only regulated in 1998 with Law 9.612 (Brasil. Presidência da República, 1998). However, between 1991, when they were mostly illegal, and 2009, almost one decade after Law 9.612, their number increased from only 542 to 3.817 in the whole country (Del Bianco, 2011, p. 372). In 2013, around 4,600 community stations had a broadcasting license (Reporters without Borders, 2013). Although impressive, these numbers are deceiving, as there could be many more community stations out there. Law 9.612 was an important step in setting a framework for community stations, but it is criticized by scholars and media activists alike for creating various restrictions in practice: it limits community station’s transmission power to only 25 Watts, sets countless bureaucratic obstacles to obtaining a broadcasting license and prohibits funding through advertisement. The latter point often leads to politicians sponsoring community stations and effectively determining their content, reproducing the problem already observed on Brazilian traditional media (Torres, 2011; Hintz, 2011).

Agência Nacional de Telecomunicações (Brazilian Agency of Telecommunications) (Anatel), the Brazilian Agency of Telecommunications, is responsible for enforcing Law 9.612, carrying out what critics consider a crackdown on stations that broadcast illegally, often seizing their equipment — even when they had already initiated the laborious legal process to renew their older licenses or obtain one for the first time (Torres, 2011; Hintz, 2011). All these hurdles to their operation do not do justice to the essential role that genuine community stations can play in their communities:

“(...) apart from serving innumerable collective interests (such as public utility services including the gathering of contributions for the burial of people, finding missing children, posting messages, providing a place to make telephone calls), they contribute to the process of organization and increase the level of political consciousness of the community.” (Torres, 2011, p. 347)



This articulation of collective interests and political identities proves even more important in communities that very rarely come up in traditional media or whose representation there is mostly negative, as research on community media in Rio de Janeiro's slums shows (Custódio, 2017; Medrado, 2007). At the absence of a broadcasting license, community stations often resort to loudspeakers placed in key points of the community (Reporters without Borders, 2013, p. 23) or to online streaming to keep reaching their audiences. However, broadcasting online can often be even more expensive than broadcasting on airwaves, as ISPs excessively charge this activity, making it almost prohibitive for many stations (Reporters without Borders, 2013, p. 11).

Given all the challenges community media faces, it is no surprise that groups behind such projects also play an important role in the fight for democratization of communication in Brazil, along with academics that have called for policies that democratize the country's media landscape since the 1980s (Custódio, 2017, p. 64). Social movements that used to focus mostly on legislation for community media have changed tactics and turned to regulatory measures that could make the whole media system more inclusive and democratic (Mattelart, 2009, p. 44–45). After all, media democratization

“(...) involves more than the transformation of media institutions, a freer press and the rise of journalistic professionalism, or even the good intentions of journalists. It largely refers to demands which are placed on media systems to provide better quality information, and a commitment to representing political diversity and giving voice to different groups in society, which does not exclude the importance of professional standards.” (Matos, 2012, p. 3).

Protesters' criticism towards traditional media during the demonstrations in 2013 and 2014 could also be analyzed as part of this activism about the media, as protesters demanded the end of media concentration and a plurality of perspectives over events instead of one predominant narrative across various media outlets<sup>44</sup>.

Fanzines are another popular form of alternative media in Brazil and are important to understand the role of socialities in the country's alternative media. Traditionally a print alternative media format, they “are noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute themselves” (Duncombe, 2008, p. 10–11). The name “fanzine” derives from the words “fan” and “magazine”, as most of the first publications focused on pop culture, but nowadays fanzines cover a myriad of themes, from movies and music to sex and politics (Duncombe, 2008, p. 15–17). In Brazil, various cities have vibrant fanzine scenes since the 1980s. Fortaleza is among the cities with a relatively active community of fanzine producers and, as Meireles (2013, p. 159) described in her study of the city's fanzine scene between 2002 and 2005, they weaved personal connections online and offline, combining traditional xeroxed zines with blogs, letters, social media, regular meetings (which were announced mostly online on social media) and even a project for a mobile fanzine library. Her description of this

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<sup>44</sup>Other recent Latin American movements, such as #yosoy132 in Mexico and the Chilean student movement, have also included demands towards democratization of communication, employing their online communication as part of a strategy to address and challenge the shortcomings in their countries' media landscape (Bacallao-Pino, 2015, p. 3716; Garcia & Treere, 2014, p. 501–502).

community echoes Horst's (2011) concept of networked sociality, where the line between online and offline is blurred in local, mediated relationships.

Such hybrid online and offline networks are part of the alliances between alternative media and social movements for various reasons. Fonsêca localizes them in a specific historical context of the anti-globalization and anti-capitalist movements from the past 20 years:

“Often lacking any permanent source of funding, these groups rely on their mutual collaboration, exchanging products and infrastructure, building on institutional and political solidarity, mostly in the form of networks and collectives – some of which appeared in the midst of myriad demonstrations. Not uncommonly, these experiences get their inspiration, however indirect, from late 1990s' initiatives, in the wake of the demonstrations organized to protest against meetings convened by multilateral institutions. At that time tens of print and online media vehicles appear, also spurred by the first editions of the World Social Forum, beginning in 2001.” (Fonsêca, 2013, p. 22)

The World Social Forums provided a physical space of articulation between actors from alternative media projects and social movements. There they created inclusive and collaborative media forms that showcased marginalized voices. These efforts extended into the online sphere through the creation of own platforms (Stephansen, 2016, p. 5–9). *Mídia Ninja*'s official launch occurred in March 2013 during the World Forum of Free Media (WFFM) (Estúdio Fluxo, n.d.), linked to the World Social Forum. This event exemplifies the intersections between the historical global justice movements in the 1990s and another turning point in Brazil's alternative media history: the 2013 protests.

Reviving old links and creating new connections between individuals that formed media groups and social movements that had been mobilizing around various causes for years, the June Journeys seems to carry on Brazil's alternative media tradition of aggregating various actors. Many of the studies published shortly after the June Journeys focused on the overall trends of online discussions around the protests, measuring the most relevant users, pictures and hashtags on Twitter (Goveia, Ciarelli, Carreira, & Herkenhoff, 2014; Zago, Recuero, & Bastos, 2014; Paiero, 2015) or the most influential fanpages on Facebook (Malini, 2014; de Sousa, 2015). However, their findings soon made clear that some alternative media actors such as *Mídia Ninja* were playing an important part in this discourse, creating an ecosystem with impressive online reach: Malini (2014) estimates that 300 fanpages updated by alternative media groups reach at least 15 million users, although he asserts this number could be even higher, as each time a user shares something posted at one of these fanpages, the reach is multiplied, as the content is seen by other users in an individual's personal network. Thus, alternative media groups in Brazil seem to fit a global trend, in which networked technologies gain in importance, “amplifying, mobilising, and coordinating protest, but also becoming a potent weapon in the repertoire of contentious action, as well as conducive to recording/archiving protest artefacts” (Cammaerts & Jiménez-Martínez, 2014, p. 45).

Interpersonal connections also played a role in the foundation of *Mídia Ninja*, the most prominent among the alternative media groups that covered the protests in 2013 and 2014. It

started as a project of collective Fora do Eixo (Out of the Axis), a network of artists with members throughout Brazil that organizes actions ranging from workshops, music festivals and alternative currency systems to artistic residencies, with members of the network sometimes living together for certain periods of time at the Fora do Eixo Houses<sup>45</sup>. *Narrativas Independentes, Jornalismo e Ação (Independent Narratives, Journalism and Action) (Ninja)* (which stands for Independent Narratives, Journalism and Action, in Portuguese) existed since 2011 as part of Fora do Eixo's *Pós-TV* project, which focused on digital media, with the core mission of streaming Fora do Eixo's events. Before 2013, however, it had already covered other protests, such as the marches for the decriminalization of marijuana in Brazil in 2012, as part of Fora do Eixo's increasing proximity with social movements in the city. *Mídia Ninja* itself has roots in the do-it-yourself movement, being influenced particularly by the community and free radio movements and their demands for decentralized journalism and democratization of communication (Whitworth-Smith, 2014, p. 66).

In June 2013, *Mídia Ninja* began streaming the protests that took place mainly in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, but their coverage quickly developed to also include pictures and texts featuring descriptions of the situation and quotations from various actors on the ground. The journalist Bruno Torturra, who has worked on various Brazilian media outlets, is among *Mídia Ninja*'s founders. Other members at the time were photographer Rafael Vilela and videographer Filipe Peçanha (Watts, 2013b). Their coverage made a dent on traditional media's previous grip over the predominant narrative, in great part due to their significant reach online. This reach, in turn, is a product of Brazilians's growing incorporation of the internet and social media into their routines, as described in section 2.7. Although the internet is no panacea against the Brazilian media landscape's numerous problems, it seems to be slowly affecting some change:

“Engagement with social media is not, by itself, indicative of access to qualitatively better or more diverse news and information. Greater exposure of mainstream audiences to alternative media is, nonetheless, a concrete reality, as can be seen from the level of popularity achieved by an initiative such as *Mídia NINJA* during the 2013 protests.” (Mizukami et al., 2013, p. 125)

The fact that traditional media outlets were trying to adapt their coverage to resemble *Mídia Ninja*'s and even airing the collective's copyleft footage in their own prime-time news programs can be regarded as another sign of the growing significance of *Mídia Ninja* and other actors like it (Whitworth-Smith, 2014, p. 233–236)<sup>46</sup>.

All over Brazil there were alternative media collectives much like *Mídia Ninja*, with varying impact. Their coverage of the protests provided different perspectives than the ones featured on

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<sup>45</sup>Fora do Eixo rose to prominence after *Mídia Ninja*'s popularity boom in 2013, but that did not have only positive effects for the group, as many of its practices came under criticism from former members and traditional media. Whitworth-Smith (2014) describes in detail Fora do Eixo's trajectory and the polemics it is involved in.

<sup>46</sup>An interesting episode to illustrate this phenomenon is how *Mídia Ninja*'s images helped prove one protester's innocence in 2013. The young man had been accused of throwing a molotov cocktail at the police, but *Mídia Ninja*'s cameras caught the real aggressor: an infiltrated police officer. The footage that implicated the police officer as being the one who had thrown the molotov cocktail was picked up by large, traditional media outlets, such as *TV Globo* and *Folha de São Paulo*, and the protester was released from police custody.

traditional media, especially in terms of countering these media's criminalizing narratives around the protests. This led many citizens and protesters to further question the current Brazilian media system (Fonsêca, 2013, p. 3). de Sousa (2015) summarizes some of the characteristics these collectives share:

“(...) we can highlight some of their main aspects of configuration and *modus operandi*:

1. They work in pairs or groups before, during and after the protests;
2. They use badges that identify themselves as press while working;
3. They wear individual protection equipment, such as helmets, anti-bullet vests, gas masks etc. As the protests unfold, in general, they can be divided into two groups according to their approach: there are the ones that behave like activists with cameras and the ones that seek to act as press. The former, in many occasions, are at the heart of the direct conflicts with the police; they shout catchphrases and chants, provoke and are provoked by the repressive apparatus. The latter are more moderate and try to stay out of conflicts with the police, seeking, first and foremost, to make sure their work as press can continue;
4. Participation of journalists, film makers and other professionals, many of which are not necessarily connected to the communication sector;
5. With the exception of *Jornal A Nova Democracia*, which is a popular newspaper founded more than ten years ago in Rio de Janeiro, all other collectives are exclusively activist structures, created during protests. Thus, these activist media see themselves as a type of independent media, distanced from the traditional media and from the government;
6. The equipment used to produce the images are either owned by them or lent by someone;
7. They use the internet and in particular social media as a platform for organization, diffusion of their production and political activism.”

(de Sousa, 2015, p. 146–147, emphasis in the original)<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup>“(...) podemos destacar algunos aspectos de su configuración y *modus operandi*: 1. Trabajan en parejas o grupos, antes, durante y después de las manifestaciones; 2. Trabajan identificados como prensa; 3. Utilizan equipos individuales de protección, como casco, chalecos anti disparos, máscaras anti gas, etc. En el desarrollo de la protesta, en general, la forma de actuar los divide en dos grupos: los que se comportan como militantes con cámaras y los que buscan comportarse como prensa. Los primeros, en muchas ocasiones, están en el medio, cuando no son el centro, de los conflictos directos con la policía; gritan palabras de orden, cantan; y provocan y son provocados pelo aparato represor. El segundo grupo es más comedido y intenta mantenerse alejado de conflictos con la policía, buscando garantizar el cumplimiento de su trabajo como prensa, en primer lugar; 4. Participación de periodistas, cineastas y profesionales, muchos no necesariamente vinculados a la comunicación; 5. A excepción del *Jornal A Nova Democracia*, que es un periódico popular establecido desde hace más de diez años en Río de Janeiro, todos los otros colectivos son estructuras exclusivamente militantes, creados en el desarrollo de protestas. Así, los media activistas se consideran un tipo de prensa independiente que está alejado tanto de la gran prensa como del gobierno;

The presence of journalists and other media professionals in such alternative structures (what the author refers to as activist media in item 5) already stands out in this quote. My brief overview of alternative media in Brazil since the military dictatorship shows, however, that this is not a completely new phenomenon: journalists were among those behind alternative newspapers back then and are also active fanzine makers and community stations staff members (Medrado, 2007, p. 131–132). Alternative media collectives that covered the protests show some continuities with this history. At the same time, they also pose interesting challenges concerning normative principles that guide the journalistic field and how it is researched on journalism studies, such as objectivity standards and journalists' role as impartial observers of events, which supposedly creates a conflict between them and activists. I explore these questions further in 4, building the theoretical background necessary for analyzing my own empirical results later on.

## 2.9 How the June Journeys and Brazil's Media Landscape are Connected

In this chapter, I summarize some of the most important changes in the context that took place in Brazil during the period studied, the years of 2013 and 2014, zooming in on events in Fortaleza, which are directly relevant to my empirical research. I also provided a more in-depth description of the country's media landscape, its media legislation, matters of digital inclusion and online news consumption, as well as how alternative media developed throughout the decades.

One of the main takeaways of this chapter is how the protests in 2013 and 2014 and the Brazilian media landscape's many shortcomings — such as clientelism and concentration of ownership — are interconnected. This became visible in protesters' growing discontent with how traditional media represented demonstrations, sometimes expressed in physical hostility towards reporters on the ground. I argue that alternative media collectives active at the time, however, are also a reflex of this interconnection, fitting in a long tradition of aggregating both journalists and social movements in counter public spheres that provided the emancipatory representation and exchanges of ideas they did not seem to find in the broader public sphere, traditional media included. Many studies have already documented both reactions to traditional media observed in this case as part of how social movements deals with media. The next chapter explores these studies, as well as the scholarship they integrate, as it provides key theoretical background to understanding my research.

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6. Los equipos utilizados para la producción de las imágenes son propios o prestados; 7. Utilizan el internet y, principalmente, las redes sociales como plataforma de organización, difusión de sus producciones y militancia política” (de Sousa, 2015, p. 146–147, emphasis in the original).

# Chapter 3

## Media Practices and Social Movements: Theoretical Grounding

While chapter 2 provided the contextual basis to understand my case study, this chapter focuses on some of the terms I draw upon in my own empirical studies. It is structured around two broad areas of scholarship: practice theory and social movement research. I intertwine them in the four sections that compose the chapter, starting from overarching theoretical contributions and narrowing the focus down to their concrete applications in empirical studies. In the first section, I retrace the origins of practice theory while presenting broader concepts that can later be applied to the more specific study of media practices. In section 3.2, I expand on the literature on media practices, how it innovates with regards to traditional communication research and how it relates to concepts such as mediatization.

Section 3.3 addresses the second broad theme of this chapter: social movements and their interaction with media, providing an overview of the scholarship on movements' media strategies, traditional and alternative media's coverage of movements and the role of social media for activists' mobilization and communication. Finally, section 3.4 describes how scholars have applied media practices to their case studies on social movements around the globe.

Together with chapter 4, this chapter provides the necessary theoretical background to understand my empirical studies' results, as well as the conceptualization I propose. By intertwining practice theory, social movement studies and journalism studies, I will approach the alternative media coverage of protests from a perspective that brings new insights on the specific practices of actors in this field and what these practices mean for the journalistic field at large.

### 3.1 Practice Theory

Practice theory provides a useful perspective over individuals' activities while taking into account the way their socialization and the world around them permeates these actions. As this section will show, practices describe routinized activities, ways of being a body and of internalizing social rules without neglecting individuals' agency. As such, practice theory as a framework allows for conceptualizations of complex interactions between individuals and changing contexts

as the one I focus on in this study, while also avoiding the dichotomy between macro and micro contexts. This is possible because a focus on practices captures the way actors react to shifting conditions on the ground and in society at large and how their own practices, in turn, influence these shifts.

This section will retrace some of practice theory's main strands<sup>1</sup>. In the Anglophone world, Ortner (1984, p. 145) links an increase in interest in studying practices to the publication of the English translation of Pierre Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, in the late 1970s. In it, Bourdieu (1977, p. 72) defines practice theory as "the theory of the mode of generation of practices", in which context, in the form of spatial and time conditions, plays an essential role. Another element that composes this context is what Bourdieu calls habitus, a term that describes the social conditions that surround actors' individual trajectory and permeate their practices, making them "intelligible and foreseeable and hence taken for granted" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 80) to other individuals with a similar background, be it in terms of social class, religion, ethnicity, profession or education, for example. Through habitus, practices are "collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrated action of a conductor" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). In fact, the concept of habitus influenced many practice theorists. Peterson (2010, p. 140) summarizes it as something that "involves a practical knowledge which is neither theory nor rules nor value nor strategy but a continuous assessment of situations and an improvisation of action on the basis of one's sense of what will work". This sense is "learned as part of growing up in a society but continually reshaped by ongoing experiences of social life" (Peterson, 2010, p. 140).

Another key author that shaped practice theory was Anthony Giddens, especially in the books *Central Problems in Social Theory* (1979) and *The Constitution of Society* (1986). He regards practices as part of a social system in which they both produce and reproduce the social order that permeates the structure sustaining social systems, in an attempt to overcome the dichotomy between agency and structures in social sciences (Giddens, 1979, p. 66). To Giddens (1979, p. 81–82), practices are not connected to just one single rule, but to an "intersecting set of rules and resources that ultimately express features of the totality". Sewell Jr. (1992, p. 4) summarizes this view: "Structures shape people's practices, but it is also people's practices that constitute (and reproduce) structures. In this view of things, human agency and structure, far from being opposed, in fact presuppose each other".

Bourdieu, in turn, regards structures in which a practice is embedded as in a relationship with these practices, not as their causes, preferring a more contextual approach (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 21). By turning to practices, both authors propose to regard social life at the level of practices that result from the interplay between sociality and individuality (Schäfer, 2016, p. 12). For them, the micro and the macro levels, so often analyzed separately by structuralists, can be united at the level of practices, as another first generation practice theorist, Schatzki (2016, p. 32–35), also defends.

In addition, Giddens, Bourdieu and Schatzki emphasize time as an important aspect to understanding practices. Bourdieu (1977, p. 9) observes that science tends to detemporalize the

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<sup>1</sup>As practice theory is a very broad field, this section only encompasses the concepts that prove directly applicable to my empirical research. For a more thorough review, see Schäfer (2016).

phenomena it observes, ignoring the inherent rhythm of the practices analyzed. Giddens (1979, p. 3) comes to a similar conclusion, claiming that social theory had been ignoring time's role in the constitution of social interactions for far too long, mostly due to the predominance of functionalist or structuralist approaches. Finally, Schatzki (2001, p. 53) sees practices as the sum of doings and sayings organized by understandings, rules and a teleoaffective structure (oriented both by emotions and by a sense of finality) that can change over time, integrating temporality into his conceptualization.

Mostly influenced by these three authors and bringing their own backgrounds from different fields, many scholars offer their own definitions of practices, seeking to develop different nuances contained in first generation practice theorists' conceptualizations. Their starting point is an understanding of practices as a complex yet unconscious or routinized array of activities, permeated by diverse elements from the sociopolitical context and with the human body as their nexus. Postill (2010, p. 1), for example, describes practices as "the embodied sets of activities that humans perform with varying degrees of regularity, competence and flair". It is no coincidence that the body plays an important role in many of these concepts, as Reckwitz points out:

"At the core of practice theory lies a different way of seeing the body. Practices are routinized bodily activities; as interconnected complexes of behavioral acts they are movements of the body. A social practice is the product of training the body in a certain way: when we learn a practice, we learn to be bodies in a certain way (and this means more than to 'use our bodies'). A practice can be understood as the regular, skillful 'performance' of (human) bodies. This holds for modes of handling certain objects as well as for 'intellectual' activities such as talking, reading or writing." (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 251)

This way of learning to be a body is not just individual, as Schäfer (2016, p. 13) points out: it is based on the in-betweenness of social and cultural interactions, as members of a society or culture can collectively retrieve the way a practice occurs, is adopted and experienced individually. As a result, he asserts, "we can never be completely alone with a practice" (Schäfer, 2016, p. 13)<sup>2</sup>. The concept of habitus may provide a good starting point for understanding this: individuals with similar trajectories and social backgrounds carry out similar practices without necessarily discussing and defining those practices beforehand. This is due to the fact that actors "possess cognitive schemata that provide them with group-specific patterns of meaning. These serve as a basis for uniform classifications of objects in the environment; they are the schemata of the habitus" (Reckwitz, 2000, p. 325)<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the consolidation of practices takes into account embodiment and habitus, as "the relative continuity of practices in a certain form is generated through arranging social knowledge cognitively and, at the same time through the anchoring of the practices in the materiality of body and artifacts" (Reckwitz, 2004, p. 44)<sup>4</sup>. Schatzki (2016,

<sup>2</sup>"Wir können mit einer Praxis niemals vollständig allein sein" (Schäfer, 2016, p. 13).

<sup>3</sup>"(...) sie über kognitive Schemata verfügen, die ihnen gruppenspezifisch Sinnmuster an die Hand geben, auf deren Grundlage eine gleichförmige Klassifikation von Gegenständen der Handlungsumwelt erfolgt; dies sind die Schemata des Habitus" (Reckwitz, 2000, p. 325).

<sup>4</sup>"die relative Kontinuität der Form von Praktiken wird einerseits durch die kognitive Ordnung eines



p. 33) also regards the interaction between practices and what he calls “material arrangements”<sup>5</sup>, i.e. arrangements between humans, artifacts, organisms and natural elements, as forming bundles that can be altered in both directions: while practices may create and change material arrangements directed at or connected to them, material arrangements can also orient, prefigure or make practices viable.

Building upon the work of Reckwitz and Schatzki, Shove et al. (2012) conceptualize practices as resulting from the links formed between three types of elements: materials, competences and meanings. While Reckwitz (2002, p. 249–250) already sees practices as forming a “block” through the connection of such elements — which he has often referred to using terms such as “artifacts”, “skills” and “cognitive schemata” —, Shove et al. (2012) make an important contribution by conceptualizing exactly how this happens. In order to do this, they propose admittedly simplified and broad categories: materials encompass “objects, infrastructures, tools, hardware, and the body itself” (Shove et al., 2012, p. 23); competence stands both for practical forms of know-how and more abstract frameworks to judge the quality of a performance; finally, meaning covers “what Reckwitz describes as mental activities, emotion and motivational knowledge” (Shove et al., 2012, p. 23). In their understanding, “practices emerge, persist, shift and disappear when *connections* between elements of these three types are made, sustained or broken” (Shove et al., 2012, p. 14–15, emphasis in the original)<sup>6</sup>.

Shove et al. (2012, p. 44) describe elements as being relatively stable and capable of “traveling” between different places and through time, i.e. they exist outside of practices and may be present in more than one practice at once — or, when not linked to other elements, remain dormant until a new practice establishes new links between elements. Practices, on the other hand, are “necessarily localized, necessarily situated instances of integration” (Shove et al., 2012, p. 38–39) of material elements, competence(s) and meaning(s) through the performance of the practice itself (they call this practice-as-performance). However, similar practices can and do occur in different sociocultural contexts. Shove et al. (2012, p. 132) attribute this to the circulation of their constitutive elements, which make the re-enactment of practices in different places possible, as long as the necessary elements are available and can be linked through the performance of the practice. In this case, the practice can be described as practice-as-entity, transcending the local context of its performance.

All three elements circulate in different ways. While materials physically travel through processes of transportation around the globe, competences and meanings travel in the abstract sense, through processes of codification and de-codification. For example, instructions on how to use a tool and with which aim depend on the recipient’s capacity to understand and apply these instructions, adapting them to the local context if necessary. In other words, “know-how can only travel — by means of abstraction and reversal — to sites in which practitioners are already prepared to receive it because of prior, first-hand, practice-based experience” (Shove et al., 2012,

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sozialen Wissens, gleichzeitig durch eine Verankerung der Praktiken in der Materialität der Körper und der Artefakte hervorgebracht” (Reckwitz, 2004, p. 44).

<sup>5</sup>“Materielle Arrangements” (Schatzki, 2016, p. 33).

<sup>6</sup>Ahva (2016) also proposes a model that highlights practices as composed of three elements, which she calls activity, materiality and reflexivity. She recognizes her model and Shove, Pantzar, and Watson’s (2012) are similar. She applies her model to the conceptualization of journalism as a practice.

p. 49). As a result, elements often build upon each other: in order to travel, materials depend on available transportation infrastructure, achieved through the performance of previous planning and building practices involving other materials; competences and meaning rely on practitioners' previous learning of other competences and meanings that enable them to de-code the new ones.

The circulation of materials, competences and meanings also enables links between different practices, as one or more of their elements overlap. This can happen when two or more practices are based on the same meaning, as with the practices of driving and repairing in the early 20th century, which were both signified as enactments of masculinity (Shove et al., 2012, p. 32–37). Thus, elements become “a form of connective tissue that holds complex social arrangements in place, and potentially pulls them apart” (Shove et al., 2012, p. 36–37). As practitioners attribute another meaning, adopt another competence or integrate another material element to a practice, not only the links that constitute that one practice change, but rather links between this practice and other practices may change as well.

With regards to how exactly practices link to each other, the authors describe two possible arrangements: bundles consist of a loose co-existence between practices, in which they do not depend on each other yet share elements or the same location. Practices connected to each other through co-dependence — for example, a sequence of practices make the practice that comes before a pre-requisite for the practice that comes after it — become then complexes and present characteristics that cannot be traced back to only one of its composing practices (Shove et al., 2012, p. 81–88). This is often the case when “one practice produces elements (for example, competences or materials) on which another depends” (Shove et al., 2012, p. 88), but these types of sequences are only one of the possible forms of complexes; they can also originate from relationships of “synchronization, proximity or necessary co-existence” (Shove et al., 2012, p. 87).

The concepts of bundles and complexes already provide hints about the role of time and space in this theory. Time and space do not circulate like materials, competences and meanings — they are not elements, but rather they hold “the traces of past practice in place in ways that are relevant for the future, and for the perpetuation of unequal patterns of access” (Shove et al., 2012, p. 134). Therefore, like many of the authors I brought up so far, Shove, Pantzar and Watson do not exclude power relations from their model, adopting a Foucauldian perspective towards practices, regarding inequality not only as based on individual actors' trajectories, “but in the circuits of reproduction through which elements and practices are brought together and by means of which they are pulled apart” (Shove et al., 2012, p. 136). These circuits of reproduction are embedded in historical and geographical contexts that produce and reproduce inequalities, such as, for instance, (post-)colonial processes or globalization.

By recognizing that practices emerge, change or disappear as the links that constitute them are made or broken, the authors also make an interesting contribution to the discussion around the routinization of practices. There is often a theoretical tension between the views of practice as being routinized, reproducing social order, and practices as possessing an element of unpredictability and, with it, the potential to be subverted (Reckwitz, 2004, p. 41). For Shove et al. (2012), routinization is a continuous process: the links between elements must be made time and time again — until they are not, as links finally break or at least one element changes. Therefore,

they regard routinization not as a linear process, but “as ongoing accomplishments in which similar elements are repeatedly linked together in similar ways” (Shove et al., 2012, p. 24). Here, they converge with Reckwitz in his pledge for more nuance in describing routinization:

“Instead of presupposing ‘the’ routinization or ‘the’ unpredictability of practices, we should retrace how specific historic and local complexes of practices commit themselves through very specific means to a high measure of routinization or to a high measure of unpredictability” (Reckwitz, 2004, p. 52)<sup>7</sup>.

In his understanding, time and space also play a constitutive role in determining which linkages prevail and, thus, become routinized at least for a while.

As this brief overview of first and second generation practice theorists’ work shows, the contribution Shove et al. (2012) make, with their focus on practices as dynamic enactments of the connections between elements, provides an important analytical tool to observe processes like the one I analyze in this study, namely how actors create or adapt their practices to changing circumstances. With their focus on links between elements and practices, however, the authors make clear that practitioners play a secondary role in their analysis, although practices need someone that performs them in order to exist (Shove et al., 2012, p. 62). However, it is also possible to regard actors’ embedding in certain social contexts, as in the concept of habitus, as being part of processes of circulation of elements necessary for the enactment of practices. The concept of community of practice, coined by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in the late 1980s, provides a useful bridge between both approaches.

Community of practice “describes the way that members of groups cooperate and collaborate through discourse and interaction in order to generate and share both knowledge and practices” (Tewksbury, 2013, p. 13). Since communities of practice also create boundaries between those that perform and generate practices inside the community and those outside of it (Wenger, 1998, p. 189), it can converge with fields, where the assertion of boundaries plays a central role in establishing a field’s autonomy in relation to others<sup>8</sup>. The concept’s emphasis on mutual learning, however, distinguishes it from fields: “A community of practice can be viewed as a social learning system. Arising out of learning, it exhibits many characteristics of systems more generally: emergent structure, complex relationships, self-organization, dynamic boundaries, ongoing negotiation of identity and cultural meaning, to mention a few” (Wenger, 1998, p. 179).

Communities of practice are part of society and its myriad of organization forms, from political institutions to social movements, each with their own practices, forming what Wenger (1998) calls landscapes of practices. Thus, on an individual level, one person is rarely just part of one community of practice; their learning is “a journey through landscapes of practices” (Wenger, 1998, p. 184). On the collective level, as individuals share knowledge inside a community of practice, “over time, a history of learning becomes an informal and dynamic social structure among

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<sup>7</sup>“Statt allgemein ‘die’ Routinisiertheit oder ‘die’ Unberechenbarkeit von Praktiken vorauszusetzen, ist zu rekonstruieren, wie historisch-lokal spezifische Komplexe von Praktiken durch sehr spezifische Mittel sich auf ein hohes Maß auf Routinisiertheit oder auf ein hohes Maß an Unberechenbarkeit festlegen” (Reckwitz, 2004, p. 52).

<sup>8</sup>I describe fields, in particular with regards to the journalistic field, in chapter 4.

the participants, and this is what a community of practice is” (Wenger, 1998, p. 180). This learning happens as members of the community of practice, whether they are newcomers or old-timers, share knowledge with each other – through storytelling, as members of the community share their experiences with each other; through discussions with the goal of defining and consolidating the community’s goals; through the relationships formed inside the community; and through individuals’ journeys in that community, to name a few.

Looking at this concept through Shove, Pantzar, and Watson’s (2012) theoretical framework, I conclude that communities of practice enable the circulation of elements among certain practitioners. In their exchanges, actors may negotiate meanings to their practices, train each other on specific competences or provide each other with the necessary material for the performance of practices, consolidating (through repetition), breaking or creating links between elements that give way to practices in the process. However, even members of a tightly-knit community of practice are constantly in contact with other communities of practice and with their surroundings. And these surroundings are increasingly permeated by media. Shove et al. (2012, p. 55) acknowledge that “since any one practitioner has limited first-hand experience of how a practice is reproduced by others, it is nearly always the case that elements of meaning are quite literally mediated”, with meanings being decoded in various ways depending on the local contexts they encounter. Material and competence elements may also intersect with media in various points, for instance in the form of required technical equipment for performing a practice or media savviness as a necessary competence. In the next section, I retrace the more specific concept of media practices, which is embedded in the scholarship on practice theory.

### 3.2 Practice Theory in the Context of Media Studies

Before I define media practices, it is important to delineate what I mean when referring to media. Couldry (2012) describes the term “media” as encompassing less than “communication” and more than “traditional media” – in the sense of newspapers, film, radio and TV stations. The term covers “all institutionalized structures, forms, formats and interfaces for disseminating symbolic content” (Couldry, 2012, p. viii).

This approach to media, which seems quite influenced by Friedrich Krotz’s definition of media (as seen in Hepp and Hartmann (2010, p. 11)), also permeates Couldry’s concept of media practices, which he introduces with an open question: “What, quite simply, are people doing in relation to media across a whole range of situations and contexts?” (Couldry, 2010, p. 39). Couldry advocates for a socially oriented media theory that analyzes media as a social practice, with all the elements covered by his description of this term, instead of the traditional, narrower focus on media texts, their production and consumption. The study of media practices should focus on “actions that are *directly oriented* to media, actions that *involve* media without necessarily having media as their aim or object; and actions whose possibility is *conditioned* by the prior existence, presence or functioning of media” (Couldry, 2012, p. 35, emphasis in the original)<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup>The term “media practices”, however, is not universally accepted in the field. Hobart (2010), for instance, defends the term “media-related practices” as more appropriate. To him, media practices only refer

Media practice researchers ask open questions, avoiding disciplinary labels (consumption or audience behavior, for example) that sometimes alienate the actors themselves (Couldry, 2010; Peterson, 2010). That way, they can avoid the functionalism and centrism that is so recurrent in media studies. As Rao (2010, p. 149) accurately points out, in a media-saturated world all members of society play routinely the part of audience. Ardèvol, Roig, Cornelio, Pagès, and Alsina (2010) argues that the same is true for media production. In short, research on media practices must include people's agency in producing media, as the authors understand media practice "as an integrative practice that involves a set of dispersed practices of production, distribution and consumption that together constitute a social domain (cultural performance)" (Ardèvol et al., 2010, p. 275). They also involve "socially significant, bodily and emotionally lived experiences" (Ardèvol et al., 2010, p. 275), a definition that echoes broader practice definitions such as Schatzki's (2001).

The discussion on the role of media in various contexts leads to questions about the nature of media practices' relationship with scholarship on mediatization<sup>10</sup>. Both approaches have been gradually converging in the past years. According to Scolari and Rodriguez-Amat (2018, p. 134), "mediatization invokes a rather vague general awareness of a major cultural and sociopolitical transformation that involves the integration and impact of communication devices and practices within and on the social fabric". Media's influence over various social spheres and "new types of causal complexity" (Couldry, 2012, p. 134) due to media's pervasiveness are at the center of this theory.

Hepp and Krotz (2012, p. 7) see the concept of mediatization as already present in the work of some of the most prominent social theorists to focus on media and communication, such as Ernst Mannheim, Jean Baudrillard and Jürgen Habermas<sup>11</sup>. However, the term only became more popular in the 1990s and 2000s, mostly in empirical studies on media as an increasingly significant element in processes of social change and as an integral part of everyday life, which creates a media logic that permeates cultural, social and political interactions. Recently, there have been shifts away from claims of one media logic — an idea that Couldry (2012, p. 136) describes as empirically inviable in a context where the media themselves are constantly changing — towards a more plural approach that sees mediatization as a metaprocess that takes place historically (Hepp & Krotz, 2012, p. 7–10). Therefore, "mediatization becomes a concept to understand the

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to explicitly media-oriented practices such as reporting, but not to the whole of the social context media are a part of. In a later article, Couldry agreed with him (see Couldry and Hobart (2010)) and adopted the term "media-related practices" in later writings (for instance, Couldry (2012)). In my work, I continue to use the term "media practices" for the sake of brevity, but applying this broader focus Hobart (2010) defends and that Couldry himself described in the previously quoted passage.

<sup>10</sup>The processes described by the term "mediatization" are often referred to as "mediation" or "medialisation" as well, depending mostly on the language of the scholar writing about them: "mediation" is the predominant term in English and Spanish (seen, for example, in the writings of Colombian scholar Martín-Barbero (1991)), while "mediatization" and, to a lesser degree, "medialisation" are more recurrent in German and Scandinavian languages. Couldry (2012, p. 134–137) argues that "mediatization" is more precise in English, as "mediation" has other uses in quotidian language.

<sup>11</sup>Krotz (2012, p. 34–38) offers a critical review of the various uses and conceptualizations of mediatization in the last decades while Scolari and Rodriguez-Amat (2018) provides a review of the Latin-American contribution to the concept's development, focusing especially on the Argentine theorist Eliseo Verón and his followers, who combined mediatization with semiotics.

interrelationship between transformations in the media and in communication on the one hand and transformations in culture and society on the other hand. The patterns that permeate this interrelationship do not follow ‘one logic’, but rather must be defined empirically” (Hepp & Krotz, 2012, p. 11)<sup>12</sup>.

Based on this understanding of mediatization as a metaprocess, Mattoni and Treré (2014, p. 266) propose it be combined with media practices in more long-term studies, with the goal of overcoming ahistorical accounts of social actors’ interactions with the media, regarding them as part of a continuous process. I agree with this assessment of mediatization as a broader framework to understand social processes and media practices as a concept that takes it into account yet is more applicable to empirical studies.

In the next section, I provide a brief overview of the literature on social movements’ relationship with media. Much like media practices have enabled research that moves away from traditional perspectives in media studies, social movement studies have also profited from research that regards the role of media in activist contexts through the lens of practices. In order to show more clearly how this happened, I first retrace some of the main currently discussions taking place in the field.

### 3.3 Scholarship on the Interactions between Social Movements and Media

The literature on the interactions between media and social movements provides the necessary theoretical framework to understand how researchers have been analyzing social movements’ media practices, as their studies have been embedded in broader discussions around activism, media representation of protests, social media as a tool for mobilization, among other topics. In this section, I will highlight theoretical perspectives that I consider relevant for my own analysis, as well as studies from different parts of the world that showcase findings drawn from distinct social contexts and media systems.

Due to their fluidity, social movements have been traditionally hard to define yet central to understanding political life today and in modern history (Downing, 2008, p. 43). Diani (1992, p. 3) attempts to address this by describing social movements “as consisting in networks of informal interaction between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in a political and/or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity.” I consider this definition appropriate, as it differentiates social movements from other collective actors, like civil society organizations with a political or religious background that possess formal structures permeated by hierarchy and formal membership, for example. At the same time, Diani (1992) draws the line between social movements and sporadic protests as well as movement coalitions, which tend to also be informal yet ephemeral. One of the main differences lies in a more resilient collec-

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<sup>12</sup>“Mediatisierung wird dann zu einem Konzept, um das Wechselverhältnis des Wandels von Medien und Kommunikation einerseits und des Wandels von Kultur und Gesellschaft andererseits zu erfassen, wobei die Muster dieses Wechselverhältnisses nicht “einer Logik folgen, sondern je empirisch zu bestimmen sind” (Hepp & Krotz, 2012, p. 11).

tive identity, which, in social movements, lasts through periods of latency, when protests have subsided at least for the moment (Diani, 1992, p. 16). Moreover, Opp (2009, p. 38) differentiates between protests and social movements by defining protests as a “joint (i.e. collective) action of individuals aimed at achieving their goal or goals by influencing decisions of a target”, while social movements – or, as he calls them, protest groups<sup>13</sup> – represent the “collectivity of actors” themselves that perform the protest. In short, protests are actions while social movements are forms of collective organization.

Central to both Diani’s (1992) and to Opp’s (2009) definitions, collective identity is “an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at a more complex level) and concerned with the orientations of action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place” (Melucci, 1995, p. 44). It is intrinsically connected to collective action as one of its enabling elements. Melucci (1995) sees collective identity as being in permanent construction and lists organizational structure, leadership patterns and membership pre-requisites as empirical indicators to research it. Dialoguing with Melucci’s work, many authors emphasize the interaction between personal and collective identity (McDonald, 2002; Diani & McAdam, 2003) as well as increasingly porous boundaries between public and private life (Bimber, Flanagin, & Stohl, 2005) as central components of collective action in times when communicational and informational costs are significantly lower than in the 1980s<sup>14</sup>.

Rucht (1994) builds upon the definition proposed by Diani (1992), emphasizing the role of protests for social movements. Although social movements are not the only ones that may hold protests, “the orientation towards protests remains a constitutive characteristic both for movements’ own identity and for the perception of the movement among the public and in the public sphere” (Rucht, 1994, p. 339)<sup>15</sup>. Since they lack other resources to attain public attention, movements resort to protest actions. For Neidhardt (1994, p. 32–33), movements’ demonstrations are the equivalent to the press conferences actors that are well-established in the public sphere hold: while the latter – politicians and industry representatives – have privileged access to the public sphere due to their central position in it, the former usually speak from the margins and, thus, have to be much louder, in order to be heard<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, despite social movement scholars’ traditional neglect of media and communication in their analysis (Downing, 2008; Treré, 2018)<sup>17</sup>, this brief conceptualization shows that media are intertwined with other central aspects that

<sup>13</sup>Opp (2009, p. 41–42) argues that social movements are too fluid to define in a way that would be satisfactory for empirical research, as any definition could leave out potential, unforeseen forms of mobilization and organization. He offers the term protest groups as an attempt to address this, but uses both terms interchangeably throughout his book.

<sup>14</sup>More recently, authors such as Kavada (2010), Milan (2015), Monterde, Calleja-López, Aguilera, Barandiaran, and Postill (2015), Bennett and Segerberg (2015) among others have proposed actualizations of the concept in light of recent developments around the internet and social media’s role for constituting collective identity in current movements. However, I will not go into detail on this discussion, as collective identity is not central to my empirical analysis. I address the internet and social media’s role for social movements through other frameworks later in this section.

<sup>15</sup>“so ist Protestorientierung doch ein konstitutives Merkmal sowohl für das Selbstverständnis von Bewegungen als auch ihre Wahrnehmung durch Öffentlichkeit und Publikum” (Rucht, 1994, p. 339).

<sup>16</sup>More on public spheres in section 4.4.

<sup>17</sup>Treré (2018, p. 1–30) presents a critical literature review of the relative dismissal of the role of the media in traditional social movement studies, marked by stances of technological instrumentalism, functionalism and determinism, and how this has been changing slowly.

define social movements.

One of the most known scholars in the traditional social movement scholarship, Charles Tilly focused mostly on the political process underlying social movements, but he regards briefly the media's role in this context, in what he calls WUNC displays: public representations of worthiness, unity, numbers and participants' commitment to the cause of a movement. Together with campaigning efforts, in which the actors make collective claims directed at specific targets (mostly government authorities) and various forms of political action, such as protests, petitions and the creation of coalitions, WUNC displays are among the core elements that characterize a social movement in Tilly's theory (Tilly, 2005, p. 216). Wearing badges or specific colors<sup>18</sup>, chanting slogans and picketing in public buildings are examples of WUNC displays that do not necessarily have to do with the media. However, the rise of mass media in the 20th century has led to an unprecedented increase in the reach of WUNC displays:

“As compared with direct attacks and person-to-person negotiation, broadcast of movement claims by means of public media reaches far more third parties. Those third parties include powerful figures other than the ones to whom activists are directing their claims. But they also include publics that will be making relevant judgments in elections, purchases, opinion polls, and other expressions of support; potential recruits to the cause; and, for that matter, allies of the target(s) who might reconsider their positions (...).” (Tilly & Wood, 2004, p. 85)

This increase in reach has led to changes in social movement's strategies towards the media, with a popular approach being focusing particularly on photogenic WUNC displays to draw media attention, as I will describe later in this section.

Another common perspective on media in social movement theory focuses on the framing processes in the context of social movements, also in connection with collective action frames. In short, this approach draws attention to how movement participants interpret events and the context surrounding them not only in their internal mobilizing efforts, but also in their legitimacy claims in the broader public discourse<sup>19</sup>.

As marginalized actors with no direct access to institutional decision-making processes, social movements need to influence the actors who do have direct access through non-institutional means (Richter, 2011, p. 86; Rucht, 1994, p. 347–348). In this context, media prove key to their strategy, as they mobilize public opinion. According to Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, p. 120–121), social movements seek mainly three things from the media: standing through media coverage, the dissemination of the movement's preferred interpretation of issues, and to gain sympathy from the public through favorable coverage. However, social movements are not as central to the media, even though they can make up for good stories. Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, p. 116) call this a “competitive symbiosis” and McCluskey (2008, p. 769) accurately summarizes it: “activists rely on media for access to the public much more than media rely on activists for copy”.

<sup>18</sup>For example, individuals supporting the Seebrücke movement in Germany and other European countries adopted the color orange to signal their support for civil rescue missions in the Mediterranean Sea, in a reference to the orange life jackets given to drowning refugees during those missions.

<sup>19</sup>Benford and Snow (2000) offer a review of this scholarship.



As a reaction, social movements develop various strategies and approaches to the media. Rucht (2013, p. 257) theorizes them with his “quadruple A” model, which stands for abstention (withdrawing from any kind of coverage from mainstream media), attack (criticizing the media or even physically attacking journalists or facilities), adaption (tailoring action to media logics, in order to get positive media coverage) and alternative (creating their own media). The adaption strategy can be observed when movements start doing public relations work, planning actions to get media coverage and professionalizing media work inside the movement (Waisbord, 2011; Rucht, 2013). A high degree of professionalism in these movements, however, might cause a disconnect between the grassroots and the people formulating such refined media strategies (Costanza-Chock, 2014; Husband, 2005).

Even the best efforts to adapt to traditional media’s demands may have undesirable outcomes to social movements. Mass media can be a double-edged sword — central to making images of protests reach the wider public, but also permeated by selection routines that shape those images’ meaning, not always representing the meaning protesters initially attributed to them (Teune, 2013, p. 210). A typical example of this is the protest paradigm, which describes the criminalization of protests by traditional media, with more emphasis on violence and clashes with the police than on protesters’ causes, as well as more attention to what authorities have to say than to protesters’ discourse (Cammaerts, 2012; McCluskey, 2008; Teune, 2013). In addition, as Boyle, McCluskey, McLeod, and Stein (2005, p. 639) put it, “the more protest groups threaten the status quo, the more harshly they will be treated by the media”, as Blickhan and Teune’s (2003, p. 198–199) analysis of media coverage of the 1st of May protests in Berlin empirically showed: the coverage of radical groups’ demonstrations was much more criminalizing, with reports focusing almost exclusively on clashes with the police and property destruction, than that of worker unions’ demonstrations on the same day, whose coverage featured unions’ causes more prominently, for example.

Studies showed that alternative media resort much less often to this form of representation (Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Mattoni & Treré, 2014). However, it is important to keep in mind that there are nuances among traditional media outlets as well. In their analysis of the coverage of the right-wing movement Tea Party in the US, Weaver and Scacco (2013, p. 74–79) found that the protest paradigm plays out in different ways depending on media outlets’ own political leaning, with progressive TV networks using the same marginalization strategies to describe the Tea Party that more conservative media outlets usually employ to delegitimize left-leaning movements. Right-wing TV networks, in turn, tried to portray the Tea Party under a less criminalizing light. Their findings were later corroborated by studies in various contexts, such as Malthaner, Teune, and Ullrich’s (2018, p. 68) analysis of German media’s coverage of the protests in Hamburg during the G20 summit in 2017, Mourão’s (2019) analysis of protests in Brazil between 2013 and 2016 or Shahin, Zheng, Sturm, and Fadnis’s (2016) comparison between coverage of protests in India, China and Brazil. In the latter two studies, media outlets’ political stance towards the seating government in particular — rather than a broader ideological stance — played a key role in determining whether they employed the protest paradigm or resorted to more positive representations of the protesters and their causes. Studies on transnational, online coverage of

protests add even more nuance to the concept of the protest paradigm, showing that multimedia features may give more room for more discursive and less criminalizing frames and that foreign media tend to be more sympathetic towards the protesters than domestic media outlets, as the latter tend to see protests as disruptions that impact their country directly (Harlow, Salaverría, Kilgo, & García-Perdomo, 2017). With regards to social media users, Harlow et al. (2017, p. 345) also found that they tended to share pieces that presented protesters as peaceful or discussed the issues that had brought people to the street, which may indicate the audience's preference for a more legitimizing coverage of protests.

Scholars also point to the public nuisance paradigm to describe an even more negative type of protest coverage than the one theorized in the protest paradigm. Characterized by a portrayal of protests as bothersome events, with an emphasis on the disruptions to everyday life they may cause (for example, traffic jams), this concept has many similarities to the protest paradigm, “but nuisance paradigm coverage dismisses the method of protests by suggesting that protests cause more trouble than they are worth” (Di Cicco, 2010, p. 136). Coupled with a representation of protesters – in the US context – as unpatriotic and ungrateful for the freedom of speech they enjoy (Di Cicco, 2010, p. 138–139), this kind of coverage seems to aim to discourage the public from protesting at all. There are, however, far fewer studies on this concept than on the protest paradigm, so that its nuances and contradictions have not been empirically verified yet.

In addition to media outlets' political orientation, studies both on the protest paradigm and on the public nuisance paradigm have attributed this kind of coverage to news values, such as a preference for exceptional situations (Blickhan & Teune, 2003, p. 187), and reporting routines, such as journalists' sourcing practices, which tend towards public officials in various subjects, not just protests (Bennett, 1990; Cook, 1998)<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, as the various empirical studies on the protest paradigm have made clear, coverage that social movements may consider unfavorable or unpredictable does not originate from ideological disparities alone, but from journalists' professional culture. Wouters and Van Camp (2017) empirically asserted this with regards to a particular piece of information protest organizers consider crucial in media coverage of their actions: the protest turnout. The authors found that the Belgian journalists they analyzed tried to find a middle-ground between organizers and police's turnout estimates regardless of which organizations were backing the protest or what it was about, following journalistic procedures of often quoting both estimates if they diverged widely (Wouters & Van Camp, 2017, p. 465).

Creating an alternative to traditional media through their own media, in which actors may perform other reporting practices than the ones that guide professional journalism, may be seen as the way social movements have found to counterbalance unfavorable coverage and to better control their message (Waisbord, 2011; Richter, 2011; Dias, 2007). However, just like their traditional counterpart, alternative media can also be regarded as a double-edged sword: they give social movements more control over what to cover and how to cover it, but they rarely reach the broader audience necessary to really mobilize public opinion. Thus, alternative media end up preaching to the choir (Owens & Palmer, 2003, p. 338–339). That is why more and more movements are combining both the adaption and the alternative approaches in their media

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<sup>20</sup>I detail critical scholarship focusing on news values and journalistic practices in chapter 4.

practices (Cammaerts, Mattoni, & McCurdy, 2013; Mattoni, 2013; McCurdy, 2013). Rucht (2013) summarizes this trend:

“Today’s organizers of ambitious and complex protest campaigns hardly discuss on principal grounds the pros and cons of old and new media. Rather they use and combine it in an almost intuitive way so that their respective advantages add to each other while their respective disadvantages become more or less neutralized or at least mitigated.” (Rucht, 2013, p. 263)

This assessment is supported by research such as the study Costanza-Chock et al. (2015) conducted with QTPOC<sup>21</sup> youth organizers in the US, which described their reliance on a mix of social media networks and appearances on traditional media in their strategies. In addition, it is interesting to mention that movements can make media out of many other supports than what is commonly understood under media – print, TV, radio and the internet. Downing (2008, p. 44) proposes a look into formats such as graffiti, murals, street theater, popular music, dance and dress as means people choose to communicate as well.

While the web drastically lowered communication costs for social movements, making them less dependent on traditional media, many authors have defended that it is just a cost-efficient tool for activists to do what they have always done – mobilizing for offline events, documenting their struggle, self-representing, encouraging debate; however, it does not replace face-to-face interaction, rather adding to it (Mattoni, Berdnikovs, Ardizzoni, & Cox, 2010; Cammaerts et al., 2013; della Porta, 2013; Kavada, 2013; Rucht, 2013). Still, it must be acknowledged that the internet did bring some new elements to this equation, questioning older explanations of the relationship between social movements and the media such as Gamson and Wolfsfeld’s (1993). “With the emergence of alternative means of attention acquisition, movements still need mass media, which are still the biggest conveyor of public attention, but the relationship is less that of an oligopoly to a desperate customer” (Tufekci, 2013, p. 852).

The Zapatistas’ use of online media in the 1990s, which inspired the Global Justice Movement and Indymedia in the early 2000s is an interesting case to understand how the tables might have started to turn. The Zapatistas are seen as pioneers, articulating a network identity that crossed the borders of Chiapas and unifying online and offline mobilization, often translating global support acquired online into physical support channeled to Chiapas or performed in solidarity actions worldwide (Russell, 2005), as well as combing online media with traditional media coverage worldwide and community media use in the form of local radio stations to both capture international attention and mobilize support on the ground (Mattoni, 2017, p. 497)<sup>22</sup>.

Since the Zapatistas’ innovative use of online media available in the 1990s, social movements have continued to accompany technological developments, adopting and abandoning on-line communication channels such as mailing lists, blogs and, more recently, social media net-

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<sup>21</sup>The abbreviation QTPOC stands for queer, trans and people of color.

<sup>22</sup>Wolfson (2012) provides a good overview of the literature on both the Zapatistas and Indymedia’s approaches to media and how they intersect. In addition, Costanza-Chock (2014, p. 6–7) describes how horizontalism permeates both movements at least since the 1999 protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle, known as the “Battle of Seattle”, where people organized horizontally through affinity network groups.

works and messenger apps according to movements' needs and how they relate to the broader sociopolitical context (Treré, 2012, p. 2371).

In terms of disseminating movements' own narrative, social media platforms remain the newest major development in this area at the time of writing. Through social media, movements are sometimes able to create enough buzz online to gain standing on traditional media as well, promoting their own interpretations more easily than before, especially if they have a significant number of followers on their own social media accounts. After social movements achieve a certain reach online, it even becomes harder for traditional media to sustain an exaggeratedly biased description of the movement, as it can now be countered by the movement's own voice, questioning traditional media's credibility. "Today, media professionals are still important in reporting about protests, but the authoritative image of protests in commercial media brittles as it is confronted by alternative channels of news making and sense making through user-generated content" (Mattoni & Teune, 2014, p. 883). In addition, when social movements publicly record their own actions, disseminating them online and especially through social media channels, it leads not only to the transmission of their own perspectives, but also to the creation of an archive that "spills over" to other protests elsewhere, "feeding the struggle and contributing to the construction of a collective memory of protest" (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 125).

A downside to activists' reliance on commercial platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube is their vulnerability to state repression due to lack of true anonymity (Cammaerts et al., 2013). These websites also encourage grassroots content production while, at the same time, aiming to make a profit over it (Uldam & Askanius, 2013). Additionally, I argue that such platforms are usually subject to national laws, especially when they have offices in various countries, and are thus more cooperative with local authorities, something that might make activists in those networks more vulnerable to search warrants affecting their data, for example. Police infiltration through online channels is another issue, as the case involving an infiltrated officer that became a website administrator for #YoSoy132 in Mexico, studied by Treré (2013), illustrates. In addition, since Edward Snowden's revelations in 2013, it has become clear that the extent of government surveillance online is far greater than many had ever thought possible<sup>23</sup>. More recently, social media platforms themselves have admitted they have been targeted by state actors and other organized groups that try to actively interfere with movements' online discourse through the use of bots or fake accounts (Arif, Stewart, & Starbird, 2018).

In his analysis of power in the network society, Castells (2009, p. 418–419) recognizes that while social media provides everyone with the chance of telling their own story, not all stories have the same reach, as networks are still controlled by commercial actors, the government or mass media companies. Not to mention the role of algorithms, with their nontransparent ranking of content according to criteria that platform owners alone know (Milan, 2015, p. 890)<sup>24</sup>. Although social media enables a wider reach at lower costs, that does not mean social movement discourses remain uncontested. In their study of the Blockupy movement in Frankfurt,

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<sup>23</sup>Russell (2016) offers an essential overview of how the documents released by Snowden have affected activists and journalists' practices alike.

<sup>24</sup>For a detailed review of literature on the interaction between social movements and algorithms, see Treré (2018, chapter 7).

Neumayer, Rossi, and Karlsson (2016) showed how the police not only employed social media to monitor protesters, but also to counter activists' discourse on these platforms by using the same hashtags activists used to post their own version of events. Malthaner et al. (2018, p. 72–75) came to a similar conclusion in their analysis of tweets during the protests against the 2017 G20 Summit in Hamburg. Online harassment and targeting of activists by troll armies is another issue social movements face, as various cases involving feminist activists have shown (Drüeke & Zobl, 2016; Drüeke, 2017; Maireder & Schlögl, 2014; Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2018).

Despite their many caveats, social media and alternative journalism constitute elements of protesters' media practices to bypass traditional media. One explanation for activists' sticking to social media could be their embedment in most people's everyday lives. In his study on digital activism during US election campaigns, Nielsen (2010) proposed the term "mundane tools" to describe tools widely present in people's quotidian, such as e-mail, search engines and mobile phones. To him, mundane tools are the ones that are actually key for this kind of activism, as they reach the broadest public possible (Nielsen, 2010, p. 186-192). Researching protests in the Philippines and in Spain in the early 2000s, Mattoni (2017) observed that mobile phones' mundane character was potentialized during uprisings. Previously used for personal communication with friends and family, they "became almost natural political tools to make individuals' emotions explicit to others and to then mobilize people virally" Mattoni (2017, p. 501), as people forwarded each other text messages with calls to demonstrations. For her, social media play a similar role in today's mobilizations to the one cellphones did back then.

The personal bonds that pervade most users' activities on social media are an underlying aspect of their mundane character. Most activists are no different: they "risk their privacy and safety, at least in part, because these platforms are extensions of their everyday lives where they communicate with friends, family, and colleagues, where their online lives are already being played out" (Russell, 2016, p. 82)<sup>25</sup>. It is this previous presence in people's lives, generating consolidated networks among users even before protests arise, that helps protesters' messages published there reach larger audiences than through activist websites (Mattoni & Teune, 2014; Tufekci, 2011). These audiences may, in turn, expand the reach of the messages even further, as Barberá et al. (2015, p. 11) showed in their study on the synergy between core and peripheral participants for the visibility of protests on social media, in which users that were not central to the network built around certain hashtags or keywords still contributed to circulate information about it by sharing content produced by core accounts or otherwise interacting with them, especially when traditional media coverage was lacking.

Another factor that explains activists' reliance on commercial social media platforms may be their features, which enable certain kinds of use. Cammaerts (2015) sheds light on this through an analysis of these platforms' affordances in a context of activism<sup>26</sup>. He divides these affordances

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<sup>25</sup>Another relevant element are the emotions and affect that circulate on social media, particularly during uprisings and other major events. Papacharissi (2015, chapter 5) provides an interesting take on the affordances of platforms like Twitter when regarded through the perspective of affect and connective action.

<sup>26</sup>Coined by Gibson (1979), the term affordances describes the inherent properties of any object and what these properties mean in relation to a subject's needs. To him, they are invariant and do not change to fit those needs: "An affordance is not bestowed upon an object by a need of an observer and his act

into various categories and points to their similarities with other types of media that have been around for longer:

“On the one hand, reminiscent of broadcasting and telecommunication, social media enable instant — real-time — forms of communication, which tends to be fleeting (unless recorded or harvested). However, just like print, a delayed asynchronous form of communication is also possible, which is potentially more permanent and easier to archive. On the other hand, social media afford both public/open forms of communication — akin to broadcasting and private/protected forms of communication — more salient to traditional postal services and telecommunication. Social media combine one-to-many, one-to-one, and many-to-many forms of communication. This produces a matrix of affordances that can be attributed to various types of social media leading to a variety of possible actions for protest movements and activists (...).” (Cammaerts, 2015, p. 90–91)

The affordances described in this passage translate into what Cammaerts (2015, p. 91) calls self-mediation logics, i.e. the rationale that guides activists’ decisions to use certain types of media to achieve a certain goal, which permeate various activities inside social movements: spreading movement frames, recruiting new supporters, organizing internally, coordinating actions on the ground, recording actions and archiving movement content. Increasingly, he argues, activists are deciding that social media are the type of media where all or most of these logics take place due to the way their affordances combine with other aspects of activists’ lives. In terms of internal communication, social media’s asynchronous character enables many supporters to balance activism with other important spheres in their lives, such as family, friends and professional commitments. In addition, real-time affordances in terms of public communication make it possible for social movements to broadcast their actions live (Cammaerts, 2015, p. 94).

In light of these communicational advantages, coupled with social media’s mundane character, activists react to the many downsides of social media in various ways, such as avoiding strategic internal communication on social media as a means of circumventing surveillance there (Cammaerts, 2015, p. 107), encrypting communications (Neumayer et al., 2016, p. 5564), relying on multiple platforms, instead of just one, or making efforts to create their own, non-corporate platforms (Costanza-Chock, 2006, 2014). As a result, movements’ communication on social media is just part of the story: “That which is visible as an event and traceable through social media data is built upon a complex structure of secure (and invisible) communicative tactics, visible communicative tactics, and activist collectives’ underlying beliefs and struggles” (Neumayer et al., 2016, p. 5565). It follows that it is necessary to develop a focus beyond just one medium or just one platform, in order to analyze a movements’ interaction with media in all its complexity.

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of perceiving it. The object offers what it does because it is what it is” (Gibson, 1979, p. 136). Norman (2008) contests this notion, arguing that affordances vary according to context, individuals’ needs and skills involving a specific object. He proposes, instead, the concept of signifiers, which give room for uses to emerge by chance as well: “Social signifiers replace affordances, for they are broader and richer, allowing for accidental signifiers as well as deliberate ones, and even for items that signify through their absence, as the lack of crowds on a train platform” (Norman, 2008, p. 19). As the concept of affordances is not central to my research, I will not dwell too much on it.

In this section, I argued for the importance of overcoming some of the main dichotomies present in research on social movements and media: traditional media/alternative media, on-line/offline, “new” communication technologies/“old” communication technologies<sup>27</sup>. Many of the studies I cited here demonstrated empirically that reality is more complex than such dichotomous constructs, with activists making decisions based on their movements’ needs and resources in a specific sociopolitical context. Some of these studies applied the concept of media practices as a way of approaching the realities on the ground, since, as I explained in previous sections, thinking in terms of media practices may bring the necessary versatility to understand actors’ complex interactions with all kinds of media. In the next section, I address the application of media practices to the field of social movements more explicitly.

### **3.4 Media Practices in the Context of Social Movements Studies**

For scholars researching social movements’ interactions with the media, media practices may serve as an “heuristic tool through which the communicative dimensions of social movements can be observed and explained from an empirical viewpoint” (Mattoni, 2017, p. 495). For a long time, studies of media practices mainly focused on individuals’ interactions with traditional media, but, as scholars apply media practices to the analysis of social movements, practices involving alternative media come increasingly to the fore. At the same time, media practices foster an open perspective on digital technologies, regarding them as part of a broader context of various interactions with media that permeate social movements’ activities (Mattoni, 2017, p. 496–497). This is in line with many of the current approaches in scholarship on social movements and media I described in the previous section, as they attempt to capture the multifaceted role media play in social movements’ strategies, activities and collective identity. In this section, I will start by delineating some concepts various authors developed to describe media practices in a context of activism and that may be applied to similar cases, followed by more specific case studies that highlight the benefits of researching the relationship between a certain social movement and the media through the lens of media practices, an approach that may reveal new aspects previously obscured by dichotomies long established in the field.

Drawing from Shove et al. (2012) and from Butler (2010), Lünenborg and Raetzsch (2018) propose that media practices be regarded as “as a concept to understand communicative routines in which the relation of individuals to society is articulated and negotiated” (Lünenborg & Raetzsch, 2018, p. 24). This articulation and negotiation happen as actors link different elements by performatively carrying out their practices. By highlighting performativity, the authors argue that actors’ practices may either reinforce existing norms or question them, “as observers and actors are co-constituted and speaker positions can alternate between audiences and publics and transition from personal and public articulations” (Lünenborg & Raetzsch, 2018, p. 24)<sup>28</sup>. Al-

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<sup>27</sup>I explore another dichotomy, namely that between journalists (seen as impartial) and activists (seen as biased) in the next chapter.

<sup>28</sup>In the next chapter, I detail how Lünenborg and Raetzsch’s (2018) concept of performative publics

though the authors highlight the fact that processes of political change and their interplay with media practices also occur outside traditional social movements, their concept proves useful to understanding the dynamic character of social movement actors' media practices as well. An interesting example for this in the context of activism is protesters' use of mobile devices and cameras to record police violence. By linking the mobile device (material) to video-recording skills (competence) for the purpose of "surveilling the surveillers" (meaning), protesters actively and performatively – they ostensibly hold their filming gadgets close to police officers, for example – question the State's monopoly over surveillance and spark debates on police and human rights violations. This media practice can be found in protests worldwide (Cammaerts et al., 2013; Mattoni & Teune, 2014), including in the case I will analyze.

As with media practices in general, there is an increasing intersection between theories of mediatization and theories of media practices regarding social movements and media. Mattoni and Treré (2014) intertwine media practices, mediation and mediatization in their own approach to studying social movements and their articulations of meaning and discourse to address the limitations Postill (2010) pointed out for research of major social events through the perspective of media practices<sup>29</sup>. For this, they employ the concept of activist media practices, which Mattoni (2012) developed during her study of movements against precarization of work conditions in Italy in the early 2010s. Activist media practices can be

“(...) defined as routinized and creative social practices in which activists engage and which include, first, interactions with media objects – such as mobile phones, laptops, pieces of paper – through which activists can generate and/or appropriate media messages, therefore acting either as media producers or media consumers; and, second, interactions with media subjects – such as journalists, public relations managers, but also activist media practitioners – who are connected to the media realm.” (Mattoni & Treré, 2014, p. 259)

This concept can also be understood through the conceptualization of practices Shove et al. (2012) propose: activist media practices result from the links between media objects (materials), actors' competences as media producers and consumers as well as the meanings they articulate in their media messages. While mediation helped the authors analyze how activists attempted to adapt to and subvert “the reconfiguration and remediation of media technologies” (Mattoni & Treré, 2014, p. 259–260), mediatization provides a long-term perspective, through which scholars can regard the interactions between media and social movements in the way activist media practices play out in a longer period of time, as processes of mediatization interact with broader cultural and social shifts (Mattoni & Treré, 2014, p. 261).

Mattoni (2012) also details two main dimensions of activist media practices that are helpful to better grasp the complexity of social movements' interactions with media: media knowl-

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interact with other theories of the public sphere.

<sup>29</sup>Postill (2010, p. 19) argues that major world or media events cannot be analyzed by practice theory alone, because they constitute a political process, also known as social drama or media drama, with its own dynamics, different from regular embodied practices. At the same time, he defends that practice theory can explain how the quotidian actions of those involved are affected or how actors modify or create media practices due to such world events.



edge practices encompass the activist media practices in which “individual activists and social movement groups interact with the diverse world of media messages circulating in the media environment, engage in the production of media related literacy and develop self-reflexive perceptions of the ‘things’ they do and expect from the media at large” (Mattoni, 2012, p. 20), while relational media practices describe activist media practices that are centered around interactions with the broader media context, as “individual activists and social movement groups construct and redefine networks of relations with media professionals, including journalists, engage in the manipulation and recombination of technological supports and create their own spaces of communication and mediation within the media environment” (Mattoni, 2012, p. 20). The author also points out that both kinds of activist media practices often intertwine – I would add this may happen due to elements some practices have in common, be it in terms of material, competence or meaning. She also found that the practices described in both dimensions serve as sources of practical experience and knowledge that then mold future media knowledge practices and media relational practices, that is, while performing media practices in the present, activists are also generating a basis upon which movements will perform their media practices in the future (Mattoni, 2012, p. 161).

Generated during Mattoni’s empirical research, these concepts confirm media practices’ potential in enabling scholars to uncover social movements’ complex interactions with media and theorize their nuances. For example, she found that, in their attempts to achieve visibility for their cause, actors continuously move between various media objects, from alternative media websites to flyers and appearances on traditional media, according to the specific audience they seek to address (do they want to reach government officials or potential supporters among the population?) and to the conditions in their local surroundings (Mattoni, 2012, p. 157), confirming the need for an approach to media that overcomes traditional dichotomies. Other empirical studies have come to similar conclusions concerning other aspects of social movements’ activities. In his ethnographic study of the the Hong Kong 2013 Umbrella Movement, Lin (2017, p. 66) found that not only did the movement blur the boundaries between online and offline alternative and traditional media, but it also employed different types of media “in different periods of the movement, which facilitated recruitment, built identity, and created community” (Lin, 2017, p. 66). During the Spanish diaspora’s movement *Marea Grande*, activists combined the use of various commercial and open source online platforms and apps with face-to-face meetings for better coordination of their activities, while publicizing their message both on traditional and on alternative media (Martinez, 2017, p. 43–45). These are just some examples of the potential of a media practices approach to social movements. They are part of a growing literature, which I do not intend to expand on in this section, as I consider that the studies I cited here drive the point home on how media practices may serve both as an analytical tool towards new concepts – as in Lünenborg and Raetzsch’s (2018) and Mattoni’s (2012) cases – and as a lens that allows researchers to regard movements’ interactions with media from a less dogmatic perspective – as Lin’s (2017) and Martinez’s (2017) case studies exemplify.

Taken together, the studies presented thus far support the notion that media practices can be fruitfully applied to analyses of social movements, providing a theoretical framework that focuses

on movements' complex interactions with media and allows more open inquiries towards these interactions than frameworks based on the division between media production, texts and media consumption provide. The present work seeks to build upon this consolidating tradition as well as to contribute to it with new insights.

### **3.5 Media Practices as a Versatile Concept for Empirical Research**

In this theoretical grounding chapter, I started by reviewing the broader scholarship on practice theory, laying out some concepts that went on to permeate research on media practices, which I then detailed in section 3.2. Particularly the way first generation practice theorists, such as Bourdieu, Giddens and Schatzki, regard temporality and space as important elements to understanding practices proves helpful for my empirical research, as they regard practices as dynamic phenomena and susceptible to changes over time. For my part, I take into account sociopolitical contextual changes as part of a chronological time span of two years, in order to describe the creation and adaptation of media practices.

Another relevant theoretical contribution I seek to apply to my research is Shove et al.'s definition of practices as the enactment of links between material, competence and meaning elements, which also takes into account the dynamic character of these links, which can change over time or through elements' circulation across different places. Their conceptualization of how practices connect to each other in terms of bundles or of complexes of practices also constitutes an essential grounding for my own research, which will aid me in the interpretation of my results. However, their primary focus is on practices, not on practitioners. In this sense, my focus differs from theirs, as actors' habitus plays a key role in my case, since it also provides them with the competences, materials and meanings to perform practices of engaged journalism. At the same time, actors' connections to each other as part of a network of alternative media collectives are also important to understanding their practices. Thus, I will draw from Lave and Wenger's concept of community of practice as a framework to understand the role of actors' embedding in a specific habitus to the circulation of the elements that constitute their practices.

The second half of the chapter zooms in on the complex interaction between social movements and media, making the case for more empirical research that applies the concept of media practices to this topic. Finally, I detail some of the current studies on social movements' media practices and the nuances that a media practices approach was able to reveal, namely movements' plural and situated approach to media, beyond theoretical dichotomies.

While most empirical studies cited in this chapter look into social movements' media practices as part of their broader activities, I provide a contribution to this scholarship by narrowing the focus of my work on a specific group active in the context of social movements, namely professional journalists covering social movements from alternative media structures. These actors straddle the intersection between social movements and journalism, performing practices originally situated in both fields and linking elements in innovative ways, in order to constitute new or adapted media practices. Therefore, the next chapter provides further theoretical grounding

for the comprehension of my research results by detailing the scholarship on journalistic practices against the background of the objectivity standard, alternative media and (counter)public spheres.

# Chapter 4

## Journalism Studies and Public Spheres: Intersecting Theories

While chapter 3 brings a discussion on the broad concept of media practices, which frees media studies from the focus on production and reception processes to instead inquire more openly about people's relation to media, this chapter's focus on journalism studies may seem like a return to more restrictive forms of studying media. However, I approach journalism here as a social practice, permeated by relations of power, attempts to realize normative standards such as objectivity or create alternatives to them. Therefore, I propose this chapter be regarded as an in-depth look into journalists' media practices and how they interact with the contexts they are embedded in.

This chapter features a focused discussion on issues that are relevant to understand the model I will present in chapter 6, which reveals many practices that are connected to the journalistic field yet performed by actors placed at its boundaries. I seek to capture the volatility of this field by first reviewing the literature on it, in section 4.1, and then looking into some of its most normative values, such as objectivity in section 4.2, as well as alternatives built upon the various criticisms to objectivity in practice, especially the practices in alternative journalism in section 4.3. Finally, in section 4.4, I analyze the role of both traditional and alternative journalism in Habermas' model of the public sphere, presenting the various critiques his normative assumptions have received over the years and the concepts many authors have elaborated based on it, especially the concept of counter public spheres, which provides the necessary theoretical framework to understand engaged journalists' relationship with social movements and the changing consensus in society.

Drawing from authors grounded on various traditions and from different regions, especially from Latin America, I attempt to de-centralize the discussion from the Western world. However, given the historical roots of concepts such as objectivity in the US scholarship, as well as the German tradition of theorizing the public sphere, the presence of authors from these contexts sometimes predominates in the chapter. Moreover, the Brazilian media landscape has been historically influenced by "US capital, technology, and content" (Waisbord, 2013a, p. 133), which also partly explains Brazilian journalists' adoption of objectivity standards in ways that are simi-

lar to their US colleagues. This makes an in-depth look into the US discussion around objectivity relevant.

Combined with the previous chapter, this chapter makes clearer where my own theoretical model fits, both in the scholarship on media practices and in the research on journalism in its many forms.

## 4.1 The Journalistic Field and Practices Performed Beyond the Newsroom

As with the scholarship on practice theory, Pierre Bourdieu also made an important contribution to journalism studies. There is a growing body of literature on what authors call the journalistic field, based on his field theory. Bourdieu (2005, p. 30–33) defines fields as microcosms inside the broader social universe yet free from some of the constraints that characterize it, having instead their own rules and functioning logics. This offers a “theoretical framework to connect between the micro-level of the agent and the macro-level of society” (Willig, Waltorp, & Hartley, 2015, p. 9). There are, for example, the political field, the economic field and, of course, the journalistic field. However, these fields are not completely immune to the influence of other fields.

Changes in other fields, such as an economic crises, new legislation, social or cultural movements, might also lead to changes in the journalistic field and the activities performed in it (Benson & Neveu, 2005, p. 6). Bourdieu (2005, p. 33) sees journalism as a field that possesses relatively weak autonomy — that is, it is more susceptible to pressures external to the field —, but as autonomous nevertheless. Thus, there is a need to look at it as a microcosm: “Part of what is produced in the world of journalism cannot be understood unless one conceptualizes this microcosm as such and endeavors to understand the effects that the people engaged in this microcosm exert on one another”. Champagne (2005, p. 50) even describes the history of journalism as a history of a field whose autonomy is permanently under threat due to its susceptibility to transformations in the social, cultural, political and economic fields. Underlying these assumptions is the fact that these authors see the journalistic field as very heterogeneous, which makes consensus inside the field more difficult.

The journalistic field’s autonomy depends on journalists’ willingness and effectiveness in asserting it against the influence of other fields (Waisbord, 2013b, p. 41). Autonomy translates concretely into the ideal that “professional standards and professional sanctions should be decided on from within the profession rather than outside of it, and that external influences over the work process itself should be non-existent or minimal” (Örnebring, 2010, p. 569). This can be done through professionalism, which is based “on the admittedly self-serving idea that certain people in our society are uniquely entitled to fill a particular prestigious occupational niche” (Singer, 2003, p. 156), an entitlement that draws from “the professional’s special skills, training, codes of conduct, commitment to public service and autonomy” (Singer, 2003, p. 156). However, professionalism is far from being an undisputed concept, as it is often caught between occupational descriptions and normative values. Waisbord describes how this contradiction plays out in professional journalism:

“The idea of professional journalism refers to various dimensions. It is linked to the conditions and requirements of ‘newswork’, training and education, the observance of certain ethics, the production of information, work routines and norms, the political economy of news organizations and press systems, legal frameworks, and normative expectations about the role of the press in democracy.” (Waisbord, 2013b, p. 79)

In addition to those many intersecting expectations on professionalism, the concept is also criticized as being elitist, perpetuating privilege and social differences through control over knowledge and alienating citizens from their right to information and self-expression (Waisbord, 2013b, p. 106). However, professionalism can also be a defense against the influence of commercial and political interests over journalism, especially in media systems plagued by clientelism (Matos, 2007, p. 5; Waisbord, 2013b, p. 169–170). Waisbord (2013b, p. 70) regards the lack of agreement among professionals about basic rules as weakening the journalistic field’s autonomy and increasing the chances for undue influence from other fields. Other scholars, such as Russell (2016) and Lewis (2012), see this more optimistically, as a chance for much-needed change in the field.

According to Lewis (2012), despite professional journalists’ unwillingness to give up boundaries, they are slowly doing so, as newsrooms’ embrace of audience participation exemplifies. “This, then, may lead to a revised logic for journalism: one that preserves certain ethical practices and boundaries that lend legitimacy, abandons jurisdictional claims that have lost their currency in the new environment, and embraces fresh values, such as open participation, that are more compatible with the logic of digital media and culture” (Lewis, 2012, p. 852). With the rise of news blogs and, more recently, influencers with a journalistic focus, the definition of who is a professional journalist is increasingly being put into question. Scholars like Singer (2003, p. 157) predicted in the early 2000s that journalists were better advised to accommodate these challengers into the field rather than trying to keep them out. On the other hand, she recognized this would mean a revision of the values the journalistic field abides by. In her observations on bloggers focusing on typical journalistic themes such as politics or performing media criticism, Singer (2007, p. 86) asserts that both groups share a commitment to truth and to its autonomous pursuit of it yet define these concepts differently.

Most of the authors cited so far focus primarily on journalists working in traditional media outlets. However, as Russell (2016, p. 12) points out, “news production has spread far beyond what we used to call the newsroom”. This is due, among other factors, to the increasing precariousness of working conditions in traditional media outlets all over the world (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, p. 176) and to audiences’ major empowerment through the internet, which made it easier for individuals’ own messages, reactions and complements to traditional media’s input, reach a broader public, in a way mostly only journalists in large media outlets used to be able to. As a result, the calls for studying journalism beyond the newsroom — the traditional, empirical representation of the journalistic field’s boundaries — are growing louder (Ahva, 2016, p. 1529; Deuze & Witschge, 2018, p. 176; Raetzsch, 2015, p. 73–74). Although there are still few studies connecting field theory to actors outside of newsrooms, the fact that field theory proves to be

particularly useful to understand various actors' disputes around the media industry (Klinenberg, 2005, p. 188) may help update the literature on the journalistic field at the face of these demands, as it connects structural elements of a field and individual trajectories — or habitus (Benson, 2009; Raabe, 2004). It is possible to see this intersection between structure and habitus by studying the arrival of new actors in the journalistic field — sometimes coming from a different habitus than the predominant one in the field —, as they try to bring change into it and, thus, leave their mark on the field (Benson, 2009, p. 487–488). Concretely, the way these actors bring change to the field is by performing distinct practices than those already established in it.

Looking at the journalistic field through the lens of practices, Ahva (2016, p. 1529) proposes an alternative to the concept of professionalism as a field's defining feature. According to her, scholars should understand “journalism as a structure of public communication that is enacted through practices by various actors — journalists and citizens alike — and assembled into fact-based, verified and timely representations in sites that exceed the newsroom” (Ahva, 2016, p. 1529). This theoretization could help understand some of the challenges posed to the journalistic field by digitalization and actors traditionally seen as outsiders to the journalistic field without falling into the dichotomy professionals versus amateurs. In this sense, members of the audience play an essential role as partners in maintaining the journalistic structure with their own media-oriented practices, which are in continuous dialog with journalists' media practices, as Raetzsch (2015, p. 66) points out: “Both forms of practice sustain journalism as a social structure and it is in practice where innovation takes place. In practice, the traditions of old media and the potentials of new media are negotiated”. Thus, journalism needs to be permeated both by the audience's practices and by journalists' practices alike, in order to survive as a credible form of public communication, a process that happens not only when users become producers (Bruns, 2010) of content, but through media-related practices performed in comments sections of news sites or social media posts as well. Another recent contribution to rethinking the journalistic field is Hepp and Loosen's (2019) concept of pioneer journalism. It focuses on “professional pioneers” as those that bring innovations into the field. These individuals are usually members of various communities of practices<sup>1</sup>, bridging the gap between insiders and outsiders of the field and proposing visions for the field's future (Hepp & Loosen, 2019, p. 5–6).

Guided by these practice-based approaches to journalism, which provide a more flexible perspective on the field and the analytical tools to study its many contradictions, I highlight in the next section the tensions between the journalistic field's traditional understanding of journalism and some of the ways it is being contested. As Deuze and Witschge (2018, p. 167) asserts, “the general approach to understanding, studying, teaching, and practicing journalism articulates the profession with a specific occupational ideology and culture”; these are based on ideals of journalism as an objective, fair, autonomous public service that provides trustworthy and timely information. Zooming in on the concept of objectivity, I exemplify how a defining ideal to journalists' occupational ideology plays out and is contested through various actors' journalistic practices.

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<sup>1</sup>In their empirical study, the authors look into the journalistic practices being performed inside traditional media outlets, journalism startups, social movements, tech companies as well as by freelance journalists.

## 4.2 Objectivity and Professional Journalism

The concept of objectivity results from a long historical development, dating as far back as the work of Greek philosopher Pythagoras, who defended intellectual impartiality through detachment from events (Ward, 2004, p. 40). Applied to the journalistic context, the concept stands on three main philosophical pillars:

“The doctrine of journalism objectivity, with its stress on facts, procedures, and impartiality, is a hybrid of the three senses of objectivity. According to traditional journalism objectivity, reports are ontologically objective if they are accurate and faithful descriptions of facts and events. Ontological objectivity in journalism involves telling it ‘the way it is’. Reports are epistemically objective if they adhere to good reporting methods and standards. Reports are procedurally objective if they present information in a manner that is fair to sources and to rival viewpoints. The ideal objective report displays all three forms of objectivity.” (Ward, 2004, p. 19)

These three pillars represent the role of objectivity in shaping traditional journalism as we know it in diverse areas, as I will detail in this section. I suggest approaching ontological objectivity and procedural objectivity by looking into the discourse journalist produce, as they refer to the practices journalists perform when selecting and structuring in their media production itself. Epistemic objectivity, in turn, can be understood as how journalists performing their work in relation to their profession’s methods and standards, which would represent the competence element of their practices.

Throughout the decades, the concept of objectivity has been criticized on many fronts, as I summarize in section 4.2.1, but it remains “a general model for conceiving, defining, arranging, and evaluating news texts, news practices, and news institutions” (Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 86). As such, it imposes a series of standards on journalistic work, such as factuality, fairness, non-bias, independence, non-interpretation, neutrality and detachment (Ward, 2004, p. 19). In addition, it encourages attempts to separate facts from values, based on the belief that facts cannot be distorted and will withstand independent verification, while values merely translate into subjective opinions (Schudson, 1978, p. 5–6).

