

DOSSIER

THE STRUGGLE OF GIRLS IN THE MEDIA:

Framing and Perceptions of School Occupations in São Paulo

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ABSTRACT - This work is a comparative study on the images and perceptions surrounding news coverage on public school occupations in São Paulo, in 2015. The concept of framing (Gradim, 2017) is applied to the analysis of a mass media vehicle (the *Folha de S.Paulo* newspaper) and an independent press publication (the website *Jornalistas Livres*) between November and December 2015, and January 2016. We conducted a focus group interview with six young activists and discussed the perceptions of their images in the media. The main conclusions we reached were that these young women were rarely used as direct sources of information, but they appear prominently in news reports through a large number of photos and references. This occurs mainly in the independent vehicle and in cases of police repression involving students of color.

Key words: *School* occupations, feminism, framing, mainstream press, alternative media.

MINAS DE LUTA NA MÍDIA:

Enquadramentos e Percepções das Ocupações Escolares em São Paulo

RESUMO - Este trabalho realiza um estudo comparado sobre as imagens e percepções a respeito da cobertura noticiosa das ocupações de escolas públicas do estado de São Paulo, em 2015. O conceito de framing (Gradim, 2017) é operacionalizado na análise de um veículo da grande imprensa (o jornal *Folha de S.Paulo*) e de outro da imprensa independente (o site *Jornalistas Livres*), entre novembro e dezembro de 2015 e janeiro de 2016. Em seguida, a partir dos resultados de um grupo de foco realizado com seis jovens ativistas, passamos a discutir as percepções de suas imagens na mídia. Podemos elencar

como principais conclusões do trabalho o fato dessas jovens aparecem poucas vezes como fontes diretas de informação, mas figurarem nas matérias de forma relevante, por meio de fotos e menções bastante expressivas. Isso acontece sobretudo no veículo independente e principalmente em casos de repressão policial envolvendo estudantes negras.

Palavras-chave: ocupações escolares, feminismo, enquadramento, grande Imprensa, mídia alternativa.

CHICAS DE LUCHA EN LOS MEDIA: Encuadramientos y Percepciones de las Ocupaciones Escolares en São Paulo

RESUMEN - Este trabajo realiza un estudio comparado acerca de las imágenes e percepciones a respecto de la cobertura noticiosa de las ocupaciones de escuelas públicas del Estado de São Paulo, en 2015. El concepto de framing (Gradim, 2017) se operacionaliza en análisis de un vehículo de la grande prensa (el periódico *Folha de S.Paulo*) y de otro de la prensa independiente (el sitio web *Jornalistas Livres*), entre noviembre y diciembre de 2015 y enero de 2016. A seguir, a partir de los resultados de un grupo de foco realizado con seis jóvenes del movimiento, vamos a discutir las percepciones de sus imágenes en los media. Podemos hacer una lista de las principales conclusiones de este trabajo con el facto que estas jóvenes no son fuentes directas de la información, pero figuran en las materias de manera relevante, con fotos e menciones bastante expresivas. Esto acontece sobretudo en el vehículo independiente e principalmente en los casos de repressão policial e envolvendo estudantes negras.

Palabras clave: ocupaciones *escolares*, feminismo, encuadramiento, gran prensa, mídia alternativa.

1 Introduction

The high school occupations in São Paulo had a great repercussion in the press in 2015, mainly for being events with social and political consequences. Since the beginning, news coverage of the students' reaction to the announcement of the plan to "reorganize" the schools, proposed by the Government of the State of São Paulo, contained many images of occupied schools and student protests, as well as interviews with unofficial sources such as relatives and the students themselves, focusing more on the girls in this movement.

Following a number of protests organized by Brazilian students against poor school conditions, whose most famous examples are the "Brazilian Spring" or "June Journeys" in 2013, there was another large protest, in 2015, leading to school occupations after the São Paulo state government announced it would close 93 schools as part of its plan to group students into specific schools

for each level (Elementary School I for children between 1st and 5th grade, Elementary School II for 6th to 9th grades, and High School with three grades). The students understood the governor's proposal as authoritative and would result in overcrowded classrooms –a situation many of them already experience. The government not discussing their decision led students to close and “occupy” schools until they received some answers, a strategy inspired by previous movements from students in Chile and Argentina (Romancini & Castilho, 2017a). It's interesting to note that the government initially labelled the protest as immoral and repressed both the school occupations and the street manifestations in the country's capital cities, but the public stood by the students, resulting in a drop in the governor's popularity (Mendonça, 2015). After numerous retreats, the students' resistance and the people's dissatisfaction resulted in the government announcing on December 4th, 2015 that it would suspend its plan and the de-occupation of schools began, lasting until January 2016.

