

Five strategies for political participation of the media democratization movement in the New Republic

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Abstract

This article analyzes the strategies of political participation of the social movement for the democratization of the media throughout the New Republic in Brazil. The hypothesis presented is that at least five strategies were part of the discourse of movement in this period. At first, the attempt to influence the Constituent Assembly (1987-88). Then the institutionalization of the agenda through the creation of the National Forum for Democratization of Communication, FNDC, in Portuguese, in 1991. Third, the holding of the National Communication Conference, Confecom, in 2009. As a fourth strategy, the organization of communication vehicles in particular on the internet. Finally, the mobilization around the Popular Initiative Project of Electronic Social Media in 2013. In addition to reviewing the relevant literature, the survey collected documentary and press sources. The article argues that each of these strategies came from the constraints and opportunities imposed by the political conjuncture.

Keywords: Political Participation. Social movements. Democratization of the Media. National Communication Conference. Constitution of 1988.

Introduction

Brazil's 1980s were marked by a redemocratization followed by the birth of a New Republic, being a foundational moment for many social movements. Students' activism showed its strength with the reorganization of the Students' National Union in 1979 and the Brazilian Union of College Students in 1981 (POERNER, 2004). The peasants' movement founded, in 1985, the Landless Workers Movement (MST in Portuguese), an organization which became synonymous with social movements for land distribution reform (ROSA,

2009). In 1985 women's organization achieved their first victory with the creation of a Police Department Specialized in attending women, known as DEAM (BANDEIRA, 2009). In 1988 feminist movements launched the Brazilian Union of Women (UBM), while black organizations, which had created a Unified Movement Against Racial Discrimination (MUCDR in Portuguese) in 1978, saw its wide mobilization turn into Federal Law Number 7.716, known as Caó Act, defining the practice and incitation of racial discrimination as a crime (RIOS, 2012), and in 1988, with the creation of the Black Union for Equality, known as UNEGRO. In regards to public health, the central role of the movement behind the sanitary reform is well documented, when they managed to go forward with 1986's Health National Conference and the inclusion of the Health National System, known as SUS, in the Federal Constitution of 1988 (ROLIM; CRUZ; SAMPAIO, 2013). What may remain still not analyzed yet is the movement behind media democratization campaigns, that emerged in this same period and kept continuous activities through their highs and lows until today.

The present article focuses on analyzing strategies of political participation within the social movement for media democratization in the New Republic. Besides the literature review, this research presents documented sources, especially those found in files of the National Forum for Media Democratization, known as FNDC in Portuguese, and in the press. Our hypothesis is that at least five main strategies were part of the movement's agenda. At first, still in the 1980s, the attempt to influence the outcomes of the Constituent National Assembly (1987-88), then in the 1990s with the institutionalization of the movement through the creation of the National Forum for Media Democratization (FNDC). Third, when in 2009, the National Media Conference (CONFECOM) took place. The fourth strategy happened with the organization of their own media outlets, with online sources in particular. And lastly, with the mobilization around the Popular Initiative for a Democratic Media Bill from 2013 onwards. Like with any other social movement, the media one was affected by historical circumstances, so the formation of these five agendas was a response to the dilemmas imposed at the times they were developed.

Strategy 1: influencing the Constituent National Assembly (1987-88)

The 1980s popular mobilizations led to two great foundational moments of the New Republic. First, with the campaign for the approval of Dante de Oliveira's amendment, which proposed direct elections, known as the *Diretas Já* movement, in 1984. Although this battle was lost, with the indirect election of Tancredo Neves by the Electoral College, the achievement of having a civil president after 20 years of military governments in the country, is undeniable. Secondly, the expressive mobilization around the outcomes of the 1987's Constituent, when popular gatherings strengthen activism for media democratization.