In order to understand how the concept of objectivity got to where it is today, it is useful to look at the social factors that permeated its ascension in the United States, the country Hackett and Zhao (1998, p. 12) describe as “the historical and global bastion of the objectivity regime”. Heinonen and Luostarinen (2008, p. 231) retrace the origins of neutrality as a normative notion in journalism back to thinkers from the 17th century such as John Milton, who argued for open public spaces where everyone could express their opinion equally. In this chapter, I focus on more recent developments, starting from the 19th century. The US press was stridently partisan back then, with each newspaper explicitly defending the party that funded it both in its opinion columns and its news articles. However, the sociopolitical context in the country shifted towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, in a process that involved political parties’ loss of influence and credibility and newspapers seeking other funding models, among which advertising, in order to distance themselves from their fallen funders



(Kaplan, 2010; Ward, 2004). “This new twentieth-century journalistic regime was upheld by the dominant alignments of political culture and public authority and reinforced by technocratic occupational ideals, an increasingly monopolistic market structure, and corporate ownership of the press” (Kaplan, 2010, p. 35). Society moving towards more impersonal structures, a scientific understanding of phenomena and an aspiration towards “impartial professionals, objective facts, and fair procedures” (Ward, 2004, p. 187) are the dominant alignments Kaplan mentions in his contextualization. Thus, market reasons (the turn to advertising as a funding model) and shifts in social norms were the two factors that drove to the ascension of objectivity in the US.

One of the most significant events in this process during the 20th century were the two World Wars and the role of propaganda in mobilizing the population of the countries involved. It is after World War I, Hackett and Zhao (1998, p. 41) argue, that objectivity was translated into stricter codes of ethics and practices inside the news industry in the US, in order to avoid manipulation of public opinion (Ward, 2004, p. 194). These standards and practical rules went on to spread in different forms all over the globe, with defenders of objectivity often neglecting to mention its grounding on the particular historical and social conditions that enabled its rise in the 19th and 20th century US (Kaplan, 2010, p. 25). Schudson (2008, p. 38), however, warns precisely against this: “The American model cannot be grafted onto any other system. It emerges out of a unique history and it has been shaped by a relationship to distinctive political institutions and a unique political culture.” Despite this warning, studies show that objectivity as a regime seems to be well disseminated around the globe, with reporters almost everywhere embracing its norms (Hanitzsch et al., 2012, p. 478; Weaver & Willnat, 2012, p. 536), albeit in different ways depending on the specific context – for example, objectivity may serve as a protection for journalists in authoritarian contexts, as journalists hold onto it to steer clear of conflict with the state (Hanitzsch et al., 2012, p. 483–484).

A look into Brazilian manuals for journalists and journalism students reveals how the concept of objectivity in the country is heavily influenced by the US perspective. Pena (2005, p. 50) emphasizes the importance of objective rules of reporting to counter the reporter’s own individual subjectivity, while Bahia (1990, p. 14) refers to the various standards of objective reporting in terms of independence from the government, separation between facts and opinions, no omissions of information that is relevant to the public and accurate reporting also through transparently correcting previous mistakes. At the same time, many Brazilian journalists perceive investigative and interpretative journalism as their main task, areas that traditionally offer more room for the reporter’s own sense of what is happening (Hercovitz, 2012, p. 376). In this aspect, they seem close to German journalists, who, while considering objectivity standards central to their work and attainable in practice, see no contradiction between the tasks of providing information in a neutral and precise way while also analyzing and interpreting complex issues for the public (Weischenberg, Malik, & Scholl, 2012, p. 213–214)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>Deuze and Witschge (2018, p. 168) make valid criticisms to the studies I cite here, which are part of transnational, coordinated efforts to assess national journalistic cultures through standardized surveys. They argue that such studies feed into the myth of a homogeneous journalistic culture while basing such claims on limited samples, often restricted to journalists working for big traditional media companies. As much as I agree with them on these points, these studies remain useful as overviews when discussing the predominant ideals journalists from a broad spectrum of countries seem to abide by, as reporters working

While the historical conditions that led to the rise of objectivity may be clear, the question remains as to why journalists all over the world embraced this concept. The concept of field offers an answer. Much like lawyers, doctors, scientists and other white collar professionals, journalists built the basis for their claims to autonomy as a field and a special status as a profession upon the premise of objectivity (Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 55). This process took place in the early 20th century:

“Objectivity provided crucial support for journalists and their associations who saw professionalism as an ethical response to concerns about the press. Soon after 1900, when journalists sought evidence of their professionalism, they did not turn to the norms of subjectivity that governed opinion making — wit, satire, and persuasive rhetoric. They pointed to forms of journalism that embodied the objective norms of fairness, balance, impartiality, and verified facts. Objectivity came to define what it meant to be an autonomous, impartial, public communicator — that is, a professional.” (Ward, 2004, p. 218–219)

This shift between norms embedded on subjectivity towards standards based on objectivity was part of the broader context of how professions defended the boundaries of their fields, by acquiring specialized training and by insulating themselves from the public both through technical language and institutionally established autonomy (Schudson, 1978, p. 8–9). And, as seen in the previous section, autonomy is a permanently disputed status for the journalistic field, as it gets continuously challenged by other fields. Objectivity, particularly in the form of detachment, is, thus, the price journalists pay for autonomy (Gans, 1979, p. 183).

Pressures from the economic field were also pervasive. Authors such as Lage (1993, p. 15) see the turn to the regime of objectivity as a result of increasing commercialization of the media landscape in the US<sup>3</sup>, leading to the transformation of news into a standardized product that could reach more consumers by not taking a side. In this sense, objectivity plays an ambiguous role for the journalistic field: while it enabled journalists to assert their status in times when objectivity also became the predominant paradigm in science and society in general, it was also the way the journalistic field found to accommodate market pressures. Although the regime of objectivity remains predominant to this day, it has been criticized on various grounds for decades. The next section focuses on the main points of criticism.

### 4.2.1 A Concept in Dispute

Debates around objectivity are not new: media moguls such as Henry Luce, founder of *Time* magazine, were dismissive of the concept as far back as the 1920s and, from the 1960s onwards, in the broader social context of the civil rights movements in the US, academia also started to tear

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in large media outlets often influence how professionals working for smaller outlets or journalism students regard their trade.

<sup>3</sup>Commercialization is a quite complex term. I use Benson’s definition. According to him, there are “at least four distinct kinds of commercial pressures: concentration of ownership, level and intensity of competition, profit pressures related to type of ownership, and type of funding” (Benson, 2004, p. 281).

it apart, pointing out the impossibility of completely objective reporting, as journalists were also actors under political and commercial pressures, not neutral observers (Ward, 2004, p. 10–13).

Over the decades, more criticism has surfaced. In the 1950s and 1960s, criticism on objectivity became louder worldwide in the wake of decolonization movements, as part of a broader critique of Eurocentrism and its destructive effects on former colonies (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 19). In the late 1970s, Schudson (1978, p. 5–6) reduced objectivity to a mere belief in the separation between facts and values, based on an unrealistic definition of both. Schiller (1981, p. 2) even sees objectivity as an illusion grounded on conventions that permeate news as a cultural form. More recently, Hackett and Zhao (1998, p. 5, p. 54) blame objectivity for masking the many problems concentration of media ownership is actually responsible for while alienating journalists from their political role as citizens by demanding they exclude all judgment from their newswork.

Objectivity has long been far from unanimous among journalists themselves, as studies looking into historical aspects show. Even in the 1920s, as it rose to become a predominant paradigm for journalism, it was an ideal journalists clung to although they knew it was unattainable (Schudson, 1978, p. 157–158). The 1960s saw a generational conflict around objectivity between editors and younger journalists – with the latter already criticizing the formers’ preference for official sources back then (Schudson, 1978, p. 161–162). This might be traced back, in part, to the coverage around US Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s, which had driven many journalists into questioning their routine of balancing contradictory claims when they are impossible to check by simply citing “both sides”. This interpretation of procedural objectivity, i.e. fairness towards rival viewpoints, led journalists into disseminating false claims such as the ones that fueled McCarthyism’s hunt on alleged communists (Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 45; Zelizer, 1993, p. 230–233). Later, in the 1990s and 2000s, scandals around fabricated stories in the further helped discrediting objectivity, as fact-checkers that abode by objectivity standards sometimes failed for years to catch reporters’ fabrications (McNair, 2017, p. 1326)<sup>4</sup>.

Connected to the discussion on professionalism and autonomy as a field yet also looking into discourse, Zelizer (2010, p. 188) proposes to regard journalists as forming an interpretative community, using “discourse and interpretation to discuss, consider, and at times challenge the reigning consensus surrounding journalistic practice, facilitating their collective adaptation to changing technologies, changing circumstances, and the changing structure of newswork”. However, as her analysis of the traditional media coverage in the US of Saddam Hussein’s hanging in 2006 shows, these adaptation strategies “do not always work in the direction of full and complete relay of information” (Zelizer, 2010, p. 188), as a commitment to objectivity in the ontological sense of “telling it ‘the way it is’” (Ward, 2004, p. 19) would require. Rather, these strategies may lead to the omission of certain informative elements in order to secure journalists’ autonomy as a field in face of challenges to this autonomy presented by the coverage of events or changes in society. These findings seem to reinforce claims that objectivity allows journalists to maximize their autonomy while obscuring their own political power and influence over what gets reported as news (Cook, 1998, p. 7). Moreover, they indicate there may contradictions

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<sup>4</sup>In 2018, the Relotius case, involving an award-winning reporter who for years fabricated stories for the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* without being caught, revived the discussion around how newsrooms can improve their fact-checking routines in order to prevent such frauds (Fichtner, 2018).

between objectivity standards and the way they are put into practice in daily journalistic work. The next section focuses on this aspect.

### 4.2.2 Objectivity in Practice

In this chapter, I explore this articulation between professionalism, objectivity and journalistic practices by zooming in on key journalistic practices and how they relate to the three forms of objectivity that Ward (2004, p. 19) describes. As a key component of the journalistic field's notion of professionalism, objectivity sets the rules that underlie many of the current established journalistic practices. In its procedural form, objectivity plays out in the practices of selecting and quoting sources with the goal of doing justice to diverging viewpoints in the way information is presented. Through its commitment to "just the facts", ontological objectivity spurs practices of verification of information, as well as practices of writing and editing reports, as objectivity guides journalists in their selection of the appropriate format to relay facts (as news pieces) and opinions (as op-eds, for example) (Ward, 2004, p. 21). Epistemic objectivity assures that reporting standards are met across the various practices that compose journalistic work.

The conception of objectivity as a "set of practices" (Ward, 2004, p. 21) refers once again to the process of professionalization of journalism, as possessing a specific training – thus, the competence element of routinized practices pertaining to the field – is one of the main requirements for belonging to a profession. Tuchman (1978, p. 65) exemplifies this with her observations in US newsrooms, where journalists expressed their professionalism by knowing the basic journalistic practices well enough to deal with various types of stories in a timely manner. Particularly in the case of extraordinary, unexpected stories, journalists needed solid practices to fall back to when trying to get the story out as fast as possible<sup>5</sup>.

Practices of source selection provide a good starting point for my analysis of how objectivity as a norm diverges from journalists' daily work, as they provide important insights into journalists' relationship with society and politics (Franklin, Lewis, & Williams, 2010, p. 202; Gans, 1979, p. 259; Zelizer, 2008, p. 281). Gans defines sources through their function as providers of information for journalists:

"By 'sources' I mean the actors whom journalists observe or interview, including interviewees who appear on the air or who are quoted in magazine articles, and those who only supply background information or story suggestions. For my purpose, however, the most salient characteristic of sources is that they provide information as members or representatives of organized and unorganized interest groups, and yet larger sectors of nation and society." (Gans, 1979, p. 80)

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<sup>5</sup>Deuze and Witschge (2018, p. 169) criticize classic studies conducted in newsrooms, arguing that these studies "have supported the dominance of certain interpretations of (the role of) journalism by focusing on specific institutional arrangements within particular privileged settings". This is a valid point and my own focus on journalistic practices performed outside of such structures is an attempt to counter this dominant focus on newsrooms. However, I still cite from these studies, as they pioneered observations of journalistic practices and how they contradict the normative understanding of journalism's relationship with objectivity.

As this definition illustrates, sources do not usually stand just for themselves, but as representatives of larger groups in society. This is, however, only one of the three criteria sources must fulfill in one of the central practices influenced by objectivity, i.e. their selection: eligible as sources are “those who have accredited knowledge, who are recognized representatives of the relevant institutions, and/or who are personally directly involved in the story” (Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 84–85). However, the authors criticize these criteria as establishing a hierarchy that enables the exclusion of less powerful voices from the public sphere (Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 87). Reporters’ preference for government officials and other institutionally powerful sources is “one of the most consistently-replicated findings of research on American journalism” (Hallin, Manoff, & Weddle, 1993, p. 753). As some of the studies I cite in this section show, not much has changed since Hallin et al. (1993) made this remark decades ago. There are multiple possible reasons for this: from objectivity’s technocratic nature (Kaplan, 2010, p. 35) to reporters’ limited time available for individual stories (Gans, 2010, p. 96). While some see source selection and other newsgathering practices as journalists’ attempts to mediate their delicate relationship with public officials (Ryfe, 2006, p. 138–139), others regard source selection in traditional newsrooms as reproducing the hierarchy that exists in society: the powerful have more access than those at the margins (Benson, 2004, p. 279–280; Gans, 1979, p. 81).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, various scholars made contributions to understanding how journalists made sourcing decisions in US newsrooms, revealing objectivity’s implementation and shortcomings. The studies ranged from non-participant observations in diverse contexts such as TV stations and newspapers’ newsrooms (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978) to historical research (Schiller, 1981; Schudson, 1978). One finding across these studies was journalists’ reliance on public officials as their preferred sources. “All other things being equal, journalists prefer to resort to sources in official positions of authority and responsibility”, Gans (1979, p. 130–131) observed. This preference served many purposes: from safeguarding journalists from criticism that could eventually come from higher up in the news organization to increasing a story’s dramatic potential. Quoting “both sides” within the official spectrum also protected journalists from criticism originating from one of the affected parties (Gans, 1979, p. 175–176) and helped them avoid fringe sources with more radical views, as they usually attracted more criticism from other actors and the audience (Gans, 1979, p. 276).

Tuchman (1978, p. 93) sees journalists’ preference for official sources as the result of generalizations they make as they gain experience in the field. In short, journalists think most sources defend their own agendas and, thus, must prove their reliability through a series of contacts with the journalists on different occasions, which happens more often and easily through institutional channels. Officials’ own agendas are outweighed by their access to potentially exclusive information regarding their institution. In addition, institutions are seen as inherently more reliable and legitimate, so that those speaking for them also gain this seal of quality. Thus, authority as a source often overlaps with official authority: “that same person outside that position saying the same thing would be more likely to be seen as providing speculation or hearsay” (Cook, 1998, p. 97).

Schudson (2008, p. 89) describes a similar mechanism as the way journalists cope with events’

inherent unpredictability: “News-gathering on a daily basis means maintaining contact with the organizations that most reliably produce usable items of news, and cultivating relations with those sources that are closest to and most knowledgeable about the regular news-makers”. Other authors, like Peña, Rodríguez, and Sáez (2015, p. 62) see exactly that as a reason for mistrusting official sources the most, as they benefit from the attention their institutional status affords them to spread their agenda through the media. Still, whether taken with a grain of salt or in good faith, a downside of over-reliance on official sources is that journalists end up in a symbiotic relationship with them, which might lead to journalists not pursuing stories that could upset these sources (Gans, 2003, p. 51).

In addition, the sources journalists turn to might be decisive to the interpretations that eventually prevail of events and even what makes it to the news, as sources’ values “are implicit in the information they provide” (Gans, 1979, p. 145). Tuchman (1978, p. 210–211) comes to a similar assessment, adding that preference for official sources turn their perspectives into accepted facts, discouraging dissent if it comes from outside powerful spheres. Berkowitz (2009, p. 102) highlights the fact that sources’ interpretations not only apply to the issue or event at hand, but rather may shape the long term “ongoing meanings in a culture”. Two decades after Tuchman, Gans and Schudson, Hackett and Zhao (1998, p. 142) assert journalists still mostly accept official sources’ accounts of events as facts.

As a result, in the “power struggle over what messages enter the symbolic arena” (Gans, 1979, p. 249) represented by source selection, social movements and other marginalized actors are in a weaker position when it comes to presenting their take on events. Tuchman became aware of just how starkly these sources’ standing amongst journalists contrasts with that of official sources during her various rounds of non-participant observation in US newsrooms:

“I never observed these reporters contacting the leaders of social movements. Nor did they search for grass-roots leaders, preferring instead the leaders of local political clubs. (...) They contacted the powerful, the politician with the resources to accomplish his or her ambitions, not the merely dissident or dissatisfied.” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 81)

Bennett’s (1990) indexing theory confirms Tuchman’s observations as part of a broader pattern. According to this theory, journalists focus on the range of opinions represented within institutional blocs, i.e. the opinions defended by the governing party – or parties – and the opposition to issues up for debate. They build an “index” of dominant, official sources (Bennett, 1990, p. 124–125). This theory has been tested in a series of studies, especially in relation to wars, such as the Iraq war and the war in Kosovo. Their major finding: when no institutional sources voice opposing views, for example disagreeing with a country’s participation in a war, the press often does not report on these perspectives, even if civil society actors articulate them (Bennett, 2010, p. 108).

The relationship between practice, objectivity and professionalization is also part of the application of news values to determine newsworthiness, as this is a process rooted in practices journalists routinize as they gather experience in the field (Harcup & Neill, 2017, p. 1470; Wyss,

2004, p. 310). Much like it happens with source selection, determining newsworthiness fast and effectively through internalized practices was also part of professionalism, according to the journalists that Tuchman (1978, p. 50–51) observed, helping them allocate resources and schedule coverage efforts.

While the concept of news selection refers to the news that eventually get published, newsworthiness is defined by “cognitive and normative concepts that refer to what journalists believe should constitute the news” (Strömbäck, Karlsson, & Hopmann, 2012, p.719). These cognitive concepts were first critically summarized by Galtung and Ruge (1965) as consisting of cultural proximity, unexpectedness, frequency, unambiguity, continuity, reference to elite nations or people, and meaningfulness of events concerning the public journalists are reporting to. O’Neill and Harcup (2009, p. 164–165) point out that it is ironic these criteria, which Galtung and Ruge (1965) initially just deduced without much empirical proof, became a canon in scholars’ understanding of newsworthiness. The authors themselves updated Galtung and Ruge’s list through their own analysis, building on research that points out the need to take into account market influences, and incorporating criteria such as the presence of celebrities and entertainment value (O’Neill & Harcup, 2009, p. 167–168)<sup>6</sup>

Extraordinary occurrences and those coming from authoritative places such as government institutions are also very likely to become news (Allan, 2010, p. 63). These criteria relate to the historical and social conditions journalists are experiencing, as “defining what is newsworthy entails drawing on contemporary understandings of the significance of events as rules for human behavior, institutional behavior, and motives” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 209–210). At the same time, they also pertain to newsrooms’ internal dynamics, as Gans’s (1979, p. 90–93) description of highlighting practices makes clear, that is when journalists employed news values to delete the ordinary in a story and leave just its special aspects in order to be able to “sell” the story to the editor. These highlighting practices also favored official sources and stories focusing on conflict, as they brought out the extraordinary component that made a story newsworthy. Over forty years later, Harcup and Neill (2017, p. 1483) also came to the conclusion that “who is selecting news, for whom, in what medium and by what means (and available resources), may well be as important as whatever news values may or may not be inherent in any potential story”, emphasizing the sociopolitical context surrounding news values.

Not only story and source selection are permeated by objectivity as a socially established concept, it serves as an “invisible frame” (Schiller, 1981, p. 2) for practices of editing and publishing as well. However, sometimes journalists also find ways to add a certain flexibility to this frame, as reporters’ practice of selecting and quoting sources whose opinion they personally agree with shows: “reporters may remove their own opinions from the story by getting others to say what they themselves think” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 95). Thus, all these processes of selection, both of sources and stories, reveal one of objectivity’s contradictions: although they attempt to

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<sup>6</sup>In a later study, they updated these criteria again, not only analyzing the frontpages of 15 UK newspapers but also the most popular news stories on social media. Four new criteria entered their list: arresting audio-visuals, conflict (ranging from controversies to war), exclusivity (as in news scoops), and shareability, i.e. “stories that are thought likely to generate sharing and comments via Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media” (Harcup & Neill, 2017, p. 1482). These new criteria raise questions about how journalists might be structuring their content differently to meet online audiences’ demands.

exclude subjective values from their coverage, reporters inevitably express values each time they decide what stories to cover and which people to interview. This fits Cook's (1998, p. 7) criticism of objectivity as a means of obscuring journalists' own power to decide what gets covered while, at the same time, investing their practices with authority due to their epistemical alignment with objectivity standards.

How does objectivity play out in another of its main pillars, the verification of information that should assure ontological objectivity? Journalists' verification procedures are both "a political and a professional accomplishment" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 82–83), in the sense that facts are ultimately negotiated in the context of professionalism and of the society journalists live in. Thus, supplementary information that support the initial claim, such as documents or other interview partners that independently tell the same story, have been defined among professional journalists as ways to verify a story (Tuchman, 1978, p. 88). However, these routines are not perfect. When a piece of information cannot be verified, journalists resort to quoting opposing opinions around it without taking sides, leaving it up to the reader to decide which of the contradictory claims she believes, a process that maintains journalists' image as objective communicators yet demands a subjective reception from their audience (Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 44–45; Tuchman, 1978, p. 90–91). Yet, like with the coverage of McCarthyism, this might have grave consequences for the public sphere.

Another common mode of verification is journalists' own presence at events. Applying the concept of witnessing (Peters, 2001) to journalists' work, Zelizer (2007) assesses how journalists act as eyewitnesses to events through their presence on site, a role that assigns credibility to their accounts: "Drawing from the authority gained by being on the site of an event being reported, eyewitnessing refers to an ability to account *subjectively* for the events, actions, or practices seen with one's own eyes" (Zelizer, 2007, p. 411, emphasis my own). In other words, the fact the journalist witnessed events as they unfolded assigns the status of verified information to their own impressions, something they would otherwise cross-check if it had come from other sources. This is particularly effective when the audience has not experienced events first-hand (Zelizer, 2007, p. 411). However, it also raises many questions that refer to fact selection in a regime of objectivity: "who decides what is worth witnessing, and can even the most professional and detached of observers record the essential truth or meaning of an event? It is possible but not easy to transcend the filters of culture, class, and gender" (Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 185). Moreover, there are concerns about how journalists' presence alone can influence other actors' behavior as events unfold.

This tension between journalists' aspiration towards being neutral observers of events and the influence their presence exerts is clear in the normative notion of journalists as watchdogs, guarding society's moral values and reporting on those that hurt these values, as Gans (2010, p. 97) exemplifies: "in fact, sometimes journalists function as watchdogs by their mere presence, for politicians do not curse when reporters are around and US military does not commit atrocities when video cameras are there to record them". At the same time, this is a conservative role, in the sense that journalists act as watchdogs not by promoting advances in terms of innovative policies or values, but by preventing things from getting worse or bringing abuses to



light through journalistic investigation (Schudson, 2008, p. 15). Watchdog journalism is based on the conception of the media as a Fourth Estate, keeping the other three centers of power in a democracy in check, an ideal that has its roots in 17th century Great Britain (Hampton, 2010, p. 6; Haller, 2004, p. 137). As with the objectivity ideal itself, the Fourth Estate presents various shortcomings when put into practice, especially through the limitations imposed by commercialization and conglomerates' other interests (Hampton, 2010, p. 6; Hercovitz, 2012, p. 377; Mellado, 2012, p. 397). In addition, Couldry and Curran (2003, p. 4) question the ideal of the Fourth Estate itself, arguing that it distracts from the power media itself increasingly wield in today's societies, which remains unchecked.

Taken together, the studies mentioned so far support the notion that journalism, analyzed here through the concept of objectivity and the various practices it permeates, is inserted in a specific sociopolitical context, marked by power relations and tensions around the status quo. Changes in journalistic practices often originate from broader social shifts, as journalists seek to react to them and guarantee their professional autonomy. As the previous sections described, objectivity itself rose to become an integral part of journalistic practice as a reaction to changes in society (Ward, 2004, p. 33). Can other values rise to take its place in the 21st century? Objectivity as a paradigm has not been replaced yet, although it faces increasing cynicism and criticism (Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 8–9). Schudson (1978, p. 193) stated in the 1970s that there were no concrete ideas in sight of what could replace objectivity, but there is still openness for new forms of reporting.

While many authors have been attempting to understand the influence of the internet on journalistic practices (Ananny & Russell, 2013; Eldridge & Steel, 2016; Lewis, 2012; Broersma & Graham, 2016), I consider the rise of the Web only one of the many shifts affecting journalism both in and outside of traditional newsrooms. Thus, my focus goes beyond online journalism. Instead, in the next section, I turn my attention to journalistic practices being performed outside traditional newsrooms — online and offline — and that do not abide by objectivity standards. Looking at this scholarship reveals some of the possible futures beyond the regime of objectivity that have been put into practice in alternative media structures for the past decades.

### **4.3 Alternative Journalism's Counterpoints to Objectivity**

The main focus of this section is alternative journalism and the possible alternatives it proposes to the regime of objectivity. Before defining what I describe as alternative journalism, however, it is necessary to also briefly take into account the broader literature on alternative media, in which scholarship on alternative journalism is often embedded (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 117). The task of defining alternative media itself is quite challenging, as alternative media forms vary extensively. Among the most fruitful theorizations is Atton's (2002, p. 27) typology of alternative media, covering aspects such as content, visuals, distribution, transformation of social relations and of communication processes. However, he also recognizes that alternative media are rarely radically distinct of traditional media in all dimensions he proposes, arguing instead

against puristic definitions of alternative media that deny a continuous dialog between them and a broader social context, of which traditional media and their practices are also a part (Atton, 2002, p. 29; Atton, 2004, p. 158–159).

Bailey, Cammaerts, and Carpentier (2008, p. x) argue for a definition of alternative media that includes efforts to democratize communication, as many alternative media initiatives emerge from the need to counter the marginalization or utter exclusion of certain communities in an increasingly homogeneous and commercial media landscape (Couldry, 2002, p. 172; Russell, 2016, p. 144; Streitmatter, 2001, p. 250–251). Like Atton, they point out that the heterogeneity of alternative media initiatives presents a difficulty in theorizing them, as most definitions end up excluding important aspects. At the same time, alternative media's elusiveness may be an asset against control from the government or the market — one could say it defends their autonomy as a field against external influences such as all-encompassing legislation (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 29)<sup>7</sup>.

While the media practices I focus on in my research are part of alternative media with a political focus, not all alternative media forms are explicitly political, they may also be spaces for unconventional artistic expression, appropriation of popular culture or personal musings (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 2). “Alternative media can be understood as those media produced outside the forces of market economics and the state. They can include the media of protest groups, dissidents, ‘fringe’ political organizations, even fans and hobbyists” as Atton (2004, p. 3) exemplifies<sup>8</sup>.

In a broader sense, alternative media involve “practices of symbolic production which contest (in some way) media power itself i.e. the concentration of symbolic power in media institutions” (Couldry, 2002, p.27–28). Thus, I argue that one overarching characteristic of alternative media is that they are produced outside of traditional newsrooms and other formal spaces of the mass media industry and seek to contest traditional media discourses.

The historical context alternative media are inserted in also plays an important role, as the characteristics of alternative media vary through time according to what characterizes the mainstream they seek to counter (Atton & Hamilton, 2008; Waltz, 2005). While today's traditional media presented a bourgeois challenge to royal authority by decentralizing information in previous centuries, their own authority is now being challenged by other forms of media. Therefore, Waltz offers a definition of alternative media that is based on some of the broader elements of traditional media and the possible alternatives to them:

“Present-day mainstream media are usually considered to be:

- large-scale and geared towards large, homogeneous (segments of) audiences;
- state-owned organizations or commercial companies;

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<sup>7</sup>Bailey et al. (2008, Chapter 1) also summarize four theoretical approaches to alternative media, showing that the scholarship also reflects alternative media projects' diversity: community-centered, alternative to traditional media, civil society-linked, and rhizomatic. The authors defend that these approaches are not mutually exclusive, but rather complement each other by emphasizing different aspects.

<sup>8</sup>However, there are also authors that propose concepts that cover exclusively alternative media with a political focus, such as Streitmatter (2001), who labels such initiatives as dissident media, and Downing, Ford, Gil, and Stein (2001), with their concept of political-action-oriented radical media.

- vertically (or hierarchically) structured organizations staffed by professionals;
- carriers of dominant discourses or representations.

Alternative media can take one or more opposite positions on these matters:

- small-scale and oriented towards specific communities, possibly disadvantaged groups, respecting their diversity;
- independent of state and market;
- horizontally (or non-hierarchically) structured, allowing for the facilitation of audience access and participation within the frame of democratization and multiplicity;
- carriers of non-dominant (possibly counter-hegemonic) discourses and representations, stressing the importance of self-representation.” (Waltz, 2005, p. 18)

In this sense, if traditional media and society as a whole change their characteristics and power structures, alternative media will change as well, trying to oppose them in different forms<sup>9</sup>. Due to digitalization processes, traditional media are currently already changing. Processes such as the emergence of small, less hierarchical journalistic start ups or some outlets' specialization on audience niches are examples of this development.

However broad the concept is, there are also discussions among scholars around what may or may not count as alternative media. A particularly contentious aspect is whether far-right media should be considered alternative media. While some authors do not regard them as alternative media because they defend an exacerbation of inequalities that already exist in the current status quo (Downing, 1995b, p. 240; Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 209), others include far-right media in their conceptualization as long as their production structures are outside of traditional media (Waltz, 2005). From the perspective of scholarship on public spheres, which I explore in the next section, authors like Wimmer (2007, p. 165–166) argue that far-right media do not constitute counter public spheres, as they do not have an emancipatory and democracy-strengthening character required by the normative understanding of counter public spheres. At the same time, their communicative strategies tend to find greater resonance in traditional media than that of left-wing movements (Downing et al., 2001, p. 93; Rucht, 1994, p. 352–353)<sup>10</sup>. With the rise of right-wing populism around the world, more and more scholars will attempt to solve this dilemma over the next few years. This is not, however, the focus of the present study, although I will make some considerations on engaged journalism's place in this discussion in chapter 9.

Another discussion is whether “alternative” is the best term to describe this kind of media. While some authors defend it as the clearest formulation for these media's role as an alterna-

<sup>9</sup>For an overview of this dialectic process throughout the centuries, see Atton and Hamilton (2008, Chapter 1).

<sup>10</sup>Downing et al. (2001, Chapter 8) offers an extensive historical discussion on far-right media. In addition, Lieb (2017) delineates some key points to differentiate between media criticism from far-right media and media criticism performed by progressive alternative media.

tive to traditional media (Kidd, 1999, p. 113), others consider it too vague and marginalizing, reducing these kind of media to their oppositional role (Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 207)<sup>11</sup>. Alternative media's heterogeneity probably makes it impossible to find an all-encompassing term that fits all cases, but I side with the authors that believe alternative media is the best formulation to describe this phenomenon so far. From a media practices perspective, the term alternative media makes it explicit that these media projects challenge "dominant media practices" in various ways, performing practices that present an alternative to already established ones (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 171). Practices created or altered in the context of alternative media are often permeated by elements such as "horizontal and dialogic forms of communication, an emphasis on self-reflexivity, the employment of everyday language, critical approaches to the media and its objects, mobilizing power and the significance of prefigurative politics" (Atton, 2002, p. 154). Following this dialectic relationship between traditional and alternative media, alternative journalism presents a challenge to the regime of objectivity that guides most traditional journalism (Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 208–209).

"Alternative journalism proceeds from dissatisfaction not only with mainstream coverage of certain issues and topics, but also with the epistemology of news. Its critique emphasizes alternatives to, *inter alia*, conventions of news sources and representation; the inverted pyramid of news texts, the hierarchical and capitalized economy of commercial journalism, the professional, elite basis of journalism as a practice; the professional norm of objectivity; and the subordinate role of audience as receiver." (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 1)

As this passage makes clear, alternative journalism brings changes to a multitude of that areas journalism studies focus on. In this section, I focus primarily on how alternative journalism's challenge to objectivity impacts practices. Much like alternative media, there are various types of alternative journalism and, thus, of practices performed in these structures. In the next pages, I detail some of these forms, such as citizen journalism, community journalism, advocacy journalism and development journalism. These concepts present distinct ways of challenging the objectivity ideal traditional journalism is currently based on and, as alternative media in general, they are rooted in specific contexts.

Community media is an umbrella term for grassroots media initiatives centered on a specific community, often — yet not always — defined geographically, such as a marginalized neighborhood in a big city and with institutional structures that favor the participation of members of the community (Medrado, 2007, p. 125–127). They are also at the intersection of public service and commercial media, often, in practice, adopting strategies from both in search of funding (Medrado, 2007, p. 126). The main defining characteristic of community media, however, is their

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<sup>11</sup>Another aspect in this discussion, though not central to my research questions, is how audiences define alternative media. Rauch (2015) surveyed readers of conservative and progressive English-speaking large alternative media websites and found these users had a surprisingly broad understanding of what constitute alternative media, including political blogs, foreign media outlets, partisan TV channels like Fox News or social media like Facebook. This may break the theoretical dichotomy between traditional and alternative media in the scholarship and should be explored further.

focus on the community they serve (Medrado, 2007, p. 126; Vatikiotis, 2005, p. 14), emphasizing topics that are important to its members and often countering marginalizing representations that circulate on traditional media, as the example of community media in Brazil shows (see 2.8). Scholarship on community media has often focused on how this commitment to the community translates into institutional and structural arrangements that lead to more democratization of communication (Vatikiotis, 2005, p. 16).

By proposing the term citizen media, Rodriguez (2001, p. xii) suggests a debate that goes beyond focusing on community media's potential for democratization of communication, taking into account more subjective aspects, such as how members of a community begin to see themselves differently by taking an active role in media-making and, thus, in the enactment of their role as citizens:

“Referring to ‘citizens’ media’ implies first that a collectivity is enacting its citizenship by actively intervening and transforming the established mediascape; second, that these media are contesting social codes, legitimized identities, and institutionalized social relations; and third, that these communication practices are empowering the community involved, to the point where these transformations and changes are possible.” (Rodriguez, 2001, p. 20)

This description relates to Couldry's (2002) perspective of alternative media contesting current power relations in the media landscape, something that happens mainly through practices, as individuals begin to reflect on their quotidian media practices and to develop new ones that highlight their role as producers of content, not just recipients (Atton & Hamilton, 2008; Stephansen, 2016). This presents a challenge to objectivity in the sense that citizen journalists are usually not interested in hearing all perspectives on an issue, but rather in presenting the perspective of their own communities. As empirical studies on citizen media in various countries have found, citizen journalists consider traditional news values less important than their own direct connection to the issue they are covering (Fröhlich, Quiring, & Engesser, 2012; Kopp & Schönhagen, 2008; Paulussen et al., 2008; Robinson & Deshano, 2011).

Another form of alternative journalism that challenges objectivity, advocacy journalism has been around even before objectivity became the predominant ideal in traditional media (Waisbord, 2009, p. 372). There are currently two understandings of advocacy journalism. One form assigns professional journalists the role of advocating for the weaker, featuring marginalized viewpoints in their coverage of world affairs and, thus, addressing power imbalance in society by tipping the scale a tad more towards the disadvantaged. The other form is performed by civil society actors that assimilate media routines in order to “influence reporting, and ultimately, affect public policies” (Waisbord, 2009, p. 371). Unlike advocacy journalism performed by newsroom journalists, the civic version of advocacy journalism does not question current news routines and values, but rather tries to adapt to them in order to gain more positive coverage to the issues they advocate for (Waisbord, 2009, p. 378).

While advocacy journalism is frowned upon in countries with a strong objectivity tradition, such as the US, it is more widely practiced in countries where the media landscape presents

problems of concentration of ownership and power imbalances dating back to a recent past of authoritarianism, such as in many Latin American countries, leading journalists to question the regime of objectivity in such an unequal context. “Where the norm of impartiality does not command strong allegiances among journalists nor is expected to be enforced in daily practice, advocacy journalism has fewer restrictions” (Waisbord, 2009, p. 375).

The local context was also important for the rise of development journalism. First proposed in the late 1960s in the Philippines, development journalism was fueled by the belief, especially in recently independent nations, that journalism should “play a role in facilitating and fostering national development” (Xiage, 2009, p. 357). Here, journalists assert objectivity’s inability to forge national unity and, thus, no longer regard it as an ideal to guide their work (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 21). This translates into goals such as empowering communities towards improving their own lives, and following up on government projects while maintaining a constructive relationship with the government itself. This last point in particular draws a lot of criticism, as critics fear that the idea of development journalism, when interacting with local contexts, may prove problematic, aiding authoritarian governments in their attempt to stay in power for lack of a critical press to perform a more confrontational, watchdog role. In particular, a certain relativism regarding press freedom among development journalism proponents that follow a more pro-government stance is seen as problematic (Xiage, 2009, p. 359–364). Seeking to address these shortcomings, Shah (1996, p. 147) proposes the concept of emancipatory journalism, relying on an explicit affiliation to new social movements instead of governments as a way of making good development journalism. While earlier models of development journalism often featured one-sided praises of governments’ major modernization and infrastructure projects, “emancipatory journalism is bottom-up reporting, resulting in news that includes people affected by modernization. It values their perspectives, consults them as sources, and publicizes their needs and their plight” (Shah, 1996, p. 155).

Despite their specificities, all four approaches to alternative journalism summarized here also have a lot in common, particularly their emphasis on marginalized communities or individuals as well as social movements, whether by featuring them as sources or by enabling them to be producers of their own content<sup>12</sup>. I come back to the question of sourcing in alternative media, which is as central as its critique of objectivity, later in this section. Before that, however, I would like to make clear one more theoretical approach to understanding alternative journalism: field theory.

Alternative journalism does not fit perfectly into the categories Bourdieu’s field theory offers due to its hybrid aspects, however, it is possible that it might occupy a liminal position between various (sub-)fields, such as the journalistic and the activist fields (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 133–134)<sup>13</sup>. As the discussions around autonomy in the journalistic field in section 4.1

<sup>12</sup>Community, citizen, advocacy and development journalism are, of course, only some of the ways of theorizing alternative media. There are also discussions around public journalism (see, for instance, Fröhlich et al. (2012), Lünenborg (2005), Ryfe (2006) and Paulussen et al. (2008)) that are not featured here due to their proximity to traditional media structures.

<sup>13</sup>Some studies also indicate that both fields are increasingly converging under specific circumstances, as tweets by newsroom journalists and activists around #Ferguson exemplify: actors from both fields tweeted about “similar themes pertaining to news dissemination and amplification, criticism of media

show, each field is in permanent struggle to assert itself against other fields around it. Thus, field theory might help to understand the dialectic process between traditional and alternative journalism, the attempts at differentiation between them and also within the field of alternative journalism itself, as actors explore its multiplicity (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 130). In addition, field theory also provides a link between the broader context alternative journalism is inserted and the individual, as well as the practices she performs:

“To study the practices of alternative journalism, we need to examine the social and political processes such as organizational methods and ideological disputes. We also need to examine the ways in which people work. How do they learn to become journalists or editors? How do they identify and choose their stories? How do they select and represent their sources? Are alternative journalists truly independent, or are their working methods influenced by the practices of mainstream journalists? These questions about media practice require an understanding of its practitioners: their values, motivations, attitudes, ideologies, history, education and relationships. In other words, this is to examine what Pierre Bourdieu terms *habitus* (...).” (Atton, 2002, p. 77)

Although some of the questions Atton poses are out of the scope of the present study, they shed light on the various aspects surrounding practices performed in alternative media, from the broader field perspective to the more specific questions of *habitus* and how it permeates practice. While the regime of objectivity requires journalists to leave their personal trajectories and opinions outside the newsroom, alternative media are usually built around the trajectories and opinions of those who make it, whether they are producers, sources or part of the audience.

Newsroom journalists think of themselves as outsiders, but they are a product of their societies and that, in turn, influences their practices: class, gender and race play an important role in source selection, with journalists often having more access to those of a similar background (Gans, 1979, p. 120–125), which means upper or middle class in most societies (Raabe, 2000; Weaver & Willnat, 2012). Atton and Hamilton (2008, p. 44–45) assert the same is true for alternative journalists in the Global North, where alternative media tends to be urban and counter-cultural, while the Global South sees more rural and grassroots initiatives, with the involvement of individuals with less formal education. However, my own research shows the difference is not so clear-cut, with urban centers in the Global South also brewing with alternative media produced by individuals from the upper and middle classes, often with a formal education in journalism. Although these individuals might inhabit a similar *habitus* as their colleagues in traditional newsrooms, they are often drawn to alternative journalism by their disillusion with traditional media's practices, grounded on objectivity and often distorted by the effects of increasing commercialization (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 46–47; Waltz, 2005, p. 7–8)

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and police, as well as the tendency to engage in affective framing” (Barnard, 2018, p. 2264), with activists often borrowing from professional journalists' reporting and verification techniques to disseminate information in their own tweets and journalists venting their frustrations toward police violence and other injustices they observed while covering action on the ground. The author attributes this to an increasingly mediatized environment that reveals the overlap between the margins of both fields.

and by alternative journalism's acknowledgment that allegedly subjective values also flow into reporting (Atton, 2010, p. 172–173).

Through his research on youth media groups in the US, Klinenberg (2005) inquires about media activists' role in the journalistic field, something that most field theorists neglect, with their focus on newsrooms. With their focus on media, these activists are an example of new actors entering the journalistic field, bringing in their own expectations:

“Media activists insist they are making necessary intrusions, because mainstream organizations have failed to live up to their own professional standards of fairness and accuracy. They claim that their political intervention is designed to help reporters and editors realize their own craft values — even though the activists themselves lack the cultural capital to produce the journalism they desire.” (Klinenberg, 2005, p. 175)

As media activists accumulate cultural capital, this may lead to disputes in a hybrid news space, “a rich and tumultuous space where boundary battles are being waged all around” (Russell, 2016, p. 37). This accumulation of cultural capital among actors outside of traditional newsrooms can be seen in a group Russell (2016, p. 9) calls media vanguard: “generally journalists, activists, communication-technology hackers — exerting significant influence in today's media environment through innovation and media competence”. Unlike media literacy, which focuses primarily on audiences and their ability to critically relate to media content — be it by producing it themselves and, thus, acquiring a deeper understanding of how the media work, or apprehending it as one representation of the truth but not its entirety (Livingstone, 2003, p. 1) —, media competence requires an additional layer of media-savviness:

“It is about leveraging convergent media to tell stories across platforms and possessing the ability and willingness to push beyond existing practices and genres. It is about being aware and scrutinizing the ways news shapes reality. And it is about seizing on the malleability of networked communications to move beyond the boundaries of what scholars have called the ‘media logics’ of the mass-media era and consciously embedding sociopolitical values into the network and its expanding platforms and genres.” (Russell, 2016, p. 9)

That kind of competence can usually only be acquired through formal, professional training or through an intensive, self-taught trajectory with media technologies. I argue that, in a context of fast sociopolitical changes, the individuals that possess this background fall back into practices they already used to perform in other contexts, putting them at the service of protest movements they support.

The media vanguard's competence is often guided by a belief in free information (for instance, in my case study, most groups published their content under Creative Commons licenses), a mistrust towards government authorities and an effort to decentralize power over content and its production (Russell, 2016, p. 15–16). This combination of media competence and a critical position towards the current sociopolitical system might lead to differences in practice between



alternative and traditional media. Although Ahva (2016, p. 168) rightly points out that “it would be a mistake to assume that the types of journalism emerging outside and alongside legacy news organizations are necessarily different or oppositional to the core values, ideals, and practices of the profession”, it is essential to recognize alternative journalism’s oppositional stance to many of these values and practices and its attempts to subvert them, as can be seen in its stance towards objectivity:

“Rather than seeing objectivity and its associated procedures — balance, neutrality, and reliance on bureaucratically credible sources — as a means for discovering truth, they use engagement with the subjects of their work as a more effective path to discovering the truth of issues and events.” (Russell, 2016, p. 138)

New journalistic values might be emerging from this dispute, being put into practice alongside those carried out in traditional media. Ananny and Russell (2013, p. 22–30) list participation and engagement, a reemerging commitment to facilitating pluralism and dialog, an emphasis on collaboration instead of competition among journalists, and an awareness of information algorithms as some of the values brought by new actors into the journalistic field. It is interesting to try to apprehend how these new values permeate actors’ use of traditional reporting techniques, understood as “both the tools to collect information and styles and formats used to tell news and information” (Waisbord, 2013b, p. 187), such as interviews and videos documenting events on the ground, and how, in turn, media activists use typical journalistic approaches and language to gain legitimacy (Klinenberg, 2005, p. 189). When actors in alternative media adapt or create their own journalistic practices, they are making an attempt at imagining a different kind of journalism: “alternative journalism will tend, through its very practices, to examine notions of truth, reality, objectivity, expertise, authority and credibility” (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 135), i.e. the current standards that guide journalistic practices performed in the context of traditional media. Through this examination, they also question how these notions are being employed today:

“The challenges raised by alternative journalism should be clear: authority does not need to be located institutionally or professionally, credibility and trustworthiness can be derived from accounts of lived experience, not only from objectively detached reporting; there is no moral imperative to separate facts from values. It is possible to find expert cultures beyond an institutionalised framework where expertise is exclusionary.” (Atton, 2010, p. 177)

Much like the concept of objectivity permeates traditional journalistic practices from news values to source selection or forms of structuring a story, alternative journalists’ challenge to objectivity plays out throughout their work. On the level of deciding what is relevant to report, alternative journalists seek to counter the news values most traditional newsrooms abide by. They do so by, among other things, developing news values that encourage “including more background and context in their reports; reporting more on long-term issues and less on ‘events’; paying more attention to complex or ambiguous issues; giving more coverage to non-elite people

and nations” (O’Neill & Harcup, 2009, p. 170)<sup>14</sup>.

The way the selected issues are then portrayed also tends to differ from traditional journalism’s thematization. Dias (2007, p. 210–223) identifies three main strategies employed by alternative journalism in their representation of events: a pedagogical one, which mixes criticism of hegemonic discourse on events and the defense of the perspective of allied movements; an organizational one, reporting on social movement’s decision-making process, logistical preparations and internal discussions, as a way of encouraging the involvement of more participants with organizational aspects regardless of whether they can be physically present in deliberative spaces; and a focus on political action, i.e. the coverage of the main event itself, be it a protest, a stunt or a summit. Thus, instead of relaying the facts without judgments, as journalism following objectivity standards is expected to do, alternative journalism sees reporting as part of broader political action.

Alternative journalism does not, however, discard all of traditional journalism’s principles and practices. It often simply subverts them. For instance, journalists’ commitment to accurate reporting remains central for alternative journalists, but it gains a mobilizing function: accurate information paired with a political message leads to more action than unsubstantiated claims (Atton, 2010, p. 174). Ida Bell Wells’ reporting on lynching in 19th century US for the alternative paper *New York Age* makes this clear: knowing Northerners would be skeptical about the veracity of her narratives of atrocities against African-Americans in the South, she filled her articles with interviews, concrete details on the victims and the crimes and as much accurate information as possible, wrapped with her own condemning opinion on the lynchings, so that readers felt this was a harsh reality they needed to change (Streitmatter, 2001, p. 85–86). Alternative journalists’ coverage of police repression of protesters is another case in which they strive for accurate information, documenting cases of violence with videos, interviews and concrete details such as time and place where abuses happened. This has a warning and mobilizing function: other protesters become better informed about what is happening on the ground and about the precautions they could take against police violence, and the broader public is confronted with its images, which cannot be as easily dismissed as mere claims (Dias, 2007, p. 216–217).

Sourcing practices also play a major role in alternative journalism’s challenge to the current traditional way of doing journalism:

“(…) alternative media access a range of voices — activists, minorities, ordinary people affected by governmental and corporate policies — usually marginalized in the major media. They give less weight to the voices privileged in the dominant press by virtue of their presumed objective expertise or representative status — officials, politicians, accredited experts. Moreover, whereas conventional news often consists of events that threaten or disrupt established institutions or values, alternative media are more inclined to represent such values and institutions as being themselves a potential threat to the well-being and rights of ordinary people.” (Hackett

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<sup>14</sup>Interestingly, O’Neill and Harcup (2009, p. 170) point out these were actually Galtung and Ruge’s (1965) recommendations for addressing traditional media’s shortcomings in the coverage of foreign crises in their pioneer contribution on news values.

& Zhao, 1998, p. 210)

As this description makes clear, alternative source selection also implies an alternative perspective on events. While a preference for official sources may lead to adopting their interpretation of events, alternative journalists' proximity to marginalized sources may lead to more sympathy towards these sources' perspective, which tends to be more critical of established institutions. This way, they develop a certain loyalty to the communities they report on while also countering a perceived imbalance in traditional media (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 86–87). This sympathy can be seen in the way alternative journalists often write their stories from a we-perspective, using the first person in the plural form and, thus, identifying themselves as part of the community (Dias, 2007, p. 213; Vizer, 2007, p. 32–33).

While ordinary people's appearances on traditional media tend to be restricted to vox pop formats or human interest stories, alternative journalism features ordinary people way up in the hierarchy of sources in their stories, choosing their take on various events instead of official sources' version, in "a practice that acknowledges ordinary people as experts in their own lives and experiences" (Atton & Hamilton, 2008, p. 90–91). However, members of marginalized communities, "ordinary people" and social movements do not just serve as sources for alternative journalists — they can become alternative journalists themselves. The empowerment of the public through horizontal linkages for participation in alternative media is a distinguishing characteristic of this type of media (Downing, 1995b, p. 241) that, through digitalization processes, traditional media increasingly seeks to replicate. Although not at the focus of the present study due to the hybrid nature of engaged journalism, this aspect has been fruitfully covered by various authors, who propose concepts to describe the fluid interactions between audience, movements and alternative media (Atton, 2004; Couldry, 2003a; Dias, 2007)<sup>15</sup>.

The different forms of participation that enable such reporting are embedded in often alternative organizational structures and funding models. Actors develop forms of prefigurative politics<sup>16</sup> in terms of non-hierarchical and collective decision-making, for example, and experiment with different forms of funding, such as subscriptions or co-operatives (Hackett & Zhao, 1998, p. 206–207). They are also part of the context in which alternative journalists operate, seeking to "integrate themselves with the movements they are supporting, reporting and, indeed, developing" (Atton, 2002, p. 50)<sup>17</sup>

Looking back at the main elements discussed in this section, I argue that, through its challenge to objectivity, its participatory nature and its alternative structures, operating outside of established institutions, alternative journalism plays a central role in bringing new perspectives

<sup>15</sup>And it may be that individuals themselves identify in multiple ways, as the example of Indymedia contributors show: they describe themselves as activists *and* journalists, breaking away from an apparently irreconcilable duality (Heinonen & Luostarinen, 2008, p. 234; Pena, 2005, p. 173). There are too many complexities surrounding the backgrounds and motivations of alternative journalists for it to be possible to summarize them all in this chapter.

<sup>16</sup>Downing et al. (2001, p. 71) define prefigurative politics as "the attempt to practice socialist principles in the present, not merely to imagine them in the future". I apply this definition, widening its scope to not just socialist practices, but practices of social change and emancipatory practices in general.

<sup>17</sup>Atton (2002, Chapter 2) offers a good overview of the political economy of alternative journalism. However, more studies are needed in this area, especially as alternative journalists turn to newer funding models based, for example, on crowdfunding.

into the public sphere. The next section focuses on the literature around this concept and details alternative journalism's place in it.

## 4.4 (Counter) Public Sphere(s): Deliberations in the Scholarship

This section focuses on journalism's role in the public sphere, a concept that, in its multiple variations, theorizes how societies achieve consensus around issues important to them. In the next pages, I alternate between the singular and plural forms of this term. When referring to the public sphere, in singular, I am writing about the public sphere Habermas conceptualizes, i.e. a space for society to deliberate on questions it deems relevant and that possesses a center and a periphery, each inhabited by different actors according to the amount of power they hold. The term public spheres, in plural, refers here to other authors' descriptions of various types of public spheres, constituted by specific groups of actors that deliberate and articulate their demands internally. These specific public spheres are also known as counter public spheres.

In this section, I highlight some of the main points of Habermas' theory, with emphasis to the role he assigns to the media and to journalism in it. Section 4.4.1 contains a summary of some of the main criticisms Habermas' model has been confronted with ever since its publication, while section 4.4.2 presents the concept of counter public spheres both in historical contextualizations and more abstract theories and then zooms in on alternative journalism's role in the constitution of counter public spheres.

The concept of the public sphere plays an important role in various disciplines, from democracy theory to media studies. In this section, I analyze it primarily from a media studies and social movements viewpoint<sup>18</sup>. While there are various models to describe it, I focus mainly on Habermas' take on it, which he first presented in his 1962 book *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* and later developed as a reaction to criticism on the model's shortcomings (Habermas, 1992, 2006)<sup>19</sup>. While other conceptions of the public sphere also have their strengths, the Habermasian model allows more critique and can be better applied to empirical studies (Neidhardt, 1994, p. 38). Studies that use Habermas' definition of the public sphere as a starting point range, for example, from historical analyses of the public sphere in specific times (Fanuzzi, 2003; Trinkle, 2002) to analyses of national media systems (Mancini, 1991) or the process of deliberation inside a community around specific issues or events (Liebes & Peri, 1998; Maia, 2009).

Despite those various applications, it is important to keep in mind the original context in which Habermas first published his work. When it came out, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* was received as a reaction to the Frankfurt School's more pessimistic perspectives on politics and the contribution of the Enlightenment to European democracy, while also attempting to

<sup>18</sup>For an overview of the various other interdisciplinary approaches to the concept of the public sphere, see Wimmer (2007, Chapter 2.1).

<sup>19</sup>For an analysis of other conceptions of the public sphere, such as Niklas Luhmann's public sphere model, see Gerhards (1994) as well as Wimmer (2007, Chapter 2.5). For a critical review of Hannah Arendt's and the liberal models of the public sphere, along with a feminist perspective on Habermas, see Benhabib (1992).

measure “the chances of democracy in West Germany after the restoration of organized capitalism had been completed under Adenauer” (Hohendahl, 1992, p. 99). In addition, Habermas’ analysis focuses on a specific historical period, the 18th and 19th centuries, as experienced by the bourgeoisie in specific countries, namely the UK, France and Germany (Habermas, 1992, p. 422). This has also been the focus of criticism, as I detail later on in section 4.4.1. At the same time, it is a normative and idealizing description of the public sphere, which, even in the period he described, did not really exist in the form he postulates, but rather has a utopian character (Wimmer, 2007, p. 87).

Although the public sphere, as described by Habermas, also encompasses the spheres of art, literature and science (Benhabib, 1992, p. 73), most authors focus on the political public sphere. This is also the case here: whenever I refer to the public sphere, I am describing the political public sphere, in which deliberation is part of the decision-making process around policies and other political aspects that permeate life in society.

As one of the main authors in the tradition of deliberative theory, Habermas places great value on discourse and argumentation as paths to reach the best decision possible (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2013, p. 301). In this process of deliberation, actors are responsible for bringing important issues into discussion, interpreting and offering solutions to these issues, weighting arguments for and against the suggested solutions, and, finally, rationally deciding how to proceed based on the arguments presented (Habermas, 2006, p. 416). This happens in an environment of civility and mutual respect and depends on popular inclusion of all actors as equals, with power imbalances being bracketed out of the discussion — another target of criticism, as I will describe later in this chapter. Attempts to manipulate or threaten other participants are not acceptable (Peters, 1994, p. 47). “There must be mutual and reciprocal recognition of each by all as autonomous, rational subjects whose claims will be accepted if supported by valid arguments” (Ferree et al., 2013, p. 302). The public sphere is inherently fluid, materializing in various conditions, from a 19th century coffeehouse to a parliament or wherever else citizens convey to discuss social problems, but the emphasis on rational debate remains a constant in this model (Papacharissi, 2010, p. 113–114).

Habermas also understands the public sphere as constituted by a center in the form of institutions such as parliaments, government agencies and courts, where actors make and implement decisions in terms of policies, and a periphery, where citizens discuss matters as part of their everyday lives, “rooted in networks for wild flows of messages — news, reports, commentaries, talks, scenes and images, and shows and movies with an informative, polemical, educational, or entertaining content” (Habermas, 2006, p. 415–416). These messages, in turn, originate from the political class, interest groups or civil society and are “selected and shaped by mass-media professionals”, creating an interaction between media messages and everyday conversations among members of the audience that ultimately constitutes public opinion (Habermas, 2006, p. 415–416). Ideally, public opinion, for example in the form of polls, is taken into consideration in the decisions those at the center make. This description already raises the question as to whether all actors can be equal in deliberation when they exert different functions and some make the decisions (in the center) while others can only talk about them (in the periphery).

Another pre-condition is thematic openness, i.e. all issues can potentially be discussed in the public sphere if the community deems them relevant. Thus, what is up for debate is a matter of debate itself and not restricted just to policy matters: norms, collective values and aspirations can also be questioned and reformulated as a result of rational exchanges in the public sphere (Peters, 1994, p. 45–46).

For Habermas, the ideal public sphere needs to be distinct from the market and the state, following its own logic, based on rational debate, as it must also be possible to criticize the state and economic relations (Fraser, 1992, p. 110–111). Habermas conceptualizes this as a separation between lifeworld and system, with the lifeworld representing the sphere of communicative action, independent of the logics that guide the system, be it power (on the state level) or capital (on the market level) (Wimmer, 2007, p. 76). This also rests on a separation between private and public life, with actors stepping out of their private domains to discuss issues in the public sphere (Peters, 1994, p. 45).

In the context of the 20th century, Habermas describes a process of colonization of the lifeworld, which endangers the public sphere, as the communication in the lifeworld becomes permeated by the values of the system (Wimmer, 2007, p. 76), for example through a commercialization of communication, with messages becoming means for profit instead of carriers of rational arguments. “By means of these transformations, the public sphere has become more an arena for advertising than a setting for rational-critical debate. Legislators stage displays for constituents. Special-interest organizations use publicity work to increase the prestige of their own positions, without making the topics to which those positions refer subjects of genuine public debate” (Calhoun, 1992, p. 26).

While the media should originally perform the role of collecting, contextualizing and disseminating the various arguments around an issue, informing citizens and enabling them to participate in the debate, commercialization leads to processes of personalization, dramatization and over-simplification of political issues and events, in addition to an increasing polarization that makes the resolution of conflicts through rational argumentation impossible (Calhoun, 1992, p. 24–25; Habermas, 2006, p. 422). In short, “the media, in particular, central in supporting democracy through public service, have actually corrupted the processes of public thought, deliberation, opinion, and action” (Papacharissi, 2010, p. 116). However, Habermas (1992, p. 438) later recognized as simplistic his initial apocalyptic views on the commercialization of the media and the generation of a passive audience. Instead, he turns to the pervasive media power and its effects over the public sphere, where actors not only seek to influence which topics get to be discussed in the media, but also try to control communication flows themselves (Habermas, 1992, p. 436–437). Dahlgren (1991, p. 17) points out that, although what is being circulated can be criticized, the circulation of information, entertainment and other contents through the media, provides shared “interpretative frameworks” that lend societies the necessary cohesion for deliberation. In addition, the empirical evidence supporting a process of disintegration of the public sphere is, at best, quite thin (Peters, 1994, p. 49–50).

For better or for worse, it is impossible to think of the public sphere without acknowledging mass media’s central role in it today (Wimmer, 2007, p. 42–43). If democracy is based on citizens’

freedom of assembly and of information, in large societies these freedoms need to be mediated (Garnham, 1992, p. 364–365; Wimmer, 2007, p. 65) – media visibility of issues contributes to deliberation on those issues (Lycarião, 2010, p. 16). Wimmer reflects this in his definition of the public sphere as being “a communication space constructed, above all, by mass media, in which phenomena that are or could be significant for the members of a society or a group are made visible and discussed” (Wimmer, 2007, p. 150)<sup>20</sup>.

It follows that, in order to work in today’s societies, deliberation needs to be decoupled from physicality, that is from the ideal of citizens gathered in a common space Habermas (1992, p. 451). Habermas also lends nuance to his initial warnings against the media, admitting their importance in the current context, while also pointing out the necessity for an independent media system and an audience that is available to also give feedback to political elites (Habermas, 2006, p. 411–412). Especially in the case of journalism, Lycarião (2010, p. 7) places his hopes on the journalistic field and its capacity of enforcing professional rules in the face of economic or political pressures from media outlet owners, but others cast doubts about whether professional norms are enough to break the influence of commercial actors over the media (Neuberger, 2007, p. 148).

Habermas reinforces with his theory the normative expectations towards journalism’s role in sustaining democracy. Good journalism, in the context of the public sphere, must be impartial and non-partisan, as well as oriented towards the concerns and the input of the public, instead of only focusing on the perspective of the powerful. One way to assess that is by looking into the presence (or lack thereof) of actors from civil society in the media (Wimmer, 2007, p. 84–86). In addition, journalists are responsible for discursively processing the input from various sectors of society and aiding the formation of public opinion (Neuberger, 2007, p. 153). Habermas’ emphasis on rational discourse underlies these demands on journalism: “The very idea of the public was based on the notion of a general interest sufficiently basic that discourse about it need not be distorted by particular interests (at least in principle) and could be a matter of rational approach to an objective order, that is to say, of truth” (Calhoun, 1992, p. 9). However, much like the ideal of objectivity in journalism faces major criticism, Habermas’ emphasis on rational discourse – which also reproduces objectivity standards – and his model of the public sphere have been analyzed critically by authors from diverse perspectives, pointing out the problems in his idealization of a public sphere based on reason alone.

#### 4.4.1 Critical Perspectives and Alternative Models

While the normative understanding of the public sphere establishes that every individual should have equal access to the deliberative process regardless of her or his status, wealth, formal education or expertise, these factors play a role in the actual public sphere, limiting participation of less powerful actors (Dahlgren, 2005, p. 157; Peters, 1994, p. 46). At the same time, Habermas’ model is based on a romanticized representation of the 18th and 19th centuries, turning a

<sup>20</sup>“einen vor allem massenmedial konstituierten Kommunikationsraum, in dem diejenigen Phänomene, die für die Angehörigen einer Gesellschaft oder Gruppe von Bedeutung sind oder sein könnten, sichtbar gemacht und diskutiert werden” (Wimmer, 2007, p. 150).

historical and exclusionary public sphere into an ideal, while ignoring its gendered exclusions<sup>21</sup>; equating the bourgeois public sphere to the whole public sphere and ignoring other spheres of deliberation outside the dominant class (Calhoun, 1992, p. 33; Dahlgren, 2005, p. 5–7; Downing et al., 2001, p. 28). Baker summarizes the critique as follows:

“What ultimately emerges as Habermas’ ideal of the early public sphere is an associational life of male property-owners gathered to exchange rational arguments and critical opinions shaped and mirrored by novels and the press. This translates into an influential bourgeois public sphere.” (Baker, 1994, p. 6)

To be fair, Habermas (1992) recognized most of these points later, admitting he initially did not distinguish well enough between his model of the ideal public sphere and the actual historical context he based it upon. Still, it is worth exploring this criticism in more detail, as this opens up a constructionist approach to the public sphere that sees discourse as permeated by power inequalities, a very different starting point than Habermas’ approach to discourse theory (Ferree et al., 2013, p. 306–307).

Constructionists’ views on power lead them to the conclusion that inequalities are more pervasive than Habermas seemed to think and that they continue to play a role despite demands to leave them out of the deliberative process. Social inequalities generate exclusion in informal, everyday settings, as cultural forms that stem from marginalized groups are looked down upon: “There are forms of expressing oneself or of displaying specific social attributes that grant credibility and the right to speak to some individuals, whilst denying them to others” (Mendonça, 2009, p. 213). In the more official stances of the public sphere, exclusion happens especially through commercial media that are rarely in the hands of members of marginalized groups. They also do not have those groups as their main sources or audiences, limiting their access to the channels that could disseminate their views in the public sphere. As a result, the demand for bracketing out inequalities is based on the assumptions that it is enough if actors pretend to be equals while deliberating and that actual social equality is not necessary (Fraser, 1992, p. 116–120).

Constructionists argue that popular inclusion should not be based on normative bracketing out of inequalities, but rather acknowledge and value the different sectors of society and the different identities actors speak from as key to enrich deliberation, “de-centering dominant speakers and their assumption of what is ‘natural’” (Ferree et al., 2013, p. 308). On the other hand, authors such as Mouffe (1993, p. 70) criticize theorists that defend the inclusion of marginalized communities without acknowledging this will not be a smooth process, as some identities are based

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<sup>21</sup>Various authors point out the exclusionary character of Habermas’ public sphere in its separation between public and private, which relegates women to the private, familial realm and silences discussions around gendered violence, oppression and exploitation (Benhabib, 1992, p. 93; Fraser, 1992, p. 132; Mouffe, 1993, p. 71). In general, classifying something as private means placing it off-limits for deliberation in the public sphere and informally reinforcing inequalities (Fraser, 1992, p. 132). Habermas (1992, p. 428) acknowledges the nature of this exclusion, based on gender, as being rooted in the private realm, which makes it different from exclusions based on class due to its structuring nature for the public sphere. As a solution, constructionists reinforce the normative demand, already present in Habermas’ model, for a public sphere that truly does not set thematic boundaries of what could be discussed, thus — and therein lies their departure from the Habermasian model — not separating the public from the private (Benhabib, 1992, p. 72; Fraser, 1992, p. 128).



on the exclusion of others and would need first to be deconstructed. According to her, conflict will inevitably arise, which leads to the next point of critique: the Habermasian public sphere's emphasis on reaching consensus through rational deliberation.

One problem Mouffe sees in rationalist approaches like Habermas' is that they deny aspects pertaining to power and antagonisms that permeate the political field, as well as the tensions that arise from these aspects and that are present in social relations. In aspiring to reach full rational consensus, they ignore that every consensus has some dose of coercion due to antagonisms and power relations. Portraying democracy as purely rational is denying its power imbalances and labeling as irrational all attempts to question them, which can lead to totalitarian stances (Mouffe, 1993, p. 140–146). Thus, Mouffe (1993) argues for an embrace of conflict, allowing it to happen through democratic channels. Otherwise, marginalized groups may turn to fundamentalist or populist movements, leaving the sphere of deliberation. "Democracy is in peril not only when there is insufficient consensus and allegiance to the values it embodies, but also when agonistic dynamic is hindered by an apparent excess of consensus, which usually masks a disquieting apathy", she warns (Mouffe, 1993, p. 6).

Applying theoretical approaches to deliberation to the protests in Brazil and Turkey in the early 2010s, Mendonça and Ercan (2015) regard the polyphony and dissension inside these movements as proof that deliberation and conflict are not mutually exclusive:

"The dichotomy between conflict and deliberation is reinforced by a mistaken definition of deliberation that reduces it to a direct (and oral) exchange of passionless arguments among political actors who agree to sit down together to resolve their contentions. (...) Deliberative processes are discursive exchanges that allow different actors to engage with the task of defining the world in which they live together. Some arguments may be pervaded by outrage and anger. They can be presented through elaborate polite sentences, but also through incisive slogans as well as disruptive images or signs in a demonstration." (Mendonça & Ercan, 2015, p. 271)

However, especially in the case of Brazil, the amount of dissonance between the various protesting groups proved to be unsustainable for the movement, as I described in section 2.3. Their argument for a less stiff definition of deliberation is still valid, though<sup>22</sup>. In line with it, Peters (1994, p. 68) argues for an understanding of consensus as temporary and open for new dissident arguments that may lead to changes in the reached consensus. Mouffe (1993, p. 7–8) defends a conception of democracy that does not aspire to a final resolution of conflicts, but understands them to be an essential part of democratic and political life. In this multicultural and egalitarian society, there are diverse publics, and individuals may be affiliated to more than one of these publics due to the multiplicity of identity. Thus, she implicitly concedes the existence

<sup>22</sup>Regarding the role of emotions, which Mendonça and Ercan (2015) also thematize in this passage, Papacharissi (2015) argues that scholars should not look into political discussions and the public sphere only through the lens of rationality, but also consider the hybridity of affect, proposing the concept of affective publics: "networked public formations that are mobilized and connected or disconnected through expressions of sentiment" (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 125–126). The role of emotion and affect in the public sphere and in the practices of actors involved in alternative media is a relevant aspect that I plan to analyze more in depth in future research, as it is not the main focus of the research questions I posed for this study.

of various public spheres, while at the same time arguing that there should still be one broader public sphere to which the various groups can converge for deliberation across lines while staying in dissensus (Mouffe, 1993, p. 18).

The idea of multiple public spheres is often present in the work of authors that criticize or propose to further develop Habermas' model of the public sphere. This is grounded in their rejection of a separation between public and private, understanding politics as being present in various spheres of people's lives, not just in one separate political public sphere. In addition, having spheres of their own, where they can articulate their own identities and support each other, frees actors from pressure to conform to the broader public sphere all the time (Ferree et al., 2013, p. 309–310).

From a historical perspective, Fraser (1992, p. 116) argues that there was never just one public: the bourgeois public and other publics were in conflict from the start, and the exclusionary aspect of the bourgeois public sphere was no accident (as Habermas seems to consider in his theory), but rather a deliberate move to assure this class' domination over the others. Conceptions that envision only one public sphere in the 21st century seem even less realistic:

“The goal of ushering all citizens into one unitary public sphere, with one specific set of communicative and cultural traditions, is usually rejected on the grounds of pluralism and difference. There must exist spaces in which citizens belonging to different groups and cultures, or speaking in registers or even languages, will find participation meaningful. Differences of all kinds, including political orientation and interests, gender, ethnicity, cultural capital, and geography, can warrant specialized communicative spaces. At some points, certain groups may require a separate space where they can work out internal issues and/or cultivate a collective identity.” (Dahlgren, 2005, p. 152)

As Dahlgren points out, the discussion has shifted from whether or not there are various public spheres to the question of how they relate to each other. Some authors propose regarding multiple public spheres as a network in which actors from various circles engage with each other (Calhoun, 1992, p. 37–38; Downing et al., 2001, p. 33–34). Others focus on how decision-making may happen in a broader public sphere where actors from various groups – who articulate their stance beforehand in their own public spheres – converge to deliberate without excluding the possibility of unsolvable conflict, which may lead to decisions being imposed by some groups upon others (Garnham, 1992, p. 371–372; Mouffe, 1993, p. 142).

Peters (1994, p. 56–57) sees the various public spheres (Teilöffentlichkeiten) as having porous boundaries: “some of the contributions made internally in these public spheres find their way into the broader public sphere. This structure enables higher participation, in comparison with a homogeneous larger public sphere, but it also bears the danger of a fragmentation into specialized interest groups”<sup>23</sup>. This fragmentation would mean less dialog between various groups, with

<sup>23</sup>“ein Teil der Beiträge, die intern im jeweiligen Feld zirkulieren, findet jeweils den Weg in grössere Öffentlichkeiten. Eine solche Struktur ermöglicht ein höheres Mass an aktiver Partizipation, verglichen mit einer undifferenzierten großen Öffentlichkeit, aber sie birgt natürlich die Gefahr der Fragmentierung in spezialisierte Interessensgruppen” (Peters, 1994, p. 56–57).

each group advocating only for its own interests. This can be avoided by acknowledging and countering mechanisms of thematic exclusion, so that groups perceive their issues as at least potentially being able to reach the public sphere and be seriously considered (Peters, 1994, p. 56–57). However, the fragmentation into interest groups is not the only consequence of lack of thematization of certain issues. It can also generate explicitly political public spheres, usually connected to social movements. As I discuss in the next section, the thematization of new issues is one of the key functions of counter public spheres.

#### 4.4.2 Alternative Journalism's Role in Counter Public Spheres

This section focuses on more concrete conceptions of counter public spheres and its various manifestations, many of which, in turn, draw from Habermas' understanding of the role of civil society and social movements in the public sphere, as authors either criticize or build upon it. Then, it connects this concept to the scholarship on alternative journalism.

Habermas (1992, p. 453–454) defines civil society as “constituted by voluntary unions outside the realm of the state and the economy”. Its actors can gather in fora such as churches, workers' unions, cultural associations, sports clubs and citizen groups, among other spaces. Therefore, civil society is grounded on the lifeworld — not on the system —, and that, to Habermas, legitimizes its input to the public sphere due to its actors' closeness to everyday life and their relative freedom from organizational constraints that actors in the political and economic realms are subject to (Ferree et al., 2013, p. 300-301). This legitimization should also increase civil society's influence over decision-makers in the political and economic systems and compensate for their lack of direct political power (Habermas, 2006, p. 418–419). This representation is widely contested, since, far from possessing the freedom Habermas envisions, civil society actors are still subject to power relations and economic pressures, which can, in part, be traced back to the processes of colonization of the lifeworld previously described (Wimmer, 2007, p. 83–84). As Downey and Fenton (2003, p. 191–192) point out, if the public sphere's democratic character gets corroded — for example, by processes of commercialization —, civil society alone will not be enough to keep the public sphere democratic; instead, it is even likely to become anti-democratic itself.

Due to his postulated division between public and private, Habermas' conception of the civil society is more centered on private individuals assembling around common interests and, thus, engaging politically from their own private perspectives. This seems to result in a neglect of the role of social movements in the public sphere, which limits his analysis in a historical perspective — as he does not explore in his model the role 19th century social movements played in the transformations of the public sphere at the time —, as well as in understanding social movements' role in bringing new themes and identities into the political public sphere (Calhoun, 1992, p. 37; Postone, 1992, p. 170). In light of more recent studies, Habermas (1992, p. 425) recognized he was mistaken in initially neglecting what he calls the plebeian public sphere, which the lower rural and urban working classes populated parallel to the bourgeois public sphere in the historical period he studied. I argue this might also have caused his broader neglect of social movements, as they are often rooted in groups that are in some way marginalized.

Still, Costa (1994, p. 45–46) points out that Habermas later described social movements as part of civil society yet placed them on a higher analytical layer than associations, churches and other civil society groups, arguing that social movements defend a broader thematic spectrum and foment new subcultures with their own demands towards the public sphere<sup>24</sup>. This may lead to an inclusion of the issues social movements champion into the broader public sphere.

Before this inclusion in the broader public sphere happens — if it happens at all —, there is often the moment when actors conceive of the public sphere as not fulfilling the democratic expectations that its normative conceptualization demands, especially because they do not feel those at its center are addressing certain issues. The exclusion of issues peripheral actors feel strongly about may drive them either into joining already existing social movements or into organizing as a new social movement (Neidhardt, 1994, p. 33; Roth, 1994, p. 430–431; Rucht, 1994, p. 337–338; Wimmer, 2007, p. 64; Stamm, 1988, p. 71). In both cases, counter public spheres play a central role in their process of internal articulation.

Counter public spheres themselves are the result of society's self-reflexivity with regards to what should be thematized in the public sphere, as they originate from this need to thematize exactly what actors at the center of the public sphere neglect or ignore. Often, authors define counter public spheres by negation: they are everything the public sphere is not. However, that alone does not say what exactly they are supposed to counter in the public sphere. On the other hand, various definitions focus on specific aspects of counter public spheres. Some models conceive of counter public spheres as spaces of articulation of actions that target the bourgeois public sphere, especially through traditional media, in order to influence public opinion; or as spaces where dissident groups may radicalize their positions and actions and, thus, set themselves apart from the bourgeois public sphere. Counter public spheres are also conceptualized as places where authentic communication happens, generated by people directly affected by certain issues; or as a space of emancipatory communication, a theorization that is rooted in cultural studies' analyses of reception and the transformations in the media landscape that allow for more empowerment on the side of the so-called audience, previously seen as passive (Wimmer, 2007, p. 151–157).

In line with his definition of public sphere as structured by mass media, Wimmer offers a definition of counter public spheres with three main dimensions that also take mass media's pervasive role into account:

“First, one can define counter public spheres as critical spheres that make use of alternative media and actions inside the mass media public sphere, in order to direct attention to their positions, which they feel are being marginalized (= alternative public sphere). Second, the term also relates to collective and especially political learning processes and experiences inside alternative organization forms such

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<sup>24</sup>Habermas claims, for example, that contact with social movements such as labor or the feminist movements, which first came together in their own spheres of deliberation, transformed the bourgeois public sphere, as it tested and expanded its thematic range, including actors that were previously excluded from deliberation and the issues they advocated for (Habermas, 1992, p. 429). Neidhardt (1994, p. 35) also describes this process, highlighting the fact that this inclusion often presents a compromise for social movements, as their issues get incorporated to the broader public sphere in a more moderate form.

as the new social movements or non-state organizations (= participatory public sphere). Third, the term refers to often non-organized activists' attempts to influence the mass media public sphere (= media activism)." (Wimmer, 2007, p. 237)<sup>25</sup>

As this definition shows, media integrates various practices inside counter public spheres, some of them outward and other inward looking. However, counterpublics do not arise just from media, as Custódio (2017) emphasizes: they are permeated by other manifestations of counter public spheres, such as face-to-face gatherings ranging from assemblies to demonstrations, or collective affective displays: "Because this is such a complex process, we cannot claim that without media or media activism there would not be counterpublics. However, the uses of methods and technologies of mediated communication certainly enhance the process and increase their reach to more people and their influence in the main public sphere" (Custódio, 2017, p. 86). In that sense, alternative media can be seen as a means for not only inserting new issues and actors into the broader public sphere, but also creating a space for the dissemination of information internally among members of a movement and their allies (Bailey et al., 2008, p. xii; Haas, 2004, p. 117; Wimmer, 2007, p. 159).

In their specificity in terms of public and discourse, "alternative media should be seen as a multiplicity of public spheres, a colorful – but at times also contentious – myriad of media initiatives so diversified as society itself" (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 153). Thus, there are various examples of alternative media as part of counter public spheres. For Downing et al. (2001, p. xi), based on their concept of radical media<sup>26</sup>, they perform the role of articulating opposition both vertically, that is from grassroots actors against those in power, and laterally, building support networks among oppositional actors. They also serve to fight blockages of public expression:

"These blockages emerge from many quarters: powerful components within the capitalist economy, governmental secrecy, religious obscurantism, institutionalized racist and patriarchal codes, other hegemonic codes that appear natural and sensible; the insidious impact of reactionary populism, and also reflexes of those within oppositional movements themselves." (Downing et al., 2001, p. v-vi)

For them, the thematization function of counter public spheres is intrinsically connected to oppositional stances against reactionary components of society. Other authors, such as Bailey et al. (2008, p. 153) and Atton (2002, p. 153) defend broader definitions that emphasize empowerment and exchange of experiences among marginalized groups rather than their ambitions (or lack thereof) towards opposing or subverting the current hegemony.

<sup>25</sup>"Erstens werden damit kritische Teilöffentlichkeiten definiert, die ihre als marginalisiert empfundene Positionen, welche oft auch als Gegenöffentlichkeit bezeichnet werden, mit Hilfe von alternativen Medien und Aktionen innerhalb der massenmedialen Öffentlichkeit Gehör verschaffen möchten (= alternative Öffentlichkeit). Zweitens bezeichnet Öffentlichkeit auch kollektive und dabei vor allem politische Lern- und Erfahrungsprozesse innerhalb alternative Organisationszusammenhänge wie z.B. neue soziale Bewegungen, nicht-staatliche Organisationen (= partizipatorische Öffentlichkeit). Drittens verweist der Begriff auf die versuchten Einflussnahmen zumeist unorganisierter Aktivistinnen auf die massenmediale Öffentlichkeit (= Medienaktivismus)" (Wimmer, 2007, p. 237).

<sup>26</sup>The authors define radical media as "media, generally small-scale and in many different forms, that express an alternative vision to hegemonic policies, priorities, and perspectives" Downing et al. (2001, p. v).

There are various case studies that describe how alternative media can make the concept of counter public spheres more palpable. With his historiography of dissident newspapers in the US starting as early as the 19th century, Streitmatter (2001) describes how they served as counter public spheres for various marginalized groups in their fight for equal rights: women, the LGBTIQ community, and African-Americans. Another case concerns the samizdats in the former Soviet Union (Downing, 1995a, p. 200), do-it-yourself publications that offered a space for dissident discourse to circulate among the public, circumventing state-controlled media.

Alternative media are also a component in historical theorizations of counter public spheres, although not always a prominent one. The latter is the case in Negt and Kluge's (1972) proposed model of the proletarian public sphere, often seen as one of the first conceptualizations of counter public spheres. In their understanding, the proletarian public sphere is not a counter public sphere that exists parallel to the bourgeois public sphere, but is, rather, only really possible with its end<sup>27</sup>. They believe that the bourgeois public sphere blocks workers' self-expression and, thus, the effective articulation of their own demands (Wimmer, 2007, p. 176). This happens because, through its exclusion of the industrial work and the family contexts from the public sphere, the bourgeois public sphere leaves important spheres of workers' lives out of the deliberation process while, at the same time, claiming to encompass the whole of society (Negt & Kluge, 1972, p. 10–11). In addition, they also criticize mass media's one-sided form of communication – represented, at the time, by Germany's public service broadcasters – as aiding the silencing of proletarian perspectives (Negt & Kluge, 1972, p. 179–180). Thus, it is essential that workers articulate their experiences in a proletarian public sphere lest they be appropriated by capitalist structures (Negt & Kluge, 1972, p. 310), leading to disempowerment.

In part due to their Marxist background, Negt and Kluge's concept of the proletarian public sphere is more normative than empirical, focusing mostly on questions of power (Wimmer, 2007, p. 180). Apart from arguments about the importance of workers articulating their own experiences, the authors remain vague as to how media would work in a proletarian public sphere, or as to whether workers should strive to create their own media as a means of self-expression. The historical context their theory is embedded in may explain the duality between proletarian and bourgeois public spheres, with workers movements often being rejected and criminalized in 1970s West Germany, as Rucht (1994, p. 349–350) points out. This could also be the reason why, unlike in Habermas' conceptualization of the bourgeois public sphere, the media do not play a key role in their theory. The context new social movements, such as the peace or the feminist movement, encountered was much different:

“Unlike the revolutionary socialist working class, which could not expect to affect change through discourse, the new social movements want and must win over the attention and support of the broader public sphere. For them, turning to mass media also means turning to a broader political public, which is still neither on

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<sup>27</sup>Their choice of the word “proletarian” is already an attempt to articulate the oppositional nature of this public sphere in relation to the bourgeois public sphere, as the term “proletarian public sphere”, unlike “critical public sphere”, does not suggest a possible integration into the bourgeois public sphere (Negt & Kluge, 1972, p. 7).

the movements' side or against them." (Rucht, 1994, p. 350)<sup>28</sup>

Thus, the new social movements defined counter public sphere in a very different way, as Stamm (1988), one of Negt's students, describes, again based on the West German context. Influenced by Habermas' theoretical model, West Germany's 1968 student movement initially tried to rehabilitate the bourgeois public sphere's deliberative characteristics — which Habermas described as having disintegrated —, especially through attempts at bringing the issues they considered important up for public discussion. Confronted with its exclusionary mechanisms, especially with traditional media's coverage of their actions, they realized that striving for an inclusion in the bourgeois public sphere would not suffice for their means and redirected their efforts towards the creation of a counter public sphere, which encompassed from alternative media to temporary actions such as protests or teach-ins, as well as more permanent alternative spaces for the development of a counter culture, such as communes, clubs and "free" universities (Stamm, 1988, p. 21–42). In the decades the author analyzes, between the late 1960s and the 1980s, this counter public sphere proved to be a "dialectic" rather than a continuous development, with phases of retreat into more private spheres — often accompanied by an increase in authoritarian forms of interaction that discouraged deliberation — and phases of expansion to encompass other aspects of life and make them the object of deliberation (Stamm, 1988, p. 260). Thus, the author highlights the fluidity of these counter public spheres: "Fixed instances and institutions are not the ones that generate counter discourses, but rather communicative relations that are built ad hoc and that recombine themselves over and over again, according to the current thematic conflicts" (Stamm, 1988, p. 282)<sup>29</sup>.