In relation to the female role in the protests, we noticed that it was realized on a number of levels: in the press coverage of the protests¹; in the case analysis (Campos, Medeiros & Ribeiro, 2016); in a documentary on the subject²; and in the participants' statements taken in the scope of this research.

Thus, this work is structured in the following manner: (1) research design; (2) analysis of the news under the framing concept; (3) analysis of the students' perceptions about the women's image, the “Struggle of Girls”, in the media.

1.1 Research issues and study methodology

The main purpose of this work is to take the images that appeared in mainstream press and alternative media of the female high school students who participated in the São Paulo school occupations and compare them with their perceptions of themselves, questioning the information released on the situation, and paying particular attention to the space given to the girls in the protests.

This paper matches quantitative approach (articles published by the traditional and alternative press) and qualitative exploratory approach (focus group) related to the phenomenon under analysis. The main concerns of knowledge in the study are summarized in the following research questions:

- a) Which framings were made by the mainstream and alternative press? Were there any changes over time?
- b) Is the female protagonist in the school occupations in São Paulo recognizable news coverage from the mainstream press and the alternative channels?
- c) What is the image of these high school students in these news reports; in other words, which aspects were most highlighted? Was feminism one of them?
- d) What is the high school students' perception of the news coverage from both media vehicles?

To accomplish this, we built a sample composed of news reports and stories³ published in the *Folha de S.Paulo* newspaper and the alternative media website *Jornalistas Livres* in the months of November and December, 2015 and January 2016 – the main period of the analyzed events. This sample is composed of 43 news reports published in *Folha de S.Paulo* and 26 in *Jornalistas Livres*. Research was conducted using the key words “occupations”, “occupation”, and “reorganization”. We created two data bases in Excel with the following variables: date, title, main actor (source), secondary actor (source), photo/image, main actor (photo/image), and secondary actor (photo/image). These bases were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), especially for data crossing. The goal here was to identify which actors had a voice and space in the news coverage (students, relatives, teachers, school leaders, government, police forces and judiciary branch).

In addition, we used the results from a focus group conducted in December 2016⁴ with six high school girls who took part in the protests. The goal was to collect qualitative data on these students' participation and their perceptions of the news coverage of the protest⁵.

2 News framing of school occupations

We know that the media are powerful agents in building reality; they create images of the world that are legitimized through their credibility and become a reference for individuals. So, when we think about media representation of certain groups, we understand images not only as photographs published by the press, but as the general image built by the news, in the words of Lippmann: “the images in our

minds" (1922 cited by Colling, 2001, p. 89). We refer to memory stock and common framings formed by different instances to which the media fundamentally contributes (Cunha, 2005). The production of meaning lies in these subjective recollections of memories which are then selected for visibility in the news *agenda* (Traquina, 2001). In other words:

The media forms a space in which it decides and exercises its influence on perception, the construction of reality and of the newsworthy facts in the media receptors through information selection, the use of sources, the use of images, and the journalist's interpretation⁶ (Browne, Romero & Monsalve, 2015, p. 724).

In this regard, the notion of framing interests us in how the narrated events are understood, especially by the media, who end up structuring our construction of reality. Gradim presents a definition of framing by a group of classical authors in journalism and communication:

Frame or framing can be defined as a set of visual or linguistic and conceptual clues, which form the context of an object or event. These clues to how the event must be interpreted form its framing, highlighting certain aspects and blurring others, and are susceptible to presenting many forms with different scopes: they can refer to a concrete object, or be about symbolic and cultural constructions that serve as a context to a wide range of narratives (2017, p. 22).

For this reason, we referenced this theoretical perspective presented in Goffman's (1975) study, which also orientates journalism studies (Tuchman, 1978; Entman, 1993), in our work in order to analyze how the news treated the school occupations in São Paulo.