In 1983 the organization of the *National Front to Demand Media Democratic Policies* is discussed during the IV Seminar of Latin American Media Faculties and the VII Congress

of Brazilian Media, ABEPEC, hosted by the Media-Journalism Faculty of Santa Catarina's Federal University (UFSC). In the following year the Front would actually be created with support from six institutions: the National Federation of Journalists (FENAJ); the Brazilian Press Association (ABI); the Brazilian Association of Media Studies and Research; UFSC's Media Faculty; the Federation of Communitarian Associations of Rio de Janeiro (FAMERJ), and the Media and Culture Research Center. As the initiative was proposed by UFSC's Journalism Faculty, a member of its department, the journalist Daniel Herz, became the first Coordinator of the *Front* between 1984 and 1985.

This initiative, predictably, met some resistance, as Pereira (1987, p. 54) describes: “against the National Front, appeared a powerful lobby amongst businessman and politicians to discourage activism”. Although the 1st National Congress of political party PMDB in 1986 had approved in a pioneering way a document titled “Media and media outlets: for a democratic journalism” which included ambitious proposals for media democratization in Brazil, Federal Governments' high bureaucracy, directed by this same political party, never abided to that (PEREIRA, 1987).

The National Front influenced, then, the 1987-88's Constituent to incorporate some demands from media democratization activists. As already known, the political and financial power of media outlets' lobbying was significant in Congress, so the alternative found to go through with the Constituent was popular pressure. A relatively successful example was the petition for Popular Amendment 91 to be presented at the National Constituent Assembly. This amendment proposed the creation of a Media National Council with deliberative powers and wide participation. The 1988 Constitution has, in fact, in its 224th article, the designation of a Media Council, as a result of popular pressure, but not in the same format detailed in Popular Amendment 91. The mechanism approved with the Constitution does not confer autonomy and works like an auxiliary department of the National Congress (LIMA, 2015). Another demand from Amendment 91 was the state monopoly of telecommunications, which was included in the Constitution through item XI of article 21. However, although this mechanism was officially included in the Constitution, it was never affected in reality.

Strategy 2: To institutionalize and organize activists amongst civil society

After the 1988 Constitution's promulgation there was a certain feeling of a new challenge ahead amongst activists for media democratization, in terms of effecting the legal mechanisms regarding public media. To deal with such challenge the strategic option was to institutionalize the movement. This happened through the transformation of the old Front into the National Forum for Media Democratization (FNDC) in 1991.

Still an informal movement at the time, it was decided during a meeting held in Brasilia, that the priorities were: cable diffusion; the regimentation of the National Media Council; and an update in the Press Act, originally from 1967. At the plenary held in 1993

in Rio de Janeiro, the diversity of organizations taking part in FNDC was broadened through elections, although the Forum still remained informal. The so-called Democratic Information Bill (LID in Portuguese) was an important item discussed in the plenary, since it was developed by the Forum to substitute and broaden the scope of the Press Act. Also known as Zaire Rezende Bill, LID also included devices to limit the concentration and monopoly of media outlets, aiming to guarantee citizens their full freedom of information (ROCHA, 1995). In 1994, the Forum held its V plenary in Salvador (state of Bahia), where the document “Guidelines for a Media Democratization Program” was approved, referencing the organization’s initiatives and covering four strategic axes: public control; restructuring of media’s labor market; civil society’s professional training; and policies for cultural development (FNDC, 1994).

FNDC’s acting between 1993 and 1994 was remarkable, since the entity engaged in debates and the joint creation of Bill 8.9977/95 along with the government and members from private media outlets. This bill regulated on Cable TV services in Brazil. During the VI plenary, held in 1995, in Belo Horizonte, members decided to institutionalize the Forum, turning it into a legal entity. This formalization happened in August of that same year, in Brasilia, during a meeting under the presidency of Daniel Herz (a member of FENAJ), whom would become at the time the first general coordinator of FNDC.

