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The Peripheral Media: Alternative Coverage and the Politicization of Inequality in Contemporary Brazil

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

2018

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Acknowledgements

Moving to London amid the crisis of journalism, I embarked on a Masters, then on a PhD, with a self-assigned mission to investigate and understand the media phenomenon I had witnessed while working in Brazil. As I found no source of funding, I assumed the ambitiously dangerous duty of writing a PhD and, at the same time, earning to fund my university fees and finance research trips. After all the struggle that it entailed, and with this thesis written, it is time to appreciate the contributions from all who have provided comments or thoughts at any stage of this research. I start by those who saw one of this thesis's early drafts, and that includes Dr Carolina Matos, Dr Petros Iosifidis, Prof Jean Chalaby, Prof Chris Rojek, and my examiners, Prof Natalie Fenton and Dr Johanna Redden. I want to express my gratitude to Prof Eugene McLaughlin, then the PhD students' tutor, who was supportive in incredibly hard hours of this journey. I owe a great deal to my supervisor Dr Dan Mercea, who accepted supervising this research and believed in me when the project still had considerable gaps. Dan deserves all the credit for his kind, balanced, and well-informed feedback. I thank my close friends for their time and patience, Joe, Renato, Claudia, and Sandra, and want to say a big thanks to Robert Levy, my father. I also owe a lot to my partner for enduring the absences, and levels of attention that this work demanded from me along the years. I dedicate this thesis to all alternative media producers in Brazil working under hard conditions to shed light on realities that were, until recently, invisible.

Abstract

Since the 2013 nationwide protests in Brazil, the coverage of social issues by the country's alternative media has reached unprecedented levels of notoriety. Media producers have laid bare the consequences of inequality, as seen in bad public services, crime and violence among the poorest, and episodes of class prejudice in the country's biggest cities. This thesis aims to set new parameters to analyse the coverage of this alternative media scene, based on a framework called the *peripheral media*. It investigates the contribution that this amalgam of small media outlets can make to the politicization of inequality in Brazil. With limited infrastructure, could producers create a different type of politicized awareness based only on their discourse? How could the alternative media thus open a path to a more democratic media environment? This research has invested in interviews with media producers based across the country, and in a frame analysis of their content, to find common strategies used to raise the awareness of an indifferent mainstream society regarding inequality. Evidence has shown producers transforming past mainstream stereotypes, as well as acting to reframe crime as political events and to deconstruct the trivialisation of everyday inequality. This thesis contends that the alternative media's strength lies more in its ability to create counterhegemonic discourses than otherwise thought, also suggesting that media democratisation could come increasingly from the margins of society.

Introduction

In June 2013, the massive protests erupted on the streets of São Paulo. These weeks were of intense public discussions and mass media coverage on the causes of such outrage (Winters & Shapiro, 2014; Shahin et al, 2016). Some authors argued it was a crisis of Brazil's welfare, political and economic system (Sweet, 2013; Holston, 2014). As a journalist working in Brazil, I watched the news coverage develop on both mainstream and alternative media, with the latter gaining unprecedented degrees of prominence. The *Mídia Ninja* group is a good example. The collective called itself a "decentralised network of independent media, and alternative to the traditional media",[1] later becoming notorious[2] in national and international press[3] for its non-filtered and spontaneous coverage, which powerful TV networks did not deliver (Peruzzo, 2013; Vieira, 2014). Since then, the consensus on the importance of social media for this process has derived from the action of such collectives in bringing activists, social movements, and citizens together (Castells, 2013; Dahlgren, 2013; Mercea, 2016; Fenton, 2016).

Since the early 2000s, there has been indeed an enthusiasm for new alternative media formats, such as blogs and web forums. Where one might see these platforms as oppositional weapons (Adhirgini & Pereira, 2006; Christofoletti & Laux, 2006; Adhirgini, 2008; Garavello, 2009), others saw them as a "committed" model of journalism (Albernaz, 2002; Oliveira, 2011; Bailey, 2009; Barbosa, 2010). The alternative media is also seen as reviving a tradition of independent investigative journalism (Targino et al, 2010; Ramos, 2015; Requejo-Alemán-Lugo-Ocando, 2014), and the blogosphere as a competitor to mainstream media power (Couldry & Curran, 2003). In Brazil, these expectations included one of overcoming the many socioeconomic divides (Marques & Bailey, 2012) and boosting of peripheral identities (Martins, 2015).

This thesis invests in understanding the *alternative* media as a realm that is alive with its own possibilities, including those seen during the 2013 events. On the other hand, we should not forget that the background of progressive agendas stems from long ago and is another legacy from the alternative media (Kucinski, 1991; Woitowicz, 2009). Hence, more than seeing the set of actors that emerges from the protests and activism seen in 2013 or only as a self-absorbed phenomenon of past, I propose that we explore both present and past contexts, trying to organise its fragmented roots. As the starting point, I find important that we revisit this alternative media background, which point to the timelessness of the discourse for social justice, as it can also extend this discussion into the complex interplay between inequality and alternative media. By revisiting this backdrop, we can understand

these recent developments in a more systematic way as I discuss how this thesis can advance in this area.

The alternative media and its scattered trajectory in Brazil

The lack of contextualised information on the development of Brazil's alternative media after the 1960s echoes the impediments that are related to the turbulent military regime (1964–1984). It is known that alternative journalists have produced evidence-rich, but fragmentary reports on "oppressed" characters, with portraits aimed at reversing the image of economic prosperity sold by the military junta (Kucinski, 1991; Woitowicz, 2009; Mazzetti, 2009; Klein, 2009; Vinelli, 2010). After the 1964 coup, the dictatorship that ruled Brazil for 20 years wrecked most of its institutions (Fox, 1988; Abreu, 2006). Despite the occasional repression, it is known that more than 150 alternative tabloids, pamphlets, and other small outlets circulated between 1960 and the 1980s. They formed what some call the *imprensa nanica*, or *nano* press, which conveyed a strong idea of social justice in opposition to the military state propaganda of progress and industrial development (Pereira Filho, 2004:63).

The historical importance of the *nano* press has been none the less minimised. It is often remembered because of its ability to evade repression or as a vehicle of "counter-information", but having a temporary and elusive presence (Mazzetti, 2009). Alternative press researchers, such as Bernardo Kucinski (1991:12), have otherwise argued that this period should appear in the future as much more rich and important than a resistance front—more complex than a simple opposition[4]:

> "An alternative press came from the articulation of two equally committed elements: The wish of the left-wingers to start the transformations they sought, and the search, by journalists and intellectuals, of alternative spaces out of the big media and the university. It is at the same time the opposition to the system represented by the military regime and to the limitations of the intellectual-journalistic production under authoritarianism that this articulation between journalists, intellectuals and political activists is found."

After the re-democratisation, the alternative media was, for the public, the *popular* press. Journalists, activists, and their supporters celebrated not only praised the return of democracy that was in progress, but also imagined the alternative media as a new model of citizenship based on a hybrid communion. Priests from the Catholic Church forged a dialogue with union leaders, who allied with feminist and black activist groups (Alves, 1986; Mainwaring, 1987, 1987b; Kucinski, 1991:21). In the 1986's book, *Communicação Popular e Alternativa*, by Regina Festa and Carlos Eduardo Lima e Silva, presented this moment as an umbrella for multiple subjectivities, lined up by strong Marxist ties and resulting in a joint expression of citizenship. Silva, an active journalist in the mainstream press,

argued that the popular press was filling a gap within the Brazilian cultural industry. Frei Betto, a popular friar with a strong relationship with the Catholic Church, saw it as a struggle from the Church as well (Ibid, 1986). Raimundo Pereira (1986), himself a former alternative journalist, came to argue that the popular press, as a mutual construction, eventually lost to the emergence of individual interests (now channelled by political parties).

At the same time, as the mainstream press broke sale records and affirmed its hegemony in the 1990s (Barbosa, 2007:221). The failure to visualise other alternatives of commercial survival and distribution led the popular press to a circulation decline. *Popular* outlets had, at best, dispersed; at worst, they adopted a sensationalist agenda. The popular press has become, then, a genre aimed at violence and graphic imagery or the chronicling of cheap newspapers, as happened with the popular *Notícias Populares* (Amaral, 2005). Media producers have, since then, blamed massive investments in big media organisations, arguing that only mass distribution could have taken alternative and *popular* values to other heights (Rolnik & Guattari, 2008:164). These facts should not seem a total defeat of the popular press, as frames springing from the left-wing, socially sensitive journalism can still influence Brazilian journalism to date (Waisbord, 2000:174; Matos, 2008:246).

The problem is that, even in the 1990s, the very notion of alternative media had grown weak or too abstract for the broader public. First, this happened amid the growth of the mainstream media into large conglomerates, while media moguls consolidated their alliances with politicians, which resulted in TV stations often being owned by politicians and government officials (Santoro, 1989; Aufderheide, 1993; Fox, 1988; Fox & Waisbord, 2002; Almeida, 2007; Porto, 2012). Secondly, later-created leftist publications, as well as social movement media, were forging their own outlets by encapsulating parts of the lost alternative press ideal or turning to strict partisanship (Pereira, 1986; Festa & Silva, 1986; Ferreira, 2009). The *popular* as a concept would prevail in mainstream culture as a sub-product of media organisations in their programmes and spectacles, turning out to become a much less of a powerful theory (Stroud, 2013:61; Napolitano, 2001, 2002). In the 2000s, studies on the popular press have otherwise highlighted the alternative scene as an attempt to rival, rather than integrate, the media environment. Peruzzo (2008) likened the current popular media to a type of community media for its continuous "autonomy and independence". Meanwhile, other authors have referred to popular communication as *folk's communication*, what, in my view, dismisses further complexity in their discourse (See Marques de Melo, 1999; Trigueiro, 2005; Melo, 2008).

Arguably, the emphasis on Brazil's media market and ownership concentration have pushed the alternative media into purposeless territory. At the same time, local radios, TV channels and, more currently, blogs and websites have kept their influence on the micro level, commenting on everyday life and often relating to civic rituals, such as elections or commemorative dates (Cogo, 2004; Nunes,

2004; Horst, 2011). If these local circuits, as such, have not been enough to enchant and attract a more robust engagement with this alternative discourse, this does not mean that they are silent and still. In a divided country, the presence of large media organisations, such as *Globo*, has diverted the attention from other ways of thinking about the media in Brazil. Now I explore how media concentration can blur scholarly understanding of other media realms to then discuss what we are missing out when we continue to face non-mainstream media practitioners only as "alternative" media.

Beyond the "media monopoly"

Media businesses in Brazil have been under scrutiny due to their family-organised and hereditary nature. It is said that the concentration of ownership paves the way for an alignment with a nationalist, patriarchal elite (Waisbord, 2000; Amaral, 2002; Amaral & Guimarães, 1994; Porto, 1998). This perception has led to protests against the presence of giants, such as Globo TV, and its affiliates (Sinclair, 2002; Paiva et al, 2015). To their defence, it is not possible to accuse the mainstream media of being totally undemocratic and anti-equality in all instances (Waisbord, 2000; Matos, 2008). Media organisations in Brazil have made many contributions to the country's democracy (Aldé, 2004), particularly to the formation of a particular model of a critical citizen, as TV discourses have helped, even if minimally, with understanding laws and civic responsibility (Porto, 2007, 2012). But to what extent this concentration on the "monopoly" has diverted the attention from what happens in the periphery? Looking at the margins of society, what are the bottom-up contributions to the country's political media?

I argue in this thesis that capturing the "alternative" discourse is not only critical to advancing the scholarship, as it could help to perceive changes in the whole Brazilian media environment. We could pave new critical grounds based on the degree to which small-scale producers politicize and mobilise their audience without repeating old frames. With regard to the groups who joined the coverage of the 2013 protests, this is why it is hard to claim a broader contribution based only on the temporary (though large) context of the activist movement and having no further clarity if their "politicization" has really affected the cancellation of bus fare hikes or improved the awareness on the contradictions of the Brazil's World Cup.

If this underestimation of the periphery favours the view of only *one* monolithic media environment (as it does to a notion of *one* alternative media), it also pushes the periphery to be seen as lying in stillness and passivity, to then *explode* in a few occasions, such as those seen in 2013. Even during these demonstrations (Castells, 2013; Pinto, 2013; Mendonça & Ercan, 2015), the focus was on

producers' ability to *intervene*, *interact*, or *disrupt* mainstream TV broadcasts,[5] as if they had nothing to say by themselves. The missed opportunity here is one in which scholarly research overlooks authorship by exploring interests, angles, and languages[6] in a broader context, taking into account who these producers are and what how their positions have evolved in the last decade of democracy in Brazil. By inquiring into the insertion of these reporters in the shadow of the concentrated media environment, we must credit them for doing the "media work", despite their size and quality of their intervention.

During recent parliamentary debates, for example, cases such as the *PEC Domésticas* (a law bill that granted wage equivalence for domestic employees) have illustrated how the mainstream and alternative media can differ from each other in the coverage they offer for the same news agenda (Mendonça, 2013). Black women in white aprons have personified the role of *empregadas* (maids) in Globo TV's *telenovelas* for years (Souza & Dalberto, 2013), but the opposite to this is to approach these women as responsible for pioneering agendas, which small newspapers come defending since the 1970s (Fonseca & Woitowicz, 2016). In brief, both media strands have had a different approach to covering the *PEC Domésticas*. In order to focus on the effects of this law change for house cleaners, the mainstream media prioritised "questions and answers" sections to help bosses to skip legal exposure,[7] while the alternative media dedicated time to explaining the roots of such inequality in Brazilian slavery.[8]

The alternative media have shown sides that were more beneficial to the most affected community. My argument, in that case, is that while the mainstream media goes on producing language, image, and text that are indeed more suited to reach a large country,[9] the *PEC Domésticas* case has undeniably received a different treatment in the alternative media, while, recognisably, not reaching a wider audience in the same way that the mainstream media do. Whether by offering powerful testimonials given directly by former maids[10] or by producing content that favours workers rather than their bosses (arguably, the less affected party), the alternative media eventually pursued a more democratic perspective of this historic moment, even though to a small, but mobilised layer of spectators.[11] It is true that the largest news organisations have extensively clarified what this law bill was in the wake of its vote, but another perspective was missing—and, therefore, a more comprehensive perspective of the media environment itself would be also missing—if we look only at mass communication as "the media".

The choice of *PEC Domésticas* as a case study yet informs us that producers do not pick random issues to explore in the alternative media. This thesis's proposal is to map these producers' interventions in a way that leads us out of the media monopoly turmoil so that we can question the discourses, conditions, and repertoires to the extent of its purposeful politicization in society. I looked

at this politicization appears more in consonance with the historical and social sensitisation of society than it seems. It also comes up by abandoning formal political communication standards as seen in the media. My approach is then to pick up and explore these episodes of high politicization of inequality, then fleshing out their angles and their meanings. Where the establishment has failed to address certain discussions and include the country's periphery, or when it does in insufficient fashion, it is where the alternative media can thrive by promoting its insights. Before that, I must further develop the link between alternative media and inequality. This thesis' purpose is also one of harmonising what are actually different and simultaneous interests in inequality and understand what it means in the Brazilian case lays out the foundations of this study.

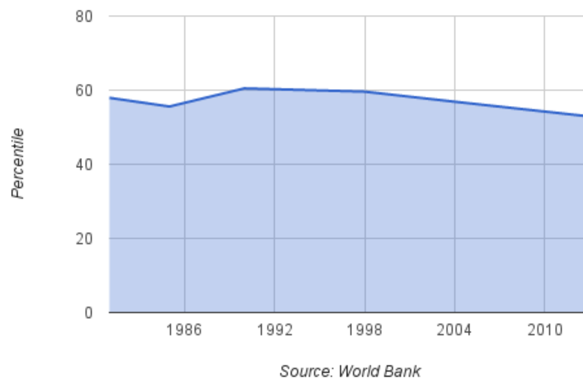
Inequality and the alternative media

Inequality has been a key agenda for the alternative media in Brazil over the past decades. For decades, poverty and "the poor" have inspired a mentality in which the elites blame the state for "such poverty" (Barros et al, 2001; Reis & Moore, 2005). Reis (2000:145) argued that, from the elite's perspective, inequality connects to key subjects, such as violence, the "worker's health", and the "uneducated mass". Brazil's sense of inequality mainly refers to intersectional economic, racial, and ethnic participation asymmetries (White, 2014). At the same time, only economic development could not have played a role in changing it, as it failed to do so in the Amazon region, for example (Weinhold et al, 2013). Alternative media producers have battled visible divides—such as elite vs the poor, white vs black—that occur when one talks of inequality in the country, as well as the hegemony of the *racial democracy* thesis has preached that no racial hierarchy exists or links between racism and poverty were possible (Sodré, 1998; Spink & Spink, 2006; Jarrín, 2010).

While not embracing a deep discussion of the racial or socioeconomic implications of inequality, to understand the alternative media discourse is necessary to embrace a umbrella concept that goes beyond "the uneven distribution of resources and opportunities" (Purdy, 2005:121). It is more about crossing boundaries between poverty, discrimination, and violence. Sen (1999) highlighted subtle variations that lie between inequality and poverty. While "inequality" debates tend to lean towards *income* inequality, other "deprivations" must also count as "inequalities", which are part of this discussion. Empirical indicators such as the *Gini* index have measured recent advances in income in Brazil (Figure 1.1) but they are not enough to cover all these other inequalities that alternative media producers usually mention (Wood & Carvalho, 1988; Telles, 2004; Barros et al, 2001). They focus on broader stories, such as non-existent public services due to community discrimination, or the criminality that affects only those who cannot afford to pay for private security, as "the rich" live in

walled, privately secured neighbourhoods. These facts are, for them, the only visible face of inequality.

Figure 1.1 Gini inequality index of Brazil (1985–2015)



In this complex panorama, the alternative media in Brazil links to inequality stories because it disputes its discursive structures that stem from society's historical indifference or its accommodation around the same frames. For this purpose of better engaging with inequality and with actors involved in denouncing it, I aim to conceptualise *periphery* as a term that resonates both geographically and symbolically to identify actors and stories as they come up. Covering inequality means to promote the awareness on the periphery, whether about undelivered welfare state provisions, the unequal public assistance, or any similar topic (Costa, 2009; Fleury, 2014). *Politicization* appears as a path through which producers can effectively publicise these agendas. First because it stimulates producers to ignore the mainstream media as a bastion of social justice. Secondly, because the *politicization* of the periphery contradicts the *pacifying* myths of equality and diversity that has misled a deeper debate. I will look at how content is made out of challenging old discourses, and how it demands we engage with a new concept of alternative media, as I explain next.

From alternative to peripheral media: An overview of the study

Past scholarly approaches have set different emphases in their investigations of alternative media worldwide. Whereas the literature focuses on its connection to professional journalism (Atton & Hamilton, 2008; Harcup, 2005; Forde, 2011) or on its opposition to mainstream society and state ideologies (Rodríguez, 1994, 2001, 2001b, 2011; Rodríguez et al, 2005; Downing, 2001, 2008; Couldry & Curran, 2003; Atton, 2002, 2002b, 2013; Rauch, 2007; Fenton, 2016), a few others see it as a purely activist effort (Lievrouw, 2011; Barassi, 2015; Custodio, 2017). In common with all these debates, this study sides with the understanding of the alternative media as a force for dissent and

social change. Different from them, it seeks to contribute to the literature by looking beyond media formats or participation and trying to reconnect with a long alternative media legacy in Brazil (Kucinski, 1991; Festa & Silva, 1986; Downing, 2001; Woitowicz, 2009).

In advance to the main discussion, this thesis has to acknowledge the insufficiency of *alternative media* as a defining term for all these distinct movements, as everything can be alternative to any paradigm we decide to adopt (Downing, 2001:ix). Although not fully in agreement with this term, I acknowledge the position of this ecology as being known as "alternative media", but much conscious of this term's limits. In fact, the country has a strong notion of "alternative press", as one of "alternative media". As a deeply subjective arena, the study of *alternative media* involves no clear limits between these fields, having hundreds of empirical case studies dedicated to each name. (Rodríguez, 2001; Downing, 2001; Atton, 2002; Lievrouw, 2011; Gerbaudo, 2012; Barassi, 2014; Zayani, 2014). I contend that we do not need to theorise on top of terms such as *community* or *grassroots*, and that resorting to the generic term *alternative* media is useful when referring to non-mainstream outlets in general. Moreover, I employ *peripheral* to mention the outlets studied in this thesis.

The same strategy guides the preference for the term *media* over the term *communication*, as the latter appears more commonly associated with non-structured formats or the process of communicating (Bailey, 2009). For alternative publications of any kind or format, I refer to them as "outlets" instead of *blogs* (as in Marques & Bailey, 2012) as a practical choice amid changing platforms. When mentioning the "alternative press in Brazil of the 1970s", I might also refer to initiatives that took place in the 1960s and 1990s (Kucinski, 1991), as it is a conscious decision to refer to the past alternative press when its production was booming.

By *media production*, I mean the set of procedures that leads an individual or group to publishing a named piece or outlet. Although the literature has also mentioned *rituals* as part of the reality of contemporary media production, such as in Deuze (2003), I skip naming the differences and similarities between blogging, journalism or social media. Consequently, alternative media practitioners are mentioned as *media producers*, or *producers*, rather than *bloggers*, *writers*, *citizen journalists* or *community speakers*, except if those roles need highlighting for some reason (for example, a *producer* who may have had experience working in mainstream journalism). I am inclined to also skip ideological or partisan expressions, such as *left wing*, *critical*, *neoliberal*, or *radical*. For example, the Marxist *radical* media as the alternative media, while the *mainstream* (at least in this conceptual package) is not seen as radical. I do not mention these qualifiers unless the outlets in question have claimed them for themselves (e.g. in Kucinski, 1991).

Aware of the tensions that involve deliberations in the public sphere in a Habermasian sense (Habermas, 1992), this thesis instead focuses on *coverage* as the most suitable concept to understand the media producers' self-assigned mission to inform an audience. Instead of "public sphere" or counter public sphere or its siblings, I prefer the term "periphery" to reflect both non-mainstream media (the centre) and to discuss the suburbia where producers live and can create their projects. Therefore, the *peripheral* media is the one that speaks for the outskirts of the large metropolises and on behalf of populations that are victims of Brazil's divides. The symbolic meaning of a periphery thus relates to what is not part of the main agenda of society.

The idea is to study a diverse sample of outlets and interview media producers, developing separate efforts of frame and discourse analyses respectively. I use these methods to engage with producers' content and repertoire, centring my approach on questioning if this material, as published, is enough to politicize inequality issues and create further resonance. The main research question is, therefore, to what extent can the coverage of issues of inequality, as the periphery reports it, politicize these issues to improve their visibility in contemporary Brazil? What are the factors that enhance this coverage? To what extent is this a change from the previous alternative media scene in Brazil? Furthermore, to what degree can this politicization contribute to media democracy in Brazil?

To examine these questions, in Chapter 1, first I revisit the main scholarly debates on alternative media. Drawing on an important legacy of citizen-led media as a front for mobilisation and social change (Rodríguez, 2001; Downing, 2001), I argue that the search for purpose in alternative media studies must continue, but anchoring case studies in frames and discourse, not only in participation and ethnographic description. I base my analysis on Gramsci's concept of hegemony as a balance enforced by elites to ensure consent and control. Understanding a counterhegemonic coverage helps in envisaging a break with the "consensual" and thus the trivialised reporting of inequality in the periphery. The idea of "politicization" stems from new forms of breaking with that hegemony by deploying a confrontational stance as seen in outlets.

Chapter 2 deepens the discussion about the framework used in this research. I introduce the term "peripheral media", understanding how society has built the periphery as a concept how politicization can respond to it through the alternative media. As history, the periphery has referred to urban areas where basic guarantees are missing (e.g. security, healthcare, education); it refers to the *favelas*, and other communities that have become epitomes for precarious dwellings. The periphery is also a stereotype seen in the mainstream media, as feature films and soap operas have idealised it. Yet, for the authorities, the periphery is where dwellers are ultra-dependent on the state and is a stage for populist politicians. This thesis' framework then dwells on a new politicization based on a set of practices that could improve these images and play a role in Brazil's media democracy.

Chapter 3 discusses the criteria for this mixed methods research. First, I explain how I conducted semi-structured interviews with producers, after which I performed a frame analysis with the interview data. To get a full grasp of producers' repertoire, research efforts included listing patterns, and differences of content, discussing relationships with inequality. Two proposed frames were designed to test whether there was a balance between an aim to provoke solidarity, in a sense of charity, regarding inequality issues or if the predominant aim is one to politicize these issues. Results from both methods served to debate politicization under the terms conceptualised here. To reflect on *politicization*, I seize notions of frame resonance (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Benford & Snow, 2000) and Tarrow's (1992) notion of political opportunity as my conceptual tools, alongside elements from the past alternative press and Brazil's political history.

In Chapter 4, I start to introduce the coverage that portrays urban struggles related to inequality. I show that producers have politicized interclass encounters that take place in public or semi-public spaces. Producers looked at homelessness, racial intersections of poverty, and issues that compromise the free access of the poor to the city. In Chapter 5, I focus on the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Recife to debate specific reactions seen from these communities. Fighting against preconceived images of a troublemaker, producers reimagine the *favelado* as the "2.0" citizen. By deliberately designing their media appearances, they open their underprivileged conditions to invest in the creation of new mediatised subjectivities. The flip side of this personalisation lies in the struggle against police brutality, as sole victims are named, and their lives stories exposed.

Chapter 6 details how the peripheral media can reclaim mainstream media portraits of inequality. First, I revisit the decades-old notion of *educomunicação,* contrasting with recent formative programmes developed by media organisations. Overall, rather than disputing what they see as "bad" portraits, producers have positioned their coverage in such a way as to boost their content by creating a model of watchdog journalism and well-sourced reports. They criticise the mainstream media's lack of transparency regarding its productions and question its commitment with the periphery. In Chapter 7, on challenging the state, I begin by analysing narratives of government distrust, but I am more interested in exploring how producers who have received grants from the state or attended government-sponsored training still can post counterhegemonic frames. I end this chapter by discussing evidence that points to the unmaking of the *assistencialismo* narrative, as I also discuss partisanship and political affinities to the extent that it does not overshadow producers' engagement with politicized coverage.

The concluding chapter ponders the contributions of this thesis. Both discourse and frame analyses confirmed the prevalence of the adjustment of representation, feedback to power, and multiplication

of frames. There are three main consequences of this politicization. I first argue that the transformation of the discourse coming from the Brazilian periphery, which amounts to marginalised citizens framing the news according to native expressions and demanding more accountability in public affairs. Secondly, producers of different backgrounds converge into similar strategies and intentions, which differs from past literature. Third, I argue that this assemblage of voices from the periphery adds to Mouffe's (2000, 2000b) "participative democracy", especially with regard the agonistic discourse. Uneven and uncoordinated, the peripheral media has managed to disrupt a *flawed* consensus on inequality, pursuing adjustment of representation, feedback to power, and the growth of the frames though which they are represented. In the next chapter, I start with a discussion of current issues in alternative media research. The introductory part of this thesis finish in chapter 3, where I discuss the research methods.

1. Existing issues in alternative media research: A frame-focused approach

Introduction

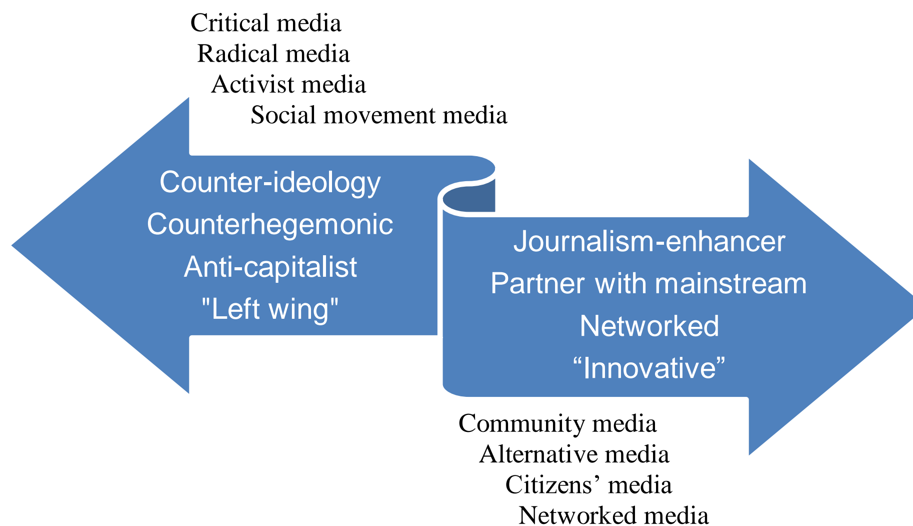
Prominent cases have shown how the alternative media can act as an instrument of social change, whether it is based on professional, cultural, or proletarian affiliations around the world (Downing, 2001; Lievrouw, 2011). As projects continue to flourish, a diverse and counterhegemonic alternative media is still a powerful ideal in the 21st century, as many recent cases continue to illustrate (Atton, 2015). In certain contexts, producers still convey more of local discussions than they engage with big international causes (Lievrouw, 2015). The alternative media has also shown its power of being a counterhegemonic tool in the hands of an anti-capitalist press (Curran, 2002; Fuchs, 2010). In this chapter, I revisit parts of the existing literature on the alternative media in its many nuances to then apply *Gramscian* notions of hegemony. I argue that its apprehension in silos prevents the alternative media from emerging as a more robust concept. While interfaces, purposes and names abound, less research focuses on the counterhegemonic power of alternative media discourses to the extent that it could break with a consensus that matter for the broader society.

As its production routines, language, and style do increasingly mingle with that of mainstream journalism (Kenix, 2013; Hackett & Gurleyen, 2015), a way of differentiating alternative media from the mass media environment is to offer robust critical grounds regarding its creativity of discourse. Studying the alternative media is putting the community "at the forefront" (Rodríguez et al, 2014), but I argue, though, that it is necessary to sharpen the analysis of *both* collective and individual discourse. I anchored this exploration in present concepts from communication research, which could help the interpretation of content as a stable element, but knowing that it changes every day with the story. For that reason, I incorporated notions of *coverage* and *framing* as indicators to help evading subjectivity. I start by revisiting past emphases on the alternative media debate and the legacy that inform today's studies.

1.1 The legacy of alternative media studies

Since the 1960s, it is consensus that the alternative media should be a subject of theorisation (Williams, 1962; Hamilton, 2000). Authors have attested to its endurance amid aggressive media commercialisation, and confirmed that political power can, in fact, spring from within marginalised communities and challenge dominant ideologies (Rodríguez, 2001; Atton, 2002; Downing, 2001, 2010; Jankowski, 2003). After the 2000s, the advent of digital media inspired new concepts. Whether the topic is "alternative journalism" (Harcup, 2003; Forde, 2011) or "alternative internet" (Atton, 2013), scholars pointed to hybridisation to understand alternative media. In brief, such theories have offered innovative ways to understand the motivations behind the media of non-privileged cultures, while they adopt practices of a conventional news organisation (McQuail, 2010:184). At the crossroads between multiple types of alternative media, the *activist* media defines the role of media producers as "community interpreters" (Waltz, 2005; Hackett & Carroll, 2006; Rauch, 2007; Lievrouw, 2011). All these cases have globalised alternative media studies in different areas of interest (Atton, 2015), while keeping subtle variations according to different emphases on technology or ideology (Image 2.1).

Figure 1.2 Visual summary of the main debates on the alternative media and vocabulary



In fact, early expectations that this hybridisation of the alternative media could lead to an inversion in commercial media domination have not been met (Couldry & Curran, 2003; Couldry, 2000:154). In the later 2000s, the intense use of digital media in moments of political instability blurred the lines between alternative media and activism, such as having blogs, tweets, and fanzines as spaces for dissent or dialogue (Gerbaudo, 2012; Zayani, 2014; Barassi, 2015; Fenton, 2016). The discomfort with how technologies have initially assumed the protagonist role in some alternative media studies

(e.g. Bennett, 2003; Rheingold, 2003) provoked a call for not only looking at technology, but also looking at media producers (Rodríguez et al, 2014). The perception that alternative media continues as an under-researched and underrepresented field has produced recent efforts to theorise it (Bailey et al, 2007; Fuchs, 2010). Nonetheless, as Atton (2002:7–8) argued, alternative media initiatives have long existed as political endeavours aimed at resistance, as they also are cultural hybrids and are political in their own sense and realm.

In the late 2010s, authors continued to stress new interpretations for alternative media in a world taken by digital media. Downing (2015) argued about the "overuse" of some metaphors (e.g. rhizome); he proposed thinking of alternative media more as a continuous flow of ideas and people, like the dynamics of social movements (Ibid, 2008). Hamilton (2015) defended a more historicised approach, recovering the legacy of social movements from the 1960s and 1970s. Rodríguez (Rodríguez et al, 2014:162) argued against research aiming to "reinvent the wheel". Dean (2010:29–31) saw bloggers as "displaced mediators" aspiring to publicity rather than content and ideology. If, in the past, the alternative media stood out as an environment apart (Williams, 1962; Comedia, 1984), scholarly research goes a long way towards situating its endurance in a scenario of explosive activist media, co-existing with national or transnational political participation (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Fenton & Barassi, 2011; Kidd, 2014; Barassi, 2015).

Amid the many directions that this debate has taken, there also lies a polarisation trend regarding the nature of digital media. Fuchs (2016) reflected on the "positivist or utopian" character that the Internet and social media debate has assumed for scholars, in which the "positivist" position places digital media as a by-product of the Internet, whereas the "utopian" position refers to a less net-deterministic, more dependent approach towards technology. Curran (2002:109) had revisited the historical roots of this division, but where the "polarisation" in media research had led to binaries between Marxist and liberal views of the media and the most "effective" way to mediate society's issues would be the most *legitimate* option, that is, the voice of marginalised groups (Couldry, 2010). Curran et al (2016) reinforced this stance on the different understandings of the Internet, which include that of "radical politics".

I side with this latter angle, in which one envisions action for the public good on the Internet by neither ignoring the binaries nor ignoring the need for a politicized *alternative media*. This also means assuming to understand this movement of "grooming" conscious citizens as a scholarly mission and, as a result, harvesting political engagement and civic participation (Dahlgren, 2006). What interests me is the extent to which past contexts of *hegemony*, the overarching Gramscian notion, impede these processes from happening. Moving back to Brazil's media, the position and discourse of powerful players, such as *Globo organisations*, have arguably left little room for others to influence public

opinion (Porto, 2012; Paiva et al, 2015). Thus, the deployment of new counterhegemonic patterns of discourse on inequality could stop its trivialisation and reverse the lack of new frames, this thesis defends.

With that clarified, I do not need to necessarily take part in this debate on the "utopias" of digital media. It is possible to skip this polarisation by tackling these non-technological hegemonies that still constrain "alternative media". Discourses and frames are still determinants of how a population understands and engages with inequality. Likewise, this approach could reduce the conceptual *vagueness* earlier discussed regarding alternative media research by centring its role in fighting inequality through the politicization of its discourse. In the next section, I continue to lay out my strategy by focusing on discourse innovations as important indicators of this politicization, where key Gramscian concepts of hegemony will then sustain this thesis's theoretical approach. I use Gramsci to see counterhegemonic attempts as a way of tackling society's consensus on certain issues.

1.2 Looking at the alternative media as counterhegemonic discourse

Remarkable cases have shown alternative media producers' commitments to democracy and how they expressed this through discourse. In Rodríguez (2001:83), it occurs through the use of video-making during the wartime in Colombia or a popular TV channel in Barcelona. Downing (2001) described how many forms of radical media in South and Central America, as in Southern Europe, were key to narrating the aftermath of dictatorships. In common, these studies have visualised the alternative media as continuums instead of as delimited and historicised projects (Hall, 1982; Hamilton, 2000:373). One sees deep links with political stability, inequality, and the responses that stem from marginalised communities. These are elements also found elsewhere, such as in Negt and Kluge's "proletarian public spheres" (Jameson, 1988).

Even if we agree with Downing, Rodríguez and, to a lesser degree, with Negt and Kluge's ideas on the power of these initiatives, the problem lies in where to extract these discourses from. In a time of excessive media commercialisation and branding, the discourse of the citizens has inevitably fallen into a state of vagueness. To state that this or that content is *alternative* because of the citizen becomes much subjective. Recently, sourcing from *citizen journalists* has become part of the routine of journalism departments in large media organisations (Atton & Hamilton, 2008; Goode, 2009; Carpenter, 2010; Allan, 2013). Rodríguez (2001) saw the use of original or copied content, as well as its *alteration*, as helping community engagement. I contend that it is not possible to ensure the source

of originality of the content used, but its *intent*, especially from an alternative media perspective. Whether by copying it or altering it, it is not possible to be entirely sure that it will correspond to any socially-committed purpose (see the concept of *memes*, for instance).

Another limitation of "the media produced by citizens" approach lies in the advance of media commercialism at the technical level. Differences between content from genuinely committed citizens and from the commercial, profit-driven individual becomes narrower, as US-based alternative websites have piloted paywalls or payment-restricted access (Kenix, 2015). Otherwise, I would argue that the mingling between radical and commercial narratives has yet to deeply affect audience perception, let alone that many studies are still very much based on a US notion of *alternative* (Rauch, 2015). In the English-speaking world, for example, widely accessed web channels such as *Democracy Now*, *Indy Media*, or the portal *Open Democracy* have proven that the tradition of radical discourse is indeed possible, as these outlets embed in their texts the fine layout of professional journalism (Curran, 2002:86; Platon & Deuze, 2003; Pickard, 2006; Atton & Hamilton, 2008; Milioni, 2009). So, why should one focus on technical realities if new, previously-unknown voices or agendas are yet to be allowed in as part of the "media"? (Couldry & Curran, 2003:6–7).

On the other hand, if socially sensitive news is a reality in the mainstream (Atton, 2002b), that does not mean that media practitioners will be in opposition to the agenda of power holders (Schudson, 1989). That is where I invite Gramsci's (2010) ideas of hegemony to explain the deep-seated hegemony against the alternative media. These ideas could help us to find the 'location' problem (where this content stems from) and balance any discussion on technological innovations or activism based on the definition of *hegemony*. Here, I appropriate Gramsci's *hegemony* as a "combination of force and consent, which balance each other" (Gramsci, 2010:156). For Gramsci, hegemonic consent is aimed at mirroring the majority through the "public opinion", eventually debilitating the "antagonist". The extent to which the alternative media can revert the "consensual" and *hegemonic* truth should be able to provoke a major change in Brazilian scenario of homogeneity and agreement.

By identifying this counterhegemonic element of Brazil's alternative media suffices to inquire any change in the present *and* relate to past standards of politicization as little has changed in the main media environment (Paiva *et al*, 2015). According to Gramsci (2010), *hegemony* stems from an *apparatus* that, for our purpose, could be similar to the infrastructure owned by the contemporary mainstream media, which helps to disseminate hegemonic discourses and viewpoints. Even though authors have seen the alternative media falling victim to this intrinsic relationship between media, commodity, and capitalism (e.g. Hermann & McChesney, 2001), without enhancing our knowledge of what would counterhegemonic discourses look like, we could hardly advance in this position. If,

historically, this idea has resided in this ‘radical’ aspect (e.g. Downing, 2001), we must level it to Brazil’s context, updating it to see new forms of circumventing the media apparatus.

While I do not aim to involve all aspects of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, this link between national consensus and mainstream media apparatus seems adequate enough. While past research had worked with concepts such as *antagonism* and *apparatus* to capture how major media organisations frame poor communities to fit in their media formats (Amaral & Guimarães, 1994), there is a chance to transfer this discussion into the arena of the discourse. Globo TV comes up as an example of an organisation that concentrates the power of narrative on the life in black communities (Soares, 2006) and it is also the one to produce a vast amount of national films (Champangnatte, 2015). On the other hand, we should not look at hegemony as an organisational, liberal problem of market leadership, as it is, rather, about more subtle ways in which powerful groups can limit the understanding of inequality. From a problem of “others” to an issue that affects all the citizens and their communicative choices. To what extent could disadvantaged communities take back control of how their issues are told, or how can they hack into present narratives?

The focus of this research lies in analysing how a generation of new media producers could renew this real counterhegemonic side of the alternative media in Brazil. In sum, if current theoretical issues lie in the downsized expectations deposited on small communities, as they appear as prototypes of hardship and eternal suffering. The alternative media success has been much tied to situations of conflict, democratic hardship, or complete marginalisation (as in Downing, 2001; Atton, 2002), or as documentation or memorialisation (Zayani, 2014; Barassi, 2015), but this thesis aims to advance its role in normal democratic conditions, using a counterhegemonic model based on a more sophisticated politicization without pushing for a major disruption of the big media. Next, I further develop the conceptual basis that aims to stabilise this peripheral discourse, observing frames and coverage as useful tactics to extract meaning from a web full of fragmentary, over-reproduced content.

1.3 Analysing the alternative media coverage and its frames

By calling *coverage* the intent with which alternative media voices come out (whether text, images, or sounds) to reach an audience and tell a story, I aim to ground the discourse of the alternative media in a purpose. Producers may “cover” events, but, in reality, they might as well make use of reproductions, brief comments, slangs, and metaphors of all kinds. Therefore, for this research’s proper engagement with the alternative media, I aim to see in the producers’ aim to *cover* a subject or an issue their commonly assumed task to engage with reality and generate discourses. This also entails considering coverage as this level of conversation found in blogs, social media, and informal

pages. For that purpose, I had thus to unmake the automatic link that *coverage* has had with events and facts chosen by the mainstream media. Media *coverage* appears to involve power holders and is conditioned to hegemonic relations. McQuail (2009:316) described that, for mass media, *coverage* has become a routine based on planned or unplanned report of an “event”, resulting in the “story”. Again, looking at Brazil’s 2013 demonstrations, one sees little of that planning, whether due to their “smartphone coverage” (Peruzzo, 2013) or, otherwise, the *coverage* they offered was too slow or too new for the big media.

At the same time, this choice does not assume that we should have a *new* form of coverage because the mainstream media suppresses debates on social issues. Neither do I suggest that all citizens can contribute towards a unique form of *coverage*. However, I can assume that organised groups can deliver regular input on their realities and feed commentary from different stakeholders. Cases in Tunisia and in Brazil have shown a consistent approach on what would otherwise seem to be scattered digital contention (Zayani, 2014; Custódio, 2014). Secondly, understanding alternative media coverage also means engaging less with this “technical” affordance or dependency on the smartphone or equivalent ICT, and more with the *intent* of covering something, whether sourced from the mainstream, transformed, or originally created by producers. What matters is its critical standpoint.

This counterhegemonic coverage would nonetheless matter due to its new possibilities of interpretation. For example, a story on the ruthless treatment low-income dwellers by the police may shift from crime news into voicing “the unacceptable” and sharing personal pictures of the events, as far as it may lead to public indignation. Stories such as “black, poor youngsters cause panic in middle-class shopping malls” can switch into “peripheral dwellers are mistreated in shopping malls”, as I show in Chapter 4. There can be a switch from the little emphasis on elements of class, race, and prejudice towards a vocal criticism that has yet to exist in the mainstream media level. As far as expectation of “exceeding” or “transforming” what the mainstream media does may be much of an idealism (Harcup, 2011), and the realities of both realms are hardly comparable (Atton, 2002:15), one’s intrinsic relation to historical, cultural or socioeconomic realities may suffice to create new angles, which, once publicised, could disclose unknown details of a story, or refuse the whole narrative in a way to gather support.

Past research has found many ways to assess forms of “Internet contention”, but that scholarship does not analyse alternative coverage in such detail. For instance, Castells (2007) assessed what he saw as effects from “mass self-communication”, which leads to a sort of “counter-power” expressed on the web. This “counter-power” is the “capacity by social actors to challenge and eventually change the power relations institutionalised by society” (Ibid, 248). Couldry (2002:50) discussed the long tradition of “raising consciousness” that stems from Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,

concluding that framing could come to break the ideological purposes on which mainstream media operate. While in Castells (2007, 2013) "counter-power" exists as a product of emerging networked social movements in and out of the Internet, in Couldry (2002), we find *framing* as a socially conscious decision of media producers to favour social change.

From the latter, I took this notion of *intent* that results in new media frames, which echoes my preoccupation in seeing if counterhegemonic can really exist and resonate through *politicization*. Scholarly, *frames* are organised from the perspective of social movement research (e.g. Tarrow, 1992:287), which ties it up to a notion of frames as 'strategies' of these organisations. Both conceptual tools can enrich this thesis's approach in different ways, by looking at the assemblage of multiple coverages into frames, and from these, we can analyse if there are counterhegemonic opportunities, as I further develop in the next section.

1.4.1 Working with collective frames

Although most alternative media groups in the scope do not make up a formal social movement, their coverage could be organised (either by coincidence or by alignment) as that of a collective action. When analysing the behaviour of social movements towards mass media, Gamson (1992:82) argued that media coverage could amplify some images of collective action and allow audiences to "generalise and transfer to other issues". Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) saw the interest in spectacle amid the framing strategies of both journalists and action participants. Feminist movements have also reframed media coverage to get more prominence for their own causes (Defrancisco, 1997:41). In Benford and Snow (2000:624), we learn that frames should follow "strategic processes" or those that are "deliberative, utilitarian, and goal directed". These views synthesise how I intend to capture the *strategic* process of covering and reframing in producers' routines, and, from this, seeing which stories they choose and what linkages they create to get further publicity.

Therefore, engaging with this tradition of social movement framing as something that incentivises reflexivity and, at the same time, acquires publicity becomes a necessity for this research, as the definition of "media producer" could either include journalists, bloggers and activists as it could see reframers of existing content. The advent of social media has allowed re-tweeting or re-blogging, which is nowadays a common feature of many social networks, making it easy for producers to relabel images, add hyperlinks and convert content into other agendas. Therefore, frame analysis seems adequate for dealing with a universe that not only has original, authored news content, but a series of appropriations whose main value is the frame that this content debates (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010). As *covering* appears as the pursuit of agendas based on factual, evidence-rich

information, *framing* is the following step of personalising or *altering* content, which has also appeared in Rodríguez (2001).

The fact that this research looks at the *intent* regardless of a coverage that includes original or appropriated content does not jeopardise what Benford and Snow (2000) saw as the value of "genuine" frames—that is, the veracity of the intent behind the action. This search for the interpretations given to causes and the conclusions at which producers arrive is another aspect that interests me and which can be taken from the collective frames literature. While scholarship on wider media frames has surveyed many frames as angles chased by the news media,[12] many of which aim at audience polarisation and manipulation (e.g. Entman, 2004, 2007), the debate here focuses on the ability to create reproducible language structures that carry powerful ideas of marginalisation and inequality, but which do not follow pre-existing patterns set by the mainstream. It is similar to what happened with the Zapatista movement in Mexico, for example (Castells et al, 1995).

In Brazil, it is still worth mentioning the experience of the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST), which has overturned a set of negative mainstream representations by forging more extensive dialogue with mass media through its own "alternative media" (Gohn, 1999; Bertol, 2003; Bailey, Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2007). For over two decades, from the image of criminals or land invaders, MST's communicators have vowed to inform outsiders through their media and to form partnerships with mainstream interlocutors, which have contributed to changing their image for a broader public (Hammond, 2004; Fonseca, 2007). This case confirms that framing power exists where statements from the community are more than "a letter of intentions". Instead, we find their "mission", "delivered in a more pragmatic way". Ironies, metaphors, or retelling a story could also result in a new frame (Snow et al, 1986:478). In the case of the MST, it has changed not only their activist events—skipping the image of "invasions"—but has overwritten their Marxist ideology, approximating it from the mainstream (Carneiro, 2006).

Having given this conceptual background on what *frame* means for social movement research and examples of its application in this thesis, I defend *coverage* and *frame* as conceptual tools adopted in this research. By adopting both *coverage* and *frame*, I can ease my interpretations of what the alternative media has produced and systematise their contributions. While *coverage* informed this research regarding the purpose of the content I looked at, *frames* allowed qualifying which of the subjects are being politicized or not. As explored above, the fact that mainstream media can overshadow a bottom-up coverage of inequality by promoting a flawed type of consensus amounts to *hegemony*. All the attempts to change it towards a fairer, although counterhegemonic, portrait of inequality by employing a variety of language resources are what interest me in this thesis. This also connects to my first wish of contributing to new paths for alternative media research. I discuss in

Chapter 2 the grounds on which I explore the alternative media in the country, as well as define the framework that informs this thesis on aspects of politicization or solidarity that involves the agenda of inequality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *coverage* and *frame* were introduced in this chapter as key concepts to advance a new agenda for alternative media research. I discussed the limitations of the public sphere theory and borrowed notions from media studies, such as *coverage*, and from social movement research, such as the concept of *frame*, to tailor the core notions that have guided this research. I proposed that the thesis mainly advances knowledge on alternative media by understanding the counterhegemonic discourse of its coverage, which is achieved by analysing frames. I based my discussion on Gramsci's *hegemony*, specifically on how the power of media organisations could help to shape the consensus, as I aim to show what is counterhegemonic *coverage* (here conceptualised as intent rather than a technical affordance or an activist by-product). The contribution from the alternative media to general awareness on inequality could help to disrupt the mainstream hegemony of narratives, and that could happen either by content alteration, by appropriation, or by forging new content in a more politicized manner. In the next chapter, I add to this discussion the concept of *peripheral media*, which goes back to a historical narrative of inequality in Brazil. The past coverage of marginal groups reveals not only what is missing from mainstream coverage, but also testifies to the emergence of a different way of covering that reality.

2. Understanding the peripheral media

Introduction

Having reflected in the introduction on the scattered trajectory of the alternative media in Brazil, whose power of contention has emerged during weeks of massive protests in 2013 (Peruzzo, 2013; Bastos et al, 2014), the previous chapter revisited the alternative media literature to defend a frame-focused approach for this study. By applying the notion of *frame* to *coverage*, I defended that one way of improving our grasp of the alternative media and its counterhegemonic potential is by looking at its discourse. In this chapter, I connect this aim with the trajectory of the alternative media in Brazil (Kucinski, 1991; Woitowicz, 2009) and around the world (Rodríguez, 2001; Downing, 2001). I clarify that this commitment to social issues has also existed in the country's mainstream press (Waisbord, 2000; Matos, 2008), but it is at the alternative media level where one finds the most progressive agendas. I show an amalgam of outlets focused on disrupting the hegemonic reading of the poor, as of the periphery, which has appeared in the media as a distant location without closer attachment to mainstream society (Festa & Silva, 1986; Woitowicz, 2009; Peruzzo, 2013).

This chapter describes new ways of approaching this alternative media focused on Brazil's periphery. From looking at the literature, there is no clarity on how to structure and assess its discourse through the "community" media model, which is often limited to process and participation. I propose the concept of *peripheral media*, which could shed light on how producers come to cover inequality under their own standards and terms. For example, to analyse the peripheral media discourse, we must not only consider the alternative press talking about inequality (e.g. newspapers, magazines), but also NGOs and civil organisations, activists, scholars, celebrities, sportspeople, politicians, and other actors converging into the same agency. We must see the urban settings of this discourse (Harvey, 2015; Sassen, 2006) but considering its popular side (Downing, 2001; Peruzzo, 2013). From a past of voluntarism and spectacle in the mainstream media (Leu, 2004; Gomes, 2008), the peripheral media would encase a new politicized way of discussing inequality from new locations and by different interlocutors.

In this chapter, I start by stressing the meaning of *periphery* in Brazil. This is a concept that helped me to detach from a general (and often vague) understanding of alternative media to then focus on the periphery as a possible reference. It can geographically indicate clear spots, such as on the outskirts of big cities, or the *favelas*, as they can also be talking through the periphery as the location that is not

the “mainstream media” or dependent on the state. Based on past literature, I conceptualise each of these locations as key points which this thesis will approach in interdependent chapters. These cases eventually point to a single understanding of how the peripheral media politicizes inequality in these scenarios. The contribution of this thesis lies in examining the extent to which the peripheral media (in its multiple interests and from many locations) can move from an approach based on context of charity and the broadcasted form of *solidarity* to a counterhegemonic politicization of inequality on multiple fronts. First, I must review why the periphery is an entrenched concept in Brazil, which justifies this thesis’s interests in seeing it as such an encapsulating term.

2.1 The periphery in the context of Brazil

In Brazil, the word *periphery* dates back to the Luso-Brazilian colonial tradition, which later became much associated with the precarious reality of large urban outskirts (Russell-Wood, 1998). Brazil often appears as a “peripheral and unequal” society, where the mainstream media profits from its lack of pluralism and connection to the rest of the world (Amaral & Guimarães, 1994; Porto, 1998; Lima, 1996; Lima & Motter, 1996). It is not surprising that media producers have constantly resorted to the portrait of the periphery as the ultimate image of inequality. In the face of these linkages, terms such as *alternative media* or even *community media* have appeared to me as obsolete and generic for this thesis’s purposes. Therefore, it is also possible to reimagine contemporary alternative media projects on the grounds of their references to the periphery, enquiring into the many nuances of their coverage and questioning the degree to which this politicization only happens within the periphery or if grows from inside communities into the wider media landscape.

Indeed, the boundaries of the periphery in Brazil still relate to those of the country’s inequality. It is where opportunities are lacking, a place of poor public services (Marques & Bichir, 2001) and one of an unimplemented welfare state (Gohn, 1985). The periphery is often the hard-to-reach location and a destination where commuting is traditionally non-existent (Becker, 2009: 48–49). The peripheral population suffers abuse and humiliation from agents, receiving discriminatory treatment from the Brazilian police and impairing state-civil society relations (Abramovay, 1999:46). The periphery illustrates Brazil’s internal inequalities, as seen in the historical economic gap among the regions, which becomes bigger in terms of media access and representation (Navarro, 1994; Henriques, 2000; Pedrozo, 2013).

This thesis apprehends this concept of periphery as a marginalised, criminalised area of urban Brazil, but which has fought back to recover a stronger place in the form of media representations. Even

though the country's mainstream media has also produced narratives that somehow favour the periphery's basic needs, such as when it campaigned against extreme poverty and hunger (Kamel, 2004),[13] that commitment clashes with the lack of more frames. I also concede that this might relate to the homogeneity that stems from the country's media organisations, which exist as lone monopolies (Porto, 2007; Paiva et al, 2015). I have sought to engage more with the possibility of this periphery changing its past conceptions as, on the one hand, an underestimated and passive agent, and, on the other hand, as marginalised, criminalised and a threat. In sum, the idea is to see how the peripheral media can embody the troubled city outskirts but pointing to new ways in which society can engage with its discourses and issues.

