

# AT THE SERVICE OF THE COMMUNITY, CAUSE OR CAPITAL:

alternative journalistic arrangements  
to the major media corporations in  
Santa Catarina<sup>1</sup>



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DOI: 10.25200/BJR.v17n2.2021.1382

Received in: November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Desk Reviewed: January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Desk Review Editor: Monica Martinez  
Revised on: March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Approved on: April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**ABSTRACT** – This paper presents the results of research on journalistic economic alternative arrangements to the major media corporations in the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil. It draws a profile of 20 arrangements identified through combined research techniques (snowball and questionnaire), characterizing them from three central axes: 1) “what is journalistic” in the journalistic arrangements (defining aspects of the type of journalism that is produced – or “markers”) and considerations about the world of work of the people in charge of these arrangements; 2) organization and production process (publication regimes, target audience, independence, and alternativeness); and 3) innovation and sustainability (if the arrangements consider themselves as entrepreneurial and innovative, what their legal status is and how they are financially sustained). The results point to three ideal types of journalistic arrangements, identified by their different bonds with the capital, their communities, or their political causes. Each ideal type corresponds to a distinct understanding of what journalism is and to distinct governance practices. Without constituting consolidated models, these types respond, each one in its way, to the structural changes that occur in the profession.

**Keywords:** New arrangements for journalistic work. Santa Catarina journalism. World of journalists' work. Independent journalism.

### **A SERVIÇO DA COMUNIDADE, DA CAUSA OU DO CAPITAL: os arranjos jornalísticos alternativos às grandes corporações de mídia em Santa Catarina**

**RESUMO** – Este artigo apresenta resultados de uma pesquisa sobre arranjos econômicos de jornalismo alternativos às grandes corporações de mídia no estado de Santa Catarina. Traça um perfil de 20 arranjos identificados por meio de técnicas combinadas de pesquisa (bola de neve e questionário), caracterizando-os a partir de três eixos centrais: 1) “o que há de jornalístico” nos arranjos jornalísticos (aspectos definidores do tipo de jornalismo produzido – ou “marcadores”) e considerações sobre o mundo do trabalho de seus e suas responsáveis; 2) organização e processo produtivo (regimes de publicação, públicos-alvo, relações de independência e alternatividade); e 3) inovação e sustentabilidade (se os arranjos consideram-se empreendedores e inovadores, quais seus status jurídicos e como se sustentam). Os resultados apontam para três tipos ideais de arranjos jornalísticos, identificados por suas diferentes conexões com o capital, as comunidades ou as causas políticas. Cada tipo ideal corresponde a um entendimento diferente do que é o jornalismo e a distintas práticas de governança. Esses tipos, sem constituírem ainda modelos consolidados, respondem, cada qual a seu modo, às mudanças estruturais do ofício.

**Palavras-chave:** Novos arranjos do trabalho jornalístico. Jornalismo catarinense. Mundo do trabalho dos jornalistas. Jornalismo independente.

### **AL SERVICIO DE LA COMUNIDAD, DE LA CAUSA O DEL CAPITAL: proyectos periodísticos alternativos a las grandes corporaciones mediáticas de Santa Catarina**

**RESUMEN** – Este artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación sobre proyectos económicos de periodismo alternativos a las principales corporaciones mediáticas en el estado de Santa Catarina, Brasil. Se dibuja un perfil de 20 proyectos identificados por técnicas de investigación articuladas (bola de nieve y cuestionario), caracterizándolos desde tres ejes centrales: 1) “qué hay de periodístico” en los proyectos periodísticos (aspectos definidores del tipo de periodismo producido – o “marcadores”) y consideraciones sobre el mundo laboral de sus responsables; 2) organización y proceso de producción (régimen de publicación, públicos objetivo, relaciones de independencia y alternatividad); y 3) innovación y sostenibilidad (si los proyectos se consideran emprendedores e innovadores, cuál es su estatus legal y cómo se mantienen). Los resultados apuntan a tres tipos ideales de proyectos periodísticos, identificados por sus distintas conexiones con el capital, las comunidades o las causas políticas. Cada tipo ideal corresponde a una comprensión diferente de lo que es el periodismo y diferentes prácticas de gobernanza. Estos tipos, sin ser modelos aún consolidados, responden, cada uno a su manera, a los cambios estructurales de la profesión.

**Palabras clave:** Nuevos proyectos del trabajo periodístico. Periodismo de Santa Catarina. Mundo del trabajo de periodistas. Periodismo independiente

## 1 Introduction

In the first decades of the 21st century, two contradictory movements responded to the structural transformations of journalism: while traditional media closed doors and expanded the news deserts in smaller municipalities, journalistic vehicles with very different characteristics proliferated in the largest urban centers. Native to the digital environment, these media experience new practices in the four dimensions of their governance systems — they present editorial innovations, in the management or control of organizations, in the strategies of circulation of news and engagement of audiences, and the forms of sustainability. Even if new governance models in journalism have not yet been consolidated, such experiences add diversity to the media ecosystem and constitute a relevant research topic — both for the theoretical and methodological challenges they raise, as well as for the innovation potential they carry.

This article is the product of ongoing research<sup>2</sup> whose purpose is to analyze the communication relations and working conditions in these types of journalistic ventures in Brazil, called “alternative economic arrangements to large media corporations”. As will be discussed later, “journalistic arrangement” refers to the fragile situation that journalists are subjected to in the face of the neoliberal logic of the labor market.

Because it is elaborated from the work perspective, the concept of “arrangement” encompasses a broad scope of journalistic experiences that are distinct from each other in terms of the editorial proposal, forms of financing, work organization, etc. It dialogues with concepts of “independent” and “alternative” journalism, in the sense of placing itself as a form of survival in the profession, a professional and citizen alternative to working in the large media conglomerates (Figaro, 2018a). However, it seeks to escape the inaccuracies posed due to their relational character.

Our general objective is to obtain an overview of alternative journalistic arrangements for the large media corporations existing in the state of Santa Catarina<sup>3</sup>, and active between 2019 and 2020. The specific objectives are a) to map these experiences; b) characterize them as journalistic arrangements, including their markers, their different forms of organization of the production process and their relations with innovation and entrepreneurship; and c) formulating

ideal types that help to understand the different conceptions of journalism and the different governance practices of these arrangements. We take international research as a parameter for this last point, proposing the adoption of ideal types to understand multiple phenomena present in the field of journalism: journalistic roles and values in a comparative perspective (Mellado et al., 2016), paradigms (Charron & De Bonville, 2016), meanings attributed to “professional journalism” (Waisbord, 2013), or link between media, state, and their influence on democratization (Hallin, 2000).

The article is organized into six sections. The first presents the theoretical assumptions that guide the study and contemplates the state of the art of research on new models of operation, mainly in the Latin American scenario; the topics discussed are the professionals’ responses to the crises of journalism, the debate on innovation and entrepreneurship and the meaning of “arranging” in the context of journalistic work. The second section details the field research methodology.

The following three sections organize the data collected in the research into axes. The first seeks to identify “what is journalistic in journalistic arrangements” as an alternative to large media corporations, considering that interpreting “the meanings of journalism disputed in this arena of struggles” is still a gap to be explored in investigations about arrangements (Figaro, 2018a, p.224). The second axis highlights the organization of the productive process of the arrangements: publication regime, target audience, their self-definition as independent or alternative, their connection with social, political, religious, or cultural movements.