We also note that a similar theoretical orientation was used in studies that analyzed Chilean student protests – associated to the theory of *agenda-setting* by Fernández (2007), and more related to the Critical Discourse Analysis from Browne, Romero and Monsalve (2015) and from Pérez (2012, 2016), all of them are studies about the news coverage of the events⁷. As previously highlighted, these student protests in Chile had an influence on Brazilian activists at the school occupations. Furthermore, the existence of such investigations allowed for a certain level of comparison.

In contrast, we are also interested in this paradigm from Entman's thoughts (1993, p. 56) about the importance of cultural studies, particularly in gender, class and race.

We shall now move on to the analysis of news framing and the image of the high school girls as represented in reports from the *Folha de S.Paulo* and the website *Jornalistas Livres*.

2.1 News coverage from *Folha de S.Paulo*

A chronological overview of the construction of narratives on the occupations from early November 2015 until their end, after the State Government had backed down and cancelled the school “reorganization” project in January 2016, shows that coverage from the *Folha de S.Paulo* – an important media vehicle in Brazil, with the ability to heavily influence the population, particularly the middle and upper classes⁸ – can be divided into three framings: student occupations; reactions from the governor and police forces; and the weakening and the de-occupation.

Figure 1 - Examples from *Folha de S.Paulo*'s coverage



Source: *Folha de S.Paulo*

The first framing is composed of reports on the occupation focusing on the informative side, pointing at reasons for why the students decided to protest (headline examples: “5 schools have already been invaded by students in SP”; “Parents stand in front of schools in support”). There is an important diversity of sources here: the students themselves, teachers, relatives and political actors.

Once governor Geraldo Alckmin was used as a direct source (up until early December communication with the press was made through spokespeople from the Secretary of Education) and the protests on the

streets began, a new phase of coverage began with different framings in which information sources like the judiciary branch and the police forces appeared more frequently. These new voices, together with pictures taken of the protests showing scenes of violence, show the use of a more negative tone (e.g.: “Government focuses on attrition and students become more radical”; “Arrests made in protest include adults and young people from other schools”).

Figure 2 - Student being assaulted at protest; girls stand in the front line in manifestations



Source: *Folha de S.Paulo*

We observed important data in this stage. Although the students are often portrayed as disorderly, reports about the violent behavior exhibited by the police, particularly in images containing activist girls, have split opinions about the protest. For that matter we believe that the female importance in the protest is a fundamental agent to changing how the protests are viewed (from negative to more positive), especially when these girls stood in front of the boys in an act of protection – who traditionally suffer abuse by the police forces. It is also on this stage that relatives and other citizens are interviewed, and the results of a survey on the popularity of the governor were published (showing a strong decrease).

After Geraldo Alckmin backed off and the de-occupation process began, in the third framing at *Folha's* coverage the students effectively

get their voices back (e.g.: “Students promise to occupy until Wednesday”; “After 53 days, students leave the school as a symbol of the occupations”). The success of the protest is depicted in photos of the students cleaning the school, peacefully handing in the key to the school director and having classes in a circle after the school activities had resumed.

2.2 The coverage from Jornalistas Livres

The “alternative” or “independent” nature of Jornalistas Livres is an important preliminary aspect to be noted about the coverage from this website on the occupations. The fundraising campaign that helped to finance the project, finished in July 2015, emphasizes the idea that the “Jornalistas Livres Network appeared on March 12th, 2015 from the urgent need to face the rise of narratives of hatred, undemocratic and constant disrespect to human and social rights, mostly supported by the mainstream⁹”. In other words, the “Free Journalists” (Jornalistas Livres) aim to be an informative counterbalance to the mainstream. “We don’t seek for the ‘correct speech’; we don’t follow homogenized manuals that exclude difference and diversity. We are an inclusive network against exclusion [sic], thus we are very different from the corporative media¹⁰”, they say.

Figure 3 - Examples of framings from Jornalistas Livres’ coverage



Source: Jornalistas Livres

The main different points in comparison to the mainstream media are marked in this definition: the variety and expansion of thematic agenda (housing and human rights, for example, are emphasized in the website), as well as the approach marked by values, particularly political ones that are frequently contrary to the traditional media. Thus, the content published on the website isn't necessarily professional (it is open to collaboration from different individuals), it has participative content, moving away from values such as journalistic "objectivity" or "neutrality", and frequently expressing opinion despite the valorization of the reporting style.