I look at four different perspectives that tie up the media and the periphery in Brazil. First, I discuss the extent that the periphery is a part of the city as it is a despised and ignored corner. Second, I analyse how the periphery has specifically meant the *favelas*, with their issues and community bonding. Third, I explore the periphery as a construction by the mainstream media—a perpetuation of stereotypes, the obscure and poor neighbourhood—and how, lately, it stands out thanks to its creativity and soft achievements. Fourth, I analyse how the peripheral population is state-dependent entity and, more recently, a *pacified* land. This thesis grounds its analyses on how the peripheral media emerges from these locations. I work on the hypothesis of overall solidarity and pacification on the one hand, and the confrontational politicization that seeks change on the other hand. In this way, to understand the role of the peripheral media is to define if politicized frames can prevail in this panorama of historical depoliticization and stereotyping of the periphery.

2.1.1 The periphery as part of the "city"

One of the most striking examples of reporting on the urban periphery can be seen in the 1970s' alternative press. This is the time of newspapers and magazines that, even though the country lived under a dictatorship, could bring up issues of poverty and also explore intersectional inequality, such as feminism and blackness. On the cover of the *Brasil Mulher* magazine, for example, writers would still use deprecating language, such as "third-class passengers" captioning the image of a black woman and a child (figure 2.1). Even if this caption was employed with ironic connotations, this cover reflects how the populations that live on the periphery of big cities have dwelt on the margins of the city not only in physical terms, but also in terms of their poor access to or the total unavailability of public services. Since its outset, the discourse on the periphery that is part of the city has been based on a perspective of getting rights fulfilled (Alde, 2004), which mixed issues of urbanisation with the deliberated condescendence from mainstream society about these shortfalls for the poorest (Gohn, 1985; Marques & Bichir, 2001).

Figure 2.1 Cover of Brasil Mulher magazine, October 1975 (Reproduction)

As mentioned, the periphery of the city is not only a delimited area, but also a location to which one goes back or where the exploited live. Still, in the 1970s, we find the case of the *bóias-frias* or sugar-cane plantation workers. They are after "cold meals" and, although their case relates to rural inequality and where "oppressed" workers work, it is in the periphery or medium-sized cities where they live or where they are from (D'Incao & Melo, 1976). They do not give in to their "oppression"; they accept work in the middle of the Brazilian countryside and face their reality with dignity (Kucinski, 1991:5). One of the covers of an alternative newspaper, *Movimento*, for example, depicts a group on the top of a truck, which is their daily precarious commute; this is a feature on a 1976 edition (figure 2.2). The case of the *bóias-frias* helped to personalise the poor conditions of agrarian work in Brazil (D'Incao e Mello, 1976) in so as far as this sense of social tragedy and exclusion punctuated a narrative that bound the city, which happens once this kind of inequality "appears" and becomes public (Reis, 2000; Telles, 2004; Spink & Spink, 2006; Silva, 2011).

Figure 2.2 Movimento newspaper, 1976 (Reproduction)

This centrality of the city to what one perceives as inequality stems from the issues that manifest on the urban stage. Martín-Barbero (1998) argued that the alternative media offered to South and Central American movements the counterhegemonic possibility of the unification of the people in search of their lost power. Barbero's sense of "counterhegemonic" resistance, which incorporates other cultural practices and a total immersion in the disadvantaged culture, puts an end to the historical "inferiority"

of these people, and also has the city as its main reference. The use of characters such as the *bóias-frias* as a personification of Brazil's vast periphery and its difficulties, as discussed in Kucinski (1991), and of the *favelas,* reinforces the city as an important stage of expression due to its central geography, but also because it is where clashes on equality of rights happen.

After the 2000s, in Brazil, the idea of a "creative periphery" has grown in both scholarly and media discourses in consonance with the economic "boom" of that decade. Brazilian scholars started to engage with the peripheries for their potential as cultural "factories" (Bentes, 2009; Nascimento, 2012). Large urban outskirts in megacities such as São Paulo have hosted thriving film production areas (Martins, 2015), as social networks have increasingly broadcasted images directly from urban peripheral neighbourhoods (Freitas & Espírito Santo, 2015). This seems to be the opposite of the image of suffering transmitted by the *bóias-frias* that crossed the city in trucks, or that of the oppressed proletarians (Mattelart & Piemme, 1980; Festa & Silva, 1984). This thriving periphery continues, none the less, to be absent from institutions such as the Brazilian Congress, universities, or from public administration (Shahin et al, 2016).

In fact, part of this new positive representation of the periphery owes much of its thriving presence to the Internet. By toppling geographical divides and feeding the media with fresh images of its surroundings, the Internet has made unreachable locations more present in daily representation. As Becker (2009:50) pointed out, if the TV had, in the past, the possibility of broadcasting "the everyday of big cities" into the houses of the Brazilian periphery, the online media can—in its own terms—reverse this logic by broadcasting the periphery to a wider audience. Initiatives such as *Voz da Baixada* or *Rio on Watch* are innovative due to their unique transversality from the periphery to the city; Digital media producers differ from the popular depiction of *favela* characters in *telenovelas* because they transcend their recognisable image. If the *poor* dwellers are still charismatic and sweet (Gomes & Nascimento, 1998), the digital narrators of the periphery can show further complexity. I approach next how the periphery has got a specific meaning of *favela*, and how these communities have embodied both geographical and symbolic senses of being peripheral.

2.1.2 The periphery as the favela

The history of publications coming out of Brazil's *favelas* dates back to at least 1925, when the *Voz do Morro* came out. This was the first newspaper that was written from a *favela* (Souza & Barbosa, 2005:40). As a monthly bulletin, *Voz do Morro* publicly displayed the *morro* (hill) culture, featuring poetry, samba, and culture (figure 2.3). Although aimed at addressing the community under constraint, the importance of outlets such as *Voz do Morro* existed in their ability to report social issues and, at the same time, evoke lyricism and music, elements that turned out to communicate well

with the public's image of inequality (Fischer, 2008). These elements later help to consolidate a sentiment of cultural citizenship in Brazil, particularly among the disadvantaged classes (Dagnino, 2004).

Figure 2.3 A Voz do Morro newspaper in a recent edition (Reproduction)

A VOZ DO MORRO

A Voz do Presidente

PROJETO MANGUEIRA

SAMBA!

O NOSSO AGRADECIMENTO

The constitution of the *favela* has not been unanimously agreed upon among scholars. *Favela* researcher Licia Valladares argued on the "invention of the *favela*", where she believed that a more integrated approach—i.e. seeing the *favelas*' issues as part of a broader urban setting—would favour a less prejudicial outlook towards these communities. Valladares argued against the reductionism that results from seeing multiple and diverse communities through one frame. Particularly in terms of the advent of the *favela* media, Brazilian scholar Marilena Chauí (1993) considered popular culture flirting with social issues as a kind of "conformism", while producers and hill-dwellers discussed "resistance" only at the cultural level. These perceptions may have considered different mainstream perceptions of the *favelas* and vice versa, but they did not question that *favelas* as part of a wider poor periphery, neither did they observed the extent to which the media and cultural products labelled as such could ever be accepted out of the periphery.

In terms of communication, there is a tradition of actors speaking on behalf of the *favelas* since the 1970s. This was the time when the Catholic Church, through regular visits from bishops and priests, was the only voice available to broker a dialogue with mainstream society. For instance, the late bishop Dom Helder Câmara was the so-called "bishop of the *favela*" (figure 2.4) (Serbin, 2002; Valladares, 2005:85). In the following decades, the presence of social movements and NGOs, such as the influential NGO *Viva Rio*, would add to this set of the *favela*'s spokespersons, but it would not necessarily help dwellers reclaim their media voices or form native standard of leaderships, at least on the media representation front (Ibid, 2005:168).

Figure 2.4 Bishop Dom Helder Câmara adresses a favela in Rio de Janeiro (O Globo)[14]

In the 1980s, the *favelado* settled in the public imagination, and many dwellers have kept their *favelado* status even though they no longer inhabit a *favela* (Gondim, 1981). The generation that grew up under this stigma, people who are now around 30 years old, are those who aim to reflect more about it, as did rapper *Eduardo Taddeo*, who published a music video in 2012 that he branded as *"The Undeclared War According to a Favelado"*.[15] In another take, historian Marcelo Belfort, himself a *favela* dweller,[16] offered his personal experience:

> "I've had a poor childhood at [favela] Nova Holanda, and this has made difficult for me to have my basic needs fulfilled, such as feeding. But I have good remembrances of the people with whom I lived, and of my child's plays, such as playing marble. [...] For me, despite everything, being a 'favelado' was something very good because I could experiment [with] freedom and creativity, which later, has constituted fundamental values for my life." (Belfort, 2013)

In fact, with 50% of the *favela* population accessing the Internet[17] in 2015, it became easier for them to challenge the historical stereotype, which describes them as brown or black criminal individuals and thus caused damage to the ways in which a younger generation wanted to appear in the media. However, there are far more serious preoccupations as well, such as looking like a *favelado* and then being screened in the streets and stopped at checkpoints (Beaton & Washington, 2015). Though the implications stemming from the reference to this stereotype are enormous, my point dwells on the counterhegemonic opportunity for the *favelado*, which I discuss in Chapter 5.

For example, as the *favelado* embodies society's burdens and the overall failure to promote social justice for all, this image has solidified in the public's imagination mainly due to the endurance of the *favela*s (as seen in Souza & Barbosa, 2005). As the *favelas* grew countrywide, their populations circulated through the city but became the archetype of a police target (Custódio, 2014) or appeared as invaders of the public space (Penglase, 2007). Considering this, could a reclaimed image of the *favelado* rejuvenate and reverse the dweller's image into another ordinary identity, achieving normality and citizenship? Could a *favela* dweller not being a *favelado* if he or she does not want to? I am interested in this to the extent that it helps the *favela* media producers improve their own position

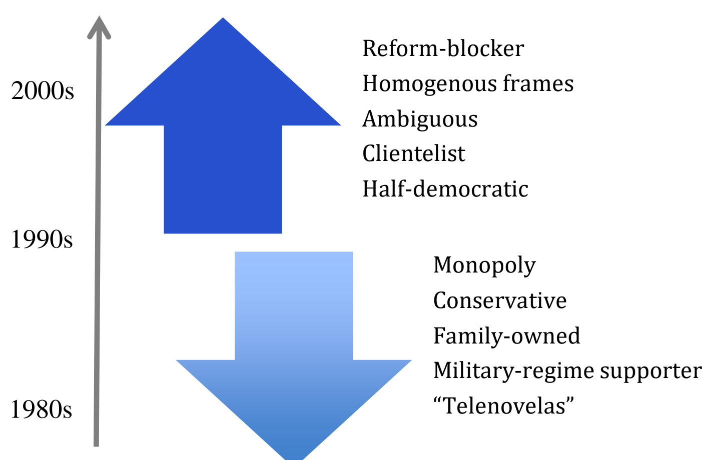
as narrators by politicizing it. I analyse how the periphery has also existed as a mainstream media construction.

2.1.3 The periphery and the mainstream media

Apart from the reporting *from* the periphery, I also find it important to contextualise the media that reports *on* the periphery. Discourses on the *poor* or on the *precariousness* have existed in the mass media as strongly as they exist in the alternative media. In this case, there are two different ways to analyse the interaction between the periphery and mainstream media. Firstly, the latter constrains the right to representation of disadvantaged groups due to its size and dominance of the media market, as discussed in the introduction (Amaral, 2002; Paiva et al, 2015). Secondly, the mainstream media misrepresents the disadvantaged and the periphery through stereotypes and by commoditising the harsh everyday reality of millions of Brazilians (La Pastina, 2014). I do not discuss much of the media's democracy agenda here, but I must dwell on these two aspects, as they are important to interpret much of what alternative media producers will respond to in their contention.

Looking at the first level of this interaction, I ponder the centrality of Globo TV in Brazil's media environment and its implications. This centrality has triggered understandable criticism from many sectors of society, but, in terms of the coverage of inequality, the risk is that Globo TV does not read in depth the extent of inequality. Authors have debated the many aspects related to Globo's predominance, always highlighting the asymmetry that its vast network provokes over the way in which it influences society on the situation of the poorest and of minorities (Figure 2.5). As far as the new criticisms that emerge move away from tackling Globo's market monopoly to focus on its role in blocking a serious media reform, little has changed in the last few decades. My purpose is more about digital media (another area under Globo's dominance), but I must also look at how Globo has influenced, partnered, or restrained alternative producers from developing their coverage of inequality.

Figure 2.5 Summary of debates on Globo TV's influence[18]



Past research on the alternative media has already highlighted this tension between alternative and mainstream media in other settings (Atton, 2002; Harcup, 2003; Forde, 2010). Even though both increasingly share methods of publication, platforms, and languages (Kenix, 2011; Hackett & Gurleyen, 2015), it is expected that alternative media producers appear to be *against* the mainstream media (Hamilton, 2000). In terms of our purpose, we must ask: would a more diversified and popular media ownership mean a better understanding of inequality in Brazil? By tackling the media monopoly, are producers also helping to politicize the agenda of the poor and disadvantaged? Does the unchanged media law help to perpetuate an excluded media periphery, despite its importance and relevance? My argument in this thesis is that, despite the state of standstill in democratising the media, we must look at discourses of inequality in alternative media as they continue to matter to sensitise on present and future issues.

We must be careful in not limiting the idea of "mainstream" to the big media organisations. Partnerships between NGOs and the mainstream media have generated a good amount of media representations that tried to tackle extreme poverty and hunger. At the alternative media level, *Primeira e Última* was a short-lived newspaper released in 1992 that aimed at denouncing not only hunger, but also inequality and racial exclusion as issues that arose straight from Rio's *favelas* (Giumbelli, 1994). This small newspaper later merged with the *Jornal da Cidadania*, a newsletter commissioned by the Institute of Social Analysis (Ibase) (Kingstone & Power, 2000:167; Stacciarini, 2002:160–79). Both gained much boost once *Ibase* started to collaborate with Globo TV, headed by the charismatic sociologist *Betinho* (Gusmão, 2000). Even so, the newspaper continued to focus on hunger in both informative and satirical manners. A cartoon (figure 2.6) reads: *"Mr Guard, this chit has his stomach growling at me"* (Stacciarini, 2002). At the mainstream media level, the 1990s also saw telecharity[19] initiatives (Stracciarini, 2002; Gallego & Galindo, 2008), as the NGO media sought

to indirectly gain influence in parliament and in the country's politics by raising the urgent hunger issue (Didoné & Menezes, 1995; Cabral, 1996). Solidarity then comes as "ideology" (Gusmão, 2000).

Figure 2.6 NGO-related Primeira e Última newspaper, 1995 (Repoduction)

This leads to a discussion on the second type of interactions between the mainstream media and the periphery, that of representation. Large media organisations, such as Globo TV,[20] have lately modernised their approach to the periphery, although they still depict it within a context of an "emerging middle class" narrative, as we see in Chapter 7 (Freitas, 2007, 2010; Freitas & Espírito Santo, 2015; Pinheiro, 2012). However, well-watched programmes keep using popular rhythms as a backdrop (such as the traditional samba to show the *favela*) and the focus continues to be social tragedy (Moreira, 2009; Rocha, 2013). McQuail (2010:47) warned that charitable media campaigns were subject to "socially approved goals" and "filter conditions". Likewise, the success of feature films such as *City of God* has actualised such narratives of poverty and co-optation in the *favelas*, but added the trivialisation of drug dealing and crime to the image of such places (Penglase, 2007; Jaguaribe & Hetherington, 2004; Perlman, 2010; Jaguaribe, 2014; Larkins, 2015). While no longer talking of the overdependent poor, the mainstream media still portrays social tragedy in its extremes, which move *assistencialismo* and solidarity from the hunger front to the military police front.

It is true that the representation of the "culture of the periphery" has improved in recent years (Grijo, 2014), but there are still sanitised versions of realities and discourses. With plots and dramas staged in the *favelas* and other disadvantaged neighbourhoods, TV shows refer to unrealistic patterns, leading to consumerist behaviour in communities that is alien to much of this population (this is also discussed in La Pastina et al, 2014). Keane (1991:178) argued that a democratic media system has much more than power and quantitative relations with the market, as he saw it as a live and self-feeding universe, attending to many sets of tastes and opinions and constantly revised to check what is missing. Baker (2007:9) suggested that, in complex democracies, there is a balance between free media entrepreneurship and the equivalence of forces. Young (2011:245) pondered the importance of

promoting an *adjustment* so that territorial, cultural, and social differences do not augment impressions of domination and oppression.

As mentioned, this thesis does not intend to discuss in full length the many debates that surround media democracy in Brazil. To what concerns to this research, if producers' politicization includes this sense of "adjustment" for fairer media representations may also be influence from an idea of democratic media. Yet, I am interested in seeing how their efforts to build what they think to be fairer and democratic representations stem from the peripheral media. How could they complement decades of such incomplete media representations of the periphery by owning their media and then changing the media environment? These questions also drive my wish to borrow some ideas from the scholarship on media democracy. The counterhegemonic frame that producers have sought tends to balance this hegemonic weight of the mainstream organisations because they tell stories that concern the majority without needing the former's filters. Should that, eventually, also count as another stage of media development in Brazil? In the next section, I discuss the periphery as it has existed in the state-sponsored narrative.

2.1.4 The periphery and the state

The relationship of the periphery with the state dates back to colonial times and, in early Republican Brazil, includes accounts of writers such as Euclides da Cunha with his book "Os Sertões" (*The Hinterlands)*. In the following decades, discourses that link both state and inequality started to come more often from the media and from politicians. The Brazilian dictator Getúlio Vargas named himself the "father of the poor" (Fischer, 2008). Fischer (Ibid:91) argued that, by naming himself as such, Vargas stood for a mix of "propaganda, rhetoric, legislative deed, and orchestrated charity". Vargas's governments were the ones to "like the poor", a term that, in itself, carries an amalgam of needs (including hunger, unemployment and education) and was ultimately a cliché of the cross-class relationships in the country (Wolfe, 1994; Levine, 1998). These are the underlying statements of *assistencialismo* (roughly, *welfarism*). This term encapsulates the extreme dependence of the poor on the state, as *assistencialismo* fits very well with populist politicians' aims (Barbosa, 2007:171).

The extent to which discourses like the *assistencialismo* have helped to create another image of the periphery is what interests me. Particularly because politicians have used these discourses in political campaigns, whether through political communications and patronising images. Aligned with media moguls, politicians have engaged with the poor only for the sake of their own image (figure 2.7). In spite of this flirting with populism, it is after Vargas that popular newspapers would headline poverty and inequality as issues against society, in so as far as they could fit in as social tragedy, the financial support needed to tackle it was not everyone's responsibility (Sodré, 1998; Dantas, 2014). This

constant tie to *assistencialismo* in the political discourse, but detached from society, would lead the ordinary citizen to take inequality less seriously, i.e. as a "problem of the state" (Reis, 1999); apart from that, this link with state could have influenced media portraits that read communities as a this permanent stereotype (Mendonça, 2015).

Figure 2.7 Ex-president and ex-dictator Getúlio Vargas (in white) talks with a disabled man on the streets (Fundação Getúlio Vargas)

This aspect of having the state or the government dictating the urgency of inequality has continued in modern times. In the late 2010s, the Brazilian media, quoting research institutes such as the *Fundação Getúlio Vargas* (FGV), tended to reclassify peripheral dwellers that have "emerged" socially by naming them *Class C* (Neri, 2008). This was the time of the Brazilian economic boom, of reports on a new working class that grew as a result of fast class mobility and poverty alleviation programmes (Neri, 2008; see Chapter 3). In the middle of the 2010s, Brazilian and international media prioritised reports of such class transitions,[21] even if indicators to that effect had only consumerist practices as evidence (Mauro, 2014; see O'Dougherty, 1998 for comparison). As the mainstream media was no longer treating poverty and inequality as the same thing, readers started to learn about other inequalities and about the crossover between gender, violence, and the periphery with overall marginalisation (Penglase, 2007; Soihet, 1997).

In fact, Brazil left the 2014 UN Hunger Map, an event that crowned more than a decade of poverty reduction and a sharp fall on inequality indexes. "Brazil without Misery" would be President Dilma Rousseff's government motto (2010–2014). On the other hand, partisan appropriations of the issue of hunger from both sides of the political spectrum[22] still exist. The *Fome Zero* scheme (*Zero Hunger scheme*), the first of the Workers' Party hunger-reduction policies, has meant a return to the narrative of hunger that is managed by the state, with officials as its main sponsors and mediators (Ferreira, 2006; Hall, 2006). In other words, if contrasting it with Vargas's "father of the poor" discourse (Fischer, 2008) and with the voluntarism that set the agenda of the 1990s and the 2000s (see Chapter 2.1.3), Brazilian society was still largely leaning towards the former than the latter. If government

leadership was the key enforcer of new policies, it has also set frames and interpretations for the issue, which continued to be serious and involve a large part of the Brazilian population (Scalon & Salata, 2012; Salata, 2016).

The media reporting on the surge of *Class C* has indeed helped the understanding of Brazil's past of inequality. By removing full attention from poverty as a scarcity of goods, society could finally concede to a broader understanding of other racial and gender aspects that are part of the economic inequality debate[23] (Osório, 2013), as well as to its failure in creating updated media images (Grohmann, 2014). However, many questions are still important for this research regarding both aspects. The reason I chose to problematise what the state thinks of inequality and how it conveys urgency or indifference is due to my interest in how the periphery gets to accommodate or disrupt its discourse. With the periphery historically seen as the backyard of politicians but, at the same time, represented by the mainstream as "promising and productive", how could producers overcome these elements to strengthen their stances toward better policies? What would new, counterhegemonic discourses of the periphery truly hold the state to account, if they were not previously taken into account? Now I present further elements from Brazil's political scenario to list the main opportunities for counterhegemonic frames from the periphery.

2.2 The rise of the peripheral media: Investigating new counterhegemonic frames for inequality

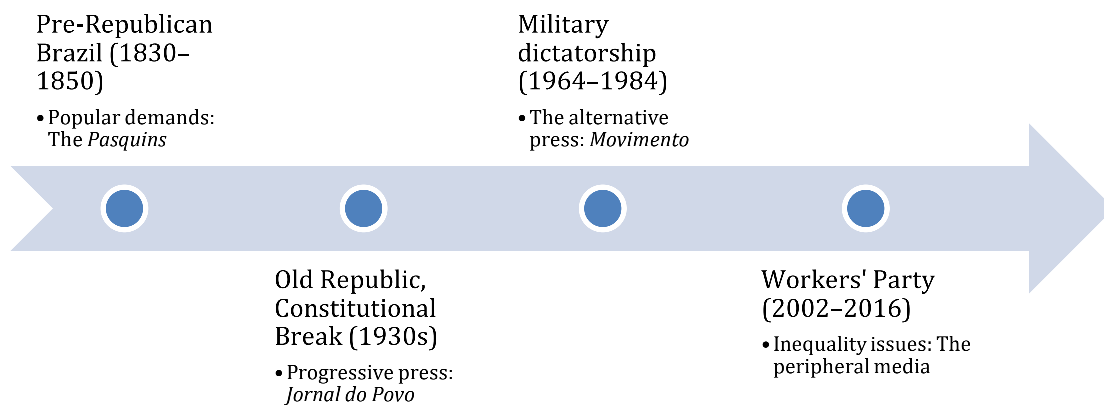
The "peripheral media" draws on the potential of the digital media produced from the margins. Once the peripheral media can properly dispute past circumstances of failed antagonism or poor mediatisation involving the periphery, producers could successfully change the image of the passive, silent, and idealised periphery to get new political ground. In brief, I argue that this new authorship and the rising number of outlets emerging from the peripheries matter because they create a politicized discourse that can better represent the disadvantaged in front of power holders. First, by articulating a model of politicization that could better communicate issues, without having to please the discredited political parties and authorities. In the face of the *hegemony* that have defined the periphery as an inferior landscape, the peripheral media could still create a new language, and more importantly, new frames for sharpening the perception of inequality issues. Finally, the periphery could build on trivialised images (e.g. in *soap operas*) (Rêgo, 2004; La Pastina, 2014), to tackle the elitism and the filters imposed by the mainstream society (Reis, 1999; Moreira, 1999).

I define *politicization* as the intent to enhance, stretch, or transform the meaning of known adjectives and categories currently connected to inequality, envisaging a broader visibility for these social issues. Looking to the background presented earlier in this chapter, politicization has corresponded to limited purposes, such as that of profiling the victims of an enslaving labour system (the *bóia-fria*) or by reproducing old categories of exclusion (such as that of *favelado*). A new politicization would detach the dwellers of the periphery from these categories to prioritise their autonomy and control. Drawing on Rodríguez (2001:19) on the *citizens' media*, I see "citizens who participate actively with their own identities, the identities of others, and their social environments, they produce power". Indeed, politicizing inequality can be like the past models of *radical* media, which Downing (2001:44) argued "expands the range of information, reflection, and exchange from the often-narrow hegemonic limits of mainstream media".

In Brazil, the recent rise of the peripheral media can be seen as product of the general improvement of socioeconomic and political conditions for the disadvantaged to the extent that it allows a new dynamic between power, identity, and history. This shift can affect the highlight old issues now have in the media. Therefore, politicization can thus appear when producers aim for a replacement of hegemonic discourses of charity, cohesion, and enforced unity to privilege *indignant* discourses that demand another type of coverage for their communities. This politicization abandons the *peaceful* settings in search of more authoritative instances. In the past, Downing (2001:3–5) saw in the *radical* media a reaction against hegemonic discourses. In *popular* culture, he saw this process as punctuated by *mestisaje*, a hybrid language that dresses itself with other resources. Martín-Barbero (2008) saw "mediations" between culture, communication, and hegemony. In sum, these are some of the ways in which language can express counterhegemonic frames of inequality. This thesis studies similar ways of provoking confrontational, yet, efficient strategies, particularly in a moment in which seizing the stakeholders' attention did not seem as hard as before.

After 2003, the rise of the left-wing Workers' Party to power has seemingly favoured the narrative of an "ascension of Class C". The idea of a Class C as a positive, prosperous renovation for how Brazilians saw the disadvantaged classes was an innovation, in which the latter benefits from job stability, and other financial gains. Under President Lula's government, however, little was known about how these developments transform the Class C's self-representation, despite the many projections of the periphery in the mainstream media (Salata, 2016). In the wake of Brazil's economic boom in 2008, Neri (2008:6) argued that a new middle class has indeed gained ground with the reduction of inequality, but to what extent, amid prosperity, could inequality get a major media highlight? After the crisis that reached Brazil afterwards, the scenario is obscure. The alternative media contention has grown in moments of coups and democratic interruptions (figure 2.8), but, in contemporaneity, the extent to which producers could repeat such prominence remained unknown.

Figure 2.8 Brazil's democratic ruptures and alternative media surge (based on Sodré, 1998)



These aspects inform this research on the urgency of capturing the contemporary scenario, both from the viewpoint of a favourable political conjecture that had set in, and from the underlining socio-cultural conditions of empowerment, and then crisis, that changed the fortunes in contemporary Brazil. What this background does *not* inform is with respect to the sustainable strategies of politicization from the periphery. I mean the language-based, media-tailored discourses that could transform the way the disadvantaged see their issues. In fact, there is a troubled backdrop involving the media and politicians in Brazil, with the latter offering constraints to the former. Authors have dwelt on the divisive role of the mainstream media during contentious political episodes, such as president Collor's impeachment in 1992 (Amaral, 1994; Abers, 2000:52; Porto, 2012:81). But during the same moments of political turmoil, little has been known on the periphery. How has this huge amalgam of citizens weighed to solve situations of political turmoil? To what extent can their thoughts and versions interact with the broader picture?

Apart from this pressing historical and political backgrounds, other questions on politicization and counter-hegemony emerge from world cities. Harvey (2013:163) reviewed cases in which citizens mobilise against corporate-coordinated enterprises, which make life in the city hostage to private developments and neoliberal organisations. Sassen (2006:338) saw digital networks replacing the concept of *state authority*. The former destabilises the latter thanks to intense digital contention, as in Brazil, which could happen to connect the poor periphery and the influential centre. This same kind of urban politicization is still consonant with movements against the militarisation of the city in Graham (2011), and with what Young (2001) argued on the necessity for bolder instruments of inclusion in contemporary democracies, where "formal deliberation is not enough".

Thus, I would add the need to look at the transformation of authorship as a final nuance of this politicization. Jaguaribe (2014:200–201) concluded that, after years of mediatisation of the *favelas* and of the periphery, forms of authorship can count as an empowering element:

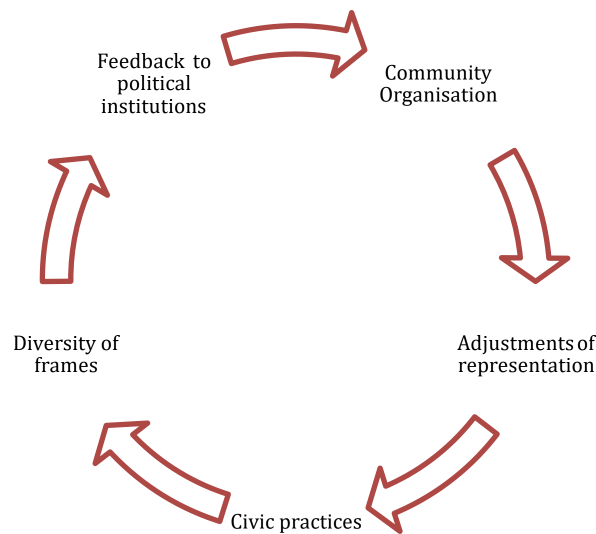
> "Forms of authorship are empowering because they give voice and visibility to the periphery and the favela through self-representation, but they can also be limiting to the extent that authorship becomes conditioned by cultural traits, territorial belonging, and symbolic identities."

Authorship can also mean politicization if backed by the legitimacy of the lived experience, or if producers aim at "historical repair" in their content.

As opposed to that, I call what it is not politicization, *solidarity*. This frame checks if the action of media producers leads to an otherwise constrained reporting of inequality because of its charity tone or its inherent depoliticizing elements. This is not to claim that all *solidarity,* in this sense of charity, compassion, cannot be political (as in Paulo Freire, for instance). As we shall see in the methods chapter, this *solidarity*, as I call here, is to reflect the way Brazilians refer to a commoditised and superficial way of avoiding confrontation, hence, not leading to a change in the background of discursive hegemony over the periphery.

In summary, I have organised this new politicization based on these challenges posed to the periphery, while I try to connect them with these emerging urban dilemmas seen elsewhere. The new politicization can mean an improvement in *community organisation* (Festa & Silva, 1986; Martín-Barbero, 2008; Woitowicz, 2009), as *feedback to political institutions and the state* (Abreu, 2007; Porto, 2012), as *adjustments of representation* (Young, 2011), as *civic practices* (Sassen, 2006; Harvey, 2013; Holston, 2014), and as pursuing the *diversity of frames* (Amaral, 1994; Porto, 2012). Having set this larger spectrum of opportunities appearing in literature, this thesis has concentrated on the *adjustments of representations, the diversity of frames and the feedback to political organisations*. Because this research is set to analyse discourse, these forms of politicization are those with which this research can engage more effectively. Furthermore, a contribution to this literature flows from observing how these aspects appeared in non-disruptive fashion, that is, apart from the alternative media momentums seen in moments of political or activist upheaval. Thus, a real and sustainable politicization from the alternative media would have to go beyond this sense of disruption and move towards a continuous, structured, and reproducible dialogue with the media, the state, and the mainstream of Brazilian society.

Figure 2.9 Opportunities for a new politicization of the periphery via alternative media



Therefore, this thesis looks at a new politicization as a mix of socially committed, innovative, and periphery-authored action to produce a long-standing agenda, shared among the periphery and addressed to the power holders mentioned herein. Based on this framework, observing articles that follow this politicization has meant to contrast them with frames seen as evoking *solidarity*, i.e. the charitable, passive perspective that used to describe the periphery, the dominant reading of the last century. The extent to which that the periphery can now raise their stakes and cover inequality in this politicized fashion comes down as a new chapter of the debate on inequality in Brazil. To verify this politicization in language, I have borrowed conceptual tools such as the notion of *coverage* or *frame* from social movement research and from mass communications, which I delimited in Chapter 3. Based on this discussion, I conclude this chapter by listing some of the specific examples of politicization or potential improvements in the periphery's visibility that could be verified under this framework.

2.3 Expected findings

The idea of laying out expected findings is to delimit what kind of politicization outcomes I expected to find, based on the criteria set by this framework. These findings have been revisited in the conclusion. As far as this research effort can also be an attempt at theory-building, i.e. by charting the existence of the "peripheral" media, the focus lies in showing that *hegemonic* narratives on inequality can be overcome by producers as long as they focus on politicizing issues. That confirmation could already offer much contribution to the literature by: raising new data on the repertoire of the periphery; setting new parameters within which we can perceive the politicized media, instead of

"alternative" media only. Below, I proposed expected findings that aim to shed light on what politicized standards of coverage would look like, noting how it could specifically improve the feedback to power, promote representation adjustments and diversify the frames produced about Brazil's inequality.

EF1 – The periphery pushes for a new framing of events involving the disadvantaged population, poor individuals, and the city's peripheral locations as to highlight inequality and government negligence *(feedback to political institutions)*

The past politicization of events in the city, such as protests or road-blocking, can have equivalents in digital media. Producers may assume other roles than that of a journalist, e.g. a role in the public administration or in partnering NGOs. Kucinski (1991), for instance, called the 1970s' alternative journalists "revolutionaries", as he believed that journalists were also part of the struggle against the regime. As the role of the alternative media producer in Brazil grows in dynamism and ambiguity (as in Holston, 2014), the extent to which producers can shed light on new policies or regulatory changes which are set out to benefit or damage the poorest or worsen inequality can be seen as ways to politicize it, and therefore, counter-balancing current hegemony in such political debates.

EF2 – Producers can update the mainstream's perceptions, images, and opinions on the favelas or other suburban locations, with dwellers creating a new verbal/image repertoire or challenging stereotypes *(adjustment of representations).*

As an emblematic image of Brazil's poor periphery, the *favelas* do matter as the central location for struggles for urbanisation, security, and public services. Although literature has advanced to engage with these communities in more meaningful ways (Davis, 2015; Nemer, 2015; Baroni, 2014), producers can still employ new efforts to reframe the *favela* in the face of public opinion, changing perspectives and showing new possibilities for a native discourse of social justice. While I do not aim to suggest that *favela* dwellers are bound to politicization through the mainstream's opinions, autonomy is one of the ideals that scholars have imagined to *favela* dwellers, for example (Valladares, 2000; Jaguaribe, 2014). By developing new frames, *favela* dwellers could also obfuscate the current trend of framing individuals and life in the *favelas* as dangerous and prone to crime (Penglase, 2007).

EF3 – Peripheral media can rival historical mainstream media portraits or develop productive partnerships to ensure fairer reports or images *(diversity of frames).*

If not a thesis completely focused on media democracy (and nor does it invoke any comparative studies), this work did start by reflecting on the effects of media concentration on the lack of attention

to the periphery, and a potential generator of further inequality. The lack of representation or of local "spokespersons" has also contributed to external perceptions of Brazil's media as underdeveloped (MacBride & Abel, 1984). In Brazil, perspectives of "colonisation" of smaller media ecologies (Marques & Bailey, 2012) have dominated the studies on the country's media environment and yet this thesis can advance other possibilities by seeing the politicization of inequality as a way to reduce weight of the "media monopoly". In other words, media democracy can be improved by reducing divides that impede the disadvantaged from having "their media" or finding native expressions echoed throughout other realms.

EF4 – The peripheral media contribute to changing inherited state-dependence, *assistencialismo* discourses *(feedback to political institutions).*

Earlier in this chapter, I explored the influence of past political discourses in Brazil (e.g. Getúlio Vargas and the later military dictatorship) and the indifference regarding the periphery. I contended that current relations between producers and state authorities needed a more detailed exploration based on this background. For example, if producers are abandoning the *assistencialismo* narrative, what other narratives could emerge to tie up the state, the disadvantaged, and inequality? If old stereotypes on the disadvantaged are suppressed (e.g. the *favelado*), what are the other discourses put out by media producers? These new images and discourses appear as forms of politicization and they could strengthen the image and discourse of the periphery when dealing with power holders. Next, I wrap up this chapter in the conclusion.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented a theoretical framework that grounds this thesis's interest in understanding the politicization of inequality by the alternative media in Brazil. I offered a critical overview of the "periphery" as a concept that not only underpins poverty, but also features deep references to inequality in the country. I also discussed how the periphery appears as a concept articulated in different locations and by different interlocutors. The first one is inclined to present the periphery as a less important part of the city, which is covered in prejudice and a lack of public services. The second one has the periphery represented by *favela* communities, which have also been featured in a set of media representations. Third, the periphery appears as a mainstream media creation, whether to promote charitable initiatives or to idealise the life in the *favelas* through feature films. Fourth, the periphery is known because its dwellers depend on the state and are a stage for populist politicians.

In all of these scenarios, I contend that there are a number of opportunities to reverse these perceptions, which I define as *politicization*. Investing in a set of opportunities, I see producers using discursive strategies to frame inequality in relation to Brazil's political actors. I discuss the feedback to political institutions, the diversity of frames, the adjustment of representation as opportunities to dismantle the hegemonic consensus around inequality, as these three topics can advance the understanding of peripheral media. The idea was to contrast this politicization with softer instances that still see the periphery as a passive agent. This chapter ended with a series of examples in which this politicization can happen, presented here as "expected findings". In the next chapter, I set out the methodological toolkit for the frame and discourse analysis conducted in this research.

3. Research methods: Capturing frames as political opportunities

Introduction

In the previous chapters, I discussed the potential of what I am calling the alternative *coverage* of inequality in Brazil through *frames* and *discourse*. This chapter presents the mixed methods design used in this research, which applied frame analyses to the content and combined the results with semi-structured interviews with media producers. The approach of this thesis is in line with past scholarly interest in the role of media discourses for the coverage of poverty and inequality (Benson et al, 2012; Redden, 2014; Lugo-Ocando, 2015), but deploys a different use of frame and discourse analysis. In Chapter 1, I discussed a justification for adopting *frames* as a useful conceptual tool to stabilise and then properly engage with alternative media content. I engaged with a past practice of seeing in the repetition of phrases or words a way to isolate frames and claim their use, as this standard appears in social movements (Tarrow, 1992; Benford & Snow, 2000), and more recently, in blogs (Cooper, 2010). As we shall see, I also apply this scholarship in order to apprehend the *intent* of producers, alongside the content that was actually produced and published. I thus complement the frame analysis with interview data, which will be interpreted with a discourse analysis. I will start by offering a method overviewed, followed by a discussion on sampling.

3.1 Method overview

In the next two sections, I lay out the main criteria for performing a frame analysis and semi-structured interviews in this research. The primary rationale for using both methods is the need to engage with the repertoire of media producers in a frame-focused manner. What I mean by *repertoire* is their discourse and their proposals for social change: questioning them and probing their outreach and resonance. As I looked at media groups whose distinctiveness is to be dissonant, I decided for the use of *frame*, which, as tool, appears overshadowed in past literature on alternative media. My choice of methods then responds to these gaps in the literature, which constantly focused on ethnographic description, but, more importantly, allows a more precise answer to this research's questions on Brazil's politicization of inequality. At the same time, as I could not count on the regularity or standardisation found in the mainstream media, I had to face what the alternative media publish in a systematised way and that is why frames also mattered. Last, I use results from the interviews to

discuss producers' repertoire and its relationship with their coverage. I discuss how the sampling was critical to reach a diverse, varied number of outlets and producers.

3.1.1 Sampling

Investing in the diversity of outlets and interviewees was key to probe the convergence into the same intent of covering inequality in Brazil. Hence, I had to initially resort to a purposive sampling strategy (Riffe et al, 2014:77; Bryman, 2012:418) and then run the chosen outlets through a *maximum variation* sampling effort. The necessity for the purposive sampling strategy lies in controlling the size of the sample, which had to follow outlets that corresponded to the tradition of the alternative media in Brazil and, at the same time, consider the different landscapes they cover (as in Holanda et al, 2008, for example). In the alternative press of the 1970s, one also learns that authorship was key to recognising the alternative media. Both Kucinski (1991) and Strelow and Woitowicz (2009) mentioned ex-mainstream journalists, NGOs, and members of civil society as alternative media producers. Newspapers such as *Movimento* or *Opinião* became references for the alternative press due to their agenda in favour of the disadvantaged, but also because of their ability to gather "committed" journalists around the same ideals (Pereira, 1986).

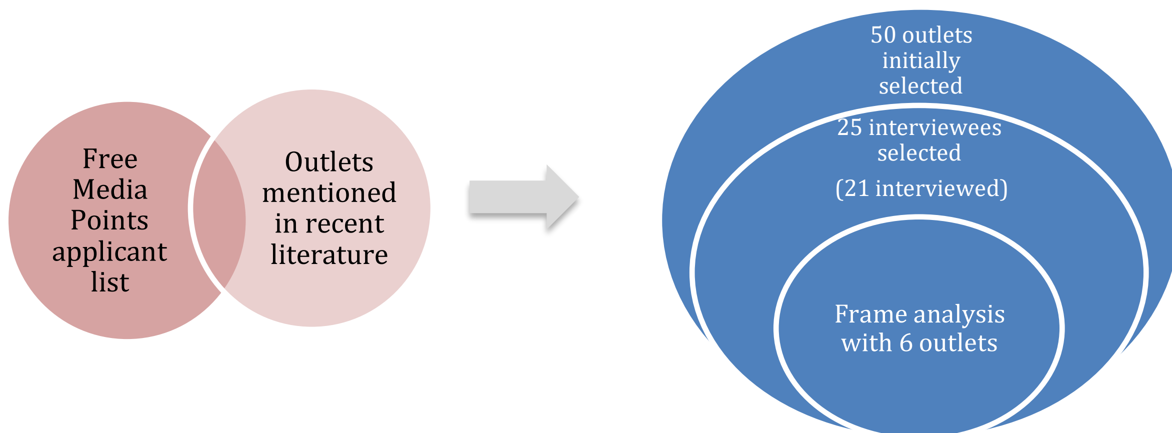
My purposive sampling effort had also to contemplate different kinds of coverage, although that precision would clash with limited resources and time. Lindlof & Taylor (2011) stressed that the purposive sample strategy must follow a few critical cases. However, an increasing number of communities appeared to be producing their media with their own specificities at the time this research started. Therefore, I had to also incorporate this variety of locations, social classes, and traditions (e.g. in the *favelas*, urban suburbs, hills, and low-income households). Once I determined that my sample would follow these variables, my *maximum variation* sampling (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011:113) had to incorporate theoretical assumptions of diversity in Brazilian alternative media, and to cover distinct periods (Kucinski, 2008; Woitowicz, 2009) and the emerging mediatised communities (Peruzzo, 2013; Custódio, 2014).

Finally, I found that four types of groups would suit this research, as they are the most cited in the foregoing research. As I examine "counterhegemonic" discourse, these groups are those that show independence from the mainstream media and from the government. They are *independent journalism* groups, *NGO-sponsored* outlets, the so-called *community media* (which refers to locally focused outlets), and *radical, proletarian* newspapers (as per definitions found in Downing, 2001). I could have chosen a *snowballing* strategy by relying on references from producers of media partners or colleagues to find other producers; however, that would have compromised diversity and autonomy. To ensure a fair breadth of coverage, I chose outlets that had been publishing for more than two years.

To find this mix of diverse but systematically of media outlets, I resorted to two sources.

First, I used the 2015 *Free Media Points* programme's project list. This federal government programme invited media producers from across Brazil to apply for grants, priming for projects that were especially promoting the voice of minorities and excluded communities to apply. This index, which names projects and their locations, was publicly available on the website of the Ministry of Culture. My next step was to identify the chosen groups via Facebook or web searches. I was thus able to index projects from all Brazilian regions, which led me to groups from less developed regions, such as the northeast. At the same time, by targeting *subscribed* projects and not *approved* projects, I did not constrain my sample to the universe of grant receivers, nor to the government's choice criteria. To focus on the criteria aforementioned, I had to choose groups independently of their platform or the format of their content, which meant equally including groups with websites or social media pages, as far as they were part of an *online* ecology.

Figure 3.1 Sampling sourcing strategy



Consistent with the *maximum* variation of this sample, I still had to ensure that projects that had not applied for this grant were also in the scope. I thus selected outlets that stood out for their comprehensive coverage of inequality, enough to raise the attention of other studies (Schwaab et al, 2013; Carvalho, 2014; Davis, 2015; Custódio, 2014b; Cunha et al., 2016). These studies guided me to other possible outlets, showing groups that had achieved certain prominence on social media or had established income sources and production independence. By picking half of the sample from the universe of grant applicants and the other half from recent literature, I reached a significant variation within the same scope (coverage of inequality), allowing me to add robustness to the claim of a broader contribution from the alternative media, not only from one or two outlets. This mixed sampling strategy may potentially inform future studies, as no literature has pinpointed the criteria one should follow to reach a comprehensive sample body of *alternative* media outlets, let alone in Brazil. Past focus has been on groups belonging to the same historical context but disregarding discursive or

ideological differences (e.g. Festa & Silva, 1986).

I finally reached a sample of 50 media outlets (see iii), from which I picked 6 for my frame analysis (three from the government's list and three from the literature). Below, I explain the preference for the six outlets on which I performed the frame analysis and how I approached it. The outlets which were not included in the frame analysis, or those from which I have picked up no names for the interviews, were nonetheless helpful for enriching this research. These remaining outlets offered this research further examples of topics or points that may coincide with both frame and discourse analyses in the discussion, despite the thesis not engaging with these outlets further than this. My intention was to show that, if different outlets can follow the same frames and standards, then it is possible to analyse the coverage of inequality under different conditions and from a set of distinct contexts and platforms (Rubin & Babbie, 2009:150).

Regarding the size of this sample, there is no consensus on an ideal number when studying alternative media. Authors often worked with one or two cases when trying to perform an inventory of Brazilian alternative media (Festa & Silva, 1986; Peruzzo, 2008; Kucinski, 1991; Woitowicz, 2009; Primo, 2009). Recent compilations of alternative media case studies show scholars dwelling on a set of three or four outlets (Atton, 2015). At the same time, the *Free Media Points* programme listed more than 500 media projects that had subscribed to the scheme from across Brazil. As Bryman (2012:418) argued, the sample size of qualitative studies should satisfy criteria including saturation and heterogeneity. In qualitative studies, sample size should reflect the conceptual basis followed and the significance of the data (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011:116). In this thesis, it meant having a good grasp of discourses produced in the periphery, even though this periphery could exist in different conditions. Therefore, choosing six outlets that could—each one—stand for these variations of the periphery seemed reasonable for this research.

Likewise, being a Portuguese-language reader allowed me to read and analyse 120 randomly chosen articles for the frame analysis (20 per outlet) from articles published both on websites, social media, and online forum spaces during 2013, 2014, and 2015. A similar number of articles was examined in other cognate studies that conducted a media frame analysis (Redden, 2014). However, the assumption in this study was that the chosen articles capture different aspects of inequality in their coverage and reflect a diverse authorship. Next, I describe the profile of each selected outlet in more detail, outlining further reasons for their selection.

3.1.1.1 Selected outlets for frame analysis

The rationale for choosing six outlets was informed by a consideration of the extent to which the periphery, as outline earlier, was represented. To check the frames derived from this theoretical framework, my main source continued being the list of outlets from the *Free Media Points* scheme. I thus chose the members of distinct groups of professional or non-professional producers that could represent the "periphery" and that cover the demands from the periphery. At the same time, although this sampling is illustrative of the alternative media scene in Brazil, I do not assume that these outlets are an exhaustive sample of all kinds of outlets or of all possible formats they may assume within their media ecology. Therefore, the sampled ones were to more likely correspond to the image of the periphery that stems from the state, the media, and the mainstream society. The extent to which "outlets" can appear as this new periphery supersedes any expectation of looking at the "processual" routine (where they publish, how they publish). Therefore, their scope and location are aspects that are more important to look at than their "presence" on Facebook or Twitter.

While I do not aim to stress the meaning of "outlet", a more generic notion of *content* is enough to ground this research on basic notions of intent and authorship, which appear as the essential elements to map media frames, studies based on this method have suggested (Benford & Snow, 2000; Van Gorp, 2010). For instance, even if outlets exist only as websites, on social media platforms or on both at the same time (e.g. Twitter or Facebook), I do not engage with the question of the influence derived from their presence on these platforms due to the length of this debate and its own complexities which include questions regarding access, digital divide, and digital labour (e.g. Davis, 2015; Fuchs, 2016). My aim instead is to scrutinize the diversity of their "media frames", as seen in relation to the history of the alternative media and past notions of *periphery*.

The result of this sampling strategy was a set of six justifications for the inclusion of an outlet (Table 3.1). The first was a group of independent journalists who produce the *Agência Pública*, a journalism agency which is a constant reference for scholars and professional journalists in Brazil (Carvalho, 2014). This agency offered much coverage of the marginalised in Brazil, receiving multiple awards for its coverage. They have reported the damage caused by infrastructure projects that affected the poor in the Amazon, as well as for its work on the racialisation of poverty and inequality in Brazil. *Agência Pública* has appeared as a group bearing similar values to those seen in the 1980s' alternative media, when producers had a similar drive to report on indigenous groups, countryside dwellers and unattended citizens to offer a comprehensive scenario of Brazil's inequality (Festa & Silva, 1986).

Table 3.1 Outlets selected for the frame analysis

Outlet	Justification	Location
Agência Pública	Independent journalism outlet	São Paulo
Viva Favela	NGO-related *favela* media	Rio de Janeiro
Coletivo Papo Reto	Community media collective	Rio de Janeiro
Mídia Periférica	Community media collective	Salvador
Brasil 247	Radical newspaper	São Paulo
Rio on Watch	English language community media	Rio de Janeiro

To ensure I included a comprehensive sample from the cities' outskirts, I contemplated a group of outlets covering the *favelas*. The first choice was the *Viva Favela* website, whose coverage has aimed to offer a more positive portrait of Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*, assembling different models of textual or pictorial contribution (Davis, 2015). This is an initiative from the *Viva Rio* NGO, which has developed an agenda in favour of the poor in the *favelas*, covering their activities and cultural demonstrations. *Rio on Watch* is a portal written in English and Portuguese, featuring opinion pieces and commentary from both foreign and Brazilian writers; it also focuses on improving the media coverage of the *favelas*. This outlet depends on NGO support and crowd-funding campaigns. The other outlet covering the *favelas*, but from the perspective of the periphery (which includes other communities and the Rio's outskirts), is the *Coletivo Papo Reto*. This group has acted through its Facebook page and a blog, which approaches contentious episodes of police violence intertwined with upbeat coverage that uses pictures of events and mixes personal accounts on the joy and scarcity of life in the peripheral communities of Brazil.

All Brazilian suburbs are not necessarily considered *favelas*. *Mídia Periférica* has emerged as a blog based on the outskirts of Salvador, in the state of Bahia. This blog, and more recently a radio show, has developed a series of reports that range from local issues, such as the lack of public transportation and the lack of welfare guarantees, to the prejudicial treatment received by black citizens at police checkpoints. It has appeared on several government lists for grants, and it later came to expand into other formats, such as radio and on social media. Of a similar profile, I chose the magazine *Vai da Pé*, which represents the outskirts of São Paulo.

The final choice for the frame analysis was the newspaper *Brasil 247*. Offering coverage that extends across the Brazilian territory, this online outlet brings different sections together for inequality, highlighting inequality from a political/partisan perspective. Even though it follows professional journalism conventions, it also frames social issues by linking them to everyday political decisions, emphasising political coverage of that which affects the poor and widens Brazil's divides. This outlet appears close to the Workers' Party (Targino, 2015), but neither wishing to enter in this debate nor

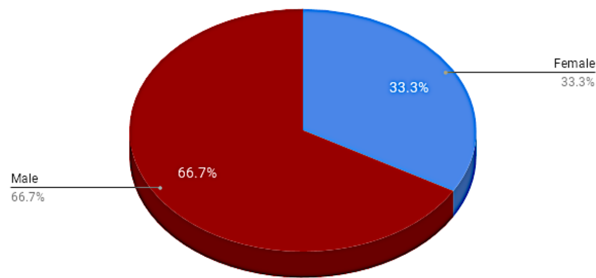
believing in a depoliticized alternative media, I prioritised its coverage of inequality. I saw a kind of approach that could indeed complement the local debate and feed a counter-opinion in favour of the disadvantaged, even though it is only directed at the urban middle class.

Another part of this effort lies in my wish to use a few mainstream media outlets to discuss the extent to which these peripheral media outlets can offer what we understand here as the *counterhegemonic*. That choice appears consonant to the literature on media frames, which is as focused on the mainstream media as it is on social movement media (Tarrow, 1992); comparing mainstream and alternative media can also be seen in other studies on media and poverty (e.g. Redden, 2014). Thus, I selected the biggest mainstream media outlets in Brazil, as this could offer a glance into the so-called *dominant* narrative to which producers have often reacted. I chose the outlets that have featured in other studies on the Brazilian media (Fox & Waisbord, 1997; Waisbord, 2000), namely *G1* (Internet portal owned by Globo organisations) and *Folha de S.Paulo*. As this does not intend to be a study on the mainstream media, I limit my search of both organisations' websites to events or facts covered at the peripheral media level, which is the core of this research. I now analyse the criteria that this research applies to the interviews with media producers.