The third axis, directly related to the second, promotes a specific analysis of the notions about “innovation”, “entrepreneurship”, and aspects about the forms of support and the arrangements’ legal status. When relevant, data from Santa Catarina were compared with results already published from the same research, on the journalistic arrangements of two other Brazilian states: São Paulo (in the southeast region) and Ceará (in the northeast region). The final section carries out an overall assessment of the study results and proposes three ideal types for the interpretation of the new “journalistic arrangements” in Brazil.

## 2 Journalists' responses to changes in the profession

The structural changes that journalism has undergone since the end of the 20th century — summarized in the debate about its post-industrial character (Anderson et al., 2013; Cagé, 2015) — are added, in Brazil, to the effects on journalistic media of the prolonged economic and socio-political crisis after 2013 (Mick & Estayno, 2020). In this adverse context, newspaper companies disappeared, extinguishing jobs and creating news deserts; those that remained in the market invariably resorted to precarious working conditions and innovations in the sense of digitalization and multimedia production of news, measures sometimes combined with the option of editorial alignment with some political agenda, far from the premises of pluralism and exemption (Christofoletti, 2019; Lelo, 2019).

In response to such changes, in individual or collective initiatives across the country, journalists have created hundreds of new media, generally small and far-reaching, exploring different configurations of the governance dimensions of the occupation. Such initiatives have not replaced companies closed in the context of crisis. However, they have expanded the diversity of the journalistic ecosystem and, as such, have drawn the attention of the scientific community, even though they have not yet consolidated the creation of new governance models.

In the points that most interest the objectives of this article, studies on this topic focus mainly on: a) the definition of initiatives, seeking greater precision concerning previous concepts, such as independent or alternative journalism; b) the interpretation of organizations in the context of the analysis of the discourses that promote entrepreneurship in the occupation; and c) the classification of initiatives in terms of the journalistic governance models that they create, develop, or promote. The definition of organizations as “arrangements”, as we will see at the end of this section, seeks to answer these three aspects of the problem.

Over time, changes in the occupation have been accompanied by the emergence of different combinations between “journalism” and some modifying word or expression that represents or indicates a certain specificity or novelty – which Loosen et al. (2020) call “journalism X”. Thus, in Brazil, journalistic experiences very different from each other in terms of proposal and management model have been characterized as “alternative” or “independent”,

by the organizations themselves or the specialized bibliography. The meaning of these terms is not self-explanatory or consensual. Both are relational concepts since one can only be independent or alternative in relation to something (Assis et al., 2017).

By the etymology of the word, “alternative” comes from the junction between two words of Latin origin: *alter* (another, second) and *nativus* (native, origin). Then, an alternative would be what originates from something or someone, assuming the existence of a predominant element and a second element, questioning the first (Bronosky & Carvalho, 2017). Based on this, “alternative journalism” shares a common element with what is considered traditional, which is the journalistic activity itself. However, it can differ in aspects such as the type of vehicle, the content, and the form of organization (Cammaerts, 2016). However, as the alternative journalistic discourse does not always occur in a radically different structure from the conventional ones, the alternative language is often used as a “mere apparel” to journalism made by traditional vehicles (Silva, 2017), which led researchers to explore the degrees of “alternativity” and “digitality” of these media in Latin America (Harlow & Salaverría, 2016).

Regarding the concept of “independence”, the most recurring meanings are related to the new forms of financial support for journalism, different from the traditional media business model, such as crowd-funded initiatives (Karppinen & Moe, 2016), which mark a clear opposition to conglomerates, their editorial lines, and economic interests. Some authors expand the scope of the concept to align themselves with the idea of “independent” journalism of economic and political interests that reiterate liberal values, disguised under the values of neutrality and the search for truth (Figaro, 2019). The notion of journalistic independence can also be characterized by the contesting action against the very model of democracy, public communication, or the State, as in the case of Cuban independent journalism (Somohano, 2019; Celecia Pérez, 2020).

It is possible to perceive the intertwining between the experiences of “alternative” or “independent” journalism and the socio-cultural and political context of the country where they are inserted, involving the characteristics of those who produce this journalism, how it is produced, the relationships between journalists and other social actors; or those relations of independence only of a discursive nature (De León, 2018). In other words, the historical formation and political economy of the media in each location cross

the dynamics of production and the multiple determinations that permeate this journalism (Somohano, 2019; Celecia Péres, 2020).

When examining the theme, Silva (2017) observed that the concepts of independent and alternative were used to designate a wide spectrum of initiatives, highlighting the absence of a precise definition for the experiences that aim to differentiate themselves from large companies and groups, or traditional organizations. The author proposed the expression “new journalism experiences”, in which “new” refers to both the temporal dimension and the willingness to oppose the business organization: “recent initiatives that essentially reproduce the already established model do not meet the approach” (Silva & Christofoletti, 2018, p.159).

The caveat of these authors responds to the suspicion that part of the organizations created by journalists in response to the structural transformations of the occupation merely reproduces the conventional business models, reflecting the expansion, over the category, of the neoliberal world reason, with its emphasis on stimulated actions by the ideology of “entrepreneurship”. The problem has been widely criticized both in perspectives that focus on the work as a whole (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2009; Dardot & Laval, 2016), as well as in studies focused on Brazilian journalism.

Oliveira and Grohmann (2015) observed the presence of mentions of entrepreneurship in journalists’ discourses about the profession, in the specialized bibliography on journalism, and the curricular guidelines for the training of journalists in Brazil. For the authors, “the narratives about entrepreneurship are articulated, in some way, with the prescriptive logic of a behavior supposedly capable of enhancing opportunities and diversifying the types of occupation, based on a corporate work ethic” (p.130).

Whether through entrepreneurship or the association of groups in the form of collectives, arrangements can be possible spaces for experimentation and innovation, even if limited by the low availability of financial resources. Borrowed from areas such as economics and administration, the concept of innovation applied to the communication field needs adaptations due to the specificities of the media product. Studies converge to typologies that delimit the act of innovating to the introduction of something new, to a change (Rossetti, 2012). It may include the improvement of products, processes, or business models (Storsul & Krumsvik, 2013), plus new forms of consumption and distribution (Lindmark et al., 2013), and insertion of technologies (Flores, 2017).

Also understood as a “discourse formula” (Grohmann, 2017), innovation suggests meanings that attribute a supposed “innovative spirit” to individuals. In this reading key, it is reduced to a mere voluntary act on the agent’s part, ignoring political and economic conditions that structure the journalistic field and limit the innovation processes in the area (Franciscato & Silva, 2020). In the ergological perspective worked by Schwartz (2000) and Figaro (2018a), however, the act of innovating is intrinsic to the human work itself and to the idea of “getting ready”, as we will see later.

Theoretical-methodological efforts to visualize the plurality between the different types of organizations led by journalists in response to the structural changes of the profession mobilized the concept of governance in its four operational dimensions – editorial, engagement and circulation, management, and sustainability (Mick & Tavares, 2017). Tavares (2019) observed tensions between conventional practices and the anti-systemic character of journalistic initiatives in the peripheries of São Paulo, while Giusti (2019) identified original practices in an experience of national reach and Silva (2017) compared the innovations in 30 Brazilian experiences.

A study comparing Brazilian cases with those from other countries (involving both traditional and new media innovations) found that original governance models of the occupation have not yet been consolidated and, although many initiatives operate to transform professional cultures, the potential of interaction between journalists and their audiences (Waisbord, 2017) remains largely unexplored (Mick & Christofolletti, 2018).