In addition to being cost friendly for the project, publishing online allows for the fast spread of information and the ability to reach its target audience. Such characteristics seem to collaborate, nowadays, with a new emergence of "alternative" news channels (Carvalho & Bronosky, 2017) that sometimes have a significant role in covering protests and social movements. The clearest example is the so-called *Mídia Ninja*, since the events of 2013.

From what was said and the favorable tone of coverage of the high-school students, one can understand why the students prefer this media, as evidenced by statements we took during the research. The *Jornalistas Livres* website played a key role in the events, releasing a story¹¹ on the government's intention to prepare a "war" against the occupied schools, according to audio recordings of the secretary of Education in a meeting with heads of education in late November 2015. The story made the government back off, exciting the students and favoring the mobilization.

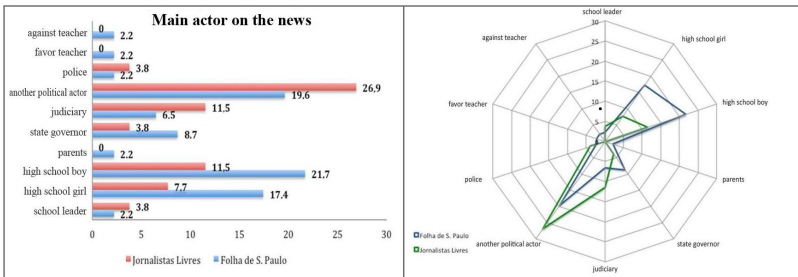
Before this story was released, the website had published ten texts about the school protests and the occupations, showing frames about the event that weren't shown by the press, such as the repression that occurred during the street manifestations and the occupations, as well as the support they received from various political actors, such as Eduardo Suplicy¹² or members of the homeless movement of São Paulo. The general tone of the coverage is always supportive and the authors often express ostensive sympathy for the cause and support criticism of the government (e.g.: "The decree of shame is out"; "More than 5 thousand students go to the streets against Alckmin in SP"). After the story of the secretary of education audio, *Jornalistas Livres* started to focus on another actor (in three articles), the Judiciary Branch (Public Defense and Public Ministry) who took actions both to protect the students and against the school reorganization.

In addition to that, there were reports of new forms of violence against the high school students and against the “free press” covering the event (e.g.: “Why do the SP police always want to prove their cowardice and racism?”; “Subway security attacks the free press”). Once the occupations had finished some news vehicles were concerned that the conditions at the school were the same as before the occupations. This framing choice worked in favor of defending the students, considering they could have been accused of theft or damaging state property. At the end of January, the website tried to develop a series of more analytical reports about the students’ protests using scholars as sources.

3 Comparison between coverages

Using the data base we built for this objective we can see that the main actors (Graphics 1 and 2) in both the news reports and the images (foreground) from the *Folha de S.Paulo* are different from the ones highlighted by *Jornalistas Livres*. For example, the students were the main sources of information at *Folha* at 39.1% (girls and boys), while at *Jornalistas* the main source were other political actors (activists, unions, etc.) at 26.9%. In second place were the students at 19.2%.

Graphic 1 - Main actor on the news



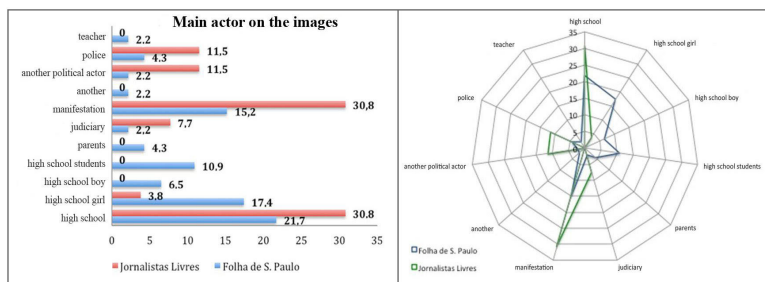
Source: Elaborated by authors

First off, we must consider the characteristics of “independent” media which makes more use of author opinions while in traditional press uses sources of direct information which are fundamental to the construction of news. However, it is important to notice that both channels opted to give voice to the boy students. On the website *Jornalistas Livres*, the girls had 3.8% less space than the boys, while

in *Folha* this difference was 4.3%. The governor and the teachers (in favor of or against the protest) were consulted only by *Folha*.