3.1.1.2 Approaching media producers

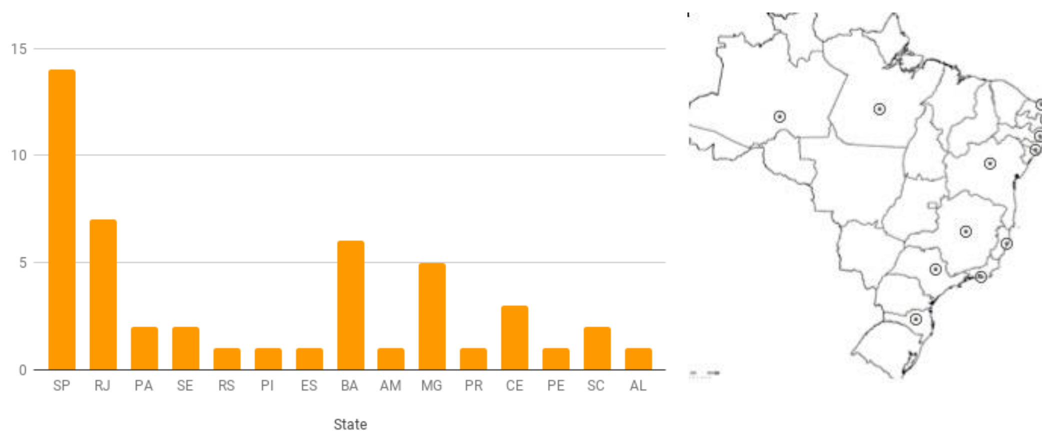
From a total of 25 producers that I contacted who were working for the above outlets, 24 responded. They were based in different Brazilian states (Image 3.1). From them, 21 were interviewed in this research. By disclosing who were the producers interviewed in this research, I can project some of the limitations of gender, for instance, that still persist in the alternative media realm. Though not conclusive to attest that there is a gender imbalance in the whole media environment, we can look at it carefully that these data can refer to a sector that is more progressive and forward-looking with regards to inequality and the issues that affect the disadvantaged, but it can still reflect broader socioeconomic, gender, and racial unbalances. Here, for instance, I point to the smaller number of women (figure 8.1), but there might exist other imbalances which were not possible to check with proper depth.

Figure 3.2. Gender of the interviewees (%)



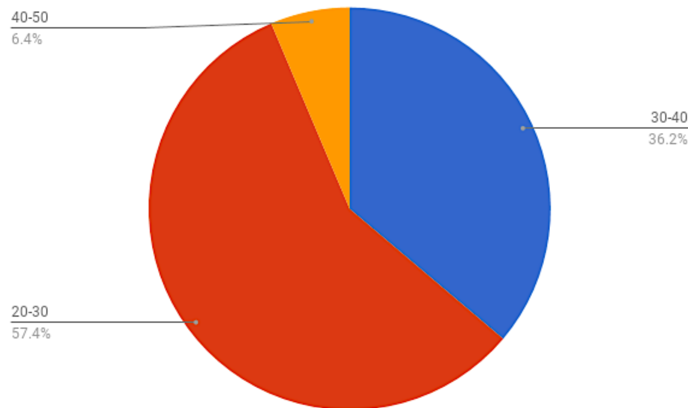
In relation to their locations, I have targeted producers have mirrored key states in Brazilian territory (figure 3.3 and 3.4). Even though most of them were based in São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro, many of them were originally from other smaller states. This wide representation could potentially cover the totality of the living conditions in the country, from the impoverished North and Northeast to the wealthier South and Southeast. By inviting producers from the biggest states and from distant locations, this research could unveil the different, but complementary challenges that inequality poses to the whole country.

Figure 3.3 Number of interviewees per Brazilian state



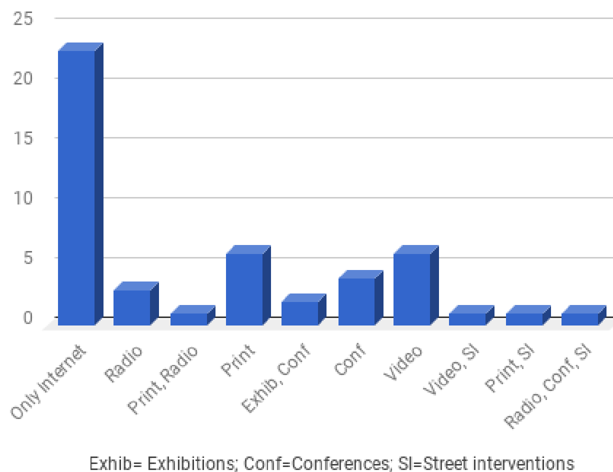
By following these guidelines, I aimed to be coherent with the *maximum variation* effort described earlier. I achieved to meet producers of different backgrounds (considering gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, regions of Brazil they represented). At the same time, the size of the cohort that accepted to take part in this research (and probably of those who compose the alternative media in Brazil in general) poses constraints in that respect, as not *all* profiles were available so as to do justice to a diverse country such as Brazil. Selected interviewees thus represented a cohort which is consonant with the set criteria and mirror groups covered in other studies (Kucinski, 1991; Rodríguez, 2001; Downing, 2001; Atton, 2015), including the fact most producers in this case were slightly younger (figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 Age of the favela media producers according to the sampled websites



When producers described themselves, they were clear on the number of platforms they adopted, their routines of publication. There is a preference for using the Internet as the standard platform, but a reasonable number has added another format to their online media presence, with many citing radio and video as alternatives to reach other populations. This presence was not at first related to any expectation of generating income but one of increasing publicity and mobilisation.

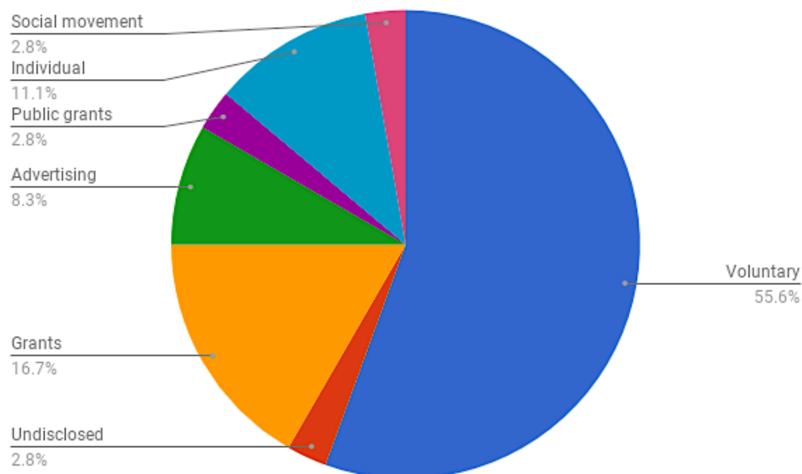
Figure 3.5 Number of producers per platforms



Although producers have not provided evidence of their funding, I have informally inquired and checked independently what information was disclosed on their websites or available according to Brazilian funding body. I found that overall funding sources were much fragmented. I concluded that a significant number of them were sourcing their media projects from voluntary work and skill sharing, but still with a small fraction admittedly having received public grants, as others mentioned

social movements, individual donations, and other types of grants from NGOs, for example (figure 3.6). While only 2.8% chose not to disclose their source, it was not possible to know what other support those on a voluntary basis could potentially have.

Figure 3.6 Source of funding according to interviewed media producers



Interviews followed a flexible theoretical script, which included questions on media democracy in Brazil, on the past coverage of inequality, and about alternative media networking, following the model of a semi-structured interview (Bryman, 2012:471; Seidman, 2015). I departed from the points indicated in the introduction, especially when approaching the so-called "success" of the alternative media in covering protests and activism; I also considered the motivations for covering inequality, contrasting these with the affiliations of past media producers. For instance, Festa and Silva (1986) mentioned alternative journalists and social movement members as actors carrying strong political and partisan values. Kucinski (1991) spoke to professional journalists, activists, and grassroots organisations that were part of the same pool of pro-democracy producers. Woitowicz (2009) featured alternative journalists, social movement leaders, and academics. Peruzzo (2008) mentioned activists and community leaders as important mentors for the alternative media. I compared these profiles with my script, although the focus continued to be the producers' discourses and views on inequality.

Alternatively, I could have also taken an ethnographic approach (which has usually served to draw observations of communities), taking notes on behaviour and producers' attitudes when producing media (e.g. Barassi, 2015). Many ethnographic studies have contributed to a better apprehension of society's complexity, expanding knowledge on how communities articulate with "the other" in everyday life (Rasul, 2009:309–15). However, the focus on alternative media producers' behaviours, memories, and models of participation (as in Davis, 2015) leaves little room for focusing on these

groups' discursive potential, their terms, opinions, and repertoires as they appear in interviews or in publications of their own. While researchers have been rather interested in describing the dynamic behind their behaviour and motivation (e.g. Custodio, 2017), I understood that the contribution of this thesis would be stronger if I engaged with producers' media production and how they reacted to existing images of themselves. In the same way, a lot of media producers call themselves *journalists*,[24] and have consciously adopted mainstream journalism standards (such as balance and fairness; Harcup, 2003; Atton & Hamilton, 2008). Therefore, performing an ethnography study appeared unnecessary, considering that there already are several works about newsroom routines and practices (Schudson, 1989; Deuze, 2005).

Likewise, instead of interpreting alternative media practitioners as a detached group, I have chosen to engage directly with their points and the outcomes of their practice as media producers. That approach also allowed an enquiry into what they perceive or describe as a counterhegemonic, especially to check if they confirm Globo's weight in the local media environment (which is much publicised in the literature) (Paiva et al, 2015). In any case, interviews could give insights into the *intent* behind the coverage by these producers. By performing the interviews, I could better engage with their biographical information, which allowed a more direct approach to the reasons for engagement, occasionally allowing them to highlight personal trajectories (Weingraf, 2001:111).

Reaching out to producers from remote areas was particularly challenging, even via online video conference (Skype), but all interactions have respected ethical concerns such as privacy, identity checking, and informed consent[25] (King & Horrocks, 2010:101–02). Nevertheless, I did not name media producers when quoting them directly, for various reasons. This identification could harm them due to the political implications of their positions, whether it be when they are applying for funds amid a politically changing scene in Brazil or when they are publishing and engaging with audiences. Identification could potentially harm quoted individuals and potentially the third parties mentioned. Having discussed the main lines of this study's sampling, I qualify the criteria for the analysis of the content and interviews in the next section.

3.2 Performing discourse and frame analyses

This thesis's use of media *frames* has not engaged with investigating the manipulative power of the mass media's hidden agendas (Entman, 2004) or the process whereby social movements build frames (Benford, 1997). Instead, I returned to Goffman's (1974) view of framing as the "organisation of experience", extending it to focus on the alternative media. *Frame* here stems from choosing image

and language to cover inequality, as I study the complexity of these constructions as viewpoints or simply as "dissent" (Cooper, 2010). I applied Gitlin's view (1980:7–10) that framing may work as a *selection* of important facts "based on tacit theories". These "tacit theories" have guided this study to verify how they inform this organisation of experience—how this intent to frame the issue of inequality leads to the interpretation of facts and opinions. Yet, how producers come including news content from the mass media, and based on that, structuring their discourses around a single agency (Benson et al, 2012). Therefore, the frame is the mechanism through which I find what these agendas are, and which allow the study the implications for the coverage of inequality in Brazil, whether presented as a politicized topic or based on the old solidarity frame. The possibility of finding this intent to politicize—which is what I see as advancement in the way in which this agenda is publicised—explains why I invested in a frame analysis and not in a content analysis, for instance.

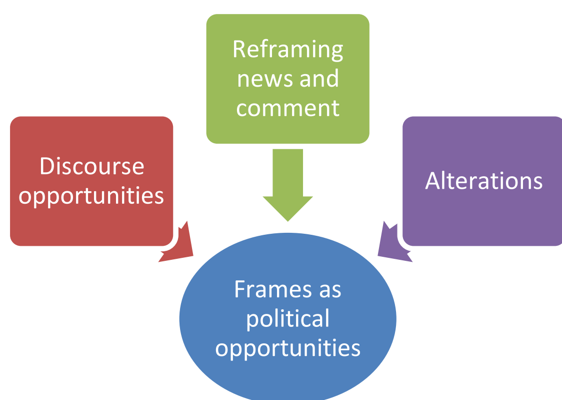
Another reason for using frames is to make use of the documental work that has already revealed the past alternative press's strong drive for social justice (Festa & Silva, 1986). With regard to how some past media outlets were leaning towards Marxist left-wing partisanship (Pereira, 1986), frames could ease a new interpretation of the new data against this old historical development. By organising this analysis around specific frames, this thesis could depart from this broad impression of a "socially conscious" alternative media, moving towards more specific frames or intents that may update producers' role in modern Brazil. Likewise, I do not assume that frames are always exact or make assumptions about their fairness (based on past ethics or according to the ethics of contemporary mainstream journalism, as in Atton & Hamilton, 2008). As discussed in Chapter 1, the more politicized the frames appear, the more this thesis could defend a contribution from the alternative media to an enhanced discourse on inequality. I dwell more on this by explaining the link of this frame analysis to the following discourse analysis.

3.2.1 Identifying frames

In terms of finding frames in the content of the outlets analysed, I considered what Van Gorp (2010:85) defined as "shared notions of symbolic significance, such as stereotypes, values, archetypes, myths, and narratives". In addition, I also saw what Tarrow (1992) mentioned as existing "group opportunities" in discursive patterns, as they can motivate a change in behaviour and in society. Moreover, Goffman (1974:65) argued that framing involves a process of "alteration", in which one creates a new order of values to reframe "what is going on". For this work, I worked with ideas, group opportunities, and discursive opportunities (alterations, metaphors) to arrive at what Benford and Snow (2000) saw as *political opportunity*. I see this concept in how producers could somehow succeed in attracting mainstream media attention, such as during parliamentary debates, enabling overall community or society awareness.

Because this thesis works with alternative media and frames such as reflexivity, we do not need to necessarily investigate frames as part of the publicity obtained through the "conventional" mainstream agenda. This was done in Tarrow (1992), who mentioned the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a case for *given* frames, which have become globally known in the media. In Benford and Snow (2000:624), we learn that frames should follow "strategic processes" or those that are "deliberative, utilitarian, and goal directed". Gamson and Modigliani (1989) suggested capturing catchphrases, keywords, and metaphors to confirm how semantics can lead to frames, as discussed in the above section. I followed a triple conceptualisation of this frame analysis that could establish a direct relationship with political opportunities (Image 3.4). In sum, I considered the reframing of news and commentary, the use of discursive opportunities (e.g. hyperboles, catchphrases, or metaphors), and the investment in alterations of content through "remixing" (i.e. old content used with new purposes).

Figure 3.7 Using frames as political opportunities



In the above figure, I show an example of how frame analysis has worked in practice. Whenever the mainstream media features socially sensitive issues on Brazilian TV—e.g. "a new soap opera staged in *favelas*"[26]—alternative producers can, in this way, capture momentum by *appropriating* that agenda to provide a more realistic outlook of what it really feels like "living in the *favela*". Alternative media producers may *alter* celebratory accounts, from diverting their purpose of feeding tourism and commoditisation to *transforming* such narratives by telling about the harsh treatment of its black dwellers or reporting on the uncollected litter, for example. Producers would have used the soap opera as a starting point to lobby for public policies and to bargain for an equivalence of public services offered in that community. Here, the analysis of this frame has indicated the use of the *telenovela* as *political opportunity* to politicize the inequality surrounding the *favelas*, which might be hidden from the wider public who watch the programme.

In this way, in Brazil's alternative media, the production of frame *devices* (Van Gorp, 2010:219), as we saw in this example on the *telenovela* and the hardship of communities, could exist as responses to existing media discourses, but not only through them. In fact, I do not assume that all frames are responses or aim at covering inequality, as some discourses may be political but do not ask for changes in policy (Henriques, 2000). Producers could also engage with political discourses. In the past few decades, for example, politicians have talked actively about issues of hunger and inequality, as did ex-president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2012) (Chagas, 2007); this led some media producers to align with or contradict what the power holders were saying (Vargas, 2014; Branford & Kucinski, 1995; Hall, 2006; Castro et al, 2014). This could also generate other frames—for instance, when producers do not detach inequality from myths of the "backwardness" of Brazil (Reis, 1999). In this context, framing also exists when producers probe any contentious topic in favour of their bottom-up political agenda, or when they deliver an alternative version of political discourses.

On the other hand, we must acknowledge the past criticism directed at the use of frame analysis. For instance, frame analysis has a lack of robust grounds to measure the "resonance" and effects of collective frames over the audience (Opp, 2009:269–270). I believe that this research does not need to necessarily engage with these debates, as the value of the frame here lies in producers' ability to feed the public with new discourses and recover past ideas or misconceptions, not necessarily in measuring their *effects*. Another criticism challenges the conceptual sufficiency of *frames* in explaining social movements' collective action. Opp (Ibid, 2009:242) argued about frames' broadness and lack of stability, which compromise their readings in the long term. Indeed, by avoiding some frames due to inherent subjectivity or obviousness—i.e. detecting "social injustice", which is an overexploited topic of investigation—this kind of insufficiency is addressed without refusing to engage with the existence and variety of frames that might refer to local or global settings (Snow et al, 1986).

Therefore, I managed these critiques at two levels. Firstly, I centred the study around media discourses, and not on protests or the parsing of activist language. That leads to "stable", reproducible frames, some of which have their use well documented since the 1970s at least (in Kucinski, 1991, for example). I chose random 20 articles per outlet published in 2013, 2014 and 2015, as this number could match the different publication routines in each of the outlets and covered a reasonable and proportional amount of their production during the three years. This amount was enough to overcome temporary conditions that would undermine the notion of a *frame*. Secondly, I manage these critiques by looking at inequality. I did not seek to "confirm inequality narratives", which have been known since the 1980s. The focus is on discussions, interactions, and initiatives that could lead to further and unprecedented politicization, confirming the change in the pattern that has encompassed Brazil's discussions on inequality for decades, as explained in the introduction. In the next section, I describe the frames and explain how this research has analysed them.

3.2.2 Framing politicization or solidarity

A first frame, "politicization", stems from the attributes described at Chapter 2.2 and refers to the extent that producers have re-employed past images of inequality (hunger, precarious work) to confront society and ask for political change. Whether when they are mobilising against law or constitutional changes that could jeopardise welfare policies or in society's views that delay the inclusion of the disadvantaged. As already discussed in Chapter 2, the origins of this frame are in the radical and alternative press that thrived during the dictatorship (Sodré, 1998; Barbosa, 2007), in which whose way of approaching inequality could now have new nuances. For example, to frame issues that mainstream society has yet to understand as "rights" (Fischer, 2008). Through *politicization*, producers catch a subject and reverse its coverage towards the debate on inequality. It can also be *politicized* to *help* individuals, but in a way of guaranteeing a broader, higher-level change, as opposed to only provoke compassion and charity. The new labour laws for house cleaners is another example: instead of siding with the bosses, the producers talked about the inequality that exists in this profession).

For illustrative purposes, examples of politicized frames lie in how the public discourse can evolve from treating poverty and inequality as a homogenised event into a detailed-rich and appealing story. It is not the case of being sensationalist, but one of raising the awareness to a level in which any evidence of public concern starts to appear. The example of how the press has reported on low-income, salaried workers is clear. Back in the 1970s, they were the "oppressed classes" (Kucinski, 1991), which, —to some extent, were romanticised. Recently, a more politicized discourse has meant their precarious conditions were made apparent and well-described. A good case remains the *PEC Domésticas,* in which a law change that has given house cleaners equivalence of salary revealed how their poor wages and illegal conditions came out in the press as a *private* issue, rather than a broader political problem. In brief, politicization corresponds to the way in which otherwise *regular* content could be turned into an accusatory, personalised, or memorialised piece aimed at changing how inequality issues are perceived and discussed.

Table 3.2 Frame analysis matrix

Questions	Answer	Answer/frame
Is the coverage promoting partnership with the mainstream media, tying up inequality and	Yes or no	Yes for solidarity

charity purposes or not driving the public perception away from the broader issue? It refrains from promoting: adjustment of representation, diversity of frames or give feedback to power?		
Is the coverage holding power to account, personalising disputes, involving society, or turning confrontational around issues of inequality to the extent of clarifying on the issue? Does it promote adjustment of representation, diversity of frames or give feedback to power?	Yes or no	Yes for politicization

A second frame (solidarity) dwells on how the alternative media could present softer examples of partnership and solidarity regarding inequality issues. The term "solidarity" should not receive any reading based its history or connotation for European left-wing parties, also found in Marxist literature (Stjerno, 2009). Instead, I have sought what Brazilians have called "solidarity campaigns". Festa and Silva (1986) gathered many examples of the importance of basic ecclesiastical communities (ECB), sponsored by the Catholic Church in the 1980s, to develop community-based media that could claim citizens' rights for those at the bottom. Indeed, for decades, dwellers of peripheral communities depended upon external intermediaries to voice issues with powerful stakeholders (Valladares, 2000). To quote another case, in the 1990s, massive tele-charity campaigns were boosted by Globo TV, in which TV programmes asked for donations to schools and hospitals aimed at helping disadvantaged children (Stacciarini, 2007; Lattman-Weltman, 2007). Their lack of emphasis on public policies led scholars to dismiss it as *voluntarism* (Gomes, 2008). The second frame thus tests if this strong bias towards "solidarity" is dominant, a concept that is distinct from "politicization" and turns the coverage of inequality into a call for direct support from society or external actors, rather than allowing further political change.

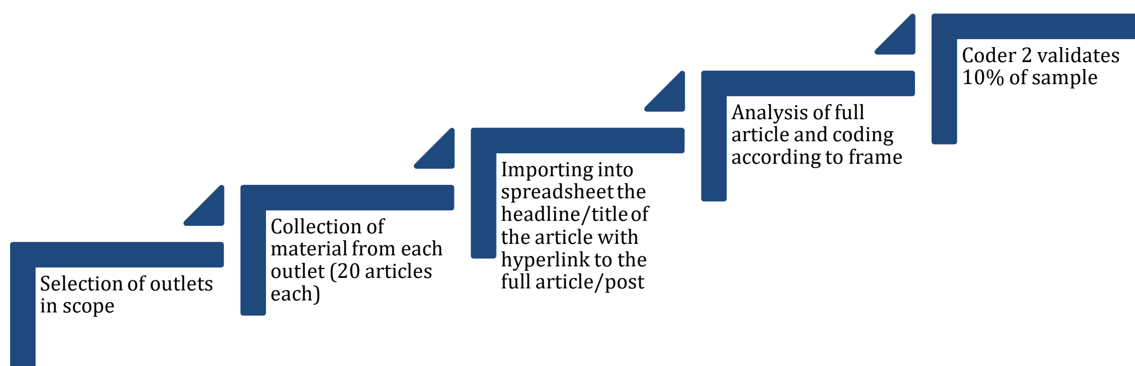
Table 3.3 Example of frame analysis results

Article	Frame	Frame reasoning
"Peace efforts continue at Alemão Favela" (*Viva Favela*, 04/05/2015)	Solidarity	• Reports privileged cases of partnership or conciliation • Suggests voluntarism
"Activist is against cable car at Rocinha Favela" (*Brasil 247*, 07/08/2015)	Politicization	• The story personalises disputes • Sets a confrontational strategy

The final aim of this frame analysis is to decide whether "politicization" has more prominence over the "solidarity" frame. This is not to argue that the "solidarity" discourse must be depoliticized. Brazil's experience with *mutirões*, community-organised groups that perform public service duties (Boschi, 1987) such as cleaning sewages and food distribution, shows that the charity discourse could be also political. Here, we must refer to Paulo Freire and the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970), where one learns about the transformative power of helping communities to educate and develop.

The prevalence of *politicization* is decided upon the predominance of an assertive, urgent discourse to reflect some kind of union (Benford & Snow, 2000:623). In Kucinski's (1991) documental book, *Journalists and Revolutionaries*, all the success of changing public conversation during dictatorial times is owed to the use of a robust, proactive, pro-minorities and therefore *politicized* discourse. Festa and Silva's (1986) reference to *popular and alternative communication* likens a moment of harmony and reciprocity, the opposite to what I call *politicization,* to the inevitable demise of the alternative media producers in Brazil in the late 1980s. That said, looking for politicization in this research is a way of seeing the revitalisation of the first tradition of dialoguing with power, to sound off demands and set changes in a constitutional framework.

Figure 3.8 Procedures for frame analysis



Having set the concepts for each of the frames, which are the rationale and criteria to interpret the frame analysis (figure 3.8), the process of operationalising it was designed to minimise the complexity of selecting content and recording each of the decisions by both coders. Once 20 articles from each sampled outlet were selected, the articles' headlines and hyperlinks to the original story were pasted into an Excel spreadsheet, which will serve as the main guide to both coder 1 and coder 2. In this document, coders would click on the hyperlinks, read the full article or story, then use the columns indicated to record agreement or disagreement with each other frames. Coders must follow the decision matrix (table 3.2) based on which they reflect on the extent that producers are politicizing inequality or promoting *solidarity*. The decisions and the original content will support further interpretation and collection of repertoire. To reduce these imprecisions and to shed light on the reasons behind these frames, I complement this research's enquiry with data from the interviews, on which I performed a discourse analysis.

3.2.3 Performing discourse analysis

Interviews have helped to produce important alternative media studies in different locations, whether the authors were discussing the producers' ambiguous roles (Atton & Wickenden, 2005:354) or whether they showed their grasp of civic agency and journalistic commitment (Harcup, 2005, 2011). Like these studies, I thought that this research could be enriched by interviewing producers from distinct outlets and locations in Brazil, so that we could know more about their coverage. The notion of coverage as *repertoire* draws on Potter & Wetherell's (1999) idea of investigating taxonomies, languages, and terms to which groups refer when they aim for social change. By choosing a semi-structured interview template (Potter & Whetherell, 1999; Seidman, 2015), I could create theoretically informed questions (Weingraf, 2001), particularly using the past of the alternative media in Brazil, and then adopting a more flexible approach in which unexpected revelations and other details of their involvement could pop up. The decision to conduct interviews also derives from my wish, as a researcher, to reduce hierarchies between me and my interviewees. I could thus agree with them in moments when I could capture their thoughts, not excerpting any pressure in their everyday lives that could either constrain or magnify their daily reporting (Seidman, 2015).

At first, I questioned the producers' mission and the value of their outlets. I compared the past mobilisation of the alternative media around the inequality agenda with these producers' present coverage and remained attentive to the mobile intents and goals that are part of the alternative media environment (Harcup, 2003). Secondly, I included questions about their actual role as media producers, including what influences their agenda on social issues and the degree to which stories stem from them or from other actors, such as social movement leaders (Rauch, 2007). Third, I brought

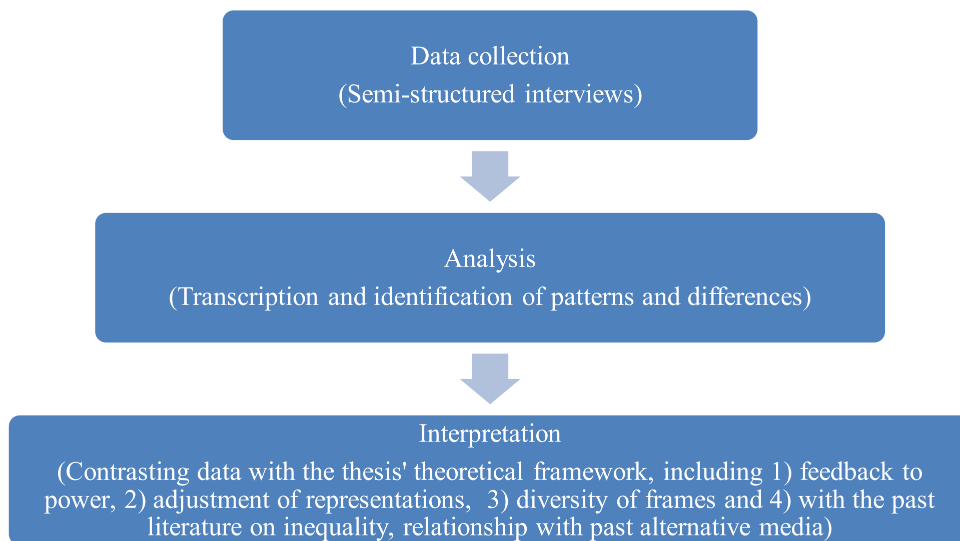
up questions that arise directly from the early repertoire of the alternative press in Brazil, especially regarding their critical relationship with Brazilian democratic institutions and their attachment to the poorest classes and workers in *precarity*; I asked if these elements do really offer any contribution towards understanding and denouncing inequality (as in Woitowicz, 2009).

While I did not assume that every interview had to cover all these three areas, the data generated in the interviews was meant to supply the material for a discourse analysis. The central point for this analysis was to cover existing attempts to policitise inequality, based on producers' language and repertoires. Looking at past literature (Kucinski, 1991) and with recent literature on alternative media worldwide (e.g. Atton, 2015), little is known about what media producers have to say outside an activist purpose. How could a new mapping of a native repertoire represent a change towards recognising, interpreting, and finally, politicizing inequality? The analysis of this repertoire, as expressed in interviews, was supplemented with cross-references to the content found on websites, blogs or social media platforms.

The analysis and interpretation of this discourse could identify "change" as it manifests through innovative perspectives (i.e. introducing concepts or readings that are not commonly available in Brazil's press) or through the way in which producers work on new linkages (e.g. inequality and crime, inequality and citizenship). Still, I looked at how producers have taken their understanding to new directions or in line with the background offered in Chapters 1 and 2. In this way, this discourse analysis could hint at a historically orientated engagement of these producers with their reality or, instead, at a new engagement that leads or creates new agendas. To remove any trace of subjectivity from this analytical effort, I split the arguments shared among producers from those that differ from each other. By grouping the parts in which producers agree or disagree separately, I could create different branches of a same argument, which have been based a so-called corpus of "linguistic evidence" (Potter & Wetherell, 1999:156).

As Seidman (2015) pointed out, an effort to separating *collection*, *analysis*, and *interpretation* into different steps is much necessary and gives more clarity on the analysis (figure 3.9). Therefore, after having coded the data according to what the producers agreed or disagreed about among themselves, I could dedicate my interpretation to each variation in the producers' discourses. I could also interpret these differences and similarities by comparing these patterns with those of past alternative media, using, for example, the patterns that the alternative media used to refer to disadvantaged populations (such as that of the *bóia-fria*, as explained in Chapter 2) (Festa & Silva, 1986; Kucinski, 1991), in which I check if producers progress towards more politicized and less compassionate stances.

Figure 3.9 Description of the procedures used in discourse analysis



Following Potter and Wetherell (1991), I saw as an advantage in the possibility to engage with reflexive patterns as they appeared in the interviews. By focusing on "repertoire", I remained aligned with this research's strategy of studying the discourse of the alternative media, meaning the display of contradictions or emphases that are important for understanding the dialogue with the dominant narrative of the mainstream. In terms of the presentation of the results, I chose to italicise terms and expressions that evidenced new language standards, which, to a greater or lesser extent, can confirm the politicization of inequality that I had hypothesised in the beginning. Because I literally quoted producers' discourse, I also had to perform quick literature reviews so that I could interpret empirical evidence, checking it against the theoretical background. This reflexivity has also opened space for new intersections between inequality, poverty, and racism, which I tend to analyse as long as it connected to the central research question.

This interplay between empirical, theoretical, and reflexive perceptions is necessary in mixed method studies, which are based on laying out distinct technological and social realities (Biber et al, 2015). That mix is also useful to avoid the sensation that the analysis is grounded on "views from nowhere" or that mixed methods carry too much "positivism" (Giddings, 2006). For the benefit of diversity, revisiting the literature also in empirical part of this thesis also allows more space for the "reflexivity" that the producers showed in relation to the framework on politicization outlined at 2.3. Often, this content brings up *new* images of this subject (1), revealing their politics of naming and framing of inequality (2) that may or may not represent an advance the approach to social issues seen in the past (3). Yet, to systematise these new images in these three different ways, I had to resort to a few generalisations, as for instance, by referring to "media producers" as a single group, the same for "mainstream media", even if I am aware of the multiple differences between these individuals and organisations.

The collected repertoires in these three moments have been interpreted on the grounds of: 1) their relationship with one of three areas that guide the analysis on "politicization", namely: adjustments of representation, the diversity of frames, and the ability to give feedback to power; 2) the rich ecology of social engagement that forms the history of alternative and mainstream media in Brazil (Abreu, 2002; Porto, 2007). By looking at Kucinski (1991), for instance, one finds a set of ideological and ethical commitments from alternative journalists, even when working under the repression of a military dictatorship; 3) acknowledging the specific settings of Brazil's contemporary politics (Castro et al, 2014), which differs a lot from the repressive governments of the 1970s and 1980s (Fleury, 2014), producers' responses must shed light on how the periphery of a modernised Brazil is aware and responds to new struggles, but also reminds society of old trivialised inequalities (Reis, 1999; Henriques, 2000).

Furthermore, part of the interviews happened in a climate of intense political polarisation that marked the 2014 presidential elections in Brazil, followed by a political and economic crisis in 2015, but before the trial and impeachment of ex-president Dilma Rousseff in 2016. Therefore, some producers have been understandably cautious in replying to my requests. However, producers with whom I spoke opened up about different aspects of their media production, among other aspects relating to their agenda on social issues, human rights, and overall inequality. I have translated the selected parts to include in this thesis, aiming to ensure accuracy, but I have left in the original language the terms that could reflect key concepts or those whose meaning would be lost if translated into English. I discuss next the validity and reliability of both analyses conducted in this research.

3.2.4 Validity and intercoder reliability

I employed another Portuguese-speaking coder to review a sample of the articles and interview transcriptions in Portuguese, as well as to double-check the frames assigned to the former. The calculation of reliability indices can show how often the two coders agreed on the classification of each item (Riffe et al, 2013:114). Moreover, the calculation of the percentage of agreement can make the analysis more robust (Lombard et al, 2002:594). However, even if different coders come to disagree, there might still exist a discovery and a significance of each frame identified. Therefore, disagreeing does not mean invalidating the premises of this research. In any case, it was important to check perceptions, as notions of politicization and solidarity may vary from one person to another. Following similar procedures of past studies that also employed frame analysis (e.g. Redden, 2014), 10% (or 12 articles) have been proportionally extracted from the main sample (Riffe et al, 2013:108). Cohen's (1968) *kappa* was applied to both frames, as they presented the same index below. Despite the many controversies regarding this index, including the chance of coincidence between coders (Lombard, 2002; Neuendorf, 2002), the low complexity of this frame and the small number of articles

posed a reduced risk.

Table 3.4 Intercoder agreement results

Frame	Frame agreement	Presence of frame: *Kappa*
Politicization	90	0.81
Solidarity	91	0.78

As displayed above, results have shown that, while not all proposed frames are recurrent in the sample, there is a low level of disagreement between the coders. For Cohen's *kappa*, an index of at least 0.7 is an adequate level of reliability (Riffe et al, 2013:125), even though indices of 0.7 tend to show enough consistency for exploratory research (Lombard et al, 2002:593). In this research, this part of validation scored at 0.81, which has met expectations. In the next section, I discuss some limitations of this thesis.

3.2.5 Limitations of the method

Over and above the limitations discussed thus far in this chapter, the focus on discourse and on framing entails other limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, I do not follow the "categorisation" of alternative media practices as it has appeared in other studies (Atton & Hamilton, 2008; Forde, 2001). In brief, I skipped popular terms, such as "alternative journalism", "activist" or "radical" media (Downing, 2001). I engaged with a new taxonomy that could address Brazil's complex history between alternative media and power, which still poses a dilemma on how to engage with these previous taxonomies and their own complexities. From these two possibilities, I decided to privilege the former, as only a brief borrowing from the extensive vocabulary on the alternative media would otherwise appear anecdotic. This same choice and rationale applies to other political taxonomies such as "radical", "neoliberal", but which do not compromise the understanding of "politicization" in this research as a phenomenon distinct from these assumptions

A second limitation emerges from not investing in ethnographic methods. As far as ethnographies have much contributed to the knowledge on alternative media, this research could add more if it could capture other sides of eripheral media production. If we look at recent studies regarding the alternative media in Brazil that cover the disadvantaged (Custodio, 2017; Davis, 2015), we see a constant turn to a descriptive ethnography. As a method, ethnographies attend well to the purpose of looking at alternative media if one aims to look at organisational and format-based enquiries that involve small groups of media producers (e.g. Atton & Wikenden, 2005). By contrast, this research has set out to analyse how a wider "coverage" leads to a counterhegemonic discourse from the

periphery, through frames and new expressions. The chosen interview method is more suited to advancing the knowledge of media producers, but not details of their process, behaviours or practices, which may vary from region to region and from platform to platform. On the one hand, this decision has helped this research to explore the depths of the counter-hegemony of an underrepresented discourse; on the other, this approach limits our visibility of specific actions or procedures or of producers' association as a group.

Finally, as an epistemological contribution, this thesis draws on an effort to interpret phenomena and offer subtle meanings that lie under the assumption of the "periphery" in Brazil. Because it invests in *stressing* the characteristics, motivations, and reactions from Brazil's periphery in relation to inequality, this work cannot offer more precise guidance or more basic data about "who are the producers", "where are they expected to be", or "how many projects are expected to come up in the next decade", which could add on to knowledge, as it could fulfil a demographic or socioeconomic research gap. The same absence still exists in relation to their sources of income and their budget, for example. One can find this idea of a "guide" to the alternative media scene in South and Central America in a few publications (Vinelli, 2010; Atton, 2015). To alleviate the absence of these data, I will open my research data to the point it does not compromise interviewee's privacy and to the degree that it clarifies the profile of media producers according to information that I collected (their age, location, and production methods). This is a body of knowledge that may be valuable for future research. However, it only faithfully reflects the research design employed in this analysis and it is not meant to be an exhaustive map of this field.

3.3 Case reporting and thesis organisation

This thesis follows a multiple-case reporting model. Yin (2013:30) defined multiple-case reporting as embedding the results of empirical cases in different sections or chapters. Previous studies on the alternative media, such as Rodríguez (2001) and Downing (2001) and partly Atton (2002), have treated the *case* as each outlet under investigation, including a description of its reality and its participants, which, after using ethnographic methods, made much sense. In this thesis, as I have chosen to collect opinions and views from producers and compare them with their media frames. The election of *case* is based on a story or event that the producers have covered, whether raised in the interviews or captured in the content. As the story of the *PEC Domésticas,* for example, the change of in the law that reduced inequality, could be an example of a case. One that was generated from the periphery, highlighting the role of mainstream media in perpetuating the inequality in the many ways the media read society and its challenges.

This selected *cases* have been, therefore, stories that have interested to the majority of media producers in the cohort, as perceived through the recurrence of frames and by the references I collected during interviews. Following Yin (2013), I aim for a balance between hierarchising the findings, reflecting the pressures from the field and giving how the phenomena in reality appears, in relation to the alternative media background. In brief, many stories happened during the period of this research and were in producers' attention, but those appearing in this thesis are those that related more to producers' coverage and which have more resonance for this research's aims. By choosing cases that had the greater priority for them, and those that were urgent for Brazil's political context, I could both include what producers could see and what they haven't mentioned. Eventually, I sought to divide the following analytical chapters into three sections. The first one is dedicated to discourse analysis and interviews; the second one to frame analysis, and a third part in which I discuss the combination of both methods and apply the literature on political opportunities and on the alternative media, linking back to my framework. Next, I start to explore the empirical findings related to the periphery as a part of the Brazilian cities.

4. In the city

Introduction

One of the first assumptions of this thesis was that peripheral media producers are based on the outskirts of Brazil's cities or in historically segregated areas, such as the *favelas*. However, after I started the interviews, I quickly realised that the periphery also went downtown, as both interview data and content revealed further interest from outlets to overcome the boundaries of this periphery and cover what happened in spaces where all social classes cross with each other. In this chapter, I start with evidence that showed producers reacting to old prejudices against the poor. Moving further than the jargon "voice of the streets" (Oliven, 2013; Peruzzo, 2013), which was much hailed by the press after the 2013 demonstrations, the idea is to discuss new reassessments of urban settings of inequality in Brazil. This coverage has meant a bolder politicization of visible and invisible urban divides, which could shake the elite's perceptions of the "invasion of the poor" and other racial-economic stereotypes (Reis, 1999; Nascimento et al, 2008). Yet, it also involved advocating for spaces where the disadvantaged could freely circulate. As we will see, these cases escalate to the extent of forging new terms or redefining old ones, such as *segregation*.

I start this thesis by analysing the context of the peripheral media as it appears in some of the biggest Brazilian cities. Much of the past empirical research, especially in Kucinski (1991) and, to a lesser degree, in Woitowicz (2009), has offered many other examples of how past alternative journalists had contrasted the life of the poor against the life of the rich as a recurrent discursive strategy. In fact, much of Brazil's discussion on inequality emerges from this notion of *contrast* but also from stressing forbidden or troubled "encounters" based on one's class background. Verbiage from the slavery time (*senzala*, *quilombo*) is often "recycled" to illustrate the place where inequality is higher based on the assessment of poverty and precariousness, or because where the rich lives is exaggerated to suggest its inaccessibility (*mansão*, *VIP*). To explore how producers have further employed these references of prejudice or clashes whenever they reported on recent troubled encounters, I will show that they are no longer fighting for the periphery as a geographically static area in the outskirts, but expanding its classification to the places attended by people "like them".

Later in this chapter, I also flesh out other variations of this discussion on urban inequality, based on the result of the frame analysis. An urban *encounter* has become a counterhegemonic act to the extent that the marginalised citizen can use its physical presence to stress its effects or measure it by the repercussions that it provokes in the media. Thus, peripheral media outlets have published pieces that

could revive old mainstream prejudices that entail such encounters, making use of new forms of content (CCTV footage is one of them) to stress the occurrence of episodes that used to be much more subjective and hard to probe. This situation happens, for instance, in the row about the *rolezinhos*, when young, black/brown students insist in their right to hang around in the middle-class shopping mall. I take on the contemporary theoreticians of the city, in Brazil and elsewhere (Sasken, 2006; Harvey, 2013), to discover how latent symptoms of these divides can be transformed into real stories of inequality. I start by reflecting on what I consider to be new agendas if comparing them to the past of the alternative media in Brazil.

4.1 Discussing the lack of access to the city

The first paradigm to appear challenged by interview data is the one that tests the city's accessibility for the disadvantaged. I saw producers strongly advocating for a periphery that has the right to be part of the mainstream city, previously known by acronyms denoting its restricted access (*centro*, *bairro de rico*, expressions meaning the "neighbourhood of the rich"). For their reporting, producers started from these impediments in mind, so they developed premises to state that peripheral dwellers must be able to circulate with no concern among elite neighbourhoods and not be a police target. Another aspect lies in their understanding of how the permanent occupation of the city (or the profile of each neighbourhood's households) is directly related to what they call the "expulsion" of the marginalised or of the poor from the centre due to gentrification. Third, producers have aimed to raise the awareness on the increasing loss of public spaces, wherein the disadvantaged could express themselves. They have drawn on the importance of skate or hip-hop practitioners as key components for the peripheral expression (Pereira, 2005).[27] I explore these three aspects in the following sections.

4.1.1 Segregation, gentrification, and marginal expression

During the interviews, I have questioned many producers on the value of the city for their coverage and on the origins of their interest. These answers could shed light on the degree to which their discourse reflects the "politicized" city, or otherwise a space of solidarity and harmonious relations. The fact that they showed complete awareness of the bureaucratic dynamic behind city development appeared as a strategic asset. Moreover, they have confirmed that much of this knowledge grounds their interest in covering urbanisation issues—not only because the "poor tend to live in hills, distant neighbourhoods", but also in the name of those affected by the unequal real estate market, which inevitably evicts low-income families from living in the city's centre. This was also the scenario they visualised when they decided to cover the situation involving beachfront quarters and in areas with good public transportation links, from which, they said, the poor were being evicted or made to leave.

Here we find a summary of the dilemma imposed on peripheral populations, and an idea of the frame that producers express in their content. The italics are mine:

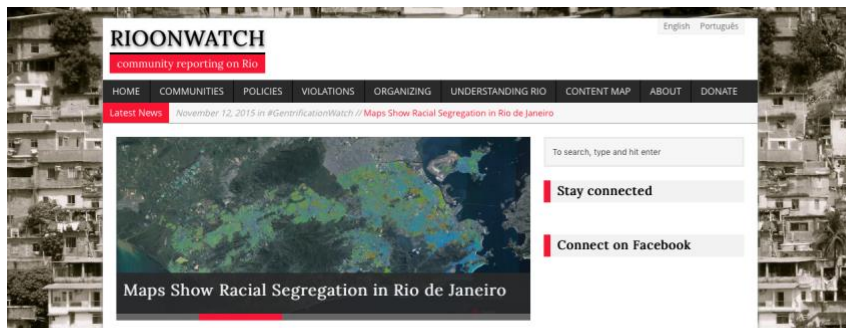
> "The city is built and rebuilt during all times. Whether by the hands of politicians, by the hand of real estate developers, or by builders, one rebuilds the city all the time. The people in these [peripheral] environments also go rebuilding things. They come down from the *hill*; they live in the *baixada*;[28] they want to have their space; they want to show they are there. They do it in many ways, they do it in tattoos, skate, and these are urban elements and this is what is pulling us to them. There are a lot of things going on, a lot of urban activity, and we think they have to have a space for this, for registering this." (Media producer 22)

As seen above, the way in which expressions such as the *hill* or *morro* appear has both defined poverty and marginality, and yet reveals a common intent to rehabilitate terms and expressions that do not find space at the mainstream media level. Producers have said to consciously turn to this vocabulary, but more because they intend to provide a positive aspect of suburbia. When questioned on the reasons for such framing, they argued that they had no other way of improving the perception of peripheral communities amid mainstream interlocutors, and also mentioned other issues that are linked to this urban classification:

> "One of the most interesting things in our coverage and in our involvement over the years is to understand why many of them [inhabitants of the periphery] are out of [the] job market, totally out. Why? Because the fact they live where they do makes it unfeasible for someone to trust in them. Therefore, they are not only marginalised, but at the margins of the job market, and of any possibility of emerging to a job that is dignifying and not an *enslaver* one." (Media producer 42)

This rediscovery of terms was just the beginning for a wider development of materials that aimed to put the periphery at the forefront. Their goal was *visibility* in a way that lays bare the *real* relations between the disadvantaged and the mainstream society. Looking at the *Rio on Watch* website, the *Map of Racial Segregation* of Rio de Janeiro (figure 4.1) is an example of another effort at putting numbers to what otherwise could be just a perception of inequality. For instance, high-income neighbourhoods have become the target of denouncements that involve intersectional inequality, an issue that some producers have seen as a problem of wealthier neighbourhoods, where they point to cases of class-based racism. In other words, due to the highly contrasting number of dwellers in upper-class areas who were white or non-white, outlets found that framing this divide as *segregation* could help to call more attention to the issue, even though this term has literally another meaning.[29] They defended that this term could better convey the sentiment existing amid the majority black or brown population when they find themselves walking in neighbourhoods that are entirely white.

Figure 4.1 "The map of racial segregation in Rio de Janeiro", as it appeared on the Rio on Watch website (snapshot)



Producers saw that this broader movement of calling for affordable homes as an opportunity to ensure that public resources could do more than meet private interests. The access of the disadvantaged who want to live in the city centre is central to their reporting; this producer justified the many stories of gentrification they covered in the period:

> "You see families, you see elder people, you see children, it's different. The central issue in an unequal society is the housing issue. The city is thought [about] according to the real estate interests, by gentrifying areas, and we see the struggle for housing as a central thing." (Media producer 12)

My question to producers, then, was about how they covered gentrification from a politicized perspective. For example, considering that the concept of "gentrifying" some location is not even a fully perceived phenomenon in Brazil[30] and hardly a popular agenda, how can they define what is up to cover or not? This producer gave a definition of gentrification tied to unequal real estate development and to the state of inequality in general:

> "The city hall had a project for a certain area. It was a gentrifying project because it wanted to raise the [land] value. After realising that they could come to face eviction, we started recording [a film]. When we got this 'edital' [public notices for funds], we realised we had a lot of material to talk about the beachfront [homeless] people, but those were things that we did with no need of people giving us money to, and this kind of idea was crossing a lot with other things." (Media producer 12)

Many producers with whom I spoke mentioned the *Ocupe Estelita* as one of the most successful activist events in recent years. This movement involved not only the right to inhabit, as its struggle specifically fought for "public space" in a broader perspective. The protest started when a group of real estate developers had been received authorisation to demolish a group of historic warehouses in Recife's historical centre. The authorisation was granted by the heritage department and it would raise a new set of skyscrapers that would destroy the city's century-old vistas. The city hall's approval for the project came as a demonstration of the power of developers over the local government. Some

producers have credited themselves as the ones to make this issue visible in the nationwide media, pointing to the silence of the southeast-based alternative media on the issue:

> "The best example of this, which for me was shocking, was the *Ocupe Estelita*. That was a fantastic experience. We had national-level artists, in a more comprehensive way than the 'independent' media [from São Paulo]. Of course, they would not have a representative in Recife, or someone who would produce quality material over there. That is a clear limit. That's why, overall, I thought their participation very small during the *Ocupe Estelita*." (Media producer 13)

Less visible than the *Ocupe Estelita*, but an older struggle, was this same kind of fight for the city but focused on spaces aimed at cultural production. I discussed with producers on the degree to which these groups fighting real estate issues were also their sources and the reasons of their interest, as one producer argued:

> "Our intention is to give a space for these people and we see that their effort is huge. For example, we cover an activity called 'Graffiti collective'; therefore, we choose a community to cover and then we only talk about that specific community, just that periphery […] The fact [that] we can give them a voice and take them from obscurity and this contact with the periphery is what motivates us most. Our outlet is mainly turned to the hip-hop culture and if we are not down there with them, there is no sense of having this space, if it is not to give voice to these people." (Media producer 21)

This supportive coverage of cultural collectives protesting gentrification or calling for an open city had also a side role in stopping associations of this youth with crime. Movements against gentrification tend to be the same defending other prohibitions involving the occupation of the city. City hall administrations have, many times, revoked authorisations on the grounds of the danger offered by these cultural practices. On the other hand, peripheral media producers showed further interest in exposing these prohibitions, especially when directed at groups associated with marginal practices, or whenever mainstream society links personal attitudes and wardrobes with those of criminals. We find an example of this coverage when the city hall decided to forbid the so-called *Duel of MCs*:

> "BELO HORIZONTE MUNICIPALITY CHARGES 33 THOUSAND REALS PER YEAR FOR HOSTING THE MCS' DUEL, EVEN [WHEN] IT [IS] TAKING PLACE IN PUBLIC SPACE: An arbitrary development comes boycotting important events for urban culture and hip-hop in Belo Horizonte. Since 2007, the Família de Rua collective was 'de boa' [in good will] promoting its beautiful weekly gatherings, the MCs' duel and the Família de Rua of Skate, under the Santa Tereza Viaduct, with no trouble or damage [to] the city." (*Mídia Periférica*, 30/03/2014)

Thus, favouring this cultural *marginality* implies covering artistic demonstrations that are not unanimously accepted among mainstream society, such as graffiti. While Brazilians encourage most

artistic interventions on walls and in public spaces (Caldeira, 2012)—and street art paintings, if authorised—another form of graffiti consists of *tagging* buildings, façades, and monuments called *pichação*.[31] As a contentious practice, tagging is punishable by law in Brazil, although anthropologists see it as a cultural manifestation that holds legitimate grounds[31] (Pereira, 2005). Producers argued that their take on *tagging* aims to rehabilitate the perception of what is art, seeking distance from what society perceives as *vandalism* of public monuments and buildings.

Figure 4.2 Image displaying the public perception on tagging (left-hand side) and a picture captured from the website Viva Favela[32] (Snapshot)

Reports found on the website *Viva Favela* confirmed this attempt to frame *graffiti* as a family-orientated, artistic intervention on public walls, with photos of children practising it (figure 4.2) and an overall peaceful environment surrounding the artists. For producers, the purpose is to bring practices such as *graffiti* closer to a common narrative, making it look less as *pichação* or *tagging* and more as trivial, urban artistic practice. This counter-representation of such practices so one could dismantle the association with crime was also to include *hip-hop*, *skate*, and other music genres from the periphery, such as the *funk*. The link with anti-capitalism appears when producers mentioned their efforts to publicise what is “non-corporate” urban culture, as far as it keeps a message in favour of social justice in a way that it appears in a mutually understandable language:

> “We are concerned with marginalised stories, both in the mainstream media and in society. We see social movements, the marginalised culture, or the housing issue. We seek to portray issues that are not visible in the mainstream media. Our true need is for a narrative. The one used [in the mainstream] is not the one with which we can feel represented. We think that these people are agents and they have no voice in the mainstream media.” (Media producer 07)

In the three aspects visited here—namely, segregation, gentrification, and the marginalisation of disadvantaged culture—I reviewed *encounters* between the periphery and mainstream society and discussed how they are framed. On the one hand, producers have not explored old myths of extreme scarcity or wealth, such as *mansão*, the VIP mansion where the rich lived, which I cite in the

introduction. On the other hand, important agendas, such as racial prejudice, gentrification and cultural policy, have continued in a more sophisticated way, adding data to the concentrated wealth and its inherited relationship with whiteness. I move now from discussing how this process happens in collective causes (*tagging, gentrification*) to seeing producers who also find new terms to frame the situation of disadvantaged individuals that live on the margins of the city.

4.1.2 From collective to individual marginalisation

Fewer producers have preferred to look at how the city belongs to the individual as well. That corresponds to the freedom of citizens, those who stand in their own in squares, parks and public locations, to feel that they belong in the city without suffering the consequences of discrimination for being poor or doing temporary jobs. This producer illustrated the job discrimination suffered by those who do not take "proper" jobs (in the sense of respectful), but, paradoxically, these are profiles one sees too much of in any Brazilian city:

> "What would the world be if everybody could have the right of recognition? What are you going to publicise? 'I am the guy who sells water in the streets. I am the traffic light performer, this is what I want to be and to show off.'" (Media producer 41)

In other words, producers have felt that they do not have to only "give a voice", but also "promote voice", escaping the "aseptic" tone of professional journalism that ignores these professions or individuals. This tailoring of how the city perceives individual needs finds echo in Rodríguez (2001), who stated that the *citizens' media* is where the Peruvian indigenous could elaborate their presence on TV by changing their wardrobe when reading the news or by speaking their language on live TV. At the same time, no link with *identity* is readily available to justify the emphasis on such portraits, as producers limited their argument by saying that their purpose is not tied to any particular "culture", but to naming marginal populations by their "marginal status". They are aimed at linking their personal attributes according to the context of the city these dwellers inhabit. In this case, this would mean connecting names and images to streets, bridges and squares as if one *is* the place where *one* dwells, which is a reference much used when reporting on homelessness, for example.