The concept of journalistic work in “alternative” economic arrangements to large media corporations combines different forms of organization: they can be collectives, non-governmental organizations, micro and small companies, and civil society organizations (Figaro, 2018a, p.19). These are “alternative” arrangements, not necessarily about professional practices and values, but as possible employability outside the media conglomerates. However, this does not mean that the arrangements are economically stable since, in many cases, the work is done voluntarily. As we will see, most of the initiatives mapped in Santa Catarina do not yet have sufficient financing sources to make their operation viable, without financial assets capable of making an idea last.

In these conditions, the action of “arranging” implies a reorganization of productive forces through creativity and innovation

intrinsic to the human activity of work, according to the ergological approach (Schwartz, 2000). To outline the concept, Figaro (2018a) uses theories of the economic field studied by Wilson Suzigan and Mauro Lombardi, characterizing the arrangement as a territorial or productive agglomeration formed by local, economic, political, and social agents. With some link, even if incipient (Cassiolato & Lastres, 2003), these agents usually develop arrangements according to demands from the surroundings of their communities. But they are not restricted to this purpose: arrangements also include the participation of companies (micro or small), associations, and public or private institutions.

It is a more open concept that does not consider the “independent” and the “alternative” as defining categories but places of enunciation and dispute of meanings (Grohmann et al., 2019). Avoiding these categories beforehand meets the only basic criterion to characterize what arrangements are: “repeating what they themselves claim, that is, they are not organized like the big media companies” (Figaro, 2018a, p.32). Thus, they encompass initiatives with different degrees of independence and alternativity, as well as those that are recognized as closest to innovation and entrepreneurship.

It is from this diversity of conceptions about journalism and governance practices that this article seeks, in the end, a synthesis of the Santa Catarina cases<sup>4</sup> in a typology that contributes to the assessment of the consistency of the concept of “arrangements” for the study of this theme.

### 3 Methodology

The methodological steps of this investigation followed a protocol similar to the pilot research carried out by the Research Center for Communication and Work (CPCT), at Universidade de São Paulo (ECA/USP). In its exploratory phase, the study in São Paulo initiated the survey of the arrangements based on the Map of Independent Journalism published by Agência Pública<sup>5</sup>. Through the snowball technique, vehicle participants became informants (seeds) and indicated more contacts to the CPCT.

The national composition of 170 arrangements – 70 from Greater São Paulo – started to be nucleated by criteria such as self-

denomination (independent or alternative journalism, entrepreneur, or innovator) and journalistic markers (if they produced journalism, if they had trained journalists, or if they considered the arrangement as a journalistic initiative). Even the arrangements that did not present journalism qualifiers comprised the sample since the inclusion criterion was the informants' indication.

To search for information about the arrangements in Santa Catarina, we used a set of strategies combined and applied between March and August 2020. As in CPCT, the first one was the snowball technique, carried out in two stages, to numerically identify the arrangements: one with the coordination of journalism courses in the most populous cities in the state; and another with the circulation of a Google Forms form freely requesting the indication of journalistic arrangements. It was posted on the Facebook profiles of the researchers in the study<sup>6</sup>, and another with the circulation of a Google Forms form freely requesting the indication of journalistic arrangements. It was published on Facebook profiles of the researchers in the study<sup>7</sup>, of journalists in the region, and also on the official channels of dissemination (website and Twitter) of the Graduate Program in Journalism at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (PPGJOR/UFSC).

The next step was to identify the information relevant to the study. To do this, we first collected all those available on the social networking websites/pages of the arrangements. Subsequently, we contacted the responsible journalists to confirm the data and obtain others that were not available on the internet. Among the relevant data are whether the arrangements declare to produce journalistic content, and which are the journalistic markers, that is, the defining aspects of the type of journalism produced (Costa et al., 2020), which are divided between textual genres and formats, productive routines, and deontological markers.

The research group PráxisJor, from Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC), also integrates the national mapping of the CPCT and uses such categories of analysis (for this reason, data from this state are also present, for comparative purposes). The first marker concerns the textual genres and formats adopted by the arrangements. As discourse elements in journalism, they represent an "indication of journalistic identity" (Costa et al., 2020, p.32), and are materialized in genres and formats ("news", "reportage", "interview") or related terms ("information", "opinion", "inform",

“produce”, “collect”, “ascertain” and division of guidelines by editorials). Those are established attributes in the journalistic field and refer to the reader the specificity of the content produced by the arrangements.

Information was also collected characterizing the world of work of the workers in these arrangements: whether the responsible persons identify themselves as journalists; if gender inequalities cross the heads, as it occurs in traditional media (Pontes, 2017); if there is evidence of multifunctionality and precarious work, through the accumulation of activities of workers in the arrangements with other jobs; and whether journalists also participate in some type of activism, maintaining links with social, cultural, or religious movements.

The data on the world of work of journalists made us raise the hypothesis that the arrangements would be created as an outcome of traditional media dismissal processes. To test it, we produced an additional analysis on the professional trajectories of and from the journalists working in the SC arrangements: we search for their public profiles on LinkedIn, and in a complementary way, on the Lattes Platform<sup>8</sup>, seeking to understand whether or not they came from the traditional media, whether they are involved with some kind of political/social activism, whether they accumulate other parallel jobs, inside or outside the media.

There are always intermittences in the arrangements' publication regime, as these are crossed by the real conditions of the production processes and by the synthetic relationship between time and space in the domain of everyday life in an online environment, which does not fit in the logic of periodicity of the mainstream media. The term periodicity, in this sense, is insufficient for the analytical objectives of this research. Instead, the concepts of “publication regime” and “chronotope” were used, more appropriate to the reality of the arrangements (Figaro et al., 2020), to understand the objective conditions of production better. In addition, the existence or not of a headquarters, the target audience, the digital channels through which publications circulate (social networks) were also identified – factors that also imply in another dimension about the here and now, about space and time (Figaro et al., 2020) in the journalistic practice of the arrangements.

Finally, we investigate the vehicles' identity statement; whether the journalists in the arrangements define themselves

as entrepreneurs; whether they consider themselves producers of some type of innovation; whether they identify themselves as independent or alternative; what is the legal status of the arrangement; how they support themselves, and what are the financing and income sources.

In all, we found 20 journalistic arrangements in Santa Catarina (Chart 1), very different in terms of editorial proposal, target audience, and forms of support. Twelve of them work in the city of Florianópolis, capital of the state: Cientista que virou mãe; Desacato; Maruim; Portal Catarinas; Subversiv@s; Folha da Cidade; Catarina Lab; UFSC à Esquerda; Floripa Centro; Jornal do Veneno; Repórter Popular and Tribuna Universitária.

The rest are divided into the cities of Joinville (O Mirante); Chapecó (Revista Artemísia); Mafra and Rio Negro (Portal Ponte Notícias); Blumenau (Economia SC); Criciúma (Tabelando); Garuva, São Francisco do Sul, Itapoá, Araquari, and Campo Alegre (Folha Norte SC); Itajaí (Diversar) and Palhoça (Estopim). The latter two suspended their activities during the execution of the research (temporarily, in the case of Diversar, which returned being active in 2021, and definitely, in the Estopim arrangement). The decision to keep them in the sample is because they are part of the recent media ecosystem in Santa Catarina and, therefore, it seems relevant to see what they built during their existence.

Two initiatives did not return our contact (UFSC à Esquerda and Jornal do Veneno), and the data present in the study were collected exclusively on their internet channels. The oldest of the alternative journalistic arrangements to the major media corporations in Santa Catarina is Desacato, followed by a Cientista que virou mãe, both created in the 2000s. However, most of the arrangements started to emerge more strongly from 2018 and 2019.