Comparing the photojournalistic coverage of these two vehicles was one of the most difficult challenges faced in this study considering the two scopes that had to be studied: space and editorial freedom. Online media has access to a larger number of images than printed journalism does. Thus, there are more images of the street protests in *Jornalistas Livres*, with actors such as the police and the students in general, than in *Folha de S.Paulo*. It's in this regard that the pictures in which the girls appear in the foreground get more importance, once they had less space to speak. The centrality of female in the protests – something that was evident in the participants' statements – obtains visibility through these images, which even appeared on social networks, in a clear agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), becoming symbols of the protest.

Graphic 2 - Main actor on the images



Source: Elaborated by authors

The high schools, students and protests included in the two coverages are both the social actors who are consulted more directly and the more striking figures in the images. However, in terms of narrative construction, the pictures in *Jornalistas Livres* of the girls have more of an impact as they appear more frequently in direct conflict with the police. In addition, the girls are wearing garments for protesting (tissues covering the face against tear gas) and are shirtless, only wearing bras (a symbol of feminist activism); the images selected by *Folha de S.Paulo* did not show this.

In Chart 1 we can see the framings for both coverages. In terms of approach, we note that both the students' sides of the story was heard since they are the direct sources of information, much more

so than the government and other official sources. However, one can see a strong tendency in reports of police abuse in the *Jornalistas Livres*. In contrast, the photos of the girls appeared in both coverages but were more prominent in *Folha*. In both media vehicles the main framing was the highlight of the occupied schools themselves.

Chart 1 - Analysis data from reports in the *Folha de S.Paulo* and *Jornalistas Livres*

Channel	Sources of information 1	Sources of information 2	Main actor (photo)	Secondary actor (photo)
<i>Folha de S.Paulo</i>	Boy and girl students	Political actors and girl student	Occupied school and girl student	Students in general and protests
<i>Jornalistas Livres</i>	Political actors and boy student	Headmaster and police forces	Protest and occupied school	Police forces and students in general

Source: Data and authors' elaboration

Other important dimensions to consider are racial and economic issues. Coverage in *Jornalistas Livres* is clearly directed to the reports of abuses related to the conflict; there were a larger number of schools that were mentioned. News coverage from *Folha de S.Paulo* prioritizes the *Fernão Dias* School (located in a middle-class neighborhood with honorable alumni, student body) and is basically complimentary of the occupations, as evidenced in the titles from two of its analyzed articles "Classes return to occupied schools with circular debates and desks" (from January 7th, 2016) and "On the eve of the decision, occupied school holds mini festival" (November 23rd, 2015). *Jornalistas Livres* even spoke ironically about how the police treated the students from this school and other main districts.

The Police have been guarding the Fernão Dias Paes Public School for almost 5 days and the most that has happened were a little pepper spray here and some pushing over there, an attempt to try and take some people down to the police station...nothing else. That's because Fernão Dias is located in the Pinheiros District, close to an expensive store called Fnac in a middle class area that has access to the news and the media in general¹³.

In the same article, the site also writes "Student from Fernão Dias is detained by the police for 30 minutes... guess what color she is? That's right! Black!" It's also worth highlighting this potential racist attitude towards the students in the photo of a student of color being

punched on her chin by an angry citizen in one of the street protests (see Figure 2). This image was published on *Folha de S.Paulo's* cover on December 8th, 2015. In the article, this student's mother said that her daughter will never again participate in any protest alone, and the student herself said that because of her height (5'11") she decided to stand in the front line and protect the shorter students.

4 Perceptions from the protest participants

Going on the definition of framing already given in this article, which is built and personified "on the key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images emphasized on the narrated news" (Entman 1993 cited by Colling, 2001, p. 95), we asked the question: what did the high school students think about the news coverage on the occupations in traditional and "alternative" media?