To another extent, this sort of coverage is ambiguous because it displays both the completeness of being who they *are*, but also the incompleteness of lacking further *aid* from the state. This ambiguity is present in the work by *SP Invisível*, which started as a *Tumblr* blog. The page features deeply personalised profiles of the São Paulo homeless population, telling the life stories of these individuals and illustrating them through fine photographic essays (figure 4.3). *SP Invisível*, which translates as "Invisible São Paulo", has also set up an *Instagram* account that boasts more than 40,000 followers. On the home page, one reads: "My name is Julio, I am forty years old". One reads details of the life of

these individuals, in which they appear with their meals, caring for their stray dogs, and pulling their trolleys, most of them filled with recyclable materials collected in the streets and later sold to cooperatives.[33]

Figure 4.3 SP Invisível home page (Snapshot)

Such proximity with the homeless population also included calling hawkers and beggars by their names and *personalising* their appearance in the streets (e.g. this is John's street, because he lives there) in a way that the population could *recognise* them as human beings. They clarify that those are whom the public end up living with if they want to live in the city. This personalisation of the homeless has also led to other consequences, such as the appropriation by mainstream entertainment productions,[34] but producers argued that this kind of media boost is beneficial for these individuals. At one level, producers mentioned that this stands out from mainstream coverage because professional reporting does not give homeless people the "correct kind of publicity", which is much more focused on those who can afford to "give interviews, pick up the phone, write emails, have pictures of oneself; in brief, have a story". At another level, the "correct" kind of publicity would be one that engages with the latter with the purpose to "remove any degree of incommunicability", as these producers have confirmed:

> "What we look forward to in this reporting is [to share] what we usually talk among other independent communication outlets. If we are discussing groups of historically oppressed people, the so-called 'minorities', it is not worth going to them, writing a story, then offering a written analysis by me or by another producer, and then describing their issues. We understand we are there to listen, to give voice; the video has no off narration, it is all about people speaking, interviews, so we search for it". (Media producer 49)
>
> "We used to say we don't want to be the guitar, we want to be the amplifier; it is something like this." (Media producer 07)

I look back at the alternative press of the 1970s to see a similar intention of revealing street-based inequality. Alternative journalists have then coincided in showing the poor's traits, routines, and subjectivities. The *Movimento* newspaper featured a story of two boys who work selling candies at a traffic light in the city of Porto Alegre (the italics are mine):

> “The main concern of these *little executives* is with the [city hall] guards. Celso and one of his friends explain that it is important not leaving the money in their boxes, because otherwise ‘they take everything and the damage is bigger’. ‘Once, one of us has brought some food for dinner. When they came in, we had no time to take the food away. We came back and there was nothing. It makes no sense. What they [government] really want is seeing us pickpocketing instead.’” (*Movimento*, 01/09/1975. Carlos Mossmann column)

By exchanging the name of the boys with “little executives”, the above report also promotes a personalised portrait that co-exists with the wish of giving voice to these children. As Kucinski (1991) put it, there was an ethics in the 1970s’ alternative press that appears as a secondary element to the wish to *cover* social issues. Much of this ethics stems from a vision in which the oppressed had to be rescued off, which has not necessarily meant implementing practical solutions at the public policy level. Instead, “removing factors of oppression” seemed to be the ideal solution. I found an intrinsic link with what Boal, whose theatre was very influential then, says:

> “To understand this poetics of the oppressed one must keep in mind its main aim: to change the people – “spectators”, passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon – into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action.” (Boal, 2000:122)

While not enough to configure this same ethics of the oppressed, contemporary producers have mostly cited leftist magazines as their foremost references:

> “When we were journalism students and had some involvement with the leftist militancy, this was very straightforward. We ended up having contact with magazines such as *Caros Amigos*, *Carta Capital*, and *Le Monde* in Brazil, which are critical outlets. And, after getting to know a lot of people in São Paulo who experienced that [dictatorship], I started to understand what is the militant media in Brazil, as a way of saying, also [I got to know] the background of dictatorship, the fight against being clandestine, and all hardship […].” (Media producer 15)

Whereas the alternative media of the 1970s also placed importance on framing inequality, the main takeaway here is the extent to which these past outlets seem to influence and, therefore, explain contemporary producers’ agency. I believe it means a relatively low influence. In the producers’ testimonials, for instance, one finds no direct references to magazines such as *Movimento* and *Opinião*, which were landmark publications of the time. This comparison matters because much of the “individual marginal” that is at stake when one mentions homelessness could be a new representation, new subjectivities that were not as emphasised in the past alternative media. This report reveals a protest on the *Baixada Fluminense*, a low-income region of Greater Rio de Janeiro, calling for no homophobia in the community:

> “Baixada reacts to homophobia with a kiss-in

> Around 500 people, among them straight and homosexual couples, group of friends, 'traditional' families were at the Skate square, in Nova Iguaçu, on Friday (16/1) to participate in the Solidary Kiss-in Against Homophobia. The intention of this 'kiss-in' event was to protest against an episode of intolerance in the beginning of the month, when a homosexual young man was attacked." (*Viva Favela*, 19/01/2015)

In the above example, a single case of homophobia led the community to unite for a "kiss-in" activist protest, which has become a widely published story in other outlets. If the former frame only showed individuals as "being poor" or as staying "on the margins", here we find a richer, more complex picture that gathers skate-riders and gays who congregate in an area of low-incomers. Likewise, producers have refused to engage with the term "victims from the system", which was much used in the 1970s (Kucinski, 1991). Rather, they tended to frame themselves as individuals with non-transferable characteristics (e.g. *o cara,* or *the one*). In a second moment, if asked about any media collective, or other kinds of affiliations, they have not skipped presenting themselves as participants of a collective movement. In sum, there is a greater degree of individuality in habits (being gay, being homeless, being whoever they want *in* the city), even though producers did not refuse membership to broader groups, as long as, it allows them to politicize their issues and make their cases visible (e.g. *along with skaters* or with *the poor* as separate categories).

In this section, I explored the enrichment of the dialogue of urban inequality in Brazil; I focus next on the content published on the websites and their frames. The frame analysis reveals other angles of these struggles, as I explain the notion of *urban encounters* to apprehend the coverage of serious confrontations with authorities. Parallel to this section's discussion on the different modes in which disadvantaged populations appear in the city (collective vs individual, oppressed vs new subjectivities), I clarify the extent to which these periphery-centre dialogues can be framed to offer new proofs of persecution in semi-public areas. As producers try to communicate with mainstream society, they also debate issues the latter's refuse to accept, such as public building occupations. I ask to what extent do politicized, counterhegemonic frames convince the mainstream that there is class prejudice which stems precisely from inequality? If they do convince, are there political gains in such coverage or what are the drawbacks of politicizing it to these new extremes?

4.2 Transforming urban encounters into class discussions

By looking at stories through the two frames proposed in this research—*politicization* and *solidarity*—we see, in both frames, episodes that underpin the people's discomfort with the status quo in Brazilian cities. On the one hand, tensions arise from clashes between the middle class and peripheral dwellers, even though both share the same habits and cross at locations that might be considered for the rich but where the poor also go. On the other hand, a minor part of the coverage

turns to reconciliation and calls for community union and, more recently, to the pro-active work of mapping how inequality leads to disappearances and assassinations, some of which end up finding no justice. I have gathered two examples of how *politicization* or *solidarity* manifest:

> "Rio de Janeiro: The map of disappearances" (*Agência Pública*, 07/03/2014)
> – Frame solidarity
>
> "Those who should provide security and ensure the law are those to break the law in favour of an elitist society." (*Mídia Periférica*, 17/04/2015)
> – Frame politicization

While I do not argue that urban encounters only exist through the perspective of violence, producers saw in these encounters a way to *politicize* the dwellers from the periphery. Such stories have triggered enormous mainstream media attention, as producers have built on this to stretch, recreate and prolong repercussions that stem from any public case of inequality. Under the frame *solidarity*, however, the same facts are de-escalated, as communities are shown as getting together to achieve common goals and overcome the issues. These are the stories in which the *favelas* receive visitors and where tourists are welcome amid insecurity. These are also *urban encounters*, which, for producers, were seen through a filter that avoids touching on class divides. I highlight a story that mixes a positive view of the Olympics with a demonstration of the community's long-standing self-esteem:

> "The favela is hand on with the paint: Since Rio de Janeiro has been announced as the host of the 2016 Olympic Games, the concern in housekeeping to receive athletes, journalists, and tourists has taken place. Favelas, as a part of the city in need to look prettier, safe, and organised, is receiving special care from the public administrators and private sponsors, and even from international sponsors. For specialists, one needs to take care so [that] the Olympic legacy be real and effective, as all cariocas deserve." (*Viva Favela*, 04/01/2015)

In fact, considering that the Olympics was such a polarising event in Brazil at the time, frames that invested in promoting *solidarity* offered much less in terms of regular encounters and more in terms of *idealised* realities, through events of peace and communion. Consonant with the wish to pacify and to promote an understanding of Brazilian inequality, at least in that moment, some producers downplayed the real degree of interactions between the marginalised and the wealthier parts of society in the everyday life.

However, most coverage was still related to other *tensions* that emerged between the privileged and the underprivileged. Looking at outlets' publications, their aimed to sensitise on the urban inequality that manifests not in special events, but during any encounter in public or semi-public spaces. For them, these episodes should be documented and analysed. In this section, we see this coverage from the perspective of the challenger citizen. Protests, traffic disruption have appeared as justifications used by the police against dissenters. In a second part, and in more peaceful settings, it is the portrait

of groups of underprivileged youth *making* it through their difficulties to ensure they can walk or *hang* around in monitored spaces. These cases have been described by a specific vocabulary, which also denote fear, clashes and persecution.

4.2.1 Protests, vandals, and arrastões

In the earlier section, I highlighted the strong words that echoed from producers' repertoire while others got another meaning, such as *segregation*. In this section, I expand this vocabulary to analyse how the words *extermínio* (extermination), *massacre*, and *ditadura* (dictatorship) were applied interchangeably to episodes of police responses to protests and their extreme use of armed force against disadvantaged individuals. For example, in 2013, the collective *Nigeria* covered a series of protests staged in the city of Fortaleza, creating a short-length video about the action of the police in these demonstrations. The group's interpretation lies in who is provoking the rubber bullets shot at the demonstrators; the camera close-up is on the face of activists, some of them scared or wounded, while the policemen appear at a distance. The appearance of groups such as the *black blocks*, punk-like individuals dressed in black who wreck bank branches and shops, is noticed, but their importance is diminished for their narrative. *Nigeria*'s main point is that the responsibility of distinguishing peaceful protestors from *black blocks* lies with the police, who do not do so.

Figure 4.4 Footage from Vandalismo, 2013 (Snapshot)

By titling this video reportage *Vandalismo* or vandalism, the group has incorporated the language of society to accuse it of pushing for more violence. Most protests covered by the group fought for an improvement of precarious public services, showed anger at the state of corruption, and shouted against the unnecessary 2014 World Cup. The group insisted that it was the overall economic crisis that was generating more poverty and inequality, and therefore the authorities should be "punished", not the protesters. However, what interests me in *Vandalismo* is the degree to which their frames also relate to the access to the city by the marginalised. Instead of the impossibility of peaceful encounters between state agents and these demonstrators, their frame lies in the state ability to disguise their repression of what are actually "poor people occupying the streets". The language of *vandals* has

itself official roots, as it is the way in which the authorities have usually referred to demonstrators (Conde & Jazeel, 2013). And yet, as seen in the first section, their *intent* of showing persecution, fear and the overall concerns of peripheral dwellers is what drives the dwellers' appropriation of this language to express their wishes to be seen at the heart of the city.

This similar mingling of protests, violence and the reversal of vocabulary also happened during the coverage of the policies aimed at preventing the *arrastões*. These are known as petty crimes committed on Rio de Janeiro's beaches, when a band of robbers act simultaneously to take sunbathers' belongings. According to the general population, this series of crimes are associated with young black *favelados* or the "typical" *favela* dweller. In 2013, in an attempt to stop *arrastões*, Rio's police authorities introduced checkpoints aimed at preventing poor and young *favela* dwellers, the "traditional" suspects, from reaching the beach. This was a deliberately racist policy, which employed the violence argument to justify banning the *favela* population from Rio's most popular and accessible leisure activity. I have contrasted coverages from the portal *Rio on Watch*'s report and from Rio's biggest daily, *O Globo*:

> "Anger in the north zone at the security response to the *arrastões*. […] Educator and community photographer Léo Lima, from Jacarezinho, wrote on Facebook after sharing the story: 'This news is unbelievable! Its name is racism, for those who think this [issue] is over. This is called a divided city, the public space becoming elitist.'" (*Rio on Watch*, 30/11/2013)

> "Buses heading towards the south zone beaches will be stopped by the police." (*O Globo*, 22/11/2013)

While *Rio on Watch*'s coverage valued the reactions to this controversial measure, as well as its racist implications, *O Globo* developed its coverage on the grounds of traditional journalism. That means that, by quoting Rio's Secretary of Security at the top of the story and offering the potential discriminatory implications as a secondary element, the newspapers missed questioning the police on the racial implications of the checkpoints and on their impact on the marginalised. For media producers, that police procedure was unacceptable regardless of the background of robbery, as it would inevitably link to each citizen's skin and their *favela* address.

Both coverages of *arrastões* and the *vandalism*, as seen in the peripheral outlets, politicized these events by using a vast range of new implications. While not offering a plea for peace, producers prioritised confronting state violence above confronting the violence started by citizens. In other words, disrupting protests should not serve as justification to maintain poor dwellers' unequal status within mainstream society. Without proper remediation of the risk of increasing inequality, there would be no legitimacy for the so-called preventive "measures". Slowly, peripheral outlets were

redefining the violence perpetrated by the police as another major *crime*, as this story published by *Coletivo Papo Reto* attests:

> "Case Eduardo de Jesus, we from *Coletivo Papo Reto*:
> We consider this as a criminal murder, the verdict that appoints 'legitimate defence' as the response for the cruel and brutal extermination of the young Eduardo de Jesus, 10 years old, murdered on the 2nd of April, at his home's door, with a shot at his nape and at his back, at the *Complexo do Alemão*". (29/11/2016)

Another example is found in outlet *Brasil 247*, which employed irony and metaphors to reverse the original use of the media material, but with stronger and blunter headlines that state: "Poor, and *favelado*? Not on my beach".[35] Along with this headline, images of the police operation, with the focus on young boys lined up in front of a bus, made a dramatic angle not seen at the mainstream media level.

Figure 4.5 Reproduction of Brasil 247's coverage of the arrastões

It is also not possible to assume that these images of violence seen in the peripheral media take on an exaggerated tone. Brazilian TV programmes have daily broadcasted violence any time, occasionally using sensationalism and displaying graphic images (Montoro, 2002). The peripheral media appears different from this "sensationalist violence" for two reasons. First, when it takes violence out of the comfort zones in the media (consolidated TV programmes at lunch time, for example), narrating it with frames that are at best unconventional. Hence, the coverage of crime and violence is no longer restricted to a few minutes of television coverage, as it is channelled permanently in social media feeds, without the control of the spectator (e.g. of language or escalation). Producers have noticed this easy broadcast of violence to place new frames on top of it. Secondly, the peripheral media depicts violence because it easily explains other narratives of *oppression*—much like the alternative press of the 1970s, but in the latter's, violence was meant to be a consequence of capitalism only (Sodré, 1998). Here, the unsettling content aims at the otherwise *peaceful* society by showing citizens targeted to suffer persecution, where others try to live up to normality and the status quo. This politicization by

contrasting does not stop at Rio de Janeiro or Fortaleza, but is an overall tactic seen in the peripheral media, I explore a similar case in São Paulo.

4.2.2 The case of the rolezinhos

The so-called *rolezinhos* or *hangouts* caused much controversy in 2013 and 2014. This happened when a group of *black* or *pardo* (brown) male youngsters decided to hang out together in shopping malls. This type of meeting has happened in other cities around Brazil,[36] but it was their presence in a São Paulo shopping mall that led administrators to call the police, fearing lootings and obstruction of public circulation. The dispute ended up in court,[37] as shopping mall representatives argued that the presence of the youth compromised security. Further episodes led to violence, as the police used rubber bullets to push these youngsters out.[38] Human rights advocates argued the racial and class roots of the controversy, as shop owners were acting based on prejudice against the youth's imagined "dangerous" behaviour.[39] Debated across alternative and mainstream media, the repressive actions taken against these groups became *viral* through blogs as CCTV footage emerged. It showed security guards using violence to break up group encounters, while these meetings continued to pop up on social networks.

While I would not liken access to shopping malls to exercising citizenship, the essential point here continues to be the access to public spaces and how producers aim to politicize this issue. Producers explored the fact that quality public spaces are non-existent in the periphery, as the centre offers limited spaces for the public gatherings of young people (Caldeira, 2000; Pinheiro-Machado & Scalco, 2014). To generate media content, participant youngsters used their mobile phones to record the *rolezinhos*, increasing the interest in what they were doing and gathering more and more people at each meeting. Although this content later became *more* popular thanks to mainstream publicity, it originally came from the peripheral media and found the perfect framing through that media that would complement the news. Broadcasted *rolezinhos* via social media seized the national agenda once mainstream society reacted against it through a judicial dispute. Newspaper *Brasil 247* headlined "Veto over the *rolezinho* consecrates the Brazilian apartheid" and illustrated the story with an image of police officers escorting brown young men up to the exit of a shopping mall (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6 Snapshot of Brasil 247's coverage of the rolezinhos

As in the earlier case of the *arrastões*, in which the use of strong vocabulary such as *extermination* became widespread, here, the use of *apartheid* aims to frame the state of persecution against the youth's *rolezinhos* as promoting exclusion and divisions. Having accepted the apparently consumerist, leisure and inoffensive purposes of the *rolezinhos*, the peripheral media concluded that the real discussion was about inequality and the fear from the middle class about seeing a group of brown or black young men hanging out together. As publications asserted:

> "Rolezinhos raise questions about inequality in Brazil." (*Brasil 247*, 18/10/2014)
>
> "Brazil's rolezinhos: Shopping as a social inclusion agent." (*Rio on Watch*, 16/10/2014)

This coverage also revealed other divides, that of supporting mall-goers versus criticising them for their "superficial" behaviour. Data also revealed that, at the end of this big spark of controversy on the *rolezinhos*, in late 2014, a cautious but supportive tone for the youth emerged in the reporting on the *rolezinhos*, but this time framing it as "planned protests" and no longer a spontaneous and uneventful ritual. Meanwhile, mainstream media headlines were more careful about reporting further disturbances, although not exactly supporting the youth in their assumedly leisure intent. The discourse legitimised the shop owners' fears, an aspect continuously underlined:

> "Youth book meeting through the Internet and wreak havoc in São Paulo shopping mall." (*Folha de S.Paulo*, 08/12/2013)[40]
>
> "Despite recent fights involving the *rolezinhos* in São Paulo, new youth meetings will happen in squares, shopping malls and parks in the next few weeks." (G1, 17/01/2014)[41]

While this is not enough to prove that the mainstream media was against or in favour of the *rolezinhos*, or if it had an *opinion* at all, professional journalism language was clearly not enough to report was really at stake during the *rolezinhos*. At best, frames found at the peripheral media level

enhanced it by claiming that the *rolezinhos* were no ordinary disturbance and were not to "wreak havoc", which was a hypothesis that ran uncontested in the mainstream media, leading society to certainly support police repression. As I defend next, problematising tensions that derive from inequality and denormalising prejudicial portraits were some of the goals that this coverage and its frames achieved, whereas I discuss the further consequences of this politicization from the borders.

4.3 Conclusion: Covering conflicts, denormalising class prejudice

During this research, Brazil's mainstream society has debated its fear of violence based on real experiences of *arrastões*[42], the gang robbery on the beach. More recently, the radical actions of the *black blocs* have also provoked fear of vandals[43], as these groups have indeed caused panic and destruction in many cities across Brazil. It is in this context that media producers have worked their frames to reverse historical images of violence and disturbance based on class, race, in sum, on inequality. At the same time, importantly for this research, we see producers starting to challenge these binary terms in their attempts to cover those issues, but at the same time, introducing others— e.g. the white "middle class" against the marginalised "black" youth. This repetitive effort gets close to what in social movement framing is called "line of action" (Benford & Snow, 2000), that is, the spreading of terms to reach a further meaning, as we saw in the case of the terms *segregation* and *precariousness* becoming a common marker to contest this often-justified middle-class fear. In that sense, the studied outlets also differ from past alternative media because the analysed projects vowed to sensitise audiences in a less confrontational way (Woitowicz, 2009).

Why does that happen? In Benford and Snow (2000), we find that past movements have worked for the "enlargement" of markers and identities: e.g. instead of "black" individuals, you have "black power" as a group. Here, producers have worked to put all stereotypes that directly relate to inequality at the forefront of their publications, i.e. being from the periphery, being a vandal, or personalising one's homelessness status. For instance, they have raised the profile of those characters obfuscated in society due to commiseration or prejudice, thus giving them a new agency— e.g. the peripheral youth that is poor, but who also want to engage in mainstream habits such as going to a shopping centre; the vandals who want media recognition; the homeless people who pose for a professional photographic essay. While *rolezinhos* can admittedly represent a new black youth generation standing up for their rights, based on the confidence brought by the affirmative policies of recent governments (Vargas, 2014), I argue that this counterhegemonic stance is broader than that and underpins a wider effort of apprehending generic agendas (which could involve them directly or not) to give them a further politicized meaning and, consequently, resonance.

As I started the research, I came from the aftermath of the 2013 protests, when expressions such as "voice of the streets" proved to be a common point among scholars. They cited it as an intersection between alternative media, activism, and social justice (Peruzzo, 2013; Holston, 2014; Bastos et al, 2014). More than taking the "streets", which still sounds like a generic statement, I discussed evidences that go further than this general idea, as producers have rejected the idea of *equality* as "availability", in which the "street" only makes sense for producers after the abolishment of the deep hierarchies that govern the public space. They challenged any assumption of fluidity in this sense, looking at a more complex sense of accountability. For example, because they figured out that not all protests and disturbances are treated in the same way, they demand that black or brown protesters cutting are received with the same tolerance that white demonstrators do count on. In connection to this point, Brazil's historian José Murilo de Carvalho (1999:227) has indeed foreseen that a Brazilian model of citizenship could emerge in the future, but only if people's reactions and alignments could fix these different power realities, and not necessarily by the nature of the conservatives state forces or by forcing an entire new ideology.

This narration through the enlargement of present categories and a new review of what used to be "total normality" is what leads producers to use "segregation" (or other similarly exaggerated terms such as *genocide*), wrestling with its implication to class and race. This takes us to the North-American tradition of *racialising* the debate on inequality, the "race coding" issue of the press, as Gillens (1996) argued. When examining how black populations were the ones to constantly appear in the US media, Gillens found that reportages on welfare and poverty were inevitably tied to black groups. In this research, producers have approximated from rejecting this same reality. By showing areas in which the poor or blacks could not afford to live, producers diagnosed the scenario as *segregation*. This use of *segregation* does not refer to any state-sponsored racial policy, as it happened in the US or South Africa, but to specify who are missing in such wealthy neighbourhoods, concluding that the absence of the periphery means an active stance from society, rather than its *resilient* acceptance.

This departure from a generic agenda into a more assertive struggle also touches upon crime and poverty in cities like Rio de Janeiro. Indeed, there has been a "convenient" criminalisation of the poor, labelling the *favela* dweller as a criminal by appearance (Valadares, 2005) as the same mainstream society is led to ease authoritarian quotes from authorities once they are responding to damage of commercial facilities (as seen in *Vandalismo*). Aware of these reactions, producers have gathered a number of separated events to demonstrate society's complicity in preventing poor and young beachgoers from reaching the beach (as in the *arrastões*), as result of their fears of persecution by the poor, eventually reminding of the double standards that govern Brazilian society.

Following this reversal of meanings, producers have also attempted to *re-organise* the city according to their perceptions of collective and individual rights. Framing processes "situate or place relevant sets of actors in time and space and by attributing characteristics to them that suggest specifiable relationships and lines of actions" (Benford & Snow, 2000:632). Thus, it is producers' task to unveil society's racist bias by situating it as backward and Brazil as a delayed society. As seen earlier, the maps of "segregation" reads highly desirable areas as zones of exclusion, and ultimately, of disinterest. In another way, the increasing number of "invasions" or *squatting* in abandoned estates in central, often expensive, neighbourhoods is framed as a necessary routine so as to forge a debate on proper housing. Whether legally or not, produces do not see squatting as "disproportionate", as they have in mind that a major violence is to deny constitutionally-enshrined rights, as it has been for decades (De Souza, 2006).

Current studies on urban clashes have narrated the main challenges to any city's sustainable development, putting that of housing at the top (e.g. in Harvey, 2013:75 on real estate development). This politicization has then engaged in this "feedback to political institutions" against the Mayor's decisions, but which also promotes a series of adjustments in current representations. When dealing with the impossible conditions which an individual has to face to inhabit any big Brazilian city, producers have discussed the reason that may have led someone to be a homeless, an investigation that, again, delves into something beyond, such as one's past of rejection due to sexual orientation, or into the economic factor of one's homelessness. This investigation reaches a point of intersection between both collective and individual dimensions, as it tries to make sense of it through culture. Producers were convinced that the more marginalised is the culture, the lesser is their ability to see the city as a safe location, be it because of the lack of official recognition or because resources are not allocated for that purpose.

The attachment of peripheral media groups to what we call "marginal", as to cultural practice, is not new. Dagnino (1994, 1998) saw a permanent link between culture and the sentiments of citizenships. For her, this "culture as citizenship" movement came along with the "expansion" of citizenship in 1980's South America. Martín-Barbero (2006) discussed the "appropriation of topics" that stem from the cultural mediations in Latin America. He saw it as a context in which multiple, often chaotic intersections do not structure their narrative priority, otherwise they happen simultaneously (e.g. events that do not need date and time and simply "happen"). Here, producers have shown interest in *rap* or *hip-hop* songs, as in many other cultural collectives, reporting their attempts to stage concerts and events at the city's *centre.* The peripheral media has contributed to their struggle by crafting arguments that could resonate more technically, by arguing, for example, that the centre was the

obvious position because it would cause less “chaos” as attendees could arrive by bus coming from distant peripheries.

On the one hand, race, housing, and culture were keywords for this coverage that tried to disrupt the naturalisation of the “place of the poor or the rich”. On the other hand, as Martín-Barbero (2006) sees it, *mediations* stemming from *tensions* among young people are typical of those discovering the city and, alongside, finding its limitations and problems. This escalation by vocabularies, or simply by reproducing the language of the streets, has taken on other kinds of tensions that were previously informal and thought to be *resolved* on the street level. Not only they were not, as they would not have happened due to the lack of this exchange among class-demarked zones or “territories” (Sasken, 2006). Where underrepresentation becomes *segregation* and evictions are *gentrification*, producers have justified this new taxonomy on the grounds of engaging with further attempts to come across other individuals and reframe social phenomena at their peril. In sum, they were not mean to necessarily *inform* citizens, but to makes them aware of the current struggles.

A final way of seeing this framing strategy stems from what Gitlin (1980) mentioned as the “conditions” met by “producers of meaning” to reach a stage where they could frame reality in their own way. Atton and Hamilton (2008:22–41) reasoned this by citing the higher “expectations” that become raw material for the alternative journalism practice. According to them, “To the degree that these derive from bourgeois journalism”, there are new angles that are worth exploring. As seen, the “conditions” for reporting both cases confront the real existence of these disturbances to the extent that society has demonstrably shown indifference to their repeal. This assimilation of violence to deal with “deviant” youth happens as mainstream journalism subordinates the violence against the marginalised to the officials’ versions of events, thus diminishing the relevance or impact on the former. For producers, without such tough language, no commitment exists to reform these issues, nor enough attention is paid (via media coverage or discussions sponsored by the establishment) to the underlining issue of inequality.

To summarise this discussion, politicizing what otherwise would be “frictionless and non-disruptive” in the city also actualises the perspectives about the urban encounters of an unequal Brazil. Is this growing tension a symbol of an overall improvement in the access and use of so-called middle-class, semi-public facilities? Is the role of the peripheral media to lay out class tensions as a way of broadening the discussion towards a stronger inequality agenda? One thing has become clear, that the politicization of urban disputes, have not necessarily repeated old radical jargons (as they have left behind the discourse of the “oppressed” and stretched that of the “streets”). Instead, there is a fresh the start for narratives that publicly shame a repressive state, but still resorting to an interplay with the

entrenched prejudices of mainstream society. By reapplying prejudicial terms against the society that created them, they claim to speak on behalf of the criminalised, transgressive poor from the periphery.

In this chapter, I started by discussing the peripheral media coverage through its effort to engage and describe urban inequality. An important landscape to encase and stress how inequality manifests, this chapter focused on issues taking place in Brazil's biggest cities. Either by drawing on cultural events such as hip-hop or stories of homelessness or by returning their focus to activism and its relation to vandalism, producers can leave behind the generic assumption that they are the "voice of the streets". The events explored a diversity of situations: those living far from the centre; the youth prevented from going to the beach or the shopping mall due to their poverty and skin colour; or those who get to live in the heart of the urban centre and who are still criminalised, evicted or made invisible. Frame analysis revealed an interplay of collective and individual identities to highlight mainstream society's indifference to inequality, as producers used terms such as *segregation* or *apartheid* to politicize their arguments and enhance their claims. In the next chapter, I continue to discuss similar dilemmas of access and acceptance as they appear in Brazilian *favelas*. We learn how producers have also politicized their demands for inequality, challenging old caricatures, stereotypes and criminal associations that have jeopardised their existence in multiple levels.

5. In the *favelas*

Introduction

In the last chapter, I started an exploration of the peripheral media. I listed many episodes of urban clashes and the coverage that they received, revealing a set of discursive strategies that producers use to improve the awareness of existing inequalities. We saw old tensions escalating to include race issues, disruptive protests, and homelessness. I dedicate this chapter to a similar kind of exploration, as the amount and complexity of findings have led me to leave aside the discussion between the periphery and the centre and instead concentrate on the *favelas,* a big periphery in itself. I study outlets reporting directly from these communities. Digital media outlets have surged in the *favelas* after the 2000s, thanks to their young ICT-user population (Bugs, 2014; Nemer, 2015). If, in the past chapter, If I worked with the notion of *encounters* to look at the trajectory of class conflicts in Brazil, here I draw on other details of the everyday life in communities and how producers aim to negotiate their own situation with power by covering personal, social or economic constraints (Davis, 2015; Baroni, 2012, 2015; Custódio, 2016). It is still possible to map how this politicization responds to a legacy of graphic media images that depict the *favelas* through the stereotypes of poverty, crime threats, and rights violations (Penglase, 2007; Leu, 2004).

To ease our understanding of the specific challenges faced by the *favela* media producers, I opt to call this "*favela* media" as a sub-type of the peripheral media. The fact that there are key issues that only involve the *favela* (while being of interest to Brazil's periphery and the disadvantaged in Brazil) justifies an entire chapter that could give proper space to frames and discussions that do not exist elsewhere. A first section is dedicated to the reconstruction of a new *favela*, from unmaking the perception of the "troublemaker" dwellers to the establishment of new alliances. I found producers seeking contributors who would help them to fight against decades of marginalisation and association with crime (Pires, 2004). The second section look at frame analysis, in which dwellers appear to maximise society's indifference through the use of terms such as *segregation* or *apartheid.* As a force for solidarity, media producers have created new stories to rival those of the mainstream media and convince society of their issues. Politicized frames have added personal features to victims and opened their lives to the extent that it becomes an important agenda in the media. First, I analyse producers' repertoire, then I reflect on what past perceptions of inequality inform us regarding the current priorities of the *favela* media producer.

5.1 Defining a new agenda for the *favela* in the media

I have focused in this section on positioning interviews with the *favela* media producers so that we can grasp the extent to which dwellers, as producers, can break free from past conceptions of themselves. I also inquired, in this data analysis, about how far they go in forging a new agenda for inequality, either politicized or not. It is important to say that the category *favela* citizen appeared as elusive and simplistic. Distinct in profile, educational background and age, producers have presented a repertoire that could be divided into two different patterns. Most producers have referred to inequality as an issue that would naturally spring from their agenda; second, they have not discarded the mainstream media's influence in guiding them through topics and discussions.

This duality in and out the *favela* is because most producers have to respond to both universes, the *favela* and the rest of society. Long-standing eyewitnesses of conflicts, drug dealing and urbanisation issues, producers, as dwellers, cannot stand still and need to develop an interface to claim for improvement, which has happened over the last decades. Hence, I take note of the fact that their vocabulary also varies according to their affiliations, education profiles, or engagements with NGOs or other organisations. Some mention *o morro*, or the hill, as well as the *favela*. Others prefer to refer to it as the *comunidade* (community). Based on these references, I explore these two stages of the communicative *favela* according to producers. In the first stage, I see how the *favela* dwellers have interpreted facts that long ago, those seen from afar through the mainstream media—e.g. evictions, demolitions, or scarcity of water or food (Valladares, 1978). In the second stage, producers turned to themselves in an attempt to change their personal credentials to the outer world, from troublemakers or unemployed into a new *favelado*, a term that stops sounding derogatory to get a new resonance.

5.1.1 Taking back control of the facts

Most *favela* producers with whom I spoke have prioritised the precarious state of public services when covering their communities. For that reason, covering the lack of running water, infrequent litter collection, or frequent electricity outage were the main issues to be politicized in their agenda. At the same time, there is also a degree of ambiguity. When I approached the potential for solidarity in their stories, as I reviewed stories that showed a "positive, growing" *favela*, producers also suggested that they did not want to appear as second-class citizens because of these issues. They fight for public services at the municipal level; at the same time, they also struggle against views that lower their status. Unsurprisingly, many dwellers refused to appear as the marginalised, although they were sceptical about short-term changes in the reproduction of their images as such. Producers also encompassed a sentiment that their role is to make sure the community does not fall into political

populism anymore. Politicians have, for decades, used the urbanisation of the *favelas* for empty promises (Pino, 1997; Fischer, 2008).

While this research does not focus on production, producers have pointed to their aim to build a decentralised sourcing of stories and, from that, to create a joint discourse. In fact, editors act according to inputs from dwellers, but they are the ones to make the final cut and frame issues according to current debates:

> "We have contributors who write articles, who are often ordinary dwellers, teachers, and agents from our community who want to write about anything. Then we open the space for these people, so that they can send us [articles]; this also allows the newspaper to have different views." (Media producer 36)

> "The person who proposes the stories for the newspaper is the same person who writes the story. For example, when we have more stories than space on paper, we check similar stories, the people who proposed it and try to make the people work together. In meetings, we always have a cut. [If one needs to] speak about public service and we [have] already approached the [topic of] transportation, the issue of sewage, the issue of education [...] These meetings are interesting because each one has a viewpoint and each one [is in a different] territory, each one with a difference and they gather together in this project." (Media producer 35)

There lies also a sentiment of *solidarity*, whether in relation to the indifference from the mainstream or to the need to generate new success stories. In that sense, to *politicize* is to take *favela* demands to the "outer world", like this producer/dweller argued:

> "If you talk to anyone in the *favela*, you will see this ideology in their mouth. 'Everyone has to rise up together; I like my community; I don't want to leave my community; I want my community growing less unequal'." (Media producer 41)

I interpret the "I don't want to leave my community" as part of an ongoing recognition of the limits that divide the *favela* from the *asfalto*, the urbanised city centre. The extent to which one knows what is *in* and *out* has meant knowing the limits of their content. To phrase it differently, this limit informs the *favela* media about what to report and where to look at if they want to cover the need for more welfare benefits. I have italicised some keywords that repeatedly played with this meaning of "marginalised", not as someone who lives in the *favela* or gets no benefits, but as an actor that does not receive proper recognition by the mainstream. This need to politicize inequality to a public level of recognition also extends into cultural necessities. Producers are eager to change the image that the violence can define their place, they want the people to know that their community is more than a "dangerous" place, as these testimonials show:

> "We are concerned with *the marginalised* stories in the mainstream media, as they [the media] are in mainstream society—that means, in social movements, the issue of *marginalised* culture, the occupations for housing issues. We try to portray these issues that

have no visibility in the mainstream media. We do not relate to this often-used narrative. And we think that the people are agents *who have no voice* in the mainstream media." (Media producer 49)

"In *Baixada Fluminense*, for example, we have many cultural movements, many *saraus* [*public readings*] which happen in public squares. I think it would be very nice for the [mainstream] media to broadcast it *for everybody*, so that when they have the chance of being in Rio de Janeiro, they could visit the *Baixada Fluminense* with another sort of view. Otherwise, the media states 'Do not go there, it's *dangerous*'." (Media producer 47)

In other words, more than politicizing only the known needs for healthcare or education, some producers have also sought to gather support for new visitors and to normalise the *favela*. Knowing how "indifferent" mainstream society can be towards *favela* dwellers, they aim to build this broad consciousness with a level of grassroots mobilisation. However, I would still argue that this differs from the mobilisation of the 1970s' alternative press. While the "alternative media" is seen as stemming from social movements and proletarian associations (Kucinski, 1991), producers mentioned that they teamed up with groups that they trust and targeted agendas from these groups. Their choice is sensed not one of subordination to the organisations working in the *favelas*, but of partnership, as this producer argued:

"Educators, teachers, unions. These are the points that have a broader reach to their classes, as far as they also reach students, schools, and libraries. Thus, we thought that these are important ones to receive our content. They can spread more didactically, each one in its own way, what we want to share. For example, regarding social movements, we aim to get close to its base. On social movements, we become aware because of these exchanges between them and us—i.e. the student unions and the regular unions." (Media producer 36)

Understanding how the *favela* media producers form their audience and "crowdsource" their content is important because it informs on collaboration and on discourse. Achieving strong politicization, for them, depends on what kind of content resonate better among their audience, and the way they can reach these partners and prominent actors involved in this struggle. These individuals give producers fresh angles and forward to their emails unseen images of conflicts, for example. Indeed, producers' frames have to seduce a range of audiences, from students to social movements, from communities to individuals, all of whom are not necessarily media consumers. These groups that today help to make the *favela* media are those that embody the typical poverty stereotype (Cardoso, 1978; Rosas-Moreno & Straubhaar, 2015).

On the other hand, the producers' idea is not necessarily to use politicized images as tools to reverse stereotypical representations for the sake of "appearing" good on TV or in the media. Most of them seemed more comfortable about sharing news and content among those who do not deny their poverty and inequality but do not look down on them because of that. Selecting trustworthy partners seems

more important than promoting politicization indiscriminately. Framing critical issues (such as crime episodes, insecurity, and economic constraints) must thus carefully acknowledge the people's material deprivation, but also make sure that this reporting does not constrain further relationships with "external partners", and as a result, provoke more prejudice against the community. The way in which producers seemed to execute this delicate approach to discourse was to focus more on conquering "rights", rather than on the deprivation of goods or specific scarcity:

> "In the communities we visit, the idea of wealth is arguable. I think the people want to access several rights. This is what they deny us on a constant basis. It is the right to own a house, the right of being black, of being a woman and not being raped, of being a worker." (Media producer 42)

I approached *where* these external contacts are from, as many of them are visitors or foreigners. This is a profile that producers have admitted to targeting in their publications. They argued that Brazilians do "carry an inherited degree of prejudice". This assumption encompasses the relationship between the *favela*, mass tourism and capitalism, factors that have become more tied together after the 2000s (Freire-Medeiros, 2014; Jaguaribe, 2014). As Freire-Medeiros (2011) asserted, there are concerns that tourism does create *urban safaris*, but the producers with whom I spoke saw this differently. If they are to seek *solidarity* coverage, let that be something that invites *favela* visitors and, simultaneously, sets up new paths to renovate narratives and thus overcome prejudices. On the other hand, would the presence of "outsiders", be that tourists or visitors, constrain their counterhegemonic intent? I italicise some hints on what it is like to be *inside* and *outside* the *favela*:

> "A lot of people from overseas come into the *favela*. I think that there is a little bit of that idea [of exotic]. Though we never speak about it, people from the *outside* do surround the *favela*. And these people come to set up new relations and this is not that idea of predatory tourism, but it is a relation in which one wants to get to know who lives there, what they do, how they dance—this *exoticised* thing." (Media producer 41)

> "We were called to join [other media initiatives that advertise the *favela*] at the City of God *favela*. So, many meetings happened, but our idea is to focus on our community, our territory." (Media producer 36)

According to producers, the definition of *outside* or *inside* depends on who has offered strong support to the *favela*. In brief, it is against those who are *outside* that they are more likely to rebel or to politicize their agendas, including politicians and members of mainstream society. Thus, local visitors from other wealthier parts of Rio de Janeiro are likely to also fit into the category of "the outside". As a result, a good coverage is the one to tackle a broader level of indifference, either stemming from the locals or foreigners. The former public is said to be the one which is "harder to reach". Although "the rich" may also live close to *favelas*, their prejudice is harder to reverse due to historical reasons. Yet,

foreigners (assumedly) would be more accessible because they are less influenced by the national media and its racial or social prejudices.

When asked on *how* to recreate and change people's "assimilated" image by a new self-representation, the producers said to diversify the agenda to ensure it translates what they live for both the *inside* and the *outside*:

> "We don't need to preach for them [favela dwellers], but I think it is interesting because each individual comes from a different tradition in our group. The hybridism is an interesting thing. That producer has developed a perspective on the state, as he is studying law. To this other producer, who is from the *hip-hop* [culture], he is much more the 'individual', the rage. For that other one, because she has a university degree, she understands more about social justice. This exchange is positive." (Media producer 42)

As seen, this discussion serves to prepare for my later incursion into more politicized coverage. I aim to show how producers express some caveats. Much of collective knowledge that bases new strategies is sourced from what I called "assimilated" prejudices of society. The sources for their strategies, some of whom are also their audience (universities, social movements, journalists), which still include parts of the mainstream, tourists, and foreigners alike. These factors help us to understand the *politicization* of the *favela* media as this amalgamating effort to place historical demands at the forefront, such as sewage and better public services, but also which turns to these partners to reimagine the *favela* and then compose new media representations. In the next section, I approach how the *favela* media has concentrated on personalising the life stories of its inhabitants as a first step in this new politicized and counterhegemonic dialogue with the mainstream. Producers aim for a new, normalised portrait of the average *favela* dweller, especially of the youth.

5.1.2 Building a new favelado

When analysing interview data, many young producers often questioned the historical significance of the *favelado*, discussing how they aimed to overcome or change that image. I tried to engage with this concept to better understand why this reference seemed so significant. First, it became clear that authors or editors of the sampled outlets were, on average, 20 to 30 years old (See chapter 3). Although the age factor was not the basis of this research, it did offer a robust path to interpret the discourse of a large number of the interviewees to the extent that they felt as "inheriting" a stereotype that seemed otherwise powerful in the past.

This brief retrospect on the *favelado* as a negative stereotype may not necessarily be unanimous in the peripheral media. The younger generation, those in their 20s, have offered another take on the *favelado*, in which they mixed this background of social issues with some technological fluency,

framing their status of *favelado* on the grounds of their creative capabilities, as these producers illustrate:

> "Cadu is one of the colleagues in the group; he's *b-boy*, graffiti artist, DJ—he sings and composes rap songs. I think this expression was already there. Adriano was less [fluent]; he was [performing] dance, that was one part. The part of [teaching them] the media, this was up to us [in terms of] investing in these boys." (Media producer 41)

> "Our web-radio happens in São Paulo through collaborators, Junior and Augusto. We hire [some] of the contributors through the Internet, and others through in-person activities. The 'gang' joins in, likes it, wants to join in again and, somehow, who comes together and whoever comes is very welcome." (Media producer 45)

Covering the *adventures* of this new *favelado* has also meant coupling it with other identities, whether those of media practitioners, bloggers, photographers, or communicators. Many have spoken about themselves and neighbours or friends as *favelados*. Producers showed that, through charisma, they can overcome old stereotypes, but they do not abandon their attention to whatever prejudice may suddenly come up. In the newspaper *Voz das Comunidades*, for example, they could play with soft accounts of the *favelado* and, at the same time, use these to become insider accounts during conflicts. This duality has often served mainstream organisations.[44] This was the case of *Rene Silva*, who was born and raised in Alemão Favela, in Rio de Janeiro. Silva has emerged to prominence through social networks such as *Twitter*, leading him to join a *soap opera* (as seen in figure 5.1), but he also *tweets* images of his native *Alemão Favela* whenever an armed conflict emerges or shots are heard.

Figure 5.1 Monique Evelle of the Desabafo Social website (left) and Rene Silva of Voz da Comunidade (Twitter snapshot)

Although the producers with whom I spoke did not confirm that they are in search of Silva's kind of notoriety, there are elements to associate this new framing of the *favelado* with the possibility of major publicity via the mainstream media. I discuss this relationship with the mainstream media and grassroots reporting in Chapter 6; here, what interests me is how this media exposure as *favela* interlocutors has added to this "assimilated" image and how this boosts any form of politicization. *Favela* researchers such as Beatriz Jaguaribe (2014) have argued on whether the Internet could reduce

the weight of the *favelado* stereotype, as location that no longer affects online interactions, but it is not clear if that imaginary distance but also proximity, between interlocutors that are not based in the *favela* but still can get their message, increases or decreases the eyewitness power of a *favelado*.

Producers have suggested that the trustworthiness of their accounts on conflicts in the *favelas* has depended on how their image of the *favelado* resonates in the mainstream media, regardless of what platform it is featured on; it could be in fictional dramas such as *telenovelas* or in the news media as a source. To call oneself a *favelado* suggests an increasingly popular "statement of power", at least in media settings. Both dimensions of power (soft and hard) have often appeared together, confirming the departure from this term as it used to exist and moving towards a non-derogatory employment. Yet, this reversal of its meaning still seems the only reason why producers revamp this term, whether through critical or ironic metaphors. Far from a remote conception of a *favelado* as a homeless person (Valladares, 2000:23), the *favela* media producers have posted discourses or images in which the highlight of this *favelado* condition has not been necessarily a position of privilege or power, but rather as a basic argument for their media appearance. This happens when they meet TV celebrities (figure 5.2) or when they are writing about their own everyday experiences; in both situations, they find space in the text to call or frame themselves as *favelados*.

Figure 5.2 Media producer poses with mainstream media actors (Facebook snapshot)

Likewise, although the *favelado* may find it easy to spread the message through social media pages and technology, to another extent, the social media websites as platforms also lighten these "statements of power". Daily posts inform readers that a certain *favelado* is attending events or workshops, as it helps to assert the term within a context of struggle. This happened when the YouTube channel of the *Gatomídia* collective published a video about ICT insertion in the *favelas*:

> "The *favelado* 2.0 is the girl or guy from the favela who, [without] training resources and not having attended many courses, gets by with the technology [that] comes to him, becoming an expert in mobile applications. The *favelado* 2.0 films, shoots pictures for his or her

entertainment, knowledge, and to guarantee rights, whenever the rights of those living in the community are torn apart by some other forces." (*Gatomídia* Youtube)[45]

This self-broadcast as coverage carries the "2.0 discourse" of innovation while making sure that viewers are aware of the harsher reality of the everyday, which is not new. To "be understood" by a highly demanding audience is a goal that reformats the image of the *favelado*, but also extends over to other subjectivities. *Coletivo Papo Reto*'s producer *Thainã de Medeiros*, for instance, has shared scenes from a cinematographic production based in Favela Nova Holanda in Rio de Janeiro (figure 5.3). He wrote: "How is the audio-visual production in the *favela*? — I've myself lived this scene. The scenes showed two teenage boys running from what seems to be police persecution on unpaved streets." His reference clearly linked the video to the wider world of professional production, but Medeiros also contextualised it by using the *real* conditions in which the piece was made.

Figure 5.3 Scenes of a film shot in the Favela Nova Holanda, Rio de Janeiro (Facebook snapshot, user Thainã de Medeiros – 12/10/2014)

As seen above, this video and Facebook post couples two complementary narratives (the new *favela* media productions and the past remembrance of an innocent being persecuted). At one level, media producers reinterpret their historical muteness; at another, they place new voices at another post-modern level of irony. This new *favelado* can, at the same time, show an awareness of technology and mainstream media productions while revealing their negotiations with the real constraints. An example would be the below producer, who voiced opinions on environmental issues while also seeking to sell this story to a mainstream outlet:

> "There are many cases of environmental destruction that happens in our community, which are not shown by the mainstream media. It is the case of corporations such as *Coca-Cola*. There are cases that this company is using, through illegal means, the water of a nature park. They take the water from this park and divert it directly to their factory for production." (Media producer 36)

This attitude is not only about saying who is a *favelado* or to ground one's abilities based on being a *favelado*, but it is also to review the current affairs in a more critical, counterhegemonic light. Moreover, I found a trade-off with the mainstream, where one sees a growing number of partnerships between the *favela* media (which can raise data and statistics, and confirm things *in loco*) and mainstream organisations (which can create bigger impact, increase their resonance). Producers have argued in many times that to cite the *favelado* with no derogatory intent, one has to also reveal good figures, showing the hard-working side of its people, as they published:

> "While political and economic scenarios go through turbulence, the favela is reinventing its lifestyle. According to a survey by the Data Popular Institute, published in 2013, the GDP of Brazilian favelas reached more than 56 billion reals by year, but the reality is far from being uniform." (*Viva Favela*, 04/01/2015)

I have questioned producers on the nature of these partnerships that cover the *good* favela. My point concerned not only to the role of NGOs or the mass media, but also evangelical churches that have been present in these communities, some for decades. By offering technology access and financial or educational support to ordinary dwellers, pastors can also form popular media producers. A few producers argued that, in return, these churches are channelling producers' ambitions to fulfil their own religious goals. The extent to which this youth can continue to pursue a socially engaged but critical perspective in their publications while members of religious organisations has divided interviewees. One producer answered by offering the example of the so-called "Neo-Pentecostal churches":

> "There are those who are not up to this [i.e. fighting social issues by discussing inequality]. I think that it is in the religious field in which we see some clash [with this mission]. If we are thinking of it in ideological terms, the way in which evangelical churches play with the issue of jealousy, for example, is very bad. It is hard to work with solidarity in a group, in a community project." (Media producer 41)

While I do not elaborate on this involvement of evangelical churches with discourses of inequality, it is worth remembering the past partnership between the *favelas*' leadership and the Catholic Church. An example is the *Basis Ecclesiastic Communities* (BECs); in the 1980s, these seemed key to raising the profile of poor communities (Festa & Silva, 1986), but the producers have not cited them at all during this research. Otherwise, producers stressed the different purposes of the contemporary evangelical churches. It is not about the media that they may be led to create, but the effects on the youth in general. They gave some examples:

> "The financial thing is very much present. They work with the perspective: 'If you donate, you earn it back, but if you donate, don't do it for your neighbour, do it for the church'. In a certain way, this limits the ability of the community's youth to continue the networks that were much more powerful in the past." (Media producer 42)

I could not verify all these claims in every interview, nor is this verification the aim of this research. However, international religious NGOs have also appeared as financial bodies for outlets covered in the scope here; the website *Viva Favela*, for instance, acknowledges support from a Norwegian church. On the other hand, this growing interface with evangelical churches echoes recent changes in the demographics of Brazil (Birman & Lehman, 1999). In terms of the politicization of the *favela* media, the fact that religious organisations (like any other) are capitalising on this communicating will of the *favela* youth apparently creates new opportunities for producers from disadvantaged backgrounds to speak out. We must be careful, likewise, not to discriminate between the kinds of support received—although producers have understandably discussed concerns in a scenario of changes in the *favela*, whether of sponsorship or in the amount of external attention they recently received.

To sum up this section, evidence has shown the complexities involved in reimagining the *favela* on the grounds of past prejudices and scarcities. The actions of the *favela* media producers span different areas of the community's life, which consequently have become part of their media. I sought to draw an overview on the image of the *favela* and the *favelado* so as to give a clear picture of opportunities to politicize or pacify agendas. I do not intend to settle an expectation of what the *favela* media are, or say that these are all the concerns these outlets carry, but they have shown how they master and try to change the past stereotypes regarding the *favela*. More than a plural coverage, producers thereby team up to bring publicity to key issues, activities and everyday facts: they end up telling national or international affairs from their perspective or challenging, in their own way, when appropriate, outdated stereotypes such as that of the *favelado*. Now, I analyse data from the frame analysis that allow us to debate more assertive cases of politicization, in which the above ambiguities regarding the *favelas* are also present.

5.2 Old issues, new frames for the political *favela*

Frame analysis has revealed clear differences in stories classified as following the *politicization* frame from those framed as *solidarity*, with the prevalence of the former. In the *politicization* frame, producers strongly draw on identity issues, protest the lack of state aid in the *favelas* and cross social issues and inequality with those of racism and violence; the *solidarity* frame consists of articles appealing for the dignity of dwellers, in which the *favelado* media is investing in a positive voice. While the previous section has given a panorama of the contributors and partners of the *favela* media that help producers to reimagine communities, here I analyse why the producers' integrated approach results more in politicization than in solidarity. Because this thesis invests in discourse and in the

frames, this method allows us to assess whether the *favela* media has meant a much more politicized coverage than seen in the past (Kucinski, 1991; Woitowicz, 2009). This coverage not only reminds readers about the deep state of inequality in the *favelas*, as it reflects years of a discourse for social justice that (as we shall see) draws on multiple linkages, history, and everyday episodes of inequality.