**Chart 1** – Alternative economic arrangements to large media corporations in journalistic organizations in Santa Catarina (2020)

Organization	Location	Foundation Year	URL
Desacato	Florianópolis	2007	<a href="http://desacato.info">http://desacato.info</a>
Catarina Lab		2018	<a href="https://catarinalab.com">https://catarinalab.com</a>
Cientista que virou mãe		2009	<a href="http://www.cientistaqueviroumae.com.br">http://www.cientistaqueviroumae.com.br</a>
Floripa Centro		2019	<a href="https://floripacentro.com.br">https://floripacentro.com.br</a>
Folha da Cidade		2020	<a href="https://folhacidade.com.br">https://folhacidade.com.br</a>
Jornal do Veneno		2020	<a href="http://comidasaudavelpratodos.com.br">http://comidasaudavelpratodos.com.br</a>
Maruim		2014	<a href="http://maruim.org">http://maruim.org</a>
Portal Catarinas		2016	<a href="http://catarinas.info">http://catarinas.info</a>
Repórter Popular		2007 <sup>9</sup>	<a href="http://reporterpopular.com.br">http://reporterpopular.com.br</a>
Subversiv@s		nothing on record <sup>10</sup>	<a href="http://subversivos.libertar.org">http://subversivos.libertar.org</a>
Tribuna Universitária		2019	<a href="https://tribunauniversitaria.com.br">https://tribunauniversitaria.com.br</a>
UFSC à esquerda	2013	<a href="https://ufscaesquerda.com">https://ufscaesquerda.com</a>	
Economia SC	Blumenau	2019	<a href="https://www.economiasc.com">https://www.economiasc.com</a>
Artemisia	Chapecó	2019	<a href="https://revistaartemisia.com">https://revistaartemisia.com</a>
Tabelando	Criciúma	2017	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/tabelandoec11">https://www.facebook.com/tabelandoec11</a>
Folha Norte SC	Garuva, Itapoá, São Francisco do Sul, Araquari, and Campo Alegre	2019	<a href="http://www.folhanortesc.com.br">http://www.folhanortesc.com.br</a>
O Mirante	Joinville	2017	<a href="https://omirantejoinville.com.br">https://omirantejoinville.com.br</a>
Diversar	Itajaí	2020	<a href="http://diversar.com.br">http://diversar.com.br</a>
Portal Ponte	Mafra/Rio Negro	2018	<a href="http://portalponte.com.br">http://portalponte.com.br</a>
Estopim	Palhoça	2011	Unavailable

Source: authors.

These organizations operate in a market characterized, on the one hand, by the multiplicity of small media in smaller cities and, on the other, by a strong concentration of ownership in vehicles with state coverage or that reach the metropolitan regions (Mick & Kamradt, 2017). A duopoly divides control of the main radio and television broadcasters, internet channels, and print media with a greater reach between the NSC group and the ND group<sup>12</sup>.

In a conservative state in political and behavioral terms, the Santa Catarina media has become less plural since the rise of the extreme right to power in Brazil, showing alignment with the Bolsonaro agenda. This context affects the performance of almost all organizations mapped in this research, even those whose identity is distant from clearly political themes.

#### **4 What is journalistic in journalistic arrangements**

Of the 20 Santa Catarina arrangements surveyed, 19 declared themselves to be journalism producers. The exception is the autonomous collective *Subversiv@s*, which prefers to define itself as “free media”. The type of journalism produced ranges from niche proposals – such as feminist journalism/with a gender perspective and specializing in sports, economics, culture – to proposals for local journalism with varied themes. Of the total surveyed arrangements, 30% consider themselves journalism collectives.

##### **4.1 Journalistic markers**

In Santa Catarina's arrangements, 85% express some genre or format marker in their presentation texts. However, despite the high number, most of the mentions are vague, brief, and unclear about the type of work performed. They are self-declarations that are limited to terms such as “Florianópolis vehicle” (Folha da Cidade), “journalism collective” (Maruim), “popular communication” (Repórter Popular), “local journalism” (Folha Norte SC), “online newspaper” (O Mirante). Although they trigger discourse elements that link the arrangement to the journalistic field, they do not specify what type of content is produced.

In contrast to the arrangements in Ceará<sup>13</sup>, there are far fewer direct references to genres and formats in groups in Santa

Catarina. Only four explicitly state that they produce “news” (Portal Catarinas, Floripa Centro, and Economia SC; Portal Ponte Notícias includes the genre in its name, although it does not mention it in its self-declaration). “Reportage” is mentioned only by Estopim and Catarina Lab, while the arrangements Cientista que virou mãe and Desacato refer to other formats to explain their content (“as if it were a magazine”, writes the first, “it was founded (...) in a virtual magazine format”, informs the second). “Information” is a more common term, found in seven arrangements.

In this sense, the initial high percentage of the marker should be analyzed with caution, since most of the arrangements use related terms, with few explicit mention of the genres and formats with which they work. Self-denominations can be fragile indicators of the nature of groups, as the presentation texts tend to be underestimated by the arrangements (Costa et al., 2020). This was the case in São Paulo, where some did not identify themselves as journalistic initiatives but reported marks of praxis in journalism (Figaro, 2018a).

In any case, the low recurrence among Santa Catarina’s traditional lexicons’ arrangements on journalistic practice (such as “news” and “reportage”) is significant in spaces that, supposedly, would serve to present the readers with the type of content they would find. One hypothesis to be discussed is that groups may consider it sufficient to declare that they are “vehicles”, “portals”, or “journalistic projects” as if the content produced by them automatically becomes something of a journalistic nature.

Markers of productive routines are present in 70% of the arrangements (14 of 20), a significant increase to the 52.4% of the groups from Ceará. Senses can be expressed when arrangements designate the purpose of their activities (“produces research, analysis, reporting, data collection, an investigation [...]” – Catarina Lab; “disseminating and producing information” – Tribuna Universitária; “producing informative content [...], in addition to offering the reader a complete agenda of the most varied events” – Diversar).

Markers are also associated with who are the content producers that integrate the routine of the arrangements. This is perceived in four cases, albeit quickly and without much detail: Folha Norte SC (“independent initiative of three journalists”), Folha da Cidade (“formed by a team of six journalists”), Floripa Centro (“Journalist for three decades, worked as a reporter and editor at Diário Catarinense between 1997 and 2003”), Cientista que virou

mãe (“they are journalists, scientists, and other independent content producers”).

Productive routines are also linked to the periodicity of the content produced. Only one arrangement mentions this sense in its self-declaration (Desacato – “weekly summary”, about the “radioweb” newsletter derived from the website). No other group mentions whether website updates are daily, weekly, or monthly, for example. The gap may be linked to the previous marker, of genres and formats, in which there was a low presence of terms such as “news” and “reportage”. Another hypothesis, which we will discuss in the next section, is the emergence of a specific publication regime in the arrangements.

Content segmentation is more common and is present in seven initiatives. These are delimitations that specify a specific production routine and give indications of editorial divisions on the websites. Revista Artemísia, for example, signals that “music, cinema, theater are recurring guidelines”, in addition to “social content”; Economia SC specifies its specialization in “economy, business, innovation, technology, careers, and sustainability”; and Portal Catarinas segments coverage by a “gender perspective”.

The third marker refers to the ethical dimension present in self-declarations when arrangements make deontological values about good practices in journalism. They are self-referential discourses – because they build an image of themselves, an *ethos* – and strategic – to establish a contract with the reader and preserve the credibility of the arrangements. Seven of the 20 Santa Catarina initiatives (35%) contain the marker, a slight decrease compared to the 42.9% present in Ceará’s arrangements.