After facing disarticulation by the end of the 1990s, in 2001 FNDC manages to press for the creation of the Media Council, in 2002. Even though it was regulated in 1991, this Council was not effectively implemented due to pressures by corporate interests, despite the fact that its only role was assisting the National Congress, without any powers to deliberate. This Council would work for only four years after its implementation, and remain inoperative from December 2006 to July 2012, “when it was finally reinstalled in a controversial way, and with an uneven composition, privileging, unquestionably, the corporate representation” (LIMA, 2013, p. 29).

Also in 2002, FNDC has the opportunity to address a media government program to then presidential candidates. The offer was approved internally within the Labors’ Party (PT), but was not published in its official presidential program nor publicly mentioned (HERZ, 2006). One can identify a relative lack of action from PT’s early mandate, in 2003, until the I National Media Conference, in 2009, with FNDC’s participation in the I Forum of Public TV Companies of the Ministry of Culture being the only exception. This event prompted the Letter of Brasilia, a document that established, amongst other things, that Public TV Channels in the digital era should be independent and autonomous in relation to governments and the market, and having guidelines for management, creation and auditing of content, through a deliberative board of members, representing civil society and without a majority of governmental bureaucrats.

We consider FNDC’s greatest impact to be the leadership of the entity in two central processes for civil society’s debate over media democratization: the National Media Conference and the Democratic Media Bill. We will now approach these two strategies separately.

Strategy 3: To pressure political members through the National Media Conference

One of the historical demands from media democratization activists was the creation of a conference to discuss media public policies that would provide a new regulatory framework for broadcasting. The I Confecom took place in Brasília in 2009, and is seen by activists as a remarkable accomplishment (FNDC, 2011, 2016). The forum had 3 main topics: “Content production”, “Means for distribution” and “Citizenship: Rights and Duties”. In organizational terms, places for delegates were allocated in the following way: 40% for non-entrepreneurial civil society, 40% for entrepreneurial civil society and 20% for members of the three levels of public administration (FNDC, 2009b).

This division was criticized both by social activists, organized to demand for media democratization –which considered civil society to be one only, so places shouldn’t be allocated according to (non-)entrepreneurial criteria-, and by members of the corporate sector, who considered their share of participation to be small, despite their significant share of places. The report *Governança Democrática no Brasil Contemporâneo: Estado e Sociedade na Construção de Políticas Públicas* produced afterwards showed that of the 74 conferences that happened during Lula’s two terms, only eight mentioned specific places for businesspeople, being the Media conference the one with the highest share for this segment. Still, during the organization for the event, some important associations representing this segment announced they would not attend the conference, claiming, at first, this event would hurt the principles of free will, freedom of expression, and the right of information and legality. Gradually, these corporations started insinuating in press editorials in newspapers such as *O Globo*, *O Estado de São Paulo*, and *Folha de São Paulo*, and also in TV Globo’s primetime hard news *Jornal Nacional*, that the mere organization of events with such topics would in itself attack the right to freedom of expression. As Lima (2012, p. 228) points out, in the very few times Confecom was reported on the media, the approach was always the “threatening social control of private media, or, the revival of the hard days of dictatorship through official censorship practiced by the State”.

Despite the negative reaction by corporate members, I Confecom produced more than 600 proposals, oriented by the need for a new regulatory framework for the sector. Moraes (2011) and Lima (2012) list the main theories created in this event and highlight as the most important, the statement of media access as a human right and the demand for this right to be included in the Federal Constitution. They also consider relevant the creation of a National Media Council, dedicated to formulating and monitoring public policies; the definition of more democratic and transparent rules for public concessions and renewal of bestowals, aiming to broaden plurality and diversity of content, and the prohibition of bestowals for politicians with active electoral mandates; the regulation of public, private and state’s media systems. The “fight against concentration in the media sector, with pre-established limits to horizontal, vertical and crossed properties; the guarantee of time slots for regional and

independent production” are also among the 15 main recommendations that came out of Confecom according to Moraes (2011, p. 108).