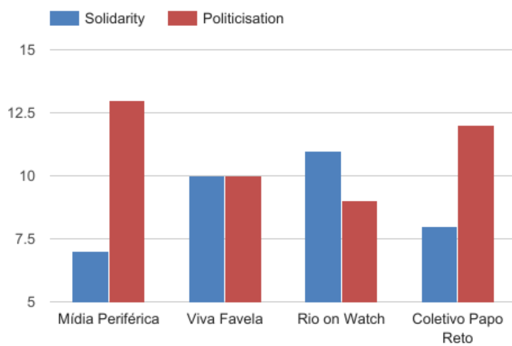
In articles associated with the frame of *politicization*, one finds the continuous struggle for social justice and many attempts to reach out to state representatives. Producers use allegations of police violence and create bold statements to unmake the *favela* stereotype. In *solidarity*, even though there are calls for communal work, highlights of *favela* entrepreneurship and celebratory events, and an overall perspective of independence from external intervention, there are stances that also tend to appear *politicized* to a greater extent. Dwellers see issues of *inequality* and *racism* under the *politicization* frame, but they do seem sceptical and critical to only reproduce messages deemed a *neutral* stories, such as cleaning or public services. As this excerpt shows, they want, at every opportunity, to reconnect with major topics:

> "Complaints do not help; it is necessary to do your part. Emlurb collects litter three times a week and, according to the city hall, it reaches remote places. According to Luiz Felipe, the *litter collection service seem*s to be satisfactory. The same does not happen with the streets' cleaning." (Frame solidarity – *Viva Favela*, 20/03/2014)

> "Ronald Vaz, a hostage of intimidation through racism. One eliminates and violates the black youth day after day—whether in the periphery via deadly means or in downtown via hostile means, and those who should give us security and ensure the rule of law are also those who violate it in favour of *an elitist society* and who have the profile of *embedded racism*." (Frame politicization – *Mídia Periférica*, 17/04/2015)

Although my intention is to analyse discourses through the prism of both frames, a strong correlation appears when we connect the higher recurrence of *politicization* to the outlets that do not follow any professional journalism style, such as that of objectivity or impartiality (figure 5.4). This is the case of the *Mídia Periférica* blog or *Coletivo Papo Reto*. Comparatively, NGO-sponsored *Viva Favela* focuses less on criminality issues and more on other events taking place at the city's outskirts, falling into the frame of *solidarity*. Likewise, *Rio on Watch*, another outlet funded by private partners, fits more into the same frame, often telling stories of hardship and success accompanied by analyses and reflections, mostly written by academics and journalists with the occasional partnership with *favela* dwellers.

Figure 5.4 Frames found in the favela media



This correlation is important to understand the coverage of the *favela* media and what these distinct frames really mean for us. The *favela* media is indeed a palette that ranges from the more radical political to a softer, dialogue-orientated narrative, but the extent to which there are narratives that can politicize social issues *less* or *more* is what really changes in this scenario. The tailoring of arguments starts by tackling hegemonic assumptions—for example, that *favela* people have to be always poor, black and unable to produce their own solutions. This is one of many narratives that are more likely to politicize issues, what differs from outlets with other links with third party organisations. This is perhaps because NGO-related producers must comply with a certain level of hierarchy and public image that affects what they publish. The more popular and well-funded a website or producer is, the more elements of this *solidarity* and less of *politicization* have appeared in their coverage.

There are exceptions, of course, as well as intermediary cases to this rule. An example would be a well-known *favela* media producer, who has a good space in the mainstream media but who has dedicated his Twitter account to informal explorations that do not lie in any of these frames. He aims to know who-is-who in the community, how this average citizen lives, and how much he or she earns per month. One day, he asked his audience: "To what *class* do you belong to?" This question appeared in the format of a poll on his Twitter account, as follows:

> "Producer: Your average salary is:
> 53% – 80 to 1,500 reals
> 18% – 1,600 to 2,500 reals
> 29% – 2,600 to 3,500 reals
>
> "Producer: Which class do you consider yourself from?
> 9% – Upper class
> 41% – Middle class
> 39% – Low
> 11%- – Under the low
>
> "Reply 1: It is a hard question. I think I was middle class. I have no class at the moment."
> (Twitter account of media producer 03, 04/01/2015)

I am more inclined to interpret interactions like these as characterising a kind of candid dialogue framed as *solidarity*. Yet, would this discussion help to tackle prejudice by confirming dwellers' low income? As seen, it is a distinct form of solidarity that manifests, more pro-active and with a modern language, especially if one compares it to the 1970s' humanitarian focus on saving lives and tackling extreme hunger (Valladares, 1978). In most of the occasions, this form of *voyeurism* into the *favela* life ended with an ironic statement—as seen in this case, where a participant played with assumptions of income and class by responding: "I have no class at the moment."

At the other edge, politicizing stances were to promote more serious reassessments of the community's internal settings and demographics, some of them directly aimed at feeding rebellious acts. In this excerpt, bloggers urge dwellers to reconsider their cooperation with the police, likening their potential involvement with officers as being "spies on behalf of criminals", which, in other words, aims to downplay the importance of any commitment to work on behalf of the police. According to this stance, dwellers should not film drug dealers under police officers' requests, as prescribed:

> "1 - Monitoring criminals is such a responsibility of the state. The state should take care of criminals, not us. We are a civil society.
> 2 - Criminals are already breaking the law.
> 3 - There is no criminality without help from the police.
> 4 - Efficient security policy is not the one that kills most."[46]
> (*Coletivo Papo Reto*, 04/12/2015)

The above evidence attests to an ambiguous intent. On the one hand, dwellers are the "civil society" but they should not help the police, the mainstream society's military apparatus, due to crimes perpetrated by the formers inside *favela* territory. Even if supporting crime-prevention efforts is frowned upon; the politicization of these dwellers still aims to tackle the *hegemonic* power of the police and neutralise it via dwellers' individual inaction, defining "spying" as the act of "denouncing" a crime. Next, I detail these initiatives aimed at the personal power of dwellers. When I approach the *solidarity* frames, I see *favelados* fighting for new interlocutions, as they brand their presence, as some see them "showing off" material affordances to gain respect and attention from mainstream society. On the flip side, *politicization,* producers have sought to cover crime as an individualised event. They started giving names of victims and offering images deemed as private — which overall increased a positive form of exposure to victims so as to revamp their own protagonist role in this reporting. Even though they continue to portray inequality, dwellers come up as reactive agents, different from the "hostages of poverty or violence" that has been the predominant frame in the traditional news coverage.

5.2.1 Speaking as protagonists, finding limitations

The self-confidence that stems from this *new favelado* also reaches other areas of the dwellers' lives, projecting an unprecedented form of leadership. The resurrection of the *favelado* as the new protagonist not only responds to a past in which dwellers could not assume an active role in mediating solutions (see Chapter 2.1.2), as it carries much more emphasis on personal leadership. I have italicised the key parts of this publication that tells the story of an ordinary dweller that has reached the age of retirement while living and working in a *favela:*

> "The one thousand faces of Ana Mineira from Carangola: *She came to Rio de Janeiro* to work as a maid and help her aunt, who was living with an ill husband. For decades, she worked and lived in the [employer] families' houses. Over there, *she had the inspiration to create*. 'Sometimes, I was cleaning and had an idea. I stopped to make a note of a poem because sometimes the idea runs away,' she tells us. Once retired, she moved into Maré Favela and started a training course in painting [...]." (*Viva Favela*, 06/09/2014)

Although some of the anonymity still exists in part of the discourse, especially with regards to reports of issues and failures of welfare policies, the overall tone is more complex than this binary example of social mobility, in a financial sense, that used to be deemed as *success*. Let us see how an old model of community leadership may yet to come up in *favela* outlets, just to compare it later with more recent examples, as this report that tells the mediation from two community leaders to an eviction at Curicica Village:

> "Threatened of eviction, residents of the Curicica Union Village are informed that there is no house for everyone. With [regard to] this last-minute announcement, two of the more important resistance individuals couldn't attend. According to residents, the city hall did very little to ensure transparency and send information. Zezinho and Costa used a broken microphone, which made it hard for most people to understand what exactly they said. Although the support from [community leader] Zezinho and the words of Costa as a guarantee, the residents continued to fight for their rights." (*Rio on Watch*, 17/11/2014)

Different from the "guarantees" provided by Zezinho and Costa, what I argue here is that this *solidarity,* framed as such, is increasingly rare in *favela*-made reports. This new protagonist is less at forefront as a physical presence, and more 'online' when it involves bringing up major issues, such as that of the oppression of the poor and racism. The same happens to their growing involvement with politics and parliamentary discussions. Instead of dealing with the state at the level of these administrative questions, a body which is seen as an entity that often fails dwellers, producers publish more about the decision-making process of major power holders (see Chapter 7). During the period of this research, I noticed a special dedication to debating the project that aimed to lower the age of criminal responsibility for so-called "serious" crimes. This law change would specifically affect young *favela* dwellers who might be involved in petty crimes, then get involved with large gangs but

with no direct responsibility for the latter's schemes, while offering no chance of rehabilitation for those who had no education or opportunity, as this notice said:

> "Rapper Fall Classico reinforces that he is against lowering the criminal responsibility age after knowing the reality of the young man who robbed him." (*Mídia Periférica*, 27/04/2015)

Likewise, this political debate centred at *punishment* has risked a new re-assimilation of the subaltern condition of the *favelado*. Before as a poor, troubled individual, now a criminal and potentially guilty one. For producers, this constant aim to punish *favela* citizens stems from a pattern unequivocally aligned with the Brazilian history of slavery and discrimination.

As a feature discussed in Chapter 4, producers have adopted anachronistic associations of the present cases of inequality with Brazil's colonial past appear in terms such as *quilombos*. These were hidden settlements founded by fugitive slaves who escaped their lords and condition, but here this term defines precarious homes and relate to dwellers' fears of persecution by the police. To name a meeting location, a media collective, or simply, an event, as *quilombo*, is to raise society's awareness for their seriousness, but also to mark a position of union and shared isolation from mainstream society. Even though it is a painful reference to past slavery, it helps producers to assert a position of control over their destiny in modern times. I have italicised some parts of these calls:

> "*The quilombo talk*
> Every week, the *young communicator* invites one activist from the black movement to dialogue about black culture and speak a little bit about a black activist, *enriching our knowledge culture on our predecessors and those who fought for the race recognition*. We will post here about all the editions of the interviews" (*Mídia Periférica*, 20/05/2013)

This link to the past to assert present leadership also has softer references. Many outlets studied here referred to the Facebook page, *Favelados pelo Mundo*[47] (or "Favelados around the World"), which is an initiative that gathers many examples seen early in this chapter: the personalisation of producers' narratives, the intersection between poverty and sophisticated narratives, and historical bonds. This outlet started after producers decided to post daily updates on their trips around the world. While casual in its goals, this page targeted the old middle-class stereotype that states that *the poor cannot travel*, which often reads as: *the poor should not travel* (see Nascimento et al, 2008 or Freire-Medeiros & Name, 2013). As their cover image, they placed a stereotyped *favelado*, the poor, black man taking a ride on the rear of an old bus. This picture assembles the portrait of the extreme poverty of those dwellers who used to have no money to pay the bus fare (figure 5.5) with further cosmopolitan intents. The content of this page shows young *favela* dwellers taking selfies in front of tourist spots and visiting mainstream capitals, such as Paris and New York.

Figure 5.5 Favelados pelo Mundo's Facebook page (Snapshot)

I would conclude that outlets such as *Favelados pelo Mundo* deliver coverage of inequality that qualifies as a frame *solidarity*. Instead of reaffirming the gaps between the poor and the travelling middle class, the *contrast* that the producers try to show wrestles with a more subjective kind of hegemony. They suggest that *poverty* is no longer obstacle to other material affordances, it does not stop them from living other experiences. They attack the hegemony of deprivation, but not to aim at middle-class *rituals* only, but to state they own a knowledge of the world. There is a counterhegemonic intent, but this is subtler than the other examples of politicization seen. As the *favela* may be the occasional stop for tourists aiming to visit poverty, *favela* dwellers reverse this relationship by taking the *favela* to mainstream locations.

To summarise this section, this approach of having "*favelados* around the world" is only a smaller part of a whole frame that connects with the new *favelado 2.0* seen at Chapter 5.1.2, and to the *rolezinhos* visited in Chapter 4. These cases teach us how one can see poverty, inequality, and consumerism placed together in producers' intention, but not to establish the socially-accepted associations of affordance and prestige. These adjustments of representation aim, otherwise, to politicize their presence in a number of different ways. I would not say that this is completely aimed at showing inequality, as it fights other kinds of stereotypes that are also hegemonic. Next, we see that *life* is a recurrent discursive resource for producers, as they strategise their framing by *individualising* everyday facts and forging a new counterhegemonic order in which everything starts to have an individual impact. This strategy will be proven useful when dealing with the murder of *favela* dwellers, which is a fact that used to have little repercussion until recently.

5.2.2 Individualising murder to get support

The *politicization* of inequality has led intimate aspects of one's *life* to come at forefront in peripheral media reports. As already explored in the interview data, violence is a part of this frame. Available data grounds their concern in publicising violence as part of their life experiences. According to *Amnesty International*, in 2014, from the 244 murders by the police in the city of Rio de Janeiro, 68

were in the *favelas*, where mass murders are not rare. In the 1990 case of the 29 dead in *Baixada*, where 11 young men died after a mass shooting in Acari Favela, no one suffered any prosecution. Likewise, 65% of *favela* dwellers have said that they fear police violence.[48] In any case, violence in the *favelas* or in poor areas is hardly a new phenomenon (Vianna, 1990; Huggins, 2000; Huguet & Szabó de Carvalho, 2008; Penglase, 2014), nor should we assume that it is entirely due to the inequality context. To this research's points, producers have politicized this prevalence of violence through many other aspects—for example, the extent to which a crime is underreported due to the community's fears and how they could change a perception that the Court will overlook their causes due to their little importance for society.

Whereas not all crimes have been covered in the *favela* media, I found that a resource to create more impact was to transform the reporting of murders by focusing on the victims, their profile, and their personal history. It seems obvious, but in the past, producers have seen that murders were an event of local significance, in which the press rushed to other stories, while not returning to ask for inquiring into the investigation's outcomes. Then, producers started to individualise victims in their reportages at length, whether by printing faces and names on posters or by paying for online posts with provocative messages. By *individualised*, I mean this focus on the names, biographies and socioeconomic conditions of violence victims. These were not only names, but different ways to frame this information. Outlets have mixed current with the victim's past information, conjugating it with other similar examples that prove society's negligence and the serial nature of crimes. I propose a contrast with the anonymity that existed in earlier coverage, so we can see an hegemonic narrative being contested.

I sourced my mainstream examples from the leading portal, *G1*, picking up a random homicide I found in the peripheral media as a point of comparison (see figure 5.7). When reading both the mainstream report and the one from the *favela* outlet, visible differences appear. Whereas the former gives a generic headline, the latter presents the crime in straightforward language to include many elements that relate to the identity of the victim. While both employ the same imagery, the headlines reveal deep distinctions in what elements they prioritise. I have italicised some of these parts:

> "Relatives say the *dead young man* in Babilonia, Rio, was arrested by police officers." (G1, 27/08/2015)
>
> "One more, Clayton da Silva Modesto, *black, poor and favelado*." (*Coletivo Papo Reto*, 27/08/2015)

Figure 5.6 Coverage from G1 and from the Coletivo Papo Reto Facebook page (27/08/2015) (Snapshot)

If only mass murder cases have appeared as *massacres* in the mainstream press, I found the *favela* media extending the understanding of every single murder as a *massacre*. The "group" being victim of a *massacre* was not necessarily only the murdered individual, but the whole community. The inappropriateness of the past mainstream reports is epitomised by the graphic images of corpses lying on the floor during the *Carandiru* massacre[49] (figure 5.7). By individualising these crimes and transforming them into a case-by-case approach, the *favela* media producers created stories that offered a greater display of the victims' personal identification and their identities, thus appealing against a perception that crimes against the poor always happen in bulk. The *Carandiru* case sheds light on how, at the mainstream media level, no profile of each of the murdered prisoners has ever appeared in the press, as well as any reference to their race or background. By ignoring the individual in these catastrophic events, the lasting reference to event is the place where it took place (the massacre is known, to this date, simply as *Carandiru*) despite the fact it took the life away of 111 victims.

Figure 5.7 Image from the coverage of the Carandiru massacre in Brazil's mainstream media[50] (Epitácio Pessoa, Agência Estado, 1992)

Another example lies in the use of the term *traficantes* (drug dealers) or *presidiários* (prisoners of the judiciary system), which are the terms of journalistic reports, but which, again, fail to recognise

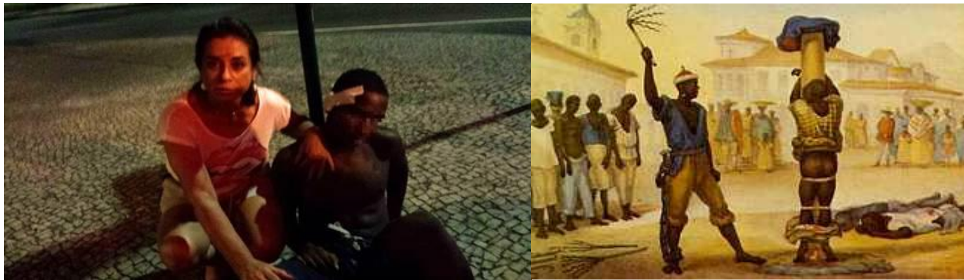
names, identities, and profiles. The main territory of action for media producers is this vacuum perceived in the mainstream media. Where newspapers have limited their naming of individuals involved in armed conflicts in the *favelas* (now mostly only calling by name a handful of drug dealing leaders), they have also omitted it during police operations in which victims are also poor, black and anonymous *favela* dwellers, including police checkpoints (which are intended to prevent crime and thus run unquestioned at the mainstream level). It is from this lack of respect for the individual identities of the poor or *favela* dwellers that the *favela* media designs its approach, taking a strong stance to warn against the violence used on *favela* populations daily:

> "*A decade of anger* in the *Baixada*: 10 years later after the *Baixada massacre*, parents, relatives, and friends of the victims gather to pay tribute. On 31 March 2005, eleven police officers, which were unhappy with the administrative changes in many of their battalions, met in a bar and planned revenge. The murder of 29 people has substantially changed the everyday of the victims' families and the lives of dwellers in *Queimados* and *Nova Iguaçu*." (*Viva Favela*, 04/02/2015)

In this way, consecutive waves of violence have led to the repetition of this standard of anonymising victims in mainstream media coverage, only to see them renamed in the *favela* media. In 2015, episodes of urban robbery or pickpocketing provoked a reaction from middle-class and urban *vigilantes*, who took revenge on black young men (who then appeared in anonymous videos tied to lighting poles).[51] As such images circulated in the mainstream news portals[52] and on social networks, the *favela* media outlets framed their stories as to show how fragile the position of poor individuals (invariably black or brown) was in Brazilian society. During these days, mainstream coverage was slowly catching up to report on the criminal attitude of the middle class, although it still did not bear any consideration for the personal identities and lives of the victims.[53]

Again, media producers once again invested in the comparison with colonial portraits. The key in this case was a Debret[54] painting (figure 5.8) from which commentators drew parallels between past events and these attacks. They linked the revenge taken on the deviant black youngsters to Brazil's past of punishing fugitive slaves. This frame was particularly powerful, as the image of the individual tied to the lighting pole could be compared to the image of the old slave at the "*Pelourinho*", the slave lashing spot. While this idea has not been echoed in the mainstream media, this case serves to assert—with precision—what producers really aimed for through the process of *individualisation*. Either as a reaction to the vague crime reporting and its intentional disassociation with inequality by the middle class or as a carefully-designed framing effort, media producers have contributed by making coverage migrate from the generic denomination of massacres (named after the place they occurred, as groups that were not counted as individuals)[55] towards more affirmative titles.

Figure 5.8 A black man tied to a lighting pole in Rio de Janeiro as shown by the mainstream media (2015) and a reproduction of Jean-Baptiste Debret's painting "Pelourinho" (1827) (Reproduction)



Another illustrative case is the *Cadê Amarildo?* (Where is Amarildo) campaign, which marked the disappearance of the builder Amarildo de Souza on 14 July 2013 from his neighbourhood in the *Rocinha Favela*. This case earned extensive coverage from the *favela* media; it started as an activist campaign but later emerged as stand-alone coverage. In terms of the activist campaign, Amarildo's face became the main illustration on t-shirts and on outdoor signs, carrying discourses that were later the basis of the *favela* media coverage.

The *favela* media had, for weeks, published a banner that read: "A builder, father of 6, Rocinha dweller, where is Amarildo?" As the first sentence insists, he is "a builder" and a "*Rocinha* dweller" (figure 5.9). Part campaign and part coverage, the coverage led to a reconstruction of Amarildo's routine and constraints while living in the *favela*. Producers vowed to offer evidence that Amarildo was no drug dealer, but the latest victim of what they saw as a *genocide* targeting black, poor and *favela* dwellers. They also linked this to the failure of the controversial *UPPs*,[56] the state policy that installed permanent police-manned kiosks at the heart of Rio de Janeiro's *favela* hills after successive military campaigns to occupy and restore civil normality. They protested that this apparently "normality" came at the cost of the *favela* dweller's peace and privacy. Therefore, *politicizing* the *Amarildo* case involved both privileging his life as a dweller, which was at stake, but also questioning these public policies as reproducers of *favela* oppression. It challenged the efficacy of these security policies, which, for some dwellers, controlled their lives but did not end violence.

Figure 5.9 Banner of the campaign for Amarildo de Souza (Reproduction)

Amarildo’s case triggered coverage that later came to lay bare the subordination of the *favela* dwellers to permanent control by armed men of the Brazilian Army, while the city’s centre ran free. Though I am not drawing more on this tension, it is important to keep in mind these parallel realities—i.e. at the local level, the distrust of police surveillance and, at a major level, the suspicion of the Brazilian judiciary, fuelled by claims that a biased justice system would ignore Amarildo’s case. On the other hand, the politicization of *life* also found in this coverage. As weeks passed and no news of Amarildo’s whereabouts appeared, the *favela* media reporters went further to underline the conditions in which the family of Amarildo lived, and a campaign started to use a picture of his family standing in front of their house in the *favela* (figure 5.10). Meanwhile, *favela* outlets continued to cover the daily news of this investigation:

> “Amarildo’s widow asks: ‘Where are the remains?’” (*Brasil 247*, 14/07/2015)

Whereas the *favela* media outlets scooped the early developments of this case, the mainstream media was also covering it at this stage, as international, notorious characters such as Julian Assange joined the campaign by holding signs with the campaign’s motto: “Where is Amarildo?”

Figure 5.10 Facebook campaign “Cadê o Amarildo?” (Snapshot)

Whether we analyse this as a successfully networked activism case or as a deeper coverage of inequality, we find producers constantly using these same discursive patterns. As data show, outlets continued to politicize every angle of the case, offering it historical readings, personalising it, and individualising the stories. On the Amarildo’s campaign’s Facebook page, the cover page once again depicted Brazil’s enslaver past by showing an image of prisoners dragged out using a collar chain that was used for fugitive slaves during colonial times. This continues the anachronistic linkage with the historical Slavery (as seen in Chapter 5.1), coupled with the fight against the old anonymisation of the victims, frozen in their condition of subjects to power. Furthermore, video reporters interviewed Amarildo’s family members (figure 5.11),[57] where peripheral media reporters visit Amarildo’s home

to use it as a backdrop for their documentaries.[58] This resulted in a media production that was later broadcasted in Rio de Janeiro's parliament.[59]

Figure 5.11 Documentaries produced on the case of Amarildo Souza (snapshots)

These multiple linkages with history, life, politics, and affectivity matter to the extent that we do not find a similar strategy in the past literature on the *favelas*, nor is such a strategy part of the alternative media. Would this case have attracted such attention in the mass media if it were detached from Amarildo's personality and class? Contemporary literature on life in the *favelas* (Perlman, 2010; Penglase, 2014; Jaguaribe, 2014) has set up a clear position of affectivity and group solidarity in daily activities, memorialisation, and resistance against external threats that affect the dwellers' lives. These data contribute enlighten our case to the extent that we find those elements serving a comprehensive coverage strategy. The frames deployed during the search for Amarildo and for his killers helped to the public's perception of "all or nothing" in the everyday routine of the *favela*. By narrating Amarildo's death not as one more, but his missing as *one less*, the coverage has achieved to make poverty images popular, underlining the argument of inequality at multiple levels (judicial, state, and society).

In anticipation of the court verdict, producers' coverage correctly pointed out that the victim was not specific police target but ended up as such due to the long record of impunity in cases involving the assassination of poor people from the *favelas* like Amarildo. Officers who took part in the torture of Amarildo and the disappearance of his body faced justice,[60] and the state had to pay compensation to his family.[61] In any case, the politicization from the *favela* media regarding Amarildo's case supported a portrait of Brazil's poor record of human rights, causing national and international resonance primarily based on many reports of the studied outlets (such a case united a diverse range of *favela* dwellers, which was rare).

I expand now on the political opportunities that stemmed from this case and from other episodes visited in this chapter. I apply Benford and Snow's (2000) model of political opportunity so as to tie together the range of innovative discourses analysed here. What do they mean if read altogether? I start moving from these many instances in which *favela* dwellers have tried to build new identities

(the frame presented as linked to the past) to read it as a single attempt to forge a mediatise their everyday struggle, and accordingly, pushes for politicized discussions on rights and citizenship. The next section stress the implications from seeing *life* as such prominent element in the *favela* media, appearing as dwellers' main weapon against decades of indifference and prejudice from mainstream society.

5.3 Conclusion: Reframing life in the *favela*

Through the analysis in this chapter I have shown how little from the tradition that forged the newspaper *A Voz do Morro* (Morel, 1986; Souza & Barbosa, 2005) has remained in the contemporary *favela* media. Consonant to this thesis's purpose of mapping "politicization", I investigated the extent to which producers approached hardship with soft stories and how they do transform them into politicized frames. If *A Voz do Morro* had become a paradigmatic example of *favela* communication, in contemporary Brazil it is more like an example of a cultural and community pamphlet (Morel, 1986). So, how can we interpret early-21st century's *favela* producers' efforts? What is the significance of their action to represent the diversity of its dwellers and still denounce the inequality that affects them all? To understand this change in the contemporary *favela* is to recognise that politicization exists because producers have seen themselves as liberated to explore other agendas. If there is no immediate pressure or threat of having their house demolished,[62] producers are to explore new opportunities to change the representation of the *favelas* in many aspects.

Therefore, what I saw as an appropriation of *life*, either to promote solidarity or to cover actions of community resistance that can fit in to both 'feedback to power' and 'adjustments of representation' aspects analysed in this research. For instance, Holston (2009, 2009b) investigated how forms of citizenship can resist in places of uneven rule of law and criminality. In this research, I saw these "forms of citizenship" as encapsulated in the use of *life,* which has had a use that goes beyond to the previous discussion on citizenship. While the category "citizen" is elusive to a population that still face dire constraints, this term comes up as of common use by officials who frame *favela* dwellers as victims, so the dwellers end up abandoning this term to logically escape the victimisation attributed to them. In other words, it is about building another portrait of themselves. These news pieces gave them the case for adjusting their media, socio-political. Because many of them appeared proud of their insider's knowledge – of what happens in the *favela* – this perception offered the opportunity to frame themselves as "those who are being respected" by both police and criminals (see Mattos Rocha, 2013).

In Benford and Snow (2000:624) we learn that *frame bridging* is part of a strategic process to successfully promote "ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames" (Ibid, 2000:624). This process happens in the case of *Amarildo*, as it also explains the *favelado 2.0* or *traveller favelado*, images that stem from the personalisation of the life in *favela*. Producers then connected loose facts and traces of contemporary life to a representational system that centred the attention at their primordial condition of *favelado*. In all these cases, frame *bridging* happened in different ways. Firstly, it occurred by bridging the use of ICTs in such a way of displaying new material affordances (the *favelado 2.0*), those which were previously limited to the middle classes in the context of Brazilian inequality. In the case of *Amarildo*, it was the absence of justice for the disadvantaged alongside the difficulties for the poor in paying for prime access of expensive lawyers. Hence, coverage tried to reverse traditional impunity by bridging a personal tragedy and later transforming it into a new politicized frame.

Furthermore, by claiming that a *new favelado* was born, producers have acknowledged other social issues that stem from this name (e.g. illiteracy, criminalisation of poverty) (frame amplification), linked it to their life stories and skills (frame extension), and led isolated injustices to become mass causes (frame transformation). To a greater degree, these cases of frame resonance aimed to raise the awareness of external allies (whether artists or the mainstream media), but it reveals how *favela* dwellers can gather around a common language. Without this, the new *favela* would not echo anything, but the old de-politicized lyricism seen in the *Voz do Morro* newspaper. To another degree, normalising the term *favelado* has also disrupted the hegemonic sense of isolation imposed on them, as dwellers were formerly "imprisoned" but their stereotypes (Valladares, 1978). The *favela* media have thus confirmed that the citizens can now move across to other parts of the city and around the world (as in the *favelados pelo mundo*).

Having set these two framing paths based on private lives (life as an asset to stop hegemonic discourses and politicize new frames), media producer's main aim was to assume the role of the protagonist. This new spokesperson has talked crime, drawing associations with history by deploying discourses that refer to small details of one's experiences in *favelas*. This character is not afraid of including unpleasant experiences, and to a lesser extent, those facts related to crime and violence. By covering their life but privileging such intimate interfaces, they dwell on an imaginative, post-materialist aspect observed in other cases involving the South American youth (Blasco & Krausen Hansen, 2006). *Self-designing* life can have profound counterhegemonic impact as it shows how personalised entails the permanent display of both soft and hard aspects of one's expectations: it is about meeting celebrities and seeking publicity, as it is about crime and joblessness.

Both ways of publicising dwellers' life in exchange of showing inequality differs from what is known as a "popular newsgathering" among citizens (Atton & Hamilton, 2008). To allow this new radical fluidity, producers vowed to set themselves free from the total influence from activists or NGO volunteers, or churches, and even from that of the mainstream media. The role of these agents has, none the less, continued as one of "partners" and that should continue as it is and as it appears in literature (like in Rodríguez, 2001; Davis, 2015; Custódio, 2017). Through this new fluidity, producers triggered new ways of exploring their "cultural opportunity", which is an important pillar of the concept of political opportunity (Benford & Snow, 2000:629). Culturally, this fluidity transmits only to the ordinary dweller the ability of knowing what no one else does, allowing them bridge the *particular* way in which the *favelas* understand the facts. This change is disruptive because no other actor can mediate that on their behalf, and alters a scenario where institutions (NGOs, politicians) or individuals (celebrities, sociologists) have had, literally, more weight than dwellers did (as discussed in the first section). Ultimately, this shift creates an internal dynamic that invites many other dwellers to also "embody the *favela*".

In fact, I associate this fluid way of politicizing the *favela* life with this mix of formal with informal names that has enriched the *favela* discourse. Segre (2009), for instance, discussed the notions of formal-information contentions. Where *formal* or *informal* used to depend on the engagement of institutions and mainstream society or merged with organised activism, *favela* serious reporting and the so-called mundane activities appear together, whether through the posting their own pictures or in a chat with the audience. As far as scholars have focused on the effectiveness or feasibility of this kind of fluid *favela* production from an audience-forming perspective (e.g. Medrado, 2007), I would argue that the value of this fluidity resides, besides other roles not mapped here, in the growing sophistication of dweller's terms, which mirror a further revitalisation of the *favela* toward mainstream society, potentially emerging as a bottom-up consciousness of power.

Many angles are still available to analyse this nuanced politicization of life in *favelas.* We can still understand its repercussion during recent episodes, including the weeks-long anger behind the recent state interventions in the *favelas* (Granja, 2015), its importance for a new aesthetic of protest in Brazil (Soreanu, 2015), and compare it to the double standards of the press regarding the *favelas* (Lacerda, 2015). My inclination here is to point out the centralisation around the individual from *favelas*, which confirms the shift from a pattern that has only sought the "collective of anonymous" as the main frame. This change can be noticed, for instance, in how the murder of the builder Amarildo has developed upon. His poverty and precarious conditions in the *favela* has not appeared as second-level information. Yet, it was his condition of "targeted" citizen for his poverty that came at as a first layer in producers' frames. Eventually, this narrative got him in the news primarily because his ordinary citizen status, who could be from anywhere, but in this frame, he *had* to be from the *favela*.

In sum, the *favela* media has first fulfilled a major goal of politicizing inequality by helping dwellers and outsiders to adjust media representations, helping dwellers to broker a new coverage in which they can give a more effective feedback to power. Yet, I argue, its biggest goal has been one of revitalising the image of the *favelado* to then introduce a new institutional and civic expectation from this actor, perhaps enabling new political aspirations. As *favela* dwellers have recently organised to launch their own political party, they start connecting with black movements and other *favela* dwellers to forge partisan representation.[63] While this section's conclusion deserves more development in future research, to what concerns visualising the "peripheral media" in action, the *favela* media has contributed to the generation of collective frames that deepen and politicize discussions about inequality in Brazil. Other than that, it enabled the action of media producers and *favela* dwellers by blazing the trail with highly politicized discourses and angles that are strategised to get further resonance in the media, having been tested among a vast set of collaborators.

This chapter approached two levels of the coverage of the *favela* media producers. Firstly, it presented how producers' discourse has reimagined the *favela* and the *favelado* by revitalising concepts that fit into a new landscape of ICT access and new material affordances. In the second part, I reviewed evidence to sustain that, by investing in the leadership within the *favela* or by individualising crime victims, producers shared images of their communities and raised the awareness of their profiles. In these developments, the prevalence of politicized discourses involving a new *favelado* as a citizen that claims rights and protests violence has broken the past consensus centred on the underestimation of this citizen. Then, I analysed scenarios where peripheral media outlets have pushed for political opportunities that granted dwellers a new form of self-representation that is more than identity based. I defended that by reframing the *favela's* decades-old conflicts with such imaginative self-representations, these outlets have fulfilled the fundamental goal of making dwellers emerge as protagonists of their own political narratives. Through its discourses and partnerships, outlets have enabled the *favelas* to fight and replace the hegemonic portraits of weakness and passivity. In the next two chapters, I ponder on the many ways in which the peripheral media has also focused on reporting about different levels of media and state power.

6. Challenging the mainstream media

Introduction

Known by the nickname "big media", Brazil's large media organisations occupy a significant space in the coverage of the peripheral media. Scholars have tried to understand the weight of these organisations in terms of pluralism and media democracy since the early 1980s (Straubhaar, 1984, 1991; Azevedo, 2006; Porto, 2007; Matos, 2008). Centred on Globo TV, authors see these organisations resembling a monopoly, in which independent producers have neither the space to grow nor the conditions to access the market. Yet these players can manipulate public opinion and, overall, divert the press from modernisation towards the players' own gains (Amaral & Guimarães, 1994; Lima, 1996; Waisbord, 1997; Paiva et al, 2015). It is none the less true that such big groups have promoted socially-conscious discussions and dialogue, from which may stem democratic frames that help develop some sort of citizenship model (Porto, 2007). Therefore, there is a consensus about the role that Globo TV and a handful of mainstream newspapers have played in contributing to democracy, but also in overshadowing further pluralism (Waisbord, 2000:87; Matos, 2008:22).

This research does not focus on the role of the mainstream media, but on the opposition that producers have expressed against its hegemonic discourses. It is not possible to ignore that the peripheral media also aims to change the weight of the mainstream in terms of the way in which the public understands inequality through mass media. I dwell on two different aspects. First, I reflect on producers' expectations of building a more "democratic media" by increasing the awareness on inequality; I also stress that while they see mainstream coverage as superficial, they work to identify other opportunities of a new politicization. In that sense, I also assess the importance of *educomunicação*, a practice that trains disadvantaged people on the critical role of communications. In the second section, I debate the results of the frame analysis that showed producers leaving the *big media* paradigm in search of excellence in their practices, politicizing their journalism through new formats of *watchdog* journalism. I start by reviewing the debate on media democracy, linking its continuous relevance with the coverage of inequality, and then discussing the extent to which producers have corresponded to all expectations raised in the literature that see the mainstream media as the ultimate and hegemonic standard.

6.1 Tensions for the right to communicate

Alongside the politicization of inequality, most producers with whom I spoke revealed a position on the mainstream media. Whether supporting or opposing Brazil's biggest media organisations, it became clear that the producers are increasingly abandoning binary positions of opposition or full compliance and moving towards a notion of conditioned partnership. Data appear to reveal two distinct stances. The first stance is one of total dissent, in which producers repeat accusations of media monopoly and criticisms about the "conservative" nature of the mainstream media. In another stance, producers have been open to a limited partnership, especially regarding technical cooperation, as long as this does not affect their agenda, frames, and ideology. When questioned on the direct consequence posed by the mainstream media for people's understanding of inequality, producers argued that such large and powerful media apparatus leads to less visibility of the everyday scale of social issues. They still accused large conglomerates of draining their possibilities by limiting their chances to create new audiences and diversify the agenda.

This first exploration matters because it informs the level of politicization or solidarity. In these two frames, what do producers bring as novelty in the face of their past criticism? For example, references to Globo TV are meant to attack its institutional weight in terms of Brazilian democracy or its market exploitation, but how do producers could possibly respond to accusations such as one of "cosy ties with the powerful"? They argue that one of the best solutions to this turmoil is to deliver the real "voice of the periphery" (also in Fonseca, 2003). I revisit some of their opinions about this:

> "Here we have, for example, two big newspapers, historically owned by two conservative families. Our local TV channel only broadcasts Globo TV and we have another network that broadcasts the Bandeirantes [media group]. The space is therefore very difficult to dialogue with; we do not have many alternatives. Therefore, we have been trying to face that discussion." (Media producer 38)

> "Let us talk specifically about Globo, which was born in 1965, a year after the military coup. It [Globo TV] must follow its own interests, but it cannot deny [that] it has spectators; therefore, it must [occasionally] talk with them. The same Globo that denied it, supported the dictatorship. It [did], one of these days, apologise [for its support]. […] To talk about this would be to concede and propose the democratisation agenda inside Globo. This would be very difficult for them, as it would for be for Record [TV]." (Media producer 37)

Another producer saw that the only antidote to all kinds of inequalities that stem from Globo (both in terms of media access and of limited portraits available) was to build a strong consciousness that informed the public about this background. At the same time, they are admittedly unable to refuse a sort of relationship with Globo TV, irrespective of its agenda, practices, or current programmes. For

example, this producer pondered all that comes from the technical supremacy of this player, which is not entirely negative:

> "I think that the economic aspect [of domination] defines the ideological one, because who pays more is who has the space, and this naturally touches upon this pedagogical process of market ideologisation. [...] We, unfortunately, have no economic power, and economic exploitation not our interest. [...] I shall recognise that sometimes [social] movements create barriers for this dialogue; therefore, when you start to think about these [private] institutions as the main responsible agents, you start to demonise these private institutions—you end up shutting these doors." (Media producer 39)

Otherwise, producers also offered their criticism on the entire system of licence distribution in Brazil, as argued by this producer from the Ceará state:

> "We don't have it [license to broadcast] because it's all sub-divided. It is all split among the business people, and among very few families in Brazil that rule the communications and, not by chance, a good part are also politicians. Jangadeiro TV's proprietor, the second biggest here [in Ceará state], is Tasso Jereissati, and Verdes Mares's TV is Edson Queiroz. They are a media conglomerate and, during a certain period, wanted to join politics. We have to take this out of the hands of these people, otherwise it'll be always the same thing, and they'll only speak of their interests." (Media producer 36)

It is an ambiguous relationship because there is criticism about the lack of diversity in ownership, but producers also confessed that they need this mass outreach to get stronger publicity for social issues. In that case, the question for this research is if they still get to develop a stronger counterhegemonic coverage (as they assume). Moreover, this ambivalence towards the mainstream can also be seen as they look for models amid professional journalism. While some left-wing players are cited, they are also considered as part of the mainstream, as this producer argued:

> "We were journalism students and were involved with left-wing militancy. And, of course, they expected [that] we had contact with people from *Caros Amigos*, *Carta Capital*, and *Le Monde* in Brazil, which [are outlets] with more critical perspective. And because we know a lot of people from São Paulo [who went] through these experiences, I was starting to understand how it is that thing of militant media in Brazil, and, I could say, the background [of it] during the dictatorship, the fight through the clandestine scene, the difficulties […] And, always, we [have] had a lot of this. We had a certain will in seeking to know how that was the 'historical' and that influenced us for sure, very much. For example, the *Movimento*, the *Sol* newspaper and all these old outlets—we had contact with [them]." (Media producer 14)

A more positive view of the mainstream has also been voiced by a few producers. However, these producers still do not give up framing their views or original work as antagonist to these actors:

> "[…] To be honest, *Globo* has invited us to talk many times. Our producer goes there and she talks about subjects they do not like to touch upon and debate. For example, *Globo* has

recently spoken about gender: how can we debate gender in a *Globo* programme? They have sought us, and we are not taking any profit for us, but we are glad that we can send our message through." (Media producer 44)

"Well, we've done things with the *Roberto Marinho Foundation*[64] as well as for *Futura TV*. Our editorial policy is like: 'we can do it; if you want to fund us, [that] is fine, but we will do whatever we want.' If in case one wants to change what we do, obviously, we won't accept." (Media producer 36)

Therefore, the point of departure for seeing any counterhegemonic coverage is not looking for opposition, but seeing *how* producers can deliver better quality, and *demonstrate* their opposition politicization. While we must not downplay data that show the continuity of an unequal media system and its effects (Fonseca, 2003; Porto, 2012:61; Paiva et al, 2015), this research contributes more by exploring how they are delivering politicized frames in that sense. Hence, I go through some evidence that shows that producers have framed this opposition by working on their notions of quality. It is through discourse, but also by taking on mainstream formats, that they base a new form of reporting that tackle the hegemony of the latter.

6.1.1 Forging critical, bottom-up pluralism

Producers who criticised the media concentration also spoke about how the insistence of this topic prevents a more diverse inequality agenda. Their overall impression is to agree that, because the mainstream media is owned by "families", it might not care about producing media programmes that could bring up new social issues and human rights issues. But even if they do agree with this, they point to a bigger threat, that of a prevalent *entertainment*-driven agenda. Producers believed that because it is a private media system, some subjects would never receive proper space in the media. Moreover, the system's regulation does not consider this issue (lack of representation) as a formal limitation or something that must be imposed on broadcasting companies. The government should offer mass media alternatives (in the shape of public service media, discussed in Matos, 2008), as it contemplates these missing items as an agenda of its own:

"There is no public channel [through] which we could talk about human rights. Meanwhile, three channels bomb us with crime news during lunchtime. There is no quality; there is no democracy in communications. They may have [channels]; even the religious fundamentalist people might have their channel. But we have to have the channel to speak differently." (Media producer 36)

"We're fighting hegemony, but, at the same time, we're becoming mature. This is our fuel [for] life. That is why our work makes senses. It does not make us afraid because [ours] is not a big work, or because [there are assumptions that] society is not ready. The balance is at continuing the work even knowing that you have to go against yourself." (Media producer 45)

Producers' criticism of large conglomerates about these persisting issues of representation is often down to their failure to address the indigenous, black people and other minorities. Putting issues of each community aside, such minorities would be *victims* in this representation for being "pooor and excluded from mainstream society", and therefore unaccounted in a commoditised system. Being fair towards this excluded layer would mean rescue them from the media obliviousness and bring forward their politicization:

> "Their representation is often not really nice. It is as [if they were] folklore, or they talk about them [the indigenous] as if they were disrupting the development of some real estate. This appears in a prejudicial or 'cultural' manner, as if it were culture and not part of the population. The *Indigenous World Cup*, they broadcast. So, if they find [it] interesting to broadcast the indigenous games, with all that beauty and everything, why not show the reality of the indigenous people, as some of them may still fall victim [to] slavery? In some cases, they are killed for land." (Media producer 28)

Looking at the above case, this opposition comes up when one analyses the coverage of the mainstream with that of outlets such as *Agência Pública* and the *G1* portal. While the former has consistently explored the pains and the daily struggles of indigenous communities, the latter has featured the indigenous prominently due to its "Indigenous Olympic Games", in which images are of festive congregation. It is not to argue that the agenda for the Brazilian indigenous tribes should always bridge suffering and degradation, as producers recognised the "mix" of news as the ideal. However, if this mix is not achieved, it is the replacement of one agenda for the other—*leisure* is replaced by *conflict*—that strikes the producers most. It is a dichotomy that transforms the meaning of every indigenous presence in Brazil's capital, Brasilia, making it contentious, no matter how serious is the issue of land redistribution. In terms of the tribes fighting for rights in both cases,[65] it is the conflict and "invasion" that stand out in the reports (Figure 6.1). This absent pluralism within an inequality agenda makes it poorer at the mainstream level and which the peripheral media replaces by politicizing people's complacency about it.

Figure 6.1 Coverage of G1 of the "Indigenous Olympic Games" (left-hand side) and Agência Pública's coverage of protests in the Pará state for indigenous lands (Snapshots)

MENU G1 REGIÃO DOS LAGOS

20/04/2016 13h45 - Atualizado em 20/04/2016 13h45

Jogos indígenas vão reunir tribos do Brasil em Maricá, no RJ

Disputa inclui corrida com tora, cabo de guerra e provas de tiro com arco. Objetivo é mostrar capacidade e talento dos índios no esporte e na cultura.

Do G1 Região dos Lagos

Evento indígena será realizado em Maricá (Foto: Fernando Silva/Divulgação)

A Aldeia Kaaguy Hovy Porã (Mata Verde Bonita) de Maricá, RJ, vai realizar a partir desta quinta-feira (21) a Jornada Esportiva e Cultural Indígena (Jeci). Esta será a primeira vez que o município vai receber o evento, que a expõe a cultura indígena e será realizado na aldeia de São José do Imbassaí. A programação está prevista para se encerrar no domingo (24).

Os jogos serão coletivos e típicos, como as disputas de corrida com tora, cabo de guerra e futebol. Haverá também provas individuais de

Cala-boca em Belo Monte

11

por Alceu Luís Castilho | Direitos Humanos, Truco! #Cartas Na Mesa

A reportagem que abre a série "Cartas na Mesa", em que cidadãos criticam os candidatos, é sobre a maior obra do governo Dilma; 40 mil pessoas, principalmente indígenas, sofreram o impacto da obra

Producers also aim to politicize discussions over soft portraits. They have argued about the de-politicization promoted by Brazilian *soap operas* (Figure 6.2). As a result, the website *Mídia Periférica* has produced what they call "Postcards from the Periphery" (Figure 6.3) with pictures displaying the reality of unfinished brick houses and streets in which garbage lies apparent—these images correspond to the "reality" of a city outskirt in Brazil. At the same time, by naming it "postcards", the initiative also communicates a sense of distance with their interlocutor, metaphorically assuming the periphery as a distant location (as discussed in Chapter 2) for those who live downtown.

Figure 6.2 Scene of the soap opera Avenida Brasil (2012)

Figure 6.3 "Postcards from the periphery" by Mídia Periférica (website snapshot)

Once producers agreed and acknowledged that telling this *counterhegemonic* truth lies in their hands and that it is possible to publish more about it, they also drew strategies to make it more resonant. It became clear for many of them that the politicization or criticism of mainstream portraits is not enough. The responsibility to improve the feedback to power and the diversity of frames becomes a challenge on its own. In a way, they must improve reception from a public that has, for decades, been conditioned and, therefore, limited, to mainstream media formats. To ensure this message came through, they discussed professionalised strategies and content production. This revealed the reasons behind why they cannot pose an unconditional opposition to Globo TV or to other mainstream companies, as these producers pointed out:

> "The social movement language is too much of a pamphleteer, very hermetic. They tend to do things for themselves, and we started perceiving that our role was making them [able] to speak out, that they should start to speak to other people [...] Although, I am saying that social movements are tough with language, at [the] same time, we have learnt a lot. They have a political background; there were things we did not know why they were fighting and then we later understood." (Media producer 36)

> "Our magazine has been always very concerned with the language we use. We never got close to making a text, for example, a kind of reportage to tell the history of some place, but we [very] much respect the journalistic standard. On the other hand, we aim to make the most accessible language possible, [whether it] is a text [or] a photo, but it has to be mainly accessible for the people of our age." (Media producer 48)

In fact, the mainstream media can also be a barometer for quality, as producers conceded that they occasionally targeted mainstream columnists and asked them to publicise some of their causes, issues, or materials, depending on whom showed empathy:

> "There are interesting things on [the] mainstream media. The *Fantástico* [Globo TV programme] was doing good things [in] those days. The biggest issue is really the monopoly, the group of executives; there is no issue in having channels owned by the business group. The problem is having a channel owned by the society; only business people own it." (Media producer 36)

> "We are all volunteers and there is some contribution from outside, when we ask some columnist or renowned writer, such as *Xico Sá* or *Cora Ronai*, if they could write about something, but all collaborations are voluntary." (Media producer 36)

Others resorted to remember the long radio heritage in Brazil, with a handful arguing about the necessity of using the radio platform to dodge the digital divide:

> "Our outlet has to reach a poor boy from the Marsilac [São Paulo neighbourhood]. Perhaps he does not know us from the Internet, maybe he has to run a printed magazine. […] We have a radio show on the community radio of our neighbourhood. If you think, what is a community radio with a two-kilometre-reach? This is nothing, but we must use all the tools to pave a bridge. We reproduce our show on the Internet later. We fully upload the radio show on to our website. We are looking to articulate through many tools." (Media producer 08)

The issue of the mainstream media not reaching all locations and not talking about all its people, despite its large breadth of technical infrastructure, is another unexplored opportunity. This producer argued about the relationship between "visibility" and "effectiveness" in their production, as both concepts do not depend on each other:

> "The mainstream media are spaces in which we want to arrive. We want to occupy the space of the mainstream media. We do not want just having visibility through the mainstream media. If that happens, it will happen because of our performance or to give more visibility to something interesting [that] we did." (Media producer 36)

Producers from Brazil's northeast are most likely to resent the incomplete coverage from the mainstream:

> "We know we live in such a plural country, rich in culture and diversity. The media headquarters, nowadays, unfortunately, are in the Rio and São Paulo axis, as if all [of the] country could be summarised only in two federative unities. This is something that not only our project, but all the sectors, all social movements, are mobilising [and] articulating through many meetings; [they are] trying to end this and democratise the media." (Media producer 44)

> "We are talking about why a certain magazine would worry about articulat[ing] the northeast. My experience working in a southeast-based blog showed me that if we do not set our own agenda, the people from São Paulo will not do it. There are many things to talk about, but there is a lot of neglect. Let's be honest." (Media producer 14)

An aspect of this "effective" coverage of inequality, especially at the broadcast level, also lies in the uneven attention given to issues of violence, land disputes, and the protection of indigenous tribes. Those are urgent representational needs, linking "human rights" not only to the basic needs (i.e. water, food), but also to a wider context of inequality and public services:

> "They wanted to make a campaign on the public lawyers. You know, in Brazil, those to die the most are those connected with human rights. Especially in rural areas and, these lawyers, they are invisible. Nobody knows about them. Once in a lifetime, when someone like Dorothy Stang dies, who was an American missionary, the people come to realise it. An American missionary died in Pará [state], so that is news. So, they came up to do a campaign via the Internet, but we said we thought it better to use part of the money to make a film, travel across Brazil, and even [though] the budget is low, as we think that this is important, we fit in that sort of thing." (Media producer 36)

The above producer weighed in on the press's double standards when reporting a case of murder in the Amazonian hinterlands. Full exposure, or "politicization", was given to the case of Dorothy Stang, the American philanthropist who was murdered in north Brazil. The underreporting of similar cases involving ordinary Brazilians triggers criticism. For example, we find the admiration for mainstream professional efficiency, but criticism for its failure to incorporate a popular language and focus on local cases. While these mainstream media organisations have enough infrastructure breadth to include Brazil's large territory, their failure to do so becomes the basis for the general wish to go "beyond" in this coverage. That goal includes fulfilling the current insufficient interest in other publics and fighting against the prevalence of entertaining over a politicized coverage. The extent to which that shift in representation matters involves finding the right language or including stories that have seemed not newsworthy enough for a mass audience, but which are key to vast parts of the country and fully represent classes or skins colour.

As we leave the old debates, I find that the opposition to the mainstream concentrating less on its size and commercialism, and more on its hegemonic way of framing reality and its results for the periphery. This hegemonic pattern is not so much directed at mainstream players (Paiva et al, 2015), but at society, which has failed to *forge pluralism*—but not a kind of pluralism as the existing model of soft representations (e.g. the *favela* as a soap opera), but a critical pluralism that is not afraid to show the real conditions of the periphery (e.g. the peripheral postcards). A change in the draconian media's code could speed up that transformation and force a new realism within media coverage, but as producers have shown, they prefer *forging* coverage meaning to choose from forgotten voices, a counterhegemonic front yet to be explored. In brief, if for the mainstream media, the peripheral media might have seemed obscure, the latter's aim is to, recognisably, produce content that is more accessible and engage in agendas that are part of the public interest, not so much as the mainstream interest (e.g. the coverage of public prosecutors).

Before fleshing out what these initiatives are, and what public interest comes to be in this case, I have also reflected on other circumstances that entail the generation of a more critical pluralism. Producers also mentioned a strong inclination to *educate* while *covering*, a responsibility often refused at mainstream media level. In practice, instead of radicalising a boycott against mainstream productions,

grassroots media producers have dedicated part of their time to forming consciousness on the present asymmetry and on the need for fair media representation. In the next section, I highlight two cases that mirror this consciousness, which also helps to flag the limits between mainstream and grassroots reporting. As I draw critical perspectives regarding the concept of *educomunicação*, a grassroots concept cited by producers, I put it into context with similar programmes sponsored by the mainstream media organisations in Brazil and in the UK.

6.1.2 The citizen journalists and the role of educomunicação

As I approached media producers, I became aware of the role of many organisations, NGOs, and university programmes that train young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to produce online media. As I was invested in understanding *counterhegemony* in non-mainstream media, this role led me to question the extent to which these organisations could exert some influence regarding the politicization of inequality at a strategic level. This effort of *educomunicação*, or educating for communications, has reached producers with no media experience or those who are in journalism schools, as several of the producers interviewed have said they were. These producers also cited inspiration from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Indeed, the 1980s' MacBride report did cite the absence of local communicators as one of the biggest issues in Brazil regarding "media development" (MacBride & Abel, 1984). Among the issues raised in this report, at the time, was the need to form new media communicators, as the presence of new outlets seemed urgent. Would this *breeding* of new producers lead to more "media development"? Is that consonant with a real politicization of inequality? How could *educomunicação* come to later develop into "coverage"?