In the case of this study, the deontological senses of the groups untie arrangements from external agents, who can curb their practices (“without sponsorship from large corporations” – Cientista que virou mãe; “boss-free journalism” – Revista Artemísia; “plural, autonomous, and independent” – Tribuna Universitária).

They also claim the role of vigilance in journalism, as in the cases of Maruim (“[journalism] can influence political decisions and institutions”) and Catarinas (“observation of political debates on the [gender] subject”). A final sense associated with deontology refers to the accuracy of the information, as highlighted by O Mirante (“correct, well-refined, critical, contextualized, and plural information”). Combining the analysis of the deontological marker

to the previous ones, the low percentage also stems from the lack of mention of the genre worked by the arrangements. The overriding value seems to be independence, described as more autonomy in the production of content. This is reflected in the self-denomination of the arrangements, as will be discussed below.

In addition to the three journalistic markers, the analysis included a fourth, on meanings of territoriality. Significantly, 13 of the 20 arrangements (65%) in Santa Catarina refer to some local aspect in their self-declarations – an aspect also found expressively (77.8% of the websites) in Ceará (Costa et al., 2020). “Diversifying channels in Florianópolis” (Maruim), “providing the necessary subsidy for the society of Joinville to make the best decisions” (O Mirante), dedicating itself “to the charming soul of the streets of the capital of Santa Catarina” (Folha da Cidade), coverage of central neighborhood of the capital of Santa Catarina (Floripa Centro), being in direct contact with the population of Rio Negro/Mafra (Portal Ponte), and placing a bet on the “strength of local journalism” for the northern region of the state (Folha Norte SC) are some of the local references found.

They seem to indicate an effort to connect with the audiences of the respective territories through a type of coverage that is more comprehensive or diversified (in terms of scale) or even more pluralistic or detailed (in terms of scope), as opposed to journalism practiced by traditional media, when they exist. The sense of place is also used to delimit the coverage area of the arrangements in the case of vehicles with thematic specialization, such as Artemisia (focused on artistic productions in Chapecó), Diversar (valuing the cultural production of Itajaí), and Tabelando (news about the Criciúma soccer team).

## **4.2 The world of journalists’ work in alternative arrangements**

Only one arrangement (Subversiv@s) among the 20 does not have journalists on the team. The rest (95%) have at least one journalist among their workers. This data is in line with that of São Paulo, where the majority (65%) of those responsible for the arrangements call themselves journalists (Figaro, 2018a). Of the 19 arrangements with at least one journalist in SC, three (15%) work with interdisciplinary teams: Tabelando, of sports journalism, has an agronomic engineer who acts as a commentator; in Estopim, in addition to the journalist, there were collaborators in the areas of History, Law, and Fashion; in

Desacato, there are also social communicators, cultural agents, and technicians in communication systems.

As for the gender of the people who lead the arrangements, out of a total of 27 identified by the survey, 15 (55.5%) are women, and 12 (44.5%) are men. Eight arrangements are headed by more than one person or by a collective of journalists (so there are more leaders than arrangements). In addition, five leaders work in more than one arrangement. Of the 20, five are headed by men and women together, nine are headed exclusively by men, four exclusively by women<sup>14</sup>, and two did not respond.

In Brazil, women are the majority in the profession but a minority in management positions (Mick & Lima, 2013; Pontes, 2017; Figaro, 2018b). In the study carried out in Greater São Paulo, it was found that 54.2% of the managers of the arrangements are women, 28% of whom are founded and directed by them, while 17% have mixed leaderships. Based on these data, Figaro (2018b) perceives certain reversibility of the macho logic that prevents women from reaching higher positions in journalism and a leading role of professionals who seek alternatives to exercise journalism in the face of precarious work and disappearance of jobs in traditional media. This is not the case in Santa Catarina. Although there are numerically more female leaders than male leaders in the Santa Catarina arrangements, when looking more closely, the number of arrangements led exclusively by women is only four (20%), while the rest (80%) have men together with women, or only men in charge, reproducing the model of traditional media.

On mixed leadership, additional research is needed to understand whether decision-making is equitable or whether the last word remains male, as is typical in Brazilian journalistic organizations, especially those owned by family businesses with a patriarchal (Nunes, 2020) or religious tradition. Although the new arrangements for the work of journalists have a transformative power on gender issues, this force does not necessarily translate into changes in patterns of discrimination.

The existence of alternatives to work in the traditional media does not, by itself, guarantee a more welcoming and fairer environment for journalists, as gender issues (unequal wages, sexual division of labor, harassment, among others) can remain if there are no efforts by their managers to change the condition. "Media and discourse convergence can open up possibilities for female

journalists, but this is not a characteristic inherent in technological means, especially because these means are being appropriated by commercial logic” (Figaro, 2018b, p.586).

Those responsible for 11 of the 20 arrangements reported that they work in other parallel professional activities, as do other people on their teams. Only three mentioned concurrent work in the news media; the rest have varied jobs, some outside the media, but in related roles (as a university professor in journalism, press officer, illustrator, photographer, and marketing professional), and others outside journalism, in different areas (agronomic engineer, civil servant, sales of baby products and events, courses and food advice).

Reasons for this were not explored at this stage of the research. However, it is possible to suspect, looking at the data on financing and income from the arrangements (section 5), that the search for other sources of collection by the journalists is necessary for their maintenance, and also to keep the arrangement upright, since a good part of them still does not support itself. The work in alternative arrangements to the major media corporations in Santa Catarina is fragile and does not differ from the national and global crisis scenario (Pachi Filho et al., 2017). The same is true of journalists from the arrangements in Greater São Paulo, who suffer from precarious situations and strenuous working hours:

They usually have a job as a *freelancer* or even a permanent job to earn a living; and, after that journey, there is the work in the “arrangement”, the work that completes and satisfies, the work that feeds the social being, but also makes them suffer because they do not have the time and conditions for proper and quality dedication. Therefore, they support their journalistic action in the arrangement with other work, in course activities, lectures, *freelance* in journalism for other events, advisory services, etc. (Figaro, 2018a, p.226).

The analysis of public data on the trajectories of the professionals involved in the arrangements does not support the hypothesis that they created journalistic organizations as the outcome of dismissal processes. Organizations appear to have emerged from planned initiatives, guided by clear aims (although not always successful in implementing them). As we will see, the initiatives can be divided into three major groups, in a manner consistent with the professional trajectories of those involved:

1. a smaller number of arrangements for commercial purposes, which aim to reach niche audiences with segmented coverage or broad audiences in specific territories, with general coverage;
2. an intermediate number of experiences in which journalism is a useful discourse for carrying out specific political projects (gender equality, defense of sexual or reproductive rights, defense of science and the university, etc.); and
3. a greater number of cases in which journalism is conceived as a discourse for social transformation, regardless of an explicit link with any agenda, but in general in a specific territory (such as the city or region).

## **5. Organization and production process**

In this axis of the study, we highlight the organization of the production process, both concerning the arrangements' publication regime and to the target audience. Here, we also reflect on considerations of the terms independent or alternative and whether the arrangements are linked to social, political, religious, or cultural movements.