The process of building and realizing the I Confecom was a turning point in the debate over media democratization in Brazil (DANTAS, 2014, DEMARCHI, 2016, LIMA, 2011, 2012, MORAES, 2011). However, unlike national conferences dedicated to other subjects, like Health and Education, the Media one has only advanced in terms of debates, but without any concrete unfolding related to public policies. But, as we shall discuss next, this was a decisive moment for the consecutive draft of the Democratic Media Bill. Prior meetings and the actual Conference staged a growing public debate over the regulation of this sector, bringing more attention from the general public to this topic, despite corporate media’s drawbacks.

The main consequence of the call for the 1st National Media Conference (Confecom) may be the uncountable debates –structurally related to its realization or parallel to it- that pop up throughout the country. (...) Considering that one of the formidable powers that mainstream media still has is its capacity to set the public agenda- and that Confecom is a completely absent topic-, the social and geographic capillarity of the debate is, in itself, something to be studied and grasped (LIMA, 2011, p. 19)¹.

FNDC also sees in Confecom a turning point in this debate, as according to then general coordinator of the Forum, Rosane Bertotti, the event marks a moment of reconstruction of the entity, “respecting its history, but opening up new possibilities with new actors and new perspectives” (FNDC, 2016, p. 16). From 2007 until 2009, when the conference happened, several members of the Forum organized meetings, seminars, state-level meetings, which, in total, involved around 30 thousand people (FNDC, 2016).

One of the main points in this debate, which has been going on since redemocratization, is public control over corporate media. Even FNDC acknowledged this to be a controversial topic, but compromising to demystify the association with censorship that is normally related to the word “control” which, in fact, refers to social participation. (FNDC, 2009a, p. 3). The political rally around this matter is so important that one of the subitems debated in Confecom’s topic axis “Citizenship” was named “media social control” and ended up being replaced by “social participation in the media”, since the term “social control” is systematically translated by corporate actors as censorship. This is done as a way to rebound society’s follow-up and evaluation of the open broadcasting public concessions and the content they produce. In the pre-conference context, FNDC registers in its institutional magazine a review of the lack of social participation in the definition of media public policies:

¹ This citation was freely translated from the original in Portuguese by the authors of this article.

The public subjects related to media in Brazil, according to an analysis made by FNDC are, today, still conducted between the State and the private sector, in practices abundant with patrimonialism, corporativism and bureaucratism. Despite some attempts to go forward, mechanisms for participation in mediating institutions that could operationalize dealings among the State, the private sector and civil society that could democratize and legitimize the formulation of public policies, remain obstructed (MARINI, 2009, p. 18)².

Vieira de Souza (1996) analyzed activism for media democratization between 1984 and 1994, and concluded that a support for media's public control that FNDC backed up, already in the 1990s, demonstrated a tuning of the entity with the new times. This demand was a way to channel actions from organized civil society where there was a possible site to generate mediation between the market and the State toward the creation of norms to regulate this sector. According to Stevanim (2014a), this support, which remained a guideline for FNDC and became a sensitive issue in the debate over media policies during I Confecom, has 2 settings: to guarantee editorial autonomy for public media outlets in relation to the market and the State; and to investigate public services offered by private companies that operate TV and radio broadcasting concessions.

Despite the alleged controversy, fed mainly by businessman, but that resonates broadly in society since they used their companies to disseminate it, social control is connected to a shift in the conception of the State that, in the last decades, include a follow-up and intervention of civil society associations in the definition and evaluation of public policies. Even the Federal Constitution of 1988 ended incorporating in its framework the possibility of popular participation and influence in political institutions. It was after the consolidation of the debate over the need for regulating the media sector during Confecom, that several organizations, led by FNDC, drafted a proposition for a Bill which we will discuss next.