A third historical approach to counter public spheres that is relevant to this overview, especially as it applies to the Brazilian context, is Custódio's (2017) reconstruction of the history of three counterpublics in Brazil: the abolitionist movement in the 19th century, the labor movement in the early 20th century and the movement of resistance to the military dictatorship between 1964 and 1985. In all three of them, alternative media played a key role. Abolitionist publications challenged the status quo by promoting anti-slavery ideals and pushing for abolitionist policies. Combined with abolitionist gatherings, they were "fundamental instruments to challenge and thus end slavery" (Custódio, 2017, p. 82). The labor movement's newspapers helped mobilize workers both by publicizing the movements' victories and reinforcing bonds formed during face-to-face gatherings while, at the same time, disseminating the labor movements' ideals and policy demands among the broader public sphere, which later helped turn labor rights into legislation. Finally, anti-dictatorship publications aggressively satirized the regime while, at the same time, denouncing its violence, in an alternative media landscape that included over

<sup>28</sup>Im Unterschied zur revolutionären Bewegung der sozialistischen Arbeiterschaft, die nicht erwarten konnte, soziale Veränderungen auf diskursiven Wege herbeizuführen, wollen und müssen die reformorientierten neuen sozialen Bewegungen die Aufmerksamkeit und Zustimmung der großen Öffentlichkeit gewinnen. Ihre Hinwendung zu den Massenmedien ist zugleich eine Hinwendung zu einem breiten, nicht a priori schon der eigenen oder gegnerischen Seite zuzurechnenden politischen Publikum" (Rucht, 1994, p. 350).

<sup>29</sup>Nicht festgefügte Instanzen und Institutionen sind es, die den Gegendiskurs gewährleisten, sondern ad hoc sich ausbildenden Kommunikationszusammenhänge, die anlässlich thematischer Konflikte sich immer neu zusammenfügen und verknüpfen" (Stamm, 1988, p. 282).

150 clandestine publications and was fiercely persecuted by the regime (Custódio, 2017, p. 84)<sup>30</sup>.

While Negt and Kluge (1972) and Stamm (1988) based their concepts on the West German historical context and Custódio (2017) draws from the Brazilian historical context, other authors focus on theorizations less connected to a specific country, with the aim of applying them empirically to various conditions. Considered “one of the central theoretical models for the counter public sphere” (Wimmer, 2007, p. 70)<sup>31</sup>, Fraser’s concept of subaltern counterpublics is one such theory.

Fraser proposes the term subaltern counterpublics to describe the spheres where marginalized groups can deliberate and elaborate their demands, “they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (Fraser, 1992, p. 123). She conceptualizes the feminist movement in the US as constituting an example of subaltern counterpublic, with its infrastructure of feminist bookstores, journals, conferences and local meetings, among others, offering spaces where women could deliberate and find terms to accurately describe processes of oppression against them as a group: “Armed with such language, we have recast our needs and identities, thereby reducing, although not eliminating, the extent of our disadvantage in official public spheres” (Fraser, 1992, p. 123). Thus, subaltern counterpublics possess a double nature: aimed both at regrouping and mobilizing, they offer safe spaces for disadvantaged individuals to support each other and plan actions that will bring their issues into the broader public sphere, which may result in a reduction of inequalities. In line with other theorists, she proposes multiple subaltern counterpublics, where various groups might gather, not just one single oppositional counterpublic (Atton, 2004, p. 10)<sup>32</sup>.

Building on Fraser’s (1992) conceptualization of subaltern counterpublics, Squires (2002) and Warner (2002) apply her model to other specific counterpublics – the Black community<sup>33</sup> in the US and the LGBTIQ community in the UK, respectively. As a result, they criticize and develop the concept further. Squires (2002, p. 447) considers the division between dominant publics and counterpublics too vague, asserting that equating counterpublics with group identities (people of color, LGBTIQ, women) is not enough, as groups that might identify this way have various modes of articulating as a group. Thus, she proposes three terms to describe the main counterpublics’ strategies, determined not just by their relation to the public sphere but also by their internal politics and resources: the enclave, when a group opts for “hiding counterhegemonic ideas and strategies in order to survive or avoid sanctions, while internally producing lively debate and planning” (Squires, 2002, p. 448), the counterpublic, which acts as Fraser describes it, i.e. engages with the broader public sphere and employs social movement strategies to raise awareness to

<sup>30</sup>I go into the detail on the role of alternative media during the military dictatorship in section 2.8.

<sup>31</sup>“eine der zentralen Theorienmodelle der Gegenöffentlichkeit” (Wimmer, 2007, p. 70).

<sup>32</sup>Not all subaltern counterpublics are necessarily good from a democracy theory perspective – there are also exclusionary and anti-democratic ones. However, they still expand the sphere of contestation, encouraging further deliberation on previously unquestioned assumptions (Fraser, 1992, p. 124). Whether that ultimately strengthens democracy remains to be seen, as various societies worldwide seem to be currently dealing with counterpublics formed around hateful ideologies such as white supremacy and fascism that pose great threats to pluralist democracies.

<sup>33</sup>Here, I adopt Black with a capital B to highlight the fact that this is a sociopolitical category, not a merely descriptive adjective. This follows discussions inside the anti-racist movement (Tharps, 2014).



the group's demands; and the satellite, "a public that seeks separation from other publics for reasons other than oppressive relations but is involved in wider public discourses from time to time" (Squires, 2002, p. 448). Although focused on various aspects that go beyond a group's media strategy, these three responses echo Rucht's (2013, p. 257) "quadruple A" model. Her categorization adds much more nuance to the discussion around counterpublics, revealing the various motivations and goals these publics might follow. From a queer studies perspective, Warner (2002) also points out the risks and tensions of leaving the safety of a counterpublic and thematizing its issues and terminology in the broader public spheres, which Fraser (1992) seems to neglect in her description of the feminist movement as a counterpublic:

"Within a gay or queer counterpublic, for example, no one is in the closet: the presumptive heterosexuality that constitutes the closet for individuals in ordinary speech is suspended. But this circulatory space, freed from heteronormative speech protocols, is itself marked by that very suspension: speech that addresses any participant as queer will circulate up to a point, at which it is certain to meet intense resistance. It might therefore circulate in special, protected venues, in limited publications. The individual struggle with stigma is transposed, as it were, to the conflict between modes of publicness. The expansive nature of public address will seek to keep moving that frontier for a queer public, to seek more and more places to circulate where people will recognize themselves in its address; but no one is likely to be unaware of the risk and conflict involved." (Warner, 2002, p. 86–87)

Thus, much like Squires (2002), Warner (2002, p. 89) sees the articulation of counterpublics in terms of social movements that aim at changing the broader public sphere as just one of the possible paths, and not always the most appropriate one for some counterpublics if the broader public sphere is currently hostile to them<sup>34</sup>.

In the past two decades, the literature on the subject has focused increasingly on the role of the internet as a new mean of communication for the constitution or the transformation of (counter) public spheres. This is part of a broader historical context, marked by other major sociohistorical shifts that have taken place recently and affect the way scholars think about public spheres, such as the crisis of the concept of nation-state, the rise of various new social movements and the segmentation of audiences (Dahlgren, 1991, p. 12). Scholars have analyzed the internet's contribution to increasing discursive flows' multipolarity (Jones, 2006, p. 211) and journalists' loss of gatekeeping monopoly as a result, as well as the role of social media and algorithms in redefining how audiences interact with news (Raetzsch, 2017, p. 1285–1287). With a focus on activism, they have also looked into the increasingly deterritorialized character of deliberation online, with a transnationalization of civil society and an increase in alternative media global networks as a reaction to these developments (Cammaerts & Audenhove, 2005; Jones, 2006; McNair, 2017; Wimmer, 2007, chapter 2.7.2) and on the role of social media and websites' features in fostering or discouraging debate and the formation of counterpublic spheres (Antony

<sup>34</sup>For an empirical study of subaltern counterpublics' constitution beyond organized civil society and social movements, see also Marques and Maia's (2008) analysis of quotidian political conversations among women from poorer communities in Brazil.

& Thomas, 2010; Ballantyne, Lowe, & Beddoe, 2017; Larsson, 2014; Papacharissi, 2015). These are, of course, only some of the many important and lively debates being conducted in the literature by the time of writing. Some of the developments they analyzed are part of the broader context in my study, yet not directly part of its scope. Instead, I direct my focus in this study towards the interaction between communication technologies and actors' lives and practices — particularly their media and journalistic practices —, which, as some authors argue, are decisive to determine these technologies' role in (counter) public spheres (Lünenborg & Raetzsch, 2018, p. 28–29; Wimmer, 2007, p. 235).

In that sense, Lünenborg and Raetzsch's (2018) concept of performative publics takes into account the many recent shifts described in the literature yet directs the attention towards media practices. To them, media practices provide the theoretical framework “to capture and analyse quotidian routines of communication in their relevance for the emergence of publics of very different scopes and dimensions and in different socio-political environments” (Lünenborg & Raetzsch, 2018, p. 23). Through this lens, they propose a look into how globally available media technologies are integrated into local contexts and alter communication routines, affirming or challenging not only previously existing media practices, but also other kinds of social practices and the norms that underlie them. By looking into these processes on the level of practices, they argue, researchers might find clues on “larger processes of political or social change without assuming political change is necessarily the result of new practices of communication” (Lünenborg & Raetzsch, 2018, p. 23). Drawing from the work of Shove et al. (2012) among other practice theorists, they conceptualize performative publics as emerging from the relinking of the elements that compose practices, as these elements are increasingly crossing over from the private to the public realm. By focusing on these processes, they analyze phenomena happening beyond the boundaries of different fields, as new actors and discourses increasingly reach the public sphere without passing through channels traditionally theorized as central to (counter) public spheres, such as social movements or established media. The authors defend that practice theory may help “understand how negotiations allow different actors — let them be single actors or groups like (emerging) social movements — to participate, articulate themselves and challenge dominant viewpoints” (Lünenborg & Raetzsch, 2018, p. 14) in a changing media landscape.

While there are various possibilities of conceptualizing counter public spheres that allow for a multitude of empirical perspectives on specific cases, one of the overarching aspects permeating these analyses is the connection between counter public spheres and social changes, which also cause shifts in the broader public sphere (Wimmer, 2007, p. 129). Fenton and Downey (2003, p. 16), as well as Jakubowicz (2006, p. 172), even argue that counter public spheres thrive particularly in times of instability in the broader public sphere, when social shifts are yet to be consolidated. The protests in 2013 and 2014 were one such period of instability in Brazil, which echoed broader shifts worldwide. In the next chapter, I focus on the practices of actors involved with alternative media and their coverage of the protests, which I argue constitute a form of counter public sphere.

## 4.5 Between Norms and Critical Reflections

The discussion around key concepts from journalism studies and the body of theory on (counter) public spheres is a rich and nuanced one. In this chapter, I discussed the concept of journalistic field as a theoretical framework for understanding the main normative points that permeate the concept of objectivity. As a key component of the journalistic field's definition of professionalism, objectivity permeates journalists' practices, making their performance a routinized endeavor to ensure their field's autonomy in relation to other fields. Through its three dimensions — ontological, epistemic and procedural —, journalistic objectivity guides practices of source selection, presentation and structuring of information. However, as the criticism on the regime of objectivity points out, there is a stark contrast between practice and normative expectations, with practices grounded on objectivity often reproducing power imbalances that exist in society.

Zooming in on alternative journalism's critical stance and often refusal towards objectivity, I explored the literature on journalistic practices in this heterogeneous field, which experiments with other ways of doing journalism that do not abide by objectivity standards. This translates into sourcing practices focused on marginalized communities and coverage of issues relevant to these communities.

Finally, I connected both scholarships to Habermas' model of the public sphere, offering an overview of its main assumptions, as well as its shortcomings. This provided the basis for revising the scholarship on the concept of counter public spheres and how it relates to alternative journalism. Regarding this literature through the question of alternative journalism's role in the constitution of counter public spheres, I surveyed how alternative journalists' practices may help mediate the counterpublics they propose to serve.

Together with 3, this chapter lays the ground for my own contribution to an interdisciplinary scholarship on journalism and media practices. By looking into the alternative coverage of the protests in 2013 and 2014 Fortaleza, I will dialog with many of the observations other authors have previously made while questioning the notions of objectivity, analyzing alternative journalists' practices, and retracing the creation of counter public spheres. At the same time, I will also introduce some new elements to the discussion.

## Chapter 5

# Operationalizing the Study of Practices and Discourse

In chapter 3, I showed that many scholars have started to apply the concept of media practices to their research on social movements, in order to acquire a more nuanced understanding of the media's role in movements' strategies and routines. However, while activists' media practices are increasingly coming to the fore in this area of scholarship, the practices of allied actors from alternative media are still not as widely researched, as my brief overview of research on this topic in section 4.3 revealed: there are already some studies pointing to differences between alternative and traditional media in terms of practices, organization and values, but many open questions remain. The grounded theory approach provides the necessary methodological tools to best conduct my exploratory study, which aims at answering a number of these open questions, focusing particularly at the alternative coverage of protest movements in terms of practices and discourse.

Schatzki (2001, p. 45) portrays the relation between practices and discourses as one of mutual transformation: practices acquire form through discourses, only to transform them through a rearticulation of meanings that then gives way to new practices formed by those transformed discourses.

In the next pages, I provide an outline of how I empirically explored the interaction between actors' media practices and their journalistic production, i.e. their discourse. In the next section, I discuss the grounded theory approach as the underlying methodology of this study, guiding the application of the two methods I employed to answer my research questions: expert interviews and qualitative content analysis. Section 5.2 provides details on the conditions and actors I encountered during my field research in the Brazilian city of Fortaleza. Then I introduce my two research questions in section 5.3. Finally, I describe the main steps of analysis I performed as part of my research design in section 5.4.

## 5.1 Grounded Theory as a Methodological Umbrella

Developed by the sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the late 1960s, the grounded theory approach is one of the leading methodologies employed by those attempting to generate new theories through empirical research. A grounded theory “is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23). Due to its emphasis on interactive methods of data collection, such as interviews and participatory or non-participatory observation, it encourages researchers to experience on the ground the phenomena they intend to analyze (Breuer, 2011, p. 38). The analysis of data collected on the ground happens through a coding process that aims towards increasingly abstract categories generated directly from the data.

As this innovative methodology grew increasingly popular among researchers, both creators went separate ways. In the 1990s, Strauss and Glaser were at the center of a debate around their different conceptions about the correct application of the grounded theory approach, with particular focus on the role of previous knowledge in the research process: Glaser defended that researchers should avoid bringing too much theoretical knowledge with them to the field, in order to enable the theoretical structure to “emerge” on its own from the data. Strauss, on the other hand, had spent the previous decades developing more concrete rules for generating grounded theories, which Glaser considered too restrictive. Breuer (2011, p. 111–114) summarizes this conflict in more detail, offering a conciliatory perspective: “every individual case of operationalizing the grounded theory methodology and its coding process shows variations and adaptations due to the characteristics of the research object, the context and the conditions that permeate the process of research as well as the particularities of the person doing the research (...)” (Breuer, 2011, p. 111)<sup>1</sup>. Despite the various debates as to how grounded theory research should be carried out, most authors agree on its cyclical nature, which was also one of its main innovations in comparison to other methods of research in the social sciences, both quantitative and qualitative, in which a theory is first developed through the analysis of the existing literature and then tested empirically – grounded theories already need empirical data during their formulation (Krotz, 2005, p. 162). “Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23).

As a first step, researchers become aware of the previous knowledge they already possess on the phenomenon they decided to study. This knowledge can come from practical, quotidian experience or from existing literature (especially for researchers working with Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) approach). Then, they go to the field and collect data through methods such as interviews or observation. Back to their offices, researchers analyze the data through coding, enriching their previously existing knowledge with first empirical input and trying to discern relationships among categories in the data. This process generates new questions, sending the

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<sup>1</sup>“In jedem individuellen Fall des forschungspraktischen Operierens mit der GTM-Methodik und mit ihrem Kodierverfahren ergeben sich Variationen und Passungen zwischen Gegenstandscharakteristika, Kontexten und Umständen des Forschungsprozesses sowie Eigenheiten der Forscherperson (...)” (Breuer, 2011, p. 111).

researcher to the field again. The data from this new round of field research are then compared with the previous data, leading to new questions and new rounds of data collection (Krotz, 2005, p. 48). As this description already shows, the grounded theory approach is also characterized by a continuous back and forth through the various steps that compose the research process: researchers go back to their previous knowledge and confront it with the data collected each time – until the theory is complete, that is until new data no longer add new aspects to it, in what is known as theoretical saturation (Breuer, 2011, p. 69; Krotz, 2005, p. 136).

Researchers may employ a variety of methods to collect data as part of the cyclical process that constitutes the grounded theory approach. In this section, I focus particularly on the interaction between expert interviews and qualitative content analysis, as these were the two methods I employed in my empirical research. Krotz (2005, p. 85) defends that communication and language are essential for theory-generating research, as reality is based on our perception and the meanings we attribute to it. Both methods assess communication through different perspectives. The qualitative content analysis, as applied in my study, looked into actors' published media production, i.e. their public communication, while my expert interviews focused on actors' media practices. By doing this, I kept in mind expert interviews' focus on what actors "do, how they do it and how they communicate about it" (Krotz, 2005, p. 99)<sup>2</sup>, which characterizes these interviews in the grounded theory approach.

Bourdieu (1977, p. 18) describes the relationship between the actors on the ground and the researcher – in his case, the anthropologist – as a pedagogic one, in which actors make explicit previously unconscious or simply taken for granted schemes that underlie their practices in an attempt to transmit them to the researcher. This is also why actors interviewed are labeled experts: the knowledge they possess about the research object comes from their practical experiences with it as well as from how they process these experiences through communication, making them the experts on the actions researchers seek to theorize about (Krotz, 2005, p. 101). This echoes Peterson's (2010, p. 139–145) concept of metaculture, developed for ethnographers researching practices, which basically consists on registering the way actors talk about their own practices. He defends a combination of theoretical constructions and metaculture as a means for ethnographers to avoid the tendency to focus on finding patterns rooted solely on theory and ignore the meanings actors themselves ascribed to them, thus alienating practices from their context and overlooking important findings.

The selection of interview partners – and of cases, more broadly – happens through theoretical sampling: the research question guides the choice of interview partners, for example through efforts to find experts that represent contrasting perspectives to the ones described on previous interviews or further variations of the perspectives collected up until that point, revealing additional aspects of the research object and expanding the theory's scope (Breuer, 2011, p. 58; Krotz, 2005, p. 191). Unlike random sampling, which focuses on generating data to verify an already existing theory, theoretical sampling is part of a theory-generating process and assumptions grounded on the data become the basis for further sampling (Maines, 2003, p. 1121). Moreover, theoretical sampling focuses on concepts that have proven theoretically relevant in

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<sup>2</sup>“tun, wie sie es tun und wie sie darüber kommunizieren” (Krotz, 2005, p. 99).

the research cycle, i.e. “(1) they are **repeatedly present** or **notably absent** when comparing incident after incident, and (2) through the coding procedures they gain the *status of categories*” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 177, emphasis in the original). It follows that the developing categories are at the center of the sampling process, not interviewees per se, although in some cases, due to the research questions, interviewees’ individual characteristics might be of relevance for theoretical sampling.

Connected to theoretical sampling for expert interviews, guideline-based interviews enable comparisons while also providing the flexibility different perspectives require: Krotz (2005, p. 20) asserts that it does not make sense to have a standardized form and always ask the same questions, since every interview happens differently and each interview partner might highlight a different aspect, deriving from her individual perspective about the research object. Recognizing this diversity of perspectives and making the connections between them clear is the necessary next step in generating a theory that is grounded on data, reconstructing the creation and performance of practices from the actions and interactions actors recount in their interviews (Krotz, 2005, p. 104). This is achieved through a coding process that aims at finding connections, similarities and differences, as well as structures and generalizations from the very individual perspectives contained in the transcript of each interview – these segments are the building blocks of the theory (Krotz, 2005, p. 180). I provide a more concrete description of how coding works in the grounded theory approach when describing my research design in section 5.4.

Despite the many strengths expert interviews bring to retracing practices due to their focus on actors’ descriptions and reflections, this method presents some limitations as well. According to Neumayer et al. (2016), while interviews provide insights into practices that are not visible in other kinds of data and help contextualizing practices with regards to actors’ own perception of them, “use of this approach on its own may result in blind spots”, since interviews can only relay actors’ perspective (Neumayer et al., 2016, p. 5560). In their study on activists at the Blockupy movement in Frankfurt, they address this shortcoming by also performing a social network analysis. Here, I opted for a multi-layered, qualitative content analysis that also drew from coding methods from the grounded theory approach. The combination of expert interviews and qualitative content analysis contributed to revealing a more complex picture of actors’ extremely diverse media practices, with each method contributing to detect particular nuances. In addition, given this study’s focus on actors’ alternative coverage of protests, it makes sense to not only look into how they performed this coverage, but also into the discourse that resulted from the practices of alternative coverage – in this case, actors’ published media production. Thus, under the umbrella of the grounded theory approach, both methods complement each other, as they shed light on different aspects that compose actors’ alternative coverage of the protests, namely the practices they perform and the discourses they articulate.

The decision for a qualitative content analysis built upon a tradition of journalism research that seeks to draw conclusions about the relationship between journalistic work routines and constraints and “the relevance of the cultural, political and economic framework for production of media content” (Kolmer, 2008, p. 117), i.e. the broader context this journalistic work is inserted in and, at the same time, influences through its own production. The author goes as far

as to argue that “the ultimate relevance of these constraints for the daily work of journalists cannot be assessed without reference to the actual output of the journalistic production process” (Kolmer, 2008, p. 117). While the author is referring specifically to journalistic work carried out in traditional newsrooms and the specific challenges it faces, I argue that a look at alternative journalists’ output is just as essential, as they also face constraints in everyday work, albeit of a different nature than the ones traditional journalists encounter. As I argued in chapter 4, traditional journalists seek to reconcile objectivity norms with the political and economic pressures exerted over the journalistic field, which they face on an organizational level at the newsroom and in their reporting routines. Alternative journalists, on the other hand, face a lack of recognition as part of the journalistic field and resistance to their attempts at questioning objectivity norms. A qualitative content analysis might reveal aspects of this struggle in alternative journalists’ media production.

Content analysis can be performed either quantitatively or qualitatively. Both approaches focus on inferring broader contextual aspects through a thorough description of a content corpus (Wegener, 2005, p. 204–205). Quantitative content analyses are particularly useful to discern and quantify trends in a sample that can contain a very high amount of units of analysis, as studies involving big data show. Qualitative content analyses, on the other hand, draw from hermeneutic or linguistic traditions and focus on understanding the text in its nuances. Moreover, in some projects, researchers choose to implement a mixed methods approach in their research designs, in order to first discern specific trends and then study them in-depth qualitatively. However, “insofar as every content analysis involves qualitative elements at least in the definition of the objectives of the study, the operationalization of the variables as well as in the interpretation of the results” (Kolmer, 2008, p. 118–119), a stark division between quantitative and qualitative methods of content analysis proves to be misleading<sup>3</sup>.

Given the exploratory focus of the present research, I opted for a purely qualitative approach to my content analysis. The assertion that qualitative content analysis “pays attention to audience, media and contextual factors — not simply the text” (Macnamara, 2006, p. 5) proves particularly important in this case, given the central role sociopolitical shifts play in this study. The subtle changes I aimed at detecting in the content would be extremely difficult to quantify. Therefore, I approach the content as part of a communication process, embedded in a specific communicational context, not as text isolated from the surroundings that influence its production (Mayring, 2010, p. 29). The articulation between qualitative content analysis and expert interviews proves productive in this sense, as expert interviews highlight the practices that permeate this communication process while the analysis of the published media material itself revealed what was being communicated.

Specially in relation to journalistic texts, Wegener (2005, p. 205) points out three possible layers of interpretation: the subject of the journalist — as long as they are identified as the author of an analyzed text —, with their personal motivations and standards as well as conflicts between personal stances and institutional ones; the institution itself, with the aim of discerning a media

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<sup>3</sup>For an overview of the main scholarly discussions concerning content analysis applied to media texts, see Macnamara (2006).



outlet's institutional perspective, e.g. their editorial line and how it translates into the coverage of a certain issue, or a company's public relations strategy in the way it presents itself, for example by analyzing press statements; or media structures, focusing on professional and ethical standards established among those active in the media landscape, as well as the influence of political and economic conditions surrounding the production of content, with coding focusing on categories in the text that make inferences in these areas possible. As this description makes clear, the concept of media structure here can be translated into the theoretical construction of the journalistic field I described in the previous chapter. In this study, the direction of my inquiry follows the media structure, namely how actors at a liminal position in the journalistic field handle the standards in the field or break with them in their published content. It is important to highlight that the focus is not on each actor as an author individually, but on the work of the alternative media collectives they integrate and their production.

Much like with expert interviews, coding the material also plays an essential role in qualitative content analysis. Classic approaches like Mayring's (2010) suggest the development of categories beforehand, followed by their application to the material and the interpretation of the results. This approach has its own advantages, detaching categories from statistical measurements and enabling the development of complex typologies and of connections between text and its context of production and reception. However, I felt it would not suffice to answer my research questions, as patterns in the coverage should emerge inductively from the material instead of from previously defined categories. As a result, I opted for a more cyclical coding process that merges some of the steps suggested by Mayring (2010) with coding procedures from the grounded theory approach. I describe later in this chapter how both approaches interacted with each other in my research design.

Through the combination of methods of expert interviews and qualitative content analysis, I explored the particular context of the alternative coverage of protests in Fortaleza between 2013 and 2014. In the next section, I describe the concrete conditions that permeated my field research, including the actors I interviewed and whose media production I analyzed.

## **5.2 The Case of the Alternative Coverage of Protests in Fortaleza**

My empirical research focused on actors engaged in the alternative media coverage of the protests that took place between 2013 and 2014 in the city of Fortaleza, the fifth largest city in Brazil and one of the host cities of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, which also sparked massive protests there. I was born in Fortaleza and lived there until shortly after concluding my bachelor studies. This motivated me to focus on how the local alternative media scene experienced the events that transpired there during 2013 and 2014.

As I summarized in section 2.5, Fortaleza presented many of the developments observed in other Brazilian cities, such as protests during the Confederations Cup with thousands of attendees, local civil society initiatives, workers' strikes, social movements' mobilizations, and a major increase in police repression in 2014. Thus, it provided a context similar to that in other parts

of the country, but it had not been researched in its particularities yet. My sense was that most studies at the time were looking into alternative media in the Brazilian Southeast (Morales, de Souza, & Rocha, 2013; de Sousa, 2015; Almeida & Evangelista, 2013), where most nationwide media outlets are located, directing the whole country's attention to what happens there. With my work, I wanted to counter the traditional neglect cities outside of the so-called "Rio-São Paulo axis" suffer not only in terms of journalistic reporting, but in terms of academic research as well.

Much like in other parts of Brazil, alternative media collectives emerged as important voices among those covering the protests in Fortaleza. I focused my attention particularly on two of them: *Na Rua* and *Nigéria*. The choice to focus on both collectives happened during my first round of field research, in 2014 and 2015, when I realized they were at the center of alternative coverage efforts in the city, as I recount in the description of my research design in this chapter.

*Nigéria* provides public relations consulting and video production to NGOs and social movements in Brazil. It also produces journalistic pieces and documentaries on topics ranging from human rights to environmental issues. These are circulated on TV channels, movie theaters and the web (Nigéria, 2019). The collective, formally registered as a production company, was founded in 2012 by four media professionals — some with a degree in journalism and others specialized in audiovisual work<sup>4</sup> — that covered together every protest that happened in Fortaleza during the Confederations Cup and launched the documentary *Vandalism (Com Vandalismo)* in the beginning of August 2013, one of the first feature-length films on the June Journeys to come out. In an interview I conducted with one of its members for the citizen media platform Global Voices, he describes the collective's spontaneous involvement with the coverage of the 2013 and 2014 protests: "We started filming because of the necessity to record what was happening. We didn't have the slightest idea of what was going to happen" (Medeiros, 2013). Unlike its consultancy projects, *Nigéria's* coverage of the protests was a personal project for its members, not an assignment.

*Na Rua*, on the other hand, was embedded in the structures of the the Urucum collective, an NGO founded in 2011 by lawyers and media professionals to give legal and communication consulting to social movements and civil society, as well as promote the defense of human rights (Na Rua, 2019). In 2014, Urucum applied for a grant from the private Brazilian Human Rights Fund to document human rights abuses between the FIFA World Cup 2014 and the 6th BRICS summit, which took place from 14 to 16 July 2014 in Fortaleza (Fundo Brasil de Direitos Humanos, 2014). The grant allowed Urucum to start the project *Na Rua*, with two staff members responsible for the journalistic real time coverage of the protests, and lawyers who would give legal support to arrested protesters and pursue prosecution of other human rights violations that could occur during that time span (Na Rua, n.d.)<sup>5</sup>. However, the project grew beyond its staff members, composed of two journalism students from the Federal University of Ceará at the time. Their focus

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<sup>4</sup>As I returned to the field at the end of 2015, one of the collective's members had left *Nigéria* to pursue other projects, but the remaining three members were still active in 2019, as their page indicates (Nigéria, 2019).

<sup>5</sup>In this sense, the combination of alternative coverage and legal support was not unique to Fortaleza, as collectives such as Activist Lawyers (Advogados Atvitistas), founded in São Paulo in 2013 to act on human rights violations during the protests both legally and through journalistic coverage, indicates (Catraca Livre, 2014).

was on working both online and on the ground, verifying information they got from protesters on the ground, sending people to police stations to check rumors of arrests and what could be done, organizing bits of information and images into texts. Many other students got involved, taking pictures, writing real-time updates on Facebook, as well as longer texts for *Na Rua*'s website, to which many Facebook posts also link. *Na Rua* and *Nigéria* worked together quite often. They published their coverage of the protests in 2013 and 2014 mostly online, especially on their Facebook pages. While the members of both collectives were among my main interview partners, their media production constituted the material for the qualitative content analysis. In the next section, I introduce the research questions that defined the focus of my empirical research.

### 5.3 Research Questions

In the present study, I focus specifically on the coverage of protests as a site of constant adaptation or creation of media practices as a reaction to sudden changes in the sociopolitical context, as the events in Fortaleza between 2013 and 2014 illustrate. With this focus on the change or creation of media practices in mind, I pose the following research question:

*RQ 1: How do actors involved in the alternative coverage of protests adapt media practices to changes in the sociopolitical context?*

I answer RQ 1 through a qualitative approach that seeks to make patterns and processes visible, generating a model that may then be applied to other cases. The terminology used in RQ 1 tries to not excessively restrict the cases that could be studied in the future while remaining concrete enough to establish boundaries and define a focus for field research.

The “actors involved in the alternative coverage of protests” can be, depending on the local context analyzed, professional journalists, media-savvy protesters or media collectives, for example. Each context shows a different constellation of actors and the model should apply to as many of them as possible. The focus here is on the experiences these actors make — regardless of their professional background — while performing their media practices during the alternative coverage of events, i.e. coverage done by media that represents an alternative to commercial or state-owned media in general. This leaves actors working exclusively in the coverage for traditional media out of the scope of this research.

Giddens (1986, p. 233–236) criticizes the use of the term “adaptation” in the social sciences for being too vague or supporting false claims about a society’s supposedly evolutionary superiority. However, the “adaptation of media practices” I refer to in RQ 1 is much more specific. It basically involves various kinds of processes that actors initiate and constantly need to alter as events unfold, performing practices that enable the production of alternative coverage of events in its various facets.

The initial rise of a protest movement and the subsequent reactions of the various social actors to this event are what I describe in RQ 1 as “changes in the sociopolitical context”. As Brazil’s case shows, protests are only the peak of a shifting sociopolitical reality. The events preceding them and the reactions from social movements, the media and the authorities, for example, are

just as important. This way, not only the moment of sociopolitical change itself (in this case, the initial mass protests) can be studied, but also some of its consequences to media practices and the adaptation processes that followed it. In addition, I am particularly interested in protests initiated by progressive actors who are also often critical towards the current sociopolitical system, although moments of sociopolitical changes can consist of various other types of events, such as uprisings, conservative rollbacks, revolutions, coups d'état or other drastic changes in a country's reality. The focus on progressive actors is a normative decision that allows me to focus on the potential solutions their media practices might offer to face challenges posed by groups defending exclusionary and authoritarian agendas, as I detail in chapter 9.

While answering RQ 1 requires a focus on the various media practices actors perform during the alternative coverage of protests and how they adapt these practices to changes in the sociopolitical context, in RQ 2 I turn to actors' media production, which circulated in their counter public spheres as a result of performing these media practices. I direct my focus particularly to how this production changed while conditions on the ground and sociopolitical life changed as well:

*RQ 2: How do shifts in actors' media production during the alternative coverage of protests relate to the adaptation of media practices in a changing sociopolitical context?*

By looking at the coverage interview partners produced, I will trace parallels between their experience on the ground and the output this experience generated. Actors not only interact with the sociopolitical context while reporting on the ground, but also by publishing the results of this reporting. Thus, other forms of adaptation to the context may become visible in the coverage itself. In addition, the research questions complement each other by focusing on distinct aspects of the alternative coverage, i.e. the practices actors perform and the discourses they articulate. This becomes clearer in the next section, in which I describe my research design.

## 5.4 Research Design

As I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, I combined the methods of expert interviews and qualitative content analysis as a means to answer RQ 1 and RQ 2 through the grounded theory approach. In the next pages, I detail how I applied both methods as part of my research design, from the selection of interview partners and media content to the coding of both types of material following the grounded theory approach. While section 5.1 delineates the interaction between both methods as part of a methodological discussion, this section contains the concrete steps that marked the implementation of this interaction. This section is structured following the order of analysis, in which I first answered RQ 1 and then build upon its results to answer RQ 2. Thus, the method required for answering RQ 1 is introduced first.

### 5.4.1 Expert Interviews as Sources for Reconstructing Practices

For this study, I interviewed actors involved in the alternative coverage of protests that took place in the Brazilian city of Fortaleza during 2013 and 2014, in the buildup to the 2014 FIFA

World Cup, as well as during and after this major sports event. These actors integrated a network of collaboration composed not only of members of both media groups that were active during the protests, *Nigéria* and *Na Rua*, but also by individuals with a media background — mostly photographers — that collaborated with one of these media groups or both of them on a regular basis. I classified this third group of actors as solo producers.

Over both rounds of expert interviews, the snowball sampling method aided my theoretical sampling process, with each actor recommending other potential interview partners that had also engaged in the alternative media coverage during the period studied. This helped me assess the size of actors' network of collaboration in Fortaleza, especially during the exploratory phase of field research between 2014 and 2015. While this sampling method is not immune to biases, with actors recommending other individuals that may share their own views, it is still one of the most effective ways of finding interview partners in a community that lacks formal structures that could allow locating them through other means. As Atkinson and Flint (2004) point out, snowball sampling is a valuable method in contexts where the number of interview partners is limited or a high level of trust is required to reach these interview partners. "Under these circumstances, such technologies of 'chain referral' may imbue the researcher with characteristics associated with being an insider or group member, which can aid entry to settings in which conventional approaches have great difficulty" (Atkinson & Flint, 2004, p. 1044). This aspect proved essential to my study, as actors had concerns about police surveillance and infiltration due to the political climate after the first protests in 2013. Recommendations from people in their own circle worked to validate me as a trustworthy interlocutor.

Towards the conclusion of the field research, I achieved theoretical saturation as the data gathered did not add new aspects to the theory developed at that point: the same incidents and practices increasingly overlapped in actors' descriptions (Breuer, 2011, p. 110; Morse, 2004, p. 1122). Although theoretical sampling's definition of cases does not equate interview partners, but rather the variety of events and actions they describe (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 177), in my particular case study, the stage of theoretical saturation coincided with the moment when increasingly more experts responded to my requests for recommendations of further interview partners without bringing up any new names in addition to the ones I had already interviewed. When I explicitly asked whether they could not remember anyone else, they then confirmed those were all the individuals that were active throughout the period researched, with statements such as this one<sup>6</sup>:

"Yes, there were people that were close to us, people that were part of the [Messenger App]<sup>7</sup> group and, now and then, sent something. But, essentially, it [the alternative coverage] worked with the people that we already talked about. The people that brought the project forward, with assiduity, were the same: the people from *Nigéria*, us [from *Na Rua*] and the photographers. Those were the people

<sup>6</sup>For similar statements, see: NR2, 15 January 2015, 292-302; SP3, 8 January 2016, 416-418; NG4, 23 December 2015, 180-188.

<sup>7</sup>As I explain later in the next chapter, when describing practices against surveillance, I avoid naming actors' concrete communication channels for security reasons.

that were effectively working on it [the alternative coverage] constantly.” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 121–125)<sup>8</sup>

The few recommendations of interview partners I did not pursue were due to the fact that those were actors that were not involved primarily with the alternative coverage of the protests. Therefore, they were out of the scope of my research questions. These recommendations included traditional media employees, as well as members of social movements or protesters that had not taken part in the content production for the alternative coverage. Actors that only contributed to the coverage of very few protests were also not interviewed, as my research questions required interview partners to be able to talk about their experiences during the various events that took place and were covered by alternative media throughout the period studied. The tight structure of the network of collaboration seems to be a result of the lower turnout of the protests in 2014 and an increase in police repression, which discouraged potential contributors from engaging with the alternative coverage:

“But, from a certain point onwards, when the protests died down, when the large crowds and the black blocs stopped taking to the streets, a lot of people who were part of Pautão da Copa [planning meetings] also stopped covering the protests. (...) But there was not only Pautão da Copa as a large articulation space, we also built articulations in other ways. The collectives that had already been partners before this specific moment of the World Cup continued to build articulations among themselves.” (NR4, 15 December 2015, 332–342)<sup>9</sup>

Pautão da Copa was a series of meetings that alternative media actors in Fortaleza organized in the buildup to the 2014 FIFA World Cup, shortly before the matches started. It was an attempt to join forces and make a unified alternative coverage of the protests, so that contents produced by different groups and individuals did not overlap. The members of *Nigéria* and *Na Rua*, their friends and members of various social movements, such as the local chapter of the World Cup Popular Committee, took part in those meetings. As the protests in 2014 were much smaller than the ones in 2013, some of these articulations seemed out of place and were not put into practice. Actors in *Nigéria* and *Na Rua* switched to covering not only the small anti-World Cup protests, but also working together with traditional social movements that took to the streets at the time, timing their demands with the media attention towards the World Cup, as described in section 2.4.

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<sup>8</sup>“É, tinha gente próxima, que tava no grupo [do Messenger App] e que, de vez em quando, mandava alguma coisa. Mas, essencialmente, [a cobertura alternativa] funcionou com o pessoal que a gente já tinha até conversado. Aquelas pessoas que estavam tocando o projeto, assiduamente, são as mesmas: as pessoas da *Nigéria*, a gente [do *Na Rua*] e os fotógrafos. Esse era o pessoal que estava efetivamente nisso [cobertura alternativa] constantemente” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 121–125).

<sup>9</sup>“Mas, em determinado momento, quando os protestos arrefeceram, essa multidão e black blocs e tal, quando esse grupo passou a não ir mais pra rua, muita gente que estava no Pautão da Copa [série de encontros de planejamento] também não cobria mais as manifestações. (...) Mas [não] tinha [só] o Pautão da Copa, que era um grande espaço de articulação, mas a gente também se articulava de outras maneiras. Os coletivos que já eram parceiros antes desse momento específico da Copa continuaram se articulando entre si” (NR4, 15 December 2015, 332–342).

**Table 5.1:** Actors interviewed in the first (Dec/2014–Jan/2015) and second (Dec/2015–Jan/2016) rounds of field research, classified by membership in the alternative media groups (the abbreviations for each group will be employed when citing actors anonymously)

Group	1st round	2nd round	
		New Interview Partners	Follow-Up Interviews
<i>Nigéria</i> (NG)	4	0	4
<i>Na Rua</i> (NR)	5	3	3
Solo Producers (SP)	2	1	2
Total	11	4	9

Throughout my period of field research, I conducted 24 interviews (table5.1), each one lasting, on average, one hour. True to the circular process that characterizes the generation of grounded theories, I conducted two rounds of interviews between 2014 and 2016. In the first round, which took place between the end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015, my interview guidelines followed an exploratory approach, with open questions about actors' experiences during the period studied, questions about the media collectives they integrated, the main sociopolitical developments that influenced their media practices at the time and their descriptions of who were the other actors involved in the alternative coverage of the protests.

During that time, I became acutely aware of my status as a "local outsider" (Custódio, 2017): someone originally from the place she is researching while, at the same time, planning and analyzing this research from abroad. Back when we met, my interlocutors still had fresh memories of police inquiries and the authorities' various infiltration attempts in the movements they covered. Thus, the fact that most of them knew me from our common time at university or previous shared work experiences proved essential, as they may have not agreed to talk with a complete outsider. At the same time, especially during the first interviews, I felt that my further academic socialization in Germany had colored my expectations towards the field with concepts that not always fit the reality on the ground, making some of my questions sound quite naive or absurd to my interview partners. In continuous self-reflexion, I developed my interview guidelines further, in order to incorporate the reality from the field and ask more accurate questions.

The data gathered during the first interviews aided the development of the guideline for the second round of interviews, between late 2015 and early 2016, which contained questions on the practices described during the first interviews, as well as aimed at providing more data to support or refute assumptions formulated from the initial data collected<sup>10</sup>. During the second round of expert interviews, nine actors agreed to a follow-up interview to the one they had given during the first, exploratory round. In addition, four actors were interviewed for the first time during the second round of field research, answering the more focused questions developed for the second guideline, combined with some exploratory questions from the first guideline<sup>11</sup>. The

<sup>10</sup>Both guidelines, in Portuguese and in English, can be found in the appendices A and B.

<sup>11</sup>Financial and time constraints did not allow me to constantly go back to the field at each step of analysis, but I am confident that this research design, based on two rounds of interviews and actors' media production as part of the theoretical sample, fulfilled the criteria for a solid empirical grounding

topics contained in the interview guideline included actors' articulations among each other as part of collectives or of the broader alternative coverage network, their use of protective gear and reporting equipment, their interactions with the police and protesters, and their perception of their media production's reach.

Experts presented various individual perspectives in the interviews, due to their diverse background, previous professional experiences and focus of their media and political activities. They were experienced former newsroom journalists, freelance photographers, students, activists. Most of them had in common a formal education in media, such as a bachelor degree in journalism or advertising, reinforcing literature that describes those engaged in alternative media as often coming from a "media vanguard" (Russell, 2016) or being "media people" (Mattoni & Treré, 2014)<sup>12</sup>.

### **Coding the Interview Transcripts**

After returning from the field phases, I first approached the data collected on the ground by transcribing my interviews with the help of a transcription software<sup>13</sup>. I transcribed all recordings in the original language, Portuguese. Only passages I later directly cite in my analysis have been translated to English. Later, as I conducted three initial rounds of open coding, I also edited interviews' transcripts to correct typos and eliminate repetitions, a process that is possible in the grounded theory approach, since it focuses on the interview partners' accounts regarding the research object, not on interviewees' particular oral quirks (Krotz, 2005, p. 172–173).

In this study, I applied Strauss and Corbin's (1990) take on the grounded theory approach, which other key authors my research draws from, such as Breuer (2011) and Krotz (2005), also adopt. I found their approach to be the most constructive for my own research, as they suggest a clear structure for conducting empirical research without restricting possibilities of adapting to the contingencies in the field. Their guidelines for the various coding phases, in particular, helped me concentrate my efforts on extracting the most facets from the material while following clearly defined steps, which also made my coding process more transparent for other researchers seeking to follow or replicate it<sup>14</sup>.

During the process of open coding, I defined my first broad codes, while making use of memos to record contrasting perspectives among interview partners and also elements they had in common. Memos, which consist of written down observations and thoughts that cross the researcher's mind during the analysis of the data (Krotz, 2005, p. 188), were a very useful tool to refine my conceptualization throughout the coding process.

Three rounds of axial coding followed the open coding phase. My focus was on zooming in on various dimensions that could permeate a concept, looking for its concrete characteristics and formulating ways it could enrich my model. In this case, I had a clear focus on how actors described their various media practices in the context of the alternative coverage of protests, con-

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that enabled me to test and refine my categories throughout the analysis.

<sup>12</sup>I analyze what this means in light of empirical findings in the next chapters.

<sup>13</sup>I worked with the software Express Scribe version 5.70.

<sup>14</sup>For detailed descriptions of the kind of coding process I adopted, see Breuer (2011, p. 77–93) and Krotz (2005, p. 147–149, 181–184).



tinuously letting my research question guide the coding process. In order to do this, I compared segments assigned the same or similar codes to have a clearer picture of concepts' dimensions and then creating codes for segments that described the same dimension or describing these dimensions on memos. I also compared concepts with regards to which ones were mentioned by which group of interview partners (*Na Rua*, *Nigéria* or solo producers), in order to see if there were group-specific concepts or codes that only came up in the interviews with actors from one specific group. Then, I formulated more focused assumptions for relationships that might exist between different concepts and tested them with the aid of tools available on the qualitative analysis software I used throughout the coding process<sup>15</sup>, including graphics of segments assigned to different codes (intersections) or in proximity to each other (overlaps) and visualizations of relationships between codes<sup>16</sup>. This led to the development of my first categories.

In order to make sure I had coded all segments under appropriate codes, I conducted a fourth round of open coding, re-reading all interviews in full, returning to old material and recoding with higher theoretical sensitivity, as Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 181) recommend. This was followed by a fourth and final round of axial coding, during which I re-tested relationship assumptions and wrote down a final summary of each category, taking into consideration the various aspects I had noted about the concepts that composed them on memos throughout the coding process. The key category became increasingly clear towards the end of the axial coding phase. During the selective coding phase, the key category gained its final contours through further visualizations on the qualitative analysis software as well as the development of the model around it, revealing the relationships among the other categories and between these categories and the key category.

I describe the model that resulted of the process of coding my expert interviews in chapter 6. In order to complement it with data expert interviews may not be able to reveal as well as add further nuances to my analysis of the alternative coverage of protests in Fortaleza, I then turned my attention to *Nigéria* and *Na Rua*'s media production, performing a multi-layered qualitative content analysis of this material.

### 5.4.2 Qualitative Content Analysis as a Focus on Discourse

For the present study, I performed a primary content analysis as defined by Wegener (2005, p. 200), focusing on the production collectives published through their own channels and, thus, building a corpus from actors' media output. This corpus constitutes what I conceptualize as collective's discourse, i.e. what they communicate to the public after performing their media practices in the context of the alternative coverage of protests.

In this specific case, collectives' Facebook pages<sup>17</sup> served as a hub for circulating their media production, either through direct publication, with text and/or visuals uploaded as a Facebook

<sup>15</sup>I used the software MAXQDA in its 12th version.

<sup>16</sup>On MAXQDA 12, these tools are called, respectively, Code Relations Browser and MAXMaps. Some of the visualizations generated on MAXQDA during this phase are available in appendix C.

<sup>17</sup>Facebook pages are available as a feature since 2007 and are the site's most public spaces, in the sense that they "can be accessed without signing into an account and are most often used by organizations for presentation, outreach, marketing, and so forth" (Rieder, Abdulla, Poell, Woltering, & Zack, 2015, p. 4).

post, or through posts containing links to content originally published in other platforms. Therefore, both *Nigéria* and *Na Rua*'s Facebook pages were the springboard for collecting the material for my analysis. Researchers such as Alaimo and Kallinikos (2017) and Rieder et al. (2015) argue for a critical perspective on social media data, as these are influenced by the “infrastructural operations and institutional objectives” (Alaimo & Kallinikos, 2017, p. 188) of the companies that run these platforms, something I took into account when analyzing how some formats interacted with Facebook's specific features, for example. However, as I am only using their Facebook pages as a starting point for looking into the material hosted or linked to there and not aiming at drawing conclusions about the collectives' practices from the platform's metrics alone nor at looking into their media production's concrete outreach effects, I believe Facebook's specific role for my findings is minimal. In the next section, I detail the precise steps I took while collecting the material for analysis.

### Material Selection

Using the open source application Netvizz (Rieder, 2013; Rieder et al., 2015), I extracted all posts published between 1 June 2013 and 31 December 2014 in *Nigéria*<sup>18</sup> and *Na Rua*'s<sup>19</sup> Facebook pages. Netvizz compiled these posts in tabular files containing the contents of each page<sup>20</sup>. I chose this specific time frame as it covers the buildup for the first protests in 2013, which took place mid-June 2013, and allows a glimpse at further relevant events after the anti-World Cup protests around the end of July 2014. As my contextualization in chapter 2 shows, the year 2014 remained eventful until its very end, with various social movements organizing mobilizations and a disputed presidential election.

The resulting material contained 878 posts: 692 by *Nigéria* and 186 by *Na Rua*. The discrepancy between the amount of posts each collective authored can be attributed to the fact that *Na Rua* was founded as a collective just months before the 2014 FIFA World Cup, around May 2014, and they started publishing on their fanpage in June 2014. With these 878 Facebook posts serving as a starting point, I proceeded to manually collect the material itself. This process involved, first, taking screen captures of each post on Facebook, in order to record its visual character and the interplay between text and pictures on the platform. Then, I followed all external links to the original sources of published content, in order to store this material as well. This process involved visiting collectives' accounts at platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo<sup>21</sup>, in order to download their videos with the help of the Firefox plug-in Video Download Helper (Video DownloadHelper, 2019). In addition, unlike *Nigéria* at the time, which relied solely on social

<sup>18</sup><https://www.facebook.com/coletivoNigeria>

<sup>19</sup><https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/>

<sup>20</sup>Netvizz, like many other open source tools used for academic research on Facebook, has been sadly discontinued as a result of Facebook's stricter policies towards research and third-party applications connected to its API, implemented after Cambridge Analytica's massive data harvest on Facebook became known in 2018. These new policies had broad consequences for academic research involving Facebook data (Smee, 2018). Treré (2018, p. 170) summarizes how Cambridge Analytica attempted to influence electoral processes all over the world.

<sup>21</sup>Publishing videos directly on Facebook was not a common action back when I collected the data, so the posts do not contain videos directly uploaded to Facebook.

media accounts, *Na Rua* had an own website. The content published there was also linked on Facebook, so I followed these links to download longer articles published on the website as PDF files.

Finally, I double-checked other common platforms at the time of research, such as Medium, Soundcloud and Twitter, for collectives' accounts and for content posted there and not mentioned on Facebook. This confirmed my assumption that all content also posted on other existing accounts had been linked to on collectives' Facebook pages. *Na Rua* also ran a Twitter account at the time, but, after downloading the 214 tweets published within the research period with the aid of the online tool Docteur Tweety (Docteur Tweety, 2019), I decided against including them in the analyzed material, as most tweets only linked to Facebook posts and were, therefore, redundant.

Based on RQ 2, I developed criteria for refining the material, excluding posts that did not fit the focus of my research question, that is:

- Content originally published by third parties and shared by the collectives on their pages;
- Coverage by others of actions performed by the collectives (reviews of *Nigéria's* documentary *Vandalism*, for example);
- Interviews with members of the collectives or articles published by them on blogs or traditional media, in which they talked about the collective's work, making an appearance in other media as representatives of the collective;
- Announcements or coverage of the collective's participation on public events;
- Content related to other topics than the protests and social movements coverage done by *Nigéria* and *Na Rua* at the time (for example, paid projects by *Nigéria* or initiatives carried out by *Na Rua's* parent-NGO Urucum).

In short, authorship, conditions of production and thematic focus served as the main criteria to exclude posts from the material. Only content authored by collectives themselves, produced as part of alternative coverage efforts and referring to protests and social movements or events mentioned during expert interviews as related, in actors' perception, to the coverage of the anti-World Cup protests — in terms of issues (such as housing rights and evictions in the build-up for the mega sports event) and of practices they performed as they covered them — remained in the material. In addition, I also kept posts in which *Nigéria* and *Na Rua* linked to each other in the material, as the cooperation between both collectives in the production of certain formats or in the coverage of relevant events was also part of the answer to RQ 2<sup>22</sup>. At this point, the number of posts that fit the spectrum of analysis was reduced to 536 posts: 376 by *Nigéria* and 160 by *Na Rua*.

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<sup>22</sup>Although many of the excluded types of content could be interesting for other kinds of analysis, such as a network analysis of the pages collectives were linking to as part of their social media activity or comparisons between collective's paid, institutional work and the alternative coverage of protests done for free, these issues were not relevant for answering RQ 2, which refers specifically to *shifts in the alternative coverage of protests*. As I kept the original table with all 878 posts, however, this material can still be potentially analyzed in future studies, guided by other research questions.

### Basic Categories and Pre-Tests

Having defined the material for analysis, I proceeded to determine basic categories that would help me discern the first patterns in the material, focusing on relevant aspects for answering RQ 2. This represents one of the main elements I drew from Mayring's (2010) approach to qualitative content analysis, as it helped me sharpen my analysis' focus. In another text, he argues that this is an essential step, since "content analyses never aspire to a 'complete' evaluation of the text – which will never be possible –, but rather to an analysis based on the categories" (Mayring & Hurst, 2005, p. 438)<sup>23</sup>. In my case, the categories defined which aspects my analysis initially focused on, which were then further developed through coding processes based on the grounded theory approach. I defined the following basic categories for the preliminary analysis of the whole material, with the aim of identifying first patterns that would guide the next steps of analysis:

- **Main theme:** what was the post about?
- **Sources quoted:** names and/or how quoted sources were identified in the text (if not explicitly identified, I made a judgment call based on context). They needed to be at least clearly quoted (directly or indirectly) or interviewed.
- **Format:** this category contained some basic definitions of possible formats contained in the material, drawn from recurring journalistic formats and from formats interviewees had mentioned during the expert interviews. They included the formats in-depth story, opinion piece, interview, analysis of the protest, streamed talk show, documentary, short video, liveblog, among other kinds of content presentation that might emerge.
- **Visible practices:** which media practices described in the model generated for answering RQ 1 seemed to have permeated this piece or were mentioned as having been performed?
- **Key example?** This question was answered with yes, no or maybe. The aim of this category was to help me find key examples to analyze in depth at a second phase, when I focused on examples to illustrate broader patterns in the material.

In addition, I also reserved a column for notes, in order to be able to brainstorm and record initial impressions from the overall posts, their context units and specific coding units. The reason for choosing these five particular categories was their direct connection to RQ 2, which defined the focus of my content analysis. Coding a post's main theme allowed me to retrace this theme's trajectory in the whole material, in terms of the dates when it came up during those years, the formats used to cover it, the people interviewed to talk about that event or topic. Listing the sources quoted established a direct link with my model's key category, counter sourcing practices, and allowed me to verify whether interview partners' perception of their sourcing practices indeed translated into a coverage that showcased voices marginalized by traditional

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<sup>23</sup>"(...) dass Inhaltsanalyse niemals eine 'vollständige' Auswertung eines Textes anstrebt – was wohl niemals möglich sein wird –, sondern nur eine Untersuchung in Bezug auf die Kategorien"(Mayring & Hurst, 2005, p. 438).

media. Coding for formats was important, as the way collectives presented their content could also indicate changes in their media practices over time. Visible practices helped me keep in mind the link between the coverage and the model that I traced of actors' media practices, serving as a starting point for the development of categories that would increasingly move away from a direct link with practice categories and toward content ones. Finally, the category for singling out key examples aided my efforts towards selecting a representative sample from the material for more in-depth rounds of analysis. These were usually pieces that illustrated well one or more emerging patterns in the material due to the way categories interacted in them, crossing formats, visible practices and sources quoted in a way that seemed typical, i.e. it came up repeatedly across the material with minor variations. As a piece's status was constantly changing the closer I looked into the material, the answer to the question "key example?" could change with each round of analysis, being revised as I refined categories and more specific patterns emerged.

In order to test these categories, I performed a pre-test featuring a random sample containing 10% of the material, based on some sampling ground rules: each collective must author half of the posts, 50% of *Nigéria*'s posts must be from 2013, while the other half must date back to 2014<sup>24</sup>, and posts containing videos, text or pictures must be featured equally, i.e. each type must make up 33% of the pre-test sample each. As Netvizz-generated tables featured a column for the type of content and the date of publication, it was easy to randomly select posts according to these rules. After following these criteria, I drew a sample of 54 posts (rounding up the 53,6 posts that would make up exactly 10% of the material). *Nigéria* authored 27 posts (13 from 2013, 14 from 2014; 9 posts with videos, 9 containing texts, 9 containing photos) and *Na Rua* authored the other 27 posts (all from 2014; featuring 9 videos, 9 texts, 9 photos).

In order to assure intracoder reliability (as described by Mayring (2010, p. 125)), I coded this sample twice, with an interval of a few days between coding rounds. Overall, both rounds of coding overlapped, with slight differences in coding in 21 out of 54 posts, particularly in terms of coded practices (16 of those 21 posts had differences in coded practices). This showed me I needed to be more careful with how I coded practices, reading the definitions of each practice — which I formulated when describing my results for answering RQ 1 in chapter 6 — more carefully and sticking to a stricter application of them as categories, only coding when they were explicitly visible or mentioned, which left less room for interpretation. On the other hand, 16 posts received more precise/detailed coding in the second round and 15 posts were full overlaps. Only one post showed no overlaps, as, in the second round, I corrected false assumptions about the general context I had made the first time around. This pre-test proved particularly fruitful for defining my basic categories more clearly, as well as applying stricter coding criteria. It also motivated me to go through the overall material and do a final round of exclusions, refining the sample based on experiences from the pre-tests, when I came across some posts that fit the criteria for exclusion yet were still featured in the final material. In the end, the overall material contained **505 posts: 348 by *Nigéria*, 157 by *Na Rua*.**

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<sup>24</sup>This was due to the fact that *Nigéria* was the only collective active in 2013, as *Na Rua* was founded in 2014.

### **Coding of the Overall Material and Selection of Typical Cases**

After marking the posts I had already analyzed during the pre-tests and adding the notes I had made about them during those two rounds of coding to the notes column, I proceeded to code the overall final material, in the first, more descriptive of the two phases that composed my analysis. It is important to highlight that posts did not represent the primary units of analysis, but rather the measuring units (*Auswertungseinheiten*) (Mayring, 2010, p. 61), i.e. posts' date of publishing provide the chronological sequencing of the content, determining an initial order of analysis. I analyzed the various kinds of text a post may contain (videos, articles, pictures) as part of this measuring unit, starting my analysis from posts' screen captures, in order to take into account their original presentation on collectives' Facebook pages, and then proceeding to code the other elements it contained: text, videos and pictures, adding relevant codes to each category's column throughout the analysis. When I was done with one post, I moved on to the next and to the texts it contained. The unit of contextual analysis (*Kontexteinheit*) was, thus, the different elements contained in a post and the coding units (*Kodiereinheiten*) were these elements' particular sentences, passages, pictures or takes. Although there are specialized methods to analyze each kind of text based on its particular traits, I opted for approaching all texts with the same analytical tools, as my research interest was directed at the interaction between these texts in the context of actors' alternative coverage of protests and how they came together in the pieces that resulted from actors' practices during the coverage, not at how texts' traits played out individually or in comparison to similar kinds of text in other contexts.

I coded both collectives' whole material twice, in order to be as accurate as possible, as I acquired a more in-depth understanding of the material. This initial coding replaced the open coding phase which usually initiates the coding process in the grounded theory approach. Given the sheer amount of units of analysis, however, this combination proved fruitful, as it then paved the way for axial coding of the material following the grounded theory approach. During this process, I added more and more dimensions to the basic categories I had developed as points of departure for the analysis, applying more specific descriptions of formats employed or writing dimensions of categories between parentheses, tracking the stances throughout the material where these nuances came up. While the first basic categories were deductive, these dimensions emerged from the material, marking the beginning of an axial coding phase, in the sense that concepts were generated by refining codes' dimensions. This aided the development of a patterns catalog (in appendix D). The various patterns I described in the patterns catalog were concepts based on recurring formats that emerged during coding and on the relationship between main themes and visible practices coded for each post. For example, a post containing images of police violence at a anti-World Cup protest fit the pattern of police watchdog content, i.e. content produced through the performance of police watchdog practices, in which actors followed police activity closely in their coverage of action on the ground, in order to catch any abuse or prevent it through the ostensive presence of their cameras on site. These first, very general pattern categories served as the basis for further rounds of axial coding of posts marked as possible key examples, chosen as representative of the interaction among different patterns in the overall material, i.e. typical cases.

I performed two verification coding rounds only for potential key examples, in which I checked the occurrence of the patterns in their specific cases and brainstormed on possibilities of grouping posts together for describing concepts (such as liveblogs containing police watchdog content) or on individual pieces of content that could illustrate broader patterns on their own. This marked the beginning of the second phase of my content analysis, in which I selected a total of 138 posts as starting points for in-depth analysis: 82 by *Nigeria* and 56 by *Na Rua*.

At this point, I departed from the tables I had used for the analysis of the overall material and employed the interface and tools available on MAXQDA for analyzing these 138 posts. In total, I performed six rounds of coding based on the grounded theory approach. In the first two rounds, I coded the posts, videos, pictures and articles selected by applying the patterns drawn from the overall analysis as initial categories, paving the way for rounds three and four of axial coding procedures, in which I viewed all segments marked with each code and refined the coding into various dimensions, adding nuance to them and generating concepts. During the fifth round of coding, I performed comparisons between different pieces of content, looking for contrasts and similarities between them. This was useful for taking different events into consideration and seeing how the same code appeared in the coverage of various events. I also started choosing examples that would illustrate patterns in the coverage as part of the analysis of typical cases in chapter 8. Finally, the sixth round served to identify the connections between different concepts, helping me group them as part of more abstract categories. Based on these descriptions and on the links between categories, I chose the final examples for the chapter 8 as the most representative of these links between categories. Throughout this process, the importance of looking into the material in a cyclical way that generated knowledge while also testing these conclusions in further rounds of coding became clear, as patterns emerged and became more defined, raising specific questions that required new rounds of coding or distinct perspectives over the material.

After this detailed overview of my qualitative content analysis, I can summarize its steps as follows: in the first, descriptive phase of analysis, I approached the material by sorting it both through basic categories and memos in the form of a notes column. These served as the foundation for the second phase of detailed analysis, which showed an increasingly higher level of abstraction through the development of more specific codes and concepts that led to the definition of categories and to the selection of illustrative pieces. In chapters 7 and 8, I interpret the results of this process, describing each category that emerged from it with regards to already existing scholarship and to this case's particular sociopolitical context of production. It is important to emphasize that this content analysis built upon the findings from the analysis of expert interviews conducted in order to answer RQ 1. Thus, the next chapter presents the results of this process.

## **5.5 A Productive Combination of Methods**

This chapter highlights the interaction between practice and discourse as I operationalized it by combining expert interviews and qualitative content analysis in my empirical research. Based on the grounded theory approach, I was able to regard my research object, the alternative coverage

of protests in Fortaleza, from two distinct perspectives: first from actors' reflections on their media practices at the time and then from an in-depth analysis of their media production that built upon the results of the coding of expert interviews to shed light on particularities of actors' discourse.

In my application of qualitative content analysis, I employed some of Mayring's (2010) suggested coding approaches as starting points, yet departed from them in later phases, adopting the grounded theory approach's coding strategies in order to reach a higher level of abstraction in my categories. This resulted in a combination of deductive and inductive coding, in which I initially applied deductive categories to the overall material, in order to reveal some of the patterns it contained and then further explored and developed those patterns through axial and selective coding.

As studies like Neumayer, Rossi, and Karlsson's (2016) show, one method is rarely enough to acquire an accurate picture of actors' practices. Thus, by looking into their discourses in form of their media production, I could add important nuances to my initial findings from the analysis of expert interviews. In the next three chapters, I delineate the model I generated to answer RQ 1, conceptualizing actors' media practices during the alternative coverage of protests, and the categories originated from my analysis of their media production, which provided the answer for RQ 2.



## Chapter 6

# Engaged Journalism and the Adaptation of Media Practices

In the previous chapters, I have analyzed the Brazilian context in 2013 and 2014, as well as the country's media landscape (chapter 2); connected the main theories involving media practices and social movements that compose my theoretical background (chapter 3), as well as concepts from journalism studies and theories on public spheres that are relevant to understand my research (chapter 4). Then, I described my methodology for answering both research questions in chapter 5. The present chapter unites these contextual, theoretical and methodological observations in a model and a concept developed through the grounded theory approach.

I begin this chapter by presenting the categories I generated during my analysis to conceptualize the main practices actors performed as part of their alternative coverage of events (section 6.1), as well as how they have been adapted or created as actors reacted to shifts in the sociopolitical context in the period of 2013 and 2014. The analysis contains detailed descriptions of each practice and how it relates to the scholarship I reviewed in the previous chapters, intertwined with actors' own words to describe their practices and the situations they found themselves performing them in<sup>1</sup>. As the political context in Brazil has drastically changed since my last interviews, I decided to preserve interview partners' identities to prevent potential persecution based on their actions at the time<sup>2</sup>.

The second half of the chapter, starting from section 6.2, contextualizes these categories in a model that presents the alternative coverage as a complex of practices, connected to each other through various relationships. I also zoom in on how practices got disseminated between actors, delineating the factors that influence this process in section 6.3. Finally, in section 6.4, I introduce the concept of engaged journalism, which I drew from my empirical results and which may be

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<sup>1</sup>I translated all passages from Portuguese and made contextual observations between brackets for expressions that might have been otherwise unclear to readers not familiar with Fortaleza's geography and landmarks, as well as for expressions not fully explained in the passages quoted.

<sup>2</sup>One of the most concrete threats for journalists in Brazil are possible changes to the Anti-Terrorism Law, which could make any manifestations of support or sympathy for acts characterized as terrorism liable to prosecution as terrorism. In the Brazilian context, direct action — a common theme in my interview partners' reporting at the time — could be deemed an act of terrorism. For more on this, see Srinivas, Medeiros, and De Jager (2018).

helpful to describe similar cases in the future.

## 6.1 Performing the Alternative Coverage: Categories of Practice

As I described in the previous chapter, I answered RQ 1 through a thorough analysis of the expert interviews I conducted in Fortaleza between 2014 and 2016. Through various rounds of open, axial and selective coding based on the grounded theory approach, I reached complex categories that describe the practices actors performed as part of the alternative coverage of the protests that took place in the city in the years of 2013 and 2014.

In the next sections, I detail each specific category of practices I generated through my analysis. In order to bring to the fore their many facets and the changes many of them went through over time, I apply Shove, Pantzar, and Watson's (2012) conceptualization of practices as the enactments of links between material, competence and meaning elements to each category.

### 6.1.1 Counter Sourcing Practices

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 119) as well as Breuer (2011, p. 92), key category constitutes the “story line” of a grounded theory, guiding the way results are presented and the researcher's interpretation of the data on a theoretical level. This section contains more details on the “story line” that permeates this study, namely the key category counter sourcing practices.

Source selection practices are one of the central aspects of journalistic work, be it in traditional or alternative media, as I detailed in chapter 4. Counter sourcing practices permeated most other practices actors carried out during their alternative coverage of the protests. This happened mostly through a shared meaning element: the aim of countering traditional media's source selection. Actors perceived traditional media as prioritizing official sources such as governmental authorities or the police, which led them to develop counter sourcing practices, marked by the attempt to listen to sources that diverged from the official ones, especially individual protesters and members of social movements or the left. This meaning element was linked to the competence element of journalistic source selection, with the material element varying according to the specific situation on the ground — it could be a video camera, an audio recorder, pen and paper or any other material element necessary to record interview partners' testimonies. The passage below illustrates how actors converted their media criticism to counter sourcing practices:

“We worked with a change of sources: our official sources were the people on the streets, it was not the police, as much as we also talked to the police. (...) But our idea was not to work with these preestablished sources, because we knew [the local newspapers] *O POVO* and *Diário [do Nordeste]* would already use the information from the police. So, we wanted other narratives. (...) If there is a protest and someone built a barricade and closed the street, we know the newspaper will publish that the street got closed and that it caused traffic jams, but we wanted to know the reasons why the street was closed. It is not a Manicheanism around which sources

are better, but rather about giving voice to sources that traditional media do not cover.” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 207–219)<sup>3</sup>

By anticipating what traditional media’s coverage of certain events would be, actors also reflected on what their own coverage could do differently, in an attempt to address traditional media’s shortcomings or willing omissions through counter sourcing practices, bringing into the public sphere voices and perspectives these media outlets left out. The awareness that other media outlets would already focus on the protests’ negative sides encouraged them to leave certain aspects out of their coverage. This assumption hints at actors’ perception that their coverage would not remain the sole source of information for the audience, but would rather be received as part of a wider media diet. Although they challenged traditional media’s claim to covering all sides — grounded on the objectivity regime —, they did not seek to discredit these media, but rather show that there were other aspects that deserved to be covered.

At the same time, both collectives did not leave authorities completely out, but rather assigned them a lower priority as sources. Information offered by these sources usually faced more distrust:

“We also tried to give more plurality [to the reporting], in order to reflect what we saw on the streets. It was not just one group protesting, but rather different people, with different ideas. (...) And I think this thing with the official voice is also something we do to this day: the official voice is not necessarily the one telling the truth. We have no obligations towards them and we do not think journalism or documentaries should have. To this day, the police always says how many people were there and what happened. For us, that is not the end of the story. For us, the legitimate voices are those from the movements and from the people at the protests. Police officers actually never want to talk and, when they do, their discourses are quite planned, they are not spontaneous, and we know that a lot of that discourse is just for the media, it is not a truthful discourse.” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 233–247)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>“O que a gente trabalhava era com mudanças de fontes: as nossas fontes oficiais eram as pessoas que estavam na rua. Tipo, não é aquela fonte da polícia, por mais que a gente conversasse com a polícia. (...) Mas a nossa ideia não era trabalhar com essas fontes oficiais que já estão dadas, porque a gente sabia que [os jornais locais] *O POVO*, o *Diário [do Nordeste]* iam trabalhar com esses dados da polícia. Então, a gente queria outras narrativas. (...) Tá tendo um protesto, teve uma barricada e fecharam uma rua, a gente sabe que vai sair no jornal que a rua foi fechada e que isso atrapalhou o trânsito, mas a gente queria saber quais foram os motivos por que a rua foi fechada. Então, não é um maniqueísmo de quais são as fontes mais importantes ou não, mas a gente trabalha com a ideia de dar voz a outras fontes que não estão saindo na mídia tradicional” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 207–219).

<sup>4</sup>“E também [a gente] tentou dar mais pluralidade [à cobertura], que é o que a gente via nas ruas. Então, não era um grupo fazendo uma manifestação, eram várias pessoas diferentes, com ideias diferentes. (...) E eu acho que esse lance da voz oficial, que também foi uma coisa que, até hoje, a gente carrega: não necessariamente a voz oficial é a que conta a verdade. E a gente não tem obrigação nenhuma com isso, nem acha que o jornalismo ou o documentário tem que ter. Até hoje, é sempre a polícia que fala quantas pessoas tem ou o que aconteceu. Na verdade, não, pra gente, as vozes mais legítimas são as dos movimentos e das pessoas que estão nas manifestações, os policiais, na verdade, nunca querem falar e, quando falam, são discursos bastante planejados, não espontâneos e que a gente sabe que tem muita coisa ali que é um discurso pronto pra mídia, não um discurso verdadeiro” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 233–247).

Through their proximity towards social movements and protesters, interviewees perceived the nuances inside a protest and tried to represent them in their reporting, instead of showing movements as homogeneous. Contrasting with this polyphony, official sources were seen as less authentic, homogeneous and too hegemonic, as they often got the last word in traditional media reports on demonstrations. Underlying this description is, again, a critical understanding of objectivity and the sourcing criteria grounded on it, which assigns more credibility to official sources. Actors seemed to prefer to represent the complexity inside a movement, instead of regarding protesters as one side and the police as the other side of a conflict. I explore how actors selected their individual interview partners based on this premise when analyzing newsgathering practices in section 6.1.4.

Two dimensions permeated counter sourcing practices: access through commitment and distance to official sources. Exploring these dimensions makes it clearer how actors carried out these practices in their coverage.

**Access through Commitment** During the 2013 and 2014 protests all over Brazil, journalists were targeted both by the police and by protesters, as I previously described. In the case of protesters' hostility towards journalists, one of the reasons for it was their perception of traditional media's coverage as criminalizing their actions and presenting a distorted version of what they saw happening on the ground. In this difficult context, alternative journalists were not free from facing resistance from their preferred sources. However, they gained access to protesters and social movements by showing their commitment to these sources' viewpoints, human rights and, sometimes, to their political goals. This commitment played out on three levels, which were often intertwined and generated specific kinds of credibility: credibility through personal activism, credibility through organizational work and credibility through coverage.

The first level, credibility through personal activism, related to the relationships actors brought with them from their individual trajectories as activists before 2013.

“I have always been active in the feminist movement. So, when we covered the Slut Walk<sup>5</sup>, these contacts also already existed. Each person brings with them their own network, their friends and acquaintances. We put that together. In issues I did not know much about, such as the anti-asylum movement<sup>6</sup>, there was someone near me, in *Na Rua*, at the protests, who knew someone, who knew someone... The contact with other collectives was fundamental.” (NR1, 12 January 2015, 566–571)<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup>The Slut Walk is a feminist march that started in Toronto, Canada, in 2011, as women protested against victim-blaming discourses towards rape cases. Since then, feminists all over the world have organized similar marches in their cities.

<sup>6</sup>The anti-asylum movement refers to a Brazilian movement for better living and treatment conditions in psychiatric hospitals and other institutions, as well as a humanizing approach towards mental health patients.

<sup>7</sup>“Eu sempre militei no movimento feminista. Então, quando a gente foi cobrir a Marcha das Vadias, [os contatos] já existiam também. Então, cada pessoa traz a sua rede, os seus amigos, conhecidos. E a gente vai compondo muito isso. Em coisas que eu não tinha domínio nenhum, como a luta anti-manicomial, alguém que tava perto de mim, no *Na Rua*, nas manifestações, conhecia alguém, que conhecia alguém... Então, o contato com os outros coletivos foi muito fundamental” (NR1, 12 January 2015, 566–571).

Thus, one actor's personal contacts helped the whole group gain access to a certain movement, as they were passed on to other group members, creating a network that encompassed alternative journalists and social movements alike through personal relationships and previous shared experiences. Another interview partner described attending, on a personal capacity, meetings of the local World Cup Popular Committee, which fought against human rights abuses and for housing rights in host cities, and how the information he obtained in those meetings increasingly flowed into his work during the alternative coverage of the protests (NG3, 23 December 2014, 195–197). Reflecting on this, he asserted: "In short, it is a source-reporter relationship, but I think it is more, it is a relationship of participating in it." (NG3, 23 December 2014, 369–370)<sup>8</sup> Thus, by becoming active participants of social movement spaces and not simply neutral observers, actors were rewarded with more access to sources from this context when doing their reporting.

Often intertwined with credibility through personal activism, credibility through organizational work was connected to projects actors were involved as part of the collective before the protests broke out. Through their involvement in other moments of mobilization for specific movements and organizations, actors were seen as allies during the protests, as this member of *Nigéria* describes:

"(...) we already had an affinity, knew how to work and had already been working with these issues, these things, these people. So, it was not out of the blue, right? We had already shot some videos about the World Cup's negative impacts, had already produced material on human rights, had already interviewed in other moments some of the people that were then on the streets, we already knew each other." (NG3, 23 December 2014, 183–186)<sup>9</sup>

I explore how these previous contacts affected interviews on the ground in section 6.1.4, as requests from acquaintances — some of them met during previous common projects or campaigns — to be interviewed by alternative journalists during the protests played an important role in source selection during the protests.

Building upon this kind of credibility from previous organizational work was the credibility generated by the coverage of protests as they unrolled. Actors started being recognized by their main sources — protesters and members of social movements — due to the fact that they were often present, covering the protests, and through the content they had already published on previous protests, which many of the potential sources followed and (most of the time) appreciated<sup>10</sup>:

<sup>8</sup>"Enfim, é uma relação de fonte, mas eu acho que é mais, é uma relação mesmo de participar da coisa" (NG3, 23 December 2014, 369–370).

<sup>9</sup>"(...) a gente já tinha uma afinidade de saber trabalhar, já vinha trabalhando esses temas, essas coisas, essas pessoas. Então, não foi tão do nada, né? A gente já tinha feito alguns vídeos sobre os impactos da Copa, algumas outras produções sobre direitos humanos, já tinha entrevistado algumas pessoas que tavam ali na rua em outros momentos, já se conheciam" (NG3, 23 December 2014, 183–186).

<sup>10</sup>Particularly the dissonance between protesters' experiences on the ground and media coverage of protests is a common phenomenon, as Blickhan and Teune (2003, p. 187) also observed with regards to traditional media coverage of the 1st of May protests in Berlin. I suggest this dissonance may motivate

“(...) among those who kept track of the protest, for example, everyone knew what *Na Rua* was. You would say ‘I am from *Na Rua*’ [and they would say]: ‘I know, I follow you guys’. Almost everybody at the protest knew what *Na Rua* was, followed it, knew where to find us. It was like [people would say]: ‘There is going to be a protest, I saw it on *Na Rua*.’” (NR2, 15 January 2015, 93–96)<sup>11</sup>

For many of the actors I interviewed, such moments served as proof of their work’s reach, especially among protesters. The number of likes on their Facebook pages became concrete when they met some of these followers on the streets. This passage also shows *Na Rua*’s double role as part of a counter public sphere for protesters, as a source of information and of articulations as well, through which protesters heard about the next actions.

For members of *Nigéria*, who were active both in 2013 and 2014, their documentary *Vandalism*, shot during the 2013 protests and focusing on a nuanced representation of direct action, meant a dramatic increase in their credibility through coverage, which also translated into more access to different sources. Here, one of *Nigéria*’s members assesses this development, referring to the time after the documentary came out:

“We gained a lot more credibility. *Nigéria* grew a lot also because of that [the documentary]. We already had access, but people started to see us more, this access became greater. Anarchist folks, for example, started talking to us more, the black blocs knew us, talked to us.” (NG1, 23 December 2014, 291–293)<sup>12</sup>

Beyond the actors’ perception of how *Vandalism* increased their credibility among movement sources, it may be interesting to inquire why these movements started talking more often with members of both collectives. Mattoni (2012, p. 87–88) asserts that this is due to knowledge generated inside movements about media, as activists make various experiences with media outlets and their representatives, be it in the role of sources, audiences or media producers themselves. Through these experiences, they acquire a nuanced understanding of the media landscape, which informs future interactions. In this particular case, actors’ preferred sources started regarding them as trustworthy media representatives due to previous positive experiences, especially in the role of sources and audiences.

In a way, the three kinds of credibility that permeated access through commitment functioned as a form of social capital that actors possessed. Especially in the face of traditional media’s loss of credibility among protesters, this social capital, more than just identifying themselves as journalists<sup>13</sup>, enabled them to talk to their preferred sources, as these sources recognized

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protesters to turn to media that highlight events closer to protesters’ own perceptions of them, but this would take another empirical study to verify.

<sup>11</sup>“(...) quem acompanhava muito o protesto, por exemplo, todo mundo sabia quem era o *Na Rua*. Você falava “eu sou do *Na Rua*”[e eles diziam]: “não, eu sei, eu acompanho vocês”. Quase todo mundo no protesto sabia o que era o *Na Rua*, acompanhava, sabia pra onde ir. Tipo [as pessoas diziam]: “ah, vai ter um protesto, eu vi no *Na Rua*”(NR2, 15 January 2015, 93–96).

<sup>12</sup>“A gente pegou bem mais credibilidade. A *Nigéria* cresceu muito por isso também. A gente já tinha inserção, mas as pessoas começaram a ver mais a gente, e a inserção ficou cada vez maior. A galera anarquista, por exemplo, começou a falar mais com a gente, os black blocs conheciam a gente, falavam com a gente”(NG1, 23 December 2014, 291–293).

<sup>13</sup>Identifying as journalists had a different function, as I describe in section 6.1.3.

their role as allies or at least as media that was sympathetic to the protest movement. One of the actors described this relationship as a kind of mutualism, in which collectives offered their specialized communication skills to the movements and got movements' stories in return (NG4, 23 December 2015, 128–129). While actors employed a cooperative approach to sources that were usually marginalized by traditional media, they took up an adversarial role towards official sources, adopting practices that echo more normative conceptions of journalism.

**Distance to Official Sources** Although actors clearly stated their sympathy for protest and social movements and their distrust towards state authorities, the latter also served as sources for their reports. In this case, the obligation to hear the other side that stems from the objectivity regime still permeated their practices despite their general rejection of this regime:

“I think these [the protests] are extreme situations, so you are tested to the extreme. We fought a lot with this objectivity thing, of hearing both sides, you know? (...) It is complicated, because you go to the protest, spend the whole day seeing very strong, intense police repression, but, at the end of the day, you have to talk to the police and say: ‘hey, what was that about?’ For example, we got the data [on arrests] from the police stations. We had direct contact to them, because we kept track of the folks that had been taken there. (...) We had to take the information from the police, even if it was just to see that their numbers did not add up, but we had to do it anyway because that was the official data.” (NR2, 15 January 2015, 201–213)<sup>14</sup>

Official information was particularly subject to collectives' scrutiny, it was cross-checked with other information they got, for example through phone calls and messages from protesters, as in the case of arrests, which required the development of specific practices of verification that I detail in section 6.1.5. Thus, the obligation to hear the other side was balanced by an effort to counter false information, by finding the inconsistencies in official discourse and pointing them out. The distance from the authorities was permeated by the experiences reporters made on the ground, which, in turn, was also influenced by their thematic focus — in the case of *Na Rua*, actors were specifically looking for human rights abuses carried out by police officers, which made it even more difficult to establish a source-reporter relationship with the police afterwards. Police officers were seen as less credible sources than eye-witnesses and people directly affected by police violence (NR4, 15 December 2015, 589–596).