I first approached the question of whether *educomunicação* leads to *politicization* by querying producers on their commitment to educating other citizens, most of whom were from low-income backgrounds. They argued that, after realising the mainstream media's failures to report on the periphery, they decided to "act". Secondly, I became interested in exploring this effort as a "natural" consequence of their "role", as both words are pieces of their repertoire. Media producers, educators, and journalists had already gathered together in the 1980s (Festa & Silva, 1986) when their aim was also to give "critical thought" to new media practitioners (Guattari & Rolnik, 2008). However, media producers have refused to engage with this side of "grooming" citizens as a structured process; they prefer to frame it as a voluntary effort. Regardless of success or failure, the idea was to "prepare the ground" for future market possibilities. Eventually, I also came across similar kinds of initiatives from the mainstream media's side, most of which were aimed at train new media producers. Taking the interview data as my primary source, I then contrasted what producers do with other mainstream's citizen journalist schemes.

In terms of the mainstream media, I selected two pioneer programmes: one in Brazil, sponsored by the *Folha de S.Paulo* newspaper, and the *Guardian*'s *Rio Voices* in Britain. Regarding *Folha de S.Paulo*'s *Mural*, the scheme's idea was to cover everyday issues from peripheral communities, which would create reports published online in a blog hosted under the newspaper's main website. Young collaborators would generate their material and receive supervision from a *professional* journalist who was a member of staff. In Brazil, this scheme produced a blog that first appeared in 2010, led by Brazilian journalist Bruno Garcez. After five years, 650 posts appeared on *Folha de S.Paulo*'s website, where one finds the following description:

> "*Mural blog* is produced by some dozens of community correspondents – on their majority, they are students or those who already graduated in journalism, but overall bloggers who are interested in telling what is happening in the region where they live, in São Paulo's periphery and surroundings."

Looking at some of *Mural'*s publications,[66] we find many familiar topics to the outlets explored in the scope of this research. These are urban concerns, such as the lack of public transportation and healthcare, as well as reports of racial discrimination and inefficient public policies. In 2015, the blog counted fifty correspondents from the Greater São Paulo. One participant reported, in one of these posts, that his willingness to join the project came after living in the periphery and perceiving that what he was living "was not shown on television".[67] Five years since its beginning, *Mural* has fructified into another news agency.[68]

The second project featured here is in Rio de Janeiro, in which the British *broadsheet The Guardian* has also developed its own "professional training" with community journalists in Rio de Janeiro, Mumbai, and Johannesburg. This initiative started in 2010, receiving funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and appears within the "*Guardian* development" section. Yasir Mirza, one of the *Guardian's* representatives, has written about the main foundations of this programme:

> "So now we are making this a regular part of what we do, by launching the *Guardian*'s Citizen Reporting Programme – for Marginalised Voices. The aim is to work with marginalised people around the world, empowering and amplifying their voices with training and support. We'll cover how the news life cycle works, how to help verify a story with evidence, where to find this evidence, what constitutes local, national, and international news, and how to pitch and connect to us digitally."[69]

Published under *Guardian Witness*,[70] this scheme brought out stories on disadvantaged communities, including evictions and development issues, as well as reports of Rio's *favela* violence. The *Guardian* has promoted workshops with selected citizen journalists. *Michel Silva*, a young reporter in this project who comes from another media project in the Rocinha Favela,[71] has taken part in the

Guardian's coverage. I tried to contact Silva for this research, but multiple attempts received no reply. On 14 December 2015, a piece signed by Silva in the *Guardian* reads:

> "A teenager called David was killed today during a firefight between drug traffickers and police. It barely makes the news. This month, Rio de Janeiro focuses more on the Olympic test events, which are taking place in the richer areas of the city. Shootouts and killings in favelas are all too common and rarely appear in the newspapers. However, thanks to smartphones and Internet access, residents are filming the shootings and publishing the images on social networks. It is an attempt to draw the attention of society to violence in Rio's favelas."

These articles appeared initially in English, later translated into Portuguese. Leaving aside any potential translation issues, the articles followed the newspaper's style and were therefore edited before publication. Even though the news organisation has agreed not to interfere in this content, Mirza suggests that they may still be subject to further review and approval:

> "We can't turn around and say, 'that's really interesting and a really serious issue but it's not a story for us'. So you have to finesse it and approach it in such a way that you empower and train people."

Having been given the main guidelines for the mainstream media's programmes of citizen journalism, many producers with whom I spoke were keen to collaborate with large media organisations. For some of them, this interaction could be a successful "win-win" partnership, though they emphasised individualisation and personality. When analysing similar initiatives to forge community journalists through training programmes sponsored by NGOs, social movements, or universities, one finds a universe of activists, university members, or psychologists giving lectures on a kind of media practice that fits the needs of the disadvantaged youth.

The literature details many successes of communication for "empowerment projects", from which one harvests good results. Many studies have actually drawn on the potential that springs from *teaching* media producers to "find their voice" (e.g. in Riaño, 1994). With that in mind, I spoke with a coordinator of the *Associação Imagem Comunitária*, based in the city of Belo Horizonte, a charity that trains and enables small-scale media projects. One representative told me about their core activities:

> "What we do is to support and strengthen the media production or community communicative processes put out by groups, collectives, and sociocultural institutions. These are their outlets, not ours. An exception was a programme associated to the *Rede Jovem de Cidadania*, one of our biggest projects. The production was ours, [in] partnership with groups and youth movements based in the greater Belo Horizonte. It was broadcasted for more than 10 years in the *Rede Minas* network and Brazil TV [national chains]." (Coordinator, Imagem Comunitária)

What this contributor's testimonial also sheds light on is the wider *social value* of the media and communications, which leads us to the differences between both kinds of programmes. While Brazil's *educomunicação* arises from the Paulo Freire's pedagogic tradition (Freire, 1970), which seemed influential for all interviewees (to the extent that they receive no backing from a major funding scheme, but the ideal sounds strong), there is no mention of such broader values on the mainstream media's side. Programmes have appeared tentatively and not for the long term. That is the opposite to grassroots initiatives, such as *Renajoc*, a network of young communicators of Belém and Manaus in the north. The same is true for the *Desabafo Social*, which gathers young media producers from Alagoas and Bahia. The involvement of academics has also shed light on how universities can play an important role. This can either happen directly (I visited the *Coletivo Rever* from Sergipe, formed by ex-university colleagues) or when groups stem from modules taught at the university level (as in the small city of Minas Gerais, where a programme of community media training comes as part of the curricula from the University of Viçosa).[72]

Figure 6.4 Home page of the Favela News website (Snapshot)

I spoke with *Favela News* (figure 6.4), which receives support from US-based NGO *Shine a Light*. While working with the communities of Recife, this NGO's aim is to pursue a middle path between education for professional fluency and the self-awareness of the disadvantaged youth. For them, the latter should have nothing but their own efforts to develop as a small media organisation. The NGO has offered ICT access and training infrastructure to young people to create content at first; they can also operationalise tools and, more importantly, reflect on what portrait they want to create for themselves in the media. The project started in 2005 from field research conducted by anthropologist Rita de Cácia Silva and American-born Kurt Shaw, along with the NGO *Shine a Light*. They argued that encouraging this population to access new technologies, as well as encouraging them to follow the routine of publications, was a major challenge:

> "Of course, we had to work a lot on training, but the biggest challenge was the everyday discipline. Knowing that they had to know that and there is no excuse. If we wanted people to see it, we have to send out things to the Internet every day, or many days per week […] One of the difficulties is getting the people from the periphery to access new technologies. At [the] same time, there is an immense creativity in this population. Training people in this area is challenging. If one is up to [it], he can do it on [his] own."

Here, the concept of community journalists does not refer to those who are granted space by the press amid the *hard news*. Rather, it lies upon the reporters' lives, as participant producers said they felt counted as "full individuals" and not as operators of an exceptional kind of reality. This is the biggest difference between these grassroots projects and those started by news organisations. In the latter, programmes prioritise professionalised commitment over the other complexities that stem from inviting young media producers. Silva and Shaw told me that dealing with multiple cultural or conceptual backgrounds has not always been easy. If not a clash, it is a tight competition with other entities that surround disadvantaged communities in Brazil, including that of other NGOs and evangelical churches (see Chapter 5) and the appeal of cheap, widespread "popular" news—mostly crime and uninstructive pop culture. Producers were also aware that assuming journalism as the best platform and language for this youth is another way to limit other possibilities of their expression:

> "This producer, for example, is a young man who works with us. He is an autodidact in breakdance. He is a perfect dancer, and he can win contests. [To fit in our training,] you must recruit the right person and his or her interests for things [to] run all right. I think we find a lot of resistance in this sense. We, [for instance] have struggled a lot to find a right girl from the periphery that could take part in this project and who could have this curiosity."

Another *educomunicação* group called *Gambiarra*, from *Vitória da Conquista* in the state of Bahia, told me of the challenges of competing with this popular press while "educating" their audience:

> "I think here, in Vitória da Conquista, those who consume Internet news seek for news related to crime reporting, and this is an approach our outlet does not follow anyways. We try the opposite. We aim to include the debate on 'rights violation', on 'image rights' for example, that relates to the image of a dead individual that one sees in some newspapers. The most accessed blogs are those which have this 'police news' approach." (Media producer 50)

When comparing both kinds of training programmes, we find a common preoccupation with improving technical skills, but distinct aims and expectations. Both similarly try to increase the reporting abilities of disadvantaged individuals, as said earlier, in order to address the lack of voices in the media environment. While mainstream organisations can boost the *favela*-based youth by promoting short-term publicity, which is an unthinkable target by many other disadvantaged producers, *educomunicação* initiatives can boost long-term counterhegemonic communication. Following Paulo Freire's (1970) theories on liberating the oppressed by making them understand the "causes of reality", the small-scale but widespread presence of *educomunicação* makes this

dissemination of values more relevant by seeding critical values that do not take the supremacy of media organisations for granted, as they do introduce new concepts of *fairness* in the media representations' arena.

Otherwise, by forging "community journalists" through making them attend a list of workshops and by sending their texts to reviews, the mainstream editors could create hierarchised partners.[73] This youth's media potential could thereby suffer constraints from an exogenous policy, which may be at odds with the criteria of their own. The risk of inviting community journalists who work for themselves, even though their actions are still in favour of their community, is depoliticizing them only to enrich the variety of constantly actualised and potentially *paywalled* news websites. As said, *educomunicação* seems to follow distinct purposes, it is less tied to publicity and more to value dissemination at the grassroots level. For this research's purposes, it became clear that *educomunicação* is aimed at politicizing the youth in a slow fashion, whether because it explores topics such as language or because it promotes an understanding of communication as a "right". Instead of tying down producers by offering them a privileged space in the media, *educomunicação* does not seem bound by formats, but in discourse.

In sum, both programmes have formed scenarios that are not necessarily complementary. *Educomunicação* is a strategic process to form counterhegemonic communications, and "citizen journalists" schemes are fit for the purposes of the news business but do not bear any relation to the past or present of communities or to the long-standing mission to challenge narratives. In the next section, I present results from the frame analysis, which add to this discussion by informing on how this counterhegemonic intent channelled by *educomunicação* can be seen in practice. Having discussed these initiatives, now I discuss how producers have sought to sharpen their discourse through classic journalism formats, such as that of so-called *watchdog journalism*.

6.2 Revitalising storytelling

The content analysed showed that, from the 120 articles examined, only four offered politicized discourses against the mainstream media companies, directly and through their coverage of inequality issues. Amid these occurrences, a smaller number tried to politicize stances against the big media's omissions in reporting events or, instead, its excess of "bad news" in a time of optimism under the leftist Workers' Party government. While perceiving less *frontal* clashes, producers' opposition has been more strategic and thoughtful. Although part of the analysed sample indeed characterised a strong opposition to the very organisational environment of the media in Brazil, as we shall see next, producers aimed to draw on what the mainstream media could do better to build their own notion of

balanced coverage and a careful, data-orientated approach. A few producers then assumed that the mainstream media covered no “real issues”. This interest in “covering issues that are relevant” is what provoked frames of “politicization” and not necessarily the former opposition to media brands.

In the next two sections, I explore this *politicization* by competition, still defending that producers are moving away from the criticism against media ownership and concentration, and instead focusing on improving their skills of storytelling, drawing on the insufficient language used at the mainstream level. Overall, there is a real attempt to create alternatives to the mainstream media, but my interest is in how the peripheral media may operationalise its media criticism by centring it on politicizing inequality rather than treating counterparts as purely *enemies*, a tendency that some authors have judged to be the *only* possible approach from the alternative media (Amaral & Guimarães, 1994; Waisbord, 2000; Paiva et al, 2015).

6.2.1 Reducing rivalries with the mainstream media, redefining balance

Although at a lower rate, attacks against mainstream organisations still appeared when examining the content under the frame *politicization*. Producers have targeted companies such as Globo TV to accuse it of insufficient coverage of inequality but, mostly, this accusation responded to the major climate of instability that stemmed from Brazilian politics after 2014. I do not discuss the deep settings of this specific polarisation, as what concerns this research is the real importance of the vocabulary citing Globo TV as a “dangerous institution” or “champions of inequality”. What does it say about the coverage of inequality?

Confrontational vocabulary such as this has appeared mostly in the radical newspaper *Brasil 247*, the most politicized if one sees the partisan terms used on its coverage. As the intensity of Brazil’s politic and economic crisis increased, which later culminated in the “impeachment” of president Dilma Rousseff in October 2016, these attacks could only echo the condition of the family-owned media, despite all other structural problems of the media environment. I place some examples from *Brasil 247*:

> “Pessimistic, the family-owned media sector sees inequality.” (18/09/2014)
>
> “*Folha*’s columnist defends inequality.” (14/06/2015)

The case of *Brasil 247* is still controversial because police investigations later found some of its editorial staff involved in allegations of corruption.[74] Secondly, the outlet’s support for disruptive activism against Globo TV on its daily coverage also stood out when comparing it with other outlets included in this research (figure 6.5). During weeks, the portal supported activists who stormed into

Globo TV's live transmissions, with demonstrators holding messages such as "Marinho family's mansion in Paraty" (which was about a luxurious estate owned by the conglomerate's controller family). On one occasion, the portal had the following favourable headline to these flash protests:

> "The little beard man informs: Globo TV, we will not give you a rest." (16/05/2016)

Figure 6.5 Snapshot of Brasil 247's website (16/05/2016)

In fact, it is important to put these factual demonstrations in context according to the other sampled outlets. Not all of them have turned to this confrontational tone against Globo or against the mainstream, nor did *Brasil 247* do this on behalf of the "periphery". My finding regarding blogs written from the periphery of large cities (which is not the case for *Brasil 247*) is that one finds more general accounts relating to the *mainstream* (*mídia global, grupos de mídia*) in these blogs and therefore there is less confrontation if one looks at big metropolises such as São Paulo. For the outlets based on the periphery, being in dissent from the mainstream did not mean dissenting from media organisations, but instead voicing messages against middle-class privilege, protesting racism among the Brazilian elite, or even opposing stereotypical images that appear in the international media. In that sense, *Brasil 247*'s coverage is an exception in data that otherwise confirmed more partnership and less antagonism in a confrontational sense.

This post from the *Mídia Periférica* blog (05/04/2013), for example, discusses the way in which foreign journalists tend to frame poor communities negatively, rather than giving a normalised account of their ordinary life, despite the occasional issues communities confront:

> "Sensationalism: The periphery is not a stage, nor are the young actors in this theatre. What makes a foreign journalist come to Brazil and prepare a story for Reuters, a globally known website, and spread sensationalist images from Salvador's peripheral communities? We are not here to say that there is no [drug] dealing. We know that deaths and everything else exist, and we know why they exist; it is because of the lack of public policies and government's help within the communities. [...] Beyond this journalist's take, there are young people spreading out in their communities with emerging cultures and local artists."

The above criticism refers to a story run by the news agency *Reuters* regarding the criminality indices in slums from Salvador. Entitled by "A World Without Smiles", this piece highlighted the prevalence of drug dealers in poor communities. The illustration that accompanied that story showed an individual with a gun in each of his hands, as his face appeared hidden by a cap. This tone of banal violence, somehow staged, and with a poor neighbourhood of Brazil as a background, has shocked the editors of many peripheral media outlets, which led them to place criticisms against the so-called "global" mainstream journalism. In other stances, blogs such as *Viva Favela* have also published critical analyses of what seems a wasted chance to appear on global news outlets.

Figure 6.6 Image featured by Reuters' report on the Salvador slums[75] *and the image published during the coverage of the 2014 World Cup (AFP)*[76]

Again, instead of criticising the *power* of international news agencies, producers have adopted a strong disapproval of their discourses that are conditioned to show violence with no other sides depicted. The coverage of the 2014 World Cup (figure 6.6) and the recurrent images of police officers carrying snipes while walking in the *favelas*' narrow streets have also outraged media producers due to its partial approach to poverty and crime. Producers saw it as connecting dwellers and crime with no space for their own views. As much as mainstream media editors (or at least those who are responsible for the publication of these images) might also be misguided in their choices and frames,[77] that sort of media treatment becomes increasingly unacceptable to producers, as they also act as media watchers. In brief, this kind of media criticism and the quality of the attention the periphery receives seems a pattern that is more important and urgent than the politicization around Globo's power carried out by *Brasil 247*.

As a result, media producers end up rewriting the rules of professional journalism to suit fairer purposes. While framed in this research as a politicized, combative stance, the position I collected from the peripheral media editors actually claims a new notion of *balance* that does not criminalise and does not victimise dwellers of Brazil's periphery. An example of this new *balance* lies in the

portal *Rio on Watch*'s campaign and toolkit to guide more proper media coverage of the *favelas*. The website has offered extensive criticism on the way in which mainstream media organisations refer to these and other low-income areas in Brazil (for example, by calling them *slums*), a treatment that, they argue, stems from a general disregard for these areas. The terminology would reflect the fact that journalists, alongside tourists and visitors, have patronised dwellers with their own vocabulary and interpretations:

> "The strength of a word: The Slum Stigma around the world. Most of the English language reports on Brazil, during the intense spotlight of the World Cup, have translated the word *favela* into *slum*. This is not so surprising. Every single journalist or editor [will] find examples of colleagues employing the same term, as Google translates favela into slum and slum into favela." (*Rio on Watch*, 20/07/2014)

The preoccupation of producers with reporters phrasing *slums* as the *favelas* is due to the limited degree with which big news organisations are prepared to consider the history and the affectivity that exists in these communities. I contend that this native coverage "recolonises" the mainstream way of doing things and includes producing a data-rich discourse that is, none the less, a type of politicization that can raise the relevance of producers' work as critics and observers of the big media, as we will see next.

6.2.2 Politicizing transparency: The case of Belo Monte

The case of the *Belo Monte* dam is a good example of how "reliable journalism" is a title under dispute. It is key for this research's purpose to lay out the reasons behind such politicized coverage, as it articulates discourses that are more complex and dressed in new media formats. It also matters to understand the context, where *politicization* does not mean diverting from the standard but creating updated versions. The construction of the mega dam in the Amazon was a widely covered topic in the mainstream media; it was controversial, as it touched upon environmental, economic, and social variables in the city of Altamira, Pará, in the heart of the Amazon forest. Among all peripheral media outlets that have covered the social impact of *Belo Monte*, *Agência Pública* carves out a position that is unique. It moved towards a civic discussion, publishing reports that approached many of the undisclosed social issues behind the project. I drew a quick comparison of its verbiage with the coverage of *Folha de S.Paulo*, italicising some key passages:

Table 6.1 The Belo Monte coverage by Agência Pública and Folha de S.Paulo

Agência Pública	*Folha de S.Paulo*

“Shut up in Belo Monte: This the story that opens the ‘Cards on the table’ series, in which citizens criticise [the political] candidate [and] the biggest construction of *Dilma’s government*—40,000 people, mainly indigenous, have suffered the impact of this project.” (*Agência Pública*, 09/04/2014) “Approximately 44% of the National Economic Development Bank (BNDES) funds *is completely obscure*. More than the half of what BNDES sends abroad is completely confidential. The Bank deals with transparency through this way. Although *this money* is public, coming, for instance, from the Brazilian Treasury or from the Workers Support Fund (FAT), from the Work and Jobs Department [...] In search of what happens with this money, our team has found investments in infrastructure in the Amazon, a place where these works have provoked *huge social and environmental impacts.*” (*Agência Pública*, 09/12/2013)	“The urban population increases from 100,000 to 140,000 in two years and transforms the city in a chaos of traffic accidents, violence, and expensiveness. On the other hand, this place will receive *thousands of houses and sewage structures*, which have never existed. Read on this report everything that has been done and what is *missing to minimise the impact* of this work in the city’s life.” (*Folha de S.Paulo*, 16/12/2013)

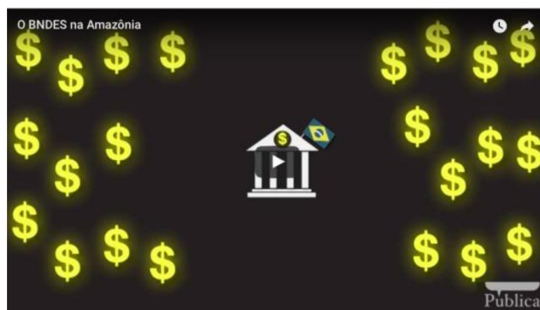
Looking at the above coverage, it is possible to perceive how both approaches differ—for instance, from “minimising” the damage to pointing out “huge social and environmental” impacts. If the situation in the city of Altamira is damaging for the population, the *balance* that seems to guide the broadsheet’s language obfuscates the pressure on government and authorities. Distinct from the less urgent tone in the story found at *Folha*, *Agência Pública*’s report highlights environmental damages and uses clear language to *politicize* the lack of clear explanation for the misuse of the “vast resources” dedicated to this work (by calling it *money*). *Pública*’s media producers have given to an average reader a stronger sense of what is going on out of the construction plant, linking it to the lives of affected citizens (most of whom are poor and indigenous).

As later revealed,[78] *Folha*’s special report was partly paid by the company in charge of building the dam. Although this does not affect the case analysis in this research (neither do other pieces later published by *Folha*), this information confirms the importance of knowing what is an independently-funded piece, as claimed by *Agência Pública*. The latter’s reporting has meant to reveal the consequence from the constraints of access faced by its reporters, who received no sponsorship from the building company. This form of “journalism” has assumed that having no special access would appear as an advantage for its piece.

As seen above, *Folha*’s emphasis on the inevitability of the dam shows the newspaper’s constrained position on delving into the work’s real impacts. The newspaper has done it, but it could have done

more. This dilemma reveals the degree of idealism in any idea of *watchdog journalism* (as per Waisbord, 2000). *Agência Pública*'s coverage (figure 6.7) claims a deeper commitment to journalism's social mission, which translates into interviews conducted with Altamira's residents and fine videos and animations where the message to taxpayers is straightforward and provocative: "Brazil National Bank of Development in the Amazon: How our money funds [infrastructure] works in the Amazon" (*Agência Pública*, 09/12/2013). This text not only appeals to a politicization that is based on the poor, but also on formal democratic premises of taxation and return, which is an angle that is not commonly found at alternative media level (often based on emotion and personalisation) (see Chapter 5). Eventually, this material also results in a *fine* media product, a professionally made animation and didactic explanations on public budget and return on investment.

Figure 6.7 Agência Pública's animation on Belo Monte and public funding in the Amazon (Snapshot)



The contrasting conditions in which each outlet has covered *Belo Monte* maps onto the different degrees of what one understands by watchdog journalism. In terms of what concerns this research, this *genuineness* politicizes issues, as it contests the mainstream media with provocative questions such as "who is more realistic?" and "whose *reality* is the big media more interested in?" (as in Table 6.1). These questions connect to past scholarship that saw the typical alternative media stance in this discussion on *open* process (Harcup, 2003; Rauch, 2007). But here I argue that while it was certainly meant to reinforce the daring conditions of the reportage, it "was *proudly* produced with no support". The process becomes the politicized discourse in this case. Even if it did not bring the Belo Monte's works to a halt, the coverage and language employed in *Agência Pública* reports still employed a huge effort to place the dam's damage at the forefront. To sum up, their work was undeniably more about the surrounding neighbourhoods than about the *dam* itself.

The main takeaway from this evidence lies in the new ways to dodge *hegemonic* imperatives of this coverage, both in terms of production guidelines and a sense of priorities. First, it tackles the counterhegemonic position of the mainstream media as a unique narrator in such a remote location. Second, it challenges the assumption that the mainstream media's production methods are the only ones that might lead to reliable and superior reporting. Third, it conveys transparency to the reader

regarding the process without giving away its degree of radical discourse. The necessary formality, in the sense of seriousness, exists so reporters are positioned to analyse a work that costed the public billions (by offering a breakdown of costs, statistics, and animation). Now I analyse how we can link this reversal of priorities to think about a renovated set of journalism standards. This goal of dominating mainstream practices to the point of responding to its has appeared in both the interviews and the frame analysis.

6.3 Conclusion: Towards a bottom-up critique of journalism

This chapter analysed producers' interests in tackling the mainstream media's views of the periphery by engaging with public interest journalism or framing what they do as such. While it is not my aim to discuss who is inside and who is outside of journalism as a profession (as in Schudson & Anderson, 2009:89), there are clear efforts in politicizing the limitations of professional reporting. The duality of not abiding by journalism rules but also aiming to evoke it, mock it, or even assume the position of "journalists" is well addressed in literature (Harcup, 2003; Atton & Hamilton, 2008; Forde, 2011). The same critique of journalism has historically been present among "grassroots" media groups from South and Central America (Rodríguez, 2001:21), but here I dwell on the discoursive side of this critique. The peripheral media differ from these groups because it responds in a more nuanced way. What stands out in this research is how this duality does not apply to invalidate what the mainstream media do (no claims of elite alignment or corporate construction of reality, for example), but it does translate into more politicization of existing social and reporting issues.

The literature on political opportunity has seen "opening media access" as one of the ways in which movements could create broader avenues to broadcast what they see as social change (Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Tarrow, 1992). In this chapter's cases, I see that the assumption of "seeking media attention" as problematic, and therefore hard to apply to the case of the peripheral media. If producers have, as seen, advocated against the *big* media, they have also voiced no wish to join or replace, but to shadow frames of an imagined better mainstream media (fairer, and focused on social issues). The producers whom I interviewed were ready to collaborate with powerful Globo TV (Chapter 6.1.1), but they also preferred to act primarily based on their own discourses and websites, which meant the total rejection of the big organisation. Likewise, they have recognised the value of the mainstream media's own formation programmes (Chapter 6.1.2), but still not abandoning the decades-old concept of *educomunicação*. These developments have shown producers' common language with the mainstream media as far as they mobilised *their* audience as *their* publics to *their* politics.

The discourse against Globo TV organisations expectedly departs from the deep-seated image of a "monopoliser" (Amaral & Guimarães, 1994) but evolves into something less important. For instance, only two producers remembered the company's ties with the military dictatorship (1964–1984), for example. In the 1970s, Globo allegedly received funds from American investors to guarantee a supportive agenda to the right-wing regime; it was when the Marinho family had consolidated their hegemonic presence with a TV network (Amaral, 2002). Researchers such as Bernardo Kucinski (1998) have also raised arguments about the enduring ethical dubiety of Globo's journalists, what he called the "parabolic antenna syndrome".[79] *Globo*'s problematic dealing with democracy has appeared in producers' discourses. In this research, neither the personal accountability of mainstream journalists, nor disguised interests of the broadcasters were at stake for producers.

The "ideological" aspect to which the producers relates to the decades of literature hailing Globo TV's technical and professional supremacy. Straubhaar (1984, 1991), for instance, has often quoted works on Brazil's "asymmetric interdependence" towards the US, but pointed out that Globo TV's *telenovelas* could create a less dependent relationship. Fox and Waisbord (2002:1–21) firmly defended the group's local and regional power, although concluding that this power is peripheral and not one of a "world media player". Other authors have discussed the soft power of Globo TV as a contributor to national identity (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Porto, 2007). Radical perspectives also placed such importance by casting doubts on the viability of a media democracy, what continued to place the mainstream media such a central actor (Kucinski, 1991; Amaral, 2002).

As result, the politicization verified here is subtler, but gets to the point of these many debates. I prefer to translate it as a *tension,* a sentiment which is also demonstrated from the mainstream media's side. In defence of their history, Brazil's media moguls have lately[80] compared Brazil's media experience with that of other countries such as the US, coming to publicly apologise for past commitments with non-democratic forces. Commercially speaking, Globo TV's grandiosity and ability to export goods such as *telenovelas* has not been that different from other media organisations (Rêgo & La Pastina, 2006; Thussu, 2006:166). Likewise, it is fair to concede that no evidence has ever proved that the mainstream organisations have blocked producers' prospects of developing a more inclusive and bolder media. Instead, they often appear as a role model for some instances of professional journalism (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001; Wilkin, 2008). In brief, producers have taken the mainstream media factor less seriously than the media studies literature have done it.

Why does that happen? First, I would be sceptical about notions of the "rejection" of the mainstream media (as discussed in chapter 2) and instead to engage with ideas of *balance, continuum* or *hybridity* (Harcup, 2006; Kenix, 2011) to describe the relationship between the peripheral and the mainstream media, but more data need to prove it in a qualitative perspective. In brief, I would say that there is too

much going on for producers to reduce them into a small amalgam of dissenters. A new reporting reality is indeed visible, which is based uniquely on producers' interests and affordances. Based in the far southeast, producers from *Agência Pública* have travelled to cover an agenda that is far away from them because they believed to be of *public* interest. The same is true for the videos that *Nigeria* produced after visiting public prosecutors in the countryside of Brazil. Outlets such as the online magazine *Vai da Pé*—a self-funded online magazine based in São Paulo[81]—have underlined their inclination to follow an *impersonal public* (as in Haas, 2004), in which they envision a less institutionalised and conservative type of audience and reaffirm a broader activist imperative with an "interpretative" scope (Harcup, 2003:371; Rauch, 2007).

Many producers have also argued (in Chapter 6.1.2) that part of their mission is to reach an interclass, interracial collaboration (via *educomunicação*) in which producers from privileged backgrounds can share technical skills with other producers, in editing in expensive software, for example, as in the case of *Favela News*. In this way, *Vai da Pé* and *Nigéria*—formed mostly by middle-class white producers—can talk on behalf of other producers or activists with less media formation, as this may also happen the other way around. At one level, this collaboration starts to mingle productive with discursive standards; on the other, that integration leads to a working collaboration, which produce alliances in many sectors of the professional media, and this is what constitutes the peripheral media's main challenge to the mainstream. As result, the middle class, *favela* residents, together with media producers of other kinds of profile can take on journalism imperatives seriously enough to afford an occasional breakthrough in the so-called media market (e.g. *Voz da Baixada*).

All these intersections are enough to claim that the politicization around the mainstream media reflects less of the dominant presence of big media players (as in Tarrow, 1992), and reveals more of the new challenges that producers pose to the old portraits and its producers. Yet, my reading of the real counterhegemonic shift from the 1980s' agenda (Festa & Silva, 1986) lies in the greater diversification of the media environment and consequent obsolescence of the debate on the media monopoly and media regulation (e.g. Paiva et al, 2015), which does not assume that the current institutional framework is appropriate. In brief, the main hegemony tackled is how stories are told: if the (mainstream) media can offer enough commitment, if they operate on the grounds of transparency, or if they speak to the poorest Brazilians.

As producers migrate away from directing attacks at the mainstream media, they started seeing these issues as too engendered to tackle and easier to make something better. This strategic thought is seen in a film produced by a *Nigeria* film collective, in which the group criticises media representations of beachfront dwellers, but the group's main concern is in delivering the finest product they can. Watching this online short-length film, *Subdivided Sand*, one finds no direct references to the

mainstream media, as if the group aimed to *overlook* what the public sees on Globo TV, and convince spectators by placing their narrative as the only reasonable viewpoint.

While it is true that peripheral media producers' increasingly proficiency is not enough to discard the tradition of public service and responsibility by Brazilian mainstream journalism (Medina, 1982), they get to bypass the bargains and relations with power holders that has been typical of journalism in South America (Waisbord, 2000:182). The harsh market reality in the region feeds the pressure for media change and media convergence, and both aspects have also become subject of criticism and politicization by the peripheral media. What I intended here was to acknowledge not only the growing limitations of these sector, but acknowledging new dimensions of the criticism dedicated to the mainstream media in Brazil, but at the same time, confirming that they are far from the only preoccupation and scope of peripheral media producers.

In this chapter, I reviewed evidence that confirmed producers' struggle in fighting portraits and practices that have affected the coverage of inequality in Brazil. Even though mainstream practice can indeed influence them (Deuze & Bardoel, 2001), there are new ideological frontiers. I aimed for more clarity on what are considered unacceptable media portraits, trying to unveil new initiatives that take on the mainstream media (via *educomunicação*), as well as analysing how the same agendas appear in different way. The contribution of this section was to move away from the "colonisation or collaboration" paradigm, claiming that such binary terms no longer correspond to the opinions collected from producers on their relationship with the mainstream media (Harcup, 2003; Marques & Bailey, 2012). Producers have opened up new ways to politicize inequality based on enhancing the media practices in their favour. Challenging the perception of a public service journalism that is dependent on mainstream media organisations (Waisbord, 2000), this chapter still debated the extent to which peripheral media producers can, on top of their difficulties, still tailor media pieces according to a politicized viewpoint, and adjust their media representations. In the next chapter, I end this thesis' empirical chapters by stretching the discussion on the *strategies* drawn by peripheral media producers to revitalise the image of the periphery in relation to the Brazilian State.

7. Challenging the state

Introduction

In the last chapter, I explored the extent to which peripheral media outlets have absorbed different influences from the mainstream media as strategic resources to attack current media portraits and build a more engaged and counterhegemonic coverage of inequality. In this chapter, producers also appear to draw on notions of public interest in a way that helps a more politicized coverage of inequality. Yet, here they have tackled discourses inherited from the Brazilian State, interacting with its swaying power. I use interview data to verify whether producers are trying to unmake this historical influence, and frame analysis to see *linkages* of contemporary inequalities with state intervention. It is important to obtain a full grasp of these state-citizen-media interactions, seeing the potential of continuing or breaking with past state-led perceptions that saw the poor and excluded as inferior or as naturally marginal in relation to mainstream Brazilian society. The common perception of Brazilians regarding inequality has involved viewing the participation of the state in solving social issues; this allows them to assign full responsibility to politicians on this issue, or justify their own indifference (Boschi & Diniz, 1991; Reis, 1999, 2000; Henriques, 2000).

On the other hand, the leftist governments that came to power in South America during the 2000s led a few authors to discuss the potential "ideologisation" of the alternative media to favour these governments' views and policies (Kitzberger, 2010; Villareal, 2015). For example, counting many media activists and media scholars among government allies or as part of its staff (Abers et al, 2014), president Dilma Rousseff's terms (2011–2016) boosted public policies orientated towards funding and expanding the alternative media. Were these developments aimed at reversing the historical dynamic of persecution between state power and the alternative media (Sodré, 2008)? Would this incentive change how society perceived poverty (via *assistencialismo*) in the periphery? These questions are fundamental for this research, to the extent that they allow us to stress the peripheral media *coverage* and how they could potentially renew producers' these discourses about the state. As this thesis spans across a period when left-wing state ideology sold Brazil as leaving the stage of underdevelopment to finally become a prosperous society, the idea is to contrast producers' opinions with these discourse of the state helping to relief poverty versus a state that now is close to the "alternative" media. I start by reviewing the ways in which non-mainstream coverage has historically opposed or engaged with the state.

7.1 Interactions with the state and the struggle against inequality

Interview data pointed to two main patterns in producers' discourse, one aiming to revise the role of the state in inequality, protest the lack of public services, and campaign for welfare policies; in another pattern, they oppose the latter's attempts to change the scenario. In the second convergence, producers viewed with suspicion the definitions given by the state, finding populism where politicians have tried to help the "needy". In the first, to protest the government's lack of attention to public services, producers made use of anachronistic references, as they linked current state negligence and the failure to support them with Brazil's authoritarian political past. In this first pattern, the producers still engage with the state in attempt to get support for funds to feed their media production. Aware of the unprecedented effort from Dilma Rousseff's left-wing government to "develop" the alternative media in the country, producers enjoyed the existing opportunities but, at the same time, voiced critical stances against the state handling of the overall media environment.

Both points are related to this research's topic for two reasons. They help us to understand the ways in which the state is a part of producers' coverage of inequality, whether when it is politicized or not. Secondly, it helps to see that, while not always in opposition to the state, they still confront politicians, authorities or institutions, in which they follow some criteria (as we see in the next section). Overall, we can understand *coverage* here as also a bridge to promote new interactions with public officials and the understanding of bureaucratic realities, or even as a way for producers to aim for direct meetings with public officials. In fact, at least regarding what concerns the periphery, this is a major shift for a country where inequality was not considered everyone's responsibility, neither has the state taken full responsibility (Barros et al, 2001; Galeano, 2013). Next, I start to outline part of this coverage of inequality that sees the issue as a state problem, in which producers explore distrust and hopelessness as a way of politicizing inequality issues.

7.1.1 Distrust, public services, and dialogue

In a first analysis of the interview data, I found that there was a general pattern of producers arguing that government failures regarding inequality related to a long history of unfulfilled electoral promises, especially when it involves public services in marginalised communities such as the *favelas*:

> "We try to show this [issue of] neglect, the lack of access to basic things. Going to a health centre and not having the right to take the vaccines; *the government is advertising [these] on TV* and they do not exist. Or the school wherein you want to study and there is no electricity,

> at least to drink fresh water or to be able to see what the tutor wants to teach, what he is writing on the board." (Media producer 36)

Even when some of these public projects in communities do start, their distrust also extends to the ability of the state to deliver works and facilities, especially as governments change and, in the meantime, policies tackling social issues do not move forward:

> "Unfortunately, we have a huge difficulty in keeping up a policy; whenever a government or political party wins an election, that policy is discarded, and we no longer have it." (Media producer 39)

Most producers have had the clarity to assess the roots of such neglect, as well as the roots of its inherent distrust. Most of them have considered it a by-product of the many interruptions to democracy in Brazil, which, at the same time, provides them with stories and an agenda:

> "When we talk about the re-democratisation period of Brazil, we are talking about a period in which some people try to erase what happened. Until a few years ago, [there was a] book called the *Revolution of 1964*, which the supporters justified as stopping a communist coup—this is one of the widespread versions. They taught it as if that was 'for your benefit' or 'this happened but it is over'. What happens is, the people do not stop to think about it, on its leftovers, on what is still here. For example, I speak about the criminalisation of the graffiti, which is one of these leftovers that we find. Why can't I do my graffiti? Because I can spread any message, even things from the media." (Media producer 38)

This persistent inequality of the public services offered to the periphery echoes Brazil's dictatorial past in its decade-long lack of orientation to the cities' outskirts, which lived amid permanent social tragedy. This is another recurrent link to the state's (mostly wrong) handling of communities' issues. On many occasions, producers have spoken out about local issues, whether about poor public services, or stretching these issues into a debate for the need of more institutional democracy. In Baixada Fluminense, an impoverished area of Greater Rio, producers of the self-funded newspaper *Voz da Baixada* have assembled all these global and local issues by forging their own strategies to create dialogue directly with the city hall. The newspaper has proposed a monthly meeting with city hall representatives, in which one of the editors discusses issues that affect the *Baixada* region. They believe these meetings could improve the local community's perception of democracy and perception of state power. A leading producer told me:

> "An idea we have started is to promote the 'Baixada Dialogue', which is an initiative in which we bring up pragmatic solutions previously proposed by other city mayors. We set up open meetings, in which we call the people to join us, and it is where we talk about current issues, such as health, the sewage system, and security. We invite a specialist in the subject or someone from the *Baixada*, who could be very involved in this subject or social movements, depending on what we discuss, and the public manager or one of the mayor's assistants. After

> 10 ‘Diálogo da Baixada’ meetings, we can make a document with citizens’ proposals and deliver it to future mayor candidates during the next election.”

According to what producers said, this initiative had two distinct implications. It first assured readers that media producers were indeed committed to taking social issues beyond—in this case, towards a practical acknowledgement, thereby reducing the gap between an imagined government and a real one. From a media perspective, this outlet’s initiative transformed their role from media producers into real community leaders (see Chapter 5.2.1 on the *favela* leadership), which could be otherwise unnecessary had the state forged more visible and effective channels for such issues or had the state taken these inputs into serious consideration.

I focus now on aspects that affect the internal production of outlets, approaching their initiatives to make part of state policies as “alternative media”. It does not mean they abandon their effort to lobby the municipal instances of power, it means that they do not give up their role as media producers and aim to live for this goal, thereby seeking more funding and institutional support. Once they have received grants, public bursaries, or direct publicity from the government or have applied to do so (which allows them to grow as media initiatives), would such support reduce their criticism of the state? I approach this question to the extent that inquire into producers’ views of what could be counterhegemonic coverage if one receives funds from the agent they denounce and are suspicious about. I will question whether their public role continues if, to some extent, they become partners with the state.

7.1.2 Public funding of peripheral media outlets: Jeopardising politicization?

My analysis starts when evidence collected on sources of funding attests to producers’ using funds from public grants. That information has obliged me to further examine how attractive were the emerging public policies for producers and how this could undermine their independence and ability to engage in counterhegemonic reporting. Brazil’s federal government has invested in developing new grassroots media groups across the country. It started as a continuation of Lula’s first policy, *Culture Points*[82] (2011–2014), a set of policies implemented in Dilma Rousseff’s first term (2011–2014); it went further to increase funding and organise the promotion of media groups focused on ethnic, sexual, and other minorities.[83] Despite its innovative call to “create media”, the *Free Media Points* programme (figure 7.1) continued its emphasis on digital access by implementing focal points, in which citizens, especially young people, could have ICTs and Internet access for free (Pretto & Assis, 2008; Pretto & Bailey, 2011). These initiatives not only created a nationwide interest from many producers with whom I spoke to, but, by subscribing to these initiatives in a scarcely funded field, they inevitably developed new opinions about the government and the Brazilian State.

Figure 7.1 Government's advertisement of the Culture Points scheme (Reproduction)

Opinions varied within a vast range of subjects, from government officials to incentives for big media organisations. I aim to concentrate here on reproducing evidence that sets up a clearer scenario about the effects of this close interaction with initiatives from the federal government—as most of the producers have said they joined it. To understand what politicized could mean in this case, I had to discover the mechanisms of this interaction with the government and then analyse how producers altered, opposed, or accepted determined conditions imposed by these interactions based on their stances.

One of the ways in which producers commonly referred to their interaction with government requirements was by scrutinising published *editals*, checking for opportunities for themselves and their groups. These official publications have appeared as the easiest bridge with the government, and interface with state-funded support; their importance became clear in all interviews. Producers interchangeably used the word *edital* to mean resource opportunities and, at the same time, "see what was going on" in their area:

> "Our project has no financial resources; we don't receive anything from anyone and have not received recently. The most we can do is resort to crowdfunding. We made [enough] now to fund a trip. We try to apply for *editais*, we try to get funds in cash." (Media producer 50)

When I shifted my focus to approaching how funds increased effectiveness in covering poverty and inequality stories versus publishing about other subjects, most producers relativised the importance of these programmes as another source of support, mentioning that it did not move their focus from stories on poverty and inequality. Some of them questioned if these grants could mean a distraction for the whole category of alternative media producers. For example, a few of them pinpointed on the contradictions of the government dedicating a small amount of resources to fund the alternative media while having a large budget to dedicate to its advertisements on the mainstream media. Producers argued that, because their goal was increasing the coverage of the poor or of inequality, they should be eligible to similar funding levels and not be underrated due to their limited outreach:

> “The logic of governmental advertisement, which is based on the audience of each outlet, is also arguable. It is complicated because this logic does not include emerging initiatives, as it does not consider network articulation. For example, a story from our group has been published by *Opera Mundi*, *Carta Capital*, *Carta Maior*; therefore, it is not possible to measure only the reach of these publications.” (Media producer 49)

On the other hand, the issue of funding as state benefit has shed light on a competitive context in which producers have seemed concerned with their own survival as professionals, citizens, and households:

> “If you look at the government’s latest *edital*, those who won were the same ones who had other chances of funding. I believe they will have to create a barrier—those who have never had the opportunity of focusing 100% on a magazine, for example; of not having to split oneself in other jobs and masters. One doesn’t have time to focus on a magazine.” (Media producer 16)

Producers have argued that while no further opposition existed against the criteria adopted in the *Free Media Points* programme, they noticed that the government primed for its relations with so-called *progressive bloggers*. This group of political blogs were authored mostly by ex-mainstream journalists, who arguably adopted an editorial line biased to favour the Workers’ Party policies (Guazina, 2013). While this study has sought not to test the involvement of these bloggers with the government, their great popularity— based on public opinion of them as paradigms of the alternative media—is said to have overshadowed the activity of those outlets focused on social justice. Even taking this into account, it is possible to assume that politicization is also possible, even if among the underprivileged group of media producers (not bound to partisan politicization).

Figure 7.2 Free software website sponsored by the Free Media Points programme (Snapshot)

Looking at *editals,* the participation of peripheral media among the awardees over the years (2013-15) is rather reduced. On the other hand, we find Internet platform or service providers (Figure 7.2), social networking websites for entertainment, and cultural and artistic groups. This list confirms producers’

accounts that the policy lacked the focus on those practicing the "coverage" of social issues, favouring instead a "digital connection, ICT-access" mentality. If receiving grants is a major indicator of producers' relationships with the state, the government's share or influence over these outlets is minimal.

This conclusion led me to focus, instead, on interpreting other parts of the interview data that would be more enlightening in that respect. I chose to assess partisanship's or ideological influence over producers' interests, which could shed light on the latter aspect versus testimonials on grant applications and fund raising. In brief, I chose to examine whether producers acted in favour of an inequality agenda even if that meant they had to go against their partisan or political orientation. In this case, their support or opposition of that government would appear weakened if it is shown they can trade their agenda for further access. For 12 years, Brazil was governed by a left-wing, socially orientated coalition, said to have changed the country for the better. This long period in power inspires a reply to research that saw the alternative media either challenging or allying with this power, inasmuch as authors say they do not (e.g. Kitzberger, 2013). I will discuss these issues next.

7.1.3 Partisanship and the social justice agenda

When I asked producers about the left-wing government's policies about poverty, inequality and, more broadly, the federal government's poor record in dealing with these demands, the producers reaffirmed their independence. They agreed with some of these policies and disagreed with others, but most of them preached an ethical detachment. However, these same producers did not deny that part of the universe of alternative media producers had, indeed, partisan ties. To report on this "poor record" that I referred would be problematic for those who demonstrated partisanship in their goals, especially under the Workers' Party government. Ambiguously, most producers also feared that readers could confuse social issues with a supportive (and blind) leftist agenda, which could throw into doubt the veracity of their coverage. I highlight some of these partisan experiences, as the ambiguity further appeared in the interviews:

> "Some [alternative] media around are very [much] 'government supporters'. My criticism is that because you have a political position but one you will support, you will have to be honest with your content. For example, during the last election, Dilma was in the first place in the polls, and [candidate] Eduardo Campos died, and [candidate] Marina started to run ahead, and out [of nowhere], some 'Internet famous' outlets started to blame Marina. Why are they blaming Marina? [This was] only because Dilma was doing badly in the polls. Then I think it is not fair. It is political, intellectual dishonesty. You're criticising Marina for something that Dilma also does." (Producer 12)

> "We worked with Telesur, a state TV from Venezuela, which has been organised in Brazil. They recruited some collectives to produce content for them but, after a while, they changed

> their editorial policy because of the World Cup. Amid the World Cup, we were doing political pieces. Then the government said we cannot talk about bad things about the World Cup anymore…[it seems that] they were 'hiding something', so we decided to leave it." (Media producer 15)

According to the above testimonial, the government expected grant-applicant producers to comply with a positive agenda when covering the 2014 World Cup. In other words, they should portray it as a smooth event, respecting the inclinations of the left-wing government hosting it. However, between driving their outlet's publications away from contentious politics and disclosing their views as a personal statement posted on social media, many producers preferred to confirm their historical alignment or identity, which was connected to the legacy of left-wing characters. This is incredibly different from the 1970s' alternative press's atmosphere, whose partisan support was not only obvious, as it involved nominating dissenters or consenters—i.e. those in favour or against the dictatorship (Kucinski, 1991). Back then, unionist leaders such as Lula, who also appeared on a cover of *Movimento* magazine in 1970, counted on support mostly due to democratic reasons (to be for him was, after all, to be against dictators). In the contemporary peripheral media, the same support occurs but, as said, for other reasons. Forty years later, Lula is a popular ex-President accused of corruption.[84] But as a display of affection, one media producer posted a selfie with Lula in a 2015 event with the following caption: "With Lula for democracy!" (figure 7.4).

Figure 7.3 Cover of the 1970s' Movimento magazine featuring Lula, and 2015 social media post from the Facebook of Jefferson Rodrigues, alternative media producer (snapshot)

I did not explore all the reasons for such affinities between famous politicians and media producers, neither did this research aim to deepen on ideological or partisan preferences any further. I assume producers made their ideological grounds clear partly due to the left-wing agenda for the poor. In the case of Lula, I settle this attachment by referencing his political discourse that still resonates through producers' opinions on the left and the right. This is different from siding with or following specific

commands from these political forces or changing the focus of their coverage, yet few producers still relativised when confronted with the lack of action on inequality from the left:

> "While we have a government from the centre-left, we will share the same premises. If a government from the right comes into power, in this moment, we will see what happens, because there is a conflict of interest. This happens in many places, in many states." (Media producer 40)

> "I think the government is important; of course we are not going to want a government [from] the right, which does not think in human rights or equality, etc. But I think the question is on human [values] really, not only right or left, but whenever you think you should say some things to people, start to accept it." (Media producer 41)

Other than that, I also stress this amalgamation between left-wing ideals and an independent agenda by investigating the discourse of *mídialivrismo*. Some of the participants of the *Free Media Points* programme described what they were doing not as *alternative* media but as *mídia livre* or "free media". Later, I found out that this term was also the name of a government's programme focused on training alternative media producers. While challenging the label "alternative", producers were comfortable with calling themselves non-hegemonic and non-traditional—in sum, *free media*. In fact, the Brazilian government had sponsored a couple of meetings in Rio de Janeiro using the same name, where the training would cover *mídialivrismo*. On the government's website,[85] the *Free Media Points* programme meetings appear as a way of "not being restricted to the big communication outlets, supporting and feeding ways of [having a] free communication". This announcement was signed by the Communications Assistant of the Culture Department, Cecília Coelho. Each producer had offered a distinctive opinion on how *mídialivrismo* mattered for their practice:

> "Mídialivrismo came with [the media activist group] *Fora do Eixo*. I [was] made part of this group for a time, as well as of *Midia Ninja*. This was a concept with which they worked a lot; it was initially 'collaborative coverage' and, more recently, it became 'mídialivrismo'. It is about using the journalism and communication languages, using the mobile for live broadcasting, using hashtags. [It is] not necessarily [related] to a media outlet, but [refers to] being able to do things with less resources." (Media producer 15)

> "It is the appropriation of the platforms by people who aren't necessarily communicators, communication specialists. It is about giving the possibility for [a] people community and exert[ing] their right to communication." (Media producer 17)

Fora do Eixo is a media collective that played a key role in feeding a counter-narrative during the 2013 nationwide protests (Peruzzo, 2013; Vieira, 2014; Wainberg, 2015). Although *Fora do Eixo* started in the early 2000s in the city of Brasília (Morais, 2013)—in other words, before Lula's first administration—the group came to notoriety once their ties with the Workers' Party grew and some of its activists joined Rousseff's government.[86] In fact, producers have also likened *mídialivrismo* to ethical conduct, such as holding politicians, society, or the mainstream media to account regarding the

lack of diverse voices in the media, especially those of the young, black and low-income classes. Here, different notions of hegemony apply, as it has meant both an opportunity to try new formats or to change (the mainstream's) tougher publication rules:

> "The hegemony of this [mainstream] media makes people [live] in a country that does not reflect ourselves, and, today, every story with more than two pages blocks us, in a time of [the] Internet in which things are fast." (Media producer 14)

> "We come from the student movement, from the social movement for communication. Therefore, the way we make our point is a way to make it clear to our reader what is the process behind the content production. Normally, the traditional media is far away from this; it is impartiality in disguise." (Media producer 45)

I asked producers if the *mídialivrismo* meeting in Rio de Janeiro had helped them increase their coverage on inequality—if there was any specific boost in that sense. I found positive accounts, as it seemed that producers from different parts of the country were able to work in partnership. On the other hand, producers who disagreed with this particular role of networking, described the meeting as "inevitably" partisan, meaning the favouring of a few colleagues:

> "This meeting was thought [of] by the people from *Fora do Eixo*, because a meeting took place last year, then they invited us to share again experiences of [the] alternative media in Brazil. They wanted to do a public hearing about this 'call for projects'. That was a certain mapping, but also co-optation. You know how those spaces are. There were people from *Fora do Eixo*, from the Youth National Secretary, which is also from the *PC do B* [political party ... In the meeting] they thought about this call for projects [*Free Media Points* programme], alas the result was [published] today. The first ones were the usual ones." (Media producer 14)

> "I was in Rio for the mídialivrismo meeting; the Youth Secretary has managed this meeting, and they had priority tickets for those from the north and northeast. Then this opened many paths to us. Today, for instance, I can talk with collectives from the northern region more easily because we had that contact, and it also allows us to articulate our actions. As I said, we are a collective, we walk through these spaces and it is important for us [to have] this communication." (Media producer 38)

Producers from the north or the northeast highlighted that meeting with enthusiasm. They argued that such chances of meeting producers from other regions were rare. Producers from the southeast tended to otherwise compare it with other big events, such as the *World Social Forum*, an event that used to happen in the city of Porto Alegre and which congregated social movements and members of the left around the world (Santos & Santos, 2006).

With some of the attendees, I explored whether laying out this scenario of government support for an agenda would undermine the strength and accountability of their personal views on inequality. More precisely, I asked if the governing party's visions or priorities could drive their agenda, making them

prioritise key issues and not others. As a response, producers, especially those who also had been at the *mídialivrismo* meeting, reaffirmed their ethical values, occasionally clarifying further limitations of these programmes. Most of them saw these programmes as limited solutions if one thinks of feeding the alternative media's development in Brazil as a "major challenge":

> "If there is any situation in which the government says: 'You will receive a resource that comes from the [government sponsored] *Belo Monte dam*', we will not appreciate it, we will not receive it, we will refuse it. We will always assess, otherwise it is a conflict with what we are proposing." (Media producer 14)

> "One of the critiques is regarding the requirements. Because at one point, you will have to be a *Culture Point*. We, as a collective, have never discussed alternative media as a 'culture point' [...] Some groups present themselves as culture points, which means that they do not deal only with communications, but create events [and] articulate [through] festivals, as some have [the] ability of hunting public funds." (Media producer 12)

As the above producer pointed out, there were differences between those groups which were led to follow the targets of the *Culture Points* policy (maintain a small facility with Internet access, for example) and those which were not totally in agreement with government's idea of investing in platforms and content alike (as shown in Chapter 7.1.2).