In our focus group, we noted a very distinct dissatisfaction with the published articles disseminated by the traditional media. All six girls we interviewed agreed that the general image of the students constructed by the media leads to maintaining the stereotype that protestors are troublemakers. The impact this stereotype has is important to them because they believe that it increases the stock of memories and forces parents to be at odds with their participation in the protests. In these students' words, the role of the media is:

Making your parents believe you were messing around the school (C.)
The media only shows when something wrong is happening, they don't show when everything is well and cultural events are happening (C.)

Indeed, as expected, while the articles in *Jornalistas Livres* were supportive of the protests, only three articles from *Folha de S.Paulo* in our sample mentioned the cultural events that took place in the schools during the occupations and, as previously stated, referred to the middle-class schools.

As we pointed, in the third phase of *Folha's* coverage, we observed narrative changes highlighting the student's victory indicating that, in the end, the protests had a positive impact on education policies. Regarding the legacy of this student cause, we noted that the girls had experienced feminism; in other words, they became aware of gender and developed a political position of combating oppression and domination

(Castilho & Romancini, 2017a). Conversely, the relationship between the students and the school environment fundamentally changed; it became a space to exchange and respect differences:

The occupation allowed us to have the school we wanted to have. We created spaces for living with people who I had never talked to for three years. It looks like the school separates us with this classroom thing. (A.)

When asked about the visibility of the feminist movement in the media, they stated that social networks were a great tool; helping to establish a network of contacts that shared common interests, but they still had doubts about the importance the traditional media gave to this aspect.

I don't know if the occupations were about empowering females, it was about empowering the high school students in general, but internally you could see that the girls were standing by one another, there was even a fight with a girl, with pictures of the girls during the act. (C1.)

The headlines are always so general: "students occupy school"; never "High school girls occupy...", this ends up pushing the issue of gender aside. (M.)

In contrast, the six participants insist on clarifying the girl's importance throughout the process, from the communication in the school occupations to the street protests.

I remember that I went to some occupied schools, I was 18 years old and I only saw children, some girls with a super empowered speech. I even felt like crying because of the emotion. There is no way this doesn't affect you: 12 to 17-year-old girls being attacked by 30-year-old policemen with batons in their hands. (C2)

The group unanimously agreed that the girls played a key role in the meetings and communication with the press. This contradicts the data in our analysis, considering that the main voice in the protests is that of boys and not girls. In other words, the girls appear on the images as key actors, but the discourse is still from the boys. It's in this way that we note how silenced they feel, mainly the girls of color, who appear the most in photos of the occupations. According to G, the idea that women of color are scandalous remains in the imaginaries of her colleagues, because when she entered the high school movement, she felt it could be one more reason to fight, but also a reason to be excluded: "I felt (they were thinking) that's ok, I'm black, talk too much, I'm stressed, feminist... What do I want now?"

5 Discussion and considerations

Looking again at our four research questions, we can say that:

1) There are changes to how the occupations are framed, mainly in mainstream media, something similar to what happened in Chile, as shown by Fernández (2007). The author describes a movement that goes from the students being represented by the media as troublemakers (*maleantes*) to becoming revolutionary heroes. In Brazil, it didn't get this far, but we noticed changes that pointed towards a more positive representation of youth (in terms of being information sources in mainstream media and on the heroic tone often used by alternative journalism). According to the author, these kinds of changes, as in the Chilean situation, mainly occur at the time when the students start to negotiate with the government. In the Chilean case, the press elected some subjects with bigger roles, including people associated to political parties and trends. In the case of Brazilian school occupations, the deeply horizontal content and, in a certain way, contrary to traditional politics¹⁴, made the negotiations as well as the existence of individuals with clear role more difficult to be pictured or noticed. It's also interesting to note that the discussion about the deepest causes of the protest irruption is only explored later and by the alternative press. Another point worth mentioning is if there was exacerbation of the "us against them" strategy. This discursive procedure, according to Pérez (2012), marked the Chilean student mobilization coverage in 2011, in the analysis of two media; the conservative (*El Mercurio*) and the liberal (*El Siglo*). As the author shows, the "other" is different in each one of them: the conservative newspaper portrayed the students as being violent, and the repressive government, with its police action, aligned with the leftist newspaper. We can say that, in some moments (although not a constant tone throughout the coverage), the large newspaper frames the students as the "other". In contrast, the prevailing tone in alternative coverage was that the government was the "other".