Thus, while objectivity standards usually lead reporters to assign more credibility to those in official positions of authority by assuming they have more access to verified information,

<sup>14</sup>“Eu acho que [as manifestações] são situações extremas, então você tem essas coisas testadas ao extremo. Essa coisa da objetividade, de ouvir os dois lados, a gente lutou muito com isso, sabe? (...) É complicado, porque você vai pro ato, passa o dia vendo uma repressão policial muito grande, muito foda, muito intensa. Mas, no final do dia, você tem que falar com a polícia, dizer “ei, o que foi isso aqui?” Porque, por exemplo, os dados, a gente pegava nas delegacias. A gente tinha o contato direto nas delegacias, por exemplo, porque a gente acompanhava o pessoal que era levado pra lá. (...) A gente tinha que pegar dados com a polícia, nem que seja pra ver que não batiam, mas a gente tinha que pegar dados com a polícia porque eles são os dados oficiais”(NR2, 15 January 2015, 201–213).

the criteria for source selection my interview partners followed de-prioritized these kinds of sources, favoring, instead, sources that traditional media tend to marginalize. These practices originated from a combination of trying to counter a perceived over-representation on traditional media of official sources and their own proximity to marginalized groups, as well as their own negative experiences with state repression while reporting on the ground. They also influenced many other practices, from the way alternative journalists behaved on the ground to how they presented their content. In the next section, I describe the interaction between counter sourcing practices and actors' focusing practices, performed in order to define the scope of their coverage.

### 6.1.2 Focusing Practices

The process of defining a focus for the coverage is long and continuous. Sharing the meaning element with counter sourcing practices, focusing practices were permeated by the need to highlight marginalized groups' experiences and causes in the coverage. This shared meaning element led actors to prioritize issues and stories their sources believed were relevant along, linking journalistic story selection skills of applying other, more established news values (competence) to material elements ranging from actors' own bodies, as they were physically present at events they deemed worthy of coverage, to the devices they used to record what was happening around them.

Focusing practices played out in very different ways in the two years I analyzed, 2013 and 2014, as Brazil went through many changes. Particularly the shifts in protests' conditions on the ground — such as a drastically lower attendance in 2014 — affected how actors adapted the focus they had initially defined for their coverage. In addition, the mobilization of other, more traditional social movements in 2014 widened the scope of actors' coverage.

Again, *Nigéria's* documentary *Vandalism* provides an interesting example of how focusing practices interacted both with media criticism and with counter sourcing practices, combined with cumulative experiences on the ground. From an open approach of going to the protests and shooting images instinctively, they gradually arrived at the focus on direct action that marked their main production in 2013:

“Little by little, as days and protests went by, we came here [to *Nigéria's* offices], dropped off our stuff, talked, and saw that, from what we were seeing in the media and at the protests, this focus on those who were on the front lines, throwing stones, could be interesting — the focus on the vandals, as they were being called [on traditional media]. (...) we started gaining confidence [to pursue this focus], because we knew various people, we were there filming the protests and uploading some material on the internet, [thus,] some people already knew us, we interviewed many others, and we started to feel it was possible to get closer, aesthetically, to focus on the vandals and make a short film about them. The idea [for *Vandalism*] was born then.” (NG3, 23 December 2014, 165–174)<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>“Aos poucos, passou um dia, passou o protesto, a gente vinha, deixava as coisas aqui [no escritório], conversava e via que, pelo que a gente tava acompanhando na mídia e vendo nas manifestações, esse



Traditional media had quickly directed their focus towards direct action, with an approach that tended toward the criminalization of protesters, as I described in section 2.4. This fueled protesters' hostility towards reporters, making the connection between access through commitment and the accumulation of the various forms of credibility that permeate this access decisive for the definition of *Vandalism's* main focus. As another member of *Nigéria* puts it: "(...) there are places some people and some media outlets could not reach. At that moment, we had a different viewpoint and could interview masked protesters, black blocs, so we ended up focusing on that" (NG3, 23 December 2014, 312–315)<sup>16</sup>. This focus definition also provided some guidance through the chaos that actors described as marking the 2013 protests, due to a surprising turnout of thousands of protesters countrywide and by the cacophony of demands from the crowd.

As *Nigéria* directed their efforts to other movements and more interpretative formats in 2014, *Na Rua* took over the task of covering action on the ground in a similar way to *Nigéria's* in 2013, yet with a different initial focus. They chose to report primarily on human rights abuses by state forces, motivated by their perception of traditional media's lacking focus on these cases:

"We focused on human rights abuses against the people performed by the state. So, if there was some kind of human rights abuse committed by the people against the people themselves, we would not ignore it, but it would not be our main focus. Our focus was somewhere else, also because we knew that, if something like that [conflicts among civilians] happened, there would be thousands of TV stations from all over the country to cover it. So, if they were already doing that, would we just add our voices to that choir? There was no need for that, we were there to cover what no one else wants to cover, which was that [human rights violations by the state]." (NR5, 27 December 2014, 104–110)<sup>17</sup>

Thus, *Na Rua's* focusing practices also generated a hierarchization of events, with human rights abuses by the police becoming a priority against which other events were measured. This became particularly clear in my analysis of content editing practices in section 6.1.5, in which I compare interview partners' practices towards covering police violence and direct action. While

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recorte de quem tava mais ali na linha de frente, jogando pedras, seria um recorte interessante, que seriam os vândalos, como, enfim, colocaram esse nome. (...) A gente viu que esse recorte poderia ser legal e que a gente tava adquirindo uma certa confiança, até porque a gente conhecia várias pessoas, tava ali filmando os protestos, botando alguma coisa na internet, algumas pessoas já conheciam a gente, a gente fez as entrevistas com as outras pessoas, foi sentindo que teve clima pra gente chegar mais perto no sentido estético, de recortar pra esses vândalos, fazer um curta sobre esses vândalos. Foi aí que foi nascendo mais a ideia [de filmar o *Com Vandalismo*] (NG3, 23 December 2014, 165–174).

<sup>16</sup>"(...) há lugares que as pessoas ou os veículos de comunicação não tão conseguindo ir. Então, entrevistar mascarados, black blocs, vândalos, naquele momento a gente tinha um ponto de vista diferente e conseguia entrevistar eles, então a gente acabou focando nisso" (NG3, 23 December 2014, 312–315).

<sup>17</sup>"[O nosso foco] Eram violações de direitos humanos cometidas pelo Estado contra a população. Então, se houvesse algum tipo de violação de direitos humanos cometida pela população contra a própria população, a gente não ia deixar passar em branco, mas não seria o nosso enfoque. Nosso enfoque lá era outro, até porque a gente sabia, que, se isso acontecesse, ia ter N emissoras da puta que pariu cobrindo isso. Então, cara, já que eles já tão fazendo isso, a gente vai engrossar esse caldo? Não precisa, a gente vai cobrir uma coisa que ninguém quer cobrir, que é isso [violações de direitos humanos pelo Estado]" (NR5, 27 December 2014, 104–110).

these actors saw human rights abuses committed by police officers as not receiving enough attention on traditional media, they perceived other forms of physical or material violence as being overly covered and, thus, felt they could emphasize these less. The focus on human rights violations by state representatives also influenced actors' choices on how to capture events:

“Because it is one thing to say ‘I read it on *Na Rua*’ — not that I want to understate a text’s importance — and another thing is to say ‘I saw the video, here it is. You do not believe it? Here it is. He was attacked’, you know? I think the video legitimizes this work, it shows: ‘If you don’t believe it, here’s the video.’” (NR2, 15 January 2015, 130–133)<sup>18</sup>

Due to their connection to NGOs such as Witness and Article 19, as well as Urucum’s own legal background<sup>19</sup>, *Na Rua* approached videos as potential legal evidence if victims sought reparation through the judiciary system. In addition to this, video as a medium was seen as aiding *Na Rua*’s credibility as a serious source of information, while backing up its accusations against powerful actors. This exemplifies the link between the meaning element of seeking to cover an underreported issue, the competence element of knowing how to record video-evidence and the camera as a material element that constituted *Na Rua*’s focusing practice.

Although *Na Rua* covered all anti-World Cup protests that took place in 2014, they had to perform focusing practices to expand the scope of their coverage, as turnout was much lower than in 2013. Actors often talk about protests to which only they and other media representatives showed up, but no actual protesters (NR4, 12 January 2015, 233–234; NR8, 6 January 2016, 194–197)<sup>20</sup>. Instead, other social movements took the chance to make more specific demands, pressuring the government on various levels against the background of such a mega sports event. Much like *Nigéria*, *Na Rua* also directed its focus to them:

“In the beginning, our focus was not that [other social movements], it was on human rights violations committed by the state against protesters demonstrating during the World Cup. As these protests did not happen the way we expected or even at all, we started shifting the focus of our coverage, in order to follow actors that were also demanding rights, but in another way.” (NR4, 15 December 2015, 310–315)<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup>“Porque uma coisa é — sem desvalorizar a importância do texto —, mas uma coisa é ‘eu li no *Na Rua*’ e outra é ‘eu vi o vídeo, tá aqui. Não tá acreditando? Tá aqui. Ele foi agredido, tá aqui o vídeo’, entendeu? Eu acho que o vídeo teve muito esse papel, de legitimar todo esse trabalho, de mostrar, ‘se não acredita, tá aqui o vídeo’”(NR2, 15 January 2015, 130–133).

<sup>19</sup>As mentioned in section 5.2, Urucum was *Na Rua*’s parent NGO.

<sup>20</sup>Such statements on low attendance and media representative’s predominant presence at some protests raises questions about the gap between reporters’ expectations towards an event and the reality that ensues. Actors did attempt at offering an explanation for this during interviews, voicing their opinion on the sociopolitical context in Brazil at the time, the World Cup’s strong attraction over soccer fans, many protesters’ fears of police violence or direct action, among other reasons. However, this was not the main focus of my research. I was primarily interested in how they reacted to this changing context in terms of practices, rather than on their evaluations of the broader context.

<sup>21</sup>“No começo, o foco da nossa cobertura não seria isso [outros movimentos sociais], seria a violação [de direitos humanos] por parte do Estado contra os manifestantes, que iam reivindicar alguma coisa durante a Copa do Mundo. Como esse movimento não aconteceu da maneira que a gente esperava ou de jeito nenhum, a gente foi mudando o enfoque da cobertura, pra documentar outros atores que reivindicavam direitos também, mas de outra forma”(NR4, 15 December 2015, 310–315).

As this quote shows, actors reacted to these sociopolitical changes by enacting their focusing practices through links between the previous meaning and material elements and the competence element of adapting their journalistic work to new developments in current events, a skill that is also needed in traditional journalism.

This widened focus co-existed with counter sourcing practices, especially in terms of gaining access through commitment to other movements' perspectives. In particular, actors experienced intensely the MTST's occupation of an abandoned plot of land in the city's outskirts and the construction workers' strike that happened in 2014: they recall going in the break of dawn to see the occupation unroll, sometimes sleeping at the camp while nervously waiting for pending eviction together with the families mobilized by MTST (SP2, 23 December 2015, 178–186); covering construction workers' early morning marches everyday for weeks (NR4, 15 December 2015, 291–294) or entering construction sites with them while they tried to convince more colleagues to join the movement (NG1, 8 January 2016, 143–147). Thus, the spectrum of social actors the collectives had a “mutualistic” relationship with grew due to new links established in the enactment of their focusing practices.

Actors' motivation to tell different stories by featuring other voices than traditional media seemed to permeate most of their newsgathering and content editing practices as their meaning element, defining the tone of actors' alternative coverage. However, they relied on the performance of non-media practices to generate the material elements for those more journalistic practices, as they faced shifting, sometimes hostile conditions on the ground. I call these non-media practices coping practices, and they were essential for actors to realize their reporting aims safely. The next section details these practices.

### **6.1.3 Coping Practices**

Actors developed or adapted coping practices as a reaction to conditions on the ground that they regarded as challenges to the performance of their newsgathering practices, such as police violence, hostility from protesters, and the employment of less-lethal weapons. These practices linked between material elements ranging from protective gear to press IDs, competence elements involving various forms of embodied know-how, and meaning elements such as the emotions actors experienced on the ground, the way they interpreted certain situations and the motivational knowledge driving their coverage. As conditions on the ground changed, the links between material, competence and meaning elements in these practices also changed.

Coping practices were also important when actors encountered risk situations before and after the coverage of protests, such as police surveillance, which could compromise their relationship with sources or their own safety in the future. Therefore, these practices provided the material elements (especially actors' physical safety and the tools they used to ensure it) without which newsgathering practices would be much more difficult or even impossible to perform. As I describe in the next pages, coping practices were performed before, during and after reporting on the ground. Regardless of this temporal aspect, what distinguished them from other practice categories was the fact that they made newsgathering and, indirectly, content editing practices viable.

I identified three main practices in this category: protection practices, involving the use of protective gear and strategies of mutual protection; practices of division of tasks amongst group members, in order to cover events more effectively; and practices against surveillance, especially concerning sensitive information. These practices were connected to each other on different levels, as my analysis in the following pages shows.

### **Protection Practices**

Most actors were surprised by the conditions they encountered when covering the protests both in 2013 and in 2014, although in different ways. In 2013, many were overwhelmed by the sheer mass of people that took to the streets and by the violent reaction from the authorities, with their apparatus of less-lethal weapons and massive arrests. The protests in 2014 demanded actors adapt the protection practices they had gradually developed to face the conditions of 2013 yet again, with their much smaller crowds and new repressive strategies employed by the police.

In face of the conditions from both years, actors described three sets of protection practices: practices around the use of protective gear, practices of covering the action on the ground in pairs, and practices of identifying as journalists as a way to avoid police repression. Actors often combined all three practices on the ground:

“So you had to have a gas mask, a helmet and so on. I adopted the gas mask because anyone who’s ever breathed a lot of [tear] gas knows it’s not nice. But that was it, plus keeping an eye on what was going on. (...) We always tried to stay together, look out for each other, let each other know what was happening. While one is shooting a video or taking a picture, the other was looking around, watching out for what was happening. (...) First, we wanted to be together when the police came for us. I, for example, got stopped and searched countless times [by the police] and they almost confiscated my gas mask because I had dreadlocks, because of my looks. Even though I was wearing a badge that said I was working for a news agency, they didn’t care.” (SP1, 09 January 2015, 58–67)<sup>22</sup>

Here all three protection practices are described as acting like different layers of security: in case one of them did not work, the others might help actors ultimately carry out their coverage safely, despite the threat of arrests or police violence<sup>23</sup>. For analytical purposes, I describe each set of practices individually.

<sup>22</sup>“Então, tinha que ter máscara de gás, capacete e tal. Normalmente, a máscara de gás eu acabei adotando porque quem cheirou muito gás sabe que não é muito bacana. Mas era isso, ficar de olho no que tava rolando. (...). A gente sempre tentava ficar junto uns dos outros, se olhar, dar um toque. Enquanto um tá fazendo uma imagem, o outro ficar olhando, vendo o que tá acontecendo. (...) Primeiro, estar junto pra quando a polícia vem. Eu, por exemplo, fui parado inúmeras vezes pra baculejo e quase levavam a minha máscara porque eu tinha dread[locks], sei lá, pelo visual. Mesmo com crachá, dizendo que era de uma agência, não interessava” (SP1, 09 January 2015, 58–67).

<sup>23</sup>Actors perceived the police as the major threat, although hostility from protesters could also happen, as I mentioned when describing the overall Brazilian context at the time in chapter 2. However, due to their counter sourcing practices, actors felt more aligned to the protesters and, thus, decided their other practices could already prevent violence originating from this group.

**Protective Gear** Practices involving protective gear are an interesting example of how actors adapted constantly, as conditions changed and they learned how to be on the ground without putting themselves in harm's way. Initially, most actors went to the protests without any protective gear. Faced with the massive use of tear gas, rubber bullets by the police and protesters' stones directed at the authorities, they started acquiring protective glasses, gas masks and helmets.

Some interview partners pointed to the incident involving one actor in their network, whose eye was hit by a rubber bullet during one of the first protests in Fortaleza as key for their own decision to buy and start wearing protective gear, especially glasses (NR1, 12 January 2015, 310–313; NR4, 15 December 2015, 191–194; NR3, 8 January 2015, 163–166)<sup>24</sup> One actor even stopped going to the protests until he had acquired protective gear, as he perceived the conditions he encountered on the ground as too dangerous for his physical integrity and that of his equipment (SP2, 23 December 2015, 83–85). However, most actors described protective gear as a precaution, not necessarily something they wore all the time. Actors learned how to assess the tensions between protesters and the police and, based on that, decide whether to wear the protective gear they had brought with them or not. Learning how to be on the ground without being in harms' way became more important than the protective gear itself (NR4, 15 December 2015, 204–208). With time, protection practices developed around protective gear established different links between elements, based on actors cumulative experience on the ground, as they learned to calculate the risks better:

“At some point, we actually wore helmets, gas masks. (...) But we bought them and only used them for a while. It was necessary, but our best protective gear turned out to be the tricks we picked up with time. We started noticing how things worked: the right time to run, the right time not to run, the fact that rubber bullets only cover a certain distance, the fact that you must first check where the wind was blowing before running, when they fire tear gas bombs. They can throw tear gas bombs and not reach you, even if you stand still. If the wind is blowing in the other direction, it goes all in the other direction” (NG4, 23 December 2015, 211–217)<sup>25</sup>

These shifts in protective practices involving protective gear can be conceptualized as a re-linking of the different elements that constitute a practice: the material and the meaning element remains the same — protective gear and the motivation to cover events on the ground through an alternative perspective, respectively —, but the competence element changed. While actors first had to learn how to wear protective gear, the competence element gradually shifted towards being able to accurately assess the tension on the ground and then to learning how to position themselves better, i.e. either out of less-lethal weapons' reach or in a position that at least reduced

<sup>24</sup>Luckily, the journalist was wearing swimming goggles and, thus, his eye did not suffer grave damage.

<sup>25</sup>“A gente chegou a usar capacete, máscara de gás. (...) Mas a gente comprou e usou durante um tempo. Foi necessário. Mas o nosso maior equipamento de proteção foi a questão mesmo da manha. A gente começou a pegar a manha das coisas: da hora de correr, da hora que não tinha que correr, que bala de borracha pega só até certa distância, de que quando usavam bomba de gás você tem que olhar primeiro pra onde tá indo o vento do que correr. O cara pode jogar a bomba de gás e, se você ficar parado, pode não pegar em você. Se o vento tiver puxando pra lá, vai tudo pra lá”(NG4, 23 December 2015, 211–217).

their effects. As the previous passage shows, they acquired this know-how through experiences on the ground.

Linking a different competence element in the enactment of practices around protective gear proved useful for actors on various levels. In addition to avoiding the physical discomfort of wearing a gas mask, a helmet or protective glasses under average temperatures of 30 degrees Celsius, some of them also tried to circumvent the need to wear this gear because it could make protesters confuse them with traditional media reporters, who often wore protective gear and even protective vests at the protests. Actors felt this could restrict their access to events and to sources and make them stand out too much in the crowd:

“We think it [protective gear] is important, but the problem is that it marks us too much. It’s weird going to a protest where nobody is wearing any protective gear and you are wearing an armor, it connects us too much to the common press, something we strategically do not want. We prefer the camouflage as a protester, because that gives us more access, rather than looking like a TV journalist. So, we practically don’t wear this gear.” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 277–281)<sup>26</sup>

The motivations for wearing or not wearing protective gear here became mixed with a certain solidarity towards protesters, as it felt “weird” to be able to afford or employ more protective gear than others, and strategic access obtained through this solidarity, by looking and acting in similar ways to how potential sources did, presented another relinking between elements, this time in the meaning element. As these examples illustrate, practices around protective gear were very dynamic, as they, like other coping practices, were a pre-requisite for performing newsgathering practices and demanded fast adaptation to the shifts in conditions on the ground, so that actors could do their reporting safely.

There were also times, however, when standing out as a journalist was desirable, as it enabled actors to continue doing their coverage. The next protection practice describes this process.

**Identifying as Press** Becoming visible as journalists was sometimes necessary, especially in order to avoid being arrested. In these cases, despite their solidarity towards protesters, the actors I interviewed tried to differentiate themselves from protesters in the eyes of the police. This was achieved by practices such as wearing a press ID with the name of the media group actors were covering the protests for or old press IDs from previous employers, such as newspapers or news agencies some actors used to work for (SP1, 21 December 2015, 224–230; SP2, 23 December 2015, 100–102).

Despite the various cases of police violence against journalists, their role as a professional group that needed access to the events and minimum working conditions was at least formally acknowledged both by the police and by actors themselves, as one actor recounts his encounter

<sup>26</sup> “A gente acha [o equipamento de proteção] importante, mas é mais por uma questão que marca muito. Você ir pra uma manifestação em que tá todo mundo sem nada e você todo armado fica meio esquisito, fica até mais relacionado com a imprensa comum, o que a gente não quer, estrategicamente. A gente prefere ser camuflado como um manifestante, porque a gente consegue ter um acesso mais livre, do que ficar parecendo um jornalista de uma TV. Então, a gente praticamente não usa esses materiais” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 277–281).

with special police unit Grupo de Ações Táticas Especiais (Special Actions and Tactics Group) (GATE) while covering a protest around an official FIFA public viewing of the matches in 2014: “On this day GATE wanted to confiscate my gas mask: ‘why are you wearing a gas mask?’ And I said: ‘I’m a journalist’, showing my ID. The police officer glared at me, but his superior saw it and said: ‘no, no, let him go’” (SP1, 21 December 2015, 266–268)<sup>27</sup>. If the actor had been a regular protester, he would have had his gas mask confiscated and would risk an arrest, as similar cases involving protesters show (see section 2.3).

While actors also described how the police differentiated between journalists working for traditional media and those covering for alternative media, regarding the latter as less worthy of the privileges reserved for journalists (NR8, 6 January 2016, 228–235; NR1, 18 December 2015, 375–380), a press ID, even from an alternative media group, still meant more access, as this *Na Rua* member describes:

“(..) when we needed a certain posture to affirm ourselves, these press IDs [from *Na Rua*] helped us with that and gave us more autonomy. In reality, this shouldn’t be necessary, but that’s how it works. With the press ID, there wasn’t a single moment when people asked me what I was doing, what pictures I was taking. I was wearing the ID. That was it. At the protests I was covering at the front line, I was wearing the press ID and protective glasses, protective gear, so this kind of thing, of people asking ‘who are you?’, didn’t happen.” (NR7, 26 December 2015, 116–123)<sup>28</sup>

This tacit recognition from the police seems to have emboldened this actor towards covering police officers and confrontations from up close, as he felt less vulnerable due to the visible marking as a journalist. Other actors described a similar feeling when using video cameras, as the category self-empowerment through camera in section 6.1.4 shows.

Sometimes, actors also tried to make themselves visible as journalists by adopting a certain physical stance, such as not running from the police when it started chasing protesters, and carrying on filming or shooting pictures during critical clashes between protesters and the police. This was recognized as a journalistic posture by the authorities, who let them continue with the coverage.

“We kept our distance for strategic reasons, so that the police didn’t go after us, you know? There were moments when the police ran right past us because we were filming, as media. (...) There were moments when we needed to run, like on Paço Municipal: it was dark and the cavalry didn’t give a damn who was there,

<sup>27</sup>“Foi nesse dia que o GATE quis até pegar a minha máscara, porque eu tava com máscara de gás: ‘por que você tá com máscara de gás?’ E eu: ‘eu sou jornalista’, mostrei a identificação, o cara ficou olhando feio, assim, e o superior dele viu: ‘não, não, libera e tal’”(SP1, 21 December 2015, 266–268).

<sup>28</sup>“(..) quando a gente se colocava numa postura em que a gente precisava se impor, a gente tinha a ajuda desse crachá [do *Na Rua*] que dava uma autonomia pra gente. Na verdade, não precisaria, mas às vezes funciona desse jeito. Com o crachá, não rolou nenhum momento de me perguntarem o que eu tô fazendo, que fotografias eram essas. Eu tava usando o crachá. Era isso. Nas manifestações em que eu tava na linha de frente, eu tava usando o crachá e tava com os óculos, os equipamentos, não rolou esse tipo de coisa: ‘quem é você?’”(NR7, 26 December 2015, 116–123).

they were hitting everybody. But, if we see that they can see us, we carry on [with the coverage].” (NG4, 23 December 2015, 204–209)<sup>29</sup>

Actors seemed to confirm their perception that this strategy worked when one member of the group was arrested after he ran together with protesters from the police, thus not being recognized as a journalist (NG4, 25 December 2014, 142–151; NG2, 25 December 2015, 142–148). In both cases, press IDs as a material element combined with the competence element of know-how about embodying behaviors that were normally attributed to journalists proved helpful in the enactment of protection practices that ensured or at least facilitated the performance of newsgathering practices. However, these practices did not always work, resulting in dangerous situations. One of the episodes that marked most interview partners’ memories of the events at the time was when one of the photographers covering the protests for *Na Rua* in 2014 was attacked by the police. It happened in a moment of conflict, when the crowd started running from the police to avoid arrest. The photographer describes deciding not to run together with the protesters, assuming his press ID and his camera would identify him as a journalist to the police, who would not target him. However, his expectations were not met, resulting in a traumatic experience:

“They [police officers] threw me to the floor, beat me up for real. A brute policeman stepped on my hand. They saw I was working on the coverage, of course, because I was wearing a huge, white badge, you see it from afar and realize [it’s a press ID]. He saw it, but still threw me to the ground, stepped on my hand, kicked the camera into my face and stepped on the camera. Then, he asked me to stand up, asked what I was doing. I said that I was reporting. I thought he would send me somewhere, but no. He told me I could go and I went away. (...). My first instinct was to cry, I started crying, I fell apart. Because it was such an unnecessary brutality. I was there to cover the protests, I wasn’t doing anything wrong, absolutely nothing wrong. I wasn’t even running. There’s not even this excuse: ‘oh, we confused you with someone else’, there isn’t.” (NR2, 15 January 2015, 165–177)<sup>30</sup>

This incident revealed the fragility of protection practices around identifying as a journalist, as the group they were directed at, the police, did not always recognize the legitimacy of journalistic work, especially from alternative media. Cases like this happened all over Brazil during

<sup>29</sup>“A gente se distanciava, por uma questão estratégica mesmo, pra polícia não ir atrás da gente, né, cara? Tiveram alguns momentos em que a polícia passou direto pela gente porque a gente tava gravando, como imprensa. (...) Teve momentos em que a gente teve que correr, lá no Paço Municipal: tava de noite e veio a cavalaria, os caras não tão nem aí, eles iam bater em todo mundo. Mas, quando a gente vê que os caras podem olhar pra gente, a gente continua”(NG4, 23 December 2015, 204–209).

<sup>30</sup>“Eles me jogaram no chão, me agrediram mesmo, um policial super bruto pisou na minha mão. Ele viu que eu tava trabalhando em cobertura, claro, porque eu tava com um crachá enorme, branco, você vê de longe e se toca [que é um crachá de imprensa]. Ele viu, mas me jogou no chão, pisou na minha mão, chutou a câmera na minha cara e pisou na câmera. Aí, ele pediu pra eu levantar, perguntou o que eu tava fazendo. Eu disse que tava fazendo a cobertura e eu achei que ele ia me encaminhar pra algum lugar, mas não. Aí, ele me liberou e eu peguei e saí. (...) Meu primeiro instinto foi chorar, eu comecei a chorar, desmorenei. Porque foi uma brutalidade desnecessária. Porque eu tava lá pra cobrir, não tava fazendo nada de errado, absolutamente nada de errado. Eu não tava nem correndo. Não tem nem a justificativa de “ah, confundimos você”, não tem”(NR2, 15 January 2015, 165–177).



the protests, raising suspicions that police officers were deliberately targeting journalists (see chapter 2). At the same time, this incident made the necessity of a third protection practice even clearer, as an actor who witnessed the attack recalls:

“Luckily there were other people around, because, at the time, we formed a big group, not just *Na Rua*, but also with *Nigéria*, independent photographers. (...) So people knew him [NR2], especially the photographers, and they yelled: ‘No, he’s from the press, let him go!’” (NR3, 8 January 2015, 157–160)<sup>31</sup>

Actors that formed a broader network around the alternative coverage of the protests kept an eye on each other and, although NR2 was alone at the time the police attacked him, others that arrived at the scene shortly after intervened to ask for his release, identifying him as a journalist. This identification from others reinforced practices such as wearing a press ID or choosing a more detached behavior in moments of conflict. There were also other reasons why actors chose to stay in groups, especially in pairs, when reporting on the ground, as the description of the practices of covering in pairs shows.

**Covering in Pairs** The practice of covering the protests in pairs seemed to be rooted on personal connections between actors, as they learned to trust each other in the face of challenging conditions on the ground: “(...) there was something like a companionship between some people that were doing the coverage. We witnessed many complicated, dangerous situations, and we kind of helped each other out, got each other’s backs.” (SP1, 21 December 2015, 16–18)<sup>32</sup> This bond was formed between members of both collectives and solo producers, regardless of the internal organization of a certain group. Actors saw each other often during the 2013 protests, and built mutual trust through common experiences, in which they could see where the others stood and how they acted. This formed a kind of solidarity that permeated the practice of covering in pairs even for photographers that were solo producers and would otherwise work alone, simply collaborating with *Na Rua* and *Nigéria* by providing their pictures to these collectives’ coverage. Although this practice was inserted in this wider community, it often involved two actors – each one having the main responsibility for their immediate partner on the ground.

Each group of actors had a slightly different way of performing this practice, linking different elements in its enactment. For *Nigéria*, the practice of covering in pairs originated from their realization that their previous practices for covering protests did not fit the 2013 protests, which were larger and more chaotic than the demonstrations they had covered in previous years. While, before 2013, members of the group carried one camera each, in order to capture more images in a smaller crowd, this proved to be unsafe in 2013.

“We started learning, seeing what was best. Because it is good to use two cameras, but you become very vulnerable, because you don’t see what’s around you. We saw

<sup>31</sup>“A sorte foi que tinham outras pessoas, porque, nessa época, a gente ficou um grupo não só nós do *Na Rua*, mas com o *Nigéria*, outros fotógrafos independentes e tal. (...). O pessoal conhecia ele [NR2], principalmente os fotógrafos, e gritaram: ‘não, é imprensa, solta!’” (NR3, 8 January 2015, 157–160).

<sup>32</sup>“(…) rolava um companheirismo entre algumas pessoas que tavam cobrindo. Muitas vezes, a gente se via em situações de perrengue, complicadas, e a gente meio que se ajudava, rolava uma retaguarda” (SP1, 21 December 2015, 16–18).

that it was better if we took less cameras with us, you know? If one person filmed with the camera and another looked around, as if they were driving, you know? (...) Another important thing was not to lose each other, because we kept losing each other and it sucked. At the protest at Paço Municipal [a downtown area], I was alone with NG1, it was dark, and we realized we could not afford to lose each other. So he kept recording and I stood very close to him, holding his arm, so that I could pull him when it was time to run.” (NG4, 25 December 2014, 127–135)<sup>33</sup>

As the description shows, actors established links between different elements in their practice of covering together protests in 2013: they reduced the number of cameras as the material element of their practice and developed the competence of working together in a different way (which they compare to the interaction between a driver and her co-pilot in the quote), with the motivation (meaning) of staying safe in a much larger crowd than they were used to. This description also makes clear the role of the body in protection practices. Actors warned each other through a pull or a touch to the back, stood close to each other in order to be able to alert one another more quickly and to avoid getting lost among the crowd in dangerous situations.

In a way, this component of embodiment was present in all three protection practices. The interaction with protective gear was an embodied one, in which the body suffered the violence of less-lethal weapons and actors realized the urgency of wearing protective gear. The body then reacted with discomfort, leading actors to learn new ways of being bodies on the ground without having to use this equipment. The practice of becoming visible as a journalist to the police was also an embodied one, as actors walked on a normal pace in moments of distress or assumed the posture of observers when they chose to keep recording the action instead of running to protect themselves from harm, as protesters usually did. In the specific case of covering in pairs, the camera’s features also fed into this practice, as the focused attention the camera demanded from actors if they wanted to shoot a coherent picture or video, put them at risk, thus demanding the cooperative competence of having someone else watching their backs while they handled the camera.

Another dimension of this practice was particularly present in *Na Rua*’s motivation for adopting it: covering in pairs enabled them to have a warning system among members of the group. In case someone got arrested or hurt, their pair could alert the rest of the group and trigger necessary supporting actions.

“(...) those who were part of *Na Rua* always split before the protests into pairs or trios, so that no one went in alone. Because, if something like this [the police attack on NR2] happened, for example, at least you’re not alone, as it is a very

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<sup>33</sup>“Cara, a gente foi aprendendo, foi vendo o que era melhor. Porque é bom [usar] várias câmeras, só que você fica muito vulnerável, porque você não vê ao seu redor. A gente viu que era melhor se a gente levasse menos câmeras, sabe? Ficasse mais numa câmera, uma pessoa gravando e a outra pessoa vendo, como se estivesse dirigindo, sabe? (...) E foi se ligando também de não se perder, porque a gente se perdia muito e isso era foda. Na que teve lá no Paço Municipal [uma área no centro da cidade] que foi à noite, só tava eu e o NG1 e a gente viu que a gente não podia se perder de jeito nenhum. O NG1 ficava gravando e às vezes ele ficava bem perto e eu ficava segurando ele pra qualquer hora ele começar a correr”(NG4, 25 December 2014, 127–135).

dangerous situation. Being alone is complicated. I, for example, was far in the back. If they took me away, no one would have known where they took me. It's crazy, you immediately think about what happened during the dictatorship. We know it [repression during the protests] wasn't even 1% of what happened back then, but it is still a big shock to think about what could happen to you." (NR2, 15 January 2015, 316–321)<sup>34</sup>

This reference to the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil between 1964 and 1985 is present in many actors' impressions of the days of the protests, as some of them were confronted for the first time with state repression directed at them personally<sup>35</sup>. During the dictatorship, it was common for oppositional activists to be "disappeared" by authorities, with some families still trying to find out what happened to their loved ones to this day<sup>36</sup>. Thus, the fear of disappearing in the hands of the police, grounded in the country's recent history, permeated this practice. It is important to highlight that many actors I interviewed emphasized the fact that the practice of covering in pairs was not always performed successfully. Especially when actors did not wear protective gear, tear gas bombs and other less-lethal weapons had the effect of dispersing the crowds and dissolving the pairs, as people started to run in panic from the police (NG2, 23 December 2014, 112–114).

Covering in pairs, for *Na Rua*, was also connected to their practices of division of tasks, as the pairs were usually formed by one photographer and one reporter focused on written coverage and interviews (NR3, 8 January 2015, 128–129). Much like what *Nigéria* members' describe explicitly, this division of tasks for *Na Rua* also implied that the actor taking the pictures depended on her pairs' overview of what was happening around them in order to stay safe, as there were no pairs in which both were tasked with photographing. As I describe in the next pages, practices of division of tasks for *Na Rua* were often marked by this and other dualities of functions each actor was expected to perform as the coverage took place.

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<sup>34</sup>"(...) quem tava no *Na Rua* sempre se dividia antes dos atos em duplas ou em trios, pra ninguém ficar sozinho. Porque, se acontecer uma coisa como essa [o ataque sofrido por NR2], por exemplo, pelo menos você não tá sozinho, porque é uma situação de risco muito grande. Estar sozinho é muito complicado. Eu, por exemplo, que tava mais atrás, se pegam e me levam, ninguém nem sabe pra onde é que me levaram. É louco, porque, imediatamente, vêm as coisas da ditadura. A gente sabe que não foi 1% do que foi naquela época, mas mesmo assim é um choque muito grande, de ver o que pode acontecer com você" (NR2, 15 January 2015, 316–321).

<sup>35</sup>Favela dwellers and other marginalized Brazilians, however, have experience police violence as part of their everyday lives for decades, despite the end of the military dictatorship. The case of Amarildo de Souza, a Favela da Rocinha resident who disappeared in 2013 after being detained by police, became prominent during the 2013 protests and led to the prosecution of 12 police officers. However, over 35,000 such cases remain unsolved (Watts, 2013a).

<sup>36</sup>Civil society groups such as Tortura Nunca Mais estimate that thousands of people disappeared due to persecution during the military dictatorship in Brazil. The regimes' official archives remain sealed to this day, which prevents the public from knowing exactly how many people were killed or kidnapped by army officials and police forces during the dictatorship. Tortura Nunca Mais lists details on some of the individual known cases on its website (see TorturaNuncaMais).

## Division of Tasks

Coping practices were not necessarily just about safety, but also about developing ways of being on the ground as a network of alternative journalists in a common coverage effort, as practices of division of tasks inside and among groups show.

Concerning practices of division of tasks inside a specific group, *Na Rua* developed sets of practices that complemented each other, assigning different roles to actors that, put together, made their newsgathering practices viable. These sets came in pairs such as: staying at the headquarters (HQ)/going to the protests<sup>37</sup>, coordinating live-blogging on Facebook/sending raw material from the street; and legal support/journalistic coverage.

Complementing the functions discussed around covering in pairs, *Na Rua* required at least three people for the live coverage of events: in addition to a photographer and a reporter on the ground, there was at least one editor, responsible for putting information sent by those on the ground together to publish the live coverage on Facebook (NR1, 12 January 2015, 277–279). They later complemented this live coverage with other written pieces, pictures and videos on *Na Rua*'s own website. Particularly for the live coverage on Facebook, actors on the streets relied on text messages, phone calls or, when someone had a good 3G reception on their phones, messenger apps to send bits of information quickly to the editors at the HQ.

While the process was extremely dynamic and fragmented for those reporting on the ground, editors at the HQ focused their practices on acquiring an overview of the contents coming from “their” reporters, performing some of the content editing practices I discuss in more detail in section 6.1.5:

“We kind of did a triage of the material the others sent us. The team worked like this: someone stayed at the HQ, which could be someone’s home, close to the protest, with access to the internet. They received the material people sent via [Messenger App] and selected interesting stuff. There wasn’t always enough time on the streets to make a cool text, grammatically correct, to choose a picture, and edit it all. So content was sent to *Na Rua*’s closed [Messenger App] group. The person who was at home [the HQ] systematized that: ‘I’ll put this picture and this information together and post it’. It was like a real-time editor.” (NR5, 27 December 2014, 340–346)<sup>38</sup>

The fragmented information was put into context and integrated into a chain of posts that composed *Na Rua*’s live-blogging. Here, we see how different senses of time were articulated in practices of division of tasks: the frantic rhythm of sending pieces of information from the heart of the protests contrasted with editing practices that required slowing down and looking at the big picture, in order to be able to piece information together in a coherent way for those

<sup>37</sup>I describe what these headquarters meant in detail in section 6.3.

<sup>38</sup>“A gente fazia meio que uma triagem de material que os meninos mandavam pra gente também. A equipe funcionava muito da seguinte maneira: alguém ficava na base, que podia ser em casa, alguma casa que tivesse internet, um lugar até mesmo próximo da manifestação, recebendo o material pelo [Messenger App] e selecionando o que seria interessante. Nem sempre dava pra fazer um texto legal, corrigindo o português, selecionando a foto, editando [na rua], não dava. Então a gente mandava pro [Messenger App] do *Na Rua*, que era fechado pra gente. A pessoa que tava em casa sistematizava aquilo: ‘eu peguei essa foto, essa informação, junto e posto’”(NR5, 27 December 2014, 340–346).

following the live coverage. This was also achieved through the physical separation between the site of the protests and the HQ, set in a residential context and offering the necessary working infrastructure, such as a stable internet connection.

Specifically in *Na Rua*'s case, alternative journalists worked together with lawyers connected to Urucum, the NGO that started *Na Rua* as a project, or to other organizations. This was, in part, a reaction to the lack of effective legal support actors identified during the protests in 2013 in Fortaleza. For 2014, they sought to provide an organized effort in this sense (NR4, 12 January 2015, 15–24). These lawyers were volunteers who either stayed at the HQ waiting for emergencies or watched out for situations on the ground where protesters might need their legal assistance — for example, in case of arrests. There were practices around the division of tasks between both groups in the context of the coverage as well:

“Whenever someone was arrested, lots of people sent us messages on Facebook or looked for one of us [at the protest] and said: ‘Hey, this happened!’ And the lawyers would go to the police stations. (...) We kept in touch and verified how many people were there [detained], how the processes were going. So, it was through the lawyers that formed this network with us that we got this kind of information.” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 229–235)<sup>39</sup>

While performing their own legal tasks, lawyers proved helpful in practices of verification, which I describe in section 6.1.5. On the other hand, alternative journalists were the ones that often got tips from the public on arrests and other human rights violations lawyers were sent to verify and, if necessary, intervene. There were also fruitful exchanges in terms of expertises, with lawyers checking the legal vocabulary reproduced in the coverage and offering more correct terms to describe certain situations (NR1, 12 January 2015, 298–305).

Given the fact that *Na Rua* was a relatively new group created in 2014 and had a porous structure, with only two core members and varying collaborators, they might have felt a greater need to perform relatively clearly defined practices of division of tasks<sup>40</sup>. For an older and smaller group such as *Nigéria*, division of tasks happened through affinity, with each member doing what they enjoyed the most. This also seemed to be due to *Nigéria* members' experience of working together before: they knew each others' abilities and preferences, dividing the tasks in 2013 and 2014 accordingly.

“There is a division of tasks, but it's not imposed. It's a division by affinity. I like to record, so I do more recording. NG4 likes to edit, so he does more editing. NG2 is more into journalism, but he's starting to edit as well, so he does editing. NG3 is a guy who works a lot with production, more with this institutional arrangement

<sup>39</sup>“Toda vez que tinha alguém detido, muita gente mandava mensagens pra gente, no Facebook ou procurava algum de nós e falava: ‘ei, aconteceu isso!’ E iam advogados pra lá [para a delegacia]. (...) A gente mantinha contato e verificava quantas pessoas estavam lá, como eram os processos. Então, era pela informação dos advogados que estavam em rede com a gente, foi um trabalho de rede e a gente tinha essa informação através dele”(NR1, 18 December 2015, 229–235).

<sup>40</sup>I explore the role of group structure more deeply when describing processes of dissemination of practices in section 6.3.

of talking to people, to those we call our partners.” (NG1, 23 December 2014, 310–315)<sup>41</sup>

These practiced routines helped them start their coverage in 2013 relatively quickly, without establishing specific divisions of tasks for covering the first spontaneous and surprisingly large protests.

I did not identify practices of division of tasks per se for solo producers, as they worked alone or in an informal cooperation with media groups, without being embedded in their internal arrangements. Solo producers, mostly acting as photographers, shared their pictures with media groups, enriching these groups’ coverage while gaining a wider reach than the one they had individually.

In all these practices, internal communication played a central role yet was not free of danger. In order to avoid state surveillance, actors also had to adopt and create specific practices.

### **Practices against Surveillance**

Shortly after the 2013 protests, the first police investigations on protesters started to become public, with cases of suspects being called into interrogation mere hours before new anti-World Cup protests were set to take place (Fonseca, Barros, Afiune, & Mota, 2014; Rosati, 2014). *Nigéria* members, in particular, received warnings that they were under investigation, although they were not directly interrogated (NG1, 8 January 2016, 181–184). In this section, I describe some of the practices actors performed in order to circumvent surveillance. However, I do not go into detail here on specific aspects that could make my interview partners’ activities unsafe, as some of them are still working in areas that are sensitive and targeted by the police. Details on their technical settings or the services they used, for example, will not be mentioned.

Basically, actors’ practices against surveillance combined two approaches: for public information, they used online messenger apps, phone calls and social networks, while sensitive information was only discussed in person. This member of *Na Rua* describes the division between online communication and communication in person:

“We waited until people got back [to the HQ] and didn’t discuss some things on [Messenger App], we were careful not to discuss some things there or on Facebook. We discussed the more serious stuff in person. As we met at the beginning and at the end of the protest, these things could be discussed in person.” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 132–134)<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> “Há uma divisão de trabalho, mas ela não é imposta. É uma divisão por afinidade. Eu gosto mais de gravar, então eu fico mais na gravação. NG4 gosta mais de editar, então ele fica mais na edição. NG2 gosta mais de jornalismo, mas, hoje, já tá começando a editar, então ele vai pra edição. NG3 é um cara que trabalha muito com produção, com a questão mais institucional, de falar com as pessoas, de ver o que a gente chama de parceiros”(NG1, 23 December 2014, 310–315).

<sup>42</sup> “A gente esperava o pessoal chegar e não discutia algumas coisas pelo [Messenger App], a gente tinha esse cuidado de não discutir algumas coisas nem por lá nem pelo Facebook. As coisas mais sérias a gente discutia pessoalmente. Como a gente se encontrava no começo e no final do ato, essas coisas podiam ser conversadas pessoalmente”(NR1, 18 December 2015, 132–134).

It is important to highlight the role of personal communication in circumventing surveillance and actors' awareness that platforms that proved practical to share information for the live coverage were not safe to discuss information that was not supposed to be public, matters internal to the group and organizational aspects such as meeting points. This weariness towards online communication as unsafe is not exclusive to the actors I interviewed, as Neumayer et al. (2016, p. 5572) describe in their research on Blockupy activists' tweeting practices. In my case study, given actors' journalistic practices, this carefulness also extended to how they handled information concerning social movements:

“(...) we avoid talking about certain things on the internet, especially social movements' [planned] actions. Because the police knows who we are. But, well, there is not much we can do about it. We get paranoid, but that's part of our work. They recognize us, they point at us [during protests].” (NG4, 23 December 2015, 219–222)<sup>43</sup>

Actors' awareness that the surveillance apparatus focused on them could also damage partners and sources from social movements was reflected not only in alternative journalists' avoidance of discussing these partners' planned actions online, but also in making sure pictures and other data actors carried around with them did not get confiscated, by trying to safeguard memory cards, for example (NG3, 22 December 2015, 295–298). This is due to the fact that unfiltered pictures could also be used as proof in police inquiries against protesters photographed or filmed doing something illegal. Therefore, actors also carried out anonymizing practices before publishing any content, which I describe in more detail in section 6.1.5.

As this section shows, actors performed coping practices as reactions to various challenges or threats they faced during the coverage of protests. While protection practices and practices against surveillance served to avoid police repression either during protests themselves or in the period that followed, practices around division of tasks helped streamline the coverage, especially real-time updates. All three sets of practices provided the conditions for actors to perform newsgathering practices, allowing them to focus mostly on reporting despite the various threats or logistical challenges they encountered. In that sense — and to use in Shove, Pantzar, and Watson's (2012, p. 87) terms —, coping practices and newsgathering practices are connected through necessary co-dependence in the complex that forms actors' alternative coverage of protests. In the next section, I explore actors' practices in the context of their reporting.

#### **6.1.4 Newsgathering Practices**

Through their newsgathering practices, actors realized on the ground the aims they had defined in their focusing and counter sourcing practices. Finding themselves covering events on the ground, actors established practices around choices on who to interview, how long they should

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<sup>43</sup>“(...) a gente evita falar certas coisas, principalmente de ações de movimentos sociais na internet. Porque a polícia sabe quem é a gente. Mas, enfim, também não é uma coisa que a gente não pode fazer muita coisa não. A gente fica noiado, mas é isso, faz parte do trabalho. Os caras reconhecem a gente, ficam apontando com o dedo [durante manifestações]”(NG4, 23 December 2015, 219–222).

stay on the ground, how to physically position themselves and where they should direct their attention to. These practices shared a competence element, namely the basic journalistic skills actors brought with them due to their professional background or education. This element, however, is linked to a different meaning element than the one that usually constitutes journalistic practices: actors' motivational knowledge is not directed at objectivity standards, but rather towards serving protesters and social movements and, thus, countering perceived power imbalances in traditional media's coverage of the protests. Material elements vary according to the specific practice, as I outline in the next pages.

### **Interviews on the Ground**

This category encompasses actors' practices for choosing interview partners while covering protests. Actors describe these decisions as mostly intuitive, almost instinctive, a "feeling" they have as journalists (NG2, 25 December 2015, 252–254). Yet, there were some patterns that seemed to cross these decisions: actors often picked interview partners that stood out in the crowd, be it because they embodied certain archetypes that alternative journalists saw as enriching their coverage (a leadership figure, a black bloc guy, a typical member of the middle class, a first-time protester) or because these individuals were at the center of an incident (someone negotiating with the police, a person who was attacked or someone performing direct action, for example). As the following analysis shows, these dimensions often flowed into each other, an archetype was often also the protagonist of an action. In addition, looks also played a role:

“It was a random thing sometimes, it's hard to tell. Of course there was a reason, but it's hard to pin it down. (...) But there was also something about the way people looked. The black blocs, for example, with their balaclavas, that ninja look, with the t-shirt, they were an obvious target. Sometimes you could also tell if the guy has some leadership role, it was a guy that was more expressive and who you could follow. I remember looking for some people who looked like middle-class youth, making a selection by looks.” (NG2, 25 December 2015, 244–250)<sup>44</sup>

The actor's difficulty in pinning down his selection criteria also shows how this practice was already grounded on repetition, something that he, as an experienced journalist, performed instinctively, revealing the competence element of pre-existing journalistic skills. By selecting people who looked like the archetype or the clichéd representation of certain broader social sectors (middle-class, black bloc and so on) present at the protest, he sought to reproduce various views on events, grounded on individuals' experience as part of these broader social groups and how their social status interacted with the various ways they experienced the protest. Another member of *Nigéria* describes this with regards to how different interview partners saw direct action against governmental buildings:

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<sup>44</sup>“Às vezes é um negócio aleatório, que não dá nem pra saber. Claro que tem uma razão, mas não dá [pra saber]. (...) Mas tinha uma coisa de aparência também. Os black blocs, por exemplo, com balaclava, aquela touca ninja, com a blusa, eram um alvo óbvio. Às vezes você podia ver que o cara tava tendo alguma atuação como líder ali, era um cara mais expressivo e você podia ir atrás dele. Eu me lembro de procurar algumas figuras mais com cara de juventude classe média, de fazer uma certa seleção pela aparência mesmo”(NG2, 25 December 2015, 244–250).



“We did not go much into the question of public property, but there was an interesting debate to be had around how symbolic it is, for a boy from the periphery, to throw a stone at Palácio da Abolição [the state governor’s office in Fortaleza]. And, for a middle-class boy, that was a violent act, because that other boy was breaking something he paid for.” (NG4, 23 December 2015, 264–268)<sup>45</sup>

In this example, the actor associates interview partners’ social status with their view on direct action. The periphery boy archetype, in this case, was seen as giving back to the state the systemic violence he suffered daily, in terms of police harassment due to his class as well as state neglect in terms of basic social services in his community. The middle-class boy archetype aligned himself with the figure of the taxpayer, who wanted to avoid any unnecessary spending. This dichotomy justified, for alternative journalists, hearing both perspectives as part of a coverage that wanted to point out this debate around the meaning of direct action, countering traditional media’s criminalizing representation, which was more aligned to the middle-class and gave little to no space to more favorable opinions on the issue.

The goal of countering traditional media’s sourcing practices was also present when actors made the decision of interviewing protesters that were “protagonizing the action”:

“Who we interview is always very important. So, when you see a story [on traditional media] and always see police officers talking, you don’t see them in our stories. You see people from the movements who are there, protagonizing [the action in the protests]. So, I think we create an empathy with these people.” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 412–414)<sup>46</sup>

Although, hypothetically, police officers could also be regarded as protagonizing some kinds of action during a protest, interviewees did not seem to see them as protagonists in this sense. Here, the focus was on protest participants: people performing direct action, carrying a banner, representing a social movement or simply being on the streets. Police officers and other state representatives were seen as people actors kept an eye on, checking for abuses of power they might exert, as the moments when actors performed police watchdog practices show, later in this section. The practice of interviewing those protagonizing the action implied an empowerment of these actors and a recognition that their views were valid, as when NG3 claims they foster empathy toward these sources by quoting them in their stories.

In addition, given the dimension of access through commitment in collectives’ counter sourcing practices, people often also walked up to them and offered to give an interview or make a statement to the camera.

<sup>45</sup>“A gente não entrou muito na questão do patrimônio público, também rolava um debate interessante de quanto aquilo é simbólico, pra um menino da periferia que tá lá mascarado, jogar pedra no Palácio da Abolição [sede do governo do estado do Ceará]. E, pra um menino da classe média, aquilo era uma violência, porque tava quebrando algo que ele pagava” (NG4, 23 December 2015, 264–268).

<sup>46</sup>“Quem a gente entrevista é sempre muito importante. Então, quando você vê uma matéria e vê sempre policiais falando, a gente quase sempre você não vê [no conteúdo produzido]. Você vê pessoas de movimentos, que estão ali, protagonizando [a ação nas manifestações]. Então, eu acho que isso cria uma empatia com as pessoas” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 412–414).

“Many times we were talking to a friend or an acquaintance and someone came up to us to say something or someone from a movement came up to say something or someone was already making a speech and we approached them with the camera, and they started talking to the camera, because they wanted to [talk].” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 315–317)<sup>47</sup>

In these stances, actors’ proximity to social movement sources and other protesters, who they knew from previous events or projects, seemed to attract other interview partners who also knew their interlocutors. This worked as proof that collectives could be trusted. This quote also reveals the material element that was often linked to practices around interviews on the ground: whether actors filmed or photographed their interlocutors, the camera played an essential role in the selection of sources — it may have been interpreted as an invitation for sources to spontaneously give a statement, as in the previous passage, or it may have influenced actors’ decisions on who to interview, as NG2 described the role looks played when he was searching for people to interview in the beginning of this section. Actors also employed other material elements for recording the interviews, such as a simple notebook or a voice recorder, but the camera was the most prominent one, coming up in many other newsgathering practices in this section.

Coming back to the previous quote, my interview partners also attributed requests to be recorded to the fact that traditional media were not willing to listen to these sources, so they were more than happy to talk with alternative media (NR6, 6 January 2016, 91–93). Another difference actors perceived between their reporting and that of colleagues working for traditional media outlets was the duration of their stays on the ground, conceptualized in the next category.

### **Staying until the End**

In part due to different priorities and a faster pace of production, actors claim that journalists working for traditional media outlets usually left before protests ended, thus failing to cover important incidents. As a reaction, actors emphasized their permanence until the protest was really over. A member of *Nigéria* criticizes the authoritative discourse some journalists still had despite the fact that they did not stay to witness the whole protest, simulating a conversation with one of these journalists:

“Oh, [you say] there were no problems? But there were!’ ‘The protest went well, it was all good.’ ‘No, it wasn’t. If you had stayed until the end, you would have seen it did not go well.’ ‘Yeah, but from what I covered...’ ‘Oh, so you didn’t cover anything. There were problems.’ (...) We stay until the end, but they [traditional reporters] don’t have the time for that. (...) They didn’t even stay in June [2013, during the Confederation Cup protests]. They left right after the conflicts started,

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<sup>47</sup>“Muitas vezes, a gente tava conversando com um amigo ou alguém conhecido e surgia alguém pra falar alguma coisa ou alguém do movimento que ele participa pra falar ou alguém que já estava falando alguma coisa e a gente chegava com a câmera perto e a gente começava a falar pra câmera, porque ela queria”(NG3, 22 December 2015, 315–317).

sometimes they stayed a while after that, but soon left. Or sometimes they came back too late, which amounted to nothing.” (NG1, 8 January 2016, 122–130)<sup>48</sup>

Actors perceived journalists from traditional media outlets as simply parachuting in the beginning of protests, recording some images and leaving for their next story. Thus, alternative journalists’ representation differed considerably from traditional media’s, as those did not catch images of the conflict, despite journalists being then sent back to the protest when word arrived that it had escalated. Due to their focusing practices, alternative journalists directed their time and resources to covering such actions from beginning to end. Traditional media journalists, on the other hand, were under outlets’ commercial pressures to produce as many stories a day as possible, which my interview partners saw as affecting the quality of their coverage and its legitimacy. Here, the connection between staying until the end and claims to journalistic authority drawn from eyewitnessing events on the ground is clear, with actors claiming this authority to themselves in contrast with their colleagues from traditional newsrooms.

The decision of staying until the end of the protests was also due to actors’ counter sourcing practices, as was the case of *Nigéria*’s relationship with the so-called vandals, who also constituted the thematic focus of their documentary *Vandalism*:

“Why record the vandals? Maybe because they were pariahs, everybody attacked them, but we also saw that they were the guys, the bodies, who stayed until the end, just like us. We stayed with them, actually. We would not have stayed alone, we only stayed because of them. And they were always there.” (NG1, 8 January 2016, 148–151)<sup>49</sup>

This description shows how counter sourcing practices were permeated not by objective distance towards sources, but by a certain loyalty: actors also stayed until the end in order not to desert their main sources. This loyalty was also present in how they moved around the protest and from which angles they sought to capture events as they unrolled.

### **Positioned Allegiance**

The practices this category encompasses could be described as an embodiment of counter sourcing practices, as actors equated their physical positioning on the ground with their editorial alignment to protesters and social movements’ perspectives. Thus, the name I chose for this category: physical position is determined by actors’ perception of being allies to their sources on the ground. As a result, actors positioned themselves on the ground in a way that privileged

<sup>48</sup>“Ah, não teve [problemas]? Teve.’ ‘A manifestação correu tal, tal, tudo bem.’ ‘Tudo bem não. Se você ficar até o final, você vai ver que não foi tudo bem.’ ‘É, mas do que eu cobri...’ ‘Ah, então você não cobriu nada. Teve [problemas].’ (...) E a gente fica sempre até o final, que é um tempo que eles não vão ter. (...) Eles não ficaram nem em junho [de 2013, durante os protestos na Copa das Confederações]. Eles iam embora logo depois, quando começava o foguete ainda ficava um ou outro, depois ia. Ou vinha depois ou já vinha atrasado, aí já não adiantava nada” (NG1, 8 January 2016, 122–130).

<sup>49</sup>“Por que gravar os vândalos? Talvez não só por eles serem a escória, todo mundo meter o pau neles, mas porque a gente viu que eles eram os caras que ficavam, eles eram o corpo ali que ficava até o final, que nem a gente. A gente ficava com eles, na realidade. A gente não ia ficar até o final sozinhos, a gente só ficava por causa deles. E eles tavam lá sempre” (NG1, 8 January 2016, 148–151).

capturing protesters' experiences: they either stood among the protesters or at the front of the demonstration — between the mass of protesters and the police line. This decision, much like counter sourcing practices, was also grounded on criticism towards traditional media and the way their reporters positioned themselves on the ground:

“Because it is also interesting to see the position of media outlets, how they were ideologically aligned and how they placed themselves in the demonstration's physical space itself. The model that had been constructed since 2013 and that continues up until today was: protesters were always facing the police lines and the traditional media were always behind those police lines, protected by them. And the alternative press was always either between the police and the protesters, moving around, or sometimes in the middle of the protesters. So, the body of the reporters covering for alternative media is more fluid, in the sense that they followed protesters' movements. Traditional media's coverage was much more fixed, they stayed behind the police line, it was a coverage that was far from the facts, they could not really see what was happening. (...) The guys from *Nigéria* like to use the term 'guerrilla journalism', which is what we tried to do at the time: staying together with the protesters, in order to cover as best as possible what was going on, to be closer to the true facts — if there are true facts at all, but we tried to get as closer to them as possible.” (NR4, 15 December 2015, 101–113)<sup>50</sup>

Actors equated journalists' physical positions on the ground with the perspective that was predominant in the coverage they produced. Traditional media reporters, mostly covering from behind the police lines, seemed limited in what they could see in terms of police abuses, as they relied on the police's physical protection in order to cover events safely. In a way, this symbiotic relationship echoed that of embedded war correspondents, who follow military troops into conflict zones and rely on these troops' protection in order to do their work. Through daily proximity to soldiers that reporters literally trust with their lives, their reporting might become more favorable to those protectors, maybe even omitting abuses they commit (Pena, 2005, p. 10–11).

It is interesting to note, again, the essential role preceding protection practices played here: while traditional reporters seemed to include police protection in their own safety measures, alternative journalists saw the police as an additional threat and, thus, developed protection

<sup>50</sup>“Porque é até legal você ver a disposição dos veículos de comunicação, como eles se alinham ideologicamente e como eles se dispõem no espaço da manifestação em si, no espaço físico. O modelo que estava sendo construído desde 2013 e que eles continuam hoje era: sempre os manifestantes na frente da barreira policial e a imprensa tradicional atrás da barreira policial, protegida. E a imprensa alternativa ficava ou entre a barreira policial e os manifestantes, mas transitando, [ou] às vezes iam mais pra onde os manifestantes estavam mesmo. Então, o corpo dos repórteres que estavam cobrindo pelas mídias alternativas era muito mais fluido, no sentido de que iam acompanhar o movimento dos manifestantes. A cobertura da mídia tradicional é bem mais fixa, ela ficava atrás da barreira policial, uma cobertura distante dos fatos, não conseguia ver realmente o que estava acontecendo. (...) Até o pessoal do *Nigéria* gosta de usar o termo "jornalismo de guerrilha", que é o que a gente tentou fazer naquela época, aquela coisa de se colocar junto com os manifestantes, pra cobrir o que estava acontecendo da melhor maneira possível, mais próxima realmente do que seria a verdade dos fatos. Se é que há uma verdade dos fatos, mas a mais próxima possível”(NR4, 15 December 2015, 101–113).

practices that did not rely on support from officers on the ground. Moreover, alternative journalists, through to their mobility and disposition to cover events among protesters, perceived themselves as “being where news really take place” (NR6, 6 January 2016, 68–69)<sup>51</sup>, simply by witnessing incidents traditional reporters could not possibly see behind police lines. Much like with practices around staying until the end and other practices I describe in the next sections, actors drew their journalistic authority from witnessing events with their own eyes, something they attributed to the contrast between their positioning on the ground and that of their traditional media colleagues. And there were certain events actors were particularly interested in witnessing, namely those concerning protesters’ side of the story:

“I hardly stood behind the police, I was always at the side of the protesters. I was much more interested in showing what was happening to them, as they were the weaker side, than in what the police was doing. Everyone knows what the police does, right? Of course, I tried to capture [police] abuses, but always from the perspective of the protester.” (SP1, 09 January 2015, 27–30)<sup>52</sup>

While actors’ claims to showing “the true facts”, as NR4 put it, were a constitutive dimension of practices of positioned allegiance, interview partners were also aware that they were capturing one side of the story, as the previous quote shows. “What is ‘being seen’ in what appears to be a natural form is, evidently, then in part or large part what is ‘being made to be seen’,” as Williams (1980, p. 60) observes with relation to cameras’ positions during protests. In his assertion that “everyone knows what the police does”, the photographer acknowledges the existence of other images of the police, captured by other reporters positioned among the police and widely circulated on traditional media. He sought to counter them by focusing on another perspective, capturing other images due to his physical position being different than the physical position most traditional reporters assumed. This required specific practices on how to carry and use a camera, which I describe next.

### **Self-Empowerment through Camera**

These practices are some of the most heavily dependent on the material element of the camera and the competence element of knowing how to operate it. The enactment of practices of self-empowerment through camera linked these material and competence elements to meaning elements such as emotions, like the thrill of pushing boundaries in a tense situation on the ground, or the motivation to be a daring journalist, going to “the front lines” of the protest to perform her reporting duties.

Some actors saw the camera as providing more protection than practices of identifying as journalists, as it made recognition as a media person easier (NG2, 23 December 2014, 160–161). One of the reasons for this was probably the behavior actors assumed when operating a camera,

<sup>51</sup>“(…) onde realmente a notícia acontece”(NR6, 6 January 2016, 68–69).

<sup>52</sup>“Difícilmente eu ficava atrás da polícia, eu sempre ficava do lado dos manifestantes. Me interessava muito mais mostrar o que acontecia com eles, enquanto lado mais fraco, do que o que a polícia tava fazendo. O que a polícia faz todo mundo sabe, né? Claro, eu tentava pegar exageros, mas era sempre na visão do manifestante”(SP1, 09 January 2015, 27–30).

which was often detached and focused on capturing the best images, which placed them closer to the usual perception of a journalist at work, not of a protester. Although looking detached on the outside, actors sometimes experienced intense emotions themselves, underlining the feeling of empowerment they associated with carrying a camera:

“The aspect that I found most interesting was how this device changes your body’s expression, your way of being on the street. (...) Because, usually, when you see someone with a camera, this person is all the way in the front. When people don’t have a camera, they become more cautious. I don’t know, it’s a kind of empowerment the device gives you. And, when I had the opportunity of carrying one, I felt this same thing. (...) The will to document, to cover, becomes greater than the fear of something bad happening, you know? What I felt was that, it gave you a greater strength, made you want to know what’s going on, to document what was happening.” (NR4, 12 January 2015, 538–553)<sup>53</sup>

The camera seemed to help actors temporarily forget — or ignore — the risks they were exposing themselves to through their coverage and, instead, focus on competently operating the camera and doing everything possible to get the best images, both technically as well as in terms of the information these images could transmit. This embodied self-empowerment was central to perform practices grounded on positioned allegiance or to play the role of police watchdog. However, as Buchanan and Keats (2011, p. 132) also found in their study on photojournalists’ coping strategies when covering traumatic events, interviewees were divided about how effectively the camera could really shield them from danger. One actor mentions NR2’s traumatic experience with the police as proof that this feeling of safety might be an illusion, as the camera did not protect NR2 from police violence in the end:

“With the camera, I put myself on the front line, I faced a lot of situations and learned a lot of things: how to position myself, the photographer’s gaze, how we can expose ourselves to risks and how that can be thrilling, a great experience. (...) I think I felt the camera protected me a bit, although we saw that this [protection] actually didn’t exist in many situations. Even people who were photographing, like NR2, suffered it [police violence] (...) So, it’s crazy, because, when I was photographing, with the camera, [I told myself]: ‘everything is ok,’ but it wasn’t, you know? I felt this way, but I think it was actually just luck. Because, in the critical moments, I ran away too, I didn’t just stay put.” (NR7, 26 December 2015, 90–100)<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup>“O que eu achei mais engraçado foi como o dispositivo muda a tua expressão corporal, o modo de estar na rua. (...) Porque, geralmente, quando você vê alguém com uma câmera na mão, geralmente essa pessoa tá lá na frente. Quando a galera não tá com câmera, a galera fica mais comedida. Não sei, tem uma coisa do empoderamento que o dispositivo te dá. E eu, quando tive a oportunidade de tá com isso, eu senti a mesma coisa. (...) A vontade de documentar, de cobrir, passa a ser maior do que o medo de acontecer alguma merda, sabe? O que eu senti mais foi isso, te dá uma força maior, de você querer saber o que tá acontecendo, documentar o que tá acontecendo”(NR4, 12 January 2015, 538–553).

<sup>54</sup>“Com a câmera, eu me coloquei na linha de frente, enfrentei várias situações em que eu aprendi muita coisa: como me colocar, esse lance do olhar do fotógrafo, como a gente se expõe muito a riscos e como isso pode ser massa, como é uma super vivência. (...) Acho que eu sentia que me protegia um pouco, apesar

Much like with coping practices that complemented each other and were usually performed together according to current needs, self-empowerment through camera also had its limits and required actors to perform other practices, in order to stay safe. However, it is still a key dimension to understand how actors dismissed possible risks in situations when they deemed more important to continue filming or photographing instead of seeking protection. It emboldened actors particularly to perform more confrontational practices, such as those around their role as police watchdogs.

### **Police Watchdog Practices**

While actors sought to capture events from protesters' perspective, which reflected the dimension of access through commitment of their counter sourcing practices, they also prioritized following police officers' actions on the ground very closely, performing a watchdog role to prevent or document police misconduct, which reflects the skepticism towards the authorities that permeates the dimension of distance to official sources in counter sourcing practices and also interacts with their focusing practices:

“The police was there as an official source, but our relationship to it was that of watchers of the police. I feel we did this a lot, we stayed very close to them, always very close to the police lines, in order to see what was happening. Our goal was to document human rights violations by the state, and the police represents the state in this case. (...) I feel that was never an easy relationship.” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 394–399)<sup>55</sup>

In addition to a rigorous fact-checking of information provided by official sources that characterized counter sourcing practices, actors' watchful proximity while on the ground, focused on capturing police misconduct, contributed to the uneasy relationship NR1 describes, reinforcing actors' distance to these types of sources. As Gans (2010, p. 97) observed, journalists performing their watchdog role can inhibit authorities' deviant behavior not only through their reporting, but also through their very presence, as authorities are keenly aware that misconduct will be later publicized if journalists are in the room. Interview partners hoped their presence would have a similar effect over the police:

“Because we do this also thinking: ‘the police officer won't fuck up so much [with cameras around]. If they do, it's on tape.’ So, we know their faces, their names —

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de, na verdade, a gente viu que, em muitas situações, não existia isso. Mesmo quem tava na fotografia, como o próprio NR2. Ele tava fotografando e foi um dos que [sofreram violência] (...) Então, é meio doido, porque, com a câmera, eu me colocava nessas situações de risco mesmo e me sentia um pouco amparado por aquela coisa. (...) Eu tava lá com a câmera, fotografando: ‘ah, eu tô aqui de boa’, mas eu não tô, sabe? Eu me sentia assim, mas eu acho que, na verdade, era mais sorte mesmo. Porque, nos momentos mais punk, eu corri também, eu não ficava só lá” (NR7, 26 December 2015, 90–100).

<sup>55</sup>“Tinha a polícia como fonte oficial, mas sempre foi uma relação de vigia da polícia. Eu sinto que a gente fez muito isso, a gente ficava colando neles, sempre estivemos muito próximos das barreiras policiais, meio colados ali, pra ver o que tava acontecendo. O nosso objetivo era documentar violações do Estado, e ele é representado pela polícia nesse caso. (...) Eu sinto que nunca foi uma relação fácil” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 394–399).

when they wear identification, that is.” (NG1, 8 January 2016, 32–34)<sup>56</sup>

If these words sound slightly threatening, they reflect the intension of inhibiting abuses, paired with embodied confrontational practices, which shared, in turn, elements with practices of self-empowerment through camera. This actor describes some of the police watchdog practices actors performed on the ground:

“Pointing the camera at the police’s faces, considering the camera a kind of shield – which it is –, getting with the camera into situations other protesters would maybe not feel up to. Being always there with the device, maybe as a way of intimidating the police, of confronting it. This is very clear: the camera is there to capture the police’s violent acts.” (NG2, 25 December 2015, 137–140)<sup>57</sup>

The camera helped actors adopt a defiant posture towards the police through their position among the action, standing close and openly recording what the police was doing. Practices of self-empowerment through camera became pre-requisites to police watchdog practices, providing the embodied competences to film police from up close and adopt the necessary assertive stance, as the actor’s description of the camera as a “shield” shows.

As in classic watchdog journalism, police watchdog practices were not only permeated by the intentions that drove actors’ counter sourcing practices and focusing, but also by their motivation to bring to light perceived injustices in the way police dealt with protesters and, thus, contribute to a public debate around police misconduct. Most of the newsgathering practices I described in this section share competence elements with traditional journalistic practices, as well as material elements, yet their enactment happened through linking these competence and material elements to different meaning elements that refer to actors’ motivation for countering traditional media’s narratives. While coping practices provided the necessary conditions for the performance of newsgathering practices, newsgathering practices provided the material element – namely the raw media input – necessary for the enactment of the content editing practices I analyze next.

### 6.1.5 Content Editing Practices

While actors’ sharp criticism of traditional media permeated many of their other practices, it was in content editing practices that they applied some of the most decisive characteristics that distinguished their coverage from traditional, objectivity-aspiring journalism. Content editing practices encompassed decisions on what to publish and what to leave out, how to name certain actions and groups in their coverage, how to verify information, how to safeguard protesters’ identities, what formats to use and how each piece should look like. In short, content editing practices revealed most clearly the intentions actors pursued with their coverage, as well as

<sup>56</sup>“Porque o que a gente faz é pensando também: ‘o policial não vai fazer tanta cagada. Se fizer, tá gravado’. Então, a gente já sabe rostos, nomes – quando eles colocam”(NG1, 8 January 2016, 32–34).

<sup>57</sup>“Apontar a câmera pra cara da polícia, considerar a câmera como um certo escudo, o que de fato é, e se meter com a câmera em situações que outros militantes talvez não enfrentariam. Estar sempre com o aparelho ali de intimidação da polícia talvez, de enfrentamento. Isso é bem claro, a câmera está realmente ali pra pegar o ato violento do policial”(NG2, 25 December 2015, 137–140).



some of the more technical decisions they had to make before letting their production out into the world. They linked the material element of raw content input generated by newsgathering practices to various editing skills (competences) and the motivational knowledge of producing a coverage that stood out against traditional media's coverage of events.

### **Contextualization of Direct Action**

This category encompasses practices of content selection that shared the meaning element of actors' political convictions towards direct action. These were linked to the journalistic competence element of editing content as part of an informative sequence and the material element of raw content itself:

“(...) journalism is a choice between various stories you can tell, but you choose one specifically. So, I made peace with this point, with knowing that there is the story of the vandals and black blocs as crazy youth making a performance and looking for revenge against the police and, if you want to portray them derisively, you can do it without much effort and you wouldn't be lying, you would be telling a true story. We can question why you chose that precise story, you could have chosen others. And we also chose other stories, which are more sympathetic towards the protesters and more hostile to the police, to power, to the state. We made choices in this sense.” (NG2, 23 December 2014, 292–302)<sup>58</sup>

Actors' rejection of objectivity as a paradigm becomes clear in this description of reality as multi-faceted, with various different stories actors can decide to emphasize or not. Faced with a traditional media coverage that emphasized criminalization of protesters and direct action as a component that invalidated their political claims, portraying them as “crazy youth”, alternative journalists chose to emphasize other aspects surrounding this phenomenon, which were more aligned to the counter sourcing practices and their coverage's focus on violence from state authorities<sup>59</sup>.

Another point that originated from actors' media criticism was their rejection of traditional media's representation of clashes between protesters and the police as a conflict between equal sides. This led them to a different selection on what to publicize:

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<sup>58</sup>“(...) o jornalismo é uma escolha entre várias histórias que você pode contar, mas você escolhe aquela. Então, eu me tranquilizei mais nesse ponto, de saber que tem a história de que os vândalos e os black blocs são jovens meio porra louca que tão fazendo uma performance ali, que tão querendo uma revanche com a polícia e que, se você quiser caricaturá-los, você faz essa caricatura sem muito trabalho e você não tá mentindo, você tá contando uma história verdadeira. A gente pode contestar porque você escolheu aquela história, poderia ter escolhido outras. E a gente também escolheu outras histórias, que são mais simpáticas aos manifestantes e um pouco antipáticas à polícia, ao poder, ao Estado. A gente fazia escolhas nesse sentido”(NG2, 23 December 2014, 292–302).

<sup>59</sup>In their analysis of the coverage of 1st of May protests in Berlin, Blickhan and Teune (2003, p. 204) found that German left-wing dailies such as the *taz* or *Neues Deutschland* made a similar effort at countering an excessive emphasis on direct action and clashes with the police by highlighting different aspects of the protests, from colorful marches to victims of police violence, which I attribute, at least in part, to the focusing practices journalists working for these newspapers perform as well.

“We did not report on it when a protester threw stones at the police, for example, we did not talk about it. It is not a battle between equally strong sides, you won’t create an image of a dispute happening between them [by publishing about the protester throwing stones]. It’s not actually a dispute, as a dispute only happens between equals. What was happening was a movement of resistance against police violence and you had to use stones to defend yourself against guns and bombs.” (NR4, 15 December 2015, 181–188)<sup>60</sup>

This refusal of portraying the clashes between protesters and the police as a dispute reflected a departure from a common practice in journalism guided by the objectivity standard, as actors resisted to assigning an equal standing to both sides of the conflict, opting for highlighting what they perceived as an imbalance of power between them. The focus, then, was on how the police, seen as the stronger side of the conflict, dealt with direct action:

“(...) we all saw direct action as legitimate, in a way. So, we were not avoiding filming it, you know? It is part of the demonstrations, so we talk about it too. (...) But we were there, covering it all, because, if a police officer reacted violently to someone wearing a mask, it was still police violence, it was still state oppression and they did not have the right to do that.” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 462–470)<sup>61</sup>

Between this quote and the one before it, actors’ approach to direct action becomes clear: it was considered legitimate self-defense against police violence and reported as such, not as a random act of vandalism or as an initial provocation that then caused police to react violently<sup>62</sup>, as actors perceived traditional media to be reporting at the time. While on the ground, performing police watchdog practices, actors captured various images. They then made editorial decisions on how to contextualize these:

“In a two-minute video, you can put more images of the police firing at protesters than of people throwing stones, for example, do the opposite of what large TV stations do, which is showing more images of people throwing stones than of the police. Or, when there are 300 wounded protesters, but they [traditional media] say ‘there were wounded on both sides’ and show one police officer that was hit by

<sup>60</sup>“A gente também não noticiava quando algum manifestante jogava pedras na polícia, por exemplo, a gente não falava disso. Não é um confronto igual de forças, você não vai criar uma imagem de uma disputa que está ocorrendo. Na verdade, não é uma disputa – uma disputa é algo entre iguais. O que havia muito era um movimento de resistência à violência policial e você se defendia contra armas e bombas com pedras” (NR4, 15 December 2015, 181–188).

<sup>61</sup>“(...) todos nós encaramos, de alguma forma, ação direta como legítima também. Então, a gente não estava ali, não querendo filmar aquilo, entendeu? Faz parte da manifestação e vamos falar sobre também. (...) Mas a gente tava cobrindo tudo aquilo também, porque, se o policial reagir violentamente porque a pessoa tava mascarada, continua sendo uma violência policial, continua sendo uma opressão do Estado, que não tem direito de fazer isso” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 462–470).

<sup>62</sup>The order of events was also something actors accused traditional media of distorting, assuring most of the times police attacked protesters first, unlike traditional media reports implied (NR1, 12 January 2015, 405–411; SP3, 8 January 2016, 277–279).

a stone and one [wounded] protester. So, you can play with these things. We had various situations like that.” (NG2, 23 December 2014, 280–285)<sup>63</sup>

Thus, through image selection and, more broadly, editing the material newsgathering practices on the ground generated, actors sedimented their approach to police violence and direct action through this practice, publishing accordingly to their focusing practices and informed by their convictions on both issues. Given the prominent role these issues played in coverage of the protests in Brazil at the time, I decided they deserved an own category, as actors’ political convictions on the matter were indissociable from their editing practices for this kind of content. Based on these convictions, they acknowledged their coverage was not neutral and that they clearly took protesters’ side, editing the content to transmit this message to the public.

Despite their criticism of objectivity, actors did not dispute the notion of truth and journalism’s obligation towards it. They simply recognized truth as complex and permeated by multiple perspectives. In a conflict situation such as a demonstration, however, false information and outright hoaxes inevitably also circulate. In order to avoid publishing falsehoods, alternative journalists also employed practices of verification.

### **Practices of Verification**

Actors carried out various practices with the aim of verifying information before publication. One of the guarantees that a piece of information was true was the reporters’ own witnessing of events as they happened on the ground. In this sense, witnessing can be defined as the “bodily presence at an event” (Rentschler, 2009, p. 166)<sup>64</sup> and relays credibility to a journalist’s account. Although witnessing an event is also an important element of how traditional journalists build their credibility, commercial pressures often force them to rely on third parties’ accounts, sometimes reporting on events without leaving the newsroom. The alternative journalists I interviewed reacted to this trend by going back to reporting from the ground as the primary form of making sure accounts were true:

“We tried to be as close as possible to events. When something was being documented, it was usually one of us who was there doing that. So, it was a direct source, you know? (...) We did not need to resort much to indirect sources because we were always close to the action, so it was always one of our people documenting it, [or] someone who was a victim of violence telling us about that. (...) So, we did not have much trouble checking sources because we were always very close to

<sup>63</sup>“Num vídeo de dois minutos você pode botar muito mais imagens da polícia atirando do que da galera jogando pedra, por exemplo, fazer o contrário do que as grandes televisões fazem, que é colocar mais gente jogando pedra do que a polícia ou então tem 300 manifestantes feridos, mas eles botam ‘feridos de ambos os lados’ e mostram um policial que levou uma pedrada e tal e um manifestante [ferido]. Então, jogar com essas coisas. A gente teve várias situações do tipo” (NG2, 23 December 2014, 280–285).

<sup>64</sup>There are other conceptualizations that also involve audiences’ interaction with real-time formats such as livestreams as a form of immersive and live “distant witnessing”, which does not require physical presence on the ground. This is an emerging notion especially among authors focusing on witnessing in the field of activism (e.g. Gregory, 2015).

the action, it wasn't like calling from the newsroom to ask what was going on. The newsroom was at the street!" (NR4, 15 December 2015, 574–585)<sup>65</sup>

Through their specific coverage focus, actors could direct their resources and attention entirely to protests and other related events, unlike most journalists working at traditional newsrooms divided by broader issues, such as economy or politics, who needed to cover a wider array of stories in a shorter period of time, which made being physically present in all covered stories impossible. The fact they had seen events unroll with their own eyes gave actors more certainty in writing down their experiences. Even when actors were not physically present themselves, accounts from other members of the wider network complemented the final reporting, as this member of *Na Rua* describes the process of live-blogging for their Facebook page from their improvised headquarters close to the protests:

"As far as I can remember, I think we received information from people from *Na Rua* who called us [from the protests], sent us messages, told us what was going on. Sometimes there were collaborations with the people from *Nigéria* that were covering as well. (...) But I think it was always one of us who sent information, and [we were] always thinking: 'oh, but I think for more sensitive information, such as the number of people [arrested], we'll try to check with the police, before we release it'. We had this caution during reporting. Although it was a fast thing and people were expecting information [in real time], it was still possible to be careful." (NR8, 6 January 2016, 102–112)<sup>66</sup>

Practices around division of tasks, thus, played a central role in these various layers of coverage: while members of the group reporting on the ground assured the veracity of their reporting through their eyewitness accounts, interviews with direct victims of aggressions, videos and pictures<sup>67</sup>, other members in charge of editing the content into coherent pieces performed editing practices before publishing it, crossing various testimonies from these trusted sources — a classic journalistic practice of verification — and assessing the need for further verification of

<sup>65</sup> "A gente tentava se colocar o mais próximo possível dos acontecimentos. Geralmente, quando se documentava algo, era sempre alguém nosso que estava lá documentando. Então, era a fonte direta, entendeu? (...) Então, a gente não precisou recorrer muito a fontes indiretas porque a gente sempre estava próximo do acontecimento, então era sempre alguém nosso documentando, alguém que sofreu uma violência mesmo relatando a violência. (...) Então, a gente não teve muito problema de checar a fonte porque a gente sempre esteve muito próximo aos acontecimentos, não era uma coisa de você ligar da redação e perguntar o que estava acontecendo. A redação era na rua!" (NR4, 15 December 2015, 574–585).

<sup>66</sup> "Até onde eu me lembro, acho que a gente sempre recebia informações das pessoas do *Na Rua* que ligavam, mandavam mensagens, enfim, falando as coisas que estavam acontecendo. Às vezes tinham colaborações do pessoal que tava cobrindo pelo *Nigéria* também. (...) Mas eu acho que era sempre gente da gente que mandava as informações e pensando sempre: 'ah, eu acho que sempre que tinha uma informação que era mais delicada, tipo número de pessoas, vamos tentar confirmar com alguém aqui da polícia e tal, antes de soltar', ter esse cuidado com a apuração. Apesar de ter sido uma coisa rápida, em que as pessoas tavam na expectativa pela informação [em tempo real], dava pra ter um cuidado" (NR8, 6 January 2016, 102–112).