Strategy 4: articulating their own media means

After the institutionalization of FNDC and the realization of Confecom, activists for media democratization started noticing that without their own media resources they would not advance their agenda in the public sphere. In a way, many media outlets have already accomplished this, but the lack of organization, articulation and unity did not allow an effective collective action. Understanding this, they come up with the idea of organizing the I National Meeting of Progressive Bloggers, BlogProg, in 2010 in São Paulo.

The idea of the I BlogProg was suggested by Luiz Carlos Azenha during a seminar of the Center of Alternative Media Studies Barão de Itararé's foundation, on 14th May 2010, and it happened 3 months later, with 330 activists from 19 Brazilian states. According to Borges

² This citation was freely translated from the original in Portuguese by the authors of this article.

and Bianchi (2014, p. 48), “in a plural universe, two points guarantee the unity of activists: the report of ‘media terrorism’ in the elections and the fight for media democratization in Brazil”.

Activists’ strategy was clear: in a context where the internet is increasingly performing the role of forming opinions, uniting bloggers and digital activists around a media democratization agenda meant a key thing to dispute narratives. If activists considered media’s monopoly or oligopoly prevented this debate from happening, the strategy then would be to go around this wall through their own media means. Only one caveat must be remarked, though: this network of bloggers is plural, heterogeneous and horizontal. As Borges and Bianchi (2014) well observe, there is no top-down structure or hierarchy, nor a general program with guidelines to be followed; what unites them is the mere platform for media democratization, where their strength resides.

The network of activists grew, organizing six national meetings between 2010 and 2018, an international meeting in 2011 in Foz do Iguaçu, and articulated networks of state seminars in almost every state of Brazil. In a totally new way, these bloggers organized collective online interviews with mayors, governors and even Brazilian presidents, Lula and Dilma Rousseff. Surprisingly, in one of those interviews, president Dilma declared she was convinced the movement’s agenda was correct and that she would support what she defined as “the economic regulation of the media” (RIBEIRO, 2014). Nevertheless, it never went beyond a promise. As every action prompts a reaction, big media outlets noticed the growth of these new actors, many of them being sued by today’s TV Globo’s head of journalism, Ali Kamel. Borges and Bianchi (2014, p. 50) suggest that “beyond physical threats – including murder threats-, Brazil is going through a process of judicialization of censorship, with many bloggers being victims of prosecutions”.

The movement for media democratization was not restricted to the internet to articulate its intervention; many neighborhood associations with local communities’ radio stations, such as the World’s Association of Community Radios (AMARC) and the Brazilian Association of Community Broadcasting (ABRAÇO) started encouraging their associated members to deal with this topic. The same can be said about the National Front for the Promotion of Public TV Companies (FRENAVATEC), an organization that unites all Brazilian community TV stations. Weekly magazines like *Carta Capital*, or monthly ones like *Caros Amigos*, and press newspapers like *Brasil de Fato* also contributed to this network. Summing up, activists for media democratization realized that without adopting a strategy with strong, organized narratives to dispute, their agenda would never enter a rational process of deliberation in the public sphere, nor would it inform decisions by Legislative or Executive powers.

Strategy 5: a bill for media democratization by popular demand

As a result of Confecom, then president Lula signed a decree in 2010 creating a cross-ministry commission to “elaborate studies and present ideas to review the regulatory framework of the organization and usage of telecommunications and broadcasting services” (LIMA, 2012,

p. 131). By the end of that year, then Minister of Communications Franklin Martins, said he would present a draft of a regulatory mark bill to recently elected president Dilma Rousseff (PT), and recommended this draft should go on public consultation, and then be sent as a bill to the National Congress. However, this process was not continued by the Executive power, and the new Communications Minister of Rousseff's term, Paulo Bernardo, made it clear this would not be his priority, but instead the National Broadband Plan (PARAGUASSÚ, 2011). This debate, though, remained in the horizon for civil society organizations.