2) The female role in the school occupations in São Paulo is presented mainly through the images and not the students' discourse. Such photojournalistic framing is generally "stronger" in the alternative media, what must partly be because of the public that *Folha* and *Jornalistas Livres* report to. Certain images might be considered inappropriate or offensive for conservative media readers. In contrast, the website, which generally defends the students, seems to recognize

that the “visceral’ effect of how this photography is received also has an effect on the way we interpret the images”¹⁵ (Pérez, 2016, p. 7).

3) We can’t say that feminism was a strong coverage angle in either the big newspaper or, as we would expect, in the alternative one, which is more focused on citizenship issues. However, both news channels converge in a group of images of the “struggle of girls”; in other words, situations in which the young girls protested on the streets or in the occupied schools and, many times – mainly when gender was related to the student’s ethnicity – were repressed.

One can think that the news values such as “newness” and “meaningfulness” (Traquina, 2002) can be applied here to explain the attention that the girls had received, especially regarding their image. However, this is high visibility with a lack of discourse. The absence of voice seems to be even more prominent – opposite to the repression situations documented by the media – about the girls of color. It’s worth remembering that gender discussions, in the context we mentioned, must consider intersectionality as an important variable (Castilho & Romancini, 2017b), especially considering the *subaltern’s* tacit silence (Spivak, 2010).

The young girls’ roles as a mobilization strategy (which was very efficient as it got the attention of the press) takes place, as noted in our discussion group, from a feeling of dissatisfaction with school life due to the persistence of sexism, homophobia and gender inequality in this space. Such inequality happens, moreover, in the student movement with critical reports about some boys’ attitudes, ironically called “esquerdo-machos” (macho-leftist), which usually silence the feminine voices in the student policies.

4) The students’ perception about journalism is that the media manipulates information and that alternative journalism is more free of political pressures and, because of that, is met with more sympathy. This also happens in Chile, as shown by another work, in which an extract from a Chilean student’s book who was considered to be the main leader in the student protests in 2011 reads: “The media that tried to slander our protests were discredited and replaced by social networks as sources of true and appropriate information”¹⁶ (Vallejo cited by Browne, Romero & Monsalve, 2015, p. 730). Furthermore, in Brazil, the social networks had the role of alternative sources of information, even though through content made by the students themselves (Romancini & Castilho, 2017a). But it also happens in Brazil, on *Jornalistas Livres’* coverage, something

that was also noted in the Chilean context, in 2011, in a channel that allows the citizen's participation, in other words, a poor news treatment of the event, since "the correspondents don't have a journalistic education and they made the mistake that the news' structure looked more like an opinion article than information note"¹⁷ (Browne, Romero & Monsalve, 2015, p. 739). Although the content produced by the students spread on social networks had interesting aspects (being appropriate and fostered by the alternative media) we could suggest, in terms of communication practices for independent groups, that they educate students on journalistic language so they can produce more qualified content (in professional terms) and report the realities in an educational context, and not only through protests. Revealing issues that do not get much attention (such as sexism in schools and the ways to fight against it) is certainly one of the most relevant objectives of the non-hegemonic press.

In mainstream media, according to one student: "The media only shows [the schools] when there is something wrong". Indeed, the student raises a valid point: do the education pages in mainstream media cover everyday school life, or do they only cover the exceptions such as strikes and occupations (naturally with more newsworthy criteria)? This issue could not be included in the scope of our work but can be suggested as a subject for future studies. In the specific case of the girls, is it possible to inquire if their growing feminist positions (through creating groups of this nature in schools) have received any coverage in the news?

In concluding this article, we can't lose sight of the concepts that guided this research, designed from different empirical clippings – from aspects related to these girls' struggles for public spaces and discovering themselves as feminists, when leaving the "bedroom culture" (McRobbie & Garber, 2006; Bovill & Livingstone, 2001) and moving from formal to informal learnings through activism online and offline (Romancini & Castilho, 2017b) and also for the problematization of the "participatory politics" (Cohen & Kahne, 2011; Jenkins, 2016) across networks.