<sup>67</sup> Although not mentioned in both quotes, videos and pictures were also central pieces to reinforce actors' credibility. See, for example, the discussion on *Na Rua's* emphasis on video evidence of human rights abuses in section 6.1.2.

sensitive information. A classic example of sensitive information in the coverage of protests was the number of arrests. To verify those, actors performed practices of double-checking with sources external to their network, for example the police.

Particularly in the case of *Na Rua*, which encouraged their audience to get in touch with information on human rights abuses or arrests witnessed during the protests, a follow-up with the authorities on this kind of information was necessary. Due to the distant relationship between alternative journalists and the police, a simple phone call was often not enough. This was solved by the division of tasks between lawyers and journalists at *Na Rua*, in which allied lawyers went to police stations to follow up on arrests and passed on information to journalists. Moreover, the timing for publishing a piece of information was also an essential dimension in practices of verification:

“We didn’t post anything before being sure, without having at least another source of information to back something up. For example, one day someone called me (...): ‘hey, they [the police] just arrested 30 people because someone tagged a police car [with graffiti].’ And I [said]: ‘ok, where was that?’ ‘It was near Castelão [stadium], at a restaurant, but it seems they’re already on a bus headed to 34th DP [police district]’. Then I thought: ‘No, there’s no way I can post this now, I don’t know if that’s true. I’m going to 34th DP.’ Then another person called, and another and another... (...) We posted something before we got to 34th DP, saying we were on our way there to check the information out and see whether it was true or not. Because there were too many people saying the same thing. We went there and, indeed, it was true [and we published]: ‘We got to 34th DP and a bus has just come in, with 33 protesters inside, and a tagged police car.’ We did try to follow up as much as we could. In this case, for example, there was too much information coming in at the same time, confirming that. We did not see it happen, but there were just too many people calling.” (NR5, 27 December 2014, 372–387)<sup>68</sup>

The case the actor describes was recalled by various members of the group during expert interviews, probably because it diverged from their usual practices of verification, which relied on witnessing events themselves. The high number of arrests after an isolated, seemingly trivial incident made actors a bit skeptical when the first tips started coming in from witnesses in their audience. However, as the tips increased dramatically in the short period of time needed to get

<sup>68</sup>“Assim, a gente não postava sem ter certeza daquilo, sem ter, pelo menos, outra informação que casasse com aquilo. Por exemplo, determinado dia ligaram pra mim(...): ‘ei, acabaram de prender 30 pessoas porque uma viatura foi pichada’. E eu: ‘tá, onde foi isso?’ ‘Foi aqui perto do Castelão, numa churrascaria, mas parece que eles já tão no ônibus, indo pro 34o DP’. Aí, eu [pensei:] ‘Não, não tenho como postar isso agora, eu não sei se é verdade. Eu vou pro 34o DP’. Aí, outra pessoa ligou e outra e outra... (...) A gente postou alguma coisa antes de eu chegar no 34o DP, dizendo que a gente tava com essa denúncia de que 30 pessoas tinham sido presas devido à pichação de uma viatura, então a gente tava se encaminhando pro 34o DP pra averiguar isso, se era verdade ou não. Porque foi muita gente falando a mesma coisa. A gente foi e, de fato, era verdade: ‘Chegamos no 34o DP e acabou de chegar um ônibus, com 33 manifestantes dentro, e uma viatura pichada’. De fato, a gente tentava acompanhar ao máximo. Nesse caso, por exemplo, foi muita informação chegando ao mesmo tempo, confirmando aquilo. A gente não viu, mas foi muita gente ligando”(NR5, 27 December 2014, 372–387).

to the police station and verify on site, they made an exception and published an update on their Facebook page, keeping the possibility of correction in case the incident proved to be a hoax. Getting to the station, NR5 saw the elements described by witnesses (the bus full of protesters, the tagged police car) with her own eyes, thus confirming the reports and staying on the ground, in order to send further updates.

The practice of double-checking by calling and, more often, going to police stations represents a form of directly witnessing events and, thus corroborating their veracity even when actors engaged in the coverage could not witness the arrests taking place, only their aftermath at the police station. Thus, actors' practices of verification added a layer of embodied witnessing to other typical journalistic practices of verification, based on crossing information from different sources and ranking sources through credibility (in this case, partners from social movements and other alternative media groups were at the top). The alternative journalists I interviewed performed these practices as well, but the ultimate verification seemed to be witnessing events, seeing them with their own eyes. Witnessing also permeated the next category, which describes how actors performed practices to deal with sensitive content encountered during their reporting on the ground.

### **Ensuring Anonymity**

As categories such as positioned allegiance and practices against surveillance show, actors were acutely aware of the consequences of their activities should they not take some precautions. With regards to the content produced, one of the main rules most of them seemed to follow was preserving the identities of protesters whenever possible, especially of those performing direct action, which could be prosecuted as a crime should the police have enough evidence available. In order to avoid the use of their pictures and videos in police investigations, actors adopted practices around ensuring the anonymity of the protagonists of their content. These practices already permeated the coverage on the ground itself (photographing or filming only masked protesters or people whose faces were otherwise not visible), but they were particularly important in the phases of content selection and post-production editions that happened before publication.

“Because that happened a lot in all demonstrations: I tried to take pictures in such a way that you could not see protesters' identities, as that could cause them trouble. (...) So, we wanted to preserve protesters' identities as best as we could, especially when they were doing something [illegal]... There was a picture I took that looked great, but the guy was building a barricade and it was a frontal picture. We tried really hard to alter the contrast, to obscure his face, so that we did not cause him trouble, but we couldn't. You could still recognize him. We didn't even use the picture.” (NR7, 26 December 2015, 266–274)<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup>“Porque rolava muito isso em todas as manifestações: eu tentava tirar fotos de um modo que não desse pra ver a identidade dos manifestantes porque podia dar problema. (...) Então, a gente queria resguardar ao máximo a identidade dos manifestantes, sobretudo quando eles estavam fazendo alguma coisa [ilegal]... Teve uma fotografia que eu tirei que foi bem legal, mas o cara tava construindo uma barricada e a foto é de

Despite the aesthetic or even informational value, actors often chose not to publish a picture or video that could aid prosecution or cause other kinds of trouble to the protagonists, as in this case. In addition, the actor describes some of the anonymizing edits the group usually employed in order to publish the content retrospectively, when actors on the ground could not perform practices to ensure anonymity during production itself. The reasons for this could be multiple: the position on the ground did not favor shots that excluded identifying elements (for example, the photographer was facing protesters) or actors were shooting pictures under adverse conditions and relying on posterior edition or image selection. Another element was lack of experience, as in the case involving a teenager who gave an interview to *Na Rua* concerning grave police abuse he had suffered.

“We shot the film ourselves, because we were there right after this violence was committed. (...) So, we recorded his testimony, asked him what had happened, who had been responsible for that. And he told us that police officers had told a group of boys that they would only be released [from police custody] if they beat this boy up. We recorded his testimony, he was wounded, bleeding. The problem was that we only had the raw footage. We started thinking about what we could do, so that neither his voice nor his face could be identified. (...) In this particular case, we ended up releasing the video after altering his voice and the image, pixelating it, so you couldn’t make out his face. But we ended up not pressing charges because his family was afraid of retaliations. (...) Another element was also lack of experience in dealing with situations like that. (...) So, at the moment we recorded his testimony, we did it the wrong way. Today, if we had to do something like that, we would record him with his back turned to us; back then we did it with him facing the camera, his features were visible. The questions we asked were also maybe not the best ones, maybe they also identified him too much. So, there’s a whole protocol we did not follow at the time, very specific and difficult matters we did not exactly know how to deal with. We ended up doing it the way we could, the way we knew. (...) In this case, it was not the best way, but it worked out in the end. (...) We thought it was better to think about the best solution, so as not to hurt the boy, and release the video later, one week after the violence had happened.” (NR4, 15 December 2015, 458–497)<sup>70</sup>

frente. A gente tentou ao máximo mexer na iluminação, deixar o rosto bem escuro, pra não dar problema, mas não deu. Ainda dava pra identificar. A gente nem usou” (NR7, 26 December 2015, 266–274).

<sup>70</sup>“O material foi feito pela gente, a gente gravou porque estava lá no momento posterior à violência cometida. (...) Então, a gente pegou o depoimento dele, perguntou o que tinha acontecido, quem tinha sido responsável por aquilo. E ele foi dizendo, que a polícia disse que só soltaria um grupo de meninos se eles batessem no menino. A gente pegou esse depoimento desse jovem, que estava todo machucado, ensanguentado. Só que a gente só tinha o material cru, bruto. A gente pensou como faria pra que nem a voz nem a imagem dele fossem identificadas. (...) Nesse caso específico, a gente acabou fazendo a matéria, soltou o vídeo – mexendo na voz e na imagem do menino, tudo pixelado, não dá pra ver a cara dele. Mas a gente acabou não encaminhando a denúncia porque a família dele ficou com medo de retalições. (...) Também teve um pouco de inexperiência em lidar com situações como essa. (...) Então, até na hora de colher o depoimento, a gente fez isso de uma forma muito errada. Hoje, se a gente fosse fazer isso, a gente teria que colher o depoimento do menino de costas pra gente; a gente pegou o depoimento com ele de

This case shows how complex practices for ensuring anonymity might be. The protocol NR4 refers to is similar to some of the practices the US NGO Witness recommends for actors engaged in videoadvocacy, in order to be able to circulate testimonies as evidences of human rights abuses without putting victims at risk (Witness, n.d.-a, n.d.-c, n.d.-b). Both members from *Nigéria* and Urucum knew and occasionally collaborated with Witness. As NR4 acknowledges, actors did not possess the necessary expertise in this case, so they had to find other ways of addressing the video's shortcomings and preserve the victim's identity. Reaching out to his family and including them in the deliberation process around how to use the footage and which other steps to take could be seen as part of actors' counter sourcing practices, in which they regarded sources as partners. Editing the video so as to preserve the youth's identity and publishing it only after reaching a consensus inside the group and with other actors involved were content editing practices which sought to remedy the mistakes committed during recording. Actors highlight that, had the edits to the video not been sufficient to safeguard the victim's identity, they would not have published the video (NR2, 15 January 2015, 139–146).

In short, content editing practices to ensure anonymity encompassed decisions around whether to publish something at all, with threats to protagonists' safety being a decisive criterion against publishing. They also involved editing the raw material through changes in image contrast, pixelation, blurring someone's features, voice distortion and other technical means of excluding recognizable traits; and waiting to publish something only after weighing its consequences for those directly affected, thus eventually slowing down the pace of coverage in favor of victims' well-being<sup>71</sup>.

### Wording Practices

This category describes actors' practices to counter traditional media's coverage through language, for example employing terms different than the ones traditional media outlets used, which they perceived to be stigmatizing and criminalizing towards protesters, as this member of *Na Rua* describes with regards to her collective's wording practices:

“(...) we took care not to criminalize through words, not to call someone a ‘minor’, using terms [traditional] media uses pejoratively. So, when we talked about teenagers, we were always careful and talked about ‘minors in conflict with the law’, never ‘young offenders’. [We did not talk of] an occupation as an ‘invasion’, of a protester as a ‘vandal’, as someone violent. We do not believe in this discourse that it is violent to break a bus stop, you know? So, it's different kinds of violence

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frente pra gente, o rosto dele visível. As perguntas talvez não foram as melhores, talvez identificassem muito ele. Então, tem todo um protocolo de trabalho que a gente não tinha domínio na época e questões muito particulares e difíceis de lidar, a gente não sabia exatamente como fazer e fazia do jeito que dava, como sabia.(...) Nesse caso, não foi o melhor jeito, mas acabou que deu certo. (...) A gente achou melhor pensar qual a melhor solução pra não prejudicar o menino e soltou [o vídeo] depois, com uma semana de distância pra violência”(NR4, 15 December 2015, 458–497).

<sup>71</sup>More recently, delayed publication has become a consolidated practice among those filming police violence in the US, with eyewitnesses releasing the footage only after police has published its official statement on the case, as eyewitness videos may reveal inconsistencies in the official version (Kaurin, 2018).



and we always treated them with the most appropriate language possible for what we believe in and defend.” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 501–508)<sup>72</sup>

The terms the actor mentions in this passage have, in part, a long history in Brazilian Portuguese and are connected to specific uses and contexts. A “young offender”, for example, is applied to poor youth, often Black or homeless, who commit petty crimes. It is traditionally not used to describe an underage middle-class youth caught committing a misdemeanor. So, it carries elements of class and race. “Invasion” emphasizes the act of trespassing, not of protest through occupation, for example in the case of sit-ins in government buildings or land occupation. Thus, actors believed employing terms with a discursive trajectory of criminalization contradicted their goal of countering a coverage they perceived as tending too much towards the protest paradigm. Adopting more neutral or even positive terms was a strategy to counter it, something social movements around the world also often do. The quote also shows a connection between wording practices and actors’ own political stance on themes such as direct action as a reason for not employing criminalizing language, suggesting a connection with the practices of contextualization of direct action.

In the particular case of the 2013 and 2014 protests in Brazil, there was one word that ascended into public discourse through the coverage of the protests in 2013 and 2014, in order to describe those performing direct action or the black bloc tactics: “vandals”. As I previously described in section 2.4, traditional media widely adopted this term, in order to reinforce their representation of protests that started out peacefully only to be disrupted by a “vandal minority” that attacked the police and private property, provoking the authorities into using force. Actors adopted two strategies towards this term: they either preferred to use “direct action” where traditional media spoke of “vandalism” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 227–233) or use the term “vandalism” in a positive manner, in an attempt to subvert its meaning:

“I find the concept of counterculture interesting, this thing about you capturing something people have been using, surfing that wave, using it with another purpose. (...) We were saturated by that at the time, everybody was talking about it [vandalism]. I think we then said: ‘you know what, let’s use this damn thing to say the contrary, let’s overtake this, the term vandalism is in.’” (NG4, 23 December 2015, 276–280)<sup>73</sup>

Through appropriation, actors tried to gain agency over a term being used to stigmatize a group. There are various cases of specific movements doing the same in different countries and

<sup>72</sup>“(…) a gente tem que ter o cuidado de não criminalizar na palavra, de não chamar alguém de “menor”, usando termos que a mídia usa pra ser pejorativa. Então, quando a gente tava falando de adolescentes, a gente sempre teve a preocupação de falar de “menores em conflito com a lei”, nunca do “menor infrator”. De uma “invasão” numa ocupação, de um manifestante como vândalo, como violento. Sendo que a gente não acredita nessa violência em que se prega que violento é quebrar um ponto de ônibus, sabe? Então, são violências diferentes e sempre se tratou tudo na linguagem mais condizente possível com o que nós acreditamos e defendemos”(NR1, 18 December 2015, 501–508).

<sup>73</sup>“Eu acho que o conceito da contracultura é interessante, você pegar uma coisa que os caras tão usando, surfar nessa onda, usar com outro propósito. (...) A gente tava impregnado na época, tava sendo muito falado isso. E eu acho que a gente [disse]: ‘ah, velho, vamos usar essa porra aí pra falar o contrário, vamos nos apropriar disso aí, o termo vandalismo tá em alta’”(NG4, 23 December 2015, 276–280).

languages<sup>74</sup>. This can have an empowering effect, breaking the taboo around a certain term and allowing affected groups to make political articulations by gathering around it. Here, however, the initiative seemed to come from alternative journalists themselves, not directly from the movements they were covering. Protesters' positive reception to *Nigéria's* documentary *Vandalism* (described in counter sourcing practices' dimension access through commitment) can be interpreted as so-called vandals' acceptance of this strategy. In this stance, actors' attempt to proactively aid the movement by proposing a new communication strategy was received favorably. However, despite their general proximity to protesters and the movements they covered, there were also conflicts between some groups and the alternative journalists I interviewed, especially when their aims did differ, as practices of strategic omission show.

### Strategic Omission

Although their counter sourcing practices privileged protesters and social movements' perspectives, actors sometimes disagreed with these groups on what the aims of their coverage should be<sup>75</sup>. Sometimes, actors' perception was that members of the movements saw alternative journalists as their public relations branch and tried to task them with doing movements' communication, which actors rejected as not being their focus nor their role (NR5, 27 December 2014, 150–161)<sup>76</sup>.

Another reason was, in part, the heterogeneity of protest movements, around which actors with various motivations converged, making internal conflicts almost inevitable. The case involving a dispute between youth performing the black bloc tactics and striking construction workers exemplifies how alternative journalists sometimes felt they needed to disappoint at least one side, in order to fulfill their editorial aims:

“It was a statement that some anarchists sent us when they got kicked out of a protest. It was a protest organized by the construction workers' unions. They don't want anyone performing direct action there, there's a whole history to it and they prefer no direct action. (...) Then, folks wrote this statement, criticizing that stance, and sent it to us. (...) So, maybe that was the only text we decided not to publish for political reasons, as we did not want to fuel this fight, we didn't think it could be an interesting political debate. We covered many other things organized by the anarchists, but we didn't publish this statement.” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 329–339)<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup>In Germany, the gay movements' appropriation of the term “schwul”, which was previously a homophobic slur, is one such example.

<sup>75</sup>This practice could be seen as the journalists' perspective to what Mattoni (2012, p. 20) conceptualizes as relational media practices, i.e. activists' experiences with media representatives and how activists reflect on it.

<sup>76</sup>While *Nigéria* did offer communication consultancy to social movements and NGOs, this was kept separate from their coverage of the protests that took place in 2013 and 2014, as this coverage was seen as a voluntary project the group carried out.

<sup>77</sup>“Foi essa nota que eles mandaram quando o pessoal anarquista foi expulso de um ato. E foi um ato puxado pelos sindicatos, da construção civil. Eles não querem que tenha ação direta lá. Enfim, tem todo um histórico e eles preferem que não tenha ação direta. (...) Aí, o pessoal escreveu uma nota, criticando essa

In addition to reports of human rights abuses and arrests, *Na Rua* often received other kinds of content through their Facebook account, such as institutional or collective statements from members of the public and social movements. Much like practices of verification helped actors decide what to publish in cases of reports of violence and arrests, practices of strategic emission guided their decisions on what kind of content to leave out among the statements and requests from social movements they received. Reasons for not publishing certain types of content could be to avoid exposing fractures within the left or disempowering movements by exposing internal conflicts, as well as to avoid criminalizing movements by exposing illegal activities. Thus, actors performed, in a way, the role of gatekeepers, barring content from their channels if they considered this could hurt movements' aims, even in cases when this content came from parts of the movements themselves.

Although actors regarded social movements and protesters as partners, some power imbalance remained, as alternative journalists were still the ones controlling their media collectives' channels, which often had a broader reach than social movements' own pages. However, it seems this gatekeeping capacity was not employed often, since actors could only recall this specific case involving anarchists' critical statement against construction workers' decision to ban them from a union demonstration. A member of *Nigéria*, having published the statement on their page, mentions some hypothetical examples of content they would not publish due to its potential damage to the broader movement:

“Something like someone writing a sexist phrase on a wall, you know? I would not publish it. That’s a clown among a bunch of other people. Or, I don’t know, a fire arm. I wouldn’t show it. Alcohol, I wouldn’t show lots of alcohol. I wouldn’t show marijuana. I already did, when it was something that could be naturalized, but it’s hard, they’re [the movements] are at the limit, every little thing can screw everything up. And we’re very close to them. When you’re close to something, you know some internal things that you won’t show. What for? It’s not our role, you know? Our role is to empower them, not to disempower.” (NG1, 8 January 2016, 393–398)<sup>78</sup>

The symbiotic character of counter sourcing practices and the access alternative journalists acquired through commitment to social movement sources could also be a trade-off, with actors choosing to withhold information from the public if they considered it to be damaging to their sources' political aims or their very existence, as the political climate has become increasingly

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postura, e mandou pra gente. (...) Então, talvez esse tenha sido o único [texto] que a gente tenha decidido não publicar por questões mesmo políticas, de não querer alimentar uma briga que não era interessante pra gente, como construção de debate político mesmo. Tanto é que a gente cobriu outras coisas que eram puxadas pela galera anarquista, mas não publicou essa nota” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 329–339).

<sup>78</sup>“Alguma coisa, sei lá, um cara pichar uma frase machista, entendeu? Eu não publicaria. Isso é um palhaço entre um monte de gente. Ou, sei lá, arma. Eu não mostraria. Bebida, muita bebida, eu não mostraria. Maconha, eu não mostraria. Já mostrei, mas quando é uma coisa que vai ser naturalizada, mas não dá, né, eles tão muito num limite que qualquer besteirinha caga tudo. E a gente tá muito perto deles. Quando você tá perto de alguma coisa, você sabe de coisas das organizações, você não vai mostrar. Pra quê? Não é a nossa função, né? A nossa função é empoderar, não é desempoderar” (NG1, 8 January 2016, 393–398).

hostile to social movements in Brazil. Therefore, consequences to sources alternative journalists felt close to played the role of an additional news value actors applied to their publishing decisions<sup>79</sup>. Strategic omission practices enacted links between this meaning element, the competence element of editing skills and the material element constituted by information and raw footage.

While actors' protective stance towards social movements could cause conflicts, as in the case between *Na Rua* and anarchist groups, it often also reinforced the bonds of trust between these alternative journalists and their social movements sources, with the expectation that these sources would prioritize the actors I interviewed as their go-to reporters in other situations, as newsgathering practices such as interviews on the ground or positioned allegiance show.

In addition to deciding what to publish at all, actors also had to define how they would present their coverage. Presentation practices, which entailed the adaptation and the creation of formats, describe how this played out.

### **Presentation Practices**

Deciding which formats are most fitting for publishing information gathered on the ground was an important part of content editing practices. While I detail exactly what formats actors employed in chapter 7 and analyze specific examples of these formats in chapter 8, I focus here on formats as part content editing practices, as formats were the basic structures actors applied to their presentation of gathered information.

Actors' presentation practices were permeated by how they related to journalistic conventions. Due to their professional or educational background, actors brought to the enactment of their presentation practices the competence element of journalistic training. In choosing formats in the context of the alternative coverage of protests, in which they linked this competence element to the meaning of countering traditional media's representation — and not, as usual, to the objectivity standard —, actors were confronted with the need to subvert their learned journalistic routines. This happened, for example, as they realized journalistic language's shortcomings for reporting on the protests:

“There's not one given text format [for an alternative coverage of the protests], so we started experimenting and thinking about another language, in order to do the coverage. For example, I'd write with the language from the newspaper on Facebook and it didn't work, you know? It turned out really bad.(...) I tested something more personal, more experimental. But the standardizing power of the journalistic language is very strong. This is something you really start seeing, how it controls your fingers, the jargons, the clichés, the ways you build a text and all that. But we had to rethink narrative formats, like this thing with the picture and the text (... ) It

<sup>79</sup>That is not necessarily the case for all alternative journalists, however, as Tim Pool exemplifies. The alternative journalist who became prominent through his coverage of the Occupy Wall Street camp in Zuccotti Park got heavily criticized by some groups inside the movement especially with regards to how he approached protesters carrying out illegal activities. Pool argued that he wanted to show the totality of the protest, not just what suited the movement (Russell, 2016, p. 131).

was a format to tell people's stories, a portrait and one personal story [combined]."  
(NG2, 23 December 2014, 306–315)<sup>80</sup>

As this passage shows, there was a tension between the journalistic practices actors had picked up and internalized as part of their professional activity in traditional media outlets or their formal education at Journalism bachelor programs and the new challenges an alternative coverage posed, such as content distribution through online channels — particularly social media — dissociated from a major media outlet and the nature of the content itself, which actors sensed required a more personal approach than standardized journalistic language, with its jargons and structuring elements such as particular connective sentences. One of the most popular formats, for both groups, was the combination of a picture and a short text for portraying a particular protester, posted on collectives' Facebook pages. This is the format the actor previously quoted refers to as having been particularly successful.

Another aspect was how actors sought to subvert technical skills acquired during their trajectories in media, as one of the widest efforts involving both members of *Na Rua* and *Nigéria* in 2014, in addition to actors from other groups, shows. In what could be seen as an appropriation of a known television format, the talk show, actors produced live-streamed debate programs as a forum for internal discussions among allied social movements and actors of various currents on the left spectrum, instead of as a discussion among diametrically opposing sides (for example, guests from the right and from the left):

“It didn't have the reach a TV show would, but we evolved a lot in terms of technique, we managed to use two cameras, the sound was great, coming from a mike. (...) At the same time, it was a lot of work, because you had to think about the content, invite the guests, gather a team around, set up and then dismantle the whole scenario. (...) So, it was really important. You would hardly find a show that discussed, with the quality we think the debates had, [issues like] party organization and anarchism, you know? Or a discussion about the demonstrations. So, we managed to transmit that content and copy TV a bit, but in a more creative way.” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 117–138)<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup>“Não tem aquele formato do texto [definido para cobrir as manifestações], então a gente começou a tentar saber como era fazer uma cobertura e a gente teve de pensar uma outra linguagem. Por exemplo, eu jogava a linguagem do jornal no Facebook e não dava certo, tá entendendo? Ficava um negócio ruim mesmo. (...) Eu testei algo mais pessoal, algo mais experimental no texto. Só que o poder padronizador da linguagem jornalística é muito forte. Isso, de fato, é algo que você vai vendo que começa a controlar seus dedos, porque os chavões, os clichês, a forma de construir o texto e tudo o mais. E eu senti muita dificuldade em quebrar essa linguagem, não consegui, na verdade. Mas a gente teve de começar a repensar formatos narrativos, essa história, por exemplo, da foto com o texto(...) Era essa história de contar histórias de pessoas mesmo, um retrato, uma história da pessoa”(NG2, 23 December 2014, 306–315).

<sup>81</sup>“Não teve o alcance que teria um programa na TV, mas a gente evoluiu legal na técnica, a gente tava conseguindo usar duas câmeras, o som muito bom, de microfone. (...) E, ao mesmo tempo, dá muito trabalho, porque você pensar o conteúdo, chamar convidados, ter uma equipe, preparar e depois despreparar tudo naquele local (...) Então, foi bem importante. Dificilmente a gente veria um programa que debateria, com a qualidade que a gente achou que os debates tiveram, organização partidária e anarquismo. É difícil, né? Ou então falar sobre manifestações. Então, a gente conseguiu levar um conteúdo. Imitar um pouco a TV e, ao mesmo tempo, de uma forma mais criativa”(NG3, 22 December 2015, 117–138).

Here, television's technical conventions were embraced and adapted to alternative journalism's issues, in practices that linked the meaning element of discussing matters internal to the movement with the competence element of technical know-how on how to produce an audiovisual format and the material element of audiovisual equipment such as a semi-professional camera or microphones.

While both *Nigéria* and *Na Rua* described a subversion of journalistic conventions as part of their presentation practices, there were also some differences between these collectives<sup>82</sup>. An important one was that *Na Rua* also possessed an own website while *Nigéria* did not<sup>83</sup>. As a result, some of the formats *Na Rua* employed seemed to be connected to the division its members made between content produced for their website and content for their Facebook page. In-depth articles and personal accounts went to the website and were often written after the protests were over, while liveblogs on the protests were posted only on *Na Rua*'s Facebook page:

“The main difference is that, on Facebook, it was a real-time thing. We'd go out to the protests and people [following the page] knew we would be there. The exact time when things happened was part of the post. We posted a picture, usually taken and posted with the cellphone, and added the time: '3:30 pm: protester gets arrested after throwing a stone at a window. The police officer acted like this or that. The protester was sent to 34th police district etc.'” (NR5, 27 December 2014, 317–322)<sup>84</sup>

*Na Rua* sought to fulfill the expectation towards its Facebook account by emphasizing the fast pace of their coverage with elements such as the exact time some events happened. However, liveblogs did not happen without fact-checking and other editing practices. And, as practices of division of tasks among members of the group show, it was unusual for actors on the ground to publish directly on the page. They often sent their pictures and pieces of information to other actors sitting at the HQ, responsible for putting everything together into coherent posts. Thus, choosing a format to publish required a series of other practices be performed first.

A counterpoint to the collective's Facebook page and its fast pace were the articles reserved for publication on *Na Rua*'s website, which interview partners described as opinion articles, interviews or longer, in-depth stories. Some actors made a clear division between the real-time coverage on Facebook and pieces posted on the website, highlighting the former's character as hard news and the latter as a more editorialized or interpretative space (NR2, 15 January 2015, 230–239). *Na Rua*'s website, thus, did not just offer a place for longer texts that could not be

<sup>82</sup>I center on *Nigéria* and *Na Rua*'s production, as they provided the channels for publicizing more widely the material solo producers made to them. By sharing their pictures with both groups, solo producers gave them the freedom to decide how to use their individual pieces as part of a broader coverage. Thus, the work of solo producers was integrated into the practices described here.

<sup>83</sup>*Nigéria* only launched their own website after the period of this research.

<sup>84</sup>“A principal diferença é que, no Facebook, era o lance em tempo real. A gente saía pras manifestações, e as pessoas sabiam que a gente tava lá. Tanto é que tinha o horário de as coisas acontecerem. A gente colocava uma foto, que geralmente a gente tirava do celular mesmo e postava pelo celular, e colocava o horário: '15:30: manifestante é preso por policial após depredação de janela. O policial agiu de tal maneira. Foi encaminhado ao 34o Distrito Policial blábláblá'” (NR5, 27 December 2014, 317–322).

produced in real time, but also contained more personal takes on the protests, showcasing individuals' subjective experiences alongside longer, investigative or interpretative pieces.

All these articles' links were posted on Facebook, in an attempt to direct followers of the live coverage to the content produced at a slower pace after or in-between protests. This raises the question as to why actors did not simply publish everything directly on Facebook, instead of linking to content published on the website. Actors did not explicitly formulate reasons for this, understanding the division between real-time, hard news coverage and in-depth, slower paced pieces as defined by their places of publication, much like the difference traditionally made between a daily newspaper and a weekly magazine. Based on how they described it, however, I venture my own guess: Facebook and *Na Rua*'s website archived content in different ways, so actors might have felt their social media account was more appropriate for ephemeral coverage which was difficult to recover once it was replaced by newer posts on the collective's Facebook wall while the website offered a more accessible – even searchable – content archive, for example through a tagging system. It may be that they considered the content on the website would be relevant for a longer period of time due to its more in-depth, interpretative nature and, thus, should be easier to find. This aspect is relevant to the last category in my model, i.e. distribution channels, but before I detail it, there is one more category concerning content editing practices that I would like to present. Parallel to presentation practices, actors also developed their own visual practices, which were closely connected to presentation practices, but also to other practices carried out in previous steps of production.

### **Visual Practices**

This category refers to practices of content edition and selection for publication according to collectives' visual aims. Visual aims were not homogeneous inside a group, but were deeply connected to other factors in the coverage, such as the format chosen to present certain kinds of information. For *Na Rua*, an important point was prioritizing clear images for the liveblog coverage, in which the public could discern what was happening in the picture accompanying the text, given conditions on the ground to send pictures on the cellphone were not optimal. In addition, there was a refusal to sensationalize violence:

“If they [pictures] had a good quality, that was kind of our criterion [to publish them]. If they were in accordance with the content we were publishing. We didn't publish anything violent. (...) but we showed pictures of people that had been hurt by rubber bullets, because we thought it was important to circulate those images, but nothing of people bleeding on the ground.” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 341–349)<sup>85</sup>

In addition to liveblogs' particular demands, *Na Rua*'s focusing practices also guided their image selection, as actors chose images that revealed human rights abuses yet did not present graphic elements. The refusal to show strong images of blood and graphic violence was likely

<sup>85</sup>“Se elas [as fotos] estivessem numa qualidade boa, o critério era meio que esse. Se estivesse de acordo com o conteúdo que a gente estava divulgando. A gente não publicou nada de violência. (...) mas divulgamos fotos de gente machucada com balas de borracha, porque a gente achou importante divulgar essas imagens, mas nada com pessoas com sangue no chão”(NR1, 18 December 2015, 341–349).

grounded on an effort to counter a local phenomenon: police investigation shows on local TV stations. These shows usually report on crimes committed in urban centers, interviewing both victims and apprehended suspects and prioritizing strong images — even dead bodies are filmed and shown to the public without any filtering mechanisms, with the main goal of achieving high rates. Journalism students in Fortaleza usually learn to regard these shows as examples of journalistic malpractice, refusing to reproduce their visual language.

Due to *Nigéria's* strong focus on video, it is through this kind of content that the group's visual practices can be analyzed more easily. Some of their main traits were present both in the short videos they released to show specific moments of the protests and of other events they covered and, in a more complex form, in the documentary *Vandalism*. Actors describe these traits as consisting of raw images, minimal edition, focus on conflict situations, “restless camera” and filming in a way that should make people feel present at the events themselves:

“What mattered the most in that situation, more than the quality of the image, was the story, the narrative, that was the most important thing. For *Vandalism*, for example, the predominant language was that of a shaky camera, it was a tense camera. (...) All those things were part of the movie's language, of a person recording at the heart of the action. And that became the language, much more than a clean camera, on a tripod, that wouldn't do it there. Because you were running, screaming, people were crying, bombs were exploding.” (NG4, 23 December 2015, 138–144)<sup>86</sup>

Much like *Na Rua's* emphasis on images' good quality for their liveblogs, *Nigéria's* visual practices also interacted with conditions on the ground. However, *Nigéria* members reacted to conditions on the ground by establishing other priorities than the technical quality of images captured. They tried to highlight the more atmospheric impressions from the protests in their videos, with long shots of uncommented action, a way of holding the camera that did not hide from the viewer the physical difficulties of filming in that situation. Their focus seemed to lie on storytelling based on a more visceral images, as the example of a short video showing tear gas bombs being thrown at protesters during the June 2013 demonstrations also makes clear<sup>87</sup>:

“This video with the tear gas bombs had a strong aesthetic appeal, it wasn't necessarily informative. But that's it. It was a very weird scene. It's a short video of five minutes, minimally edited, with a brief text, like a lead (...) there's no narration or anything like that, but it has the aesthetic appeal of what was happening that we wanted to share with people.” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 391–395)<sup>88</sup>

<sup>86</sup>“O que importava mais ali, mais do que a qualidade da imagem, é a história, a narrativa, isso é o mais importante. Pro *Com Vandalismo*, por exemplo, a linguagem era da câmera tremida, era da câmera meio tensa. (...) Tudo isso fazia parte da linguagem do filme, que a pessoa que gravava tava no meio da ação. E aquilo virou a linguagem, mais do que ter uma câmera clean, um tripé, isso não serviria ali. Porque era correndo, gritando, pessoas chorando, bomba explodindo”(NG4, 23 December 2015, 138–144).

<sup>87</sup>The video, titled *Chuva de Gás Lacrimogêneo em Fortaleza* was posted by *Nigéria* on 27 June 2013 (Nigéria, 2013).

<sup>88</sup>“Foi esse da bomba de gás lacrimogêneo, por ter um apelo estético forte, não necessariamente informativo. Mas é isso. E foi uma cena que foi muito esquisita mesmo. É um videzinho de cinco minutos, ele é minimamente editado e tem um pequeno texto, tipo um lead (...) não tem nenhuma narração nem nada,



These differences between *Na Rua* and *Nigéria*'s visual practices could be traced back to the formats they used and thus, to collectives' presentation practices. Liveblogs required a higher informative tenor for images due to their brevity and the expectations towards this format of providing real-time coverage of events. Short videos and documentaries such as *Vandalism*, on the other hand, provided *Nigéria* with more freedom to focus on an impressionist approach to the protests, transmitting the embodied experience of coverage on the ground<sup>89</sup>. They supplemented that with their own liveblogs in 2013 and with more in-depth, live-streamed talk-shows in 2014, providing the contextualization their videos often did not explicitly contain. The same can be said of *Na Rua*, which complemented real-time coverage with more interpretative formats on its website, as I described in the previous section. In terms of visual practices, these texts also featured images that did not necessarily have a highly informative content and emphasized, instead, poetic details of the protests, for example<sup>90</sup>. Thus, visual practices also depended on the overall context of production of the alternative coverage, with specific formats requiring specific kinds of visual content and being influenced, in turn, by conditions on the ground or by the channel formats were to be published. The next section covers this last aspect.

### 6.1.6 Distribution Channels

The category distribution channels refer to contextual dimensions concerning how actors circulated their media production. While the creation, selection and adaptation of formats actors conducted as part of their presentation practices played a key role in terms of content editing practices, my analysis shows distribution channels' particular affordances were not as decisive. As is often the case with alternative media today, with internet access increasing worldwide, the alternative journalists I interviewed chose online platforms to disseminate their content: private Facebook profiles, collectives' Facebook pages, video-sharing sites such as YouTube and Vimeo and, in *Na Rua*'s case, Twitter and an own website.

I went into the interviews expecting to hear how each platform's affordances demanded different practices and strategies, but, as the categories I analyzed show, that was not the case. Facebook's central role as the main distribution channel for actors' content can be traced back to its widespread use in Brazil, as this interview partner describes:

“It [the content] reached people it would otherwise not reach, as I have a lot of friends outside revolutionary circles, lots of school friends, family. (...) when my cousin shares a picture I posted, it already reaches a whole other crowd. So, if you open the post and look at the likes, 70% of them come from people I don't know. That is a lot, it's a stream that is forming and really reaches people. Everybody

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mas é o apelo estético do que está acontecendo e a gente queria compartilhar com as pessoas (...)”(NG3, 22 December 2015, 391–395).

<sup>89</sup>At least one member of the group reported feeling saturated of this approach and its focus on conflict situations in 2014 and trying to develop another kind of aesthetics that focused on more poetic details of protests. This attempt generated at least one video: *Lampejos de Resistência*, posted on YouTube on 14 June 2014 (*Nigéria*, 2014b).

<sup>90</sup>Much like formats resulting of presentation practices, I explore visual aspects of the coverage in more detail in the next chapters, as they contain my analysis of collectives' production itself.

checks Facebook nowadays, uses it as a working tool, an information tool, there's no way around it." (SP2, 9 January 2015, 395–401)<sup>91</sup>

As I detailed in section 2.7, Facebook was the most widely used social network in Brazil at the time of my research. And, as in many other protest movements that took place around the world, it also provided one of the main organizing platforms for those calling out demonstrations or sharing content online in Brazil. As is often the case with social media, alternative journalists in Fortaleza basically centered distribution on the most popular platform, where they could reach the most people, entering a trade-off many social movements have to make when using commercial platforms.

Distribution channels played a certain role in practices around division of tasks, as actors decided who would be responsible for updating *Na Rua*'s Facebook fanpage, and in terms of formats, as real-time coverage was reserved for the Facebook page while *Na Rua*'s website showcased more in-depth and opinion pieces. Outside of the scope of research, in 2015, actors did have to adapt to changes on Facebook's algorithm, as the platform started de-prioritizing links to videos posted on YouTube and boosting videos updated directly to Facebook, leading *Nigéria* to prioritize video uploads to Facebook (NG3, 22 December 2015, 180–195)<sup>92</sup>. Even so, actors seemed accepting of such algorithmic changes, adapting to them, in order to achieve a stable reach.

All in all, however, distribution channels per se did not define specific practices, but were rather integrated into practices that had been conceived to make other parts of actors' coverage possible, such as structuring content in specific formats or assigning different tasks inside the group. As some cases in the coverage that I explore in chapter 8 show, particularly *Na Rua* attempted to employ hashtags to make its content on Facebook more visible when publishing some liveblogs, but this was not an overarching pattern in the coverage as a whole. Thus, my model supports Neumayer, Rossi, and Karlsson's (2016, p. 7) observation that platforms are often not at the center of media practices, but rather integrate an intricate context.

Avoiding the focus on single platforms and the usual hype that comes with it, I generated a model that is less centered on technological changes while still taking into consideration distribution channel's role in putting actors' coverage out there for the public to interact with. However, it supports my observation that broader sociopolitical shifts are usually the ones leading to adaptation or creation of media practices in the alternative coverage of protests, not technological changes alone.

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<sup>91</sup>"Chegou em gente a que não chegaria de outra forma, porque, (...) eu tenho muitos amigos fora desse âmbito revolucionário, muito amigo de colégio, família. (...) quando um primo meu compartilha uma foto minha, já pega outra galera. Fulano compartilha a foto do meu primo, já pega outra galera. Então, você entra lá e vê as curtidas, 70% não é conhecido meu, é gente de fora. Então, isso faz muito, cara, é uma corrente que vai se formando e te mostra que tá atingindo mesmo. Todo mundo olha o Facebook hoje em dia, usa ele como ferramenta de trabalho, de informação, não tem pra onde correr, não" (SP2, 9 January 2015, 395–401).

<sup>92</sup>In 2018, it came to light that Facebook employed misleading metrics to measure the amount of views videos got on its platform at least since 2015 (Welch, 2018).

## 6.2 Alternative Coverage of Protests: a Complex of Practices

In the previous sections, I analyzed each individual category that originated from my analysis, revealing the richness of practices actors perform as part of the alternative coverage of protests. Here, I bring all these practices together in a model (6.1) that focuses on the various types of relationship between them. It makes clear that actors perform a series of interconnected practices as part of their alternative coverage of events, fitting Shove, Pantzar, and Watson's (2012) conceptualization of a complex of practices, i.e. practices connected to each other through relationships of "synchronization, proximity or necessary co-existence" (Shove et al., 2012, p. 87). In such complexes, one practice often cannot exist without the practice(s) performed before it, as each practice produces elements the practice that follows builds upon. In the case at hand, the relationships between the individual practices were varied. For example, counter sourcing practices permeated focusing practices through a shared meaning element: the intent to showcase marginalized voices also led to showcasing the topics dear to these voices. Therefore, actors emphasized issues protesters and progressive movements considered important. It is important to highlight that, although most of the practices described here are media practices, some of them, such as protection practices, are not, but rather provide the conditions for the performance of media practices. Thus, I opted to conceptualize the model as a complex of practices, both media and non-media ones.

My analysis of the expert interviews showed that actors perceived traditional media's coverage of the massive protests starting in 2013 to be biased and insufficient. This motivated them to do their own coverage, which sought to differentiate itself from traditional media through counter sourcing practices, which represent the key category in the model I generated through my analysis. Counter sourcing practices were central to the alternative coverage of the protests because actors perceived traditional media to be clearly favoring official sources and criminalizing protesters by not quoting them enough<sup>93</sup>. As a result, actors engaged in the alternative coverage of the protests decided to favor sources connected to social movements and the protesters themselves, while maintaining a distant and more critical relationship with official sources, especially the police. The meaning element enacted in the practices that compose the key category is also present in many of the ensuing practices actors performed during the coverage. It can be described as actors' drive to counter traditional media's narrative with other voices and perspectives.

When actors went to the streets to cover the protests themselves, they found conditions they did not necessarily expect to encounter: the turnout was either much higher or much lower than they had anticipated; the police sometimes made more use of less-lethal weapons, such as rubber bullets or tear gas; the protesters themselves performed more direct action than expected or were hostile to the press. This led to the creation of specific coping practices, such as practices involving the use of protective gear or the division of tasks among actors, so that they were able to interview people during the protests, film or photograph events. These coping practices provided

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<sup>93</sup>Studies on the protest paradigm often confirm this perception, as I described in section 3.3.

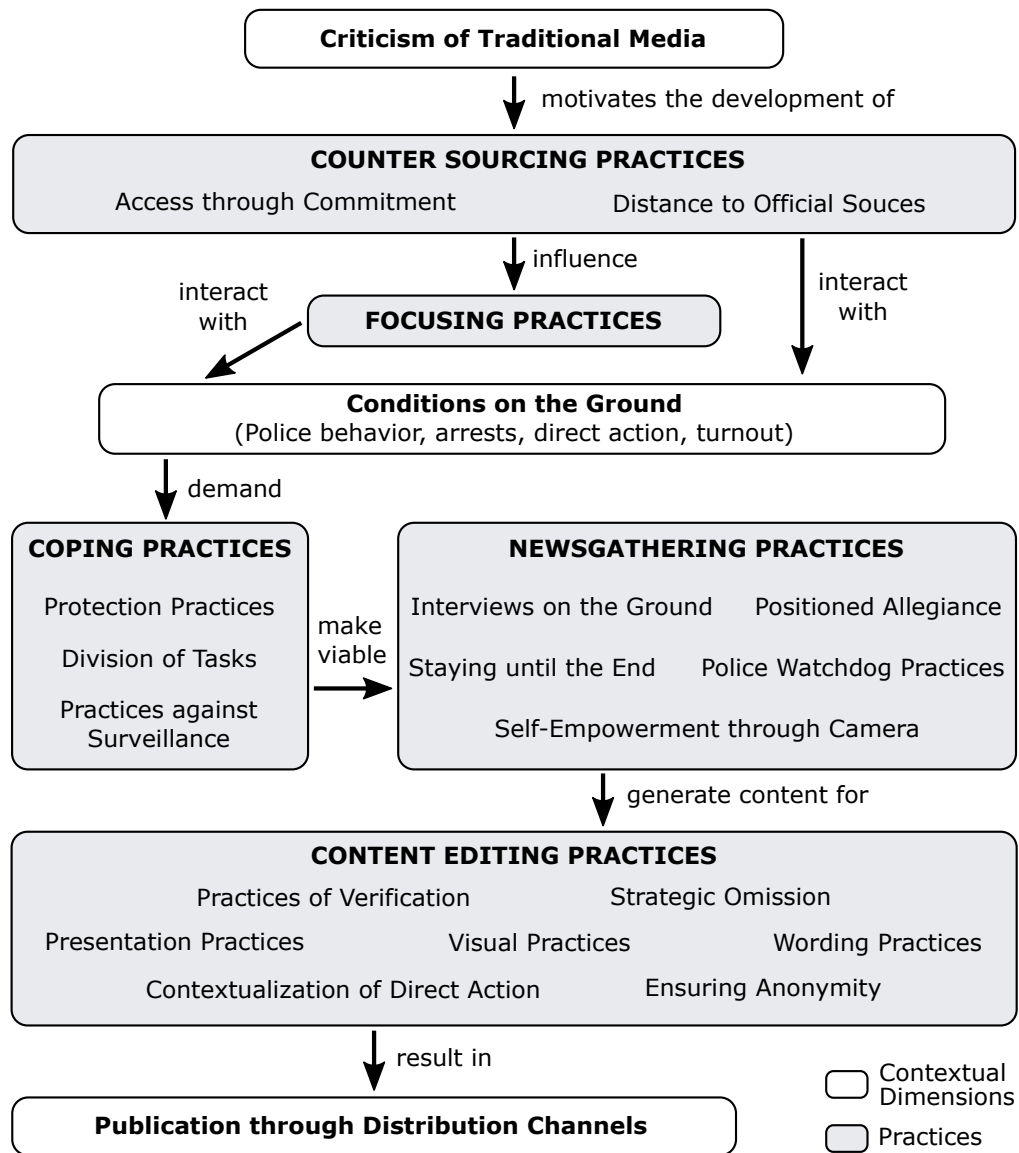


Figure 6.1: Model of the complex of practices that make up actors' alternative coverage of protests

the logistical conditions — or, in Shove, Pantzar, and Watson's (2012) terms, the material elements — for actors' work on the ground: once they made sure they were safe to move around, actors performed newsgathering practices, which were linked among each other through competence elements in the form of professional journalistic skills and also shared the meaning element with counter sourcing practices, as these determined, in part, who actors decided to interview as the action unfolded or the way they positioned themselves on the ground, standing among the protesters, in order to film events from their perspective or adopting a watchdog stance towards the police, always attentive to possible abuses committed by police officers towards protesters.

During and after the protests, actors performed various practices that shaped the content generated through newsgathering practices during the coverage on the ground — that is, the element material needed for linking in the enactment of content editing practices — , editing and preparing this content for publishing. These practices were also permeated by their source selection, for example in how they verified information, how they portrayed violent actions performed by the police or by protesters, which terms they used in their coverage, how they presented the content and so on. Finally, the content that fulfilled actors' verification and selection criteria got published through diverse distribution channels online.

This was not, however, a static process: shifts in the sociopolitical context were accompanied by other social actors' processes of adaptation at numerous stances, for example in the form of new legislation introduced by the government or social movements' attempts at organizing further actions. These adaptations generated new shifts in conditions on the ground and actors needed to adapt their own practices to them. This often led to focusing practices that widened the scope of the coverage, in order to cover events happening in the new sociopolitical context in connection to the initial shift that motivated the performance of counter sourcing practices. For example, in the present case study, actors expanded their thematic focus to the construction workers' strike that took place during the World Cup in 2014, although it was not part of their initial reporting scope. Coping practices often also demanded further adaptation, as conditions actors needed to cope with on the ground also changed. In addition, actors performed newsgathering practices developed in the events that immediately followed the first shifts in the sociopolitical context when covering events that become part of their expanded coverage focus. A similar development took place in the performance of practices for editing content: actors used new formats to better present the content produced under conditions the old formats no longer fit or applied formats established in the coverage of the first protests to new developments.

The relationships among the different categories that make up the model I described were structured based on the paradigm model developed by Anselm Strauss and detailed, among others, by Krotz (2005, p. 86) and Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 99–107). In it, researchers “link subcategories to categories in a set of relationships denoting casual conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action/interactional strategies, and consequences” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 99), with the phenomenon being “the central idea, event, happening, about which a set of actions/interactions is directed at **managing or handling, or to which the set is related**” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 100, emphasis in the original). This helped reveal the model's connection to the scholarship, as a representation of a complex of practices as conceptualized by

Shove et al. (2012).

In the present study, the phenomenon consisted on the alternative coverage of protests. The casual condition of this coverage were the protests as part of broader shifts in the sociopolitical context, fueling further shifts on various levels. The context demanding actors develop and carry out action/interactional strategies was traditional media's coverage of the protests, which actors perceive as biased. The intervening conditions that bore upon those strategies were the conditions on the ground, i.e. during a protest, which I previously described. The action/interactional strategies were the media practices actors adapted or created throughout the period researched. The consequences of these strategies was the content produced and published by actors as part of their alternative coverage of the protests. These consequences became conditions for other action/interactional strategies (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 106), in this case further shifts in the sociopolitical context and in conditions on the ground. This explains the cyclical component in my model. In the following section, I explore this cyclical nature in detail.

### **6.2.1 The Role of Shifting Contexts**

As my analysis of the categories that compose this model shows, actors have continuously sought to react and adapt to changes on various levels. For authors such as Strauss and Corbin (1990), it is essential to acknowledge change as part of studying a phenomenon, in order to bring time and movement into the analysis. "For rather than freezing action/interaction in time and space, the analyst shows how action/interaction change, move, and respond to changes in conditions that inevitably occur with the passage of time", they argue (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 150).

Change can happen in three possible ways, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 151–152). The first one is when the set of conditions shifts, causing a change in context that demands changes in action/interaction in order to handle the phenomenon studied under a different context, as for example, the changes in 2013 and 2014 in terms of the overall mood in Brazilian society and how that impacted protests in both years (massive support in 2013, apathy in 2014), as I detail in chapter 2. The second kind of change happens to intervening conditions and demands actors modify their actions; in this study, intervening conditions were the conditions actors encountered while covering protests on the ground, which demanded they develop, for example, coping practices to stay safe. The third way change happens is through consequences of previous action/interaction, which can make certain actions/interactions — or, as I call them here, media practices — develop as a reaction to changes in (intervening) conditions the basis for other intervening conditions to arise at a later point. For example, alternative journalists' counter sourcing practices, developed as a response to a traditional media coverage context they perceived as imbalanced and lacking. These media practices then became the basis for actors' future interactions with sources from social movements and official sources — these interactions were either cooperative or distant/hostile, in part, due to the counter sourcing practices performed at a previous point. Another example were, again, coping practices. They were a reaction to intervening conditions and, later, brought consequences that led actors to adapt once more: in order not to be confused with traditional journalists and be able to mingle among protesters, actors learned how to avoid rubber bullets or deal with tear gas without having to wear protective gear, which they

felt made them stand out negatively in the crowd.

These are just some examples of how intricate a dynamic model as the one I developed here can be. The analysis of most categories show similar processes. Strauss and Corbin (1990) call models such as this as portraying what they define as nonprogressive movement, i.e. movement that happens not in stages or phases, but rather as a dynamic response to changes in conditions<sup>94</sup>. The media practices I described are typical examples of action/interaction in nonprogressive movement: “flexible, in flux, responsive, changeable in response to changing conditions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 157). Although this transcends my period of research, actors also described performing and adapting some of the practices developed in 2013 and 2014 in other, later projects they were working on at the time we met for our interviews, showing the continuous character of nonprogressive movement beyond clear-cut phases.

Concerning time in Shove, Pantzar, and Watson’s (2012) conceptualization, my model also shows how this factor must be taken into account when looking at a complex of practices. Time, like space, may not be an element like competence, meaning or material, but it helps retrace how one practice performed in the past provides the necessary elements for the enactment of other practices in the future. From the long-term perspective, this could apply to how actors’ journalistic practices performed in the years before 2013 at university assignments or at traditional newsrooms provided the necessary competences for enacting many of their newsgathering and content editing practices in the alternative coverage of the events in 2013 and 2014. Together with concepts like habitus, Shove, Pantzar, and Watson’s (2012) approach to time and space also helps understand actors’ access to expensive or sophisticated material, based on their status in society and how patterns of access to certain resources are unequally distributed in it (Shove et al., 2012, p. 134). In the short-term, time and space are part of how Shove et al. (2012) conceptualize complexes of practices in terms of connections between practices that may be synchronous or co-existing, for example, as time and space are essential factors in these connections.

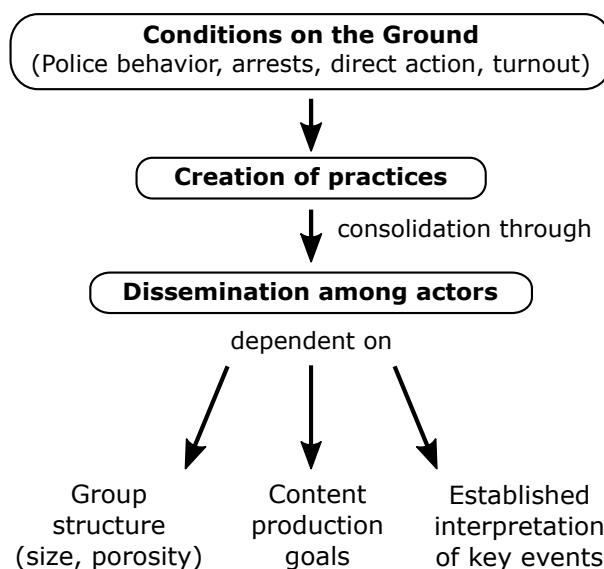
In addition to the model I have detailed so far, I also uncovered in my analysis of expert interviews how practices got disseminated among the various actors that integrated the network formed around the alternative coverage of the protests in Fortaleza, highlighting other aspects of how time and space played a role in the circulation of elements that constituted some of the practices described in the model.

### **6.3 Dissemination of Practices**

While actors referred tangentially to how practices became disseminated among them in the previous section, I decided this aspect needed to be regarded as a pattern in itself, not just in relation to individual practices. Moreover, it was not possible for me to integrate this aspect into the model of actors’ alternative coverage of protests as a complex of practices (figure 6.1), but the dissemination of practices should still be regarded as part of this process. In this section, I

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<sup>94</sup>Here, the authors use term “movement” not used in the sense of “social movement” as in most of this study, but rather in the sense of “flow”, in order to describe how action/interaction is constantly moving, how practices are not static.



**Figure 6.2:** Model of the process of dissemination of practices

detail some of the components that determine how practices get disseminated between groups and among members of one group internally.

Shove, Pantzar, and Watson's (2012) description of how elements circulate and Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice provide the theoretical basis for understanding my findings. While Shove et al. (2012) assert that practices do not circulate yet the elements linked to each other through their enactment do, becoming a consolidated practice through the routinized enactment of the links between elements, they also argue that practices recruit practitioners and cannot exist without those who enact them. In light of these claims, I consider that a practice becomes disseminated when it has recruited more than one practitioner, i.e. more than one individual enacts on a regular basis the links that constitute a certain practice. Thinking in terms of communities of practice offers a good bridge to conceptualizing this process, as it directs the gaze towards the interactions between members of a community of practice, as they exchange knowledge (competences), physical resources (materials) and interpretations of events (meaning), thus aiding the circulation of these elements inside the community and, with that, the increasingly routinized enactment of the links between them as practices by more than one individual.

Based on my expert interviews, I found that there were various factors that determined whether a practice became disseminated or not: group size and porosity (that is, how easy it was to join a group and how assiduously an individual had to participate in order to be considered part of it); the content the group sought to produce, with certain formats demanding the dissemination of specific practices to make them viable; and actors' collective interpretation of certain key events, which functioned as learning moments to justify the creation or adaptation of a practice, in order, for example, to avoid similar incidents by routinely performing this practice. On the latter point, Schäfer (2004, p. 316) argues that habitus is a component that molds actors' collective interpretation of events, providing them with a shared perspective. In the case of my interview partners, they often belonged to the same habitus, thus, making it easier for a certain interpretation of events to become widely established among them.



The model in figure 6.2 summarizes the continuous process of dissemination of practices. Dissemination is an essential phase in the creation and adaptation of practices, as actors react and adapt to shifts in the sociopolitical context and the shifts in conditions on the ground these cause. If only one actor performs a practice, it is unlikely to be helpful to the overall group's coverage efforts. Applying this to the case I studied, the broader network involving members of *Nigéria*, *Na Rua* and independent photographers can be conceptualized as a community of practice formed around the alternative coverage of protests in Fortaleza starting in June 2013. In this particular case, *Na Rua* seemed to have the most types of consciously disseminated practices, while *Nigéria* members described fewer practices they felt the need to disseminate during the protests internally. A considerable amount of practices were also disseminated among the broader network. This indicates that the larger the group and the more fluid its structure (with volunteers and people that only stepped in now and then in the case of *Na Rua*, contrasting with *Nigéria*'s fixed structure of only four members at the time), the more consciously new practices must be disseminated. It also speaks for a higher need for explicit coordination the larger and more loosely connected the network, in contrast with more tightly knit, smaller groups whose members have worked together before the shifts in context took place. In the following pages, I exemplify this by detailing some practices that got disseminated in different constellations of actors, in an effort to make the pre-conditions listed in figure 6.2 more palpable.

Protection practices in particular were among the most widely disseminated among the broader network of actors. In particular identifying as press proved important for the whole community of practice, with actors adopting postures associated to professional journalists in order to avoid police repression and identifying each other as members of the press during emergencies, such as when a member of *Na Rua* was attacked by the police and independent photographers and other actors intervened, shouting that the police was attacking a journalist and, thus, successfully preventing his likely arrest. Actors also exchanged information on the use of protective gear and subsequent practices to stop wearing it while still remaining safe by knowing the distance rubber bullets covered, in an example of the circulation of competence elements inside their community of practice. Particularly in 2014, the protection practice of covering in pairs was disseminated across the broader network, after people got to know each other during the Pautão da Copa meetings or from previous encounters in the 2013 protests. There were, however, group-specific nuances to this practice, which I describe when looking into dissemination of practices among *Na Rua* and *Nigéria* members. Still, it was common for independent photographers to rely on members of these groups and on other independent photographers to keep an eye on the action around them while they were busy focusing on taking pictures. Failures were not uncommon in this practice: actors describe losing track of each other when things escalated and everyone had to run away from the police. However, the fact that they were all trying to perform it, regardless of how successful this practice actually was, shows that their community of practice had agreed on its importance.

For *Na Rua*, the incident involving a member of *Nigéria* whose eye got hit by a rubber bullet was decisive to buy protective gear in 2014 (see section 6.1.3). While members of *Nigéria* themselves did not interpret this event as a lesson on why protective gear was important, this was the

interpretation that got established among most members of *Na Rua*. The collectives also differed in their performance of covering in pairs. For *Na Rua* members, this practice got disseminated in tandem with practices around division of tasks: the pairs were composed by a photographer and someone responsible for doing interviews and sending written information for liveblog editors, who performed this function back in the group's headquarters (HQ). Thus, the goal of producing liveblogs about the demonstrations potentialized the dissemination of both practices, along with the security concerns that permeated the practice of covering in pairs for all interview partners.

The HQ from which editors put together information for liveblog posts also constituted an important site for the circulation of elements necessary for the dissemination of practices inside the community of practice:

“It was pretty great, because it was a place where we had computers, internet access, and someone always stayed there. We waited for everybody to return from the protest and kept in touch with them. (...) This was important because there were so many people involved, we needed this kind of organizing, to have a place where there was food, water, this support for those leaving to cover the protests. Because everybody wore a press ID, we distributed them before they left for the protest and, when they returned, we checked whether everyone was ok.” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 85–94)<sup>95</sup>

*Na Rua*'s members always set up temporary head-quarters at someone's house close to the protests. This was the meeting point for all members of the group to gather before the protests and reassemble afterwards. As I described in section 6.1.3 when detailing the practices that fall under the category division of tasks, the physical place actors called their headquarters (HQ) played an important role in the circulation of material elements as well as competence elements (by centralizing articulation efforts) between actors: it was the meeting point for them to split into pairs before leaving for the protest, it was the place actors got their press IDs for practices of identifying as press, it provided the necessary infrastructure for composing liveblog posts (a stable internet connection, computers) as well as for recording the talk shows (as an improvised studio in the living room, in addition to a stable internet connection and computers). Moreover, the HQ was key for practices of verification, as actors sitting there coordinated who they could send to a police station to verify reports of arrests, supporting the division of tasks between alternative journalists and lawyers:

“We also had communicators [journalists] and lawyers at the HQ. Because, if someone gets arrested, the person who's on the street will continue to follow the protests there and the person at the HQ will head to the police station, to verify what happened, talk to the police chief, try to release the person — in short, to see if there

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<sup>95</sup>“Era bem massa, porque era um canto em que a gente colocava computadores, tinha acesso à internet e ficava sempre alguém. A gente esperava o pessoal voltar e ficava tendo contato com eles. (...) Foi importante, porque eram muitas pessoas e a gente precisava dessa organização: ter um canto onde tivesse comida, água, esse apoio pra quando precisava sair. Porque todo mundo usava crachá, então a gente fazia aquela organização na saída e na chegada, via se tava todo mundo bem”(NR1, 18 December 2015, 85–94).

was no violation of someone's rights going on." (NR4, 12 January 2015, 20–24)<sup>96</sup>

Finally, returning to the HQ was a practice established for the end of the protests, with actors trying to gather and walk back together. Actors say, however, it did not always work, as they lost sight of each other, much like covering in pairs did not always work. Meeting at the HQ also provided the material element in the form of infrastructure for practices against surveillance, as sensitive information was discussed in person between the walls of a private home — when actors gathered there before or after the protests —, instead of being shared on messenger apps or through other means of communication. It can be concluded that setting up headquarters was a necessary measure for such a large and flexible group as *Na Rua*, as it enabled the circulation of various elements among actors meeting there, which led to the dissemination of practices among them.

By contrast, *Nigéria*, which had just four members at the time and had been working together as a group for years before the protests, only needed to explicitly disseminate the practice of covering in pairs. In their case, this practice meant not going in with one camera per person, but having one person without a camera covering the other's back. This was not how they were used to covering protests before, but the massive turnout and the extreme police repression that marked the protests in 2013 demanded all members of the group adopt this new practice. *Nigéria* did not usually take part in *Na Rua*'s HQ practices other than when its members joined the production of some of the talk shows. They met at their own office and returned there at the end of the protests instead, which they felt made more sense logistically. Here, their character as a very small group and the requirements of the content they were producing, which consisted mostly of videos, helped determine the few practices they needed to disseminate internally.

In this section, I presented only some of the concrete examples of dissemination of practices among the community of practice in the case I studied. They show the role of place (namely the HQ) and time (as actors interpreted together past events to relink elements of their current practices, for example) in the circulation of elements inside their community of practice. With this category, which should be regarded as part of the model of actors' adaptation and creation of media practices in the context of their alternative coverage of protests, I retrace some of the ways practices' elements circulate and how practices are enacted collectively, even when performed by single bodies. I hope to explore this aspect in more detail in future research.

## 6.4 Retracing Practices of Engaged Journalism

In this chapter, I answered RQ1, which focused on actors' adaptation and creation of media practices as a reaction to sudden changes in the sociopolitical context. Section 6.2 introduces the model I generated through a careful coding process. In interpreting these results, I built upon Shove, Pantzar, and Watson's (2012) formulation of practices as the enactment of links between

<sup>96</sup>“A gente também tinha gente na base, comunicadores e também advogados. Porque, se vai alguém preso, a pessoa que tá na rua vai continuar acompanhando os protestos na rua e a pessoa que tá na base vai lá na delegacia, caso alguém tenha sido preso, vai lá verificar o que aconteceu, falar com o delegado, tentar soltar, enfim, ver se não tem nenhuma violação acontecendo”(NR4, 12 January 2015, 20–24).

competence, meaning and material elements as a way of conceptualizing the various types of practices actors performed as constituting a complex of practices connected in various ways, such as co-existence or as pre-requisites for each other. Moreover, in section 6.3, I regarded my interview partners as constituting a community of practice around their alternative coverage, which aided the circulation of elements among them and, thus, the dissemination of new or adapted practices. In this context, I also outlined the main factors that underline actors' need to consciously disseminate practices among each other, such as group size and porosity, content production aims and the established interpretations of key events in their community.

So far, I referred to the actors I interviewed as alternative journalists, which, given the broad character of this term, is not necessarily an inaccurate description. However, the model I developed from the empirical data gathered during my field research also provided the basis for a concept that could help describe more precisely similar efforts of alternative coverage of protests to the ones I studied, namely those performed by actors with a professional background in journalism covering events outside the structures of commercial or state-owned media while maintaining close contact with social movements. I call this kind of journalism engaged journalism.

Engaged journalism describes one particular form of alternative journalism: unlike some types of alternative journalism – such as community media or citizen journalism –, it is done predominantly by media professionals. However, these professionals pursue other goals than their colleagues working for commercial or state-owned media outlets and are motivated by a strong media criticism, both defining elements of alternative journalism. Based on Shove et al. (2012), I regard engaged journalists – those who perform engaged journalism – as possessing the necessary material and competence elements to perform professional journalism due to their belonging to the journalistic field while, at the same time, attributing a different meaning to their practices. Engaged journalists want to offer an alternative to the objectivity standard that marks traditional journalism and seek to actively counter shortcomings of traditional journalism that they perceive as damaging the movements they cover.

I developed this concept through a productive interaction between empirical data and the existing literature on the differences and similarities between journalistic practices performed in traditional newsrooms and outside of these newsrooms, particularly in alternative media projects. Therefore, the concept of engaged journalism builds a conceptual bridge between my model of alternative coverage of protests as a complex of practices and the broader scholarship located in the field of journalism studies. This is, however, only a substantive theory, i.e. it evolved “from the study of a phenomenon in **one particular situational context**” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 174, emphasis in the original) and still needs to be applied to other contexts in order to be verified and, if proven applicable, be further developed into a formal theory.

As it often happens with studies based on the grounded theory approach, I encountered a strongly pervasive and unexpected aspect during my field research, namely actors' critical remarks towards the objectivity standard despite their journalistic background. Although this aspect was not initially in the focus of my research interest – I sought to retrace their concrete media practices –, it proved important for understanding how actors went about creating or adapting their practices. The following quote exemplifies actors' stance towards objectivity, in

particular impartiality, and how they connected it to their coverage of the protests:

“No news article is impartial, there is no such thing as impartiality. Even the choice of a story is a partial act. So, we started from the premise that we did not need impartiality, as our goal was not to be impartial. We did not create *Na Rua* to be impartial. And I think no movement that was active back then aimed to be impartial. This impartiality, which regards subjectivity as undesirable, is not for us. I do not see a social movement or independent media working with objectivity (...)” (NR1, 12 January 2015, 427–432)<sup>97</sup>

This and other similar statements integrated actors’ reflections about their own practices, serving as an explanation for the direction they chose to pursue in their own reporting efforts. Much like the media vanguard Russell (2016) describes — which covers a similar group to Hepp and Loosen’s (2019) “professional pioneers” yet with a focus on the intersections between journalism and activism or social change —, engaged journalists put their expertise, the practices they learned as part of their formal education or during previous journalistic experiences, at the service of the movements they are reporting on. They seek to “subvert” (NR1, 18 December 2015, 187–189) journalistic techniques and use them not to produce an impartial account of events, as the objectivity regime demands it, but rather to tell stories from the perspective of the movement they are covering. As Russell (2016) observed, “rather than seeing objectivity and its associated procedures — balance, neutrality, and reliance on bureaucratically credible sources — as a means for discovering truth, they see engagement with the subjects of their work as a more effective path to discovering the truth of issues and events” (Russell, 2016, p. 138). Although covering a much broader spectrum of actors, her description also applies to engaged journalists.

As I previously described in section 5.2, both media collectives I studied were founded with specific missions: *Nigéria* existed prior to the 2013 protests and had specialized in developing communication strategies for social movements, as well as in shooting documentaries and making investigative pieces on issues such as housing rights, human rights and the environment. *mediaNa Rua* was founded in 2014 with a focus on covering human rights abuses carried out by state authorities during the 2014 protests. Thus, their primary goal was not to be objective, but to fulfill those missions of showing the protests from specific perspectives: abuses against protesters and the viewpoint of social movements. In addition to openly political aims, the rejection of objectivity was also related to experiences actors made on the ground:

“In terms of journalistic values, I think it often came a time when it was all too personal. You were confronted by the police, thrown out of the protest, suffered their violence, in a way. So, you saw their arbitrarinesses. I, at least, could not stay neutral and not interfere [with what was happening]. Sometimes, I did interfere,

<sup>97</sup>“Até porque nenhuma notícia é imparcial, não existe isso. Até escrever a pauta é parcial. Então, a gente já tava partindo da premissa de que a gente não tinha necessidade de imparcialidade porque o nosso objetivo não era ser imparcial. O *Na Rua* não foi criado pra ser imparcial. E eu acho que nenhum dos movimentos que atuaram foi. Essa imparcialidade, de uma subjetividade indesejada, não é pra gente. Eu não vejo um movimento social ou uma mídia independente trabalhando com objetividade (...)” (NR1, 12 January 2015, 427–432).

speak out, complain. Sometimes, I stopped being the photographer that was just recording the events and became a protester.” (SP1, 09 January 2015, 176–180)<sup>98</sup>

This passage echoes observations on Indymedia contributors, who often described themselves as both activists and journalists, not separating both roles, especially when covering action on the ground (Heinonen & Luostarinen, 2008, p. 234; Pena, 2005, p. 173). Witnessing and directly experiencing injustice during the protests seems to have led SP1 to the conclusion that this separation was impossible in practice, as he could not stay distant and neutral towards events in order to just record them, as objectivity standards – at least in theory – demand. At the same time, actors’ own experiences were not at the center of the coverage, but rather their attempts to give space to groups that did not often reach the broader public sphere, as these groups became their main sources and partners. This aligns engaged journalists with the broader tradition of alternative journalism and its search for other ways of doing journalism based on different criteria of source selection than journalism that follows objectivity standards, as the category counter sourcing practices in my model shows. However, engaged journalists are also aware that they cannot replace traditional media, trying to counter their representations of events and question their claim to presenting just the facts instead:

“That was my greatest motivation: to offer a counter-discourse, undo, in a way, the media’s discourse. We know, of course, that our reach was quite reduced. You cannot think you can compete with what they [traditional media] circulate, but we managed to have a certain reach. (...) There was a public that wanted information from other sources. They were mostly people that also went to the protest and saw how shitty the media coverage was, completely distorted. They [traditional media] changed the timeline of events, built a discourse with images they captured. And there was a great need [from traditional media] to justify police violence, like the State screwed up and the media found a justification for it, you know? (...) Our initiative was an attempt to respond to that, it was a small response, but it was done in that sense, I think.” (NR4, 12 January 2015, 391–404)<sup>99</sup>

This quote makes clear how media criticism, actors’ experiences on the ground and their rejection of objectivity came together as motivational knowledge (practices’ meaning element)

<sup>98</sup>“Em termos de valores jornalísticos, acho que chegava a hora em que era muito pessoal, de você ser confrontado pela polícia, ser enxotado, de alguma forma, ser violentado. Então, você via as arbitrariedades. Então, eu, pelo menos, não conseguia me manter neutro e não me meter [no que estava acontecendo]. Às vezes, eu me metia mesmo, falava, reclamava. Às vezes, o fotógrafo que tava registrando saía e entrava o manifestante”(SP1, 09 January 2015, 176–180).

<sup>99</sup>“Minha motivação maior foi essa, de, sei lá, tentar oferecer realmente um contra-discurso, desfazer, de alguma forma, o discurso da mídia. Claro que a gente sabe do pouco alcance que isso tem. Não dá pra achar que a gente vai competir com o que o pessoal veicula, mas a gente conseguiu um alcance bom. (...) Então, tinha um público que tava a fim de informação de outras fontes. Era muito o pessoal também que ia pra protesto e via a merda que a cobertura era, completamente deturpada, se mudava a linha do tempo, você construía um discurso das imagens que você captava. E tinha uma necessidade muito grande de justificar a repressão policial, meio que o Estado fazia a merda e a mídia ia lá e justificava, né? (...) Essa iniciativa conjunta da gente foi meio que uma tentativa de, sei lá, dar uma resposta a isso, por menor que seja, mas era uma tentativa de dar uma resposta, mais nesse sentido, eu acho”(NR4, 12 January 2015, 391–404).

for carrying out an alternative coverage of events marked by practices that diverged from those traditional media reporters performed. Thus, while my model highlights actors' criticism of traditional media coverage as a starting point for their media practices, their reflections show it was much more complicated than that. Moreover, the connection between alternative media and counter public spheres I explored in section 4.4.2 becomes palpable in this statement and in the concept of engaged journalism, both in terms of circulating counter discourses and of offering a forum for those that were already part of the counterpublic – in this case the protesters and social movements that were on the streets and also following the media coverage of the protest –, providing them with information that may be useful for future articulation and mobilization of potential sympathizers.

Mattoni and Treré (2014) make a similar attempt at generalizing actors' involvement with media in a context of activism through Mattoni's (2012) concept of "activist media practices", which acknowledges the existence of "media people"<sup>100</sup>, "individuals that interact with the media not simply because they are audiences of media messages, but because they produce media messages on a systematic and continuous basis, like media professionals working as journalists or practitioners, working on a voluntary basis" (Mattoni & Treré, 2014, p. 260). Their definition, however, does not explicitly exclude journalists covering protests for traditional media outlets. I decided this exclusion was necessary for the purposes of my empirical research, as journalists embedded in a context of traditional newsrooms and journalists working in alternative structures link different elements in the enactment of their media practices, despite their often similar professional background, as my critical review of scholarship on journalistic practices in both contexts indicated and my empirical findings confirmed<sup>101</sup>.

In summary, I propose the concept of engaged journalism<sup>102</sup> as a way of conceptualizing the practices of professional journalists acting outside of traditional newsrooms and in close cooperation with social movements while producing an alternative media coverage of these movements. Therefore, this concept describes a particular subgroup in the journalistic field. Through their practices, the engaged journalists I interviewed sought to provide what they felt was a more realistic representation of events while at the same time acknowledging their affiliation to one side of the conflict: the protesters, not the authorities. This duality between trying to "get the facts right" – a notion usually connected to objectivity – and recognizing their situatedness as social actors influenced by an ideological stance and a gut reaction to the events they witnessed on the ground – thus, rejecting objectivity – marks their practices.

As with any grounded theory, engaged journalism is expected to be constantly evolving

<sup>100</sup>Couldry (2003b, p. 89) uses the term "media people" in a different sense, referring to celebrities and those who appear in the media in general, as a media ritual category.

<sup>101</sup>In chapter 9, I perform a more systematic comparison between engaged journalism and other concepts from the literature on alternative journalism.

<sup>102</sup>On a side note, the term engaged journalism, along with the designation engaged journalists to describe the actors that perform it, also works in most languages I work with, which makes me hopeful about its potential for further internationalization. In Portuguese, it could be translated to "jornalismo engajado". In German, to "engagierter Journalismus". Moreover, the term in English provokes a certain confusion among native speakers, as journalism and political or ideological engagement seem irreconcilable in most English-speaking countries due to the objectivity regime's deep roots in their journalistic traditions. This is a welcome confusion, as it may drive readers to reflect upon this normative issue.

when confronted with more data. In the next two chapters, I add more nuance to this concept by looking at the content actors produced as part of their coverage, which provides new insights as to how the practices described in this chapter play out in the published coverage itself.



# Chapter 7

## Shifts in the Alternative Media Coverage

In the previous chapter, I conceptualized actors' media practices while covering the events that transpired in Fortaleza between 2013 and 2014. How actors adapted their media practices during this period in Brazilian history was the guiding interest in the analysis. The present chapter takes this inquiry a step further by focusing on the content actors produced while performing the media practices I described in chapter 6. Thus, I complement the focus on practices of the previous chapter with a focus on actors' discourse in terms of their media production in this chapter, that is what they communicate to the public after performing their media practices.

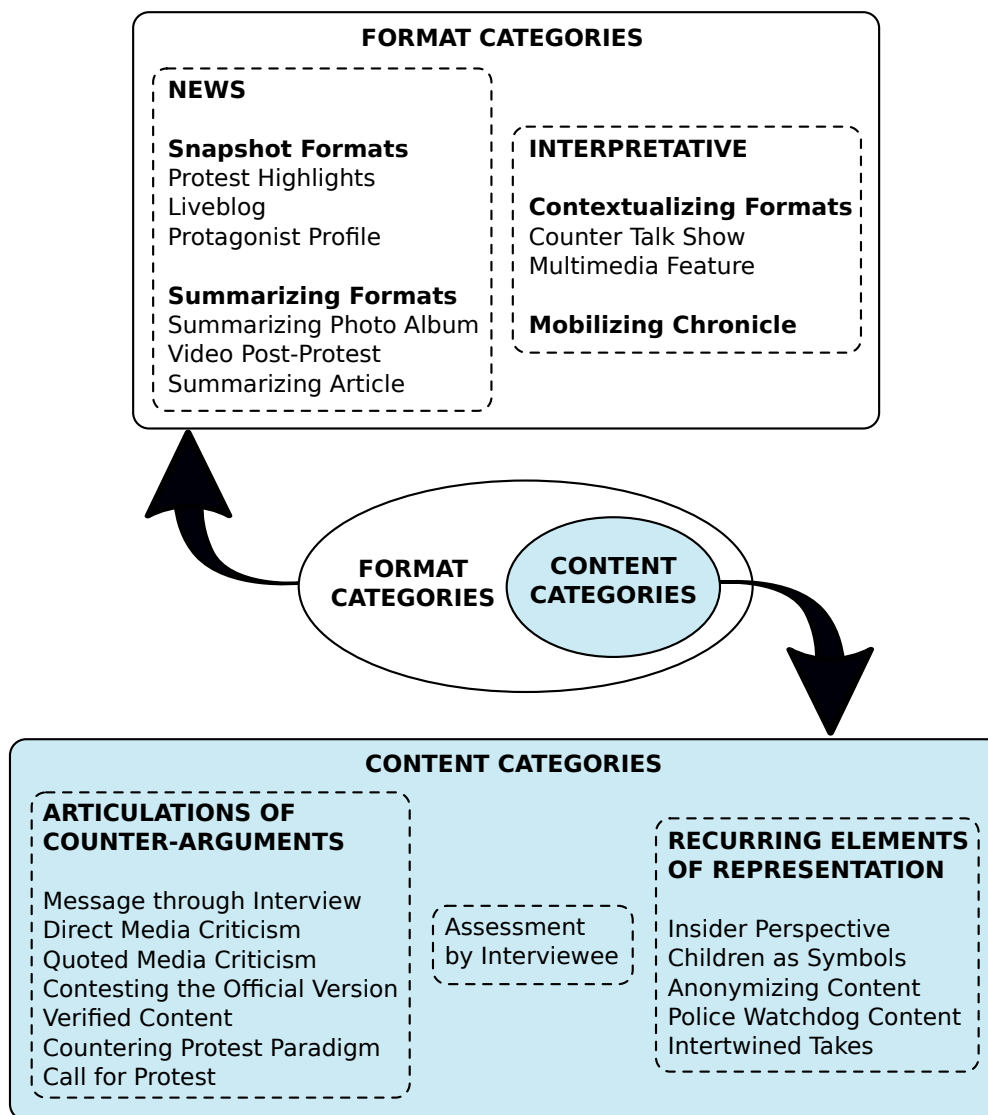
Most of the chapter (section 7.1) is dedicated to detailing the various format and content categories that resulted from my analysis, as well as how these categories relate to each other. Towards the end of the chapter (section 7.2), complementing the model sketched in chapter 6, I present some aspects that emerged from the analysis of the material and that shed light on important nuances of the alternative coverage of protests as a complex of practices. These nuances resulted from my coding of specific patterns in the material, which I then refined to specific categories.

The analysis of actors' media practices and discourse, when done together, can offer a better understanding of the adaptation of media practices in a certain period of time and of engaged journalism's nature as a form of alternative journalism that heavily draws from professional journalistic practices while subverting them at the same time, as I make clear in the next sections.

### 7.1 Categories as Patterns in the Coverage

As previously described in chapter 5, I generated the categories listed in this section through a multi-layered qualitative content analysis embedded in the grounded theory approach. They conceptualize patterns that became visible during the coding process.

Grounded on a local context, the city of Fortaleza, and on a temporal axis, summarized by the timeline of events sketched in section 2.5, the analysis shows how actors' production, regarded through the analytical lenses of these categories, changed as the sociopolitical context the cov-



**Figure 7.1:** Model of the relationship between format and content categories

erage was embedded in shifted as well. The processes I described in my model in the previous chapter, such as an expansion of the thematic focus or the creation of new formats due to the way shifts in the sociopolitical context played out on the ground, gained more precision as I switched the focus from practices to content and, thus, answered RQ 2.

I divided categories into two groups: formats and content categories, with their respective subgroups. Formats stand for the type of presentation the collectives chose for their reporting, which I categorized into news formats, with a focus on timely reporting of events on the ground, and interpretative formats, which showcased engaged journalists' personal impressions of what they had witnessed during their reporting as well as pieces structured around in-depth analyses or discussions of events. Content categories were divided into the subgroups articulations of counter-arguments, which covered the argumentation developed in the coverage both through quoting of certain sources and through framing of events, and recurring elements of representation, which center mostly around the visuals actors produced. As figure 7.1 shows, formats and content relate to each other in the sense that formats are the structure that showcase the content,

combining argumentation and visuals in different ways as part of collectives' media production.

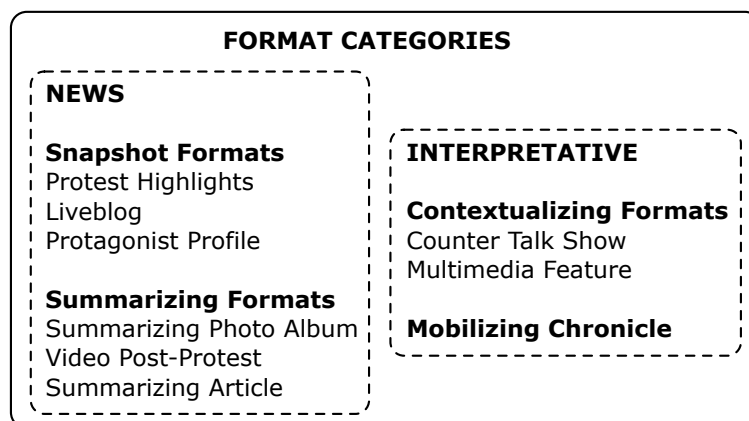
Some categories' names are quite similar to the names of practices I described in chapter 6. That is due to the fact that they show the kind of reporting that may result from performing these practices.