### **5.1 Publication regime and target audience of the arrangements**

The intermittences caused by unstable production conditions, typical of virtual newsrooms, reinforce the perception that the term periodicity is not enough to understand the variable time in the new journalistic arrangements, being more appropriate, for these cases, to speak in terms of publication (Figaro et al., 2020). Even without specifying which of the 20 Santa Catarina arrangements, nine maintain some type of publication regime on the websites and social networks. The arrangements that publish the most produce daily updates. O Mirante and Folha Norte SC carry out approximately eight publications per day. The latter covers subjects from different municipalities<sup>15</sup> and states that it works to organize a routine for the "publication times" to strengthen the bond with the audience.

Portal Catarinas does an almost daily job, but it does not necessarily result in publications. There is no standard, as in certain situations, there is more than one publication per day. Folha da Cidade stated that it organizes daily shifts with at least one publication on the website and the Facebook page. The arrangement even makes up to three posts per day, depending on the team's available time. Floripa Centro publishes one or two news a day. Moreover, Jornal do Veneno, as it is a podcast, is divided into seasons. The first had

ten biweekly episodes and the second was on the sixth program on November 20, 2020.

As for the target audience of the arrangements, the data collected is of the most varied type: ranging from the generic – like *Subversiv@s*, which has its target audience composed of people interested in politics, acts, and protests – to specific ones, such as *Tabelando*, which focuses on Criciúma Esporte Clube soccer fans. *O Mirante* states that its objective is “to be read by all Joinville residents”. The arrangement reveals that the majority of the audience seems to be identified as “left-aligned”, but there is no focus on a specific segment. A hyperlocal example (Zago, 2009) is *Floripa Centro*, which has only the audience in the central area of the city of Florianópolis as the target of its publications. Some arrangements use tools to identify the audience, such as *Folha Norte SC* using Google Analytics.

## 5.2 Independence and alternativity considerations

Many Santa Catarina arrangements mention the nicknames “alternative or independent” to characterize the journalism they produce<sup>16</sup>. Thirteen of the 20 arrangements (65%) mention a term associated with independence in their self-definitions, whether as “independent journalism” or “independent media”. A possible explanation for the “attachment” of Santa Catarina people to the self-declaration of independence is that this is a reaction to the configuration of the media in the state as an oligopoly<sup>17</sup>. In these cases, the relational character of the concept is useful. In the five arrangements that did not mention meanings close to independent journalism are nomenclatures such as “communication vehicle”, “specialized journalism”, “journalism laboratory”, and “autonomous collective”. Only one arrangement (*Portal Floripa Centro*) is defined only as “alternative journalism” – here, too, the qualifier is opposed to the traditional journalistic media of the city. Two other arrangements did not respond to the questionnaire.

It is clear the diversity of arrangements that claim the definition of independence, both in terms of proposals and in terms of financing (own resources [*Artemisia*], donations [*Desacato*], and support from companies [*Portal Ponte*]) and legal status (from cooperatives) [*Desacato*], Individual Microentrepreneurs (MEIs) [*Portal Ponte*, *Tabelando e Diversar*]). There are also complementary

qualifiers, such as “independent, alternative, and ‘even traditional’<sup>18</sup>” (Tabelando), in addition to “popular” (Repórter Popular).

Links with social, political, religious, or cultural movements add even more complexity to the debate on independence. There are six (30%) arrangements linked to some movement – and four of them declared themselves independent. This link sometimes occurs in the form of financing, as is the case of Desacato and Portal Catarinas, which declared to have unions and social movements among their subsidiaries, or other forms of support, in the cases of Diversar (artistic class) and Repórter Popular (political organization). The other two that declared a link, but do not say they are independent, are Folha Norte SC, close to business sectors in the northeast region of the state, and Subversiv@s, linked to the anarchist movement.

However, 60% of the arrangements declare that they do not have such engagements, which in some cases can be interpreted as a discourse strategy of self-preservation of their independence, as in the example of Estopim, who replied: “Often, the ideological line of movements and the magazine converged, but we did not establish any link or commitment to anyone”. In other cases, as in Economia SC, there is a rejection of any kind of link with movements: “No, under no circumstances”. The remaining 10% correspond to arrangements that did not answer the question.

These data show the fragility of the concept and the impossibility of understanding a single meaning for the independence and the alternativeness of these means: if, on the one hand, all those who claim to be independent or alternative refuse to enter into commitments with holders of economic powers and hegemonic politicians, on the other hand, there are cases of financial dependence on counter-hegemonic political actors, which can influence the journalism produced. Still, not everyone is independent of the traditional ways of thinking about journalism and its relationship with society (Figaro, 2018a).

## **6. Innovation and sustainability of the arrangements**

This research axis proposes to discuss notions about innovation and entrepreneurship based on the collected self-declarations. We asked if the arrangements are considered innovative and entrepreneurial, and the answers point to different meanings and

interpretations of the concepts. Data on the legal status and forms of support for the arrangements are also described.

## 6.1 Innovation, entrepreneurship and legal status

Among respondents, most consider their work to be innovative to some extent. Of the 20, twelve arrangements indicated yes (60%), and three (Floripa Centro, Catarina Lab, and Portal Catarinas) did not justify the reason for this choice. Six sample arrangements (30%) responded negatively to the question.

Four respondents associate the concept of innovation with the context in which they operate, close to the act of innovating, such as the introduction of something new in a socioeconomic system (Storsul & Krumsvik, 2013). This portion is considered innovative because it exists in cities of informational scarcity, supplying a vacuum of local vehicles. This is the case of Folha Norte, which states: “for a large city, it would not be innovation. But, as we operate in small municipalities, where there are often no trained journalists, the quality of information is an innovative issue”.

Another example is Artemisia, which does not consider itself innovative, but “a novelty” because “cultural journalism is poorly produced” in the region. The same association is repeated in the responses from O Mirante (“We do nothing different from traditional journalism. However, we consider ourselves innovators for journalism in the city of Joinville”) and Portal Ponte Notícia (“For the region, the innovation is not to depend directly on materials sent by the press offices”).

Among the other arrangements that responded affirmatively, the meanings of innovation are associated with the format or presentation of content (Desacato and Tabela do), the specialization of the arrangement (Economia SC), the formation of an alternative identity (Estopim), and the collaborative work with other independent media (Folha da Cidade).

In CPCT and PráxisJor’s studies, data on innovation were also obtained from the self-declarations of the arrangements. We consider that this does not allow a direct comparison with the responding Santa Catarina’s initiatives, both for the methodology and for the space limitation to be considered in the presentation texts of the arrangements. However, the low visibility of the concept observed in both studies mentioned is an indication. Of the 70 arrangements in

São Paulo<sup>19</sup>, 63 do not mention “innovation” and the same occurs in Ceará, where 85.7% of the arrangements do not show references to both innovation and entrepreneurship (Costa et al., 2020).

Concerning entrepreneurship, of the 20 arrangements in Santa Catarina, ten (50%) answered yes, if they consider themselves to be entrepreneurs. Of the other half, six (30%) do not consider themselves entrepreneurs and four (20%) did not answer. This data contrasts with the context of São Paulo, in which 65 arrangements (92.8%) do not claim to be entrepreneurs (Figaro, 2018a). Santa Catarina also differs from the Ceará results, in which most initiatives (85.7%) do not declare themselves to be entrepreneurial and/or innovative<sup>20</sup> (Costa et al., 2020). The identifications with entrepreneurship in the arrangements in Santa Catarina presented different responses:

We [are] not necessarily entrepreneurs, but it is a fact that we have undertaken something (Portal Catarinas).

Yes, I had been planning for *economiasc.com* for months before I officially launched it. Maycon has already undertaken on other companies (Economia SC).

In the sense of investing work time, money, and an idea applied as a business, yes, [the arrangement] has this entrepreneurial spirit. But, I do not consider myself with a very keen sense in that sense (Diversar).