Thus, it's important to remember that the emergence of this work dialogues with the view of how media has portrayed the school occupations since they started. This visibility contrasts with numerous invisibilities reported in works about social movements that end up having a social impact, as well as an ability to change politics. The media power of scheduling the subjects discussed and motivating

the population to discuss certain issues showed the movement in a more positive light although it wasn't the ideal form of representation according to the participants we talked to. These girls, particularly those of African origin or mixed races, were represented in both major newspapers and alternative media as the main protagonists in the confrontations. This might be interpreted as maintaining their image as troublemakers, but what remained in the imaginary of many people, ours included, is that they are true girls of struggle.

*Translated by Túlio Rezende Ferreira Moura and revised by Lee Sharp

NOTES

- 1 Collucci, C. & Gragnani, J. (November 1, 2015). Meninas formam coletivos feministas em escolas de SP. *Folha de S.Paulo*; Amendola, G. (December 13, 2015). Com o coração nas mãos. *O Estado de S. Paulo*. Retrived from: goo.gl/E0fUJ8; Silva, R. (July 13, 2016) Lute como uma menina. Ameaças de retrocessos dão gás ao feminismo, *Revista do Brasil*, 119. Retrived from goo.gl/4NxAZm.
- 2 *Lute como uma menina!* (2016), directed by Flávio Colombini and Beatriz Alonso, available on YouTube (goo.gl/N19q55) in November, 2016.
- 3 Opinion articles, short notes and reports published in the *Folha de S.Paulo magazine* were excluded.
- 4 This group's results are further explored in an article presented by the authors at Encontro Compós (Castilho & Romancini, 2017a).
- 5 Such group was made on November 30th, 2016, in São Paulo, and took about two hours and a half. We opted for conducting the focus group only with the author, because the presence of the co-author (man) could compromise the results, considering the girls could be less comfortable to talk with his presence. The audio was recorded, being written to analysis, and the discussion dynamic followed a script with the main interest axis: motivation and routines of the occupation; feminism, and the use of media. The teenagers were between 17 and 18 years old (16 and 17 at the occupations' time), identified themselves as economic classes C, D and E, and colours black and Caucasian. All of them studied

- in public schools, and four of them studied in the same Technical School (full time), in the state capital. Neither the school nor the students are named, in the case of the students we used fictional names, avoiding their identification to cause any inconveniences.
- 6 Originally: “Los medios de comunicación constituyen un espacio en el que se decide y se ejerce una influencia en la percepción, la construcción de la realidad y de los hechos noticiosos en los receptores del medio a través de la selección de la información, el uso de las fuentes, el uso de la imagen y la interpretación realizada por el propio periodista”.
 - 7 It’s important to note that Chile had a series of expressive students’ mobilization, since the first, with high school students, which was in 2006 and was known as “Penguin Revolution”, referring to the students’ clothes. There were also student movements in 2008 and 2011, but these ones, although there were similarities with the first in certain purposes, also involved university students. Zibas (2008) discussed about the Chilean students’ mobilizations.
 - 8 According to data from the National Association of Newspapers (www.anj.org.br/maiores-jornais-do-brasil/), the *Folha de S.Paulo* had a daily circulation of around 190 thousand newspapers in 2015, second only to *O Globo* newspaper and a popular periodical, *Super Notícia*.
 - 9 See: www.catarse.me/jornalistaslivres.
 - 10 Idem.
 - 11 Capriglione, L. (November 29, 2015). Secretaria de Educação prepara “guerra” contra as escolas em luta! Jornalistas Livres. Retrived from: goo.gl/RwVrHv.
 - 12 A politician, former Senator and current city councilman in São Paulo.
 - 13 Por que é que a PM de São Paulo quer o tempo todo nos provar a sua covardia e seu racismo??? (November 15, 2015). Jornalistas Livres. Retrived from: <https://goo.gl/2ufd2N>
 - 14 It’s on this way that Ortelado (2016) interprets the student movement of the occupations as the “first flower of July” referring to the 2013 protests.
 - 15 Originally: “efecto ‘visceral’ con el cual recibimos las fotografías es un factor que también tiene un efecto sobre la forma en la que interpretamos las imágenes”.

- 16 Originally: “Los medios de comunicación que pretenden calumniar nuestras movilizaciones, se han visto desprestigiados y han sido reemplazados por las redes sociales como fuentes de información verídica y oportuna”.
- 17 Originally: “corresponsales no tienen una formación periodística y se cometía el error de que la estructura de las noticias tenían un enfoque más de columna de opinión que de nota informativa”

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