### 7.1.1 Format Categories

Format categories refer to patterns in content presentation throughout the coverage. In the model from chapter 6, presentation practices of format creation, adaptation and selection were part of the content editing practices actors performed. In this section, I detail which formats actors made use of in the period researched and how these formats interacted with the various kinds of content that permeated the coverage.

For Gans (2003), journalistic formats remain stable throughout the decades, with TV evening news still quite similar to the radio formats they originated from and online news still presenting remarkable similarities to print magazines or newspapers. "Clicking on a link is not terribly different from turning a page" (Gans, 2003, p. 105), he concludes somewhat provocatively. Many of the formats actors employed as part of the alternative coverage of 2013 and 2014 seemed to support this argument, as they could still be traced back to traditional journalistic formats such as background articles or more hybrid formats such as talk shows, albeit with a certain actualization to an online context that played out mostly on social media. That does not mean, however, that these formats remained unchanged, as actors subverted some of their traditional components like the inverted pyramid, aiming to "create a story that maintains the web of facticity and builds drama" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 106) without recurring to strict journalistic rules in structuring content presentation. This is particularly visible in the use of interpretative formats.

During expert interviews, some actors described a division between formats such as live-blogs, seen as playing the role of providing hard news updates, and more reflexive pieces, to which they assigned a function akin to that of an opinion section in traditional newspapers (NR2, 15 January 2015, 230–239). My qualitative content analysis supported this perception, as the division between news formats and interpretative formats proved to be the most fruitful way of sorting the different format category groups, as seen in figure 7.2.



**Figure 7.2:** Visual representation of format categories

The division between news and interpretative formats corresponds to the complexity of the formats employed in this specific coverage, which shared many characteristics and could be distinguished mostly along these two categories borrowed from traditional journalism. Although interpretative formats were not subject to as much time pressure as news formats, they were still timely in the sense that current events often served as the motivation to dig deeper into an issue. Thus, dividing category groups in terms of synchronous or asynchronous, which could appear reasonable at first glance, proved to be insufficient: news formats such as protest highlights, published after events had already unfolded — and, thus, asynchronous —, still sought to transmit fresh impressions from the ground, focusing on short descriptions and direct facts instead of contextualization. It would be too simplistic to reduce categories to the time of their publication. The same can be said about organizing format categories in terms of linear and non-linear storytelling, as those assume a chronological order of narration of events that is being kept or broken in the formats. However, orienting format categories by this aspect would leave out important characteristics of interpretative formats that did not rely on such narrative forms, but rather drew from broader discussions or background information around events.

Another possible form of categorization, by media type such as videos or text, would also be too simplistic, as the content was mostly being circulated on a social media platform that afforded the use of various kinds of media combined into one format, as the detailed descriptions of specific formats in the next pages will show. Moreover, as both news and interpretative formats could potentially showcase all content types, a division by traits such as emotionalization or personalization, which can be attributed to content categories rather than formats, would also be imprecise. Thus, the distinction between news and interpretative formats highlights how both formats can potentially showcase similar forms of content yet highlighting different dimensions of this content.

News formats were divided between what I call snapshot formats, characterized by brief updates published in real time or very shortly after the end of the events covered, and summarizing formats, which consisted of longer pieces containing the main information on events and published shortly after the action on the ground had transpired. Both subgroups had in common a focus on the main facts surrounding events covered, relayed with more or less detail yet as much to the point as possible. Interpretative formats, in turn, were structured to present either background information relevant to understanding recent events (as with the subgroup of contextualizing formats) or engaged journalists' individual impressions from action on the ground (as with the format mobilizing chronicle). Both types of format, news and interpretative, seemed to complement each other, much like the scholarship on traditional journalism describes. This shows a proximity between alternative coverage and the traditional one in terms of formats, although the motivations to employ these formats may differ.

In traditional, objectivity-seeking journalism, the trend towards interpretative journalism rises from practitioners' realization that "their task was to help readers not only know but understand" (Schudson, 2001, p. 165) and that hard facts were not enough to provide full understanding of an increasingly complex world. Thus, journalists started mixing "facts with daubs of interpretation, colour, humour, and metaphor to create more appealing reports" (Ward, 2004,

p. 236–237). Interpretative journalism consists of providing the audience with a framework that puts loose events into context and of highlighting the journalists' own interpretation of them, acquired through first-hand experience while reporting. This framework may include a contextualization of events in a broader sociopolitical, cultural or historical background as well as an attempt to connect the audience to the story not only through the facts relayed, but also through more subtle cues such as descriptions of sensory or emotional experiences the reporter themselves made while pursuing the story, something Kolodzy (2013, p. 95) describes as adding “tone and context” to the reporting and, thus, “delivering sense and meaning to a news story” (Kolodzy, 2013) after the immediate time pressure of live reporting has passed and reporters can do more than just relaying the main facts. The aim is to reach the audience through more creative, less rigidly structured storytelling (Ward, 2004, p. 236–237). Interpretative pieces still stick to the facts, yet surround them with more subjective nuances.

The actors interviewed for this study did not feel the need to “dilute” objectivity by appealing to interpretative formats — as Ward (2004, p. 236–237) describes traditional reporters' turn to interpretative journalism from the 1960s onwards. Actors claimed simply not to seek to meet the objectivity standard at all. Instead, they made use of interpretative formats that were related to the current events covered in news formats to bring more in-depth analysis or individual points of view into the overall coverage. As one actor put it, these were “colder” stories, sometimes published a few days after the events that motivated them, but bringing the added value of more reflexivity or background information and, thus, complementing more event-focused formats (NR5, 27 December 2014, 322–334).

In addition, as already established in chapter 6, while sometimes adapted from traditional journalistic formats, the formats categorized here were employed to showcase content that departs from traditional media's, as actors prioritize sources from marginalized groups and adopt a different thematic focus than their traditional media counterparts usually do in the coverage of protests and social movements. This will become clear as I analyze the interplay between formats and content categories both in this section and more specifically in the next chapter. For now, I turn to individual format categories and their nuances, starting with snapshot formats in the news subgroup.

### **News: Snapshot Formats**

Snapshot formats told a story through a series of short updates that could be live, as in the case of liveblogs, or published some hours after the protests, as in the case of protest highlights. These updates were marked by their specific focus on one particular aspect — an important piece of information on something that had just happened, an individual perspective from an interviewed protester or a specially dramatic moment during the protest. Snapshots were often successively posted, forming a series of posts that helped form a general picture of the event covered, as different updates brought out its different nuances.

Snapshot formats were published mostly directly on the collectives' social media accounts, thus drawing from the platform's affordances in their storytelling. In the current case, this meant

that actors published updates on *Nigéria* and *Na Rua*'s Facebook pages<sup>1</sup>.

**Protest Highlights** This format consisted of posts highlighting particularly significant or dramatic moments of a protest, published some hours or days after the events on the ground. Posts often — yet not always — combined a short text of one or two paragraphs at most and a picture provided by an independent photographer or a member of the collectives. Most pictures published often went through professional editing, which improved the images' quality, emphasized sets of colors or obscured the features of people portrayed, in order to protect their identities.

There was an interplay between the picture and the text. In some cases, the text described the action portrayed in the picture. In others, the picture served to illustrate a particular, broader trend described in the text.

Two themes dominated this form of coverage. Posts on protesters' movements contained pictures taken from among the crowd and texts describing protesters' actions during a protest — for example, deliberation in spontaneous assemblies, the trajectory of marches, conflicts between different groups forming the protest or reactions to the police's actions. Other posts highlighted police conduct as the protest unfolded, listing police units on site, reporting on eventual arrests and their alleged motives, and showing stances of police violence or suspected illegal conduct by officers. Therefore, content categories such as insider perspective and police watchdog content were the ones to mainly interact with this format category. By often alternating posts that emphasized one category and then the other, protest highlights seemed to form a picture of the protest through the interplay between both sides, protesters and the authorities.

It is important to emphasize that protest highlights were published not only during the 2013 and 2014 anti-World Cup protests, but also during events such as the construction workers' daily marches during their strike or MTST actions, showing the consolidation of this format in actors' coverage of various events<sup>2</sup>.

**Liveblog** While they were similar to protest highlights in terms of content, liveblogs presented a decisive difference: they were published while the protest was still happening. Posts that made up this format relayed snippets of the action on the ground for those following the group's live coverage on its Facebook page. The language in the posts was usually marked by expressions like "at the moment", "right now", "currently", combined with verbs in the present tense, making the coverage's instantaneous character clear to the readers. Another difference to protest highlights was the quality of pictures posted along with such updates, as actors' cellphone pictures predominated.

*Nigéria* did not employ this format as often as their colleagues from *Na Rua*, preferring to post protest highlights in a timely manner. In the case of *Na Rua*, cellphone pictures and pieces of information were sent to the author of the posts via messaging apps or text messages. Here,

<sup>1</sup>On a side note, both collectives employed snapshot formats quite often in their coverage. In my overall analysis of the material, I classified 138 out of *Nigéria*'s 348 posts in the material and 61 out of *Na Rua*'s 157 posts as belonging to one of the three formats described in this section.

<sup>2</sup>For more about these and other events that transpired at the time, see section 2.5.

the link between this format and actors' practice of division of tasks, one of the coping practices described in chapter 6, became clear. Each post was the result of content editing practices of piecing together and verifying information coming in from different actors on the ground, composing a more complex text for the live update and combining it with an appropriate picture, which either generally illustrated the claims made in the text or showed the specific moment the text helped contextualize (for example, a picture of an arrest).

On liveblogs, updates from protesters' perspective focused mostly on protesters' moves on the ground or on publicizing the current location of a march. Updates on police moves involved the usual police watchdog content: which units were on site and where exactly were they positioned? How were police officers interacting with protesters? Were there any stances of police abuse? Updates on arrests were especially recurring, as members of *Na Rua* often got tips from their readers and posted updates on those tips, either to let readers know the reports were being verified by actors on the ground or to elaborate on the actual situation once actors sent more details from their assessment on site, which often involved visits to police districts to see who was being held there. Thus, editing practices of verification flowed into this format as verified content, a content category I analyze later in this chapter.

Liveblogs seemed to fulfill an increasing need for real-time information among the public, which Hasebrink and Domeyer (2010, p. 58-59) describe as part of a broader transformation in individuals' informational repertoire, made possible by processes of crossmediality and convergence. The fact that this format was published on a commercial social media platform like Facebook reflected that, as its affordances provided the basis for movements – and the alternative media supporting them – to easily broadcast real-time updates, “reaching those who want to tune into their stream or twitter feed” (Cammaerts, 2015, p. 94). In addition, this kind of real-time format seemed to lend credibility to actors' coverage of protests by providing proof of their presence on site, which raised “a feeling of both immediacy and authenticity through its link to on-the-ground activity” (Russell, 2016, p. 48).

Thus, liveblogs as a way of presenting content was embedded in this context of a public increasingly thirsty for real-time information that also transmitted a feeling of authenticity. With its own textual and visual particularities, which I presented in this section, liveblogs as a type of format fits the broader trend towards live coverage on social media that also includes formats such as live-streams or live-tweets of events on the ground. However, despite the shared characteristic of bringing real-time coverage through social media, each of these formats has their own particularities and, as either live-streams nor live-tweets were employed in the case I analyzed, I cannot include them in my model. This might change with its application to other case studies in the future.

The particular relationship between picture and short text characteristic of both liveblogs and protest highlights was not exclusively employed by *Na Rua* and *Nigéria. Mídia Ninja*, another independent media collective active during the 2013 and 2014 protests in Brazil especially in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, also became known for combining pictures and short texts in their coverage of protests published mostly on social media, something scholars saw as highly effective in building a narrative from up close in favor of the protests while employing

journalistic and photographing techniques for that purpose (Morales et al., 2013, p. 10–11). They inspired some of my interviewees to adopt a similar approach in Fortaleza (NR3, 8 January 2015, 527–528).

**Protagonist Profile** This format also combined a picture and a short text, but the focus here was on individuals taking part in the event being covered. Thus, in addition to some basic information on the person being portrayed, the text often featured her directly quoted statements and her picture. Portraits were usually taken from the waist up or even as close-ups of the faces of the interview partner. The text often told the story of that person and what led her to take part in the action being covered, as well as her opinions and particular demands. Although protagonist profiles could also be seen as a standalone format, they were often embedded in liveblogs or protest highlights series of posts, providing an individual face to the broader events being narrated there.

An interesting development in this category through time was that, as the thematic focus in the coverage shifted towards more traditional social movement mobilizations such as strikes or occupations by the housing rights movement MTST, the profiled actors were increasingly chosen among formal leaders or representatives of these movements and less among “regular protesters” as in the June Journeys in 2013. These profiled actors prioritized presenting the concrete demands of their group or movement over telling their individual stories. The newsgathering practice of performing interviews on the ground seemed to find an expression in this kind of format, featuring interview partners that seemed to meet the various dimensions actors described as composing this practice and guiding their decision on who to interview: people protagonizing the action or visually representing a certain archetype were portrayed here.

In addition, in terms of content, since this format showcased particular points of view picked from among the crowd, there was an intersection with numerous content categories, both from the subgroup articulations of counter-arguments — direct media criticism, contesting the official version, verified content, among others — and from the subgroup recurring elements of representation — such as children as symbols or anonymized content —, thus bringing more nuance into the coverage done in snapshot formats, which otherwise featured primarily content from the categories insider perspectives and police watchdog content.

While snapshot formats were characterized by their brevity and very specific focus, summarizing formats gathered the main facts surrounding an event in longer pieces, structuring the content in ways that were often similar to those encountered in traditional journalistic pieces.

### **News: Summarizing Formats**

Actors usually published summarizing formats shortly after events took place on the ground, in a matter of hours or — at the latest — days. These formats tried to capture as many nuances as possible of the event, through a series of pictures, a short article or scenes of a protest edited into a coherent video sequence. The intent was to make the main points of an event accessible to the public without requiring that readers go through many different posts or short videos: one product summarized the whole event.



Sometimes, summarizing formats were also posted at the end of a liveblog coverage or of protest highlights, with the same images being recirculated in a different format, with more context to them. Other times, collectives used summarizing formats to make up for lack of real-time coverage, providing some highlights in one article, video or photo album of a protest they could not focus more resources on. Although each format may stand on its own, there were also cases in the material of actors combining all three summarizing formats to report on one event.

**Summarizing Photo Album** A specific use of Facebook's affordances as a social media platform made this format possible: collectives uploaded various pictures — in some cases, as many as 35 —, usually in chronological order, of what happened on the ground and posted them as a single album, with a few thumbnails previewing its content. Users could then click on the post to browse through the individual pictures.

Much like in the case of protest highlights, pictures were usually provided by independent photographers and had often undergone editing, in order to anonymize participants portrayed or highlight specific colors in the composition. An important difference to protest highlights was that not much text accompanied these pictures, oftentimes the same text was repeated in all pictures. The album usually received a straightforward title, composed by the name of the protest, the place and the date it happened. Each picture featured the credits to the photographer who shot it. Thus, the narrative was developed almost exclusively through pictures collected in just one album and viewed one after the other, giving a sense of what action on the ground looked like<sup>3</sup>.

**Video Post-Protest** These videos usually featured long takes, following the situation on the ground as it developed. Takes were edited in chronological order, shifting between one relevant moment and the next. As a medium that can capture moving action, videos “can *show* how something happened, where it happened” (Kolodzy, 2013, p. 110, emphasis in the original), providing context to the main facts reported.

Videos post-protest usually began with images of protesters gathering at a meeting point or starting their march, combined with voice-over statements from participants describing the context that motivated the protest or why they, as individuals, decided to attend. As the situation on the ground escalated, images often became more frantic, as the person carrying the camera ran with the crowd or filmed police action, for example as officers fired tear gas. Thus, content categories such as police watchdog content and insider perspective were predominant in this format, sometimes presented parallel to each other through intertwined takes, i.e. put together through edition or captured successively in one take as the camera swung from one group to the other.

The length of videos varied, but they usually tended to last between 5 and 20 minutes. Despite the predominance of insider perspective and police watchdog content, this was one of the most varied formats in terms of content categories, as videos' length and edition allowed actors to include takes showing various types of situations they had captured on the ground.

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<sup>3</sup>Users sometimes added their interpretations of the scenes by posting a comment, but I do not analyze this practice in the present study, as it is beyond the scope of my research questions.

The videos usually ended with images of the end of the event itself, concretizing the news-gathering practice of staying until the end that actors described during our interviews.

**Summarizing Article** This format was the closest to a traditional journalistic written article to come up in the material. The text often started with the main piece of information concerning an event and featured less factual information towards the end, thus reproducing classic structures such as the lead and the inverted pyramid. Direct or indirect quotes from protest participants or social movement leaders complemented the text, differentiating it again from traditional media's coverage through source selection.

Collectives published these pieces both directly on Facebook, composing longer posts or, in the case of *Na Rua*, on their website. *Na Rua*'s summarizing articles often also presented characteristics of multimedia features — an interpretative format —, embedding videos and other visual elements as part of the summary of events on the ground. Thus, summarizing formats and interpretative formats could converge in some points, differing mostly in the way content was structured: actors employed summarizing formats to emphasize the key information surrounding an event, reserving background information and personal impressions to interpretative formats. In the next section, I describe contextualizing formats, a type of interpretative format actors employed to highlight background information and in-depth analyses.

### **Interpretative: Contextualizing Formats**

Contextualizing formats were embedded in the broader coverage through their thematic focus, as they also covered the events presented in snapshot or summarizing formats: protests, strikes, social movements. However, while the other two format types presented a more hard-news approach, briefly highlighting significant moments of events in real-time or very shortly after the action took place, contextualizing formats structured content so as to highlight more general discussions or emphasize background information that put recent events in context.

Thus, they reflected a more interpretative form of journalism, in which in-depth, background pieces or debates provided an interpretation of events from the day-to-day coverage.

**Counter Talk Show** Debates between actors or groups holding opposite views on various subjects belong to the core of deliberative models of the public sphere, which — although not without criticism — guide many authors' understanding of how societies should ideally discuss and solve internal disputes, as described in section 4.4. By gathering divergent views in one single format, the media fulfill one of their functions in this model, which is “to stimulate confrontation between different world views, making plural arguments more visible in the public sphere and, ideally, encouraging the public to reflect [on those arguments]” (Marques & Maia, 2008, p. 10)<sup>4</sup>.

Talk show formats are quite popular in some countries for striving to do just that, as is the case in Germany, where TV producers invite guests defending opposite views to get into heated arguments held on prime-time shows. The normative expectations toward these shows

<sup>4</sup>“(…) estimular o confronto entre diferentes visões de mundo, trazendo à esfera de visibilidade pública argumentos plurais e, idealmente, aptos a estimularem a reflexão por parte do público”(Marques & Maia, 2008, p. 10).

can be summarized as: informing the audience, discussing polemic opinions, making political alternatives visible and achieving solutions to the conflicts through compromise, all the while providing the public with entertainment through dramatic confrontations between the guests (Schicha, 2002, p. 213-214). These normative expectations are not always met and guests tend to use the visibility these shows provide not to deliberate together and reach an agreement, but rather to try to stand out individually to the audience (Schicha, 2002, p. 225) and, thus, gain media capital that may be turned, for example, into political capital later on. Criticism towards some shows' exaggerated and polarizing tone, especially with regards to subjects like migration, have become louder in the past few years (Zeit Online, 2018), but their popularity remains.

In Brazil, talk shows have been a part of both public service broadcasting and commercial TV stations' programming since the 1950s (da Silva, 2010, p. 122). These are classified either as entertainment talk shows, focused on interviews with celebrities or human interest stories and with a strong stylistic influence from US late night talk shows, and journalistic talk shows, focused on debating socio-political issues. Journalistic talk shows boomed particularly towards the end of the military dictatorship, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, "as, through conversation between participants, it would be possible to make democratic ideas (freedom of expression, equality, participation) more concrete through a public debate" (da Silva, 2010, p. 125)<sup>5</sup>. Unlike in the German context, however, Brazilian journalistic talk shows often feature just one guest and various interviewers, as is the case with famous shows such as *Roda Viva* or *Programa Livre*.

While counter talk shows, the format collectives produced in 2014, featured various guests, these guests did not defend drastically opposing views. Thus, counter talk shows parted with the deliberative goals German talk shows, at least in theory, pursue. The guests came instead from groups inside the left-wing spectrum: they were members of social movements, parties, collectives and unions, as well as autonomous protesters. Although they did not agree on everything, the starting point of the discussion did not consist of diametrically opposing views, but rather nuances that distinguished one movement from another without questioning some basic points all guests agreed on, such as their opposition towards the FIFA World Cup or the fight for workers' rights. In this sense, counter talk shows provided space for a counter public sphere to form, in which counterpublics could discuss and strategize before directing their discourse and demands at the broader public sphere (Fraser, 1992, p. 123).

Members of the collectives often played the role of presenters of the show, at moments explicitly stating its goal of providing a space of articulation for groups inside the left. The shows were live-streamed through Hangouts on Google+ and their recordings were made available on a YouTube account created just with the goal of archiving the recordings and kept separate from *Nigéria* and *Na Rua*'s own accounts<sup>6</sup>. Actors produced three different titles: *Pre-Street (Pré-Rua)*, streamed a day or some hours before a scheduled protest; *Post-Street (Pós-Rua)*, streamed shortly after a protest had taken place; and *Jogo Catimbado*, which was focused on soccer and its political

<sup>5</sup>"(...) uma vez que, pela conversação entre os participantes, seria possível concretizar ideais democráticos (liberdade de expressão, igualdade, participação) através de um debate público"(da Silva, 2010, p. 125).

<sup>6</sup>The account was called *Midiativismo Fortaleza* and was still online on 18 July 2019, the last date of access.

connotations. Particularly *Pre-Street* and *Post-Street* were of interest for the present analysis, as their focus coincided with that of the rest of the analyzed material.

In terms of format conventions, counter talk shows reproduced some well-known conventions from live broadcasts, such as when moderators ask viewers to join the discussion and send questions through social media or when they repeat the topic in the middle of the show for those just tuning in. The “studio” was not fixed, and settings varied according to whose home was hosting the show, but the participants usually sat on two sofas facing each other sideways in a living room.

This format was an example of the creation of new formats as an adaptation of presentation, as actors only came up with it in 2014. With a decrease in the pace and scale of the protests that year, the need for such formats, less centered on action on the ground and more on internal discussions for the movement, seemed to arise. Particularly *Nigéria* members reported redirecting their efforts towards the production of counter talk shows instead of doing live coverage or composing protest highlights. The collectives performed other presentation practices, structuring the content in a distinct way than during the coverage of protests on the streets. The actors they would have interviewed during a protest were now invited to the talk show and media collective members. Instead of editing guests’ statements into the broader coverage as in snapshot and summarizing formats, members of the media collective, in their new capacity of talk show hosts, mediated discussions among different guests and between guests and the public, letting guests talk at length. Moreover, instead of shooting images from the ground, they now concentrated on visual practices adequate for the new format, namely alternating takes from the studio and of the guests.

This format resulted from broader articulations between various actors in the build-up for the coverage of the 2014 anti-World Cup protests, which happened during gatherings called *Pautão da Copa* a few months before the matches took place (NG2, 25 December 2015, 27–30). In a way, this adaptation can be interpreted as arising from a need to deepen online conversations taking place between left-wing actors on social media through a longer, more linear format (NG3, 22 December 2015, 149–150). In addition, it complemented the liveblogs produced mostly by *Na Rua* members during protests in 2014, providing a space to mull over recent events that had happened on the ground. Given all these circumstances and the format’s characteristics, its interpretative, in-depth character becomes clear.

**Multimedia Feature** Actors employed a multimedia approach to contextualize events by combining various kinds of media to convey the nuances of a story. Multimedia features consisted of articles with embedded videos, pictures or graphics, fitting the general definition of multimedia in existing scholarship “as news elements that include a combination of still images (photos, illustrations, maps, static infographics), moving pictures (videos, interactive infographics), and/or sound recordings, either as independent pieces or embedded into larger text-based stories” (Harlow et al., 2017, p. 334).

This combination of various types of media contributed to the contextualization of an event by offering different perspectives on the topic being covered. Videos often showed particularly dramatic moments in the coverage and how they unfolded or featured an interview with some-

one on the ground, graphics showcased data that framed recent events as part of a trend — for example, the number of cases of police violence over a certain period of time as context for a recent case of police brutality —, and pictures provided visuals that complemented descriptions in the text. In short, “photographs, video and audio add a level of understanding and emotion beyond simple text” (Kolodzy, 2013, p. 115), bringing out other nuances than just the hard facts surrounding an event.

Multimedia features could also sometimes merge material posted on social media into a more linear narrative. This was particularly the case with a multimedia feature *Nigéria* published on the forced eviction of the Alto da Paz community in February 2014 (Nigéria, 2014a), embedding protagonist profiles, the long videos the collective shot during and shortly after the eviction, as well as background information on the infrastructure project the government planned for that area, featuring official videos and experts’ criticism<sup>7</sup>.

Thus, the possibilities of convergence journalism, in which “all communication tools available” are integrated into reporting (Kolodzy, 2013, p. 1), were explored in this format.

### **Interpretative: Mobilizing Chronicle**

While contextualizing formats represented interpretative journalism’s characteristic in-depth approach to events, mobilizing chronicles, as a different category inside interpretative formats, illustrated this kind of journalism’s more literary traits, which enable reporters to develop their individual takes on what happened on the ground, describing their personal impressions and experiences of events.

Chronicles — or, in Portuguese, *crônicas* — are a typically Brazilian genre, a hybrid between literary and journalistic text (Ramos, 2012, p. 1). It mixes subjective impressions with a journalistic article’s ephemerality, due to its focus on current or everyday topics. Its origins are in the late 19th century press, as Brazilian authors started filling literary supplements not just with fictional stories, but also with free-form texts mixing everyday observations with commentary on recent events. The chronicle was influenced by the French *feuilleton*, but, unlike this format, it had a factual character, commenting on real events through literary means, instead of featuring serialized novels (Ramos, 2012, p. 1–10).

Particularly *Na Rua* employed this format, with a section on the collective’s website dedicated to opinion texts. The best example were the articles under the category *At the Protest (No Ato)*, which featured members’ impressions after attending a recent protest. The texts combined first-person accounts of how it felt to take part in the events, lyrical and detailed descriptions of scenes from the ground with political messages — thus, the mobilizing character of these particular chronicles. Authors often mixed the first person in singular with the plural form, transitioning from speaking for themselves to conveying a collective message about the protests’ political significance.

This section detailed the format categories as part of two subgroups: news formats and interpretative formats, which reflect the division between hard news and interpretative journalism

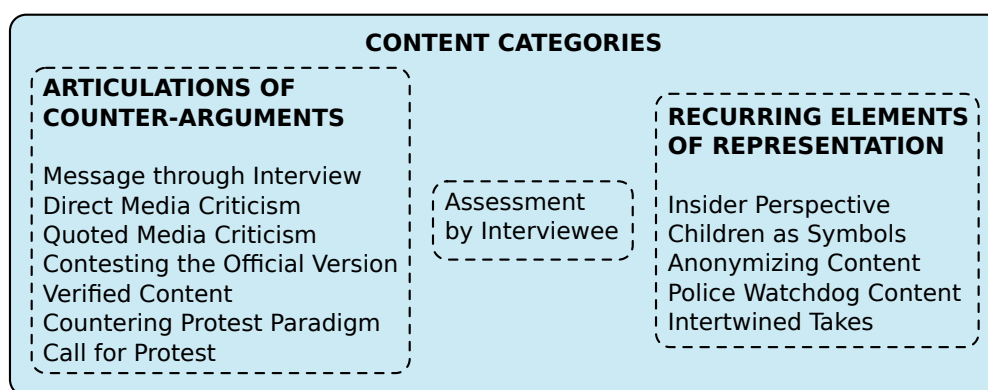
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<sup>7</sup>As the multimedia feature on Alto da Paz is extremely multi-layered and remained an outlier in the coverage, I do not analyze it in depth here. I plan to write an article on this piece in the near future.

already well-established in traditional journalism. However, these formats also presented some inherent features that reflected their origins in engaged journalism, such as the goal of contributing to the constitution of counterpublics in counter talk shows or the kinds of content showcased, as with liveblog's emphasis on police watchdog content. In the next section, I describe the content categories that permeated this coverage, which will make these differences even clearer.

## 7.1.2 Content Categories

Content categories describe the content of the coverage itself, i.e. the stories, arguments and visuals articulated, organized and published through the various formats actors employed in their coverage. While formats categories refer to forms of presentation, content categories refer to what is being presented.



**Figure 7.3:** Visual representation of content categories

As figure 7.3 shows, I divide content categories into two subgroups: articulations of counter-arguments and recurring elements of representation, with the category assessment by interviewee serving as a meta-category that shows characteristics from both subgroups. Articulations of counter-arguments describe forms of argumentation mostly through speech articulated in the coverage, while recurring elements of representation focuses mostly on visual elements. Of course, arguments can also be articulated through visual means, not just words – for example, by interposing certain images to convey a specific meaning or message. At the same time, visuals can also emerge from actors' articulations during interviews, as they tell a vivid story. However, as a theoretical categorization, this division provided a fruitful way to make explicit patterns in the content, as I demonstrate in the following pages by describing each category individually, focusing on its sharp, unique characteristics.

**Assessment by Interviewee** This category summarizes most of the stances of direct quoting of interview partners, as passages showcased interpretations of the action on the ground, opinions on the issue being covered or testimonies of experiences made during an event in interview partners' own words.

In addition to sentences between quotation marks in written texts, this category also covered audiovisual representations such as interviewees' voices overlapped through edition to images of the situation being covered or close-ups of the speaking protagonists intertwined with images

from the ground. These close-ups also provided the audience with further information, as viewers could “pick up additional signals of emotion by reading the person’s facial expression as well as hearing their voice” (Kolodzy, 2013, p. 111), which enriched the reporting.

The predominance of people at the center of the action — one of the dimensions of the news-gathering practice around interviews on the ground — became particularly clear in the coverage through the use of assessment by interviewees as a kind of narration for the images, as most videos the collectives shot did not feature other forms of narration, such as continuous off-narration or subtitles. At the same time, overlapping interviewees’ voices to images of events translated into content actors’ decision to prioritize interviewees’ perspective on events in their coverage.

Assessment by interviewee is a category that presents characteristics from both content sub-groups, articulations of counter-arguments and recurring elements of representation. It contains visual aspects, such as close-ups and the employment of quoted statements as voice-overs to images captured on the ground, and speech in the form of sources’ quoted statements. Thus, I chose to classify assessment by interviewee as a meta-category between both content category sub-groups. It is not a format category, as format categories represent the structures that showcased content, while assessment by interviewees was one element employed in various types of format structures, not just one. Assessments by interviewees permeated other content categories, such as countering the protest paradigm or contesting the official version, transmitting these forms of counter-argumentation as quoted passages from interviews with sources that integrate the final product.

### **Articulations of Counter-Arguments**

As the model I presented in the previous chapter showed, actors’ dissatisfaction with traditional media’s coverage of the 2013 protests provided a strong motivation for them to start their own coverage of events. As a result, criticism towards traditional media emerged not only as an important dimension in the development of media practices, as actors tried to perform them in ways that seek to compensate for the shortcomings they perceived in the work of colleagues from traditional media outlets, but also in the content itself.

Although I did not perform a discourse analysis of the content, Foucault’s definition of discourses is useful to understand why actors focused so much on reacting to traditional media’s coverage. Based on his work, Dunn and Neumann (2016, p. 3) describe discourses as naturalizing “meanings and identities by fixing particular representations, giving the impression of ‘truth,’” underlining the link between knowledge and power that permeates discourses’ representations of reality. As systems of meaning-production, discourses provide the framework of “what can be known and acted upon” (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 3). This can be the reason why collectives invested so much time into countering traditional media’s argumentation: they wanted to show, through their own coverage, that there were other things that could be known and acted upon yet were not being articulated as prominently in traditional media outlets’ reporting. Some of the recurring elements of representation played a similar role, which I describe later on as well. I, thus, understand discourse, in my case, as actors’ media production, constituted through this

interplay between both content category subgroups, which is structured in formats.

Regarding articulations of counter-arguments in particular, collectives' efforts to build argumentations that sought to counter traditional media's happened in various ways, from choosing to quote certain statements their interview partners made — thus giving different actors space in the coverage to interpret events through their own perspectives — to avoiding and even rebuking the usual criminalizing representations of protests on traditional media, as I describe in more detail in the next pages.

**Message through Interview** As part of their assessment of the situation, interviewees sometimes talked not just to the interviewer standing immediately before them, but rather explicitly addressed a potential audience of the final content — usually the authorities, the audience or the general population. This category describes such stances, in which actors include in the final product of their reporting interviewees' attempts to use the promising resonance of a media appearance to send a message to actors they might not reach otherwise. These messages ranged from calls to viewers to join specific actions, such as an occupation or a march, to reprimands towards politicians that interviewees considered responsible for the issues they were mobilizing around.

This was particularly clear in the videos of the eviction of the Alto da Paz community, which I plan to analyze in-depth in a separate article in the future: many of the interviewed residents expressed their rage and disappointment at the city mayor for enabling residents' violent eviction from their homes, addressing him directly with calls to rethink his actions (Nigéria, 2014a). Given the limited reach of alternative media, it is disputable whether authorities indeed received these messages, but they were a powerful form of counter-argumentation, offering an outlet for marginalized protagonists to mark their positions and demands, in an attempt to reach the center of the public sphere. In this sense, messages through interviews also exemplified alternative media's role as subaltern counterpublics as Fraser (1992) conceptualizes them. In addition to actors' commitment to these sources, which permeated their counter sourcing practices, these messages' poignancy might have been a reason why actors chose to include this content in their final products, as they addressed audiences directly, delivering sources' arguments in a very strong way.

**Quoted Media Criticism** This type of content describes the various ways protagonists expressed media criticism during the coverage. It makes explicit the pattern formed by scenes as distinct as a protester trying to reason with a traditional reporter; people wearing T-shirts or carrying banners with critical slogans against traditional media outlets; a crowd aggressively expelling a traditional reporter from a protest or trying to disrupt their work; an interview partner voicing specific criticism about the media's representation of the protests or of themselves as part of a group of protesters — for example, members of the black bloc complaining about how they were being portrayed as vandals. These scenes were united by the fact that they all carried discourses of media criticism in its various forms.

Quoted media criticism also often overlapped with categories from the recurring elements of representation subgroup, such as insider perspective: during scenes of confrontation between



media representatives and protesters, the camera usually filmed the action from an angle that connoted its position among the protesters, yet the collectives did not explicitly state their support for all these stances of media criticism, simply capturing and quoting them as part of their overall coverage. As described in chapter 2, hostility towards traditional media on the part of protesters was a phenomenon that permeated the 2013 and 2014 protests all over Brazil. This could also be interpreted as a stance of protesters adopting the attack media strategy conceptualized by Rucht (2013).

**Direct Media Criticism** While quoted media criticism portrayed other people's manifestations of dissatisfaction with traditional media, this category describes collectives directly voicing their own media criticism. However, this was done in a different way than protesters', as actors drew from journalistic routines such as fact-checking traditional media's reports or assuring their authority to present a different version of the coverage through claims of being present on sites where traditional reporters were not. Thus, actors employed markers of professionalism as a way to invest their criticism with authority inside the journalistic field.

**Contesting the Official Version** Another pattern of counter-arguments articulated in the coverage were stances where actors quoted interview partners contesting information provided by the authorities, usually by contrasting such official statements with the testimony of their own particular situation. This revealed that previously divulged information regarding public policy or police treatment did not always match the experiences protagonists made in their everyday lives.

Thus, collectives placed more emphasis on these testimonies than on the official version of events, in a manifestation of their counter sourcing practices in the content of the coverage, i.e. showing a critical distance to official sources and favoring marginalized voices.

**Verified Content** Stories that highlighted verification of information as a criterion for publishing it at all can be described as verified content. Actors often explicitly described processes of verification in the text or assured the veracity of the information after pointing out that the collective had fact-checked it.

Verified content related to information on very recent and grave events, such as arrests, or a contextualization or debunking of rumors already circulating: the content was published, in part, to combat false claims and strengthen the visibility of true ones.

Verified content was the product of practices of verification, made viable through coping practices such as division of tasks.

**Countering the Protest Paradigm** This content category describes the framing of actions such as protests or roadblocks in a way that deliberately departed from the patterns that constituted the protest paradigm, i.e. the content did not focus primarily on conflicts between protesters and the police nor did it quote the authorities prominently; in addition, it moved away from a criminalizing descriptions of protesters' actions.

Content from this category featured mostly statements from protesters and organizers themselves, containing explanations as to what had motivated their actions and the context that surrounded them. This led to a portrayal of these actions as forms of political tactics and expression, not as extreme deviations or nuisances. Scenes showing roadblocks or destruction of property captured by the collectives were, thus, embedded in a different, more understanding kind of discourse than the protest paradigm<sup>8</sup>.

Much like many of the previously mentioned content categories, this category can be seen as a result of actors' counter sourcing practices, marked by distance to official sources and a decision to showcase sources active at the protest or social movement being covered, as well as their statements, which usually did not get much attention in traditional media, as the protest paradigm describes.

**Call for Protest** In various different formats, actors embedded calls for the public to join upcoming protests, providing the basic information on the event, such as meeting place, date, time and the main theme of the protest. These factual pieces of information were then combined with mobilizing language, not just letting followers know about the protest taking place, but urging them to join the action. I conceptualize the pattern this content built in the material through the category call for protest.

This content category also helped reveal the practice of mobilization through repercussion, not previously mentioned by actors in the expert interviews. I analyze it in more detail towards the end of this chapter.

Having gone through the main forms of counter-argumentation contained in the coverage I analyzed, I now turn to the content categories that pertained to the visual aspects of the coverage.

### **Recurring Elements of Representation**

While the previous content category subgroup focuses on patterns of argumentation that crossed collectives' coverage of the events that transpired in Fortaleza between 2013 and 2014, this subgroup gathers the various visual patterns in the coverage, such as the perspective from which images were presented to the viewer or the representation of certain dominant themes, such as police conduct or the presence of children at covered events.

In a way, these categories also composed collectives' discourse, which aimed at countering traditional media's coverage of the protests, showcasing different visuals than the ones broadcast or published by most of the country's major media outlets and, thus, revealing other nuances of events.

**Insider Perspective** One of the most recurring patterns in the coverage were images shot from among the crowd, with the camera held at eye level and at the same side as protesters. This

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<sup>8</sup>As the nuanced discussion on this concept that I summarized in chapter 3 shows, however, this positive coverage might also be due to the fact that collectives and the protests they covered were on the same side of the political spectrum. It would be interesting to see how collectives would have covered a right-wing action.

kind of content, both as photos and as videos, provided the viewer with the feeling of having an insider perspective of the movement, which was captured from up close<sup>9</sup>. The viewer was placed among the crowd and could see the individuals that formed it. The images showed altercations between protesters holding different opinions, subtle changes in the general mood, small details (slogans on T-shirts, the face of someone initiating a chant, parents carrying their children, a hand grabbing a rock to throw at the police). This way, instead of a compact, faceless mass filling the streets or standing before a police line, the heterogeneity of those attending a protest became visible.

Given the hostility journalists were faced with while covering protesters in 2013 and 2014, content presenting an insider perspective seemed to be possible due to collectives' access to social movement spaces and actors, earned through the credibility they achieved by performing counter sourcing practices. Stances of insider perspective from movement spheres otherwise closed to the broader public or to most media representatives illustrated this phenomenon, as collectives captured images from inside unannounced actions – for example, the camera getting off the bus together with MTST activists in a video about a land occupation in the middle of the night (Nigéria, 2014e) – or internal deliberation, with pictures taken from among protesters as they gathered in an assembly to decide on their next steps (Nigéria, 2014d).

This category also translated the practice of positioned allegiance into content, showing the images made possible by actors physically positioning themselves among protesters instead of behind police lines, as they claimed traditional media representatives did during the expert interviews.

Insider perspectives often got combined with other content categories, such as anonymized content (filming protesters' backs as the camera was positioned behind them helped safeguard their identities) and police watchdog content (as the camera filmed officers in a way that sought to reproduce how protesters saw them: zooming in over someone's shoulder, for example).

**Children as Symbols** Insider perspective's eye for details often facilitated a focus on children taking part in the events being covered, as the camera could find them more easily among the crowd. Images of children were recurring in the material across different kinds of coverages, from colorful anti-World Cup marches to gut-wrenching forced evictions. According to researchers such as Chouliaraki (2017), this is no coincidence: "An exemplary manifestation of innocent vulnerability, the child has historically operated as an instrument in mobilising tender-heartedness and parental love (...)" (Chouliaraki, 2017, p. 1168). Children can invest an issue with moral clarity through their presence at events viewers would not immediately associate them with, showing children are also among those affected by an issue. As a result, "children have become projections of adult agendas" (Moeller, 2002, p. 37) when they are featured in the coverage.

Both Chouliaraki (2017) and Moeller (2002) focus on humanitarian crises and war reporting

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<sup>9</sup>Empirical studies such as Halfmann, Dech, Riemann, Schlenker, and Wessler's (2018, p. 18–19) seem to support actors' expectations towards the effects of such content, showing that viewers perceived videos recorded from what the authors call an eyewitness perspective to transmit a greater sense of presence at the scene, empathy and authenticity. At the same time, viewers attributed more bias to such videos.

in their studies, highlighting children's role as proxies for understanding an otherwise complex conflict and mobilizing audiences — particularly in the Global North — to aid war survivors and refugees through charity, policies or support for their governments' intervention. My research focused on a different context: although the 2013 and 2014 protests in Brazil were the first massive mobilizations the country saw in decades and had deep political consequences, they were still far from reaching the dimensions of a humanitarian crisis. Therefore, while the collectives' coverage featured images of children in distress, these were presented side by side with images of children playing, smiling, holding signs or simply watching a protest with interest. By capturing positive images of children in social mobilizations, collectives seemed to be trying to transfer their innocent, hopeful aura to the movements themselves and to associate movements' possible success with a better future for the children involved as well.

These images were also often contrasted with shots of police presence, be it in a picture or a take that showed children in the same frame as (often menacing-looking) police officers or in intertwined takes of children and the police apparatus. This also fits the existing scholarship: “children dramatize the righteousness of a cause by having their innocence contrasted with the malevolence (or perhaps banal hostility) of adults in authority” (Moeller, 2002, p. 39). These takes sought to make the disparity of forces between both sides more obvious, framing protesters and social movements as the weaker yet righteous side of the conflict.

In addition, particularly children featured in events involving housing rights seemed to symbolize their vulnerability and marginalization through state violence or neglect, as these children and their families' housing situation was presented in all its precariousness. In the coverage of the forced eviction of the Alto da Paz community, this was taken to the extreme when collectives extensively showed despondent shots of children amid the rubble of their former homes after they were torn down by the authorities (Nigéria, 2014a). These examples echo Moeller's assessment that “children are a synecdoche for a country's future, for the political and social well-being of a culture” (Moeller, 2002, p. 39). By portraying children in their coverage, collectives seemed to be asking viewers what kind of future they wished for Brazil and its children in such times of upheaval.

**Anonymized Content** Scenes featuring prosecutable actions were among the most recurring elements to get anonymized. This way, collectives protected their potential sources, the protesters, and tried to prevent authorities from using their coverage as proof against individuals being prosecuted.

There were two types of anonymized content. The first consisted of the representation of people who took measures to remain anonymous in the protest themselves: they were shown wearing masks or t-shirts around their faces — the t-shirts serving as improvised balaclavas. Thus, the collectives did not take additional measures to anonymize them when they were featured in the content, in what I call passive anonymization, i.e. simply showing people the way they chose to appear on the ground. This translated into quoted assessments by interviewees whose masked faces appeared on the frame or into shots from inside the crowd where people wearing masks also came up, to name a few examples.

The second type of anonymized content went through active anonymization and showed

collectives' content editing practice of ensuring anonymity at work, as they took measures to preserve the identity of people who were not hiding their faces on the ground. As perhaps already expected, this translated into shots in which protagonists' faces were blurred or the pitch of their voices got altered to avoid recognition. Moreover, scenes in which the process of active anonymization happened already at the moment of capturing them on the ground were also part of this category, as was the case with shots in which the camera was pointed at the feet of those performing direct action or scenes of police searches and arrests filmed from an angle that left protesters' faces out of the frame (while police officers' features were often still visible). Here, the practice of ensuring anonymity could be deduced from the editors' decision to include in the final video scenes that already protected people's identities due to the way they had been captured, thus not demanding further edition.

It is important to underline that both types of anonymized content sometimes appeared in the same shot, for example in scenes of a crowd of protesters performing direct action, with some wearing masks and others not hiding their faces — the faces visible in the shot were then blurred through edition. The final scene showed both forms of anonymized content side by side.

In written text, I considered the content to be anonymized when sources' names were excluded from the text, replaced with another name or with just vague identification markers, such as "a young protester" or "a student".

**Police Watchdog Content** Content that focuses on the police and its actions seems to be recurring in alternative media coverage of protests. Cammaerts (2012, p. 127) describes filming or photographing the police as a form of "sousveillance tactics — surveilling the surveillers or bottom-up surveillance by the citizen/activist on the state or public figures." By doing this, he argues, protesters seek to expose police violence, disseminating their own perspective of what happened through alternative channels such as YouTube and countering criminalizing narratives such as the protest paradigm featured on traditional media. Police watchdog content fits the concept of sousveillance, as it helped collectives build their discourses to counter traditional media's coverage.

Police watchdog content was composed by three recurring elements the collectives captured and embedded in their broader coverage of the protests. The first element consisted of registering police presence, i.e. counting units on site, estimating how many officers were present at the scene, listing the kind of equipment officers were using. In snapshot formats such as liveblogs and protest highlights, this came up in the form of updates containing such inventory information, often combined with a picture taken of police at the scene and descriptions of officers' more precise location on the ground. Photos and videos, for example in summarizing formats, contained shots of police units or long takes of officers positioned around the protest, as well as stances of the camera zooming into specific gear officers were carrying or specific equipment such as helicopters or water tanks. Sometimes these images looked intimidating due to the sheer amount of police officers and equipment recorded, contributing to create a picture of disproportionate police deployment during the protests.

The second recurring element of police watchdog content focused on capturing interactions between protesters or social movement participants and the police. These interactions could

consist of negotiations between both parts around a march's route, for example. However, they more often consisted of altercations between protesters questioning the legality of a specific action officers took, such as an arrest. Activist lawyers often performed this role, drawing from their recognized status as licensed professionals and their legal knowledge. This kind of content brought a confrontational tone to the coverage, showing examples of citizens questioning police action and capturing officers' arguments (or lack thereof) without interviewing them directly, illustrating the collectives' critical and distant stance towards the authorities which was part of their counter sourcing practices.

Finally, I call the third recurring element of police watchdog content police (mis)conduct. The parentheses in the name mark the intent behind this content, namely recording stances of police misconduct and abuses. However, this intent did not always materialize in actual misconduct. As described in the expert interviews with regards to the practice of police watchdog, collectives attempted to be there, with their cameras trained on officers, should misconduct arise, filming as much of the police's conduct on the ground as possible. On the final videos themselves, this meant long takes shot in close proximity to the police, as officers communicated with each other, got into formation or approached protesters, for example. These were different from takes of police presence that showed the extent of the apparatus on site. Instead, content portraying police (mis)conduct focused on police in action, in order to capture any form of illegal or violent moves. A long take of police maneuvers might end with officers firing tear gas or rubber bullets at the crowd or simply repositioning themselves. This content also featured close-ups of certain details, such as the area in police officers' uniforms reserved for identification, in order to record the name of the officer performing an action or show a violation of regulation in case the officer was not wearing any identification<sup>10</sup>.

In addition, images and testimonies that described police misconduct were also part of this pattern in the content. These included images of bullet cases found on site or of white clouds of what looked like tear gas floating in the air, as well as close-ups of protesters' red eyes, irritated due to tear gas. Collectives employed these images as evidence that police misconduct had happened, even if the misconduct itself had not been caught on camera. They were also representations of the consequences of police brutality from protesters' point of view, as protesters presented their wounds to the camera or relayed their experiences with searches, arrests or physical violence inflicted by officers in general. I call this particular stance of police watchdog content evidence material.

Particularly in the case of content featuring interactions between police officers and protesters or police (mis)conduct, images seemed to reflect the practice of filming or photographing ostensibly close to the police, which interview partners described as resulting from practices of self-empowerment through the camera. Images were relayed from up close, the words exchanged were clearly audible, and the viewer has the sense of standing very close to the scene playing out on her screen. Thus, as Cammaerts (2012, p. 127) asserts, this form of *sousveillance* can be regarded as a form of direct action, as the camera does not watch the scene neutrally from afar, but

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<sup>10</sup>State laws vary in relation to officers' identification obligations, but police officers in Ceará are obliged by law to carry visible identification in their uniforms (Ceará, 2014).

might even influence how it unfolds, as both sides — protesters and police officers — seem acutely aware that they are being observed: in the material I analyzed, police officers often looked uncomfortable with the proximity of the camera, while protesters' reactions ranged from demands for the camera to stay close and keep filming to requests for the camera not to film their faces in unflattering situations like searches or arrests. This, in turn, constitutes one of the downsides of *sousveillance*, as it contributes “to the panopticism of society” (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 129).

**Intertwined Takes** Forming a pattern in the coverage by combining some recurring elements into contrasting sequences, intertwined takes were characterized by alternating shots of different groups either through edition — by overlapping images filmed separately — or through camera movement, as the person holding the camera directed it from one side to the other in one single take.

In scenes in which protesters and police faced each other on the street, intertwined takes featured images shot from protesters' (insider) perspective and of police presence or action filmed either from a more distant or aggressively close perspective (as described in police watchdog content). Another example was the interposing of images of children, which could symbolize innocence or vulnerability, with portraits of heavy police presence around the event these children were present at. This kind of sequence seemed to underline stark, dramatic contrasts. As a result, counter-argumentation happened through the organization of opposite kinds of images into intertwined takes to visually make a point.

Throughout this section I made various connections between content and format categories and the practices featured in my model. This is due to the fact that my multi-layered analysis of the material also took the context of production into account and, thus, actors' practices during the alternative coverage of events. However, the main focus of analysis was the material itself and its specificities. During the interpretation of the results, I systematized the recurring links between practices and content, in order to effectively answer RQ 2, which sought to verify the relationship between shifts in the coverage and actors' adaptations of practices as a reaction to changes in the sociopolitical context.

My multi-layered content analysis also revealed a practice and a contextual dimension that had not been mentioned during expert interviews yet should also be taken into account as part of the complex of practices that constituted the alternative coverage of the 2013 and 2014 protests in Fortaleza.

## 7.2 Content Analysis' Complements to the Model

Through the combination of methods of qualitative content analysis and expert interviews that I employed to answer my research questions it was possible not to reveal the various patterns in the content both collectives produced. This open, in-depth analysis of the content also showed nuances that had not been mentioned in the expert interviews, yet are relevant to my model of the alternative coverage of protests as a complex of practices. This was possible as I coded posts, pictures or videos that documented these nuances throughout the period analyzed and

interpreted their overarching patterns through methodological tools of the grounded theory approach, generating complementary categories to the model.

Much like with the various rounds of coding I performed on the expert interviews' transcripts with the aim of acquiring a solid conceptualization of their media practices, the increasingly focused coding of collectives' media production provided the conceptual and empirical tools to describe one more practice and one contextual dimension, which I add to the final model in chapter 9. Concretely, this means I retraced, through successive rounds of coding, recurring descriptions of this practice and this contextual dimension, present in various stances of the material, and refined them to more abstract categories. These categories relate to reporting on upcoming actions and to the distribution channels actors used to spread the content they produced.

### 7.2.1 Mobilization through Repercussion

The collectives' practice of sharing or composing calls for upcoming protests represented a way of covering the build-up for an action and mobilizing the audience to attend it. This practice consisted of employing a mix of practical information on the event and a political discourse that encouraged attendance. Much like other practices I described in the model featured in chapter 6, this practice also showed a rejection of the objectivity paradigm in reporting.

Collectives not only forwarded the information they acquired, they also often summarized the event with their own words, as can be seen in figure 7.4:

12 June 2014 marks the beginning of the FIFA World Cup tournament. The post, published by *Na Rua* on its Facebook page, had a passionate tone and sought to mobilize those reading it at home into attending the protest organized by various movements on that day as well, as the first sentences show: “#THEREWILLBENOWORLDCUP, there will be STRUGGLE! (...) Today is the day, folks. It starts not only around Itaquairão [stadium, in São Paulo], but also all over Brazil.”<sup>11</sup> The rest of the text invited readers explicitly to join the struggle by providing practical details, such as time, meeting point and planned route of the anti-World Cup march. The post contained an aerial picture of the protest site — the surroundings of the tournament's official public viewing venue, called FIFA FanFest, in Fortaleza — and linked to the Facebook event that the protest organizers had created. The various hashtags employed in the text encouraged followers to post their own pictures and status updates if they attended the protest in a way that was traceable to the collective.

Here, the dimensions of this practice become visible: the reporting on the upcoming event was not neutral, it not only informed readers on the planned protest, but actively called on them to join it on the ground; the actors combined practical information with descriptions of a broader context that, in their view, made the protests necessary. In this example, while *Na Rua* still referred to its own live coverage, the goal was not to encourage readers to follow the events from home. Thus, the collective positioned itself at the side of event organizers, urging its public to become active: it mobilized by echoing information on a protest it clearly supports. It is important to highlight that *Na Rua* is not among the protest organizers; rather, the collective is

<sup>11</sup>“#NÃOVAITERCOPA, vai ter LUTA! (...) É hoje, oficialmente, é hoje, pessoal. É ao redor do Itaquairão [em São Paulo], mas é em todo o Brasil também.”





**Figure 7.4:** Screenshot from *Na Rua*'s Facebook post containing a call for protest.

expressing support for the event by performing practices of mobilization through repercussion.

In the vocabulary related to music, repercussion means repeating the same sound, something the collectives also did by reproducing a call for protest: they amplified the event organizer's original invitation to their audience. This practice, however, resulted in many different kinds of content, not just Facebook posts as the one I chose here as an example. The content category call for protest summarizes how the practice of mobilization through repercussion manifested itself in various stances in the coverage. I provided more examples of this in the analysis of typical cases in chapter 8.

### 7.2.2 Offline Distribution

While interviews revealed actors' use of social media platforms as the main way of distributing their content, looking at the content itself showed the establishment of distribution channels offline as well, enriching the context of publication of actors' media production. These offline channels included movie screenings and exhibitions.

Especially in the case of *Nigéria's* documentary *Vandalism*, there were over 50 posts in the material promoting movie screenings all over Brazil and around the world during 2013 and 2014. The venues varied from film festivals to screenings for allied social movements or activist gatherings. At the end of 2014, *Na Rua* also organized a photo exhibition featuring highlights from their coverage of protest movements, many of which had also been published online in the course of that year. The collective also posted about it, inviting its social media followers to come to the exhibition. Thus, content that had originally circulated online, such as a documentary fully uploaded to YouTube and pictures from liveblogs, reappeared in a different context in offline events.

This combination of online and offline distribution channels showed that actors, much like the activists they covered, did not rely on just one way of spreading their message, but rather adopted a mix of decentralized, online communication and face-to-face interaction according to their specific necessities and strategies (Costanza-Chock et al., 2015; Downing et al., 2001; Mattoni, 2012; Rucht, 2013; Treré, 2018).

## 7.3 Looking at Media Production Reveals New Nuances

In this chapter, I presented the categories that my qualitative content analysis generated of recurring patterns in the coverage of both collectives, both in terms of formats and of content (section 7.1). Moreover, I introduced one practice and one contextual dimension documented in the material that complement my model of the alternative coverage as a complex of practices (section 7.2).

As this chapter shows, looking into collectives' media production in the period researched brings more depth and nuance to the conceptualization of their media practices. While expert interviews help keep theoretical categories grounded on actors' realities, since these categories emerge from the convergence of various actors' relayed experiences, analyzing their media production allowed me to retrace details that did not come up in the interviews, be it because they escaped the original focus of my questions, be it because actors had already forgotten about them. As Cammaerts (2012) points out, social media often play the role of archives for protest movements such as the June Journeys. Despite the various challenges especially commercial platforms such as Facebook pose to activists and researches alike, collectives' pages there served as a hub for the circulation of their media production as part of the coverage of events in Fortaleza in the years of 2013 and 2014<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup>The fact that collectives' social media pages served as archives of their coverage hints at possible archiving practices. However neither expert interviews nor the analysis of collectives' media production showed that this was a concern actors had at the time. This may be a consequence of my research ques-

With regards to actors' content editing practices, the analysis of the material revealed which specific formats were employed as a result of their presentation practices. In addition, categories pertaining to the recurring elements of representation complement actors' description of their content editing practices by concretely revealing patterns of structuring the content to tell a certain story, as the use of intertwined takes to highlight contrasts between the police and protesters shows. The analysis also revealed how actors' positioning on the ground and news-gathering practices such as their choice of interview partners reflected on the resulting media production, emphasizing certain kinds of content over others – abuses by police officers (in the form of police watchdog content) instead of criminalizing representations of protests (described by the category countering the protest paradigm), for example.

Now that I have introduced the various categories present in the material individually, I show how they come together, as formats and content categories interacted in the course of the coverage of events between mid-2013 and the end of 2014. By focusing on particularly illustrative examples in the next chapter, I reinsert the temporal and contextual elements into my analysis. This provides the final factors necessary for answering RQ2.

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tions, with their focus on the coverage of the protests during or only shortly after they took place. How this coverage survives many years after the protests is a topic that poses other questions and requires further empirical research.

## Chapter 8

# Typical Cases of Interaction between Formats and Content in the Coverage

After presenting the categories that emerged from my qualitative content analysis in chapter 7, as well as their connections with the practices I described in chapter 6, I focus in this chapter on the interplay between these categories in 11 concrete examples<sup>1</sup>.

The cases I selected for this chapter are pieces that illustrate overarching patterns in the material in terms of the interplay between format and content categories in the coverage. I present them in chronological order, following the order of events from June 2013, when the first massive protests erupted, to the end of 2014. This enables a better view of how categories played out in different contexts, as the thematic focus of the coverage changed, indicating a possible adaptation of related media practices during the coverage.

In some cases, formats were thematically connected, with the same event or topic being covered in different ways through different formats, revealing the nuances of these diverse presentation forms (as is the case in sections 8.9, 8.8 and 8.10). Other examples show a high concentration of important content categories in one production, as with section 8.1, which presents the documentary *Vandalism*. What all examples have in common is the fact that they stand for broader patterns in the material, representing interactions that can repeatedly be found in the rest of the coverage not featured here.

### 8.1 Recording the June Journeys on *Vandalism*

Launched on 27 July 2013, only a few weeks after the end of the Confederations Cup in 2013, *Nigéria's Vandalism (Com Vandalismo)* was one of the first documentaries about the 2013 protests in Brazil to come out. The collective made the full movie available on YouTube, reaching 100,000 views within three months after the launch. The choice to circulate the movie as much as possible fits a tradition of using feature-length documentaries “as key vehicles for the global circulation of media strategies and tactics” (Costanza-Chock, 2014, p. 96–97), especially after the collective uploaded versions with subtitles in English and Spanish, making the movie more accessible to

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<sup>1</sup>The complete references to all pieces I analyzed in this chapter are listed in appendix E.

other movements worldwide. Although documentaries were not so recurring in the material as to constitute a format category, this movie serves as a typical example of how various content categories interacted with each other in both collectives' coverage.

Covering the four largest protests to take place in Fortaleza during that period, from 19 June to 27 June, the documentary features images from inside the protests, interviews with a multitude of actors and first attempts at understanding the events that took the whole country by surprise. Media criticism serves as a guiding thread uniting this plurality of impressions, as the documentary shows a lot of quoted media criticism from interviews with members of very different groups present in the protest, relaying their perception of what traditional media was getting wrong.

Members of the collective told me during our interviews that they had started recording the protests as a way to register this historical moment, but that the focus on direct action or vandalism — as traditional media called it — became stronger during this process due to traditional media outlets' coverage of it. The collective tried to get to the root of the phenomenon, not only showing images of direct action but also quoting various actors' opinions about it. This on-going debate around the need for direct action is the main theme of the movie, which features perspectives pro and against it, however only among protesters — no police officer, traditional media reporter or academic expert is interviewed<sup>2</sup>. All in all, this is one of the most obvious examples in the material of how alternative media sought to build a counter-argumentation, offering a different representation and interpretation of events from traditional media and showcasing different sources.

During the first minutes of the documentary, a narrator describes the focus of the film, as an image of a man wearing an improvised balaclava covering his face and standing with a triumphal pumped fist in front of a burning car becomes increasingly clear on the screen, while the camera slowly zooms out to show the whole scene. The narrator lays out the collective's rationale for making the documentary:

“June 2013. Brazil entered one of the most enigmatic moments of its history. Just like in Egypt and Turkey, millions of people gathered on the country's streets. The protests had different motives and results. In common they had the separation between peaceful protesters and vandals, a division that was propagated by the press and the authorities after various protests had resulted in confrontations with the police. According to big Brazilian media, vandals are people with no political motivation who destroy public property and media outlets' cars, and attack the police with the plain goal of creating chaos. Vandals would be the infiltrated minority, rowdies, criminals. And because of that they don't deserve to be heard. Do these protesters really have no aim? What motivates civil disobedience? We decided to follow the conflicts closely, as well as the so-called vandals.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>It may be that people with such roles were also interviewed on the ground, but appeared in their capacities as protesters.

<sup>3</sup>“Junho de 2013. O Brasil entrou em um dos momentos mais enigmáticos de sua história. Assim como os eventos no Egito e Turquia, o país reuniu milhões de pessoas nas ruas. As manifestações tiveram diferentes motivos e resultados. O ponto em comum: a separação dos manifestantes entre pacíficos e

This introduction sets the tone of the documentary, making its thematic focus explicit and also marking the collective's questioning of traditional media's representation of direct action. The narrator quotes indirectly some of the recurring arguments present in most media outlets' coverage of the protests, such as the representation of so-called vandals as criminals and depoliticized chaos tourists. The open questions the narrator poses at the end of this passage hint at the fact that the collective does not think this is the whole truth and that this is a phenomenon that must be investigated in-depth, which they proceed to do in course of the movie's 1 hour and 12 minutes. In addition, this narration, which extends throughout the documentary, breaks with *Nigéria's* usual practice of editing scenes together without much additional contextualization or comment — here they seem to want to contextualize as much as possible.

Each protest filmed can be considered a chapter in this chronicle of June 2013, with a beginning, marked by a black screen showing the date and main topic of the protest, and an end, marked by the next black screen, in which the name and date of the next protests slowly appears in white letters. My analysis follows the same structure.

**19 June 2013: Confederations Cup protest** The first protest covered happens on 19 June 2013, on the same day that the soccer match between Brazil and Mexico takes place in Fortaleza. The settings are the surroundings of the stadium. The first source quoted in the documentary is a protester present at the scene, who talks about how he changed his mind regarding direct action, from discouraging it to performing it himself. It is important to highlight that this interview comes up right after the thematic introduction, so the collective chooses to open the first section of its documentary with a voice that is favorable to direct action. This is quite different from traditional media's approach of rarely interviewing people supportive of direct action or performing it themselves; here, this voice gains a prime positioning in the movie, right at the beginning. Another important element in this quoted interview is the fact that the protester's voice is overlapped with images showing conflict between police and protesters. Very briefly there is a shot of his face: his features are obscured through edition, in a stance of active anonymization.

After this first testimony, images of police using less-lethal weapons and police helicopters are shown before the date of the protest appears on a black screen. After the date is displayed, the narrator informs that 80,000 people attended that protest, while images shot from inside the crowd, showing people walking and carrying signs, appear on the screen.

Shots of the action on the ground are intertwined with various other interview passages. For instance, a woman who appears to be from the low-income community located at the stadium's surroundings, shown with her grandson, is quoted criticizing the government's excessive spending for the World Cup while there are so many poor people starving in the country; a retired police officer who is also attending the protests denounces the presence of infiltrated police among the protesters. The viewer does not see his face, in another stance of active anonymiza-

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vândalos, divisão propagada pela imprensa e governantes, depois de várias manifestações resultarem em confronto com a polícia. Vândalos, segundo a grande imprensa brasileira, são pessoas sem motivações políticas, que depredam patrimônio público, carros de veículos de comunicação e atacam a polícia com o simples objetivo de estabelecer o caos. Vândalos seriam a minoria infiltrada, baderneiros, bandidos. Por causa disso, não merecem ser escutados. Seriam esses manifestantes sem propósito? Qual a motivação para a desobediência civil? Resolvemos acompanhar de perto os conflitos e os chamados vândalos.”

tion, yet his voice has not been distorted. His words are overlapped with images of the protest and of the police. These images show both groups captured frontally, raising the assumption that the camera was positioned in the space between them. These intertwined takes happen with a swing of the camera from one side to the other.

The collective also employs intertwined takes in another sequence a few minutes later: images of police officers shooting what looks like rubber bullets at the crowd are alternated with images shot from inside the crowd as protesters run away, the insider perspective allows the camera to capture protesters' features as they suffer the effects of tear gas and rubber bullets. The next scene shows a group performing direct action — hitting a police car —, which the narrator describes with the words: “the protesters’ reaction did not take long to appear”<sup>4</sup>. The combination of all these elements creates an alternative representation of direct action as a reaction to police violence — not the other way around, as is usually the case on traditional media’s coverage, which frames police violence as officers’ reaction to direct action. The collective employs anonymizing edition, adding an opaque layer to the images of groups performing this and other kinds of direct action, in order to hide the faces of those involved (as shown in figure 8.1).



**Figure 8.1:** Still from *Vandalism* (2013), showing a group performing direct action.

A series of interviewees’ assessments and evidence material of police use of less-lethal weapons follows these scenes of police violence and direct action: protesters show their wounds and bullet cases picked up from the ground as proof of the use of those weapons and of its consequences. One of the protesters showing a rubber bullet wound is hiding his face with an improvised balaclava, the others show their faces. The last evidence material featured in the sequence shows one of the members of the collective, whose eye got hit by a rubber bullet. He did not suffer injuries because he was wearing swimming goggles. The argument of the whole sequence, from the images of police using less-lethal weapons to these testimonies, seems to be that police vio-

<sup>4</sup>“A reação dos manifestantes logo apareceu (...)”.

lence causes direct action as a reaction from protesters that, in turn, suffer serious wounds due to police's use of these weapons.

Although images with an insider perspective predominate, there are also more panoramic shots. As the protest site is a large avenue, some images, shot from a slightly higher perspective, show people running on this broad empty landscape. The images of this first protest end with takes filmed close to the police line, as a policeman looks directly into the camera.

**20 June 2013: Student protest** The first contextual interview that comes up right after the black screen with the date of the second protest on 20 June 2013 features a student who claims to be protesting against vandalism among other issues. When asked whether vandalism comes from the police or from the protesters, she says it comes from both sides. She also claims that peaceful protesters are in the majority on that day, a discourse that seems to echo traditional media's portrayal of protesters performing direct action as a vandal minority infiltrating otherwise peaceful demonstrations, as described in the introduction of the documentary. The images on that day also show a protest marked by nationalistic chants and people wearing the colors of the Brazilian flag. While the protest from the day before happened around the stadium and, thus, close to a low-income community, the protest on 20 June took place in a wealthier neighborhood in the city. Another protester interviewed is asked whether that is a middle-class protest, which he confirms, making the contrast with the previous day even starker. While he is being interviewed, his voice is overlapped with images of people trying to erase a graffiti from a wall among "no vandalism" chants.

Although most assessments by interviewees quoted in the scenes from 20 June contain a discourse rejecting direct action, it is interesting to point out that the media criticism comes both from middle-class protesters and from those performing direct action. Both groups seem to be unhappy with traditional media coverage, albeit for different reasons. A middle-class protester is quoted expressing his criticism as follows: "We are here to represent Brazil, to protest without vandalism. (...) Here everybody is a citizen, representing the movement's reality. The vandals are exceptions that the media focus on"<sup>5</sup>. This exemplifies the core of media criticism formulated by this camp: while members of the black bloc feel criminalized and misrepresented by traditional media, middle-class protesters that reject such tactics also perceive media coverage as delegitimizing the whole protest by focusing too much on a group they perceive to be an illegitimate minority among the peaceful majority, which, as a result, does not get heard.

As the protest advances towards the state government's seat, the camera moves among the crowd and captures internal conflicts amongst protesters, as different groups argue about what to do next. This insider perspective through positioned allegiance allows the collective to film the heterogeneity of the movement. A particularly dramatic moment takes place as middle-class protesters and protesters wearing T-shirts around their heads to hide their identities start arguing on whether to perform direct action and damage the State government's seat or not. The face of the protesters arguing against direct action are caught on film, while those of the protesters

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<sup>5</sup>"Nós estamos aqui pra representar o Brasil, fazer o protesto sem vandalismo. (...) Aqui todas as pessoas são cidadãos e estão representando a realidade do movimento. Não os vândalos, que são as exceções que a mídia mostra como foco".



seeking to perform direct action are obscured through edition, adding another layer of protection of their identities in addition to the T-shirts around their heads. This is probably because the T-shirts signal a will to remain anonymous while the other protesters are showing their faces and have not expressed the wish to commit any illegal acts that could be prosecuted afterwards, so the collective may have judged they did not need to be anonymized.

Some minutes after this altercation is caught on camera, one of the protesters who was involved in the discussion is interviewed by the collective and reveals he has already suffered police violence after soccer matches in the past<sup>6</sup>. This interview partner is later at the center of another dramatic scene, as he gets beaten up and arrested by police. Another interview partner claims the young man had been handed to the police by other protesters, from the so-called peaceful camp — as protesters who opposed direct action were called at the time. This sequence shows clearly the conflicts inside the movement.

The last images of that day portray a line of protesters with their hands on their heads being escorted by the police out of the protest, before the black screen with the date of the next protest appears. The narrator mentions that that day's protest ended with over 60 arrests, including 13 teenagers. Most of them, the narrator says, were released the next day. The black screen appears while screams of "no violence" echo eerily.

**21 June 2013: Protest for Education** It is important to pay attention to the beginning of every protest filmed, especially to the interviews and the sounds that start playing as the black screen with the date of each protest appears. These first elements seem to set the tone for each part of the film. In the case of the protest on 21 June 2013, it is the Brazilian national anthem that starts playing in the background. The first images that appear on the screen show two street signs in a wealthier neighborhood and the crowd of protesters walking in the background. Like the protest the day before, this one seems to be predominately attended by middle-class students. As the camera zooms in on individual protesters' features as they sing the national anthem, the narrator reflects on the overall situation: "On the third day [of protests], once again, many people took to the streets. But the path ahead was no longer that clear, and groups seemed to more divided"<sup>7</sup>. As though to support this statement, a multitude of assessments by interviewees are quoted throughout this sequence, with opinions on direct action varying widely: while one woman repeats the discourse being circulated by traditional media that vandals are a minority, going as far as accusing them of coming to the protest just to mug people, another woman describes how she changed her mind on what vandalism is after experiencing police violence first-hand, claiming that violence is the real vandalism.

The images from that day's protest also contain one of the most interesting stances of intertwined takes, with a long sequence that shows the crowd of protesters as they run away from police after officers started using less-lethal weapons. These takes, which are shot with an insider perspective — the person holding the camera captures frenetic images while running together

<sup>6</sup>The documentary shows that many of the protesters performing direct action in Fortaleza were youth from low-income communities and members of local soccer teams' fan clubs. These fan clubs are known in the city for getting into conflict with each other and with police before and after local matches.

<sup>7</sup>"No terceiro dia, mais uma vez, muitas pessoas foram às ruas. Mas o percurso já não era tão claro, e os grupos pareciam mais divididos".

with the protesters —, are alternated through edition with aerial images — probably shot from the top of a nearby building — that show the police from behind as officers prepare to invest against the protesters. Figure 8.2 shows some stills exemplifying this sequence of intertwined takes. It is worth noting the contrast between both perspectives, as the police is filmed from very far away, echoing the aesthetics of some surveillance footage, while the insider perspective generated through images shot among the crowd makes protesters' suffering under the effects of less-lethal weapons, their fear and their anger seem very close to the viewer. While the protesters have faces, the police, filmed from above, becomes a compact mass acting in unison.



**Figure 8.2:** Stills from *Vandalism* (2013), showing a sequence of intertwined takes containing police watchdog content and insider perspectives among protesters, as both groups clash in Fortaleza's downtown area.

This sequence represents an interesting inversion of the usual angles and distances adopted by traditional media when covering protests. According to Tuchman (1978), traditional TV reports tend to adopt aerial perspectives, also known as bird's eye, while filming protests, in order to avoid jumpy images that could result from filming among a crowd. However, this results in a dehumanization of protesters: "Rather than individuals, they appear as components of some quantitatively portrayed mass" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 114). Another consequence of adopting the bird's eye perspective is that the images acquire a distant, supposedly neutral character, avoiding transmitting to the public a feeling of tumult that could result from unsteady filming among protesters (Tuchman, 1978, p. 115). By shooting from inside the crowd and incorporating unsteady, frantic shots into the final product, the collectives analyzed — both in this example and in others throughout the material — embrace this feeling and even actively pursue it.

As part of the scenes captured in this sequence, a TV reporter from a show focusing on

crime reporting is filmed as he interviews the crowd of protesters. The narrator makes a subtle criticism towards traditional media when he points out that this is the only traditional media representative present at the scene.

The whole sequence is quite long, lasting about 6 minutes. It ends with the narrator's description of how the collective left the scene as protesters started to disperse and go home.

**27 June 2013: Confederations Cup protest** The last protest featured in the documentary begins with the background sound of social movements' chants and images shots from a car driving by the protest site. The narrator then describes this protest as being predominantly attended by members of traditional social movements. Protesters carrying flags of the landless workers' movement MST, of workers' unions and other entities appear on the screen, as the narrator observes that social movement flags outnumber the Brazilian national flags this time, making explicit the contrast with the two previous protests that the viewer already perceives in this opening sequence.

The narrator points out another change in the discourse in this protest, as so-called vandalism seems to enjoy broader support among the attendees, registering that "no vandalism" calls – customary at the other protests – were being countered with "no moralism" calls. This assessment is underlined by images that show some protesters (protecting their identities by wearing T-shirts wrapped around their faces) spraying graffiti on billboards while the crowd applauds. Other than a heated argument between some protesters on whether they should perform direct action or not, captured by the camera as it moves among the crowd, most quoted interviewees in this protest express support for direct action.

Much like the protest on 19 June 2013, this one also took place on the same day as a Confederations Cup soccer match in Fortaleza and the setting is, once again, the soccer stadium's surroundings. At one point, protesters reach a police line tasked with keeping a security perimeter around the stadium and preventing protesters from getting any closer to the venue. The narrator interprets this as the reason why the crowd started to throw stones at the police, observing it was also only a matter of time until the police started firing tear gas. What follows is a long sequence, underlined by an instrumental soundtrack, showing the crowd running in the opposite direction from where the tear gas was coming: the camera films feet as they run away and features contorted due to tear gas. All the while, the person holding the camera runs together with the crowd, providing an insider perspective of protesters' reaction to the use of less-lethal weapons. The scene looks quite similar to the one captured during the 19 June protest, but, this time, as the narrator asserts, "protesters seemed more prepared for the confrontation or, as the police would say, they seemed more 'violent'"<sup>8</sup>. Protesters, most of them wearing T-shirts or bandannas around their heads, started to kick back tear gas bombs or to throw them inside recipients filled with water in order to contain the gas. The camera follows them closely as they do it.

During the confrontation, a child enters the frame: a small boy riding a horse, probably from the low-income community near the protest site. Some protesters approach him and try

<sup>8</sup>"(...) os manifestantes pareciam mais preparados para o confronto. Ou, nas palavras da polícia, pareciam mais 'violentos'."

to protect him from the tear gas. This is a stance of children as symbols of the disparity of forces between both sides. This argumentation is complemented with images of a female worker pushing a cart through the tear gas and of a family closing the windows to avoid the tear gas, underlined by the narrator's interpretation that protesters were not the only ones suffering the effects of the less-lethal weapons.

The images shift to an insider perspective from the crowd as protesters run away from the police calvary, which hurtles towards the crowd. They are intertwined with takes shot from the other side of the street, showing the police cavalry advancing as some protesters throw stones at them. The sound of protesters swearing at police officers and a helicopter circling above the site can be heard in the background. After the cavalry is gone, images of a protester bleeding from his head are shown while the narrator contextualizes this as resulting from police violence (the same protester was also profiled by the collective on their Facebook page). The argumentation scheme police violence->physically hurt protesters->direct action, particularly visible at the 19 June protest, is repeated here.

As some protesters tear down billboards to form barricades, another masked protester criticizes traditional media's coverage of events. He points at some TV crews filming the action on site. The collective's camera films the reporters briefly, showing various teams perched on the side road. Right after this interview the camera catches some protesters throwing stones at a parked, empty TV crew car, which protesters manage to roll towards their barricades and set fire on. This is the only stance in the documentary showing media criticism translating into aggression directed at symbols of traditional media.

In the next scenes, police is filmed cornering protesters on residential streets, shooting tear gas at them. The camera is also trapped with the protesters there, filming as some of them try to escape the clouds of tear gas. The camera is unfocused for a while, erratically filming the action around it until it focuses on a woman whose legs gave out, as she slid to the ground, saying she was not feeling well. Protesters and members of the collective try to help her until a resident takes her in. Members of the collective move on, filming the small group of protesters that remains on the street, with the camera positioned between parked cars and trees. After staying in the residential street for a while, actors eventually move to the other side of the road, from where they can film police moving into the street, with weapons drawn and firing rubber bullets and tear gas at the protesters. Desperate screams can be heard in the background.

As the collective is preparing to leave the scene, they notice one of their members has been detained by the police. The camera moves closer to a relatively large group of detained protesters, films police cars parked around the scene and altercations between police officers and individual protesters placed under arrest. The camera follows particularly one protester: a young, Black woman whose hands have been cuffed. The protesters must board a bus to be taken to the police district. While a police man notes down the personal details from one of the members of the collective, the camera focuses at times on his face and at times at the action happening over his shoulder, as protesters slowly board the bus and the same young woman is now standing inside the bus with her hands still cuffed. The member of the collective who had been detained is released before the bus takes off and the camera also shows as the woman's hands are finally

uncuffed.

The camera then shifts to a police contingent arriving at the scene, fully armored, their weapons over their shoulders, riding motorcycles in pairs. The camera moves to show the sheer amount of officers arriving at the scene and follows them, as some of them move towards protesters, pointing their weapons at protesters and demanding they put their hands over their heads, as the sound of rubber bullets being fired can be heard in the background. These officers soon leave the scene together with the bus carrying the detained protesters to the police station. The camera still films parked police cars on site. The image freezes, as the narrator summarizes the damages left behind after the protest that day: destroyed streets, frisked residents, 80 arrests.

The image fades into a black screen. A couple of seconds later images from all four protests covered appear gradually on the screen, as the narrator ponders about the lessons the collective learned and observations they made on those four days of protests: the changes that occurred from one day to the other, the decrease in turnout (from 80,000 to 5,000 attendees) and the increase in police violence and direct action on the side of protesters, which the narrator sets in relation to each other by stating that police violence seemed to have direct action on the side of protesters, which the narrator sets in relation to each other by stating that police violence seemed to have fueled popular revolt, reinforcing the argumentation made throughout the documentary about direct action being a response to police abuse. In addition, he concludes, “we saw the press and the authorities influence public opinion into rejecting the vandals”<sup>9</sup>, attributing to these two groups the blame for the negative stances among the public towards those performing direct action.

As the credits start to roll, a series of audio snippets play in the background: the viewer can hear screams, the sound of glass crashing, protesters arguing with each other. In these recordings, protesters voice media criticism: those opposing direct action, claim that traditional media would only show scenes of vandalism, which would discredit the movement. One member of the collective also approaches various protesters and asks them about their definition of vandalism, showing the heterogeneity of opinions on this issue in the crowd. Police officers talking to each other and to some protesters are also caught on tape. After this audio collage that summarizes some of the main arguments displayed throughout the documentary, the movie ends with the words “be the media” on a black screen, echoing Indymedia’s motto.

In summary, *Vandalism* constructs an argumentation around the topic of direct action that seeks to showcase other aspects of this phenomenon than the ones more prominently covered on traditional media, as the latter presented a coverage strongly marked by the protest paradigm, translating into an emphasis on direct action as chaos and destruction of property. In their documentary, *Nigéria* creates a polyphonic discussion around participants’ motivations to perform direct action, these tactics’ polarizing role among different protester groups, sympathizers’ analyses of direct action in relation to Fortaleza’s unequal sociopolitical context, to name just a few of the nuances the documentary reveals. Content categories such as police watchdog content and insider perspective collaborate to build this argumentation, and often are contrasted with each other through intertwined takes.

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<sup>9</sup>“vimos a grande imprensa e os governantes influenciar a opinião pública a repudiar os vândalos.”

It is possible to see some of the elements that marked *Vandalism* in other productions by the collective, such as a video post-protest published as part of the coverage of a student protest in May 2014 (Nigéria, 2014d), in which assessments by interview partners from the black bloc and an insider perspective filmed from among the crowd performing direct action also play a prominent role. As could be expected, videos shot during the coverage of 2014 FIFA World Cup protests one year later also exhibited some content that echoed *Vandalism*. One video in particular allows direct comparisons, as the protest it covers takes place at the stadium's surroundings on a match day in Fortaleza (Nigéria, 2014c). The video features members of the black bloc prominently, while also showing the massive police apparatus, which stands out in the nearly empty street — the turnout in 2014 was much lower and the police had time and resources to prepare for clashes. The protest took place in the same area where one year earlier up to 80000 protesters had filled the streets as shown on *Vandalism*, making the change in context quite clear. As a result, the collective films the same elements yet with a different emphasis: instead of shots from among the very small crowd, it becomes more important to show the disproportionate police presence through long shots of police maneuvers and advanced gear such as water tanks, all filmed from a certain distance — with the camera zooming in on specific elements.