The issue of entrepreneurship is important to mention. We now have subscribers, until then, we didn't. And this is important because we have the newspaper accounts, the domain, the MEI taxes, and expenses to carry out the agendas (transport). The newspaper offers products for the population, such as native advertising, advertising, banners (Folha Norte SC).

Although we consider work to be a kind of mission and we are willing to do it with a very low prospect of financial success, we see it as a business. We have a product, we have an audience, and we have suppliers. So, transforming this small company into a sustainable one, that pays wages, reaches new markets, is something we want and work to happen. In that sense, yes, we are entrepreneurs (O Mirante).

We observed that the idea of entrepreneurship appears, often, associated with the issue of financing the arrangement. Among the responses, the objective of achieving sustainability and the possibility of increasing the dedication to the arrangement and the opportunities to diversify the types of occupation prevailed, based on a business work ethic (Oliveira & Grohmann, 2015). Thus, the search for financial sustainability coincides with the objective of remuneration for dedicated work.

Another relationship with entrepreneurship is in the declaration of legal status. Of the total, 11 (55%) claimed to have the National Registry of Legal Entities (CNPJ)<sup>21</sup>, six (30%) of which are linked to individual microentrepreneurs (MEI)<sup>22</sup>. Of these, two (10%) are companies, one is an association (5%), one is cooperative (5%), and a non-profit organization (5%). Of the other nine arrangements, four (20%) have no declared legal status and five (25%) have not responded<sup>23</sup>. Among these, there is Folha da Cidade, which said it made its subscription campaign viable through a partnership with the Associação Coletivo de Jornalismo Maruim.

The number of arrangements that affirmed the link to the MEI in Santa Catarina indicates the possibility of using this legal status also for freelance work or other types of service provision. In O Mirante, the statement was that “one of the journalists has MEI and would issue notes to the newspaper, but that was never necessary”. They also point out that “after the pandemic, the objective is to establish a micro-company, with the entry of a new partner”. The number of MEIs in the sample also points to what Dardot and Laval (2016) call “man-company” and the fact that journalists are increasingly “called to embrace and incorporate an ‘entrepreneurial’ mentality, where each individual becomes a self-directed brand or company” (Deuze & Witschge, 2016, p.9).

## 6.2 Sustainability, revenue, and income

The data on the forms of support for the arrangements were obtained through two complementary questions: “How do they support themselves?” and “What are the sources of financing?”. The majority, 13 (65%), reported having at least one source of financing, although it is not constant. Of the other seven arrangements, four (20%) did not respond, and three (15%) reported that they did not have sources of financing at the moment. Of these without sources of revenue, Revista Artemisia informed that it intends to make collective financing, and, at the moment, the support comes from “own resources”.

While Estopim claims to have tested fundraising campaigns via social networks and friends, “without much feedback”, Diversar replied that there was no income collected between March and July 2020 (period of activity of the arrangement). It described that has invested

(with its own money) in the development of the website and the visual identity of the arrangement. Besides, the objective was to start a low-cost subscription system in the second half, with the conversion of benefits to subscribers (exclusive giveaways, discounts at concert halls, gifts from the cultural area), but that “the pandemic destroyed the planning” and postponed the continuation of the arrangement. These responses may illustrate that, despite the intention to promote the profitability of the arrangement, in the context of Santa Catarina, conjunctural, personal, and planning factors for the implementation of collective financing sources may end up hindering the arrangement’s publication regime, or even its existence.

From those who claimed to have at least one source of financing, the types of funding identified are different. Among those that use financing from the support of their audiences, there are crowdfunding campaigns (collective financing, of an episodic nature), recurring and monthly collective financing, a donation from readers, and entities (individuals and companies), systems such as Eduzz and Google AdSense and monthly subscriptions through the Apoia.se website, including a reward for the supporters. Some arrangements also mentioned financing from partnerships with companies, which includes sponsoring companies according to the plans established by the arrangement, advertisements and banners on the websites, publishing sponsored content, native and advertised advertising<sup>24</sup>. The sale of products is also mentioned as another form of financing.

Finally, voluntary work and own resources were also mentioned, which may indicate that, even in arrangements with sources of financing, the resources obtained are often insufficient to pay the bills and remunerate the work of the people involved in the activities of the arrangement. For example, *Folha da Cidade* reported that the entire team of journalists “has another source of income”. *Tribuna Universitária* replied that the arrangement “does not yet maintain itself”.

The insufficiency of the revenues obtained from the sources of financing is reflected in the responses on the level of income of the arrangements. In this category, it was observed that, despite the majority informing at least one source of financing, 11 of the 20 (55%) did not want to declare the arrangement’s revenue or answered that they would not know how to estimate. Low transparency on revenues is recurrent among alternative journalistic arrangements in Brazil<sup>25</sup>.

Of the nine remaining Santa Catarina arrangements, five (25%) reported monthly income, two (10%) said they did not have significant income, and two (10%) did not answer the questionnaire. Among the five that reported the collection, the revenue levels vary from R\$ 1.000 to R\$ 3.000 per month<sup>26</sup>. The amounts informed by the arrangements (R\$ 1.000, R\$ 1.045, R\$ 1.625, R\$ 2.470 and R\$ 3.000) are not exact and may vary from one month to the next.

In the arrangement with the highest reported income, the sources of financing come only from advertising (banners and advertisements on the website). In contrast, the arrangement with the lowest revenue range responded that the only source is donations from readers. In the intermediary revenues (R\$ 1.045 and R\$ 2.470), the arrangements combine sources of financing: support from readers (collective financing and subscriptions) and advertising (banners, sponsored content, native and advertised advertising). The intermediary value between the latter two, R\$ 1.625, belongs to the arrangement whose revenue is obtained only by recurring crowdfunding, through the website Apoia-se with rewards according to the investment range.

## **7 Conclusions and indications of new studies**

The balance of alternative economic arrangements to large media corporations in the journalistic organizations of Santa Catarina begins by realizing their limited reach in territorial and audience terms. Almost all the initiatives located with the research techniques adopted are concentrated in the six largest conurbations in the state (the two exceptions operate in a municipality in the North Plateau and a group of cities in the North Coast). Thirteen of them (65%) are in Greater Florianópolis, the region of the capital of Santa Catarina. Even experiences focused on local or hyperlocal journalism seem to depend on the existence of a few hundred thousand inhabitants to reach audiences and sources of revenue. Alternative arrangements do not seem like a financially viable solution to the news deserts.

The emergence of journalistic arrangements in medium-sized cities in Santa Catarina innovates both because of a human activity that is creative and imaginative (Schwartz, 2000; Grohmann, 2017), as well as by introducing new actors in media ecosystems with a low supply of information vehicles. Less related to the developed

product, the act of innovating, for the arrangements, comes close to social innovation (Storsul & Krumsvik, 2013) whose purpose is to improve the life of a community by supplying its social need for information. These results converge with the international research of Deuze and Witschge (2020), in which the examined startups do not necessarily introduce new practices in journalism but reinforce values. They are pioneers because they fill a gap in the journalism market – despite the precarious conditions of production to which they are subjected.

As for the dimensions of the audiences they manage to reach, some of the experiences transcend the borders of their home territory to involve audiences from across the state (like Desacato) or spread across the country (like Catarinas or Cientista que virou mãe). However, even these channels expand their audiences in an episodic manner when they manage to add original information or opinions to the journalistic coverage of topics with wide impact.