The Seminar “Regulatory mark: proposals for a democratic regulation” was hosted by FNDC in 2011, resuming the propositions made during Confecom, and listing priorities to produce scope for a regulatory mark to be presented for public consultation. An outcome of the event was the first draft of the “Platform for a new media regulatory mark”, which contained 20 items considered priorities for FNDC. Submitted to public consultation, the document received around 200 contributions from individuals and organizations (FNDC, 2011). There is here a clear inspiration from the Argentinean process, in which the Coalition for a Democratic Broadcasting, created “21 Points for a Democratic Broadcasting Bill”. This document reunited the main contributions from civil society towards the formulation of a bill that would turn into Argentina's *Ley de Medios*, sanctioned in 2009 (BUSSO; JAIMES, 2011).

During FNDC's XVI plenary in 2011, it was decided that fighting for a new regulatory mark would be their top priority for 2012-2013, and the event is marked by formation of the “To Express Freedom” campaign. During this plenary, FNDC also decides that:

Along with the highest possible number of entities from civil society (filiated or not to FNDC), it will be organized a wide national campaign for the approval of a new Media Regulatory Mark, having as its main focus the topic's popularization, promoting citizens' awareness and mobilization and pressing public entities to create conditions for the construction of wide majorities and the future approval of the bill (FNDC, 2011, p. 2)³.

Early in the following year, the Forum releases an “Invitation to the fighters for media democratization”, that recovers the decision to resume an articulation of a media movement of national and regional reach, giving capillarity to the promotion of their agenda after a push for the creation of the Forum's regional committees, and to additional support from organizations and entities that work with other topics, but see the fight for the right to media access as something important (FNDC, 2013). The idea was to broaden the range of organizations and activists involved in the debate of a regulatory mark, and promoting institutional activities around the Forum. In that year, FNDC realized the seminar “Freedom of Expression Challenges” in São Paulo, presenting the goals of the campaign “Expressing

³ This citation was freely translated from the original in Portuguese by the authors of this article.

Freedom”, among which, the attempt to amplify the group of organizations and actors that take part in the campaign, and the idea of setting the Federal Government’s political agenda regarding the subject. After months, the campaign “Expressing Freedom – A new law for a new time” is officially launched, having the 50th anniversary of the Brazilian Code for Telecommunications as their temporal link. The Code is the main norm regulating broadcasting in Brazil, and was sanctioned in 1962, which explains how well lagged it is.

During a national plenary of the campaign, in December 2012, a Study Group was created to formulate a Popular Initiative Bill to regulate the media sector. In April 2013, this group finished their work and, on the 1st of May of that year, the project was launched nationally. Named “Democratic Media Bill”, this project proposed a regimentation on articles 5, 21, 220 221, 222 and 223 of the Federal Constitution, with the following main contributions: the abolition of cross property as a dimension of the fight against monopoly and oligopoly; the increase of regional cultural production in the film industry; the right to satellite access for social movements; and the public right of response.

To go under consideration by the Brazilian National Congress, which is the main access to deal with popular initiative bills, it needs the support of 1% of the Brazilian electorate, as established in Article 61 of the Federal Constitution. At that time this meant 1.3 million signatures. In November 2013, the bill was discussed in the Lower House, with the presence of congress’s and civil society representatives during a joint session of the Science and Technology, and the Communications and Computer Science commissions, along with the Culture and the Education commissions. Invited members from corporate media did not attend. Another public hearing regarding this bill happened in February 2014 at the Federal Public Ministry, in São Paulo, with participants from civil society, and again no participation from private broadcasting companies. Members from the Communications Ministry and the Telecommunications National Agency (Anatel) were also absent.

In a plenary of the campaign that also happened in early 2014, the organizations mobilized with the promotion of the bill, pointed there were still many obstacles on the way to place the issue of media democratization at the center of social activism. Entities acknowledged that the need to meet the minimum number of signatures was very timid (PARA EXPRESSAR A LIBERDADE, 2014). Estimates, although unofficial, pointed that there were only 50 thousand adherents to the bill.