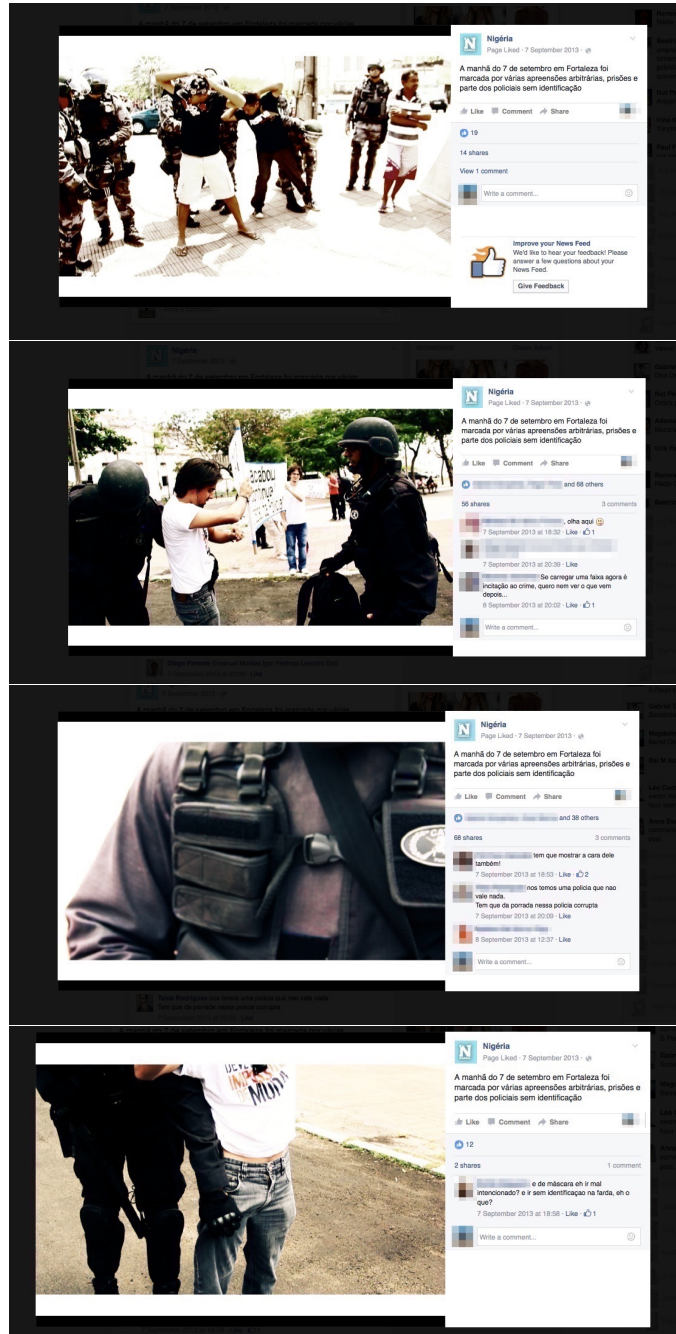
I do not intend to go deeper on comparisons between *Vandalism* and other pieces in the material, but it is important to highlight the connections that exist between them. The next example illustrates how collectives employed the protest highlights format to showcase police watchdog content in one of the first protests to take place after the June Journeys in 2013.

## 8.2 Highlighting the Independence Day Protests' Dramatic Moments

This series of protest highlights focuses on stances of police misconduct that happened during the Independence Day celebrations shortly after the June 2013 protests, on 7 September 2013. Due to the symbolism of this day, protesters organized demonstrations, which were harshly repressed by the police. Mostly with the same description, each post published by *Nigéria* on their Facebook page features a different picture documenting diverse stances of police misconduct or just showing police presence and the extension of the police apparatus mobilized for that day. The pictures have been edited to emphasize bright colors, presenting a high contrast. As common for this format category, posts were directly uploaded to Facebook a few hours after the events they portray have transpired.

The following paragraphs are accompanied by most of the pictures that compose this protest highlights series. Together, they tell the story of police's preemptive tactics from the perspective of protesters, covering the events that took place in the morning, as the first protesters headed to demonstrations' meeting points. "The morning of 7 September in Fortaleza was marked by many arbitrary detentions, arrests and police officers wearing no ID"<sup>10</sup>, reads the text that accompanies almost all of the nine pictures.

<sup>10</sup>"A manhã do 7 de setembro em Fortaleza foi marcada por várias apreensões arbitrárias, prisões e parte dos policiais sem identificação".



**Figure 8.3:** Screenshots from *Nigéria*'s Facebook page containing the first four pictures of its the protest highlights series, published as part of the coverage of the Independence Day protests in 2013.

The pictures are variations of the same main theme: police watchdog content. The first four ones, grouped in figure 8.3, show police performing searches with slight variations. In the first picture of this series, two men are being frisked by police officers while other police officers stand around the scene. All officers are wearing helmets, vests and a uniform with camouflage print. The next picture shows two protesters carrying a banner. The text on the banner is not visible, as the picture was taken from a lateral perspective close to one of the protesters. The protester who is standing closer to the camera is being searched by a police officer wearing a helmet and a black uniform. The protester has his head hung down. In front of him, another police officer is holding his backpack, probably also to be searched. The third picture shows a close-up of a police officer's uniform. It shows the place in his black vest where an identification tag should be, illustrating a case of missing ID cited in the accompanying text. The fourth picture shows the same protester who was previously portrayed amid a search, but his face is not in the frame this time, as he is photographed from the waist down, with a police officer behind him, his gloved hand grabbing the region around the protester's pocket. It is possible to recognize the protester in this picture due to the T-shirt he is wearing, which has a characteristic print.

The fifth picture shows a police line standing on the left side of the frame. Officers' faces are not visible, kept out of the frame. Instead, the camera focuses on their shields and uniforms, showing the police apparatus as a compact, uniform mass. To the right of the frame, a woman, whose face is also not visible, walks by, holding a small boy's hand – probably her son. His face is visible, practically the only one in the picture other than the police officer whose mouth and nose are also caught in the frame. This child presents a stark contrast to the police apparatus: he and his mother are dressed in bright colors and new, fresh clothes<sup>11</sup>. They are probably there to attend the military parade that takes place every year on Independence Day. The police officers are all clad in black, faceless behind their shields. Thus, this composition contrasts the categories children as symbols and police watchdog content, in the form of a portrait of police presence.

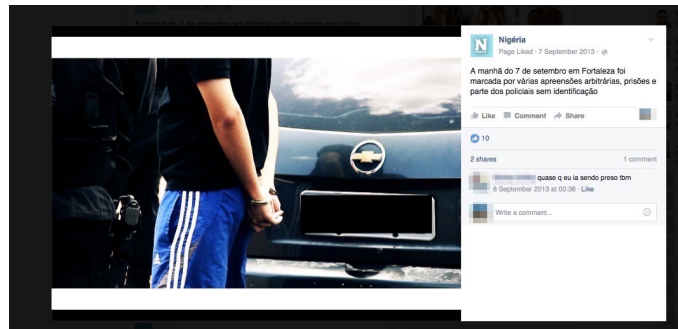
Figure 8.4 shows the last four pictures in the sequence. Picture 8.4a shows a protester, photographed from the shoulder down, handcuffed in front of a police officer. It illustrates the arrests mentioned in the description. The police officer is also portrayed from the shoulders down, hoisted gun clearly visible on his waste. Picture 8.4b returns to representations of police presence, showing a police line with officers holding their shields, wearing helmets and looking in the direction of a small protest happening in the background. This particular post has no accompanying text as a description, but one of the banners held by protesters reads “the dictatorship is not over, the repression goes on. For the end of the militarized police!”. Due to the angle from which the picture was taken, with the camera placed diagonally to the police line, neither the police officers' faces nor the protesters' can be seen. The picture was edited so that no landscape in the background is distinguishable, and the contrast level was set very high, so that the portrayed people stand starkly against an almost white background.

For picture 8.4c, the post resumes the standard accompanying text, showing the picture of a police officer photographed frontally while holding a video camera and just staring at its screen while likely filming the protest. His face is partially visible under his helmet and behind the

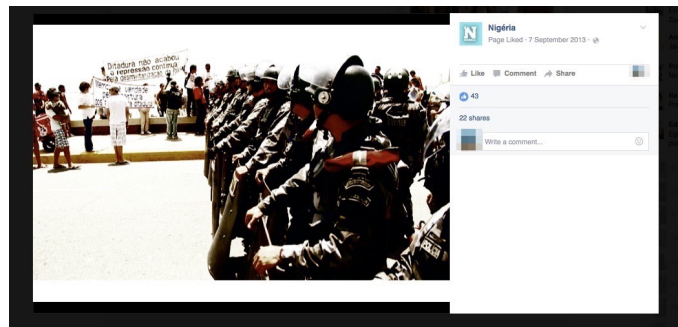
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<sup>11</sup>In order to protect this child's identity, I will not reproduce this screenshot here.

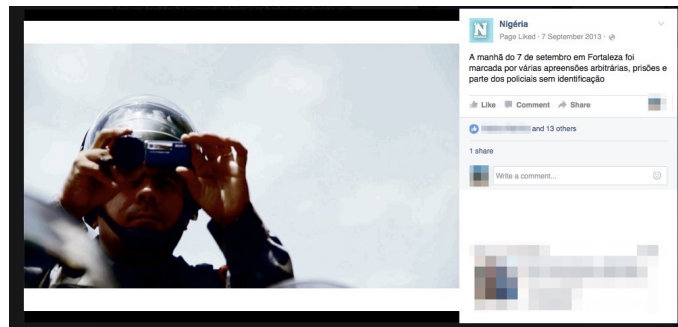




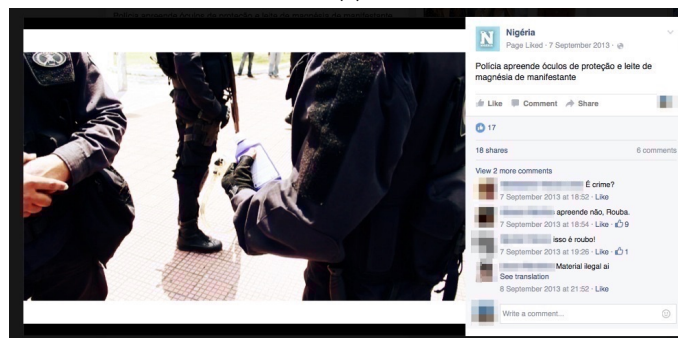
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

**Figure 8.4:** Screenshots from *Nigéria's* Facebook page containing the lastt four pictures of its the protest highlights series, published as part of the coverage of the Independence Day protests in 2013.

camera. Finally, the post with picture 8.4d contains a different description. It states: “Police apprehends protester’s protection goggles and magnesium bottles”<sup>12</sup>. The picture shows three police officers dressed in black uniforms and vests photographed from the shoulders down, one of them holding both apprehended objects. It is the last picture published on that day.

Throughout the coverage of the Independence Day protests, police watchdog content acquired a central role. While other pieces about the protest were published on the following day, including videos showing specially dramatic moments of the protest, most of them centered on aspects pertaining to police (mis)conduct and police presence. Based on the images in this series and on what my interview partners shared with me, this protest already showed some of the new police tactics towards protesters that were to be deployed more fully in 2014 during the FIFA World Cup, such as more preemptive policing to avoid protests from taking place by performing arrests, searches and other intimidation tactics along popular routes to protesters’ meeting points and at the surroundings of the Independence Day military parade. As a result, 30 people were detained in the first hours before the protest, which between 3000 and 4000 people attended, according to a police spokesperson (G1, 2013). The next case I analyze exemplifies coverage of a protest organized during the FIFA World Cup itself. Unlike the protest highlights analyzed here, published a few hours after the events themselves, it shows how *Na Rua* made use of the liveblog format, in order to cover the protest in real time.

### 8.3 Liveblogging an Anti-World Cup Protest

The protest on 14 June 2014 that *Na Rua* members covered on a liveblog is not the first to happen in 2014 against the FIFA World Cup in Fortaleza. Two days earlier, as the tournament’s opening ceremony was taking place in São Paulo, around 200 people took to the streets of Fortaleza to protest against the government’s excessive spending and authoritarian measures due to the FIFA World Cup (G1 CE, 2014). The protest covered on this liveblog series happened as Fortaleza hosted a soccer match between Uruguay and Costa Rica. This particular liveblog is a good example for this format, as it contains the two main dimensions of this category: posts describing police activity during the protest and posts containing updates on protesters’ moves on the ground, along with the various content categories that make up these kinds of posts. Another element that repeats itself on various posts is a disclaimer containing links to the collective’s profile on Twitter, a link to the streaming of the protest on-site and contact information for followers to send tips or denounce police misconduct to the collective, encouraging participation from the public. In how far this participation indeed happened is beyond the focus of the present research.

A post containing a picture of the meeting point for the protest, in which the police can be seen in the background, opens the liveblog (see figure 8.5). The text, with the time it was written and posted added on top by the author, announces the beginning of that day’s demonstration, its location and alerts to police presence on site, while reporting that the first protesters are already arriving. It calls on followers to attend the protest and resist repression, linking to the

<sup>12</sup>“Polícia apreende óculos de proteção e leite de magnésio de manifestante”.



**Figure 8.5:** Screenshot of the first post in a liveblog series published on *Na Rua*'s Facebook page, as part of the coverage of an anti-World Cup protest in 2014.

Facebook event with more details. Therefore, this opening post embeds a call for protest with current information on the situation on the ground, combining mobilization with information that should aid its readers in the decision on whether to attend or not.

Around 20 minutes later, as the time written on the post shows, the second post announces the beginning of the march. It opens by quoting protesters' chants and describing their movements: at that point they were leaving the meeting point after holding a plenary session coordinated by two local social movements. The text highlights the presence of police along the protesters' path, including a description of police units and the number of officers spotted, in addition to protesters' concerns about what this presence could mean: "will the police block the march?", asks the liveblog, quoting indirectly conversations happening among the crowd. All this information is complemented by seven pictures taken on the ground. They show police cars parked close to the protesters, police officers standing nearby, as well as pictures from among the crowd, offering an insider perspective of the movement. People wearing masks, but also known leadership figures inside the movement can be seen in the pictures. There are also pictures of the assembly, of the banners protesters are carrying and of protesters photographed from behind. Here, the fluid interaction between police watchdog content and insider perspective is well exemplified, as both groups seem to react to each other: police makes itself clearly visible and follows the march along its route, while protesters seem alert to any signs of attacks from the officers, which also influences the mood and the actions on the ground.

As with previous posts, the third one also begins with the time it was posted and quotes protesters' chants, this time against the militarization of police. The post gives more details on police moves, describing the amount of police units on site in their locations behind and ahead of the protest. The author also notes the presence of police helicopters flying over the march. The protesters are described as feeling trapped, yet also distributing flyers among residents in the surroundings of their route. Residents are described as supporting the march. Police officers, according to the post, are wearing identification. The text also contains allegations that police officers are frisking youth and that activist lawyers are being prevented from approaching the

scene. All four pictures featured in this update show police presence on site. Two of them show protesters in the foreground and police cars behind them in the background. Two of them are closer shots of police cars trailing the march. Due to their quality in terms of image resolution, the pictures are likely cell phone pictures sent by collective members on the ground to others who were at the GQ and were responsible for updating the Facebook page.

The fourth post opens with the time it was published, but this time other timestamps are also visible. This is the collective's way of showing that the content has been edited. The first text, posted at 4:13 PM, describes protesters holding another plenary due to the strong police presence, in order to decide if they should continue to march or not. 10 minutes later at 4:23 PM, the post describes protesters' chants and the main two arguments put up for discussion: should they try to approach the police barrier despite the low turnout or end that day's demonstration, focusing efforts on achieving a higher turnout for the demonstration on 17 June, when another soccer match was scheduled to take place in the city? At 4:36 PM, the last update states that protesters decided to go back to the meeting point after almost splitting up in two camps representing the both alternatives up for discussion. There is also an explicit note on the fact that the post was edited after being published, pointing out a factual mistake corrected through edition. Pictures show an insider perspective of the plenary session: they are taken among the crowd while protesters discuss their next steps. The camera is positioned among those attending the plenary and portrays faces, T-shirts and different angles of the plenary session, offering an intimate view of this internal discussion forum.

At 4:50 PM, another post reports that the protest is dispersing and the police are following the protesters on the way back to the meeting point, in what is described as an attempt to accelerate the end of the protest. The three pictures featured in the post show an already empty street, protesters walking on the sidewalk and police vehicles driving nearby. Posts like this one seem to result from the practice of staying until the end of the protest, which members of the collectives described in our interviews as one of their newsgathering practices that differentiate them from traditional media, since traditional reporters usually did not stick around until the very end of protests, according to collective members.

An update posted at 5:22 PM denounces police misconduct, such as illegal searches, happening around the meeting point of the protest. The text also describes police presence, listing various police units in the surroundings, where a low-income community is also located. This is described ironically in the post as the police giving "a little help" at dispersing the protest. The text ends with a warning note from the collective: "our observers remain watchful on site"<sup>13</sup>, a reference to volunteer lawyers that were also part of the *Na Rua* team and had the aim of providing legal help to protesters on the ground. The pictures, mostly taken with cell phones, show fully armored police officers walking around the streets of the low-income community, presenting a stark contrast to the residential surroundings. One picture also shows police officers performing a search on three men — it is not clear whether they were protesters or residents.

Updates on arrests were also often part of liveblogs, as a short post published at 5:50 PM exemplifies in this coverage, reporting on a youth's arrest at a nearby bus station after the protest

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<sup>13</sup>"Nossos observadores estão a postos".

and that a volunteer lawyer is already on the case. Less than two hours later, at 7:27 PM, reports on the arrest of three other youths, two of them underage, are published. The text combines this verified information with details that describe police misconduct, asserting that one of the youths is still handcuffed at the police station for no apparent reason. A volunteer lawyer is also mentioned as being present at the scene (they are likely the source to provide the details featured in the post)<sup>14</sup>.

As the analysis of the cases illustrating the formats protest highlights and liveblog shows, both have a similar thematic focus, namely emphasizing protesters' perspectives on events and performing a watchdog role towards the police, which translates into content that shows an intimate glance from inside the movement and surveils the police, capturing possible misconduct or simply reporting on their location on the ground. The differences between both formats are also broad: protest highlights focus on dramatic moments from an already concluded action, thus providing a recap of the events for the public. Liveblogs seem to serve as information sources both for those following the developments at home and for those currently taking part in a protest, giving the latter an overview of what is happening around them, which can be useful for staying out of trouble. Liveblogs generate a dynamic interplay between various content categories, depending on what is currently happening. The series I just analyzed, for example, shows stances of the categories call for protest, insider perspective, police watchdog content and verified content. While both liveblogs and protest highlights belong to the subgroup of news format categories, the next case features an interpretative format category: the mobilizing chronicle. I chose to analyze one example that focuses on the 14 June 2014 protest as well, which should make the contrast between news and interpretative formats even clearer.

## 8.4 Getting Personal about the Anti-World Cup Protest

As described by interview partners, a mobilizing chronicle was often posted on the day after a protest, containing a more personal testimonial from one of the members of *Na Rua* or a guest author, who was encouraged to share their impressions on the events on the ground. This particular text was written by one member of the collective present at the protest who also collaborated with reporting for the liveblog the day before.

The Facebook post linking to the article that was published on the collective's website quotes its first paragraph, along with two lines introducing the text and a picture showing a police car and police officers photographed from the ground perspective. The text, which receives the title *Letter to Life (or 'beyond individual ideologies')*<sup>15</sup>, is written in the form of a letter addressed to Life. The author starts by describing how her body felt during the protest in the face of a massive

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<sup>14</sup>One day later, one update resumes the case of the youth arrested the day before during the liveblogged protest, stating that the three had been released around 10 PM the day before and quoting the lawyers' indignation at what they consider an exaggerated procedure, in reference to the fact that one of the youths remained handcuffed at the police station. The post also quotes indirectly the youth themselves, giving more details on how they were arrested. Their identities are not revealed in the text. The post ends with the collective's contact information, requesting anybody who had more information on this case or any other to get in touch.

<sup>15</sup>*Carta à Vida (ou 'além das ideologias individuais')*.

police apparatus, how her chest tightened and how the presence of the police, even without any clashes happening, felt oppressive:

“There were no clashes. No shots were heard, there was no tear gas. The police’s arrogance did not require any shots to be revealed, it is true: weapons’ triggers drawn and prepared for shooting, shields, and their gazes of superiority from inside the cars escorting the march were enough for that.”<sup>16</sup>

She then describes the contrasting experiences she and other activists made, as the police approached them yet quickly left them alone, while a young resident of the nearby low-income community a few meters ahead was roughly searched by other officers. She describes lyrical details, like the dusk light permeating the scene and the fear and anger she felt. Then, the author regards the division among protesters — which the liveblog described with regards to the assembly protesters made — through the prism of these shocking experiences made on the ground, coming to the conclusion that ideological differences inside the movement seem trivial in relation to bigger questions concerning police repression and the structural racism it is embedded in. She ends the text with a call to overcome ideological differences in the face of this.

This text is a good example of how the mobilizing chronicle combines lyrical, individual observations with political messages, giving them a personal tone. I argue that, in addition to providing an opinion counterpart to the liveblog, as described by interview partners, it also strengthens the movement’s discourse and can help mobilize the public by creating an empathic, individual bond between the reader and the author. Another interpretative format, the counter TV show, seems to explore the very conflicts the author refers to in her text. There, collectives hoped to play a mediating role by offering a space for discussion. In the following case, I analyze a particularly controversial show.

## 8.5 Working out Internal Disagreements at a Counter Talk Show

The second edition of the live-streamed talk show format produced both by *Nigéria* and *Na Rua* members together with other volunteers loosely connected to the network of interview partners in my study summarizes the explosive nature of its content with the title *Pre-Street: Heated mood, infiltrated officers and internal conflicts during the protests*<sup>17</sup>. Live-streamed on the evening of 17 June 2014, the show starts with an announcement from the presenter, a member of *Nigéria*, who highlights the show’s character as a collective production involving different groups and makes

<sup>16</sup>“Não houve confronto. Não se ouviram tiros e muito menos houve gás. A arrogância da polícia não precisa de disparos pra se mostrar, é verdade: as armas sendo engatilhadas, os escudos a postos e os olhares de superioridade que nos eram lançados de dentro das viaturas que acompanhavam a manifestação foram suficientes para isso”.

<sup>17</sup>*Pré-Rua: Ânimos Exaltados, P2, Infiltrados e Conflitos Internos nas manifestações*. The abbreviation P2 stands for infiltrated officer and refers to the institutional name of an investigative sector inside the military police.

a call for protest, giving information on the next protest, scheduled to take place the next day, as a way to express opposition to the already ongoing FIFA World Cup.

The show mixes attempts at mimicking more expensive traditional TV formats, as it was filmed using two cameras and alternating angles and two microphones (one that the guests share and one for both *Nigéria* members doing the moderation), and more prosaic arrangements due to its practically non-existent budget: someone's living room serves as the studio, with guests and presenters sitting across from each other on two sofas. On that day, the guests were two female activists, one more aligned to the autonomous and black bloc scene and the other a member of an activist collective. They had very different views on the ways to deal with suspicions of infiltrated police officers in the movement, but could be regarded both as ideologically belonging to the left. This was, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, one of the distinctive features of this format in comparison with other talk show formats broadcast on traditional media.

Viewer participation is another defining dimension of this format, as the presenter makes clear in various moments during the transmission, combining brief recaps on the show's topic for those just tuning in to the live-stream (similar to what presenters on traditional media's live shows do) with reminders for viewers of the possible channels of participation: the collectives' social media accounts and the YouTube channel, for example, are open for questions from the audience during the live-stream. A team of volunteer producers behind the scenes collects the questions and passes them on to the presenters, who read them live.

Although the official theme of that edition of *Pre-Street* is the internal relations among the various groups protesting against the World Cup, the elephant in the room is directly addressed through a viewer's question: is one of the guests actually an infiltrated police officer, as the rumor has it? In this particular show, the burning questions come through viewer participation in various moments; the moderators do not ask the guest directly whether she is an infiltrated police officer or not. This raises the question as to whether this could be considered a remain of objectivity strategies employed by traditional journalists that quote particularly polemic opinions or inquiries from sources instead of voicing them directly themselves. Interview partners rejected the objectivity paradigm when describing their journalistic work, but maybe some of its remains may prove useful in delicate moments such as this one. As the viewer questions get more and more accusatory, one of the presenters emphasizes the nature of the show as a counter public sphere for mediating debates inside the left, not as a courtroom, in an attempt to diffuse the tension. During the expert interviews, an actor referred to this particular show as a successful example of moderating the discussion inside the microcosm of social movements in Fortaleza:

“This show's topic was hotter, there was another guest also doing the accusations and she [the suspected policewoman] denying them, saying there was nothing to it. (...) We got a lot more views [than usual]. At the time [of live-streaming], there were 150 people watching, commenting, interacting with the show. It was a great space for mediation, because, up until then, people were making accusations online and she [the woman being accused] was not always explaining herself. So, we played this mediation role inside this group that we follow, this niche, in a way,

that was the social movements.” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 152-158)<sup>18</sup>

As this passage makes clear, in order to be successful, counter TV shows needed to feature topics already being discussed among members of the left, which made up their intended audience, in a timely manner, i.e. while they were still hot. Thus, despite its interpretative character as a format that allowed in-depth discussion of broader themes permeating current events covered by other news formats, counter TV shows still needed to be current, at the pulse of the time, in order to attract public participation and fulfill their goal of enabling deliberation inside this specific counterpublic.

On this particular edition of *Pre-Street*, viewers participate so actively that, shortly before the end of the show, presenters refer to the many questions still coming in and apologize for not being able to answer all of them during the one hour and 16 minutes that the transmission lasted, highlighting once again its nature as a counter public sphere:

“This is just the beginning of an attempt to create room for debate between members of the movement, people organizing protests, autonomous people not aligned to specific movements, and people not currently at any movement or demonstration yet curious to get to know and debate what is going on on the streets, inside the movement, on alternative media and the whole scene. The purpose of this show is that it becomes more and more watched and brings more and more debates on issues that are blocking the movement or are not being currently discussed as they should be.”<sup>19</sup>

Short speeches like this one, reinforcing the shows’ stated goal of serving as a counter public sphere, were also a recurring element that made up this format, coming up in most of the other five shows the collectives produced in the period studied. Whether this goal was fulfilled or not does not constitute the focus of the present analysis, but rather the intention behind this format expressed in passages such as this one. The next example also relates to alternative coverage’s function as a counter public sphere, in the sense that it seeks to fulfill the normative expectation of countering criminalizing representations of marginalized groups by giving them a platform.

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<sup>18</sup>“Nesse, como o tema era mais quente, tinha uma menina que meio que acusava, no final das contas, e ela [a suposta policial], dizendo que não, que nada a ver. (...) Teve bem mais visualizações [que outros programas]. Na hora mesmo [de transmissão], teve 150 pessoas assistindo, comentando, interagindo [com o programa]. Foi um espaço de mediação muito legal, porque, até então, na internet, era a galera acusando e ela nem sempre se explicando. Então, a gente fez esse papel também de mediação, desse grupo que a gente acompanha, desse nicho, de certa forma, que eram os movimentos [sociais]” (NG3, 22 December 2015, 152-158).

<sup>19</sup>“Esse é apenas um começo de uma proposta de tentar criar espaços de debates entre as pessoas que fazem parte do movimento, entre as pessoas que estão fazendo manifestações, entre as pessoas que não são de movimentos e são autônomos e entre as pessoas que não estão fazendo manifestações ou movimentos mas têm curiosidade de saber, debater e também de conhecer o que acontece nas ruas, no movimento, na mídia alternativa e em todo esse cenário. A intenção é que [o programa] seja cada vez mais assistido e traga cada vez mais debates [sobre algo que] ou esteja emperrando [o movimento] ou [que] sejam necessários e não estejam sendo feitos como devem ser”.



## 8.6 Countering the Protest Paradigm on a Roadblock

Various traditional social movements mobilized their members and sympathizers in the context of the FIFA 2014 World Cup, using the timing of their actions – shortly before or during the soccer tournament – as leverage to negotiate with federal or local authorities, as I described in more detail in chapter 2. In Fortaleza, the MTST, already active in other Brazilian states, started their very first occupation in the state of Ceará on 4 July 2014. In total, around 800 low-income families built an improvised camp at an empty plot of land in the neighborhood of Messejana (Fortes, 2014). The occupation lasted until 19 July 2014, when the movement reached an agreement with the government, in which the authorities agreed to provide the families with public housing<sup>20</sup>.

However, the path to an agreement was marked by ups and downs. On 14 July 2014, MTST organized a roadblock at a highway connecting Fortaleza to the countryside, which the movement's leadership described as a reaction to attempts by the state housing secretary to evict the families from the plot of land before the end of the negotiations. The video post-protest entitled *Landless Workers block [highway] BR-222 to avoid eviction*<sup>21</sup>, published by *Nigéria* one day after the action took place, takes up the movement's framing of events, as its title already shows. It is an interesting example of how counter sourcing practices can build a narrative that departs from the protest paradigm: in various passages taken from interviews on site, the roadblock is contextualized by its own organizers as a last resort to pressure the authorities into continuing negotiations, not as a nuisance, as usually done in the coverage of this kind of action, when reporting may focus, for example, more on the resulting long traffic jams than on what motivated groups to block the road in the first place. As actors from both networks described during the expert interviews, MTST approached the collectives and invited them to cover the occupation from the start, something interview partners attribute to the credibility both *Nigéria* and *Urucum* – *Na Rua*'s parent organization – had acquired through previous institutional work (NR1, 12 January 2015, 128-130; NG1, 23 December 2014, 295-296).

The video opens with images of trucks and cars standing still on the highway. The camera then turns to the other side of the highway to show why the cars are not moving: there is a line of burning tires blocking the road. The sound of the chants from the crowd of protesters, mostly dressed in red (the movement's color), are overlapped through edition with the image of the burning tires. The next take shows the crowd, a sea of red filling the street, and the camera makes close-ups of children, participating in the protest along with their parents. One of the leaders of the movement is interviewed, his quoted assessment is edited as a voiceover for images of the action, which registers both protesters' moves and small groups of police officers standing around the protest, forming intertwined takes between images of the protest, captured from an insider perspective, and of police presence, captured more from afar. In the voiceover, the MTST leader explains why the movement decided to organize a roadblock, attributing the blame for this extreme action to a government representative's unwillingness to negotiate with

<sup>20</sup>In 2018, *Nigéria* documented singer Caetano Veloso's visit to a finished housing block that resulted from that land occupation four years earlier, see MTST (2018).

<sup>21</sup>*Trabalhadores sem-teto fecham BR-222 para impedir despejo.*

the movement.

The same discourse is reproduced during the interaction filmed between police officers and another leader of the movement, who is explaining to the officers the goals of the roadblock and the movement's demands. It is interesting to note that the representative of the movement is shown talking in a firm yet productive way with police, and officers also seem to recognize their status as valid interlocutors. Both men representing MTST are wearing red T-shirts with the name of the movement on them, making their role as members of the movement also visually recognizable. This stance of actors' interaction with the police is filmed from the side, showing both sides to the interaction, but the camera films the movement leader slightly from the back and the police officers frontally, in a clear example of how the practices of police watchdog and positioned allegiance may translate into content, as figure 8.6 shows. The viewer regards the scene from the perspective of the movement leader, as he faces the police officers. At the same time, the camera is trained on the officers' features and also registers a police car on the background.



**Figure 8.6:** Still from *Nigéria's* video post-protest covering a roadblock organized by MTST. The scene shows a movement leader (on the left) talking with police officers (on the right).

There's a brief shot of protesters looking up at the sky, where a helicopter — likely police — can be seen. The edition cuts to scenes from inside the protest, as the camera positions itself among the crowd. The chants and the percussion instruments the protesters use are the only sounds heard in the video for about 30 seconds. The camera particularly lingers on the faces of children participating in the movement, some in their parents' arms, some holding banners, and others just sitting around, representing children as symbols of the movement's hopes and innocence throughout the video.

Later in the video, another assessment by one of the movement leaders is quoted, in which he again brings up the reason for the occupation and the roadblock, contextualizing it as part of a broader fight for housing rights. As he speaks, shots of his face are intertwined with images

of police presence, of children among the protesters and of the camp set at the occupied plot of land. He also uses the interview to direct a message to the population of Fortaleza, apologizing for any problems the roadblock might have caused and shifting the blame to the government representative and his refusal to talk to the movement. The video ends with protesters' chants overlapped with a shot of a smiling boy sitting in a hammock set up at the camp. The choice of this shot to close the video adds a positive tone to it: instead of focusing on the roadblock, the camera is directed at a child who might potentially benefit from the movement achieving its ultimate goal: public housing for his and other families.

Together with the next example, a Facebook post published by *Na Rua* on 14 June 2014, this video contests the protest paradigm usually applied to actions such as roadblocks, highlighting its broader political context and featuring the movement's demands prominently in various passages.

## 8.7 Criticizing Traditional Media Coverage through Verification

This post is part of a liveblog series *Na Rua* published during MTST's roadblock. It focuses on the arrest of a worker and offers an update from the volunteer lawyer providing him with legal aid. What makes it particularly interesting is the second paragraph, in which the collective corrects false information provided by a local newspaper (*O Povo*) about the roadblock. The newspaper reported that a car had been burned on site, located the roadblock on the wrong highway, and publicized a low number of attendees. The collective contests all three pieces of information:

“Contrary to the erroneous information divulged by *O Povo* newspaper, no vehicle was burned on site. Workers present at the protest deny this. Another imprecise information the story publicizes is the place the protest is happening: it is actually at the [highway] BR 222, not at the [highway] 020. In addition, about 2000 families are present on the streets, not just 200 people. There are no reporting teams from the newspaper present at the protest.”<sup>22</sup>

As this passage shows, the collective articulates its criticism by contrasting the information its members gathered on site with claims made by the newspaper. Supported by eye-witness reports both from protesters and activist lawyers, information on an arrest is verified, while media claims are corrected. *Na Rua* draws from its members' presence at the scene and highlights the fact that the newspaper did not send any reporters to cover the protest as a way to affirm the collective's authority for fact-checking the newspapers' reporting, which they describe as “erroneous” and “imprecise”. This is one of the few stances in which collectives articulate really clear,

<sup>22</sup>“Ao contrário das informações divulgadas erroneamente pelo jornal *O Povo*, nenhum automóvel foi queimado no local. Trabalhadores presentes no ato negam o fato. Outra informação imprecisa divulgada na matéria do veículo é o local onde acontece o protesto: é na BR 222, e não na 020. Além disso, cerca de duas mil famílias estão nas ruas, e não apenas 200 pessoas. Não há equipes do jornal presentes na manifestação”.

direct media criticism, instead of quoted media criticism from interviews with sources, as in the case of *Vandalism*. One of the main differences between how quoted media criticism and direct media criticism are articulated is that the former bases on protesters' personal experiences and their perception of the dissonance between these experiences and traditional media's reporting, while the latter draws from journalistic practices of verification, crossing various eye-witness reports and relying on the reporter's own work at the scene, to present what the collective considers the correct version of the facts.

## 8.8 Summarizing a Strike through Multimedia Resources

Much like in the case of the coverage of MTST's occupation, this section contains an example from the coverage of a form of mobilization organized by more traditional social movements, in this case construction workers' unions and their strike. It lasted from 23 June 2014 until 2 July 2014, when the strike ended after successful negotiations with employers' associations. Thus, both cases show an expansion in collectives' thematic focus: instead of just covering the anti-World Cup protests, they turned to other relevant movements taking place during the period that they had not initially expected to cover. In order to showcase the characteristics of all three types of summarizing formats, this and the following two examples refer to the same event: two particularly dramatic days during the strike marked by massive police repression.

Illustrated by a picture taken from among the crowd of construction workers, the Facebook post on *Na Rua*'s page introducing this summarizing article quotes a famous Brazilian song about construction workers. The post then provides some basic information on the strike, as well as the link to the summarizing article on *Na Rua*'s site, containing more information on the workers' demands, police violence during the protest and more details on the protests on 25 and 26 June 2014 themselves. The post has the same title as the summarizing article.

The first paragraph of the summarizing article also starts with verses from the Brazilian song about construction workers, justifying the quote with the information that the song was being played during the protests. The next sentences in this paragraph follow the classic lead structure, mentioning the number of protesters since the beginning of the strike, their meeting point, the amount of police officers present at the scene and the use they made of tear gas and other less-lethal weapons, thus summarizing the main facts right in the beginning of the article. The first picture in the article was taken by one of the photographers who collaborated with the collective. It shows workers marching away from the meeting point and was probably taken from the top of the loudspeaker truck, as it presents a more aerial vision of the crowd rather than an insider perspective.

The second paragraph then introduces more details on a dramatic event that happened on 25 June 2014: workers and police clashed, as the administration of a construction site issued a restraining order to keep strikers from recruiting the workers there, which led to police violently trying to keep workers away from that particular construction site. The collective quotes directly a construction worker present at the scene, who expresses his indignation at the police violence

he experienced, as well as reports the effects he suffered from less-lethal weapons. On the same paragraph a police officer is quoted briefly defending the police's action.

Another picture by an independent photographer illustrates the article, it portrays one single worker wearing his uniform. Then the first short video shot at the scene is embedded in the article. *It's a strike! Construction Workers' March*<sup>23</sup> is only around one minute long and captures a speech a worker held as the striking workers marched down the street in protest. The cell phone footage is filmed from an insider perspective, as the person holding the cellphone walks among the crowd, until she manages to get a good shot of the worker making the speech. In his speech, the worker describes the strike as a tsunami, which makes the reference in the articles title quite clear: "*A Tsunami of Workers*" fills the streets of Fortaleza<sup>24</sup>.

The article then proceeds to describe more repression measures against the strike, such as an order of arrest against one of the unions' presidents and more police violence on the 26 June 2014, reporting on injuries, arrests and illegal searches that took place on that day. The paragraph closes with a direct quote from a strike sympathizer lamenting the police repression they faced. Some of the workers interviewed remain anonymous, with just their first names mentioned.

*Military Police shoots at Construction Workers*<sup>25</sup> is the second video embedded in the article. It is very short, about 48 seconds, and shows images of the police firing tear gas and rubber bullets at the protesters. The voice of the person filming the action through her cellphone can be heard in the background, expressing her surprise and indignation at the scene and making this footage less distanced due to the reporters' spontaneous reaction in it. It also contains an interview with a worker who shows a wound on his leg allegedly caused by a rubber bullet, in a stance of evidence material. Below this video, there is a picture of a police line: police officers' faces can be seen behind their helmets as they are holding shields, blocking the path of the march.

The article ends with some contextual information, listing the parties, social movements and unions that had expressed support for the strike, as well as the strikers' concrete demands. The last sentence is a direct quote from a striking worker, motivating other workers to join the movement and threatening with a year-long strike if employers do not fulfill their demands — a stance of messages through interviews.

This is an interesting stance of multimedia article, as pictures, videos and text are combined to summarize events. Through the interplay between these various types of media, collectives try to transmit the broader picture of events, using each media's particular characteristics to emphasize different aspects: while the text provides a contextualization and chronology of the action on the ground, the pictures and videos complement it with snapshots of particularly dramatic or representative moments, reducing the distance to the events that the text, through its adoption of journalistic conventions, might create. This also illustrates how *Na Rua*, in particular, used their website as a platform for longer, multimedia reports. The following two other summarizing formats also cover the events described, emphasizing different aspects.

<sup>23</sup> *É greve! Passeata dos trabalhadores da Construção Civil.*

<sup>24</sup> "*Tsunami de Peão*" ocupa as ruas de Fortaleza.

<sup>25</sup> *PMs atiram em trabalhadores da construção civil.*

## 8.9 Visualizing the Strike through a Summarizing Photo Album

This summarizing photo album fits the description of the format category quite well: published with the straightforward title *Fourth day of the construction workers' strike - 26 JUN 2014*<sup>26</sup>, it contains 21 pictures, all with the same brief description, which simply mentions the date of the protest, its location in Fortaleza and the name of the independent photographer who took the pictures. Figure 8.7 shows what the album looked like when posted by *Nigéria* on its Facebook page.

It is interesting to observe that, although the pictures have no specific description, the sequence in which they are uploaded tells a story through the images alone. It is not necessarily a chronological representation of events, but it highlights a series of dramatic moments throughout the protest: positive, lyrical images photographed from among the protests, as well as shots of police violence and some direct action. Looking at each picture closely and at the way they relate to each other, it is possible to discern some argumentation patterns already familiar in other coverages, such as in sequences of images in *Vandalism* that represent direct action as a reaction to police violence, which, in turn, result in wounded protesters.

The first picture (larger picture feature in the album preview in figure 8.7) shows a line of police cars arriving at the surroundings of the shopping mall's construction site, which, as mentioned before, was protected by a restraining order from the administration of that site. The second picture (figure 8.8a) is taken from the perspective of the striking workers, as they stand outside the construction site waving and trying to encourage construction workers at the other side of the fence to join the strike. They are standing with their backs to the photographer, and the camera captures what they see in front of them, the fences and the construction site. The third picture (figure 8.8b) shows workers standing in the foreground. Their faces are blurred, as the lens focuses on the police line in the background. Police officers wearing black uniforms and holding shields covering their upper bodies are pictured as they advance towards the demonstration. A police car is also parked behind them. Here, the practice of positioned allegiance becomes quite visible, contrasting an insider perspective from among the protesters with police watchdog content that shows police from afar in the background yet registers their moves and their presence. While the workers can be seen in their individuality, although their faces are blurred, the police appears as a compact mass, with no distinguishing features. The fourth picture in the series reinforces this impression, portraying a single worker standing with the flag of his union in the foreground. His image contrasts with the same police line captured in the background at a closer distance: officers' faces are mostly unrecognizable behind shields or helmets, while the worker's features are clear.

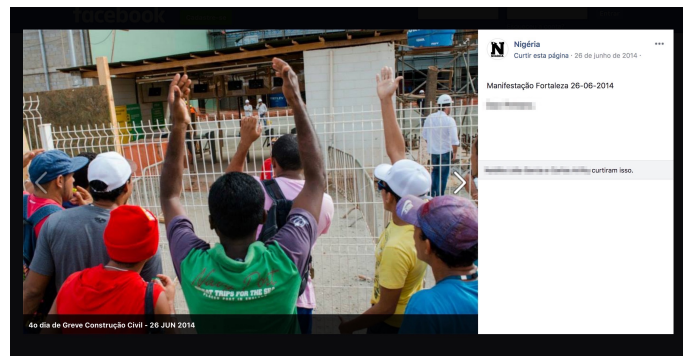
The next sequence of pictures portray the moment police starts firing rubber bullets and tear gas at protesters. The fifth picture (figure 8.8c) in the album shows a police officer pointing a weapon and other officers around him, one of them holding a shield in front of his face. The picture does not show what the police officers are looking at, although they are all gazing in the

<sup>26</sup> *40 dia de Greve Construção Civil - 26 JUN 2014.*

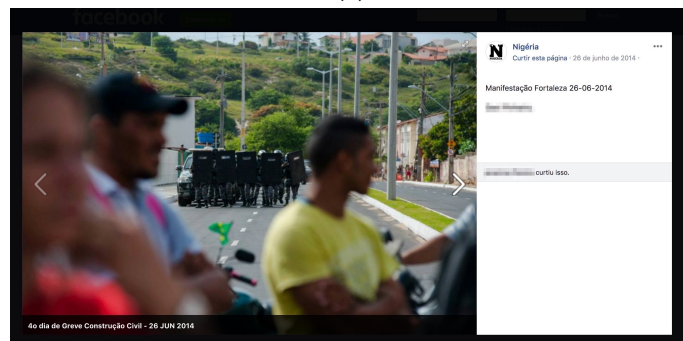


**Figure 8.7:** Screenshot of *Nigéria*'s album covering the fourth day of the construction workers' strike.

same direction. This is quite different from the insider perspectives among protesters. In such pictures, the viewer seems to look through the eyes of the portrayed protesters, the camera is placed among the subjects, often pointed at the same direction as their gazes. Here, the camera is placed distantly from police, the police officers — not what they are seeing — are the subject of observation. Their faces are also visible, unlike in many portraits of protesters through an insider perspective, in which the crowd often stands with their backs to the photographer, in a stance of anonymized content. The contrast between this picture and figure 8.8a exemplifies these



(a)



(b)



(c)

**Figure 8.8:** Screenshots from *Nigéria*'s album covering the fourth day of the construction workers' strike. Published on the collective's Facebook page, the pictures exemplify some of the themes portrayed as part of this coverage.

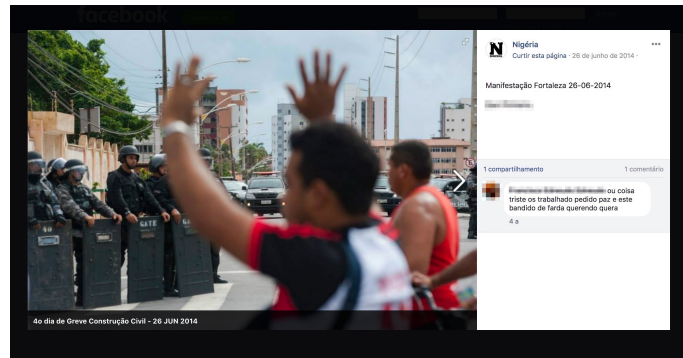


differences. The next picture shows, from a somewhat distant perspective, how some workers try to tear down or at least cause damage to the disputed construction site's fences. None of their faces can be seen, as the picture is taken from behind them, producing actively anonymized content. As mentioned earlier in this section, the sequence showing police violence first and then direct action seems to imply that the former provokes the latter, not the other way around, as often described in coverage of protests that fit the protest paradigm.

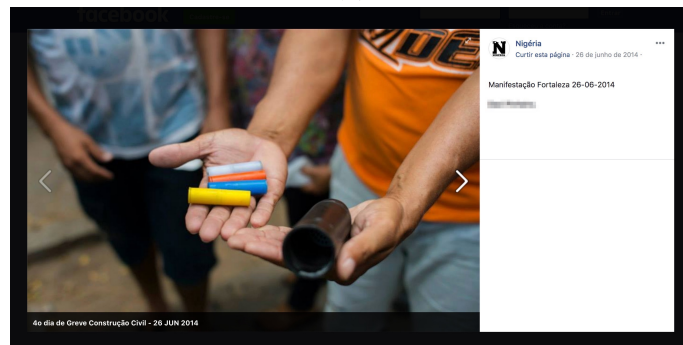
The main focus of the seventh picture is a worker standing with one of his hands held up, in what looks like a request for police to stop firing at the crowd. Around him, clouds of tear gas and workers running in the opposite direction from where he is looking can be seen. These clouds are also visible on the foreground in the eighth picture. Behind them, the backs of various workers running in the opposite direction from where the photographer is standing appear on the frame. Continuing the line of argumentation of this sequence, the ninth picture shows protesters suffering the effects of tear gas: a woman is lying down, with some men standing around her and trying to help her. In the background, another man is crouching, his hand supporting his head. This picture is an example of the content category evidence material, as it aids the visualization of the effects of less-lethal weapons. In the next picture, protesters jump the fence of what looks like a public school building, in an attempt to get away from the tear gas, which can be seen in form of a dense cloud, also around the fence. Most protesters portrayed have their faces covered or are seen with their backs to the camera, preserving their identities.

The eleventh picture shows the moment a protester is detained by police, which is also featured on the video post-protest I analyze in the next example. An officer holds the protesters' arm, conducting him away from the protest, while other police officers stand around the scene, weapons drawn yet pointing towards the ground. The officer performing the arrest is looking directly at the camera, his features visible under his helmet, in a stance of police watchdog content. The perspective changes again to an insider view from among protesters in the twelfth picture in the series (figure 8.9a), featuring protesters in the foreground, with their backs to the camera, which is located quite close to them. One of the protesters has his hands up in the air, his palms spread out, as though asking for a truce. Protesters are looking at a police line, which appears in the background, to the left of the frame. The police officers do not seem to be looking at the workers or at the camera, but rather straight ahead.

More effects of less-lethal weapons and stances of evidence material appear in the next three pictures. In the thirteenth shot, a worker with a pained expression on his face occupies the center of the frame. He is being carried by another worker. Around him, other workers look concerned at him. In the video post-protest, this image is contextualized as portraying a worker who seems to have broken his arm amid the chaos. The next picture looks quite quotidian at first glance: a man standing at a bus stop talks into his phone, another walks away in the background. Only the woman holding a tissue to her face due to the tear gas hints at the use of less-lethal weapons in their surroundings. The fifteenth picture (figure 8.9b) exemplifies the combined use of evidence material with actively anonymized content: protesters, portrayed from the shoulders down (so that their features are not in the picture), show bullet cases as proof of police's use of less-lethal weapons. The focus of the image is fully on their hands and the bullet cases there.



(a)



(b)



(c)

**Figure 8.9:** Screenshots from *Nigéria*'s album covering the fourth day of the construction workers' strike. Published on the collective's Facebook page, the pictures exemplify some of the themes portrayed as part of this coverage.

The next sequence shows how the march proceeded after moving away from the disputed construction site. The sixteenth picture seems to have been taken from the loudspeaker truck, as the protest moves towards a wealthy neighborhood by the beach, also a place where a lot of construction sites are usually located. It shows a worker gluing two stickers to one of the new bilingual street signs, installed as part of the preparations to the World Cup. The sign is usually out of reach for pedestrians, but the worker can reach it due to the fact that he is also riding the loudspeaker truck.

The next two pictures were taken on the ground, among the crowd, and exemplify how content featuring an insider perspective also reflects on portraits of small details among the mass of protesters. The seventeenth picture in the album shows a worker holding up one of the stickers distributed by the strike organizers, containing catchwords that summarize their demands. The worker's face is only shown partially: just his eyes, looking up in the same direction he is holding the sticker (he is probably following a speech held from the top of the loudspeaker truck) and his nose. Picture eighteen (figure 8.9c) features four workers' cheerful expressions, three of them looking up with smiles towards the person making a speech from the top of the loudspeaker truck. A fourth worker is making a phone call, while also smiling, and leaning against a advertisement by Coca Cola that reads, "gather everybody around", a message that strangely fits the rally, although probably unintended by the company.

The perspective shifts again to images captured from the top of the loudspeaker truck — in a way, another form of insider perspective, as the photographer shows what the union leaders are seeing from their position on top of the car as they talk to the crowd. Picture nineteen consists of a shot of the crowd, their banners, the mass of people filling the whole street, as cars stop to let them pass while the march moves towards the beachside. The next shot is one of the most poetic images in this coverage, as it shows store clerks of an expensive store standing behind the shop's windows and cheering the protesters passing by, showing their solidarity as workers. The same shot also illustrates a mobilizing chronicle published on *Na Rua*'s website in support of the strike (Na Rua, 2014c). Finally, the twenty-first and last picture in this summarizing album resumes the perspective from among the crowd on the ground. It shows a protester blowing a whistle and looking directly at the camera. On his forehead, the sticker summarizing the striking workers' demands.

As mentioned in the beginning of the analysis of this example, this is not a clearly chronological narrative, although some pictures can be grouped thematically as portraying particularly dramatic moments and the sequence in which they were published does not seem coincidental, as they appear to build a particular causal relationships between the portrayed actions. This summarizing format likely aims much more at transmitting the mood of the protest through pictures than at contextualizing events, unlike in the summarizing article or in most videos post-protest, as the next example will show. Therefore, it is no surprise to see that summarizing photo albums were often employed together with other, more contextualizing formats, such as liveblogs or videos post-protest, instead of as stand-alone pieces of reporting<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup>The analysis of the overall material showed that collectives alternated their use of each format: instead of doing their own liveblogs in 2014, *Nigéria* shared *Na Rua*'s liveblog posts and published summarizing photo albums of many events. *Na Rua* also shared *Nigéria* videos post-protests as a complement to their

## 8.10 Catching the Strike on Video

Events pictured in the summarizing photo album are embedded in a broader context in the video *Riot police attacks strikers near [construction site of the shopping mall] RioMar*<sup>28</sup>, for example through quoted assessments by interviewees and images of the protest before, during and after the main conflict with the police. While the summarizing photo album portrays the clashes mostly during its dramatic peaks, the video post-protest sequences before and after events escalated.

Nigéria published the video on YouTube and circulated its link on a Facebook post the day after the protest happened, 27 June 2014. The text in the post highlights the police's use of less-lethal weapons, as well as the fact that there were arrests and wounded protesters, previewing what the viewer should expect to see on the video.

The video opens with a sound bite from an interview with a union leader, who describes strikes as the only way for workers to effectively fight for their rights and as a last resort during negotiations with employers. By choosing to open the video with this statement, the collective seemingly wants to preempt criminalizing interpretations of the movement, in an argumentation akin to the one constructed in the coverage of MTST's roadblock, analyzed in section 8.6. This interview partner also criticizes police deployment to secure the shopping mall's construction site. His words are underlined by video editing that overlaps them to images of police cars driving by the workers that are standing outside the construction site.

The next take shows an altercation between some protesters and the police, with officers appearing to be already in formation, moving with their shields held up and weapons drawn and forcing the march to back away from the construction site and move to the other side of the street. The camera stays on the police, filming their movements. Then, it shows some workers screaming at the police as other workers — especially members of the union trying to set a more conciliatory tone — try to calm them down. The sound of a union leader making a speech from the loudspeaker truck underlies the scene. The camera frames the scene with the police on one side and the proceeding march on the other, staying on both groups, as figure 8.10 shows. This shot mirrors the one seen in the video post-protest of MTST's roadblock (section 8.6), as the camera is slightly positioned behind the police, catching some officers' faces while most protesters on the other side of the street are filmed with their backs to the camera. While the shot in figure 8.6 emphasizes an insider perspective by positioning the camera slightly to the side of the movement leader, the shot in figure 8.10 emphasizes police watchdog content by staying closer to the police.

The movie cuts to a take in which the camera films the police from behind, watching as the line of officers moves behind the march, following the protest from a certain distance, a movement that the camera, in a way, mimics, as it, in turn, follows the police from a distance. Both seem to be on stand-by to capture any possible misconduct: in the police officers' case, this would be any violations of the restraining order they are there to enforce; in the camera's case, this would be any aggressive or illegal action by the police. Nearly three minutes into the video,

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own coverage. Thus, collectives often employed formats that complemented each other's coverages and, through mutual sharing on social media, constituted a whole.

<sup>28</sup>*Grevistas são atacados por Batalhão de Choque no RioMar.*



**Figure 8.10:** Still from video *Riot police attacks strikers near [construction site of the shopping mall] RioMar* (2014), showing the camera's positioning between police and protesters.

the camera's wait seems to be over, as the police fires the first shots of tear gas at the crowd, and the clouds of tear gas materialize ahead of the police line, still filmed from behind by the collective and now running towards the march. From the loudspeaker truck, a union leader urges them to stop firing. From then on, the camera stays almost exclusively close to the police line, which keeps teargassing the crowd, as the sounds of shots and the images of tear gas clouds on the video indicate. At some point, the camera zooms in on a police officer, catching the moment he fires tear gas at protesters.

Right after these scenes, another sequence carries on with the presentation of content fitting the category of police watchdog content: it shows a small group of workers cornered against the wall and the same police line from the previous images standing in front of them, shields up and some weapons drawn. The camera shows workers in the background, some with their hands up, and the compact police line on the foreground. The workers manage to move away, appealing to the police not to shoot. Then the focus shifts to the main march, as the camera films the back of the loudspeaker truck, the filming walks along the protesters. From the top of loudspeaker truck, a union leader asks workers to take a protester to the hospital and reprimands the police for their violence, claiming the man had broken his arm while fleeing the tear gas. The camera swings briefly to the police line, still walking behind the protest, while the union leader addresses the police with his reprimand. A group of protesters is concentrated on the left side of the screen, inside and around a public school building — some of them ran into the building in an attempt to escape the clouds of tear gas. Thus, even while the perspective shifts to images among the crowd, police watchdog content continues present in these shots.

The camera then approaches the public school building. The union leader's voice, still urging others to take the injured man to the hospital, can be heard in the background. The camera swings

from the school building to the police line before a worker, his eyes red — possibly due to tear gas — and his mouth covered with his T-shirt, talks to the camera, complaining about the police violence against the protesters, saying they are workers, not criminals. Behind him, someone carries the injured protester out of the building. Then, from the top of the loudspeaker truck, the union leader urges workers to leave the school building and keep marching, announcing that the union is giving up on the workers at the mall's construction site while also addressing these workers directly during his speech, appealing to their conscience to join the strike after their fellow workers suffered so much police oppression. The inclusion of the union leader's speech as background sound to so many scenes seems to provide more context to the action on the ground, combining the images with the union leadership's interpretation of events. The camera follows the workers marching for some moments, swinging now and then to film the police line trailing the march, as though to keep an eye on police officers' movements. As the union leader keeps addressing the workers at the construction site, the camera tries to film behind the fence, capturing some engineers' grave faces at the construction site, but failing to film the construction workers there — only some silhouettes can be made out in the distance.

Through edition, there is a brief cut and, after the images of the construction site's fence, the camera is now following a police officer, as he approaches the crowd and then grabs a protester by the arm, detaining him. Here, the same monitorial pattern of police watchdog content becomes visible, as the camera was already directed at the police officer before he started protagonizing a dramatic moment — the arrest. The camera continues to follow both protagonists of this scene — the policeman and the arrested protester —, zooming in on them and ignoring two police officers with their weapons drawn that move to block the path and keep the camera from getting any closer. The camera keeps following both men from afar, while also capturing the first interactions between other police officers and union leaders that are also being kept from getting any closer. More shots from less-lethal weapons can be heard being fired in the background. After the arrested protester and the policeman escorting him disappear among parked police cars, the camera's focus shifts entirely to the interaction between union leaders and police officers. The camera films the interaction from the side, catching the union leaders' profiles and the police officers' faces frontally, adopting a similar angle to the one in the video post-protest on MTST's roadblock.

At the next take, a worker is filmed while another media team interviews him about his and others' wounds caused by less-lethal weapons, as he shows a wound caused by a rubber bullet on the back of his thigh. This is not a direct interview, yet serves as evidence material in the context of the video.

The video ends with passages from an interview with the protester whose arrest was caught on camera some minutes earlier. His voice is overlapped with images of the protest reaching a wealthier neighborhood, filmed from the top of the loudspeaker truck and showing the crowd marching below. The protest ended there, as police also blocked the path to the main seaside avenue. These shots are intertwined with earlier takes of the police line close to the shopping mall's construction site. Then, the interview partner's face is filmed briefly and images showing the moment of his arrest are replayed as he contextualizes what happened from his perspective.

This is a good example of how the decision to interview those protagonizing the action, one of the criteria actors mentioned as permeating their practices of conducting interviews on the ground, translate into content.

Compared with the short video that also shows police firing tear gas at protesters that *Na Rua* embedded in their summarizing article about the same events, which I analyzed in section 8.8, this video by *Nigéria* does not center only on capturing one key moment that illustrates a broader narrative, but rather builds up tension by putting together, through edition, a sequence of images of the protest before, during and after it escalates. In their coverage, both collectives frame police's use of less-lethal weapons as a gratuitous and unprovoked attack. This argumentation is constructed in *Na Rua*'s article both through direct quotes from sources making such statements and through passages in the text itself, such as the one in which the police's reaction to workers throwing stones is described as a "disproportionate use of force"<sup>29</sup>. *Nigéria*, in turn, contrasts its police watchdog content with images that show union leaders' various attempts at mediation and negotiation, as well as police's rejection of these moves.

In this 14-minute long video post-protest, there is an attempt at reproducing the protests' own temporality through long shots of apparently monotonous action – workers walking, the union leader's speech from the loudspeaker truck, police officers slowly getting into formation – until they culminate in dramatic actions, which, in turn, also ebb away, giving way to newer developments to emerge on the frame. In her description of news films, Tuchman (1978, p. 109–110) observed that they attempted to create the impression that their representation of time and space mirrored the actual pace of events as a way to assure their facticity. Collectives seem to make a similar attempt in their videos post-protest. However, as Hackett and Zhao (1998, p. 47) emphasize, "even the simplest camera shot can be used to create different impressions, depending on choice of location, angle, and filter". My analysis aimed at revealing the patterns of argumentation in the video that underline its attempt at transporting the viewer to the scene while highlighting one specific way of looking at it.

## 8.11 Profiling the Protagonists of Various Events

The protagonist profile was one of the formats collectives employed most often as part of their coverage of events. Throughout the research period, this format gained different characteristics, showing adaptations that reflected changes in the thematic focus as events unfolded.

Figure 8.11 shows the first example, published by *Nigéria* on 28 June 2013, which illustrates the collective's initial use of this format, which often featured regular protesters attending the June Journeys' protests in 2013 and voicing their opinion about the protest. In this particular case, the protester portrayed in a close-up picture is both actively and passively anonymized, since only her first name is cited in the text and she is pictured with a scarf around her face and sunglasses, making her features indistinguishable. In addition, the text quotes directly her assessment of that day's demonstration.

The next example integrates another coverage in which *Nigéria* employed this format re-

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<sup>29</sup>"Uso desmedido da força".



**Figure 8.11:** Screenshot of a protagonist profile published on *Nigéria*'s Facebook page, as part of their coverage of the protests in June 2013.

peatedly, intertwining it with videos and updates from the scene, as the the eviction of the Alto da Paz community unfolded on 20 February 2014<sup>30</sup>. This post is part of a series of protagonist profiles featuring evicted residents and their personal stories. The picture portrays a resident family after they lost their home: a man, his wife and their seven children leaning against a gray wall, not looking directly at the camera yet smiling<sup>31</sup>. The text quotes the father directly, who complains about the lack of assistance from the authorities. He says authorities failed to move him and his family to a shelter after their house was torn down during the eviction and contests the information provided by the government to local media outlets, according to which all residents had received adequate support. Further, the text quotes his demands towards the government. All seven children as well as he and his wife's names are cited in the beginning of the text. As in other examples analyzed here, children were a recurring motive in the coverage of the Alto da Paz eviction, representing government neglect towards the low-income community and serving as proof that family with children were among the evicted residents. While the previous case of protagonist profile focuses on an individual's evaluation of the broader political event she is attending, this example focuses on evicted residents' personal plights. Together, the various protagonist profiles that integrated this coverage generate a cumulative notion of how deep this kind of event disrupts the lives of those affected. This focus on individual cases is a known resource in human rights activism.

The third example (figure 8.12), published by *Na Rua* on the first day of the construction workers' strike, 23 June 2014, shows a further adaptation in this format to changes in the sociopolitical context. While in 2013 many profiles feature individual protesters that were mostly not linked to traditional social movements, profiles in 2014 often feature social movement leaders. This is a reflex of the anti-World Cup protests' lower turnout in 2014 and of social movements like MTST and unions protagonizing larger, organized protests during the World Cup in order to pressure

<sup>30</sup>For more details on this particular event, see chapter 2.

<sup>31</sup>In order to protect the affected children's identities, the post will not be reproduced here.





**Figure 8.12:** Screenshot of a protagonist profile published on *Na Rua*'s Facebook page, as part of their coverage of the construction workers' strike in 2014.

the government and to achieve their specific goals. The largest protests covered by both collectives were no longer decentralized events attended by “ordinary citizens”, but more traditional manifestations led by organized social movements. The woman portrayed in this particular post is a union leader, who is introduced with her full name and pictured frontally, holding up a flyer about the strike and wearing a T-shirt with her movement's logo on it. She is quoted indirectly, as the post summarizes the specific working conditions and demands of female construction workers, the group she represents. The text illustrates another difference to earlier protagonist profiles: here, the person profiled speaks for a specific group and articulates its demands, while protagonists profiled earlier talked about their individual experiences and aspirations as part of the massive June Journeys.

In short, this might be one of the formats that show most clearly how actors' adaptation of the thematic focus of their coverage over time reflects on their use of particular formats. Therefore, it is appropriate to end my analysis of examples that illustrate patterns in the coverage with them. This section shows how the more abstract categories I generated in my content analysis played out in the content itself, interacting with actors' media practices and with their changing surroundings, thus answering RQ 2.

## **8.12 How Categories Played Out**

In this chapter, I provided 11 concrete examples of how content and format categories typically interacted in the alternative coverage I analyzed. As I argued in chapter 7, format categories consisted of various ways of structuring and presenting content categories, and both types of categories revealed patterns that emerged throughout the material, providing an overview of collectives' discourse in the form of their media production. This production resulted, in turn, of actors' performance of the complex of practices that constituted their efforts at covering events in Fortaleza between 2013 and 2014 from an alternative perspective.

In the examples, the broad spectrum of events covered emerge as being permeated by overarching patterns, as the recurring representation police violence->physically hurt protesters->direct action, built through the employment of various content categories and present in the coverage of events as diverse as the June Journeys and an organized workers' strike, illustrates. In addition, actors' focusing practices towards expanding the scope of their coverage become clearer, as they applied the same formats in the coverage of events as distinct as June's decentralized protests and a forced eviction, as in the case of protagonist profiles.

Performing a multi-layered qualitative content analysis was a decisive step in improving my model and detailing a group of engaged journalists' concrete media production, as well as their intended contribution to the public debate. In the next chapter, I proceed to unite both research questions and summarize how these two facets fit together to form a more precise conceptualization of engaged journalism, as well as how this concept may apply to other cases than the one featured in the present study.

## Chapter 9

# Concept Consolidation and Future Applications

This study focuses on the alternative coverage of protests that erupted in the Brazilian city of Fortaleza between 2013 and 2014. As I described in chapter 2, people all over the country initially took to the streets to express their indignation at excessive government spending in the buildup for the FIFA World Cup, which took place in various Brazilian capitals in 2014. However, in the period of two years, the context changed often and dramatically, demanding that actors covering these events for alternative media react to these shifts, in order to be able to continue to do their reporting.

Drawing from the literature on media practices and social movements (chapter 3) and on journalism studies and the public sphere (chapter 4), I conducted an empirical study based on the grounded theory approach with the aim of conceptualizing actors' adaptation strategies towards challenges they encounter when covering events on the ground. In chapter 6, I introduced my model of the alternative media coverage as a complex of practices as theorized by Shove et al. (2012), i.e. practices connected to each other by relations of necessary co-existence, synchronicity or proximity. In this case, that meant, for example, that some practices served as pre-requisites for the enactment of other practices, such as coping practices enabling actors to perform news-gathering practices, which, in turn, generated the content that served as the material element in the enactment of content editing practices. I conceptualized actors' adaptation of media practices by focusing on the new elements that were linked in the enactment of these practices over the two years this study focused on. I then proceeded to analyze actors' discourse as the result of the performance of this complex of practices, detailing format and content categories that my analysis uncovered in their media production (chapter 7). Then, I illustrated the interplay between these categories in concrete examples (chapter 8).

In this chapter, I connect the empirical results I achieved while answering my two research questions under the banner of engaged journalism. This concept, which I generated through the grounded theory approach, provides the framework for understanding my case study in the context of the broader literature. As interview partners expressed their rejection of the objectivity standard yet performed journalistic practices usually connected to traditional journalism, I

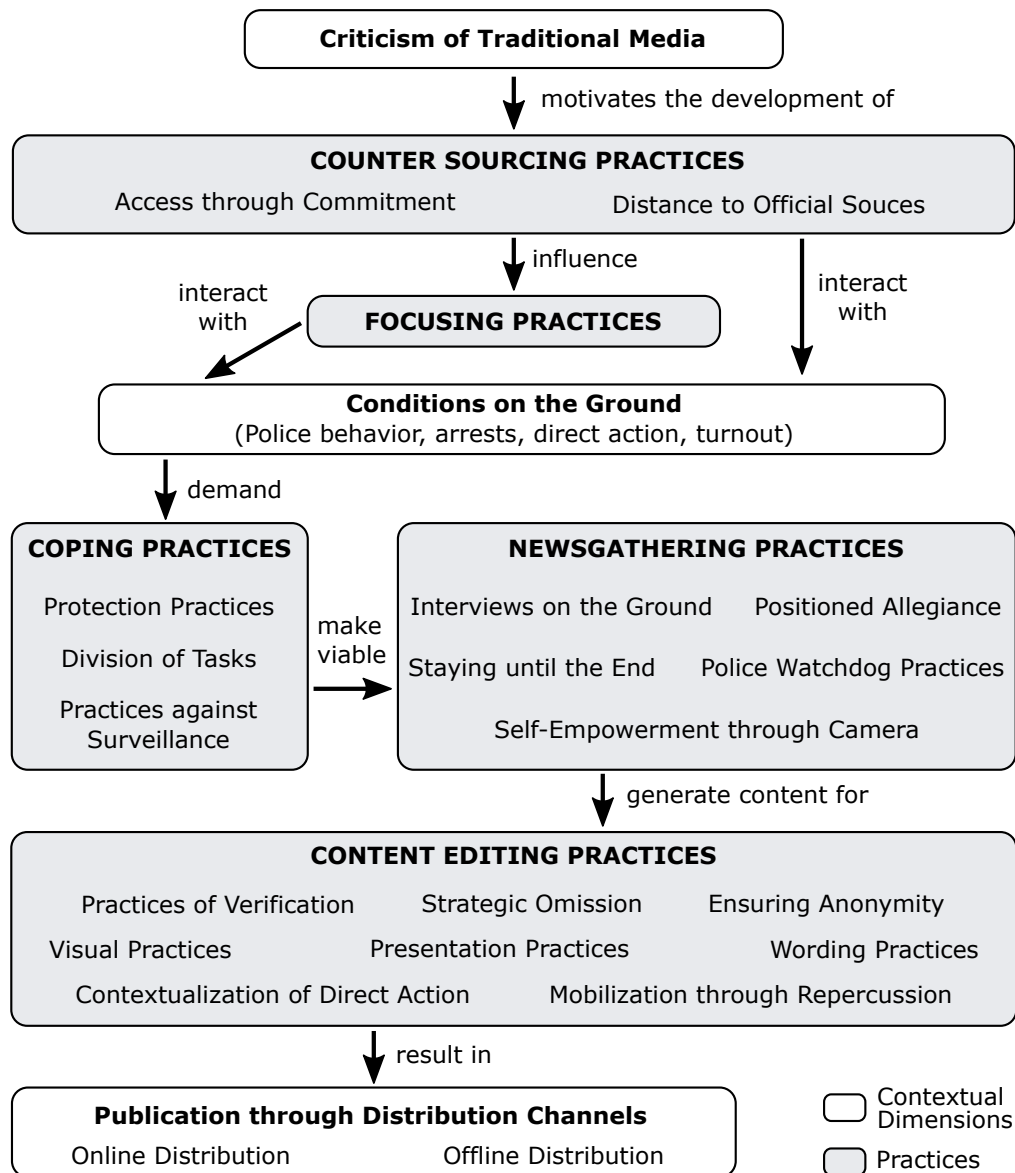
coined this term to describe the subversion of such journalistic practices through engaged journalists' aim of countering traditional media's discourse on protests. Engaged journalism offers a way to conceptualize professional journalists' role in today's social movements, as they build alternative media structures that aim at strengthening movement counterpublics.

## 9.1 Engaged Journalism in Practice and Discourse

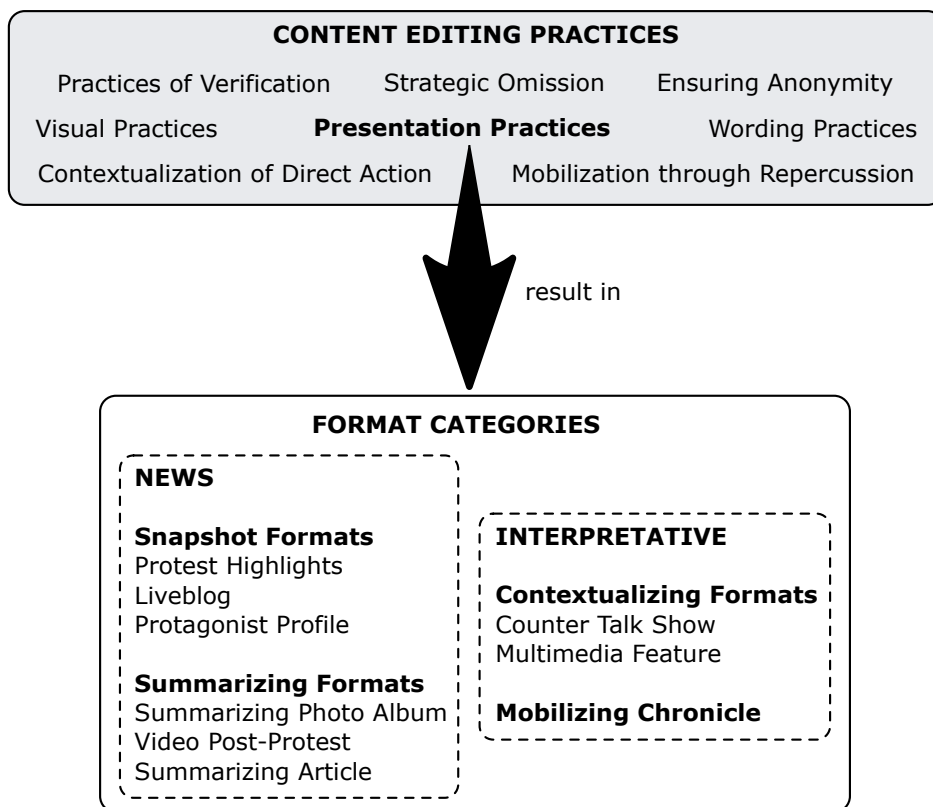
Both research questions I posed for this study complemented each other. RQ 1 focused on how actors reacted to changes in the sociopolitical context in terms of media practices' adaptation. RQ 2, in turn, required an in-depth look into actors' media production amidst sociopolitical shifts, as way to verify whether changes in media practices would also reflect upon the actors' discourse, i.e. what they published after performing their media practices. Methodologically, this emphasis on different aspects of the alternative coverage was translated into methods that provided complementary insights. For RQ 1, I conducted expert interviews in order to retrace actors' practices, generating categories to describe them that were grounded on the way actors themselves looked back on their practices. For RQ 2, a multi-layered qualitative content analysis drew from the coverage published online, in order to generate a more nuanced description of aspects actors only mentioned in passing during our interviews as well as to verify whether their media production really reflected some of actors' perceptions of their own work, for example their stated preference for marginalized sources instead of official ones. This enriched the representation of the complex of practices that constituted the alternative coverage of protests in Fortaleza during the period studied.

In the model I updated after answering RQ 2 (figure 9.1), I added the category of mobilization through repercussion to the group of content editing practices, in order to cover how actors edited information on upcoming protests into their coverage. This category only became concrete through my analysis of actors' media production, which documented how they performed this practice in different kinds of media, such as livestreamed talk shows or Facebook posts. Moreover, the contextual category distribution channels acquired two distinct dimensions, one for online distribution and one for offline distribution. While actors often referred to their publication process on social media during expert interviews, modes of offline distribution, such as movie screenings or exhibitions, only became visible through the content analysis, as these events were widely documented on social media posts.

Format and content categories acquired through successive coding during the content analysis also revealed how presentation practices, in terms of format creation, adaptation and selection played out in the published coverage. While actors' description of these practices emphasized a dialectic relationship with traditional journalism, with actors often pointing out how they subverted journalistic formats to their own means, the content analysis showed how this played out in the media production itself, giving a more precise picture of the relationship between actors' practices and discourse. Format categories from the content analysis detail which formats actors eventually employed in their coverage after performing presentation practices (figure 9.2) and their differences and similarities to traditional journalistic formats.



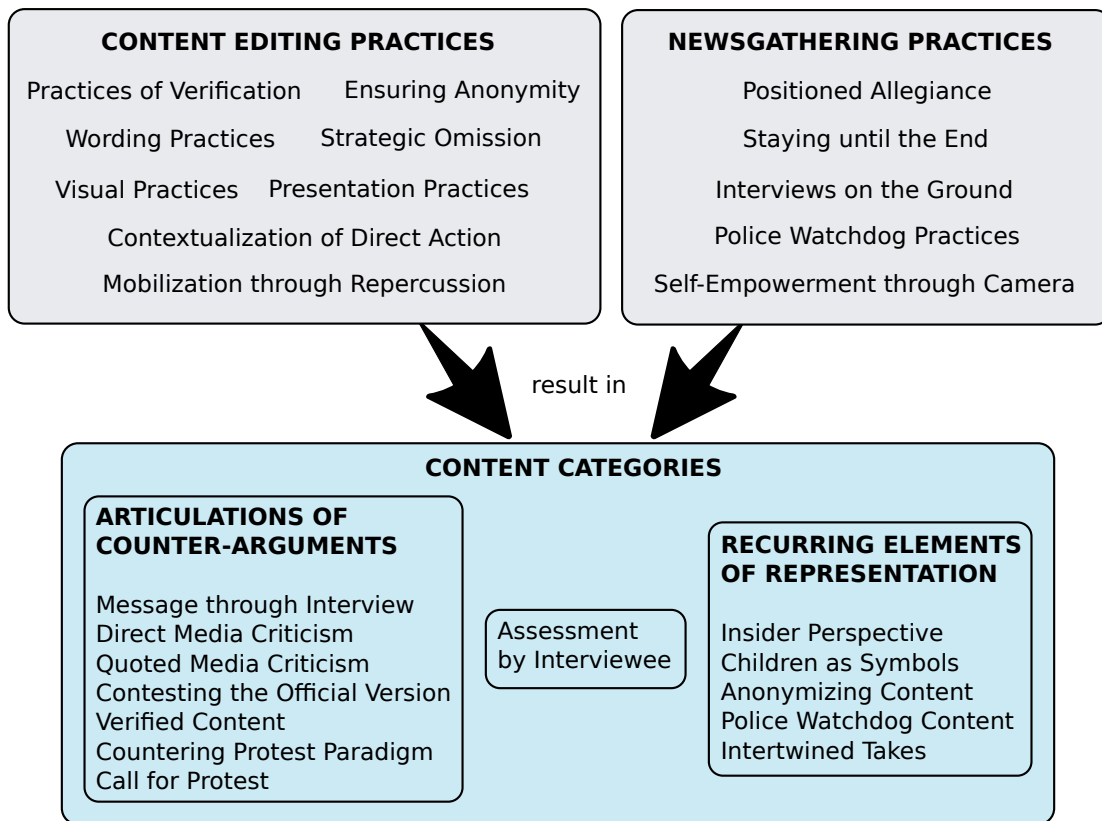
**Figure 9.1:** Updated model of the complex of practices that make up actors' alternative coverage of protests



**Figure 9.2:** Visual representation of the relationship between presentation practices and format categories

As described both in chapters 6 and 7, the main subversion of these formats consisted in the content actors chose to showcase through them. Thus, the content analysis also provided more insights about how different content categories related to each other while being structured in various formats as well as the kinds of content generated through newsgathering and editing practices. In a simplified representation (figure 9.3), I show these links between practices and content. Actors' practices of conducting interviews on the ground produced various types of articulation of counter-arguments, such as quoted media criticism and interviewees contesting the official version of events. Practices of verification (and their links to coping practices of division of tasks) were important to generate verified content. Practices of self-empowerment through camera, positioned allegiance and police watchdog were essential for generating police watchdog content as well as an insider perspective, to name just a few examples.

On the other hand, not all practice and content categories mirror each other. Some practice categories such as practices against surveillance and strategic omission cannot be found in actors' media production, since they pertain, respectively, to internal communication procedures and internal decision-making about the kinds of material actors leave out of the published coverage. These categories reinforce the importance of conducting expert interviews, as these reveal practices concerning actors' internal articulations that are not meant to become visible in public communication. Thus, while my content analysis shed light on actors' public communication and media production, expert interviews also showcased the internal production processes behind them. Together, both aspects enrich my definition of engaged journalism, a concept I



**Figure 9.3:** Visual representation of the relationship between news-gathering, content editing practices and content categories

introduced after my empirical analysis for answering RQ 1.

Actors' complex of practices and their discourse in terms of media production as part of the alternative coverage of the 2013 and 2014 protests in Fortaleza can be conceptualized as part of a broader phenomenon that I call engaged journalism. Basically, this concept covers a group in the journalistic field constituted by media professionals and experienced practitioners working outside of commercial or state-owned media while maintaining close links to social movements. Due to the habitus they usually integrate, engaged journalists<sup>1</sup> possess the necessary competence and material elements to enact professional journalistic practices while also linking distinct meaning elements than the ones present in journalistic practices permeated by the objectivity standard. These meaning elements may be strong media criticism, as well as the goal of circulating alternative narratives or countering official versions of events.

Answering RQ 1 provided me with the analytical tools for conceptualizing engaged journalists through their practices, while answering RQ 2 enable me to focus on the discourse that may originate from this kind of alternative journalism. In summary, engaged journalists media production is characterized by formats that exhibit similar traits to traditional, professionally produced journalistic pieces yet showcase distinct types of content than those found in traditional media coverage of protests and social movements. Engaged journalism pieces quote protesters

<sup>1</sup>Due to the importance of individuals' habitus and trajectories in the definition of engaged journalist, I believe it is possible to establish an equivalence between this kind of journalism and the actors that perform it by calling them "engaged journalists".

and social movement representatives more prominently than official sources, zoom in on topics relevant for their counterpublic, such as internal discussions among different movements, and articulate media criticism, both by quoting sources' grievances towards traditional media and by drawing from journalistic resources to fact-check traditional media's claims.

So far, I have applied this concept to the empirical findings I laid out in the previous chapters, i.e. the protests that took place in Fortaleza in the years of 2013 and 2014. However, the generalizing approach I employed when generating my categories as part of the grounded theory methodology opens the possibility of applying them and the concept of engaged journalism to other contexts, testing and expanding them through this process. Countries with a similar media landscape to Brazil's, i.e. marked by concentration of media ownership and clientelism, may be sites of engaged journalism, given the shortcomings these conditions impose on traditional media coverage of divisive events such as protests. In addition, as traditional newsrooms shrink and cut costs by flexibilizing working conditions, media landscapes become increasingly marked by precariousness worldwide – even in countries with traditionally healthy media landscapes (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, p. 176) –, driving more and more professional journalists to also opt for building alternative, self-managed structures and producing narratives they agree more with politically, since leaving or (in the case of early career journalists) not even pursuing a position in a traditional newsroom becomes less of a trade-off. In both cases, broader issues in the media landscape, albeit of different kinds, influence journalists' decision to become engaged journalists.

Shifting the focus from media systems towards broader sociopolitical changes, the occurrence of major protests in itself may be a factor for encountering cases of engaged journalism, as these events become watershed moments for activists and journalists alike, galvanizing them into constituting new partnerships and collectives for covering, disseminating and archiving their own perspective on events on the ground. In the current case study, *Na Rua*, founded in 2014, was one such example. The Egyptian *Mosireen Collective*, founded during the 2011 protests with the goal of documenting them (Mosireen Collective, 2019), is another.

With regard to counter public spheres, examples of engaged journalism may also arise when certain groups do not feel their concerns and perspectives receive sufficient representation on traditional media. Media professionals that integrate or are sympathetic to these groups might turn their efforts towards coverage that addresses these necessities, performing a mediating function for these counterpublics. I consider the US media outlet *The Intercept* or the German collective *Leftvision*, characterized by their proximity to the radical left and by the presence of professional journalists in their ranks, as examples of engaged journalism in this sense<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, the transferability of engaged journalism as a concept reflects one of practice theory's analytical merits: overcoming the dichotomy between the macro and the micro levels by applying a perspective focused on practices. In some cases, issues of concentration, clientelism or precarization of the media landscape can motivate professional journalists to start their own alternative media structures, adopting a stance that both counters traditional media's shortcomings and is directed at social movements and their sympathizers. Protests as a political turning

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<sup>2</sup>So far, I have only mentioned progressive alternative media for a reason. Later in this chapter, I address the issue of far-right media and how engaged journalism may position itself in the discussion around them.



point can provide the motivation for choosing this stance as a media collective. Finally, the rise of specific counterpublics that do not feel that traditional media satisfactorily represent their concerns may also drive journalists who had a previous personal trajectory in activism in to start or join media efforts focused on covering their issues. In all three scenarios, individuals' agency and habitus interact with the sociopolitical context as they enact media practices, in line with Lünenborg and Raetzsch's (2018, p. 24) understanding of media practices as communicative routines that reflect individuals' relation to society and how it is continuously negotiated.