To summarise this section, I identified a cohort of peripheral media producers concerned with production costs and general publicity of their activities and which used state's help via grants. This cohort's size and its opinions are not enough to fully contrast their advocacy for a more politicized periphery in the face of a moment in which the state showed openness and support. While this alignment between left-wing partisanship and social justice sentiments has stayed unchanged across the 1970s and 1980s (Festa & Silva, 1986)—as it still seems a common denominator for the alternative media (Peruzzo, 2008)—fighting inequality in contemporary Brazil does not necessarily depend on this attachment. Producers' interviews revealed more politicized stances both toward leftist political parties and politicians (as a class), as they reaffirmed that the interests of the periphery remained intact. Next, frame analysis results lead us to other sides of this relationship with the state, in which content can shed light on more representational side of inequality. Producers aim to unmake a legacy of seeing inequality from the perspective of those who see benefit-seekers and chasers of politicians and "godfathers".

7.2 Deconstructing myths of state dependence

After analysing frames, I found a strong correlation between producers' discourses and a politicization of past narratives of poverty and inequality that involved the state. For example, back in the 1950s, the poor appeared as victims, but those were the more likely to appear in political campaigns and in official discourses (Reis, 1999; Fischer, 2008). Eighty-seven out of 120 articles have framed news or stories on poverty or inequality in relation to what the public administration has said about them. In other words, producers' responses echoed criticism on public policies, mocked statements of politicians, and denounced their inability to tackle crime among the poorest. I did not include articles on corruption or the economy as they seemed out of the scope of this research; however, looking at the content sample, producers seemed to politicize state practices as *reproducers* of some inequalities. The state jeopardises an equal society by threatening human rights and media democracy. Through its inability to propose progressive policies on issues such as *abortion*, the state punishes those at the bottom.[87] Articles appeared as *solidarity* framed whenever producers called for sensitising public opinion on disputes involving "the rich and the poor", and when they promoted discussions on parliamentary bills or new laws assuring the welfare of threatened communities, such as the indigenous of north Brazil.

In the below table, I have delimited the main patterns that showed how each frame manifested (Table 7.1), highlighting a few variations in the discourse. On the one hand, we find "agonistic" standards of deliberation in the frame of *politicization* (as talking to the state demands strong rhetoric and voicing issues aloud) rather than those of systematic opposition mediated by secretaries, ministers, or other government officers. On the other hand, the frame *solidarity* has meant that producers network, occasionally with public administration members, and try to mediate conflicts through negotiation and occasional alignment with authorities.

Table 7.1 Alternative media content and its frames for the state in Brazil

Frame Politicization	*Frame Solidarity*
"Agonist" over "deliberative" rituals about rights and welfare benefits.	Directs attention to social issues from the people's perspective.
Holds government to account on historical issues (e.g. racial inequality, constitutional rights).	Aims for public funds, helps to create new media spaces, expands coverage, and attends events sponsored by the government.
Campaigns for more progressive laws.	Occasional partisanship, alignment with left-wing parties.

The identification of these patterns as frames shows how complex the discussion involving inequality, the state and the discourse of citizenship in Brazil really is. On the one hand, the peripheral media politicizes the state's failure to uphold the rights provisioned in the 1988 Constitution; on the other

hand, producers develop a discourse of solidarity by helping readers to manage their distrust, raising permanent questions for any political discourse, questioning the clientelist state. Another instance lies in challenging the narrative of *assistencialismo*, the discourse that politicians have used for decades to personalises state aid to the poor, as if it originates from the politician's personal will and benevolence. It can be seen when candidates and elected politicians call themselves "the fathers of the poor",[88] a much-used motto during the presidential campaigns of the 1950s (D'Araujo, 1999; Fischer, 2008).

Overall, what this section shows is the reaction to these patronising stances and new frames that underplay state presence in the life of the periphery. I break this section into three different and interdependent parts. First, I approach how producers have struggled with the *assistencialismo* narrative, creating new opportunities to understand benefits as inherited rights, not as favours from politicians. Secondly, I show how the political backstage goes beyond the "suspicion" of populists, where producers' coverage is concerned with spreading politicized frames regarding ongoing bills and engaging with democratic institutions. Third, I approach how producers link crime to a consequence of a failed and inequality-driven state. Producers try to develop headlines that dismantle the idea that crime is a natural consequence of poverty and denounce authoritarian state measures taken against marginalised citizens. To create such politicized frames, producers deploy narratives by sourcing their content from Brazil's authoritarian past or from contemporary everyday clashes in communities (or both at the same time, as I shall explain).

7.2.1 Unmaking the assistencialismo narrative

As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the most repeated narratives involving inequality in Brazil is that the state needs to intervene and change people's destinies. One example is the old saying *pai dos pobres* or the "the father of the poor" paradigm, the symbol of the *assistencialismo* narrative. The peripheral media coverage challenges this tradition in more sophisticated ways. Producers explore the extent to which receiving state aid can be re-signified and how these underlying assumptions can open space for a new active and entrepreneurial periphery. Discourses tend to reframe the advent of state benefits, for instance, by building narratives that show its positive results. Images and phrases appear as if tackling an old narrative that saw "the poor *asking* for things from the powerful", an idea that lies at the heart of the *assistencialismo* discourse to this date.[89] For more in-depth insight into how *assistencialismo* still manifests, I go back to the Dilma Rousseff's 2014 presidential campaign (Figure 7.4), in which her TV ads included images of a middle-class family whose dinner vanished as a potential outcome if her adversary was to be elected. These images drew on the deep-seated values of

Brazilian society by likening food security (in a society with a history of extreme hunger issues) to the election of a president and, to another extent, to the state.

Figure 7.4 Images of Dilma Rousseff's 2014 presidential campaign (Snapshot)

Therefore, to challenge these ideas of *assistencialismo* that are very much present in Brazilian society is to portray citizens as active characters that have *do* things to deserve the state's benefits. In news pieces seen in the peripheral media, we find producers engaging in the very idea of what is public benefit, in which they modernise the understanding of public policy and also demand its fair application, as we read on this website:

> "Cíntia also recognises the developmental benefits of Bolsa Família, praising the programme's emphasis on school attendance. School attendance has substantially increased at Fogueteiro. She finds the monetary motivation to educate the new generation somewhat unsettling, however: 'Bolsa Família is a way for [the government] to force education. Some families have little interest in educating their children, so the government pays to stimulate that interest. Now [parents] have a reason to educate their children: money.'" (*Rio on Watch*, 25/10/2013)

As a successful conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme, the *Bolsa Família* paid a sum to every low-income family in exchange for them keeping their children in school and ensuring their progress.[90] To modernise the coverage of social programmes is to give more insightful views that do not allow top-down appropriation from politicians. I point this out on the grounds of the slow and problematic consolidation of social rights in Brazil, as the understanding of programmes such as *Bolsa Família* is key to leading the people into a more autonomous position regarding the legality and impersonality of state benefits. For instance, during the process of writing the 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution, thousands of citizens from across the country wrote to members of Congress expressing their desire of having jobs, cars, and houses as a result of the new constitution. On the other hand, there was also an overall consciousness that they also needed better labour rights and women's rights, and less of a clientelist state. As alternative media, these citizens' letters helped to raise the consciousness of the time, situating the extent of these changes in terms of social welfare. As Monclaire (Monclaire et al, 1991) showed in his landmark content analysis of these letters, citizens wished for a country of equal opportunities, as this woman in her 30s, with no income and a resident of the impoverished state of Maranhão, writes:

"I wish that job opportunities [are taken away] from the city mayors, as they use it as a vote weapon. We are in democratic times; I expect the government do something in favour of women. I believe in the government and in the opportunities of being happy." (Ibid, 1991:61)

I argue that the peripheral media coverage updates and politicizes statements like this. They were latent among the poorest classes, as expressed in the above quote. The change is, however, from *expecting* social change to *participating, making discourses,* which have become possible thanks to available programmes. This model of citizenship, foreseen by historians such as Carvalho (1999), fights for rights but does not fall for clientelist politician. It is true that many reports still coincide with the government in a sense, by confirming advertised the lately social change and praising life stories (here framed as *solidarity*); however, there is also an independent effort to not concede that politicians are *giving* anything to the marginalised. The coverage is then more than agreeing or disagreeing with the government or praising its policies; it is on how citizens are making a living despite the lack of benefits to which they are entitled. While the mainstream press used to depict the beneficiaries as standing still at their doors in the *favelas*, I found updated portraits of this poor individual, now speaking about their own conditions and aware of the commitments owed to them; one reports shows children playing on the streets despite the unchanged settings of their environment (figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5 Jacarezinho Favela as reported by O Globo newspaper in the 1960s[91] *and a snapshot of the 2015 Rio on Watch's report on the Bolsa Família programme (O Globo, Snapshot)*

I saw that other variations of this discourse come into play when peripheral media outlets reported on benefits, social change and the state. The partisan newspaper *Brasil 247* has weaponised the success of these programmes for Brazil's welfare state, favouring an over-optimistic perspective.[92] In addition, most peripheral media coverage focused on the state failure to promote social justice and stop the spread of inequality, as these italicised excerpts show:

"Community leaders in Cascadura demand action from the city hall. The neighbourhood in north Rio de Janeiro has serious economic and commuting issues due to recent changes in transportation lines. They *face* issues on leisure areas, education, and healthcare. Locals and leaders *are demonstrating against the lack of municipality investment in a public school*, for a park and a local health centre for the Cascadura community." (*Rio on Watch*, 20/06/2015)

> "More schools. Less jails. To throw an adolescent into the Brazilian prison system means to throw this youth into forgetfulness with no intention to recover, resocialise and, in most of the cases, socialise someone who has always lived at the margins of society. It is a proposal fed by vengeance, to assign responsibility [to] all under-age individuals because of the mistake of a few ones based on a take on social issues, or [in] better [words], it is very *dark*." (*Mídia Periférica*, 04/04/2015)

As the above quotes show, one way of breaking the *assistencialismo* narrative is to invest in a modernised stance on social programmes and to explore a more diverse political consciousness of the population. Once hunger and extreme poverty are reduced in Brazil across the 2000s (Pinto, 2005; Ferreira, 2006; Hall, 2006), producers migrated from such issues to discuss strategic parliamentary decisions that could lead them to a higher position (i.e. reaching more people and more influence) in the political debate. I am not arguing that, eventually, inequality has appeared less or is less politicized in the agenda of social justice. I assert that part of the coverage I found seems to target the middle-class reader more than before. The *assistencialismo* narrative also dies when the focus leaves the low-income population and bounces back to politicians, the parliament and legislative pieces, as the ambition and starts to speak "as equals". I discuss next how producers tried to increase the knowledge and concern for law changes and parliamentary debates by those living in the periphery.

7.2.2 Connecting the periphery to institutions and parliamentary debates

Apart from more clarity on state benefits and social programmes, outlets have worked to give their audiences coverage that mixes activism, institutional routines and a deeper consciousness regarding constitutional rights. This new coverage interests this research because, by producing such extensive and original content on new bills and constitutional changes, the peripheral media aims to reverse the lack of a perspective from the periphery as they aim to fit in the interests of those living in the *favelas* or in poverty by making something readable. Examples include the way in which producers have tailored their reporting on government actions, framed the approvals of new infrastructure projects, or how they politicize failures of present consensus (i.e. the fate of threatened communities or budgets cuts and how it affects social care). The quotes below show new forms of this engagement, where producers make sense of big political events for those who are not familiar with government departments. I italicise some parts of the first quote that phrase new developments as *threatening* communities directly. Moreover, by placing the *favela*'s opinion on the military budget in one sentence, the second quote connects two subjects that unlikely to appear together in the mainstream press.

> "In Ceará, land of the Tremembé [tribe] is *threatened by a Spanish resort*. For almost 15 years, the indigenous fight for delimiting their lands in Itapipoca; coveted by a touristic

> enterprise, *Funai has delimited the area* three years ago, but it is yet to be homologated by the Ministry of Justice." (*Agência Pública*, 30/01/2015)

> "Maré Favela's activist questions the spending [of] the military." (*Brasil 247*, 15/07/2015)

For producers, this *new engagement* in politics is less aimed at *immersing* in the deliberative routine of politicians and more focused on creating other forms of commotion that leads to this indirect engagement. In the past, radical reporters were involved in congress proceedings, but they were more focused on denouncing the alignment with an "international capital conspiracy" or the exploitation of national resources by "foreign groups" (Woitowicz, 2009). The radical press saw Brazil as counterbalancing "the international capitalist order" (Sodré, 1998:386, 374). Not only the peripheral media outlets have not followed these debates, as they focused on the specific institutional decision-making process, given, for instance, their constant reference to ministers, secretaries, and representatives and the wish to articulate responses from these actors:

> "*The responses from Rio City Hall*: A report from Pública has questioned the situation of the real estate project with view to the Olympic Golf Camp, as shown in the story 'The sun is set for everyone, but not with that view'." (*Agência Pública*, 23/02/2015)

> "[The Secretary] Maria do Rosário defends the National Policy of Social Participation." (*Brasil 247*, 18/06/2014)

Many reports have privileged bills or law projects that could have major impacts on the disadvantaged, but which also followed the parliamentary order (the "debate of the day" in the Congress). As seen earlier, controversial projects such as the *Belo Monte* dam received unprecedented linkages to the life of the poor and of small cities. Other projects that directly affected the population, such as the *2014 World Cup* or the law that vowed to lower the age of criminal responsibility, also triggered much controversy (Levy, 2016) (Table 7.3). Politicized frames seen at the peripheral media level included phrases such as "We want *FIFA standards for schools and hospitals*". These phrases were also used by activists, but the peripheral media offered plain and clear explanations so that the message could reach readers of many profiles, as in this report:

> "We from the *Mídia Periférica* blog are against the reduction of the *criminal age* and, together with other movements and people, we are waging a guerrilla war against the conservatives. We need more schools, theatres, soccer fields, *Pronatec*, quotes, all this will strengthen the prevention against the youth going into crime, because thinking on this basis is essential." (*Mídia Periférica*, 01/04/2015)

Lowering the age of criminal responsibility to 16 years old received a special level of attention due to its implications for young people living in the peripheries. The fact that adolescents could already face long sentences for a series of crimes, such as murder, taking into account their disadvantaged

backgrounds and no possibility of rehabilitation while in jail, has divided the country.[93] Producers have unanimously defended that the poor Brazilian youth have had no proper education or chances to develop themselves; thus, they deserve another chance before facing jail. This take came in during a time when Brazil saw the emergence of more conservative forces that were more supportive of increasing punishment and hardening criminal law.[94]

Indeed, most Brazilians in jail are already male, black, and from the same socioeconomic conditions.[95] While the mainstream media has hesitated to cover this issue more assertively[96], this campaign received total support from all outlets included in this research. Other actors have joined with hopes to sensitise the public and pressurise senators to block the bill, such as the then-president Dilma Rousseff, as well as authorities, artists and leftist militants.

Table 7.2 Main debates on parliamentary bills covered by the peripheral media (2013–2015)

Year	*Bill on discussion in Brazilian Congress*
2013	Belo Monte dam operation in the Amazon forest
2013	State police violence bill
2013	Bus fare hike approval
2013	Gay marriage approval
2014	Funds for FIFA World Cup stadiums
2014	New law on environmental protection
2014	The Internet Constitution
2015	Lowering the age of criminal responsibility

That same nationwide dialogue happened in opposition to large infrastructure projects and showed the same type of mobilisation for other agendas (Table 7.2). In the last chapter, I analysed the case of the distinct coverage of the *Belo Monte* dam by *Agência Pública*; here, I use this same case to illustrate pushing the state towards further accountability. In the 2014 series published by *Agência Pública*, besides the emphasis on the negative impact from projects in Amazonian areas, there was a powerful frame at the forefront of these reports of having populations affected by Brasília-led decisions. In terms of *Belo Monte*, the state was still held to account on their failure to provide welfare, housing, and healthcare for these populations. I italicise the key parts:

> "From the work [on what] the Dilma government calls its 'biggest project', the Belo Monte dam, more than 40 thousand people [have been] affected and *complain of the passivity of the state*. Social movements cannot dialogue [and] the police violently repress public hearings, they argue. Even those who accepted the project [now complain]; they articulate [that this is] because of unfulfilled promises and environmental impacts already perceived in the region." (*Agência Pública*, 04/09/2014)

> "Occupation Solano Trindade celebrates successes and draw[s] *strong criticism to the Federal Housing Programme*." (*Rio on Watch*, 12/09/2014)

Therefore, the break with the *assistencialismo* narrative has not meant refusal of government in all instances. Producers have advanced a more sophisticated look to the state by developing opinions on laws or policies that could compromise existing rights, targeting those shifts that do not alter the deep level of inequality. Their approach is more down to budget or sewage expansion, or to protecting the right to schemes such as *Bolsa Família*, than it is to the appeal for compassion from state agents. As I explored the case of *Ocupa Estelita* in Recife during Chapter 4, their idea is to tackle *hegemony* of the decision-making level in a sense to advocate for a more horizontal debate on state-led changes. I shall discuss in the conclusion how all these interdependent coverages do contribute to a robust shift from *assistencialismo* as an acceptable narrative. Now, I continue this discussion by exploring other stances against state-sponsored inequality. I review the issue of violence, i.e. beatings, repression and murders of the poor and peripheral dwellers. Producers have unveiled the less visible aspects of Brazilian state authoritarianism, while working for a higher awareness of the role of the police in society.

7.2.3 Framing state violence as "genocide" of the poor

The fact that crime and violence in Brazil also stem from state forces has inspired new frames in the peripheral media. Harmful to peripheral communities, the military action in fragile environments such as the *favelas* has inspired producers to increasingly create links in their reporting to the country's authoritarian past, thus depicting a reality of total violence. While violent topics feature in multiple mainstream reports as well, my approach is to analyse the extent to which the peripheral media have helped to reduce the complacency against the violence directed at the poor. What are results that producers yield when they argue against state-induced violence? Their discourse grows stronger as Brazilian society increasingly accepts that that violence does affect more black and poor citizens (e.g. Jaguaribe, 2014), but what are links created to criminalise the state and not the citizens remains unclear.

As a continuation to what I discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the selective law enforcement in the periphery leads to a *counterhegemonic* interface that invests in the state's *choice* of who is going to die or survive. One powerful example lies in the reporting of the UPPs[97] or pacifier unities installed in the Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*. Kept by the state and funded by federal budgets, these are police kiosks where permanent staff, aimed at stopping drug dealers and restoring the rule of law in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*. These initiatives have quickly left their primary model goal to serve the community on emergencies, sadly migrating to surveillance, resulting in the centralisation of public life around these government officials. As police workforce in these unities grew, it began to upset the locals, as this report shows:

"Leaderships question the legacy of the UPPs: José Mario tells that some improvements [have occurred], even with some issues and initial adjustments. Police officers were those to manage some projects, particularly the sport-related ones. Alongside the community, he fought for, instead, enhanc[ing] existing local projects in Santa Marta. José Mario thinks that, in many situations, no dialogue happened between the police, dwellers, and community leaders. Nowadays, according to him, the main problems of the community are the stuck cable car, the garbage on the streets and high electricity bills charged by *Light* [electricity company] after the installation of a new chip." (*Viva Favela*, 04/01/2015)

While producers have voiced their need for state intervention to guarantee public services, they have also claimed that they do not need state control of the community. Unlike in other parts of the city, there was an excess of monitoring the lives of citizens as a disguised determination to punish lawlessness. Not surprisingly, the everyday life in communities started to become inflamed with episodes of injustice. Rapper *Rashid,* in a video published by the magazine *Vai da Pé,* criticises the lack of opportunities for the youth in opposition to the monitoring and punishment to which they are subject:

"Boys and girls have no way to burn energy. They look around and see no one who could stand for them. They have no place to play and to distract themselves. They have no place where to burn their energy, to focus their thoughts on. They look to the TV and do not see themselves in [any] one. You give nothing to this youth and then this youth will do something wrong and then *you will punish him or her*."[98]

The term *punishment* stands out as *the* punitive measure of the state and a frequent keyword in producers' content. By politicizing the population against what the producers saw as discriminatory policies of spying on them, some few reports have turned to side with the criminals in controversial posts. In this report, outlet *Mídia Periférica* uses the case of a criminal in jail to illustrate that, by perpetuating inequality in its criteria for defining criminals (as shown in Chapter 5.2.2), the state stimulates reprisals against young people who may not necessarily be offenders. For dwellers, the state's measures seem focused on an ultimate and secret goal of keeping poor people in jail.[99] I italicise some key parts of this discourse:

"The robbery that this boy committed meant the aggression of the 'system' against him. The true victim is only himself, with no opportunities, forgotten by everyone, but, as *Marcola* [a drug dealer] said once: 'Nowadays I'm *assisted by many government benefits, I weigh in on the budget, the state protects me, but I had to be noticed so this could happen*'. I write this text in outrage with such brutality with which they treat ours', and [as] a way to exorcise my fear, because I may be accused of robbery on the streets, of being poor, of being from the periphery, also because of the clothes I use. I am not only defending this boy, but also protecting us.

Enderson Araújo is a black young man, poor, who they [would] also find suspect if he [was] walking down on the streets after 10 pm. (Mídia Periférica, 30/06/2016)

The first excerpt quotes a famous drug dealer in Brazil who, it is suggested, receives more help and protection from the state once he is in jail than when he was free. That kind of reverse logic manifests through metaphors that express disillusionment with state welfare and place “protection” as *attention* from the state; this has appeared as a strong pattern. We mainly see inhabitants from the periphery reacting to the control and surveillance that target black, poor and “improperly dressed” individuals.

I see both aspects of this coverage not necessarily sticking to data and *documented* murders, but rather to a general position that aims to contradict the mainstream society’s impression that state presence is always *welcome* in the *favelas* and in peripheral regions. Locals have said to be uncomfortable with the idea that mainstream society is supporting any intervention in their communities, as far as it is deemed as necessary, urgent and justifiable, regardless of its effects. Their concerns have roots in many episodes of top-down decisions that have “managed” the populace according to the risk they posed to the mainstream society living at the town’s centre (Gay, 2010). That fear explains the constant focus on so-called mechanisms of control, as *Brasil 247* reported in many instances:

> “Allegations of police violence in Jacarezinho Favela.” (*Brasil 247*, 13/07/2015)

Extreme police methods that cracked down on street protests have been highlighted. While the 2013 demonstrations were violent, ruthless police tactics against demonstrators and dissenters have had racial and economic dimensions that stem from long ago (Mitchell & Wood, 1999). More recently, with mainstream media reporters also suffering from the consequences of this violence,[100] covering police violence has become a strategic story for the peripheral media. To report the use of rubber bullets and non-justified prison episodes, to describe persecutory events that led to a murder in suburbia is to generalise the methods of the police and compare it to totalitarian ways used in the absence of a democratic rule, as in this report:

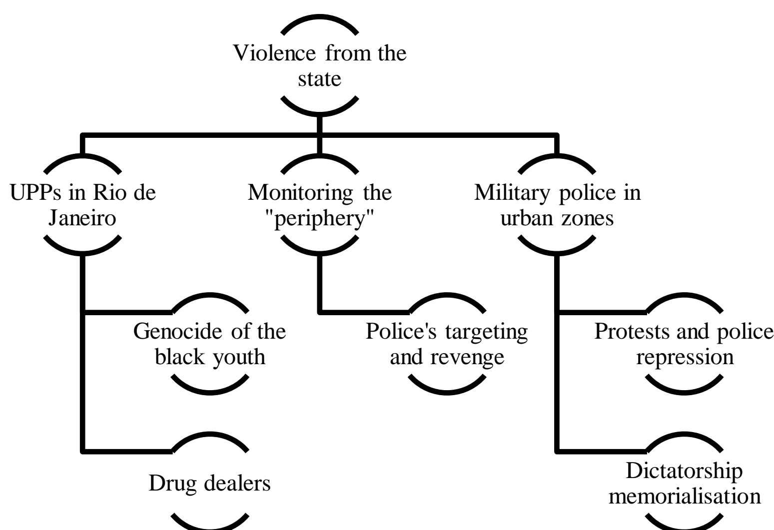
> “We are all Douglas Rodrigues. He is another black youth that has [had] his life taken away by the *armed wing of the state, the military police of São Paulo*, that one that kills more than in the Iraq war […] The *military police kills with no mercy* and the only explanation is that they killed by accident, but this is a true *genocide, extermination* of us, the black youth from the periphery.” (*Mídia Periférica*, 29/10/2013)

This link with the past and with broader events such as *dictatorship*, *genocide* and *extermination* does not ignore what these historical events mean. *Agência Pública* has constantly likened the present’s violence to the military dictatorship of the 1960s. Reporters have dwelt on society’s apathetic positions regarding contemporary politicians, showing a deliberate ignorance of their participation in torture, for example.[101] In a Facebook event, the *Coletivo Papo Reto* invited dwellers to understand the present struggles by reflecting on the past dictatorial developments in their community:

> "The *Coletivo de Pesquisadores em Movimento* and the *Raízes* [collectives] invite you to a conversation about dictatorship in the favela."
>
> The purpose of the activity is to reflect together on the institutional violence in a historical perspective, giving special attention to the period of the civil-military dictatorship (1964–1985). We will use the research made by the commission on the true state of Rio de Janeiro regarding repression in the slums and racism. During this period, to reflect on the state of violence these days, the aim is to use documents of repression located by the Commission of the Truth [Dictatorship investigation], in which we find testimonials collected [by the Comission]."

While I do not further analyse this or on dictatorship Brazil, nor on the relationship with poverty, what is interesting is the ability to associate the times of authoritarian rule, therefore, state violence, with the perpetuation of inequality and the oppression of the poorest. In other words, this coverage sees two kinds of violence: one that derives from the state, which traditionally has received more media highlight, and the one that results from citizens' actions,[102] which producers see as *general criminality*. The mention to the Dictatorship in this case is tied to the former, which helps to sustain the perspective of state distrust, where the worst evil is submission to state power that punishes the poorest and acts to hide off its past or present crimes. This high level of politicization deriving from this frame has had an effect over producers: it made them careful with every word they employed to report the conflict. I highlight below some alterations that subtly, and often unfairly, criminalise the state and focus on its status as an armed force against civilians (figure 7.6). Tracking these linkages and patterns is important to describe the state as a central element from which stems many other interpretations of inequality and social justice.

Figure 7.6 Violence from the state and its main frames in the peripheral media



In fact, dictatorship, censorship and the military control of society are not topics that faded from Brazilian debate in the past few decades (Fleury, 2012). In 2014, one of the most used images by

leftists to support the re-election of ex-president Dilma Rousseff was of her sitting in a military court in which the judges cover their face and she rests on a chair.[103] I do not aim to entirely credit the peripheral media for the use of such memorialisation and linkages. It just does not seem that producers offered such images for the purpose of forging political communication in an ordinary sense of engaging with political parties and elections. Rather, they offered them to transform the everyday news so that it can emphasise the great divides as many issues, including violence, the failing legislation and the broken social programmes, as all of them stem from the lack of political will.

Leaving aside other implications from the use of such strong words, in terms of what concerns this research, the attempt to change the official narrative of what is going on is the ultimate strategy to deal with the indifference of decades. As seen, producers have resorted to maximising their narrative. This resembles a performative effort to create big facts, call up press support, and, overall, lead the community to see itself in different terms. In the conclusion, I look at the extent to which these alignments and oppositions with the state could mean a broader change in the way the periphery covers inequality and promote adjustments of representation, as it was in the past a creation of the state. We see a constant aim to erase the populist trace left behind by generations of politicians.

7.3 Conclusion: From the passive to the angry periphery: Changing the feedback to the state

Based on the cases assessed in this chapter, both prepositive (*mídialivrismo*) or reactive (on violence) forms of discourses have meant broader changes in the interactions between the periphery and the state. I start by reflecting on these changes by discussing how this happens at the level of collective framing literature, namely, through the notions of frame resonance (support across the classes, urban and peripheral preoccupation with violence), frame linking (state punishment versus the opportunities given to young people), and frame diffusion (multiple formats and languages sourced in the past and present). I would add that, as fresh political opportunities arose, a series of new frames also came up: e.g. the appropriation of momentum to boost knowledge about new law bills in the Congress, the transformation of protest chants into lengthy, reproducible content, and the labelling by using slangs of the *favela*. These new frames are the peripheral media's contribution for changing the feedback to the state, as these collections of occasions make them move from *passive* subjects into an image of an "angry" periphery. I will discuss below what this means for this research's purposes.

From the perspective of collective framing, Benford and Snow (2000:613–14) debated the "variations of interpretative scope and influence". They describe how a "master algorithm colours and constrains the activities of other movements". I see these "variations of interpretative scope" acting on three different moments. First, when producers have navigated through public grants, but tried to keep their stories untouched. Secondly, when they demonstrated their distrust of authorities, politicians, in general, while still engaging with the latter aspect; and third, when they asserted their independence to judge what actually is the state irresponsibility regarding social issues. In this way, producers not only fought the historical narrative of state dependence, they acted with democratic maturity to carve out clear positions.

The peripheral media have invested, as per collective framing, in bringing new "colours" to the relationship of the disadvantaged with the state through questions like if "they live in a democracy" or if "they really choose politicians". These are *practical* aspects of democracy, but which have yet to yield *results* for their communities in terms of policies and welfare. On the other hand, these questions have also channelled memories of authoritarianism by a generation that was born in democracy. Young producers get to memorialise the past of non-participation in government, the time of an imposed government which they might not have experienced. Why do they cover the "men came to the community to "impose" measures if they have not seen them? This permanent suspicion of the state may be the answer as this is one of the peripheral media's main "algorithms".

Another layer of analysis emerges when we look at these aspects as "adjustment of representation". For instance, Young (2002) argued on different modes of citizen inclusion. She defined *external* inclusion as that of involving citizens in the policy decision-making process by showing that their thoughts are determinants for government action. *Internal* inclusion would be the same consideration but in terms of receiving their "familiar experiences" and shaping new public policies and procedures after them, proving that people's thoughts can be relevant and influential. Considering these types of inclusions for our case, I can see many attempts in producers' permanent dissatisfaction with the state. By checking if there were vaccines available, the producers showed the attention to the government's lack of alignment and awareness. So, they demonstrate that the state's input does not address the *internal* needs of the community. On the other side, by invoking Brazil's authoritarian past, they remembered the time when they had no right to *perform* as citizens at all; therefore, they lack more *external* inclusion, as they are not present as "decision-makers", which also affects their internal understanding of the process and of democracy.

From these two types of inclusion seen in the evidence, the way in which producers consistently to achieve *external* type of recognition, either by the state and, indirectly by the media, is what invites

more reflection. While fighting real-time developments in the streets of the periphery (as in the case of the UPPs in *favelas* and violence) or by engaging with facts at national level (as during parliamentary debates), producers do know that these points may already appear in people's minds, but they must frame it in a way that the deficit of inclusion must be remembered by society (as in Schneider, 1992). Besides that, another "algorithm" was to show continuous suspicion of the state. It is necessary that we move from seeing frames as a generic adversarial tool only (e.g. Gamson, 1995), to see them as bridges to communicate their expectations for new democratic rituals; namely, the role of the periphery in public decision-making and policy creation.

Both layers presented in this analysis – the repeated representational exercises in search of more inclusion – have meant a move against the past idea of passivity perceived in the past. Producers end up tackling *assistencialismo* narratives by unmaking assumptions that they "are on good terms" with politicians, reversing Getúlio Vargas' (the "father of the poor") and other politicians' instances, the same background of the discourse of the "lazy" periphery (Fischer, 2008:95). More significantly, producers' proposals of inclusion deliver a stronger feedback to the state even when producers join grants and bursaries. In other words, even when the state invites producers or helps them through incentives, this acceptance is still subject to conditions that must meet producers' strategic imperatives of framing themselves as not dependent, not co-opted people.

Early in this chapter, I reviewed a series of funding opportunities and state-sponsored meetings based on an idea of *mídialivrismo.* That case can much clarify how this conditional acceptance – the state by the alternative media – happens. As far as these government policies could give producers some visibility and contributed to a common purpose, this incentive has failed to introduce the peripheral media as part of a larger media ecology, and as result, producers continuously felt like outsiders. By falling short in terms of strategic outlook, these schemes did not help those producers who already had the ICT skills or had a past in professional journalism. Instead, it made them look at these opportunities with a certain degree of suspicion. Apart from that, we also know that the "cultural policy" of Rousseff's years was object of many controversies during her first term, which brought her criticism from within her party and its supporters (Silveira et al, 2013; Turino, 2013). These policies have not advanced in media regulation as well (see Hintz, 2011 for background), nor did the public budget spent on mainstream media ads (see Mattos, 1984 for background). In sum, there was a clear state's intent of connecting with the alternative media, but there was no success in pushing the producers' agenda to beyond the government's own strategy.

Therefore, this specific type of inclusion as a *feedback* to the state matters because it explains how the process of "getting" the support from the peripheral media is difficult if powerholders do not propose any further adjustment in their own standing. This evidence takes us back to the thesis of

ideologisation of the alternative media in South America. Kitzberher (2013:129) argued that, in the wake of left-wing parties in power in South America, these governments could co-opt the grassroots media to boost their image, so "ideologisation" is "beyond discourse", or that "ideology impacts the aggregate repertoire of government practices, defining government in a more inclusive way so that it comprises various formal and informal allied or co-opted". My interest here is not in necessarily probing this thesis, but, based on the evidence, to stress if this notion of "ideologisation" could not be really easy, even if focused on social justice.[104]

For producers whom I interviewed, the truth is that many of the left-wing politicians in power were also icons because they had defended the poorest. However, this did not mean these politicians should remain unchallenged. In fact, this cohort of producers have developed a robust defence of some left-wing icons while not being totally supportive of their policies. This is the case for ex-President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who said to embody the struggle against Brazil's record on hunger and for the poor, presenting himself as the symbol of class mobility and social transcendence. Even in his case, most producers have voiced nuanced views and those who have appeared to support him on social media are those to do it for historical and affective reasons, an aspect furthermore tied to their identity. Definitely, *ideologisation* has not meant the abandonment of the perspective of external and internal inclusion that lies in the heart of producers who are involved with the peripheral media.

To finish this analysis, I must ponder that what it is not possible to tell from the evidence is how these movements contribute to the see politicization also as "civic practices", as other studies have approached it (e.g. Custodio, 2017). In Brazil, the discussion *on* citizenship has been tied to many other variables, including one's factual participation in politics, the funding of political parties, which are not in scope for this research (Carvalho, 1999; Correia, 2012). In any case, there has been enough data to support that the peripheral media can lead the abandonment of stigmas originated from official authoritarianism. No producer mentioned, for example, the time of the "communist" media, as preached by dictator Getúlio Vargas (D'Araujo, 1999; Konder, 1983; Figueireido, 2013). As far as an *angry* coverage takes place under the terms of the distrust of government and feedback to power herein analysed— it becomes, none the less, a convincing case for producers' external inclusion, allowing their intervention on national issues.

In this chapter, I visited episodes in which the peripheral media contested state narratives and initiatives, while seeking to adjust the public's awareness and engaging with state public schemes. In the first part, I discussed the peripheral media's persistent distrust of the government, their relationship with partisanship, and the role of official support, stressing the embedded discourse of *mídialivrismo*. In the second part, I found the growing rejection of the old *assistencialismo* narrative, in which the periphery pursues more accountability by engaging with parliamentary debates. By

linking specific episodes of violence and exclusion to broad terms such as *black youth*, *periphery* and *genocide*, this coverage defied and opposed decades of the state's "stabilising" narratives, as producers have associated repression with poverty and inequality and not with their own "marginality". This study contributes to shedding more light on the new dynamics between the periphery and contemporary political institutions in Brazil, in which producers have used elements such as distrust or "anger" as ways to achieve more inclusion in political debates and improve their feedback to the state. In the next chapter, I conclude this thesis by presenting the broader contribution from the peripheral media to the politicization of inequality in contemporary Brazil. I revisit the coverage discussed in the empirical chapters and add conclusive arguments that cover the whole research.

8. Conclusion – A new form of media power: Inequality at the centre

This research proposed to abandon the term *alternative media* to search for a concept that stemmed directly from the Brazilian media reality. Based on the history of the periphery in Brazil and what producers claimed themselves to be, this work put forward the concept of the “peripheral media”. More than a normative framework of analysis, this thesis advanced a proposal to reinterpret alternative media on the grounds of their contributions to politicizing inequality from the margins of society. Even though no single media law changed to democratise public TV and radio during the period of this research (Paiva et al, 2015), the peripheral media expanded towards a unique contribution to the new politicization of inequality because producers have shown they can create counterhegemonic discourses that were tackling past views of such issues. Producers have taken inequality to another level of understanding and publicity by linking apparently unrelated episodes of violence and urban development to the country’s divides, and overall investing in the stories of ordinary citizens, including *favela* dwellers, in a way to press mainstream society so they could engage with them.

As a mixed methods research, this work has sought to build different ways of understanding the content and its producers. I first collected the producers’ views by conducting semi-structured interviews, from which I could map their routines, interests, and priorities as reporters of the country’s inequality. It became clear that the “coverage of inequality” that I had initially proposed to study was a variety of discourses not only on inequality, but on its consequences and the restrictions that Brazilian society has imposed on those belonging to the economic, racial, and class periphery. Among my findings, I explored many discussions on the full access to the city, the difficulties disadvantaged citizens face when trying to get fair treatment from authorities, and how producers intervene in political debates so they can reverse decades of exclusion from political debates. The frame analysis, on the other hand, revealed the emergence of fact reporting, as producers have pursued an enhancement of the quality of their production. The alterations, appropriations, and linkages that producers made out of content come up as practical ways of connecting everyday events to broader and complex situations while somehow mirroring the struggle against many divides.

I argue that both kinds of evidence have offered an unprecedented look into producers’ daily and unpredictable efforts to create what I call *politicized* discourses in a sense of forging a counterhegemonic meaning. The links found with Brazil’s history and politics show that producers

drew on the past silence of the periphery to seize the present's agenda and add more frames to it, give feedback to power, and change their media representations. These linkages have worked to place the disadvantaged in a better position than in the 1970s, for example, reflecting the broader socioeconomic change in the country of the last decades. On the other hand, after this three-year analysis, I perceived that this struggle over a politicized meaning for inequality issues also reflected many of the values that were present in Brazil's alternative press of the 1970s, as its close attachment to popular culture (Festa & Silva, 1986; Kucinski, 1991; Woitowicz, 2009), and yet, there were new possibilities of reversing the persistent trivialisation of inequality.

The methods used in this thesis have allowed further clarification of the complexity of discourses. Here, it comprised content alteration, the *metaphorisation* of the news or placing linkages to other content, or the remix of original content. I argue that this qualitative analysis of discourse, despite the difficulties in capturing it, is one of the main contributions resulting from this focus on discourse/frame. Because I invested in looking at it by assessing the intent behind producers' headlines, I could identify instances that are clearly aimed at adjusting media representations of known terms such as *favelado* as I also got its meaning when the capture of its meaning was way harder, with subtle references to reality, as when producers employed slangs, ironies, or simply when it was too dangerous to spell references to crime and violence.

The contribution of this thesis is therefore to enlarge the knowledge on the coverage of inequality from Brazil's periphery through strategies for its politicization. Thanks to its counterhegemonic aspects, producers can now represent an unprecedented stand by the periphery in the face of inequality, and not only poverty or scarcity, as history shows. Theoretically speaking, producers have applied both Gramsci's (2016) "war of position" (by refusing to adhere to certain terms and mainstream-produced frames) and "war of movement" (by stressing discursive avenues, appropriating content, and seeking to *occupy* society's understanding of what was going on in the periphery). With that said, it was not possible to see further deployment of this "politicization" over the context of formal politics (e.g. to reach the Brazilian Congress and to get the buy-in of politicians), as fragmentation is still a major condition to which all producers have referred.

In the next sections, I detail and organise the elements of the peripheral media politicization, noting its existence as a self-feeding system with its own contributors to the understanding of inequality in Brazil. By designing how this media ecology frames these issues in a consistent manner, this thesis sheds light on how the coverage of inequality can now encompass other media realms, public affairs, and the mainstream. Secondly, how this coverage also changes the way in which the alternative media can stop being this passive agent, which has essentially aimed to react, resist, or disrupt what was seen as the "broader" media environment (as in Couldry & Curran, 2003). I dislocate this focus on

disruption to see a relentless creative process. It is about creating a fluid form of discourse with the ability of appropriating momentum and seizing the hegemonic discourse. I contend that this is operated without necessarily subscribing to social movement membership (e.g. Downing, 2008) or by working for the mainstream media (Kenix, 2001; Hackett & Gurleyen, 2015). Moreover, reading it alongside Mouffe's theory of participatory democracy and agonistic communication, we find it as a media power on its own with no direct commitment with transparency, ethics and truth as we know it, but to a loud and chaotic intervention aimed at disrupting Brazil's flawed consensus on inequality.

8.1 Frame results, summary of the findings, and contributions of the research

As seen in the table below, the politicization frame has prevailed above "solidarity" framed stories, but not by a sizeable margin (Table 8.1). Therefore, I concluded on a higher visibility of inequality issues due to a set of strategies led by media producers towards a politicization of issues, based on new media representations. I defined politicization as the ability "to enhance, stretch, or transform the meaning of known adjectives and categories connected to inequality". Having concluded on the prevalence of a *politicized* peripheral media, what appeared as the real dilemma for this research was to decide between discourses that seem to follow a broader politicization "of everything" versus a politicization of inequality. By consulting the main aspects of politicization named at 2.2 (that affect representations, the diversity of frames, and the feedback to power) and following the notions of collective framing literature (Snow et al, 1986; Gamson, 1992; Tarrow, 1992; Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Gamson & Wolfsfield, 1993; Benford & Snow, 2000), the focus on inequality is unequivocally what is at stake for most media producers, which becomes even more apparent as I refer to the analysis of their repertoire.

Table 8.1 Frame analysis results

Outlet/frame	*Solidarity*	*Politicization*
Mídia Periférica	7	13
Agência Pública	5	15
Viva Favela	10	10
Brasil 247	10	10
Rio on Watch	11	9
Coletivo Papo Reto	8	12
Total	51	69

As a way of explaining this complex system of framing social issues as politicization, I first stress the adjustment of representation (Chapters 6.2.1, 7.2.3). The terms of "adjustment", as discussed by Young (2002), appears, for instance, in the case of the *rolezinhos*. Once the CCTV images were made available, it helped to establish *another* version of the facts. That adjustment meant that the urge for having young, dark-skinned men removed from shopping centres was no longer acceptable, regardless of the situation in which they are involved (*EF1*). On the other hand, Newspaper-published pictures were also key to frame conflicts among social classes, with the *arrastões* (Chapter 4.2.2) helping producers to give another weight for facts that were publicly known,[105] (*EF2*). On the "media" aspect of their intervention, there was an "adjustment" in the way producers appropriated CCTV footage: from a privately owned, non-newsworthy and bulky material of the everyday into a public record of an otherwise natural event.[106] The "deliberative, utilitarian and goal-directed" aim (Benford & Snow, 2000:624) exists as the *intent* to seize this and correlated pictures of young men escorted by body guards, to make from these past images, a *new,* continuous and uninterrupted coverage of inequality.

Secondly, I shall also discuss the diversity of frames. Radical outlets such as *Coletivo Papo Reto* and *Brasil 247* have broken with the *harmonious* portrait of the community, which used to privileged team work and an image of union, so they started displaying the blood, anger and scarcity they found in the *favelas* (Chapter 5.2.2). This shifts from the 1970s' community cooperation outlook, where the progressive consciousness of the oppressed was, arguably, at its outset (Freire, 1970) have meant a different ethics of empathy and solidarity. Peripheral media outlets, otherwise, displayed individualism and *personality* via Facebook texts (*EF3*). Selfies and private stories are still produced, but here, with unprecedented "politicized" tone, in which the limits between spontaneity and strategic design appeared, to a greater extent, blurred. This self-framing, in my view, pertained to closeness, familiarity and, but also legitimacy, authority and an autonomy of framing (*EF 4*).

Despite meeting all my expected findings, this broader change in frames and intentions from the periphery does not imply that producers have totally abandoned old partnerships. A long-term agenda of cooperation with NGOs and other third parties still help them at giving feedback to power, for example. This partnership also appears with the continuation of the historical process of *educomunicação*, discussed in chapter 6. This proactive side of "grooming" citizens – have citizens trained with the mainstream media, but it was shown the extent that producers still focus on training fellow communicators on how to deal with the political establishment. If we compare it with the 1990s' *Jornal da Cidadania,* the NGO-linked newspaper that had a direct rapport with the government (Stracciarini, 2007), one realises that this new face of the periphery is not only *tactical* in a procedural sense (Postill, 2013; Boler, 2008), it learns from this NGO reality of developing relationships with power to increase its possibilities of reaching higher spheres of government and decision-making (see Chapters 6.2.1 and 6.1.2).

These three different levels of politicization have much varied, depending on the locations and the actors taking part from the periphery. However, not all media production from the periphery serves the same purpose to adjust representation or they propose new frames or speak to the state. What I attest is the higher possibility that these events start to happen and multiply. As I examined in Chapter 4, I found that movements based on the northeast could strongly reject gentrification as a result of wealthy developers flagrantly profiting from the unawareness of the public (*Ocupe Estelita*), others in São Paulo innovated by featuring homeless and indigent individuals on the cover of websites (*SP Invisível* blog), and middle-class students paired with the poor on the São Paulo's outskirts to discuss issues such as the budget for culture (*Vai da Pé*). The extent to which this politicization abruptly grows amid "normal" episodes of the city life is what aligns what peripheral media producers do, and I argue, this will happen in distinct contexts, socioeconomic affordances, and historical backgrounds to which producers may still appear associated.

On the other hand, the local context may inform this 'one-size-fits-all' politicization. The remake of the *favelado* to fit into a new class of networked individuals is a telling new *repertoire*. By reproducing the *favela* as a reimagined entity (now an accessible place), dwellers have made clear the point at which they disagree with mainstream media representations (as I discuss in Chapter 5.2.2). And yet, the real break with the Gramscian "consensus" happens when producers challenge who is the narrator and who *can* be the real interpreter of inequality. There is a side of *adjustment* on the way *favela* exists to the outside world, leaving behind the expectation of progress (as in Chapters 4.2, 7.1) to promote not new facts (sadly, brutal crimes are not be necessarily new), but new biographical and personalised frames that put more pressure over society and, eventually, over the policy making. This "putting a face" to such an ordinary crime has stopped the state from anonymising its victims and set the real *final* version of the facts, placing it as result of the government's choices.

The occurrence of this type of story can still respect a strategic drive at higher levels of influence. I explored the case of the *Belo Monte* dam, which shows the periphery media criticising the mainstream coverage because of its poor level of transparency. I did not confirm, though, any intent of "rivalling" the mainstream media coverage. but of revitalising the "straight talking" with power. There is an interface that speaks with greater causes of democracy, such as the need for "checks and balances" debated in media democracy scholarship (Keane, 1993; McQuail, 2009) or with the issue of political *clientelism* (Waisbord, 2000; Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002). Both aspects have grown strong in outlets that started small, such as *Agência Pública*, *SP Invisível*, *Vai da Pé* and, to some extent, *Coletivo Papo Reto*. The lack of direct ties with power (in the private-realm of influence) has not prevented that they could reach the power. In 2016, *Agência Pública* was part of the journalists to

interview the then-President Dilma Rousseff[107], confirming their prominence and perhaps the prominence of other of these groups?

Different from past moments of the alternative media in Brazil, the contemporary scene lies, though not completely, outside of large social organisations, unions, and political bodies (Festa & Silva, 1986; Woitowicz, 2009). Content now comes from the appropriation of existing material (from the mainstream media, mostly), as it means a regular periodicity, cheap reproduction, and longer life for outlets. Politicization thus happens after one producer's self-realisation of its significance to communicate inequality, and politicization is how the producer will achieve to promote it and reach others. In sum, it is to transform these issues into public issues but making use of a sensitive language that make sense of subjective inequalities. To understand these manifestations is necessary to move beyond the materialist aspect of inequality (e.g. income gaps) and looking at representation, frames, and other class adjustments (and I do not assume to have covered it all in this thesis).

In sum, notwithstanding the consensus that framing entails—the "one-sided" view of reality, the "reification" problem, or the "affective amplification" of facts (Gamson, 1994; Benford, 1997)—the frames-as-reflexivity revealed the wealth in vocabulary and the core of innovation that rests in the peripheral media. Media producers do not aim to "balance" out media coverage, but instead to denaturalise the inequality that stems from the current agenda and, indirectly, from the media. This meant, for instance, reminding society of the risks of the *favela* pacification programmes, for example, in a moment in which society was leaving a positive moment of economic growth and external expectations were on the rise. The same could be said of the *Belo Monte* dam, which resulted in optimistic views of the thousands of jobs it would create, but which costed a small city and large indigenous communities their land and their peace. I develop now on the consequences of the emergence of the peripheral media by reflecting on past perceptions of alternative media, the issue of inequality, and democracy in Brazil. I expect that this can settle all the claims discussed in this thesis.

a) The peripheral media as a new agent for the media democracy agenda

In this section, I go back to one of the earliest topics discussed in this thesis, which is the position of the alternative media amid the historical media concentration in Brazil. For some authors, this lack of diversity in ownership has been a major factor that reduces media democracy in the country and imped further media representation for the disadvantaged (Amaral & Guimarães, 1994; Waisbord, 2000; Matos, 2008; Paiva et al, 2015). As said, while not intending to discuss the entire problem of media democracy, there are issues that the data obtained by this research allows us to discuss—for example, the extent to which the alternative media could contribute to the enlargement of media representation or, if not, then the reduction of the homogenous frames that have been the mark of the

Brazilian media (Porto, 2007). Keane (1991:131), for instance, described the “right of reply” as a feature of a democratic media environment. Even considering that the (mainstream) media in Brazil offers this right of reply, this same media has been an absent institution from the democratic debate (e.g. Miguel, 2000; Abreu & Lattman-Weltman, 2006).

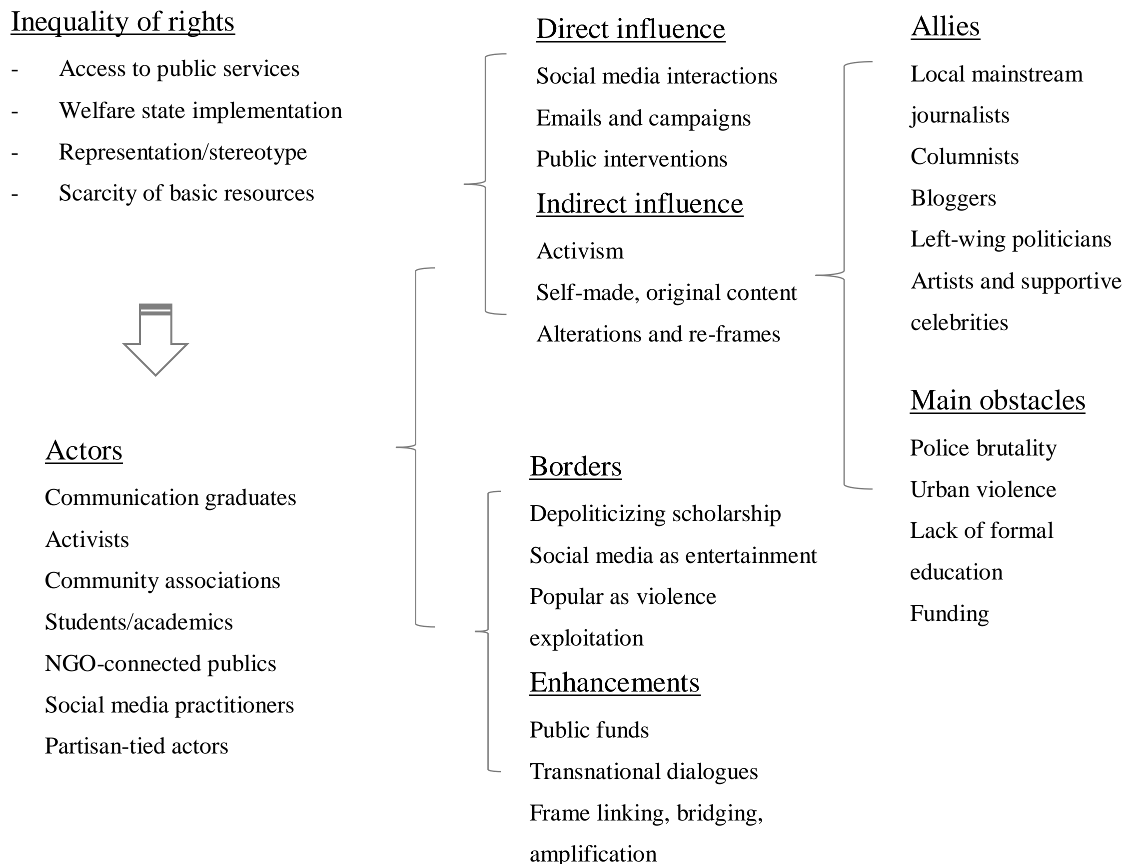
Therefore, where I did not see the peripheral media challenging assumptions of size or coverage breadth, I saw outlets meeting much of these expectations to echo clear and loud *responses* from the disadvantaged public. Producers have exercised this right by opposing state policies (Chapter 7) and, furthermore, moulding their own perceptions of what better public policies would look like, as they imagined constitutional changes and sought that episodes of impunity to be corrected. This is not to suggest that other features, such as the access to broadcast and efficient public service media, are less important (Hackett & Zao, 2005). This latter type of access is still dysfunctional in Brazil, but the peripheral media has demonstrated that a great strength of producers’ autonomy can increase the spectrum of deliberations and make it less bound to a government-supervised media business. Producers have, overall, shown themselves aware of democratic procedures and how decisions are taken.