When we contacted FNDC in March 2017, the 50-thousand-signatures estimate remained as official information, meaning that in more than two years, the attempt to highlight the importance of media democratization in the public debate did not translate into formal adherents to the bill. Despite low participation, some researches have been indicating that the Democratic Media Bill was an important strategy to promote the debate over the need to update the regulatory mark of the media sector in Brazil, aiming to increase participation (CABRAL FILHO; CABRAL, 2015, ROTHBERG *et al.*, 2016).

According to Stevanim (2014b, p. 13), there is a need for FNDC and other members in the campaign to tackle the challenge of increasing the public understanding that the bill

has to do with citizens' everyday lives. This could be an alternative to amplify adherence, as well as increase dialogue among social activists that act on media topics, as well as average members of society.

Anyway, the meeting with several organizations regarding this bill amplified the debate on media democratization, especially in regard to the need of building up a new regulatory mark. This densification, however, seems like an initial step in the direction of effectively promoting real changes in how the Brazilian media system is configured.

Final Considerations

Summing up, the present article analyzed how media democratization activism adopted distinct strategies of political participation and social mobilization during the New Republic. Each of these strategies was built from opportunities and constraints imposed by the political contexts. In the 1980s, a period of strong associativity due to redemocratization, the strategy was the creation of a social front to pressure the unfolding of the Constituent. From the 1990s on, the agenda focused on the regimentation of articles from the Constitution which dealt with the media, so this movement became more institutionalized around FNDC. Throughout Fernando Henrique Cardoso's terms there was a slowdown period until a new sparkle began with the call for the 1st National Media Conference in 2009. Besides civil society's active participation in Confecom, activists for media democratization realized the need for their own media resources, and started organizing a complex network of blogs from 2010 onwards. Finally, as a last strategy, there was a mobilization around the Popular Initiative Bill towards Media Democratization, formulated in 2013, but abandoned after Dilma's Impeachment in 2016. Stagnation in the number of signatures leads us to think that the recognition of communication as a right, and as an area in which the State needs to intervene, remains unclear.

After Rousseff's Impeachment in 2016, FNDC chose to back up the campaign "Calar Jamais" (Never Silenced) and focus their activities more in preventing more drawbacks to happen rather than advancing in media democratization. This way, the bill was not anymore, the flagship of FNDC's activism, due to the radical shift in Brazil's political landscape. Michel Temer's Presidency takeover in 2016, followed by the election of Jair Bolsonaro in 2018, completely changed the context, with neoliberal policies implemented by the two governments mitigating the reach of any media public policy. If in Lula's and Rousseff's terms there was a possibility of dialogue between the State and civil society, with Temer and Bolsonaro this landscape disappeared. Not only dialogue became impossible, but also media's public policies started declining.

Measures such as the fusion of the Communications ministry with the Science, Technology and Innovation one; the intervention in the mandate of the CEO of Empresa Brasil de Comunicação (EBC); the extinction of the Curatory Council of the company and the change in rules for broadcasting bestowals were significant setbacks in the sector

(DEMARCHI; KERBAUY, 2019). But the biggest attack so far certainly came with Bolsonaro's sanction of Decree 10.354, from 20th May 2020, including EBC in the scope of the Program for Partnership in Investments of the Presidency (BRASIL, 2020), meaning in practice, this is a first step for the privatization of this public company. The Front to Defend EBC and Public Media, which is composed by FNDC, considered this decree "a disrespect to the Constitution, an attack to the Brazilian society's right of information and a shortening of transparency by the Executive Power" (FNDC, 2020). From a propositional agenda, media activists started acting in a defensive way to counter more setbacks to what had been achieved. As we aimed to point out with this article, contextual changes decisively influence political strategies developed by social activists to position themselves.

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