Moreover, the circulation of material, competence and meaning elements that permeate the enactment of practices in the alternative coverage of protests provides the backdrop against which similar practices might arise all over the globe. Media technologies are an example of circulating material, tutorials and other forms of skills sharing incorporate circulating competences and the domestication of broader political discourses illustrates circulating meanings (as happened during the Occupy Movement, with local camps applying Occupy Wall Street's anti-capitalist frame to local issues).

## 9.2 Situating Engaged Journalism in the Scholarship

Alternative media's heterogeneity is one of its main characteristics, making it impossible to find a concept that applies to all its forms. While there are already various concepts to describe specific forms of alternative media, engaged journalism differentiates itself in various ways, adding one more layer of analysis to the scholarship. Through its focus on professional journalists' practices in alternative media, it covers a group often ignored in conceptualizations such as citizen or community journalism, which focus on "regular" citizens — i.e. individuals that do not possess a formal or professional education in journalism. This proves useful, for example, for understanding engaged journalists' role in society and possible power imbalances their practices may still be embedded in — due to engaged journalists' own belonging to privileged social groups — despite their commitment to addressing injustices in traditional media coverage<sup>3</sup>.

On the other hand, engaged journalists are also neglected by concepts such as public and advocacy journalism, which focus on professionals working inside traditional newsrooms that adopt a more activist stance on certain issues without abandoning traditional media structures. As engaged journalism may take place both in developed and in developing countries, it also does not overlap completely with development journalism. However, development journalism's newer, emancipatory version (Shah, 1996) may be considered a form of engaged journalism, given emancipatory journalists' critical stances towards official sources and commitment to marginalized communities. Moreover, while Mattoni's (2012) concept of activist media practices includes

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<sup>3</sup>In this sense, Custódio's (2017) study on favela media activism provides a valuable contrast to the habitus most engaged journalists come from. While the actors he interviewed were born and raised in Rio de Janeiro's favelas and regarded media activism as a survival strategy in the face of very concrete threats such as structural racism, violence and state neglect, non-favela media activists from the middle and upper classes were motivated by emancipatory ideals and values yet enjoyed better living conditions, which made their struggle less existential. Although members of both groups may acquire a formal education in journalism and work in traditional newsrooms, engaged journalists' middle and upper class background may provide different meaning elements to their practices

activists' interactions with professional journalists, these journalists are not the main focus of her analysis, but rather part of the broader context of media activism social movement members navigate. Engaged journalism brings the perspective of the alternative journalists these activists interact with in the course of their own practices involving media, as activists perform the role of sources, production partners or part of the audience. Finally, radical media serves as an umbrella term that also covers engaged journalism due to its focus on counter-hegemonic practices of communication. Much like the concept of alternative journalism — another umbrella term —, radical media is too broad and describes many other phenomena in addition to stances of engaged journalism.

Therefore, I argue that engaged journalism contributes to the scholarship on alternative media and, more specifically, alternative journalism by conceptualizing professional, non-objectivity-seeking journalism performed inside alternative media structures. As the examples of engaged journalism projects I cited earlier in this chapter show, there is a need in the scholarship for an accurate term to describe these types of alternative journalism, taking into account their particularities in relation to other forms that may be more grassroots or even performed inside traditional media organizations by lone advocacy or public journalists.

More broadly, this study's contributions to the academic community can be divided according to the four scholarly strands it built upon: practice theory, social movement studies with a focus on media, journalism studies and theories of (counter) public spheres. In the field of practice theory, this study reveals the potential of different methods for retracing and conceptualizing practices, such as the combination of expert interviews and qualitative content analysis, more unusual than the duo expert interviews and observation. Due to its focus on media practices, the qualitative content analysis helped shed light on different nuances of actors' practices present in their media production, as particularly the updated model (figure 9.1) shows, which features practices that, for various reasons, did not emerge from expert interviews. This can be attributed to the duality between internal and external communication present in most social movements yet often neglected in empirical studies, especially since big data on movements' public communication on social media platforms have become increasingly available for studies, leading to "an excessive attention to dynamics of public, external communication, at the expense of internal dynamics and daily communicative exchanges through which activists organise, create, and nurture collective identities" (Treré, 2018, p. 11). By highlighting the complementary relationship between coping practices for internal communication and newsgathering and content editing practices, as well as their resulting media production, directed at external communication, my model helps counter this trend in the scholarship on social movements. Moreover, it also adds an often overlooked group of actors to the discussion on movements' media strategies, namely professional journalists working outside of traditional newsrooms. While many authors focus on activists' media practices (e.g. Lin, 2017; Martinez, 2017; Mattoni, 2012) and their various media strategies (e.g. Cammaerts et al., 2013; Dias, 2007; Mattoni, 2013; McCurdy, 2013; Richter, 2011; Rucht, 2013; Waisbord, 2011), professional journalists' role in covering movements while embedded in alternative media structures remains largely obscured despite the rise of quite successful alternative media collectives in many countries.

This study fits Russell's (2016) broader conceptualization of journalism as activism, in which she describes a media vanguard that puts their specialized and advanced media skills at the service of activism for certain causes. While she also covers whistleblowers, public intellectuals and data wizards as part of this vanguard, my study zooms in on a category she calls the guerilla reporter, i.e. activist journalists covering major events such as protests from up close through flexible and innovative means. Engaged journalism deepens this conceptualization, shedding light on the collective articulations between various activist journalists, as well as on their specific practices and the particularities of their media production. This also means that, with this study, I sharpened the focus on a specific form of journalism enacted outside of newsrooms, as more and more authors have been demanding of journalism researchers (Ahva, 2016, p. 1529; Deuze & Witschge, 2018, p. 176; Raetzsch, 2015, p. 73–74). A further important contribution to the scholarship on journalism studies consists of my conceptualization of a form of professional journalism that rejects the objectivity standard, taking into account actors' motivations for doing so and how these motivations flow into the journalism they enact, often subverting traditional journalistic practices and formats. Finally, given media's central role in the constitution of today's public sphere, this study furthers the understanding of how alternative media seek to address the power imbalances on traditional media that, in part, lead to an over-representation of certain sectors of society at the center of the public sphere. Moreover, both the empirical case study and the concept of engaged journalism detail alternative journalism's mediating role in social movements' counterpublics, providing space for internal deliberation between different actors that compose counterpublics before they present their demands to the wider public sphere.

### **9.3 Possible Next Steps for Research on Engaged Journalism**

The limitations of this study mirror, in part, its contributions. While the methodological mix of expert interviews and qualitative content analysis highlighted nuances of actors' practices and discourse in the alternative coverage of protests, this study's retrospective nature made it impossible to conduct observations on the ground. I retraced practices from actors' descriptions and the content they published, but being on site and following their activities on the ground could have brought valuable insights about their practices as well. Future studies should incorporate observation and other forms of ethnography into their research designs. This would also mean taking into account the challenge presented by mobilizing resources on very short notice in order to be able to travel and observe actors as they perform practices in the context of the alternative coverage of protests as these unfold.

A second limitation is the fact that this study did not focus on the audience of the alternative coverage of protests. This enabled me to ignore social media platforms' metrics concerning users' interaction with the content, providing a less platform-centric research design. In addition, it freed my capacities to analyze actors' internal and external communication processes in terms of practices and of discourse. However, it also presents a blind spot in this study, namely how

the individuals that constitute the public this coverage sought to address really saw it. Did their perceptions and that of the actors I interviewed overlap in any way? Or were there aspects that actors ignored in the way the public engaged with their media production? Future studies with more resources — especially in terms of more personnel involved — could address this, including research questions and methods focusing on the audiences' relationship with alternative media coverage.

In addition to research projects that could bridge the gaps left by the current study's limitations, other possible future applications for the concept of engaged journalism include studies on alternative media collectives in other parts of the world, either through a case study approach or through international comparative efforts between different countries. This would be an important step to further test this concept. Based on recent empirical findings on how the protest paradigm plays out according to media outlets' own editorial line (Mourão, 2019; Shahin et al., 2016; Weaver & Scacco, 2013), it would also be interesting to see how alternative media collectives cover movements they oppose, by analyzing, for example a left-wing media collective's coverage of a right-wing movement. How would actors adapt the complex of practices that constitute their coverage to this kind of situation? And what discourse would result of this adaptation?

Moreover, engaged journalism could be applied to questions about journalistic training outside of newsrooms and journalism schools. As journalists who have received training in these structures turn their backs on them and pursue a more political role, what new professional norms and working routines may arise? More broadly speaking, engaged journalism may provide a path towards reflecting on what some professional journalists' rejection of the objectivity paradigm might mean for the journalistic field as a whole. Are engaged journalists part of the pioneers of an age beyond objectivity? As I described in chapter 4, objectivity was not always the predominant paradigm in journalism, with a partisan press flourishing even in the US, considered one of the countries where objectivity standards later set deep roots in the journalistic field. Is it maybe time for journalism studies to focus more on what comes after objectivity? After all, as Heinonen and Luostarinen (2008, p. 229) assert, journalism's history proves that it is constantly shifting, so it is not realistic to expect that it remains as we know it<sup>4</sup>. Thinking about sustainable, democratic alternatives to objectivity may bring solutions to some of the challenges our public spheres are currently facing, as I detail in the next section.

## 9.4 An Emancipatory Alternative to Challenges to Journalism

When I started working on this study, in 2014, it was hard to imagine many of the challenges progressive social movements and communication scholars are facing today. Back then, despite many governments' repressive measures, the movements that had erupted worldwide since the

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<sup>4</sup>It must be said that Heinonen and Luostarinen (2008) defend that journalism studies should focus only on the media industry and professional journalists, which is a very restrictive — and an increasingly outdated — conception of the field. Hartley (2008, p. 46) counters this perspective, putting the practice of journalism at the center of journalism studies and arguing this practice should be regarded through the framework of human rights, as covered by freedom of expression, regardless of who is practicing it.

Arab Spring had achieved significant successes, such as the fall of authoritarian regimes in the Middle-East and the rise of new themes on many countries' political agendas, as in Spain and Greece. In the years that followed, the wars in the Ukraine, Syria and Yemen as well as the rise to power of a military dictator in Egypt belong to the most sobering events that followed this hopeful wave of emancipatory movements. As Bringel and Pleyers (2017) put it, "the diffuse indignation and the protests against the political system, traditional parties and the symbols of financial capital, although initiated by progressive individuals and collectives, found themselves in no few occasions accompanied, appropriated and even controlled by conservative groups afterwards" (Bringel & Pleyers, 2017, p. 23)<sup>5</sup>. How this happened is too complex a discussion for me to address here, but it is important to bring up this major shift in the sociopolitical context, as it helps understand the challenges journalism as an institution is currently facing and how engaged journalism may contribute to solve this crisis.

Brazil also experienced a sharp turn to conservatism after the 2013 and 2014 protests, culminating in far-right politician Jair Bolsonaro's ascension to the country's presidency in 2019. While Bolsonaro has been known for his hateful statements towards women, members of the LGBTIQ community, Black and indigenous people<sup>6</sup> as well as for his nostalgia for the military dictatorship<sup>7</sup>, he also poses a dire threat to freedom of the press. Reporters without Borders registered multiple attacks against media representatives after Bolsonaro's electoral victory was declared in October 2018 (Reporters without Borders, 2018a), connecting them to the candidate's repeated statements vilifying the press. In its 2019 *World Press Freedom Index*, the NGO asserts that "Jair Bolsonaro's election as president in October 2018 after a campaign marked by hate speech, disinformation, violence against journalists and contempt for human rights heralds a dark era for democracy and press freedom in Brazil" (Reporters without Borders, 2019)<sup>8</sup>

I do not have the pretense of explaining all the nuances that led to Bolsonaro's rise to power. For sources that analyze the many factors that may have played a role in it, such as class and racial issues, neo-pentecostal churches' growing influence, security issues, right-wing activist groups, the economic crisis and others, see Pinheiro-Machado and de Freixo (2019), Gallego (2018) and Costa and Motta (2019). Instead, I shift my focus to what this means for journalism in the country, especially for engaged journalism. One of the direst threats coming from the Bolsonaro administration is the potential criminalization of social movements and their supporters through already proposed changes to the Anti-Terrorism Law, in particular the intended classification of

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<sup>5</sup>"la indignación difusa y las protestas contra el sistema político, los partidos tradicionales y los símbolos del capital financiero, aunque iniciadas por individuos y colectividades progresistas se vieron, en no pocas ocasiones, acompañadas, apropiadas e incluso controladas a posteriori por grupos conservadores" (Bringel & Pleyers, 2017, p. 23).

<sup>6</sup>For a collection of his most infamous quotes, translated to English, see Simões (2018).

<sup>7</sup>In order to distract public opinion from the multiple corruption charges against his family and other government scandals going on at the time, president Bolsonaro even declared that the coup's anniversary should be celebrated in 2019 (France24, 2019a).

<sup>8</sup>As an example of how Bolsonaro's media strategy worked during his campaign, the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* revealed that various business owners had invested millions in illegal donations to finance a network of pro-Bolsonaro WhatsApp groups managed by advertising agencies and with a reach of millions of users (Mello, 2018). These groups were major sites of circulation of false claims against the Workers' Party's presidential candidate Fernando Haddad and other left-wing politicians. The scheme violates Brazilian electoral laws, which forbid campaign donations from private companies.

direct action and other disruptive forms of activism such as occupations of public buildings as terrorism<sup>9</sup>. These articles had been previously vetoed by president Dilma Rousseff at the time the original legislation was passed (Vieira, 2018). This expanded definition of terrorism makes another suggested addition to the law especially dangerous to freedom of expression: statements considered to be public expressions of support to actions that fall under the definition of terrorist acts would be classified as terrorism themselves (Garcia, 2018). If approved, these changes would bring Brazil dangerously close to the Turkish reality, in which journalists covering criminalized movements can be framed for “terrorist propaganda” (Reporters without Borders, 2018b). Given their links to social movements, engaged journalists can become direct targets if these movements suddenly get classified as terrorist organizations. This example shows that the recent events in Brazil are not an isolated phenomenon, but rather part of a context of global threats to democracy, particularly from far-right actors. From a communication studies perspective, this context poses two challenges: the rise of a “regime of posttruth” (Harsin, 2015) and far-right media strategies aimed at questioning journalistic work as it is done today and proposing an own alternative paradigm to objectivity.

Both challenges are intrinsically connected. Drawing from Foucault’s concept of regime of truth, Harsin (2015) describes our current reality as marked by a regime of posttruth. In the regime of truth, authoritative stances such as mass media, scientific and political institutions circulated established interpretations of facts that were accepted by society as true. The emerging regime of posttruth, on the other hand, is marked by processes of fragmentation and algorithmization of the media landscape, in which diverging truths are marketed within fragmented networks. This creates multiple regimes of truth, existing parallel to each other and, thus, generating an overall regime of posttruth, in which individuals are pushed to “a) accept that there is no way ultimately to verify truth, (b) believe their own truth arbiters in their markets, and subsequently (c) engage in vigorous counterclaiming and debunking” (Harsin, 2015, p. 332). While Foucault’s regime of truth was successful due to some institutions’ credibility within societies, in the regime of posttruth, “the rush to debunk and counter-claim is usually to no avail, since there is no main venue in which a trusted authority can definitively debunk truths by suturing multiple audience/market/network segments” (Harsin, 2015, p. 332).

Far-right actors play a particularly central role in trying to enforce a regime of posttruth while also benefiting from it, as it allows them to disseminate their claims more easily to a broader public. Their politically charged, false claims, often spread with the aim of pushing a xenophobic and reactionary agenda, have recently gained the label of fake news. Although the phenomenon of so-called fake news is older than the internet, they have become dramatically more frequent with it, especially due to social media’s character as a new technology and their massive reach (Nelson, 2017, p. 3; Posetti & Matthews, 2018, p. 1; Tandoc, Lim, & Ling, 2017, p. 3) as well as their algorithms’ inner workings (Bakir & McStay, 2018, p. 155) — a concrete example of the fragmentation Harsin (2015) describes as part of the regime of posttruth. While there are various

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<sup>9</sup>Shortly before the presidential elections, Bolsonaro himself made public statements in favor of classifying the land reform movement MST and the housing rights movement MTST as terrorist organizations due to the use of occupations of land and buildings as part of their tactics (Ribeiro, 2018).

types of so-called fake news, ranging from satirical pieces to propaganda<sup>10</sup>, their possible political consequences in the context of electoral interference (Krotz, 2017, p. 23) or information warfare (Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016) raise worries among scholars<sup>11</sup>.

Due to populist and authoritarian politicians' use of the label "fake news" to discredit verified news they just disagree with (Caplan & Boyd, 2018, p. 54; Krämer, 2018, p. 138), I prefer to use the term disinformation. Moreover, fake news may also hint at isolated, incidental dissemination of false information, while "disinformation invites looking at more systematic disruptions of authoritative information flows due to strategic deceptions that may appear very credible to those consuming them" (Bennett & Livingston, 2018, p. 124)<sup>12</sup>. As Bennett and Livingston (2018, p. 132) assert, far-right movements in particular make use of disinformation to target established political parties and national institutions as well as build an own movement by creating an alternative media environment to circulate their false claims and mobilize their followers. These practices link a distinct form of media criticism than the one I have analyzed in the study as a meaning element in practices of engaged journalism.

Emancipatory media criticism seeks to constructively correct or complement reporting traditional media circulate by drawing attention to information and viewpoints these media might be neglecting and by highlighting structural imbalances of power that might have led to this neglect (Haller & Holt, 2018, p. 5; Lieb, 2017). Far-right media criticism, on the other hand, is characterized by conspiracy theories that portray traditional media representatives as part of an elitist articulation to advance secret goals through omission or false reporting (Krüger & Seiffert-Brockmann, 2018, p. 76–77), discursively marking traditional media journalists as enemies of the people (Krämer, 2018, p. 140–141)<sup>13</sup>. This kind of far-right media criticism, coupled with the disinformation strategies Bennett and Livingston (2018) describe, challenge journalistic practices directly. Far-right actors' accusations of biased reporting often drive journalists towards adopting strategies to assert their objectivity that ultimately cater to far-right interests, such as quoting politicians from this spectrum more often or adapting their news values to report on issues or events this group considers relevant. These strategies might contribute to a normalization of far-right discourses (Krämer, 2018, p. 148) and pose a threat to democratic, pluralist societies.

Far-right politicians in government positions like Bolsonaro or Donald Trump, who adopt an openly hostile stance towards journalism and actively disseminate disinformation, also pose a challenge to sourcing practices in the regime of objectivity. Following the logic of source selection that assigns authoritative sources the most credibility, journalists are now faced with the fact that many heads of state are no longer reliable. Trump, for example, "routinely and unapolo-

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<sup>10</sup>For an interesting typology and an overview of the evolution of this concept between 2003 and 2017, see Tandoc et al. (2017).

<sup>11</sup>However, some authors seem to consider these worries out of proportion, as there is still no empirical evidence that so-called fake news can really influence an individual's political actions as massively as some seem to think (Nielsen, 2017).

<sup>12</sup>According to Bakir and McStay's (2018, p. 159) definition, fake news would often fall under the category of misinformation, that is "inadvertent online sharing of false information" while disinformation constitutes the "deliberate creation and sharing of information known to be false".

<sup>13</sup>Just to provide one concrete example of the link between these tactics and far-right politicians, Donald Trump has publicly called the press "True Enemies of the People" on more than one occasion (France24, 2019b; Stewart, 2018).

getically states untruths, or indeed lies, and then seeks to brand news organisations which report those untruths as ‘fake’ and ‘dishonest’” (McNair, 2017, p. 1330). As a result, calls for journalists to challenge such authoritative sources “as never before” are rising in the scholarship (McNair, 2017, p. 1331)<sup>14</sup>. With their counter sourcing practices, engaged journalists may provide interesting examples of how to adopt a more challenging stance towards the authorities while also showcasing marginalized perspectives, i.e. often those most directly affected by governmental actions.

The difference between engaged journalism’s media criticism and far-right media is one of the main reasons why this form of alternative journalism cannot be completely appropriated by far-right actors, as these actors link distinct meaning elements in the enactment of their media practices. There are various examples of professional journalists that have put their skills at the service of far-right movements worldwide, founding far-right media outlets or acting as solo producers in a larger network of far-right media actors. This certainly requires a closer look at their media practices. However, my position is that they do not represent an example of engaged journalism, as this concept cannot be dissociated from an emancipatory understanding of alternative media, which seeks to counter instead of deepen current power imbalances in the media landscape and in society at large<sup>15</sup>. Moreover, engaged journalists perform practices that maintain journalism’s commitment to truth, refraining from spreading hoaxes and false information even when those could be useful for their cause, as the practices of verification I describe in my model illustrate. This differs from far-right media’s employment of disinformation as part of their broader strategy. Engaged journalism’s rejection of the regime of objectivity is not a rejection of traditional journalism’s social function, but rather a proposed path ahead for journalism to continue to fulfill its obligation of informing the public by being more transparent about its political leanings while keeping basic ethical commitments as an essential part of its practices.

I do not want to claim for engaged journalism the status of a silver bullet against such complex issues. However, I would like to close this study with a look ahead and propose that scholarship keeps trying to confront such daunting challenges as an important contribution to democratic societies worldwide. There is a growing literature on far-right media and networks (e.g. Atkinson & Berg, 2012; Haller & Holt, 2018; Leidig, 2019; Lewis, 2018; Krämer, 2017; Recuero & Gruzd, 2019) that attempts to understand how they work and has indisputable merit. However, like other scholars in the field (e.g. Couldry, 2002; Russell, 2016, p. 156), I believe that looking into models of emancipatory and pluralistic alternative communication is essential for finding sustainable solutions for important issues the overall media landscape faces, such as challenges to the objectivity standard both inside the journalistic field and from actors defending authoritarian conceptions of how journalism should work. I understand engaged journalism to be a contribution to this debate.

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<sup>14</sup>For contributions from various scholars on the challenges Trump poses to journalism and objectivity standards, as well as to the public sphere, see Papacharissi and Boczkowski (2018).

<sup>15</sup>Authors such as Downing (1995b) and Hackett and Zhao (1998) defend similar normative definitions of alternative media.



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# Appendix A

## Interview Guidelines in English

This appendix contains the translation to English of the interview guidelines I originally applied in Portuguese as part of my field research during the first round of interviews, between late 2014 and early 2015, and during the second round of interviews, which took place between late 2015 and early 2016. Most interviews were divided into thematic blocs.

### 2014 - 2015

#### *Nigéria* Members

##### **Personal and professional biography**

Tell me a bit about your experiences with media before joining *Nigéria*. What made you choose this professional career?

How did you guys have the idea of founding *Nigéria Productions*?

What is the difference between the *Nigéria Collective* and *Nigéria Productions*? (Is there a type of work or characteristic that is exclusive to each one of these?)

Other than *Nigéria*, are you currently working in any other place or on any other project? How about your employment situation at the time the protests happened in 2013 and 2014?

How do you reconcile all those projects? (And what is the difference between *Nigéria* and your other professional experiences? Do you have to make any sacrifices to reconcile all of these projects?)

##### **Protests coverage**

When the first protests broke out in Fortaleza during the Confederations Cup in 2013, you were working on a project to map out irregular occupations in the city. What happened to this project after you started covering the protests? (Was it resumed later? Were there changes in the way you carried it out?)

How and when did you record the first images of the protests during the Confederations Cup?

How did you prepare to cover each demonstration?

Did all four of you always take part in the coverage? (How did you divide the tasks?)  
(Please try to summarize your working routine before, during and after each demonstration.

How was your working routine?)

When did you decide to turn your footage into a documentary?

Had you worked with this format before?

And why the specific focus on the issue of vandalism?

What experience marked you the most during your time working on the ground in the coverage of the protests? Why?

Did you follow other protests that took place between 2013 and 2014 in Fortaleza, such as #OcuppyCocó? How do they relate to the protests from June 2013, in your opinion?

You were also active during the protests that happened in Fortaleza in the 2014 FIFA World Cup. What working routines did you bring into this project from your experience in the 2013 demonstrations?

Did you experiment with other formats this time?

### **Professional values and routines**

How did journalistic values like objectivity interact with your work during the protests, which was carried out voluntarily, outside of mainstream media organizations? (Were there elements you brought with you from the newsroom? Was there something you started to question in your working routine from before?)

How was your interaction with activists, social movements and other collectives during the protests?

And how about afterwards?

Did you see yourself more as a media professional or as an activist back then?

Is there anything you do differently at work nowadays after covering the protests?

### **Counter-public sphere**

What were your main sources of information about the protests at the time?

Did you follow the coverage done by mainstream media? What parallels would you draw between it and your experience on the ground?

How do you evaluate the reach of the content produced by *Nigéria* and other media collectives in Brazil, like *Mídia Ninja*? (Did they reach mainstream media's usual audience or were just restricted to media professionals and activists?)

Did you notice any changes in the way the people around you consumed news about the protests? (Think about your family and friends who work in other branches.)

*Nigéria* does not have an official website, but you have a fanpage on Facebook and a profile on *Agência Pública's* website. What role do these pages play in your work?

How do the updates posted on Facebook and the documentary *Vandalism* interact? (Do they complement or run parallel to each other?)

How did the protests of 2013 and 2014 affect you? (Both personally and professionally)

In an interview from 2013, a member of the collective stated that we needed to wait and see what would be the “legacy” of the protests to communication, in a reference to the expression used to describe what remains after mega-events such as the World Cup. Now that almost two years have gone by, how would you describe this legacy?

## ***Na Rua* Members**

### **Personal and professional biography**

Tell me a bit about your experiences with media before covering the protests. What made you choose this professional career?

How was your employment situation at the time the protests happened in 2013 and 2014?

Tell me a bit more about *Na Rua*. How was it founded?

Who was part of *Na Rua* at the time?

How does *Na Rua* relate to the rest of Urucum’s work?

How did you get involved with *Na Rua*?

And what is the difference between *Na Rua* and your other professional experiences?

Are you currently working in any other place or on any other project?

### **Protests coverage**

*Na Rua* started its activities in 2014. Did you join the 2013 protests? Did you work on any type of coverage of the protests back then?

What did you bring from your experience in 2013 to the coverage in 2014?

How and when did you record the first images of the protests during the 2014 protests?

What motivated you to start covering the protests?

How would you describe the content you produced?

How did you prepare to cover each demonstration?

How did you divide the tasks inside the collective?

Had you worked with these formats before?

Why did you decide to focus on human rights violations?

What experience marked you the most during your time working on the ground in the coverage of the protests? Why?

Did you follow other protests that took place between 2013 and 2014 in Fortaleza, such as #OccupyCocó? How do they relate to the protests from June 2013, in your opinion?

*Na Rua* stayed active until the BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, shortly after the World Cup. What did you bring from your experience of covering the World Cup to the coverage of the summit?

### **Professional values and routines**

How did journalistic values like objectivity interact with your work during the protests, which was carried out voluntarily, outside of mainstream media organizations? (Were there elements you brought with you from the newsroom? Was there something you started to question in your working routine from before?)



How was your interaction with activists, social movements and other collectives during the protests?

And how about afterwards?

How would you define your role during the protests? (Journalist? Activist?)

Is there anything you do differently at work nowadays after covering the protests?

### **Counter-public sphere**

What were your main sources of information about the protests at the time?

Did you follow the coverage done by mainstream media? What parallels would you draw between it and your experience on the ground?

How do you evaluate the reach of the content produced by *Na Rua*?

Which channels did you use to publicize the collective's work? Did they have diverging strategic roles?

### **Solo Producers**

#### **Personal and professional biography**

Tell me a bit about your experiences with media before covering the protests. What made you choose this professional career?

How was your employment situation at the time the protests happened in 2013 and 2014?

Are you currently working in any other place or on any other project?

#### **Protests coverage**

When did you start covering the protests, in 2013 or in 2014?

How and when did you record the first images of the protests during the 2014 protests?

What motivated you to start covering the protests?

How did you prepare to cover each demonstration?

How would you describe the content you produced?

Had you worked with these formats before?

Did you have a specific thematic focus?

What did you bring from your experience in 2013 to the coverage in 2014?

What experience marked you the most during your time working on the ground in the coverage of the protests? Why?

Did you follow other protests that took place between 2013 and 2014 in Fortaleza, such as #OcuppyCocó? How do they relate to the protests from June 2013, in your opinion?

#### **Professional values and routines**

How did journalistic values like objectivity interact with your work during the protests, which was carried out voluntarily, outside of mainstream media organizations? (Were there elements

you brought with you from the newsroom? Was there something you started to question in your working routine from before?)

How was your interaction with activists, social movements and other collectives during the protests?

And how about afterwards?

How would you define your role during the protests? (Journalist? Activist?)

Is there anything you do differently at work nowadays after covering the protests?

### **Counter-public sphere**

What were your main sources of information about the protests at the time?

Did you follow the coverage done by mainstream media? What parallels would you draw between it and your experience on the ground?

How do you evaluate the reach of the content you produced?

Which channels did you use to publicize your work? Did they have diverging strategic roles?

## **2015 - 2016**

For this second round of interviews, I developed one guideline for all three groups, with optional questions reserved for specific situations, such as new interview partners. Since I was interviewing most interview partners for the second time, the questions are more focused than during the first round. For new interview partners, I kept some explorative questions (in bold). Possible follow-up questions are listed as items below the broader question. The thematic blocs in this round of interviews follows a first attempt at theorizing actors' practices, which I decided not to pursue later, as the findings did not match this more theoretical categorization.

### **Introductory questions**

What is your age?

What is your current profession?

**Tell me a bit about your experiences with media before the protests. What made you choose this path?**

**How was your employment situation at the time the protests happened in 2013 and 2014?**

Tell me about your experiences in 2013 and 2014. What changed for you from one year to the other?

### **Politicization of everyday media practices**

What kind of equipment did you use during the coverage?

- Do you feel you used them any differently during the protests than usual?

How did you use your cell phone during the coverage of the protests?

- Did you use Whatsapp, Facebook's Messenger or other apps from your everyday life to communicate with other protesters and/or sources?
- What kind of videos did you record? What kind of pictures?
- Had you used your cell phone to produce content before the protests? If so, what kind?

How would you describe your use of social media before the protests started?

- Were you used to discussing political issues online before the protests?
- Did you use your personal accounts to share content related to the protests, produced by you or by others?
- Did you start a page or account just for the coverage of the protests? If so, why?

Where did you get information about the protests?

- Were those sources different from your usual ones?

### **Professionalization of media practices: General questions**

Do you think you learned any new approaches to the coverage of the events of 2013 and 2014 with someone in the group?

- How did you implement those approaches in your work during the coverage?

Were there any working rules you adopted as a group to cover the protests?

- Who came up with them?
- How did you agree on them?
- Did other groups also adopt those rules in their own work?

### **Activismization of professional journalistic practices: professional journalists**

If someone asked you to identify yourself during the protests, how would you identify? (Journalist? Activist?)

Were there any methods you learned or implemented frequently while working at a newsroom that were also useful for the coverage of the protests?

- Did you tweak them in any way to fit your experience as a protester on the ground?

Were there any differences in the way you researched and wrote your pieces on the protests from the way you researched and wrote while working at a newsroom?

- How did you verify information during the protests?
- How did you select your sources during the protests?
- How did you select the images and texts for publication?

- How similar were those criteria to the ones adopted at your former or day job?
- Where did you diverge from those criteria and why?
- How do you feel your experience would have been if you were covering the protests for a traditional media outlet?

### **Activismization of professional journalistic practices: Media-savvy protesters without formal journalistic background**

If someone asked you to identify yourself during the protests, how would you identify? (Journalist? Activist?)

Where does your interest for media come from?

- What kind of previous practical experience with media did you have?

Do you think your work covering the protests was in any way similar to the work of a professional journalist? If so, how?

- And how was it different?
- How did you verify information?
- How did you select your sources?
- How did you select the images and texts for publication?

Did you work together with professional journalists during the protests?

- How did you divide the tasks for the coverage?
- Did you take on any new tasks over time?

### **Media practices as a reaction to changes in conjuncture**

Did you learn any new approaches or techniques in 2013 that proved particularly useful during the coverage of the protests in 2014?

In 2013, no one seemed to expect the protests, but in 2014 things were different: the government, the police and the mainstream media planned months ahead for possible protests during the World Cup. Did you also plan ahead?

- Tell me more about Pautão da Copa: who took part in those meetings?
- How did you divide the tasks among the groups that attended the meetings?
- In how far were the decisions made during those meetings also carried out in the coverage itself?
- Were all groups that attended the meetings also active during the coverage in the way they had planned?

- Is there any written documentation of those meetings?
- How was working from a GQ at the house of one of *Na Rua*'s members? Did you change your strategies in comparison with 2013?

Police violence was a recurring issue in 2013. Did you prepare in any way in 2014 to deal with the police?

- Did you identify as press? If so, did it affect the way police treated you?
- Did you wear any protective gear? If so, when did you start wearing it? If not, why not?
- What role did police violence play in your coverage?
- Did you experience police surveillance? If so, how did you deal with it?

Protests in 2014 also had significantly less attendees than the ones in 2013. Did that influence your coverage in any way?

- Did you come up with new strategies or formats for the coverage?

We also saw the rise of the black blocs, which did not use to be so visible before 2013 and 2014 in Brazil. How did you cover this phenomenon?

- How do you think the black blocs relate to the so-called vandals brought up by mainstream media in the coverage?

### **Alternative coverage and counter public spheres**

How did your coverage of the protests relate to the one made by mainstream media?

- Did you use different terms than mainstream media? If so, which and why?
- Did you interact directly with mainstream media outlets in any way? I.e. use of images, cooperation, conflicts?

How much room do you feel your coverage gave for authorship?

- Did authors have their own style or was the coverage more standardized?

Among the stories you published, which ones do you think had the broadest repercussion?

- Did you change your coverage in any way because of that? I.e. to emphasize similar stories or cover different issues?
- Did that lead to any changes in the way you researched and wrote your pieces after that? I.e. stricter verification, selection of images, sources?

Was there anything you chose not to publish due to its possible repercussions?

- What criteria did you use to make this decision?

Did you feel any difference in the reach of your content on Facebook between 2013 and 2014?

- Did you notice Facebook's changes in its algorithm for fanpages?

**Other/Optional**

Solo Producers: What influenced your decision to publish your content through your own channels or through the channels of collectives like *Nigéria* or *Na Rua*?

*Na Rua* members: Did the Fundo Brasil de Direitos Humanos have any influence over the coverage? Do you know if they followed it during the protests?

In our last interviews, you expressed a wish to work more with alternative media instead of for traditional media outlets. Do you feel that came true? What are you doing professionally nowadays?

How is *Nigéria/Na Rua*'s work today?

# Appendix B

## Interview Guidelines in Portuguese

This appendix contains the interview guidelines in Portuguese as I applied them during my field research as part of the first round of interviews, between late 2014 and early 2015, and during the second round of interviews, which took place between late 2015 and early 2016. Most interviews were divided into thematic blocs.

### 2014 - 2015

#### *Nigéria* Members

##### **Personal and professional biography**

Conte-me um pouco da sua experiência com mídia antes de entrar para o *Coletivo Nigéria*. O que te fez escolher essa carreira profissional?

Que outros trabalhos você realizou nos últimos anos?

Como surgiu a ideia de fundar a *Nigéria*?

Qual a diferença entre o *Coletivo Nigéria* e a *Produtora Nigéria*? (Há algum tipo de trabalho ou característica que é exclusivo de um dos dois?)

E o que diferencia a *Nigéria* das suas outras experiências profissionais?

Além da *Nigéria*, você atualmente está trabalhando em algum outro lugar ou projeto?

E na época dos protestos de 2013 e 2014, como era a sua situação profissional?

Como é conciliar esses diversos projetos? (Em que pontos eles convergem e em que pontos divergem? É preciso fazer sacrifícios para conciliar tudo?)

##### **Protests coverage**

Quando as primeiras manifestações na Copa das Confederações aconteceram em Fortaleza, vocês estavam mapeando ocupações irregulares na cidade.

Como ficou esse projeto depois que vocês passaram a cobrir os protestos? (Ele foi retomado mais tarde? Houve alguma mudança na forma de executá-lo?)

Como e quando vocês gravaram as primeiras imagens dos protestos na Copa das Confederações?

De que forma vocês se preparavam para cobrir cada manifestação?

Vocês quatro participavam sempre?

Como vocês dividiam as tarefas?

(Por favor tente resumir o antes, o durante e o depois de cada manifestação. Qual era a sua rotina de trabalho?)

Quando foi tomada a decisão de transformar tudo em um documentário?

Você já tinha trabalhado com esse formato antes?

E por que o foco na temática do vandalismo especificamente?

Qual foi a experiência que mais te marcou quando você estava em campo, durante os protestos? Por quê?

### **Professional values and routines**

De que forma valores jornalísticos, como objetividade, interagiram com o seu trabalho durante os protestos, realizado de maneira voluntária? (Houve coisas que você trouxe da redação para o campo? Houve algo que você passou a questionar da sua rotina de trabalho de antes?)

Quais eram as suas principais fontes de informação sobre os protestos na época? (Você acompanhou a cobertura da grande mídia dos protestos? Que paralelos você traçaria entre essa cobertura e a sua experiência em campo?)

Vocês chegaram a se relacionar com ativistas, movimentos sociais ou outros coletivos durante os protestos?

E depois?

Você acompanhou outros protestos ocorridos nesse período na cidade, como o #OcupeCocó?

De que forma eles se relacionam com as Jornadas de Junho?

Vocês também atuaram como coletivo durante os protestos que aconteceram em Fortaleza em 2014, na Copa do Mundo. Que rotinas de trabalho vocês trouxeram da experiência com as manifestações de 2013 para esse projeto?

Vocês experimentaram com outros formatos?

Como você definiria seu papel durante os protestos? (Jornalista? Ativista?)

Há algo que você faz de maneira diferente na sua rotina de trabalho hoje, depois de cobrir os protestos?

### **Counter-public sphere**

(Como é o trabalho com a *Agência Pública* e com outros parceiros atualmente?)

De que modo vocês escolhem os projetos aos quais vão se dedicar?

Como está o cenário hoje em Fortaleza no que diz respeito a protestos e movimentos sociais?

A *Nigéria* não possui um site oficial, mas tem uma página no Facebook e um perfil no site da *Agência Pública*. Qual o papel desses espaços no trabalho de vocês?

Você também postou coisas relacionadas aos protestos no seu perfil pessoal?

Em uma entrevista anterior em 2013, um dos membros do coletivo afirmou que precisávamos ver qual seria o “legado” das manifestações para a comunicação, em referência à expressão usada



para falar do que permanece depois de megaeventos como a Copa. Agora que se passaram quase dois anos, como você descreveria esse legado?

De que forma as manifestações de 2013 e 2014 te afetaram? (No âmbito pessoal e no âmbito profissional)

## ***Na Rua* Members**

### **Personal and professional biography**

Conte-me um pouco da sua experiência com mídia antes de cobrir os protestos. O que te fez escolher essa área?

Na época dos protestos de 2013 e 2014, como era a sua situação profissional?

Conte-me um pouco mais sobre o *Na Rua*. Como ele surgiu?

Quem compunha o *Na Rua* na época?

De que forma o *Na Rua* se relaciona com o restante do trabalho da Urucum?

Como você se envolveu com o *Na Rua*?

E o que diferencia o *Na Rua* das suas outras experiências com mídia?

Você atualmente está trabalhando em algum lugar ou projeto?

### **Protests coverage**

O *Na Rua* começou a atuar em 2014. Você chegou a participar dos protestos em 2013? Realizou algum tipo de cobertura?

O que você trouxe da experiência de 2013 para a cobertura de 2014?

Como e quando você registrou as primeiras imagens dos protestos de 2014?

O que te motivou a começar a cobrir os protestos?

Como você descreveria o tipo de conteúdo produzido por vocês?

De que forma você se preparava para cobrir cada manifestação?

Como vocês dividiam as tarefas dentro do coletivo?

Você já tinha trabalhado com esses formatos antes?

Por que o foco em violações de direitos humanos?

Qual foi a experiência que mais te marcou quando você estava em campo, durante os protestos? Por quê?

Você acompanhou outros protestos ocorridos nesse período na cidade, como o #OcupeCocó? De que forma eles se relacionam com as Jornadas de Junho?

O *Na Rua* continuou a atuar até a cúpula dos BRICS em Fortaleza, pouco depois da Copa. O que vocês trouxeram da experiência da Copa para essa outra cobertura?

### **Professional values and routines**

De que forma valores jornalísticos, como objetividade, interagiram com o seu trabalho durante os protestos, realizado de maneira voluntária? (Houve coisas que você trouxe da redação para o campo? Houve algo que você passou a questionar da sua rotina de trabalho de antes?)

Vocês chegaram a se relacionar com ativistas, movimentos sociais ou outros coletivos durante os protestos?

E depois?

Como você definiria seu papel durante os protestos? (Jornalista? Ativista?)

Há algo que você faz de maneira diferente na sua rotina de trabalho hoje, depois de cobrir os protestos?

### **Counter-public sphere**

Quais eram as suas principais fontes de informação sobre os protestos na época?

Você acompanhou a cobertura da grande mídia dos protestos? Que paralelos você traçaria entre essa cobertura e a sua experiência em campo?

Como você avalia o alcance do conteúdo produzido pelo *Na Rua*?

Quais eram os canais que vocês utilizavam para difundir o trabalho do coletivo? Eles tinham papéis estratégicos diferentes?

### **Solo Producers**

#### **Personal and professional biography**

Conte-me um pouco da sua experiência com mídia antes de cobrir os protestos. O que te fez escolher essa área?

Na época dos protestos de 2013 e 2014, como era a sua situação profissional?

Você atualmente está trabalhando em algum lugar ou projeto?

#### **Protests coverage**

Quando você começou a cobrir os protestos, em 2013 ou 2014?

Como e quando você registrou as primeiras imagens dos protestos?

O que te motivou a começar a cobrir os protestos?

De que forma você se preparava para cobrir cada manifestação?

Como você descreveria o tipo de conteúdo produzido por você?

Você já tinha trabalhado com esses formatos antes?

Você tinha um foco temático?

O que você trouxe da experiência de 2013 para a cobertura de 2014?

Qual foi a experiência que mais te marcou quando você estava em campo, durante os protestos? Por quê?

Você acompanhou outros protestos ocorridos nesse período na cidade, como o #OcupeCocó? De que forma eles se relacionam com as Jornadas de Junho?

#### **Professional values and routines**

De que forma valores jornalísticos, como objetividade, interagiram com o seu trabalho durante os protestos, realizado de maneira voluntária? (Houve coisas que você trouxe da redação para o

campo? Houve algo que você passou a questionar da sua rotina de trabalho de antes?)

Você chegou a se relacionar com ativistas, movimentos sociais ou outros coletivos durante os protestos?

E depois?

Como você definiria seu papel durante os protestos? (Jornalista? Ativista?)

Há algo que você faz de maneira diferente na sua rotina de trabalho hoje, depois de cobrir os protestos?

### **Counter-public sphere**

Quais eram as suas principais fontes de informação sobre os protestos na época?

Você acompanhou a cobertura da grande mídia dos protestos? Que paralelos você traçaria entre essa cobertura e a sua experiência em campo?

Como você avalia o alcance do conteúdo produzido por você?

Quais eram os canais que vocês utilizavam para difundir o seu trabalho na cobertura? Eles tinham papéis estratégicos diferentes?

## **2015 - 2016**

For this second round of interviews, I developed one guideline for all three groups, with optional questions reserved for specific situations, such as new interview partners. Since I was interviewing most interview partners for the second time, the questions are more focused than during the first round. For new interview partners, I kept some explorative questions (in bold). Possible follow-up questions are listed as items below the broader question. The thematic blocs in this round of interviews follows a first attempt at theorizing actors' practices, which I decided not to pursue later, as the findings did not match this more theoretical categorization.

### **Introductory questions**

Qual é a sua idade?

Profissão atual?

**Conte-me um pouco sobre as suas experiência com mídia antes dos protestos. O que te fez se interessar por mídia?**

**No que você estava trabalhando na época que os protestos começaram, em 2013 e 2014?**

Conte-me sobre suas experiências em 2013 e 2014. O que mudou para você de um ano para o outro?

### **Policitization of everyday media practices**

Que tipo de equipamento você usou durante a cobertura dos protestos?

- Você acha que usou esses equipamentos de alguma maneira diferente do que normalmente fazia antes?

De que modo você usou o seu celular durante a cobertura dos protestos?

- Você utilizou o Whatsapp, o Facebook Messenger ou outros apps do seu dia a dia para se comunicar com outros manifestantes, colegas e/ou fontes?
- Que tipos de vídeos você gravou? E que tipo de fotos?
- Você já tinha usado o celular para produzir conteúdo antes dos protestos? Se sim, que tipo de conteúdo?

Como você descreveria o seu uso de mídias sociais antes dos protestos começarem?

- Você já discutia questões políticas online antes dos protestos?
- Você usou suas contas pessoais para compartilhar conteúdo relacionado aos protestos, produzido por você e/ou por outros?
- Você chegou a criar uma página ou conta só para a cobertura dos protestos? Se sim, por quê?

Onde você costuma se informar mais sobre os protestos?

- Essas fontes de informação eram diferentes das suas fontes habituais de antes?

### **Professionalization of media practices: General questions**

Você aprendeu alguma nova maneira de trabalhar durante a cobertura dos protestos de 2013 e de 2014 com alguém do grupo?

- Como você implementou essas abordagens durante o seu trabalho na cobertura?

Vocês chegaram a adotar regras de trabalho enquanto grupo durante os protestos?

- Quem as definiu?
- De que modo vocês chegaram a um acordo sobre elas?
- Algum dos outros grupos envolvidos chegou a adotar essas regras para o próprio trabalho?

### **Activismization of professional journalistic practices: professional journalists**

Se alguém te pedisse pra se identificar durante as manifestações, como você se identificaria? (Jornalista? Ativista?)

Houve alguma técnica de jornalismo usada no seu trabalho em redações tradicionais que também foi útil para você na cobertura independente dos protestos?

- Você chegou a adequá-la de alguma forma à sua experiência durante as manifestações?

Houve alguma diferença na maneira como você apurava e escrevia seus textos sobre as manifestações em relação à apuração e escrita feita por você no trabalho em uma redação?

- Como você fazia a verificação de informações durante as manifestações?
- Como você selecionava suas fontes durante as manifestações?
- Como você selecionava imagens e textos para publicação durante as manifestações?
- De que forma esses critérios se assemelhavam àqueles adotados no seu emprego anterior/remunerado?
- Onde você divergia desses critérios e por quê?
- Como você considera que sua experiência seria se estivesse cobrindo os protestos para um veículo de comunicação tradicional?

### **Activismization of professional journalistic practices: media-savvy protesters without formal journalistic background**

Se alguém te pedisse pra se identificar durante as manifestações, como você se identificaria? (Jornalista? Ativista?)

De onde vem o seu interesse por mídia?

- Que tipo de experiências com mídia você já possuía antes dos protestos?

Você considera que seu trabalho na cobertura dos protestos era parecido, de alguma forma, com o trabalho de um jornalista profissional? Se sim, como?

- E de que forma ele era diferente?
- Como você fazia a verificação de informações durante as manifestações?
- Como você selecionava suas fontes durante as manifestações?
- Como você selecionava imagens e textos para publicação durante as manifestações?

Você trabalhou em conjunto com algum jornalista profissional durante os protestos?

- Como vocês dividiam as tarefas entre si na cobertura?
- Você chegou a assumir tarefas novas com o tempo?

### **Media practices as a reaction to changes in conjuncture**

Houve algum modo de trabalhar, uma técnica ou abordagem que você aprendeu em 2013 que também foi útil em 2014?

Em 2013, ninguém parecia esperar que os protestos acontecessem, mas as coisas foram diferentes em 2014: o governo, a polícia e mídia tradicional se prepararam com meses de antecedência para possíveis manifestações durante a Copa do Mundo. Você também se preparou com antecedência?

- Conte-me mais sobre o Pautão da Copa: quem participou dos encontros?
- Como vocês dividiram as tarefas entre os grupos que compareceram às reuniões?
- Até que ponto as decisões tomadas durante essas reuniões foram executadas durante a cobertura em si?
- Os grupos que compareceram às reuniões estiveram ativos da maneira planejada depois, durante a cobertura?
- Existe alguma documentação por escrito dessas reuniões?
- Como foi a experiência de trabalhar de uma base, no caso a casa de um membro do *Na Rua*? Isso alterou suas estratégias de trabalho em relação a 2013?

A repressão policial foi um problema freqüente em 2013. Em 2014, você se preparou de alguma forma pra lidar com a polícia?

- Você se identificava como imprensa? Se sim, isso afetou de alguma forma o tratamento da polícia?
- Você usava algum equipamento de proteção? Se sim, quando você começou a usá-lo? Se não, por que não?
- Que papel a repressão policial desempenhou na sua cobertura dos protestos?
- Você vivenciou alguma forma de vigilância policial? Se sim, como você lidava com isso?

Os protestos em 2014 também tiveram bem menos participantes que em 2013. De que forma isso influenciou a sua cobertura?

- Você passou a usar alguma nova estratégia ou formato para a cobertura por causa disso?

Nós também vimos a ascensão dos black blocs, que não eram tão visíveis antes de 2013 e 2014 no Brasil. Como você cobriu esse fenômeno?

- De que forma, na sua opinião, os black blocs se relacionam aos “vândalos” mencionados pela mídia tradicional?

### **Alternative coverage and counter public spheres**

Como a sua cobertura alternativa dos protestos se relacionava com a cobertura da mídia tradicional?

- Você empregou termos diferentes da mídia tradicional? Se sim, quais e por quê?
- Você chegou a interagir com veículos de comunicação tradicionais de alguma forma? (uso de imagens, cooperação, conflitos?)

Quanto espaço havia na sua cobertura para o aspecto autoral?

- Os autores possuíam um estilo próprio ou a cobertura era mais padronizada?

Entre as matérias que você publicou, quais tiveram a maior repercussão?

- Você mudou sua cobertura de alguma forma por causa disso? (para enfatizar matérias parecidas ou cobrir outros assuntos?)
- Isso levou a alguma mudança na maneira como você apurava e escrevia suas matérias? (verificação mais rigorosa, seleção de imagens ou fontes?)

Houve alguma coisa que vocês decidiram não publicar devido à possível repercussão?

- Que critérios vocês usaram para tomar esta decisão?

Você percebeu alguma diferença no alcance dos seus posts no Facebook entre 2013 e 2014?

- Você percebeu que o Facebook mudou o seu algoritmo para fanpages?

### **Other/Optional**

Solo Producers: O que influenciou a sua decisão de publicar seu conteúdo através de canais próprios ou através dos canais de coletivos como *Nigéria* ou *Na Rua*?

*Na Rua* members: O Fundo Brasil de Direitos Humanos tinha alguma influência sobre a cobertura? Você sabe se eles a acompanharam durante os protestos?

Na entrevista passada, você expressou uma vontade de trabalhar mais com mídia alternativa ao invés de em veículos tradicionais. Você acha que isso aconteceu? O que você está fazendo profissionalmente hoje?

Como está o trabalho do *Nigéria/Na Rua* atualmente?

# Appendix C

## Visualizations of Relationships Between Codes

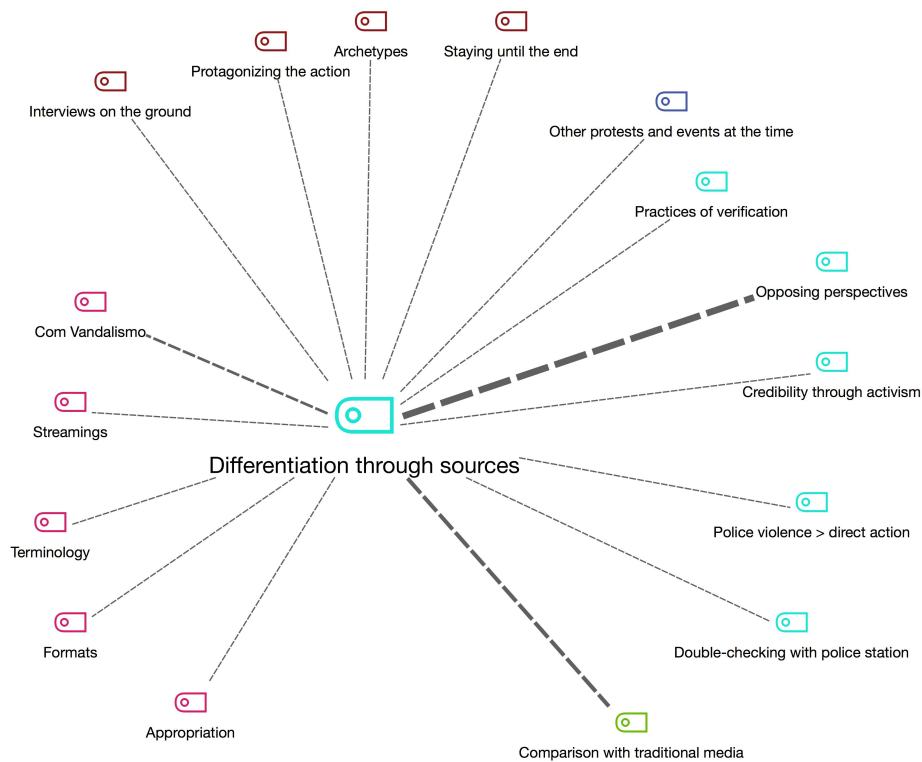
The following visualizations were generated on MAXQDA 12 using the tool MAXMaps and aided my brainstorming process as I was grouping codes into concepts and concepts into categories as part of the model I delineated for answering RQ 1. Codes' names may diverge from final practices' names in the model.

These visualizations illustrate co-occurrences, i.e. “the associations and intersections between selected codes” (MAXQDA, 2018) in terms of segments coded with both codes. The thicker the line between codes the stronger the association. I chose not to display the code frequency, as I am only interested in the relationships between codes, not in quantitative measures pertaining to them.

### Sourcing Practices at the Center

This visualization (figure C.1) helped me confirm my first assumption that sourcing practices could be the key category in my model, which I later called counter sourcing practices. It showed that codes from this category seem to be quite pervasive in various other categories from other groups: content (codes in pink in figure C.1), coverage on the ground (dark red), comparison with traditional media (green), and categories pertaining to journalistic practices (blue). This, in turn, indicated that sourcing practices were at least an important category for the key category, as actors seemed to connect many of their practices to this alternative source selection, especially when differentiating them from traditional media or describing how they defined their thematic focus.





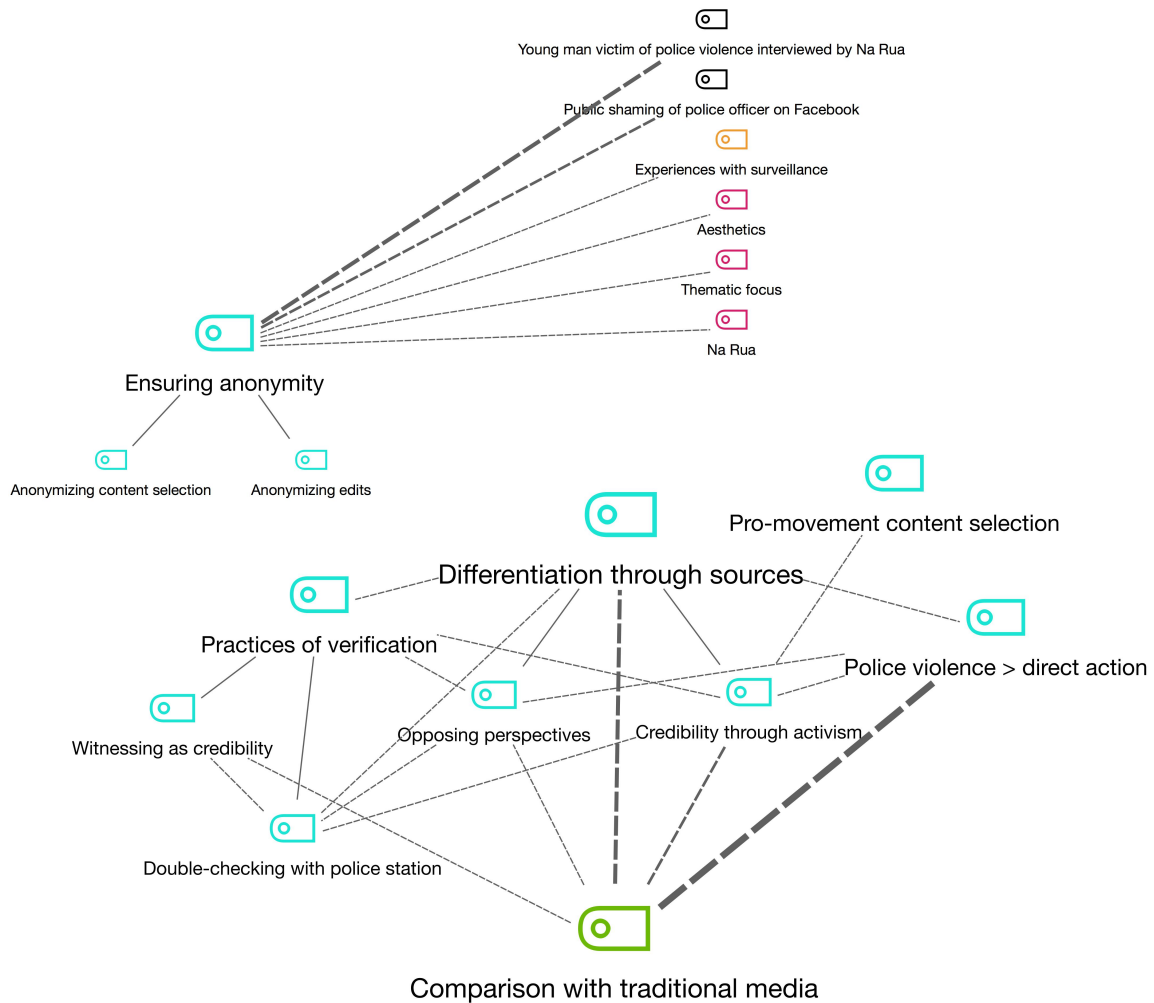
**Figure C.1:** Visualization of co-occurrence between all codes from expert interviews, with emphasis on sourcing practices codes. Generated on MAXMaps 2012.

## Sourcing Practices Test with Journalistic Categories and Comparison with Traditional media

The comparison with coded segments in which actors described how they perceived their coverage in contrast with traditional media codes showed strong links with many journalistic categories, but not all. Here, I refer to journalistic categories as categories pertaining to how actors describe journalistic work in general. It permeated sourcing practices, as expected (since they were also defined in opposition to what traditional media was perceived to be doing), with police violence > direct action (later renamed to contextualization of direct action) and to witnessing as credibility (but not to broader practices of verification). This visualization (figure C.2) helped me realize that the comparison with traditional media was a component of the key category, but did not tell the whole story, as the separate cluster around codes about ensuring anonymity in C.2 exemplifies.

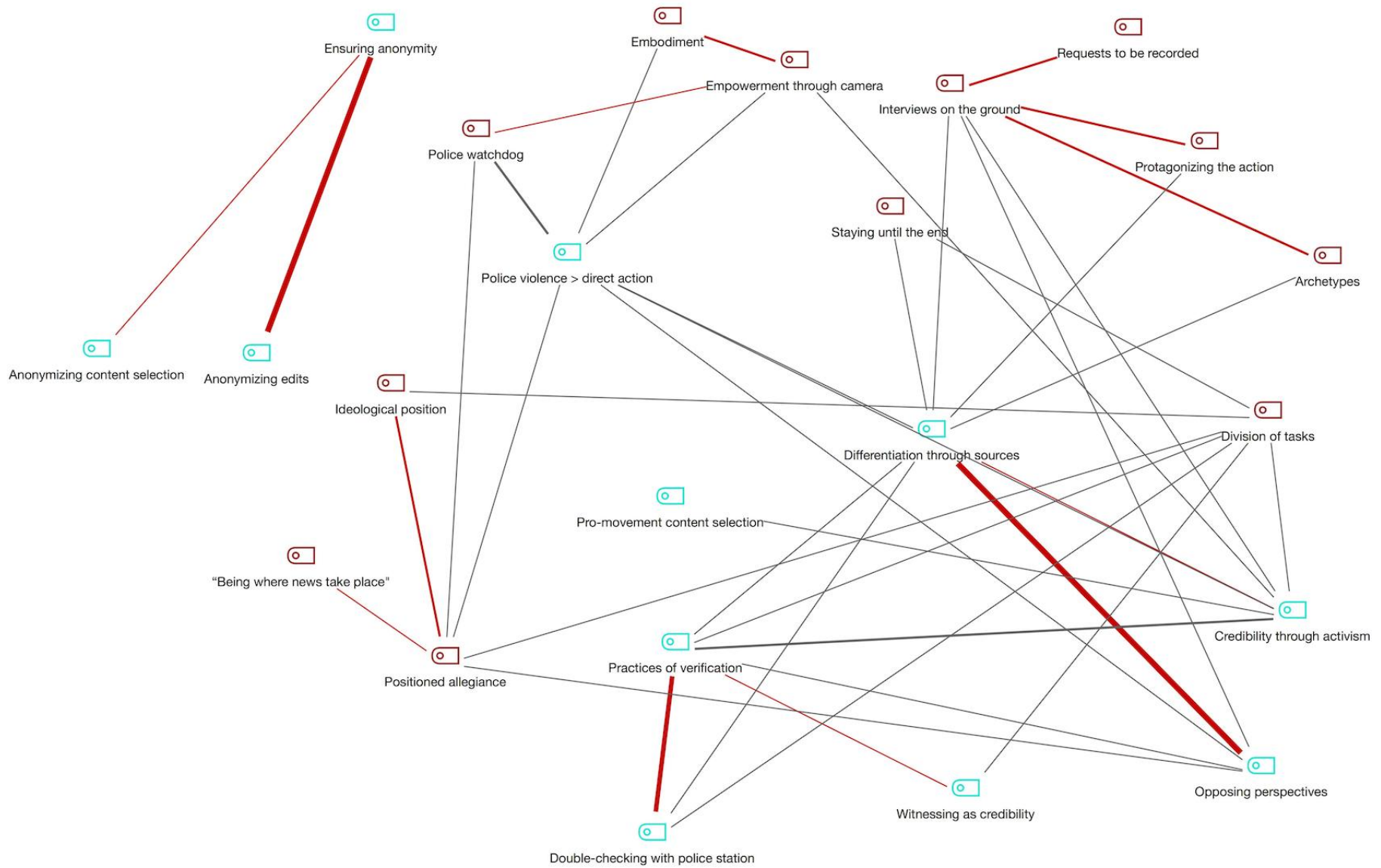
## Code Co-Occurrence Between Journalistic Codes and Coverage on the Ground

This model showed the connection between actors' ideas on journalism in general and how they put them into practice in their own coverage. Coverage on the ground codes pertain to how actors described their practices while covering the protests on site. The visualization (figure C.3)



**Figure C.2:** Visualization of co-occurrence between codes on journalistic work, sourcing practices and comparison with traditional media from expert interviews. Generated on MAXMaps 2012.

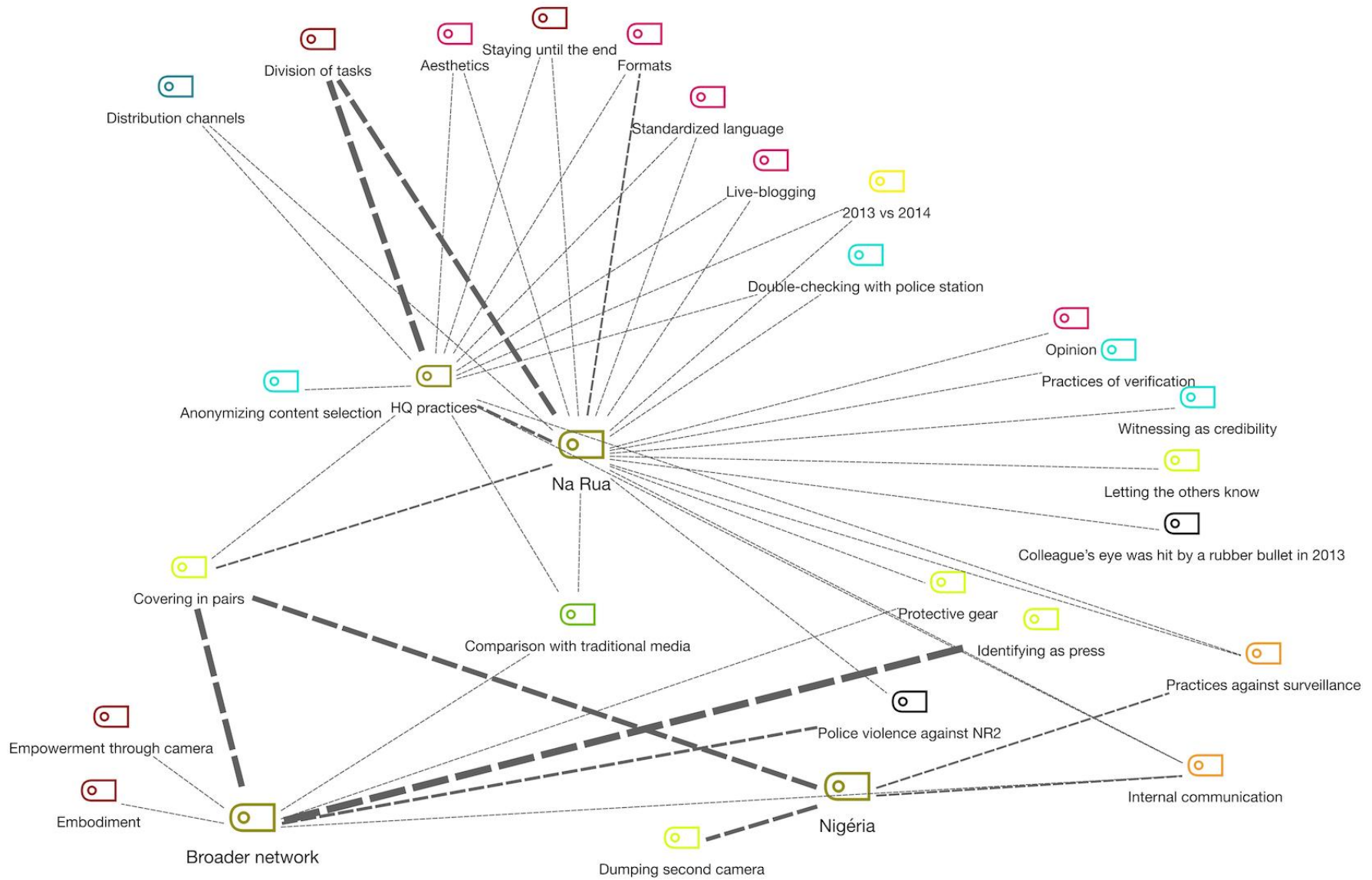
showed that most codes from both categories mostly related to other codes within their own category. Some exceptions, which I expected due to the way the coding process evolved, were: practices of verification <-> division of tasks; differentiation through sources <-> interviews on the ground; differentiation through sources <-> staying until the end (supporting segments that describe this as a certain loyalty to sources that stay until the end of the protests); police violence > direct action <-> police watchdog; police violence > direct action <-> empowerment through camera; credibility through activism <-> empowerment through camera (supporting descriptions of access to filming on the ground due to credibility among protesters, which traditional media did not possess, thus, it enjoyed less access than alternative media); positioned allegiance <-> opposing perspectives.



**Figure C.3:** Visualization of co-occurrence between codes on journalistic work and coverage on the ground from expert interviews. Genrated on MAXMaps 2012.

## Dissemination of Practices at the Center

This visualization (figure C.4) helped me delineate the differences between how practices got disseminated inside each group of experts and among the broader network of actors, i.e. both collectives and solo producers. It showed that *Nigéria's* dissemination of practices happened mostly with regards to practices against surveillance (in orange in figure C.4). The broader network maintained its emphasis on disseminated practices around protection and coverage on the ground, but also internal communication and comparison with traditional media. *Na Rua* and HQ practices, as expected, share many coded segments, from various categories: content, coverage on the ground, practices of verification and protection practices. In their disseminated practices, all of these codes met, once again corroborating my assumption about *Na Rua's* need to disseminate practices in order to be able to produce content was due to the way their group was structured around informal, voluntary collaboration yet focused on the production of certain formats.



**Figure C.4:** Visualization of co-occurrence between all codes from expert interviews, with emphasis on dissemination practices. Generated on MAXMaps 2012.

# Appendix D

## Patterns Catalog

This catalog contains the categories I developed during my content analysis of *Nigéria* and *Na Rua*'s media production. The descriptions are as detailed as possible, in order to aid an accurate coding process. It also contains my brainstorming to the categories as the process unfolded. Categories' names often changed as I refined their conceptualization. In addition, some categories were excluded in the process, as they did not illustrate broader patterns in the material. As a result, some categories listed here do not integrate the final model.

**Protester profile:** short text plus picture format portraying a protester. Maybe worth renaming for something like protagonist profile, as, like in the coverage of Alto da Paz, people profiled are not necessarily protesters, but protagonists. Another interesting development in this category through time is that, as the thematic focus shifts towards more traditional social movement mobilizations like strikes or occupations by MTST, the profiled actors also present their concrete demands and motivations as part of the text, instead of their personal opinions on the protest, as seems to be the case in the first instances of this category during the Confederations Cup.

**Protest highlight:** similar to protester profile, consists of a picture from the protest and short description contextualizing it. Often posted hours after the protest or one or two days later, using a picture provided by an independent photographer that has often gone through professional editing. That distinguishes it from liveblogging, which tends to use cellphone pictures. Much like other formats like protester profile, this format is also applied to other events, such as the MTST occupation.

**Liveblogging:** similar to protest highlights in terms of content, but published while the protest is happening. This format captures snapshots of the action on the ground for those following it on the group's Facebook page. On liveblogging, there seem to be two major trends: either updates from protesters' perspective or on the police's movements on the ground. In terms of language, this is usually marked by expression like "at the moment", "right now", "currently".

**Video post-protest:** usually published a day after the protest, sometimes contains images already published on protest highlights or liveblog posts on the day of the protest. Both formats could be analyzed together, as complementing each other.

**Summarizing article:** much like the video post-protest, this longer news article format

was published after the protest; it contextualizes more broadly events already liveblogged or highlighted. It also usually describes how and why a protest came to an end.

**Summarizing photo album:** similar to summarizing article and video post-protest, gathers highlights of the protest, posted at the end of liveblogs or protest highlights. Maybe all three formats form a trend in themselves.

**Video evidence:** videos showing marks of police violence or containing testimonies of that.

**Counter TV show:** streamed talk shows as TV format appropriated by collectives to create a counter public sphere, with various guests within the left-wing spectrum.

**Focus on detail:** aesthetic counterpoint to *Vandalism*, in a way. One of the group's members attempt to seek another form of portraying the protests, with focus on small, lyrical details that are still powerful and signs of resistance. *Lampejos* and *Piquete* are the main examples.

**Livestream from the ground:** not used often, but this format was present in some of *Nigéria's* coverage in 2014. Impossible to retrace, as livestreams did not get archived.

**Chronicle:** personal testimonies from the protests, written in a more lyrical form than other texts, mostly published on *Na Rua's* site.

**Anonymized content:** example of content where anonymizing practices were performed. Often connected to direct action or to situations involving underage actors.

**Portraying police violence:** pictures, videos or texts that show police violence and its effects. Probably only makes sense if police officers are shown as well, not just the wounds resulting of their action.

**Watchdog content:** broader than portraying police violence, as it covers other possible forms of abuse officers commit, such as illegal searches, lack of proper identification or arrests. Also covers scenes of actors confronting the police to question their action and filming ostensibly closer to police. Often coupled with empowerment through camera and police watchdog practices. Also includes updates on police presence in liveblogs that just register the amount of officers and units on site.

**Original context** iconic image in its original context, like the protester in front of a burning car in *Vandalism*. Also use for broader context a current coverage is inserted, like the relationship between Nova Estiva and Alto da Paz.

**Sense of being there:** will probably be a strong category, particularly for videos showing action on the ground, with long, uncommented shots, a restless camera, capturing the attempts to run from the police or dialogs between officers and protesters from up close. Long takes of people suffering the effects of less-lethal weapons is also part of this, the person watching can almost feel the effects too.

**Multimedia experiment:** *Nigéria's* multimedia page on Alto da Paz, maybe interesting to analyze as a recontextualization of their coverage of this eviction in a multimedia format. Maybe merge both multimedia patterns?

**Multimedia approach:** *Na Rua's* use of its website as a platform for multimedia content, embedding videos and pictures in longer reports published there. Maybe merge both multimedia patterns?

**Verified content:** stories that highlight verification of information as a criteria for publish-

ing at all, especially in the case of arrests. Often combines practices like division of tasks and practices of verification.

**Symbolic children:** children being shown as a symbol of a movements' hopeful and innocent character, as well as of a movement's helpless nature in the face of the repression apparatus.

**Protester media criticism:** scenes of protesters criticizing or being hostile to traditional media reporters. Also not restricted to protesters, as Alto da Paz coverage shows.

**Collective media criticism:** media criticism performed by the media collectives themselves, when they fact-check or contradict traditional media outlets' narratives.

**Contextual interview:** combines images of the situation being covered with voice-over and close-ups of protagonists, mostly protesters and members of social movements that explain or contextualize the action. Combines counter sourcing practices with a certain aesthetics.

**Feature interview:** long (often transcribed) interview in which the interviewee has space to describe their point of view and, if representing a movement, the demands of the movement. Mostly found in *Na Rua's* website and in at least one video. Maybe compare these with talk shows? They seem to be a trend of counter sourcing practices in developing a counter public sphere featuring various perspectives inside the left.

**Interviews as messages:** interview partners use the chance not only to give an interview to the media collective, but to use it as a platform to address a message to someone else — the authorities or the population

**Offline distribution:** movie screenings and other events as a form of content distribution, the posts document them.

**Insider perspective:** marks content produced due to the groups' access to social movement spaces and actors (inside an occupation or among the protesters, for example). Not to be confused with positioned allegiance. More like a consequence of counter sourcing practices.

**Remix:** original content by the collectives repurposed by other users and amplified on collectives' page. Could be a form of distribution. Did not include, as the authors of the remixes are not the collectives themselves (an exclusion criteria for the final material selected).

**Call for protest:** collectives' posts sharing or containing a call for protests scheduled to take place, as a way of covering the buildup for the event and mobilizing the audience to attend it.

**Contesting official version:** interview partners or the collectives themselves present points of view or pieces of information that challenge the official version of events.

**Reaction to algorithm:** only spotted in one post, in which *Nigéria* asks their followers to take a certain kind of action in order to keep receiving their Facebook page's update.

**Anti-protest paradigm:** coverage that contextualizes actions such as roadblocks away from the protest paradigm and as political tactics. Might be worth seeing if this also applies to other examples, such as the interview with black blocs on their motives to perform this tactic. Probably pairs up with contextual interviews.



# Appendix E

## Pieces Analyzed in Chapter 8

### Recording the June Journeys on Vandalism

Nigéria. (26 July 2013). COM VANDALISMO \* documentário completo [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KktR7Xvo09s>

### Highlighting the Independence Day Protests' Dramatic Moments

Nigéria. (7 September 2013). A manhã do 7 de setembro em Fortaleza foi marcada por várias apreensões arbitrárias, prisões e parte dos policiais sem identificação [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/coletivoNigeria/photos/a.388705714536906.87291.178273628913450/521563651251111/?type=3>

Nigéria. (7 September 2013). A manhã do 7 de setembro em Fortaleza foi marcada por várias apreensões arbitrárias, prisões e parte dos policiais sem identificação [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/coletivoNigeria/posts/521563874584422:0>

Nigéria. (7 September 2013). A manhã do 7 de setembro em Fortaleza foi marcada por várias apreensões arbitrárias, prisões e parte dos policiais sem identificação [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/coletivoNigeria/posts/521564144584395:0>

Nigéria. (7 September 2013). A manhã do 7 de setembro em Fortaleza foi marcada por várias apreensões arbitrárias, prisões e parte dos policiais sem identificação [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/coletivoNigeria/posts/521564494584360:0>

Nigéria. (7 September 2013). A manhã do 7 de setembro em Fortaleza foi marcada por várias apreensões arbitrárias, prisões e parte dos policiais sem identificação [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/coletivoNigeria/posts/521564731251003:0>

Nigéria. (7 September 2013). A manhã do 7 de setembro em Fortaleza foi marcada por várias apreensões arbitrárias, prisões e parte dos policiais sem identificação [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/coletivoNigeria/posts/521565067917636:0>

Nigéria. (7 September 2013). [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/coletivoNigeria/posts/521565177917625:0>

Nigéria. (7 September 2013). A manhã do 7 de setembro em Fortaleza foi marcada por várias apreensões arbitrárias, prisões e parte dos policiais sem identificação [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/coletivoNigeria/posts/521574357916707:0>

Nigéria. (7 September 2013). Polícia apreende óculos de proteção e leite de magnésia de man-

ifestante [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/coletivoNigeria/posts/521575664583243:0>

### **Liveblogging an Anti-World Cup Protest**

Na Rua. (14 June 2014). 17:22 Apesar de o processo de dispersão do ato já ter se iniciado, a Polícia tenta dar uma "ajudinha" para acelerar a fragmentação do protesto. Um helicóptero sobrevoa a praça da Cruz Grande, para onde alguns manifestantes haviam retornado. [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/posts/247081298824134>

Na Rua. (14 June 2014). 14:52 A nossa luta é todo dia, e hoje tem manifestação mais uma vez. A concentração já começou, na praça da Cruz Grande, bairro Serrinha, próxima à UECE. [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/photos/a.243322042533393.1073741828.241155812750016/247052138827050/?type=3>

Na Rua. (14 June 2014). 15:17 "DA COPA, DA COPA, DA COPA EU ABRO MÃO! EU QUERO MAIS DINHEIRO PRA SAÚDE E EDUCAÇÃO!" Manifestantes saem da concentração [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/posts/247058012159796>

Na Rua. (14 June 2014). 15:40 "NÃO ACABOU, TEM QUE ACABAR, EU QUERO O FIM DA POLÍCIA MILITAR!" Dois carros do COTAM estão à frente do ato, e três carros da mesma corporação atrás (na Avenida Silas Munguba, ex- Dedé Brasil) [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/posts/247062672159330>

Na Rua. (14 June 2014). 16:36 A manifestação se divide. Coletivo RUA - Juventude Anticapitalista e Crítica Radical propõem voltar para a praça da Cruz Grande. A outra parte dos manifestantes que deseja se dirigir até a barreira ) [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/posts/247067315492199>

Na Rua. (14 June 2014). 16:50 MANIFESTAÇÃO DISPERSADA. Após plenária, as pessoas voltam para a praça da Cruz Grande. A polícia cumpre o papel de "tanger" os participantes do ato para reforçar o processo de dispersão, seguindo as pessoas através de viaturas e motocicletas. [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/posts/247073362158261>

Na Rua. (14 June 2014). 17:50 SOBRE AS DETENÇÕES: Um adolescente acaba de ser detido no Terminal da Parangaba. O motivo foi o porte de uma baladeira (estilingue). Advogada da Renap já acompanha o caso. [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/posts/247083872157210>

Na Rua. (14 June 2014). 19:27 SOBRE AS DETENÇÕES: Três jovens estão detidos, neste momento, na Delegacia da Criança e do Adolescente (DCA): dois adolescentes e um de 19 anos. A informação apurada é de que um deles portava sinalizador e máscara de gás. [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/posts/247097035489227>

Na Rua. (15 June 2014). SOBRE AS DETENÇÕES DE ONTEM, O NA RUA INFORMA: Os dois adolescentes e o jovem detidos após a manifestação foram atendidos por dois advogados da Rede Nacional de Advogadas e Advogados Populares (Renap). [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/posts/247445582121039>

### **Getting Personal about the Anti-World Cup Protest**

Na Rua. (15 July 2014). Carta à Vida (ou “além das ideologias individuais”). Retrieved from <http://www.urucum.org/narua/carta-a-vida-ou-alem-das-ideologias-individuais/>

Na Rua. (15 July 2014). ”Vida, Tem dias em que tudo vira do avesso. O peito revira, na confusão e contradição das cenas que nos passam pelos olhos. [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/posts/247468985452032:0>

### **Working out Internal Disagreements at a Counter Talk Show**

Nigéria. (16 June 2014). PRÉ-RUA | ÂNIMOS EXALTADOS: P2, INFILTRADOS E CONFLITOS INTERNOS NAS MANIFESTAÇÕES [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8c2Ejv30g>

### **Countering the Protest Paradigm on a Roadblock**

Nigéria. (15 July 2014). Trabalhadores sem teto fecham BR-222 para impedir despejo [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gR72KpXPTKQ>

### **Criticizing Traditional Media Coverage through Verification**

Na Rua. (14 July 2014). 11h30 URGENTE: Trabalhador detido durante ato do MTST na BR 222. O trabalhador foi apreendido enquanto aparentava alimentar o fogo das barricadas. Dois policiais à paisana o levaram em viatura do Ronda do Quarteirão. [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/posts/255568581308739>

### **Summarizing a Strike through Multimedia Resources**

Na Rua. (26 June 2014). “TSUNAMI DE PEÃO” OCUPA AS RUAS DE FORTALEZA. Retrieved from <http://www.urucum.org/narua/tsunami-de-peao-ocupa-as-ruas-de-fortaleza/>

Na Rua. (26 June 2014). “TSUNAMI DE PEÃO” OCUPA AS RUAS DE FORTALEZA. “Tá vendo aquele edifício, moço? Ajudei a levantar. Foi um tempo de aflição, eram quatro condução: duas pra ir, duas pra voltar”. [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/direitoshumanosnarua/posts/250716855127245:0>

Na Rua. (26 June 2014). PMs atiram em trabalhadores da construção civil [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXEB-58U3u0>

Na Rua. (26 June 2014). É greve! Passeata dos trabalhadores da Construção Civil! [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wK3qDag0R9s>

### **Visualizing the Strike through a Summarizing Photo Album**

Nigéria. (26 June 2014). 4o dia de Greve Construção Civil - 26 JUN 2014 [Facebook album]. Retrieved from [https://www.facebook.com/pg/coletivoNigeria/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=692494830824658&ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/coletivoNigeria/photos/?tab=album&album_id=692494830824658&ref=page_internal)

### **Catching the Strike on Video**

Nigéria. (26 June 2014). Grevistas são atacados por Batalhão de Choque no RioMar [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtjPjKPxck>

### **Profiling the Protagonists of Various Events**

Nigéria. (27 June 2013). Para Alana, essas manifestações são um ”movimento popular, sem nenhuma bandeira sectária [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/coletivoNigeria/photos/a.388705714536906.87291.178273628913450/482745575132919/?type=>

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