Looking at Brazilian history is a good way to show how Brazil has adapted to democratic principles in many aspects (Carvalho, 1999), but it also shows that the alternative media has been able to pioneer much of the democratic demands to which the country later conceded (e.g. quotas for minorities and universal cash transfer, as in Festa & Silva, 1986). Sodré (1998) had earlier documented how radical journalists of the past kept their resilience in moments of coups and crisis in the early 20th century. Festa & Silva (1986) documented these journalists’ dispersal once re-democratisation occurred, as they joined political parties. Pereira (1986), an ex-alternative journalist himself, also argued that the reorganisation of the political scenario had weakened the strong alternative press in that decade. In all those movements, alternative media producers have engaged with democracy, which this research also suggests, yet that engagement comes as the result of producers enjoying more openness and flexibility to not necessarily abide by partisan and normative principles.

If the alternative media of the 1970s saw the defence of the “not-for-profit, non-private, and state-funded” as a “solution”, the rise of the digital media has increased the blur in Brazil’s environment. For instance, Kucinski (1991) saw alternative journalists as key actors to test new perspectives for the country after the constrains from the dictatorship (e.g. in Fischer, 2008; D’Araujo, 1999), but contemporary producers said that they could not simply overcome the many barriers of a conservative Brazil (see Chapter 6.1.2), but they can still “do their bit”. Rather than an entirely new democratic reality, producers do not want to conquer the current media spots as they are designed nowadays. They relate to the “detached, rebellious, and counterhegemonic” assumptions of the *radical* media

(Downing, 2001; Atton, 2002), at the same time not alluding to breaking free from “all orders”. They do not want the undemocratic constraints, but they want new parameters for disadvantaged communities. I have catalogued an active, extensive web of contributors, target audiences, borders and obstacles to the coverage by alternate media (figure 8.1). This gathers distinct and complex links with many members of society and explains this type of openness in which democracy resides in a radical language of politicization.

Figure 8.1 Main contributors of the peripheral media



By looking at the above figure, it is possible to re-think the earlier structures of influence of “the media” and to reflect on whether the so-called modernisation of the media environment really demands to topple the “media dynasties” (Sinclair, 2002) or if the argument of “modernisation” directly depends on seeing “the media” as the establishment press (as in Abreu, 2002). This list of partners and contributors helps me at contending if *adjusting* representations is what the real goal for the alternative media, if not for the “whole” media environment, is. More than just seeing the “alternative media” as another small competitor, we should see it as boosting this *adjustment.* The

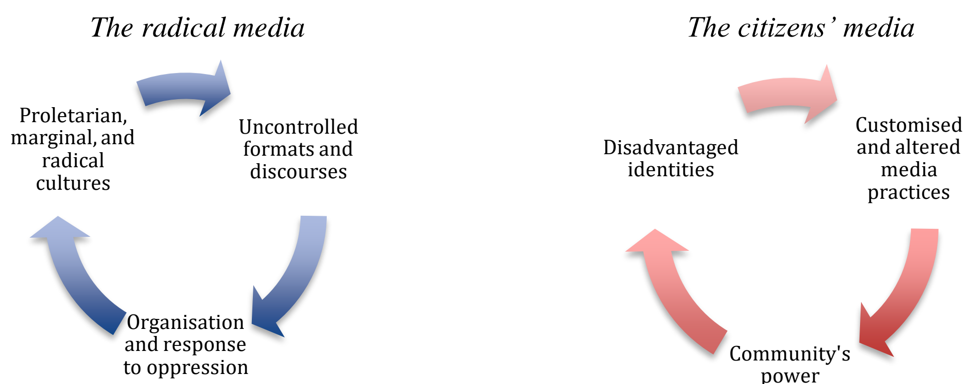
producers' ability of crafting new expressions and drawing on unknown portraits of the periphery is as counterhegemonic as it is democratic, as it is expected that a media law change could be.

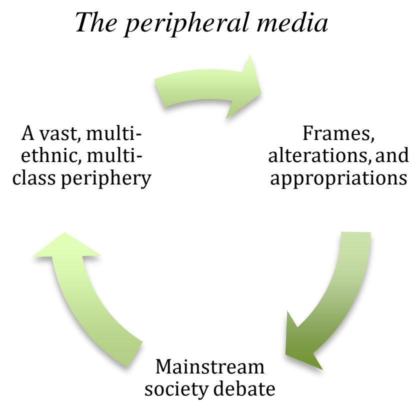
In sum, we must acknowledge the value of the everyday mediated conversation as this slow-feeding process of dissent, outrage, and non-conformity (as in Zayani, 2014) is in their role of deciphering other forms of dialogue, entrepreneurship and local influence building. These processes have constituted what I looked at as a continuous coverage, which can be influential in its own way and, eventually, contribute towards enhancement of democratic exchanges or the right to reply. The extent that it allows another perception of what the alternative media can produce, could redefine the peripheral media to both collective, community project, as well as an individual way of confronting stereotypes. Both ways can fulfil the expected notion of counterhegemonic discourse I pursued in this research.

b) Understanding the alternative media as a counterhegemonic discourse

This thesis does not aim to change any definition of alternative media; it acknowledges that studying it does not necessarily constitute delimiting its breadth of coverage (Atton, 2002). However, it is still possible to contrast findings with those consecrated by other well-known studies. For example, Downing's (2001) "marginalised, popular cultures" has often meant "grassroots", an entity that is less coherent than that of a social movement (Downing, 2008). Studies that tie the alternative media to journalism have seen groups as ambitious enough to reach a professional level, importing mainstream media settings into their outlets (Harcup, 2003; Forde, 2011). Taking Downing (2001) and Rodríguez (2001)—as I also discussed the *citizens' media* earlier (figure 8.2)—I quickly compare the findings of this research with these theories, as we all have looked at counterhegemonic efforts by disadvantaged communities.

Figure 8.2 Radical media, the citizens' media, and the peripheral media





While these authors have seen specific settings within which each media model has operated, either referring to the "community" or to anarchic cultures, the peripheral media has dealt with no targeted public at large. Here we have a chance to stretch of what we understand by "community" in alternative media, from a closed, and coherent project or group (Rodríguez, 2011; Davis, 2015) to a multi-ethnic, multi-class periphery that produces content for a likewise diverse public. Different from these studies, the peripheral media stands out because of its discursive pattern. I found that politicizing commemorative dates, creating versions of popular sayings, re-employing politicians' discourses, and challenging assumed truths from the state aims to re-orientate their audience and not necessarily make them engage among themselves. As a result, this research dwells much more on the struggle against media stereotypes, and yet, this enlargement of the notion of community could allow them to build a new, individualised personality as well as change it multiple times according to their ability to feed a media flow.

Producers' personal needs appear much less in the past literature, which is more focused on the roots of their communal engagement. If the "proletarian" membership of the radical press has been the "binding" assumption for past radical journalists (Jameson, 1998), the only "binding assumption" found in this case was the resistance against a trivialising and inferior status that stem from the context of high inequality. In Gramsci (2010), we learn that a way of fighting *cultural*, *political*, and *bourgeois* hegemonies has been one of playing different "antagonisms" on all these fronts. What I defend here is that these *personal* antagonisms have existed both through constructive approaches, seen in education efforts (*educomunicação*) or in reactive efforts (being society's *watchdog*), both of which imply in a struggle against hegemonies. My point regarding the past literature, after all, is the extent to which this research advances on new ways to build counter-hegemony, which, here, appears as much more elastic and informal than an otherwise cohesive or harmonious idea of community media. Finally, I return to Mouffe's ideas of participatory democracy to reflect on what the centrality of the discourse as a democratic practice informs this research, restoring the citizens' ability to deliberate at one's own fashion.

c) The peripheral media as a working model of participative democracy

Apart from the new reconsideration of the "alternative media" as a discourse and of its role in democratising Brazil's media environment, I also return to an early discussion on the value of the politicization that stems from the peripheral media for society. This research has assessed that producers do push for the negotiation of many divides, creating a scenario in which one *has* to agree with the inequality issues discussed. Yet, I also suggest that *value* here derives from the further political contentions it promotes. This political contention is much in line with what Fenton (2016) argued about going beyond the "veneration of horizontality". Producers and their outlets have been eager to assign responsibilities, discuss policy plans, and propose feasible changes to institutions—therefore nailing what "the political" means for a broad, often unaware population. Even though they are not involved with formal politics at this moment. Emerging from an "informal learning", as Mercea (2016:192) pointed out, the producers' role is actually to promote a "discursive inflexion", in which, I argue, facts appear in permanent flux or uncertainty so that, where once was indifference, there could exist no resistance to their discourse.

This significance of this political contention dwells on tackling the inability of the disillusioned to trust or engage with political forces of change. Because institutional deliberation has always appeared elusive for many Brazilians, due to either corruption or the inability to talk "the language of power" (Dagnino, 2004), producers reached for frames that represent them in connection with power (which were previously insufficient). I witnessed producers assuming as simple what could otherwise seem chaotic interpretations (as Chapter 7 shows); instead of absorbing polarisation and pacifying issues, their choice was to provoke reaction and publicity. In other words, their action resonates with what Mouffe (2000) saw as an antithesis of the deliberative solemnity into a loud, contradictory and often simultaneous debate:

> "To be sure, the aim of the theorists who advocate the different versions of 'deliberative democracy' is commendable. Against the interest-based conception of democracy, inspired by economics and sceptical about the virtues of political participation, they want to introduce questions of morality and justice into politics, they are looking for new meanings of traditional democratic notions like autonomy, popular sovereignty, and equality. Their aim is to reformulate the classical idea of the public sphere, giving it a central place in the democratic project." (Mouffe, 2000:745)

What is at stake here is not "civic learning" through ICTs or the political participation of those who do not normally engage with politics (Bennet, 2003b). I believe it is at a level before that, precisely the level where Mouffe refers to the notion of "autonomy, popular sovereignty". This research examined the peripheral media at the end of three Workers' Party terms in the presidency, when a

political crisis loomed, and the impeachment of ex-president Rousseff was in its early stages. This democratic tension has nonetheless resulted in unprecedented strength for the alternative media in Brazil. Watching the controversial terms of Dilma Rousseff's impeachment, the narrative of a fair country now included the need to tackle corruption that steals money from social projects. I did not look deeper into the latter discourse; however, by applying the results of this research to a broader political history, I contend that producers' efforts are consonant with a historical context of political awakening that has accompanied the discourse of the alternative media in Brazil. Historically, there has been a clear intervention by alternative media in periods of political and economic crisis and this time is not different from this.

Still, I refer not only to the alternative media's presence in the political debate, but also to the quality of its intervention. Here, I employ Mouffe's call for abandoning the "rational consensus", which is useful to engage with this often-chaotic frame production put out by producers. Although this "framing it loud" may sound a challenging way of operating democracy for some Western settings (Carpentier, 2011), in Brazil, however, the "rational consensus" may often translate into an acceptance of inequality through the myth of "racial, pacific democracy". In short, the "rational" consensus is meant to engage with politics, but amid high inequality; *abandoning* this consensus is an obvious path for producers. As discussed in Chapter 5, the "citizen shot by the police" becomes, in the peripheral media, the "black and poor—another one of us dead". I see the refusal of the rationality behind journalism objectivity (though this is changing) as a call to migrate towards another kind of consensus, back to the rights enshrined by constitutional guarantees but abandoned when their implementation is questioned (Fleury, 2014).

To claim these rights, the peripheral media does not need to erase the differences between actors or to look for ways of reducing their differences. This counterhegemonic process is one of allowing different voices to assess their own value and distinctiveness, whether from the *favelas* or other poor neighbourhoods. This allowance for free debate also removes concerns that all discourse impositions are authoritarian, as Mouffe's participatory antagonism theory seems to suggest (Carpentier, 2011). The concern that this detachment from professional, moral or linguistic standards might lead peripheral producers towards more isolation has no grounds in the evidence analysed. As in Atton (2002:18), the alternative media as a counter-cultural movement has fulfilled a cycle in the American West Coast; yet in South America, the cultural dimensions of discourse have given rise to other possibilities for citizenship (Dagnino, 2004, 2010; Carvalho, 2009). This thesis contributes to seeing new exercises of naming and renaming hegemonic events not only as culture, but also as displays of political sentiments that have increasingly mattered for the public opinion.

It is important to differentiate this political contention from the actual approximation with the political establishment. The peripheral media's strength emerges from the political and social issues that derive from the inequality of the peripheries growing amid an indifferent society, which may or may not flourish as a mature civic body. This is distinct from weaving direct efforts or links with voters or with politicians. This thesis has aimed to approach a preliminary stage of this political ecology, which is one of removing impediments for a collective reflection by using the periphery as a starting point. As discussed, this includes unmaking the past pattern of imposed, hegemonic collective agreement. This movement has gathered the *favela* media outlets, the journalism agencies, and the NGO-funded initiatives as part of the same framework of action. I highlight now some limitations that prevented other topics from coming up in this research.

8.2 Limitations and future steps

Emerging scholarly research has invested in Brazil's alternative media in an unprecedented scale of engagement and theorisation. Custodio (2017), for instance, drew on the political profiles of *favela* media activism, through which he found individualism and structure in the producers' motivations. Waisbord and Segura (2016) saw media movements in Latin America battling law change and further inclusion of the disadvantaged groups. These studies have in common the in-depth investment in understanding the agency of small or large groups that have used the media to achieve new milestones in policy, seeking the promotion of communities and of native views of society. These studies have also sought to understand some level of participation within institutional or community boundaries, in which dynamics can act as the foundation for further conclusions on the development of community projects by sharing a consciousness of risks and opportunities, then engaging further with mainstream society. In contrast to these studies, this research has not approached participation or interaction with society at this level of analysis.

Because it sought a more intimate portrait of producers' views, this study has not embraced the *process* of media making nor has it engaged in conceptualising *participation*. On the one hand, this allowed me to advance in bringing these outlets into the context of a single *coverage*, creating a way of researching this media overcoming their differences and without resorting entirely to mainstream media comparison. On the other hand, there are pros and cons in not engaging with ethnographic research. In my view, because I privileged as data the views producers offered me in the interviews and the content they produced, I did not deny their self-affirmation as journalists, writers, photographers, and self-assigned professions related to the creative industries. That goes beyond because I did not seek to interpret their activity as—or, to some extent, reduce it to—one of *activism*. I do not argue that the above studies classify the alternative media as *activism,* but that is certainly

another kind of analysis that is not the focus in this study. Aware of the legacy scholarship that has approached the alternative, community and activist media as products of the same realms (Rodríguez, 2001; Downing, 2001; Barassi, 2015), I found that this research could contribute more if we could dedicate space to producers' outputs, rather than drawing on assumptions on the size or periodicity of their organisation or any other method they use.

Likewise, this thesis could not achieve the full grasp of each specific geographic environment's inequality, as generalising what I saw as the "periphery" entails the lack of an in-depth approach for each of these locations. In the extensive literature on Brazil's alternative media, we find authors concentrating on the media from the *favelas* (also in Bailey et al, 2007; Davis, 2015; Baroni, 2015) or on "alternative journalism" (Peruzzo, 2008; Carvalho, 2014) while seeing them within the social movement framework (Gomes & Nascimento, 1998; Gohn, 1999; Fonseca, 2007; Carneiro, 2006; Bailey et al, 2007; Downing, 2008). I, however, adopted a line of enquiry close to Festa and Silva (1986), Kucinski (1991) and Woitowicz (2009), which are studies that compile the alternative media produced in many settings. Hence, seeing the periphery as one (but distributed in multiple sites and discourses) allowed me to collect similar positions and therefore to unify the agency of multiple voices. If that meets an existing perception shared by many Brazilians (how the periphery is known, that is, without a precise address), on the other hand, that approach misses more details that add to a statistic study of each region or location (briefly approached in Chapter 6).

Even though Brazil is going through deep changes since the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016, theorising on top of a single "periphery" can still relate to a sort of reality that has been unchanged for decades and still remains. This research has approached a bottom-line of political alignment among disadvantaged citizens, based on the premise that sees inequality as a subject out of political priorities. Yet, future research can still explore the fractures within existent, yet fragile commitments on the issue, looking at how communities can also split over some of these issues, which otherwise appeared here on the grounds of the received support, not of its differences. The strongly organised communities, such as the *favelas*, can also suffer from internal conflicts that can reach the media making. Newly created institutions such as *Data Popular*, a research institute tailored to create statistics on low-income families, shows that movements could help to map, assess and understand the periphery go, which may disclose new challenges for the periphery.

In the universe of formal politics, polarisation and fracturing of the political debate must be probed against the rise of the right-wing alternative media groups, as well as against the concept of "alternative media". Through well-accessed outlets such as *O Antagonista* in Brazil or *Breitbart News* in the US, conservative groups have created their own pages, while the mainstream media have seized the debate on "fake news", associating the alternative media to the dissemination of untrue stories,

thereby questioning its legitimacy. Alternative media outlets must be analysed as legitimate actors of the political debate, regardless their political or ideological orientation. While I do not believe that right-wing actors should appear as only "racists" or simply as "conservatives" (Girotto Neto, 2014), their emergence justifies new incursions into the alternative media scene, as my focus was consciously directed at social justice, without penetrating and engaging with the deep partisan fractures that existed in Brazil. In any case, the methodology developed in this research could yet help researchers to also contrast right-wing alternative media with those that still carry expectations of social justice (those explored in this thesis). Are these other groups also interested in inequality? In what sense? To what extent could the peripheral media share premises with groups of other partisan inclinations? These questions must also be responded to on the grounds of more data on partisan affiliation, which was not the focus of this research. I summarise this chapter and the key discussions advanced in the conclusion.

Conclusion

This chapter has listed all the conclusions reached in this thesis. In the first part, I summarised my departure from a scenario of uncertainty and lack of focus on alternative media discourses, in which this thesis sought to contribute for understanding the politicization of inequality as the most frequent pattern observed in frame and discourse analyses. Besides pointing to this politicized, consensus-breaking coverage and its nuances, the contribution of this thesis is to advance knowledge on the peripheral media environment. I saw politicization as promoting several adjustments of representation, increasing the diversity of frames, and providing the right type of feedback to power. I also reflected on the other implications stemming from the peripheral media. First, I aimed to advance the debate on media concentration, much centred at media organisations. Second, I stressed the possibilities of looking at the alternative media as a discourse. Third, I approximated the ideas in this thesis to Mouffe's participatory democracy theory, particularly because outlets demonstrated a new front of agonistic contention in Brazil. Future studies could profit from exploring the peripheral as a single location, as well as exploring this concept's dimension in each individual's ability to forge new realities through new media.

Attachments

i) Frames description

Frame	*Description*	*Examples*
Politicization	The responsibility frame prioritises inequality as an issue caused or intensified by any external actor to the community, including the elite privilege thesis, poor redistribution of resources, state corruption, etc. This frame is based on the long list of alternative media cases that have acted vigilantly to ensure disadvantaged communities' rights (Festa & Silva, Woitowicz, 2009), including recent efforts of watchdog journalism. I also discuss politicization by seizing notions of frame resonance (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Benford & Snow, 2000) and Tarrow's (1992) notion of political opportunity as conceptual tools. Methodologically, I locate *politicization* as in the content that aim to enhance, stretch, or transform the meaning of known adjectives and categories currently connected to inequality.	"*The responses from Rio City Hall*, a report from Pública has questioned the status of a real estate project with vista to the Olympic Golf pitch, as shown in the story 'The sun does not rise to all, but not with this vista'." (Agência Pública, 23/02/2015)
Solidarity	This frame relates to the tradition of alternative media to produce content aimed at raising funds, efforts, and charitable mobilisation around specific issues related to inequality. Literature shows this happening in the 1990s in respect of hunger (Stacciarini, 2007), and illiteracy, but this frame must include unemployment, urban violence, and any pledge for union around inequality stemming from minorities rights. Based on this background, I will work on the hypothesis of overall solidarity as the pacification on the one hand, as opposite to the confrontational politicization that seeks change on the other hand. Methodologically, I locate solidarity by looking at how *peaceful* the settings of discourses are, in the sense of inviting charity and community support (henceforth, solidarity frames), or moving towards the angle of cultural demonstrations, resulting in short-length or long-length texts, images and the overall *description* of events with no further political resonance.	"The one thousand faces of Ana: Mineira from Carangola, she came to Rio de Janeiro to work as maid and help out one of her aunts, who was with an ill husband. For decades, she worked and lived in families' homes. Already there, she had inspiration to create." (Viva Favela, 06/09/2014)

ii) List of questions to interviewees

Number	*Question*
1	Could you describe the motivations or the mission of your website/blog?
2	How have you started producing or participating in your website/blog?
3	What are the sources of funding for your work or for your website/blog?
4	Does your website/blog display third party advertisements, as for instance, from the government or official institutions?
5	Is there any expectation related to a return of investment or profit with advertisement?
6	If the website/blog is funded by donations, can this system completely cover the expenses?
7	To what extent does your blog/website follow professional journalism standards, such as objectivity, impartiality?
8	Have you or your team required any specific training before starting your website/blog?
9	To what degree do you or your team engage with new communication technologies, such as social media. Are they important for your work?
10	To what extent does your website/blog mirror, discuss, or oppose the agenda of the Brazilian mainstream media (such as Globo TV, Folha de S Paulo or other major outlets)?
11	Have you ever faced censorship, threat, or any kind of personal blaming for producing your blog/website?
12	To what extent can the media concentration in Brazil (e.g. monopoly on broadcasting, big media groups, etc.) affect your website/blog/media?
13	In your opinion, what are the opportunities for the alternative media to set an agenda for other alternative media outlets?
14	Please describe your main audience. Who are your readers? What is their profile or background?
15	What is the main source of your content? Does it come from the internet, freelance contributions, or is it your own production, or other source?
16	How would you classify your political or partisan leaning?
17	How would you assess the coverage of inequality or the representation of minorities or historically segregated groups (such as the black, indigenous, women) by the Brazilian mainstream media?
18	In what ways does your website/blog come collaborating to the awareness on the inequality issues in Brazil, particularly on subjects related to poverty and social exclusion?
19	When publishing stories about inequality, which of these groups do you expect to primarily influence: society, the state or the mainstream media? Or other?
20	In your opinion, can inequality issues prevent the online alternative media from having more impact on society?
21	Do you think that the entertainment bias of the internet can affect the interest for an inequality-driven agenda?

22	How can you assess the success of your blog/website in terms of social impact?

iii) Preliminary list of sampled outlets and description

Number	Title	Platform	Brief description
1	100 Ko	Internet	Blog covering the everyday life in *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro.
2	A Voz da Periferia	Internet, printed sheets	Blog with comments on social issues from Fortaleza, Ceará.
3	Agencia Pública	Internet	Jornalism agency focused on inequality, human rights. It is based in São Paulo and operates with a staff of journalists.
4	Alma Preta	Internet	Group of producers focused on covering the racialized consequences of inequality.
5	Aparecidos Políticos	Internet, print, interventions	Art and media group focused on protesting against the remains of the Brazilian military dictatorship, they are based in Ceará.
6	Bahia 1798	Internet	Group based in Bahia covering the struggle of Afro-Brazilians for equality.
7	Blogueiras negras	Internet	Feminist blog focused on covering racialized inequality in Brazil, dedicating part of its coverage to social activism.
8	Brasil 247	Internet	Radical online newspaper covering Brazil's politics.
9	Casa Preta	Internet	Collective aimed at covering stories that approach the poverty associated with the Afro-Brazilian community.
10	CCJ Recife	Internet, Conferences	NGO-linked group aimed at *educomunicação* for young people, based in Recife.
12	Coletivo Camaradas	Internet	Collective acting in the city of Crato, Ceará.
12	Coletivo Nigéria	Internet, video	Multimedia group based in the city of Fortaleza, Ceará.
13	Coletivo Papo Reto	Internet	Collective based in Rio de Janeiro aimed at covering human rights, inequality, especially focused on Rio de Janeiro.
14	Coletivo Rever	Internet	Started out as a collaborative group, this collective put out a magazine focused on human rights and inequality in the state of Sergipe.
15	Desabafo Social	Internet, Conferences	Collective based in Bahia, Alagoas and Sergipe aiming for the defence of human rights and media democracy.
16	DNA Urbano/ES	Internet, Exhibitions, Conferences	Mix of hip-hop, skate, and graffiti collective publishing content on the periphery of Vitoria, Espirito Santo.
17	Enecos Piauí	Internet	University-based collective advocating for media democracy and inequality of representation
18	Favela News Recife	Internet, video	Collective linked to the Shine a Light foundation, aimed at training disadvantaged young people in

			Recife. The group is based in both Recife and Florianópolis.
19	Favelados pelo Mundo	Internet	Facebook-based publication focusing on *favelados* and their trips around the world.
20	Força Tururu	Internet	Collective based in Paulista, Pernambuco. They are focused on public service issues in disadvantaged communities of the northeast.
21	Gatomídia	Internet, video	Youtube-based group aimed at the young people from *favelas.*
22	Imagem Comunitaria	Internet, TV	Nonprofit organization based in Belo Horizonte aimed at providing consultancy to grassroots communications. Their partnership is overall focused on television.
23	Imersão Latina	Internet, exhibitions, Conferences	Activist collective that runs a blog on the inequality affecting the indigenous people in Brazil and Latin America.
24	Instituto Amazonico de Educação e Comunicação Popular (IACEP)	Internet, radio, conferences, interventions	Amazon-focused group with the aim of developing communications in that region.
25	Internet Sem Fronteiras Institute	Internet	Nonprofit institution focused on digital divide and training people to produce their own communications.
26	Jornalistas Livres	Internet	A collective of media activists, journalists, and media producers based in São Paulo. It is anchored on Facebook, website, and social media.
27	Juventude Sem Terra	Internet, Print	The group derived from the Landless Rural Workers, but here focusing on its young membership.
28	Mídia Ninja	Internet	Group of activists and media producers focused on covering inequality, human rights, and “progresssive causes”.
29	Mídia Periférica	Internet	Mix of blog and radio show covering the outskirts of Salvador, Bahia.
30	Nina Campinas	Internet, exhibitions	Collective aimed at boosting feminist-oriented reports on inequality and human rights.
31	Nonada – Jornalismo Travessia	Internet, radio	Journalism group from Porto Alegre aimed at raising consciousness on social issues.
32	Observatorio de Direitos	Internet	Representing an activism group, the Observatorio de Direitos focuses on disadvantaged populations of Rio de Janeiro but also is aimed at covering Brazil’s affairs regarding human rights and inequality.
33	Outras palavras	Internet	Blog of news and commentary based in São Paulo.
34	Periferia Digital	Internet	Social media pages focused on inequality issues of the city of Fortaleza, Ceará.
35	Polo Jequitinhonha	Internet, TV	Group formed at the University of the Jequitinhonha Vale, which is focused on boosting grassroots communications.
36	Portal Viva Favela	Internet, TV	Website aimed at covering positive developments in Rio de Janeiro’s *favelas.*

37	Rede Join	Internet, Conferences	Network of "young Internet activists" based in the city of Agudos.
38	Rede Mocoronga	Internet, Radio	Collective of media producers focused on North Brazil, especially disadvantages populations around the Amazon river.
39	Redes da Maré	Internet	Group based in Maré *Favela,* newtowking among activists, NGO contributors, and dwellers.
40	Renajoc	Internet, TV, interventions	Network of yong media producers acting in North Brazil.
41	Revista Afirmativa	Internet	Magazined aimed at seeking equality for minorities in Brazil.
42	Revista Capitolina	Internet	Feminist magazine covering the gender-related aspects of inequality.
43	Revista Gambiarra	Internet, Conferences	Magazine formed by one journalist and a publicist who team up to cover socially-sensitive stories in Vitoria da Conquista, BA.
44	Revista NNA	Internet	Facebook-based magazine, later incorporated into the Jornalistas Livres network.
45	Rio on Watch	Internet	Portal focused on news and commentary on Rio de Janeiro's *favelas,* it is organised by an interdisciplinary team, originally writing in English.
46	SP Invisivel	Internet	Started as an Instagram account aimed at portraying the homeless population in São Paulo. It later emerged into a magazine and website.
47	Vai da Pé	Internet, Print	Magazine founded by ex-university colleagues in São Paulo. It covers the periphery of the City, focusing on political and cultural activism, such as the hip-hop scene and pro-citizenshp demonstrations.
48	Viração	Internet, print, audiovisual	A set of magazine, website, and foundation aimed at training young people so they can produce content on the periphery.
49	Voz da Baixada	Internet, print	Collective publishing a newspaper in the Baixada Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro.
50	Voz das Comunidades	Internet	Originally a blog founded by Rene Silva, a dweller of Alemão *Favela,* in Rio de Janeiro. It mainly covers issues of poverty and inequality affecting other communities.

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Notes, cited newspapers, and other commented references

[1] According to its website http://ninja.oximity.com Access 18/01/2017
[2] "Brazil's ninja reporters spread stories from the streets" - The Guardian, available at http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/29/brazil-ninja-reporters-stories-streets access 08 Feb 2015
[3] "Brazil protests prompts shifts in the media landscape". Wall Street Journal. Available at http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323873904578570244226440374 Access 23 Dec 2015
[4] This is my translation as it is also the case of other studies repeated here, and which are available only in Portuguese.
[5] This approach has appeared in many pieces in both mainstream and alternative media. The Mídia Ninja group, for instance, wrote an article entitled 'We will invade your beach', in reference to their presence on mainstream media. Available at https://medium.com/@MidiaNINJA/globo-nós-invadimos-sua-praia-dc1b70a8864d#.uemvx6ksz Access 05/07/2015
[6] That is the discourse as it is perceived in many outlets, for instance, in the name "Midia Ninja", which suggests areas or practices which other media producers do not do.
[7] Many mainstream stories have featured Q&A on the changes of the new law. The point here is the prevalence of an angle favouring house cleaners' employers rather than an explanation of the issue's historical backgrounds and the country's need to provide income justice for these professionals. An example is this extensive report by Globo's website G1as they offer a Q&A entitle "PEC Domésticas, read questions and answers and solve your doubts". Available at http://g1.globo.com/economia/seu-dinheiro/noticia/2015/05/pec-das-domesticas-leia-perguntas-e-respostas-e-tire-suas-duvidas-2015.html
[8] "The long transition from slave to house cleaner". Outras Palavras. Available at http://outraspalavras.net/outrasmidias/destaque-outras-midias/a-longa-transicao-entre-escrava-e-empregada-domestica/
[9] The campaign "postcards from the periphery", led by "*Mídia Periférica*" blog appears as an example of this publicity to peripheral zones, banned from mainstream representations.
http://midiaperiferica.blogspot.co.uk/2014/03/participe-da-campanha-postais-das.html
[10] In this post, blog Geledés, publishes an interview with a former maid, in which she tells of the many abuses she suffered as result of the lack of such a law of equating wages and conditions with 'ordinary' workers and domestic workers. Available at http://www.geledes.org.br/creuza-maria-oliveira-se-a-pec-das-domesticas-existisse-nao-teria-sofrido-tanto/ Access 04 July 2016
[11] The editor of blog "Mídia Periférica " from Bahia has reportedly received death threats after publishing about police violence in peripheral communities, especially against black youth. As reported by the website Bahia Notícias http://www.bahianoticias.com.br/noticia/167895-editor-do-039-midia-periferica-039-relata-ameacas-apos-criticas-a-pm-e-sai-de-salvador.html
[12] Tarrow (1992) discussed, for example, the "Israeli-Palestinian" frame, the "racial issues" frame as *given* angles, much repeated in the American press.
[13] This is a quote from Ali Kamel, Globo Vice-President, who has acknowledged the need to move towards more social sensitivity in the company's coverage. It is important to highlight Globo's position also as a matter of contrast to this research's frames.
[14] Photographer unknown, source www.adital.com.br access 14 Nov 2015
[15] In Portuguese, "A Não Declarada Guerra na Visão de um Favelado"
[16] Article initially published in NGO outlet *Redes da Maré*: "Favelado: What's this?" available at http://redesdamare.org.br/blog/noticias/artigo-favelado-afinal-o-que-e-isso/ Access 10 July 2016
[17] The Internet access in favelas can vary according to some studies. Neri (2012) saw favelas with access indices of 90% of Internet access from 24% previously reported. As this study from Brazil's FGV confirms http://www.cps.fgv.br/cps/bd/mid2012/MID_texto_principal.pdf Access 10 Mar 2016
[18] Based on the following literature: Straubhaar (1984, 1991); Amaral & Guimarães (1994); Sinclair (2002) Fox & Waisbord (2002); Porto (1998, 2007); Matos (2008); Thussu (2008) (Paiva et al, 2015)
[19] See Ivanova & Mardones (2014) for more on the concept of 'telecharity', as applied in the Chilean reality.
[20] Globo TV has consistently developed programmes with the intent of gathering more language and aesthetics of the Brazilian urban periphery. One of these examples comes with the "Central da

Periferia", presented by host Regina Casé, who has developed a frequent narrative of interacting with the lower classes, using their discourse and trying to mirror their interests.
[21] Looking at Brazil's mainstream press, one senses different approaches for classes, for instance, many stories reporting on new habits, and new environments that now receive the "new middle class" some of which may sound as ordinary as the access of this part of population to airports or shopping malls. Yet, as a barometer for the reduction of inequality, it may have sensed a break from the old order, as a deep social inequality has banned certain populations from such spaces. An example is at this story published by newspaper Folha de S. Paulo http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/mercado/me1909201002.htm Access 06 July 2016
[22] For example, I considered the appropriation of the hunger issue during the 2014 presidential election, which saw, the Workers' Party using the image of a family around a table looking at empty dishes. As still seen on Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiNabwXjbd0 Access 12 Dec 2016
[23] Because race, gender, and poverty intersect in many of Brazil demographic studies, therefore improving economic class may improve the visibility of such groups, as narrated by Telles (2015) also in Reis & Schwartzman (2012)
[24] My argument here is that, by naming their production *news*, such outlets have coupled this term with the name of impoverished communities such as favelas. This is the case of www.favelanews.org based in the city of Recife.
[25] The interviewed received full approval from City, University of London's Ethical Committee.
[26] The popularisation of favelas in soap operas had in the very successful "Avenida Brasil" (2012) its peak. Most of this upbeat representation appeared broadcasted on Globo TV's programmes, although it is still not an unanimity (La Pastina et al, 2014).
[27] As these practices are growing popular in Brazil, research has developed in the role of street hobbies such as skate to marginalized culture. Weller (2000), for instance, tied Brazil's street culture to German-Turkish rappers in Berlin, as both seem to develop new identities based on their exclusion from mainstream society.
[28] Translated literally as "lowlands" from the Portuguese, but which in Brazil has a meaning of *poor suburbia.*
[29] I see the use of "segregation" as much influenced by the American scholarship (e.g. Telles, 1992), which have often referred to rules created or enforced by the state to separate populations by racial criteria. Although the periphery has a high majority of black or *pardo* populations, state enforcement of this condition has not been directly enforced, thus "segregation" gets more of a meaning of separation, divide.
[30] Gentrification has triggered much analyses in scholarship applied to cities in advance capitalism (Harvey, 2013, for instance), but its existence in Brazil is much controversial. During the years of economic boom, *favelas* were seen as quickly gentrifying largely due to the increase at housing price, displacing part of the old dwellers (Cummings, 2015).
[31] Although *pichação* is also seen by ethnographers as a kind of expression and protest against class divisions in its cryptic typos (Souza, 2007), it is a contentious topic in Brazil. In early 2017, the recently elected Mayor of São Paulo, João Dória, has declared the end of tolerance with *pichação* as tagging, but on the other hand, vowing to protect the graffiti as an artistic practice. The borders between both concepts are ambiguous. Further context in this New York Times report. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/29/world/americas/at-war-with-sao-paulos-establishment-black-paint-in-hand.html Access 20 Jan 2015
[32] The first image has appeared in multiple blogs and websites, not being possible to confirm its authorship, one of the websites to publish it is available at http://www.ultracurioso.com.br/se-voce-ver-algum-desses-sinais-pichados-na-sua-casa-ligue-para-a-policia-imediatamente/ The second picture was published by Viva Favela at http://vivafavela.com.br/310-grafite/imagemm-050_0/ Both websites accessed on the 20 Jan 2015
[33] There are thousands of informal recycling workers who make a living from collecting disposed packages, and other recyclable items from the streets, delivering it to deposits. In 2010, ex-President Lula lobbied to transform the *catadores* in a formal profession. More context in

http://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/politica/voces-me-ensinaram-a-governar-diz-lula-a-catadores-de-papel/n1237893099937.html Access 12 Dec 2014

[34] One case of personalisation of homelessness with the purpose of entertainment was seen in the case of the *mendigato,* which translates as 'the sexy beggar'. Once photographed amid reports of police drug raids or at any other circumstances, the media transformed the image of a white homeless man, Rafael Nunes, possibly crack cocaine user, into the image of a sex symbol. The media would then credit the "Internet" for transforming these individuals in sexual symbols (with hashtags, social media profiles) as reports continuously showed these individuals getting married and leaving the life of the streets. See Brandão & Conceição (2017).

[35] "Poor and favelado, not on my beach". Brasil 247. Available at http://www.brasil247.com/pt/247/favela247/197966/"Pobre-e-favelado-Na-minha-praia-não!".htm published on 22/09/2015 access 30 Oct 2015

[36] According to mainstream news coverage verified in this research (mostly G1 and Folha), rolezinhos happened first in Minas Gerais in 2013, in the city of Contagem, and in 2014 at the Metro Itaquera shopping mall.

[37] "Luxurious shopping mall gets clearance to stop rolezinho". Terra. Available at http://noticias.terra.com.br/brasil/cidades/sp-shopping-de-luxo-obtem-liminar-para-barrar-rolezinho,50be08e1b1383410VgnVCM10000098cceb0aRCRD.html Access 10/05/2014

[38] As widely reported on key occurrences, especially in São Paulo. "Police use teargas and rubber bullets in action against rolezinho". G1. http://g1.globo.com/sao-paulo/noticia/2014/01/policia-usa-bombas-de-gas-e-balas-de-borracha-em-acao-contra-rolezinho.html Access 03/12/2015

[39] Their concern was based on previous episodes of robbery and looting, as reported http://www.em.com.br/app/noticia/gerais/2013/08/18/interna_gerais,436663/seguranca-e-reforcada-em-shopping-da-capital-apos-tumulto.shtml Access 03/12/2015

[40] "Shopping in São Paulo suffers arrastão after 6000 youngsters have invaded the place" http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2013/12/1382637-shopping-em-sp-sofre-arrastao-apos-6000-jovens-invadirem-o-local.shtml Access 05/12/2015

[41] "During rolezinho, we only steal the girls' attention". G1. Available at http://g1.globo.com/sao-paulo/noticia/2014/01/rolezinho-so-tem-roubo-da-atencao-das-gatas-diz-participante-em-post.html Visit on 05/12/2015

[42] "Arrastões and robbery raise fear among dwellers and tourists in Rio de Janeiro" http://g1.globo.com/hora1/noticia/2015/09/arrastoes-e-assaltos-assustam-moradores-e-turistas-no-rj.html Access in 20 Dec 2015

[43] Brazil's black blocs have also attracted the attention of the international press for their destructive action on the streets of cities like São Paulo as this report on CNN portrays. "Brazil Blocs" http://edition.cnn.com/2014/06/02/sport/football/football-brazil-black-blocs/ Access in 20 Dec 2015

[44] This aspect has appeared in many interviews, but also it is easily identified in mainstream media content when reporting on the favelas.

[45] "Who are the favela makers". Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOvLn6RZOqQ Access 20 Dec 2015

[46] "Ten reasons for not denouncing criminals", as seen on Mídia Periférica website: https://100ko.wordpress.com/2015/12/04/dez-motivos-para-nao-denunciarmos-criminosos/#more-322 Access 23/12/2015

[47] Profile not originally included at research, but website Rio on Watch reproduces its content. Original story at http://rioonwatch.org.br/?p=20388 Access 10 Jul 2016

[48] According to research reported by the *Data Popular* institute, as stated by the portal G1 http://g1.globo.com/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2015/06/violencia-policial-65-de-moradores-de-favelas-do-rio-temem-diz-estudo.html Access 10 Jul 2016.

[49] The Carandiru Massacre happened in 1992 as result of a police intervention during a riot. This episode caused the death of 111 inmates. Recently the police officers involved saw their jail conviction overturned as lawful murder. See Leite (2006) on the multiple narratives for this episode.

[50] This picture is often credited to photographer Epitácio Pessoa, taken on 04/10/1992. I could have no confirmation of this authorship or in reaching out the photographer. My intention was not to

necessarily highlight this photography, but the angle and its content, the group of nude bodies of the murdered prisoners.

[51] According to press reports in G1, Extra, and Folha, this was the case of a teenager tied to a lighting pole with a bicycle lock, after the suspect he had committed a robbery. A passerby discovered the case thanks to neighbours and then called the police, later posting the case on Facebook.

[52] "Teenager tied to a lighting pole by group of *vigilantes* in Flamengo" Jornal Extra. http://extra.globo.com/noticias/rio/adolescente-atacado-por-grupo-de-justiceiros-preso-um-poste-por-uma-trava-de-bicicleta-no-flamengo-11485258.html 18/09/2015, access 30 Oct 2015

[53] The prevalence was during the period of early 2014, when such occurrences started to gain prominence in the media was to call the victims by subjective references, such as 'teenager' (jovem) or 'rapaz' (young man). My point is that at that moment the peripheral media was already disclosing details of his life, or at least, its condition of black, and marginalized as the key feature of this crime. As this story from Folha de S. Paulo confirms it. Available at http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2014/02/1407239-adolescente-e-agredido-a-pauladas-e-acorrentado-nu-a-poste-na-zona-sul-do-rio.shtml Access 31 Mar 2014.

[54] Jean-Baptiste Debret (1768-1848), French painter who lived in Brazil.

[55] As it is the case of the Carandiru's Massacre, in 1992, named after the prison in which it took place, or the Realengo's massacre, in 2011.

[56] *Police Pacifying Unities* in Portuguese.

[57] Much of the video coverage counted on testimonials from Amarildo's family, the object here is the non-mainstream material made with the participation of Amarildo's wife or several members of his family, as well as with activists, human rights lawyers, and witnesses. An assemblage of this material resulted in *Uns,* which is a documentary available on Youtube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITUfXc0ySvA Access at 30/11/2014

[58] "Amarildo's family speaks about the Somos Todos Amarildo project". Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITUfXc0ySvA Access 30/11/2014

[59] This is reference to the interview with Anderson Souza, Amarildo's son, filmed by undisclosed media producers, which was a material made freely available on Youtube, access at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCXWaAZxp90 in 30/11/2014

[60] As reported by Amnesty International, which is a summary of these developments on its website. "Punishment to policemen involved in death of builder Amarildo is exemplary to break with impunity". Available at https://anistia.org.br/noticias/anistia-internacional-punicao-aos-policiais-envolvidos-na-morte-pedreiro-amarildo-e-exemplar-para-romper-com-impunidade/

[61] "Justice concedes pay to builder Amarildo's family". G1. Available at http://g1.globo.com/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2016/06/justica-concede-indenizacao-familia-do-pedreiro-amarildo.html Access 18/12/2016

[62] This is not to deny that eviction continues to be an issue for contemporary *favelas.* I refer specifically to the context of dwellers who were interviewees in this research, most of them live in old communities, therefore more stabilised in that sense.

[63] "Black movement and peripheral movement launch Frente Favela Brasil political party". Agência Brasil. http://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/politica/noticia/2016-07/movimentos-negro-e-de-periferias-lancam-partido-frente-favela-brasil Access in 30/09/2016

[64] Connected to Globo TV as non-profit organisation

[65] As in the following story published by G1 "Indians insert arrows in front of the Brasilia *esplanade* in protests for land distribution", where the main feature is the violence of the protest. Available at http://g1.globo.com/distrito-federal/noticia/2016/11/indios-fincam-flechas-na-esplanada-em-ato-por-demarcacao-de-terras.html Access 18 Jun 2016

[66] All content references are from the blog's website http://mural.blogfolha.uol.com.br Access 18 April 2016.

[67] As quoted by Folha de S. Paulo, available at http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2013/09/1341989-jornalista-do-blog-mural-lanca-livro-sobre-maior-favela-de-sp.shtml Access 12 Jan 2015

[68] The project seems to continue via crowdsourcing, their website is the https://agenciamural.com.br Access 12 Jan 2015

[69] According to interview in the News Rewired panel. Available at https://www.newsrewired.com/2015/07/16/how-news-groups-use-citizen-journalism-to-give-a-voice-to-marginalised-communities/ Access 31 Dec 2015
[70] Available at http://witness.theguardian.com Access 31 Dec 2015
[71] According to his account on the Guardian's website. https://www.theguardian.com/cities/video/2015/jan/06/guardian-citizen-reporting-training-programme-india-video Access 01 Feb 2015
[72] More information on this programme is found on the initiative's website: http://www.com.ufv.br/noticias/34-gerais/835-museu-da-comunicacao-realiza-atividades-nas-escolas-de-vicosa.html Access 20/10/2014
[73] While no specific dates of workshops or evidence from this text review process have been found, by contrasting the testimonial of both schemes' sponsors, seeing their social media invitations to potential participants, and reading the final language of these publications, it is expected that these programmes have followed bureaucratic procedures, which have not been seen in *educomunicação* practices.
[74] As widely reported in the Brazilian media in 2015. Brasil 247 editor, Leandro Attuch appeared as beneficiary of a corruption scheme, according to whistleblower Milton Pascowitch https://www.cartacapital.com.br/blogs/parlatorio/site-brasil-247-recebeu-propina-de-vaccari-diz-lobista-1677.html Access 12 Dec 2015
[75] This story appeared on Reuters' photography blog on 02 May 2013, accessed 25/12/2015, available at http://blogs.reuters.com/photographers-blog/2013/05/02/a-world-without-smiles/
[76] This image was found at the International Business Times website but its use here is illustrative, as many similar images have appeared in international news websites, most of which taken by international news agencies, such as the Associated France Press, which is the owner of this picture. Available at http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/rio-police-marines-occupy-massive-mare-favela-slum-world-cup-security-operation-1442884 Access 12 Jan 2015
[77] Editorial staff's decisions are not generally open to scholarly or non-scholarly scrunity, as journalists have generally treated their own options out of public gaze. However, in the case of *favela* reports, and perhaps due to the campaigning for a better coverage, has achieved some public acknowledgement of these pitfalls, as in this case of journalist Jo Griffin, The Guardian's contributors. Citing newsrooms concerns, it was argued that editors did not know what term to employ when reporting from *favelas.* This opinion was found in this media criticism website. Available at https://ijnet.org/en/blog/rioonwatch-launches-guide-encourage-nuanced-news-coverage-rio-de-janeiro-olympics Access 15 Dec 2016
[78] In December 2015, the Piauí magazine, one of the leading monthly magazines in Brazil, has revealed the close ties between PR agencies and the Brazilian press, in which the former facilitates deals to promote certain clients, which in return, sponsors some of the press pieces. Folha's reporting on Belo Monte was one of the examples. "O sujeito oculto", available at http://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/materia/o-sujeito-oculto/ Access 14 Feb 2016
[79] Name given after a backstage conversation mistakenly broadcast in which the Globo journalist Carlos Monforte appeared in conversations with a former minister from Fernando Henrique Cardoso's administration contradicting the version just debated live in the programme.
[80] The owner of Brazil's most influential daily *Folha de S. Paulo,* Otavio Frias Filho, argued in his defence a comparison with the The New York Times, also owned by a family. Brazil's leading left wing magazine, *Carta Capital*, is also property of the Carta family, which saw itself recently involved when its close relations with ex-president Luís Inácio Lula da Silva came to public attention. These arguments came up during a conference in London 24 June 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usPgv2M4ZlE Access 08 Oct 2016
[81] When I spoke with them, their improvised newsroom was at one team member's home in a middle-class suburb, west São Paulo.
[82] I translated this and the following policies' names because of the straightforward meaning and perfect correspondence once translated. That also makes it easier for an international reader to refer to it in English, rather than in Portuguese.

[83] According to the edital released in 2015, the year after Rousseff has been elected for her second term. Available at http://www.cultura.gov.br/o-dia-a-dia-da-cultura/-/asset_publisher/waaE236Oves2/content/edital-pontos-de-midia-livre/10883 Access 12 Dec 2015

[84] Not completely unrelated to Lula's corruption charges, the support for famous figures of the left has apparently had its side of demonstrating support to what activists saw as a persecution from the right-wing justice against the ex-President. Many of these pictures have come captioned with phrases of support. For context on Lula's case, the news media have provided some background, as in this Guardian report. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/10/brazil-lula-president-court-corruption-charges Access 05 July 2017

[85] Available at http://www.cultura.gov.br/noticias-destaques/-/asset_publisher/OiKX3xlR9iTn/content/encontro-no-rio-busca-unir-e-fortalecer-midia-livre/10883 Access 15 Dec 2015

[86] As for example Fora do Eixo's leader, *Pablo Capilé* joined the Ministry of Cultura, as other collaborators came later to do the same. This report from Folha de S. Paulo unveils some of the details of this approximation between the Workers' Party and Fora do Eixo actually happened after Rousseff's first term. "Fora do Eixo inside the MinC". Available at http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/ilustrada/203624-fora-do-eixo-dentro-do-minc.shtml Access 15/05/2015

[87] Abortion research in Brazil has constantly linked its implications with social class. In both Rocha (2006) as in Machado (2000), which have analysed the demographics behind it and the media portraits in evangelical media, respectively, we learn that the failure in addressing it affects more disadvantaged women.

[88] As did later president Getúlio Vargas.

[89] Although there is an inclination to see *assistencialismo* as much focused on the rural populations of Brazil, its discussion (or assumption) is present also in urban settings. Scholars have debated ways to tackle this discourse, especially by feeding civil society organisations, and stimulating "voluntary" effort. Still, these initiatives did not seem to respond to the core argument of *assistencialismo,* which is the commendation for the "needy" over addressing the roots of social dysfunctions. See Sanglard (2003) for historical context and impacts of *assistencialismo* initiative on the health care sector. Available at http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0104-59702003000300017 Access 12 Jan 2016

[90] "Brazil's Bolsa Familia scheme marks a decade of pioneering poverty relief" https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/dec/17/brazil-bolsa-familia-decade-anniversary-poverty-relief Access 20 Dec 2016

[91] Available at the *O Globo* newspaper website, I could confirm neither authorship of the photograph or publication date http://oglobo.globo.com/blogs/arquivos_upload/2007/11/138_623-jacarezinho.jpg Access 20 March 2015

[92] By for example inviting government staff to defend policies, as in this story in which a minister of Dilma Rousseff's government appears interviewed but no downsizes of the programme are discussed as well as opinions from citizens. "Lack of information leads to prejudice". Brasil 247 t http://www.brasil247.com/pt/247/brasil/201526/Bolsa-Fam%C3%ADlia-'falta-de-informação-leva-ao-preconceito'.htm Access on 31 Dec 2015

[93] The discussion on lowering the punishable age in the law has divided the country not only in relation to this issue, but linking both positions to the left (against the change) and the right (pro-lowering it). That reflects a deep polarisation of society. A background of this constitutional change is provided in this Guardian article. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/02/brazil-age-of-criminal-responsibility-16 Access 31 Dec 2015

[94] At the centre of this politicization of the criminal law lies Jair Bolsonaro, an icon for the right, and defender of tougher rules for criminals in Brazil, not envisaging the unequal settings of crime in Brazil. Full background at https://www.opendemocracy.net/democraciaabierta/pedro-henrique-leal/bolsonaro-and-brazilian-far-right Access 05 Jul 2017

[95] Most of Brazil's jail population is young, black and poor, according to this report from Justice Department states. Available at https://www.justica.gov.br/noticias/mj-divulgara-novo-relatorio-do-infopen-nesta-terca-feira/relatorio-depen-versao-web.pdf Access 10 Mar 2016

[96] As in this article published by portal G1, in which the pros and cons of this bill are weighed in by lawyers and judges. "Check out arguments of those who defend and criticise lowering the age of criminal responsibility". Available at http://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2015/08/confira-argumentos-de-defensores-e-criticos-da-reducao-da-idade-penal.html Access 10 Dec 2015
[97] UPP means Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora or Pacifying Police Unity in Portuguese.
[98] Available on the magazine's Youtube channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTWpUXVpOS4 Access 06 Nov 2016
[99] This post appears signed by the editor of Mídia Periférica blog, an outlet in scope for this study, and this story later appeared in Bahia's main daily *A Tarde* and in other blogs such as the *Favela Potente,* available at https://favelapotente.wordpress.com/tag/midia-periferica/ Access 30 Jun 2016
[100] The mainstream media have covered police violence in the Brazilian streets with considerable attention. Folha de S. Paulo has one of its reporters, Giuliana Vallone hurt in her eye during the 2013 demonstrations. As this report shows, "I often never found he'd shoot on me". http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2013/06/1296077-jamais-achei-que-ele-fosse-atirar-diz-reporter-da-folha-atingida-durante-protesto.shtml Access 27 April 2014
[101] This series of reports is available at http://apublica.org.br/ditadura
[102] I frame this kind of crime as "citizens' actions" because that is the way in which producers have often referred to crime from favelas' citizens, which otherwise, is different from drug dealers', murderers', and other actor seen as "not part of the community", although they have lived in the same quarter.
[103] The image is real and relates to her judgment regarding guerrilla tactics adopted as resistance to the dictatorship. In any case, the point here relates to the use of past images in contemporary political discourses. Particularly during the 2014 election campaign, scholars have seen many genderised elements, let alone content manipulations and serious accusations among candidates, as Jaenisch and Borelli (2011) had seen in 2010, and Dos Santos & Jalalzai (2014) point out regarding the election in analysis.
[104] In this case, the producer referred to a story against the hosting of the 2014 World Cup, whose funds could better attend social issues in Brazil, which was a general argument during 2014 demonstrations.
[105] Young men removed from environments that are deemed as "middle-class" is not new in Brazil as demonstrated by this episode, or by the other cased of the *arrastão* discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis. More context in Penglase (2007), Jaguaribe (2014), Perlman (2010).
[106] That language is found in many peripheral outlets, mostly in newspaper *Brasil 247.*
[107] Interview available at https://www.animalpolitico.com/2016/06/ellos-no-me-sacaron-yo-sigo-siendo-presidenta-dice-dilma-rousseff/ Access 20 Sept 2017