Although this research did not seek to assess indicators of reach and quality, the other data collected here reinforce the perception that alternative arrangements are very incipient and far from being an alternative to conventional media in this regard. In other words, even if they are configured as a social innovation in their local information ecosystems, the initiatives are isolated, quite voluntary, and inconsistent in terms of impact and the publication regime.

Most of the journalistic arrangements are still young – many of them started in 2018 and they reflect the reaction of professionals to the downsizing of newsrooms in traditional media. A possible explanation for this comes from technological advancement, technical improvement, and cheaper services related to the production and hosting of digital content, enabling the creation and maintenance of this type of vehicle. A second explanation is political: aggravated by the economic crisis, the deterioration in the quality and diversity of news coverage is also associated with the electoral triumph of the extreme right in the country and, in particular, in Santa Catarina<sup>27</sup>.

The presence of neoliberal reason among the people of Santa Catarina is so robust that even the arrangements that fight the agendas of the new government are also supported by the lexicon of “entrepreneurship”. A third elucidative possibility is the ephemerality of the initiatives: arrangements created together with Desacato (the first to appear in SC) no longer exist, and it is likely that, within a few years, part of the 20 organizations mapped here will have

disappeared, while others will emerge.

It is relevant that, in half of the researched arrangements, the journalist considers himself/herself an entrepreneur: although “to undertake” has different meanings for them, the word often appears associated with the search for financial sustainability of their workers and the vehicle itself. It would, therefore, be more related to “entrepreneurship by necessity”, which Figaro (2018a, p.73) talks about, as “several ways of earning a living”, than “that idea that propagates a model of success as a maxim absolute”.

From the perspective of ergology, binomial communication and work consider that all human work is innovative, as it is a creative and renormalized action (Figaro, 2018a). It is the process of “renormalizing the norms” that allows us to “settle” in other ways of being, existing, and working outside large media conglomerates. Whether to satisfy themselves professionally, producing the type of journalism they believe in, or seeking spaces for action in the gaps left by traditional journalism, research has shown that Santa Catarina’s journalists “arrange”, innovate, and intend to survive on their practices journalistic. However, most of them still do not succeed – which still indicates an enormous fragility of these media.

However, with this broad sense, “arrangements” apply to a very broad and diverse group of experiences, which reduces the explanatory power of the concept. The analysis of the 20 Santa Catarina arrangements allows us to divide them into three ideal types, to which correspond different conceptions of journalism and different governance practices:

a) some organizations give their version to the dominant form of journalism in the West; they are companies that understand journalistic discourse as a symbolic asset; they reproduce renowned genres and formats of journalism in search of retaining their audiences, who are almost always interested in specific themes (niches); they use more conventional forms of financing (advertisements and subscriptions);

b) elsewhere, journalism is a type of discourse that is relevant to achieving a political project – gender equality, ecological sustainability, the defense of science or the university, among other topics; such arrangements have more intense connections with social movements and their forms of financing mirror this support, combining institutional and audience donations; lastly,

c) in the third part of organizations, journalism is a socially

relevant discourse in itself, due to the contribution it makes to the life in that community; in these arrangements, the search for a type of permanent connection with a territory and a population prevails, which is reflected in the themes, in the verification practices and the sources of financing and sustainability.

The three distinct conceptions of journalism to which each ideal type corresponds coexist in society and the professional group: as a business (associated to provide service or infotainment, for example), as support to the cause or strategy (fulfilling the roles of a civic agent or loyal facilitator) and as a public service (both as an inspector of the powerful ones and as an impartial discourse).

Each conception of journalism seeks, despite the countless difficulties, to develop coherent governance practices. Catarina, for example, is looking for a way to build another type of journalism focused on gender issues; although episodically men act in this media, they are almost always women who produce, edit, publish, and circulate content.

The data presented and discussed in this article can be compared in more detail to the situation in other Brazilian states. Comparative studies would allow the refinement of the ideal types of arrangements and favor the observation of regional variations. A balance of the set of studies on alternative arrangements in Brazil is on the horizon of the research led by CPCT. Other outcomes of the investigation in Santa Catarina may also result in studies to systematically assess the quality of these media and their reach, taking as a parameter the transformations in the local labor market for journalists, with effects on coverage, noted in other investigations (Nicoletti, 2020).

## NOTES

- 1 This research was partially carried out and financed in part with support from the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) – Financing Code 001. The reviews of BJR reviewers, which we are grateful for, led us to significantly rewrite the text.
- 2 The research “The relations of communication and the conditions of production in the work of journalists in alternative economic arrangements to the media corporations” is carried out by the

Communication and Research Center for Communication and Work (CPCT), of the Universidade de São Paulo (ECA/USP). Its objective is to understand the new ways of organizing the work of journalists in alternative/independent arrangements to media conglomerates. It uses as a theoretical base the binomial communication and work, from the ergological approach. The pilot phase of the study was produced between 2016 and 2018 in Greater São Paulo and is being reproduced in other Brazilian states, including Santa Catarina. The methodological strategy is the triangulation between the mapping of the arrangements based on the snowball technique, in-depth interviews with journalists working in the arrangements, and discussion groups (Figaro, 2018a).

- 3 State located in the center of the South region of Brazil. It has high social indices (such as higher life expectancy among Brazilian states, lower infant mortality, inequality, and illiteracy rates). It has the sixth highest GDP, with a diversified economy and strong industrialization, consumption, and exports. Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics.
- 4 Relative to the state of Santa Catarina.
- 5 Retrieved from <https://apublica.org/mapa-do-jornalismo/>. Accessed on 04/13/2021.
- 6 In addition to the capital, Florianópolis, another 12 municipalities in Santa Catarina with more than 100 thousand inhabitants were listed: Joinville, Blumenau, São José, Chapecó, Itajaí, Criciúma, Jaraguá do Sul, Palhoça, Lages, Balneário Camboriú, Brusque, Tubarão.
- 7 The authors would like to thank the doctoral student Rafael Venuto (PPGJOR/UFSC), who participated in the data collection at this stage of the research.
- 8 Platform developed by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), a body of the Brazilian government, containing curricula of researchers from all areas.
- 9 Repórter Popular is an exception, as it started its activities as a printed vehicle in 2007 in the city of Porto Alegre in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. As of 2017, it became primarily digital and expanded its contributions and collaborations to other states, including Santa Catarina.
- 10 The arrangement was first published in 2006, but there is no

mention of the date of creation in the website presentation.

- 11 The arrangement concentrates most of its activities on Facebook, although there is an editorial by Tabelando on a partner's website: <http://www.engeplus.com.br/editoria/tabelando>.
- 12 NSC is owned by the NC holding, with capital from the pharmaceutical industry and linked to Rede Globo, a TV chain. On the other hand, ND is family owned, linked to Rede Record, another TV chain.
- 13 Relative to the state of Ceará.
- 14 Arrangements in SC led exclusively by women: Catarinas, Cientista que virou mãe, Portal Ponte and Jornal do Veneno. By men: Desacato, Folha Norte SC, O Mirante, Artemísia, Tribuna Universitária, Tabelando, Diversar, Estopim and Portal Floripa Centro. Arrangements with men and women in charge: Maruim, Folha da Cidade, Economia SC, Catarina Lab and Repórter Popular. No answer: Subversiv@s, UFSC à Esquerda.
- 15 Folha Norte SC declared to publish reports related to the municipalities of Garuva, São Francisco do Sul, Itapoá, Araquari, and Campo Alegre.
- 16 The data collected in the presentation texts of the websites were refined in a questionnaire sent to those responsible for the Santa Catarina arrangements, which contained among the questions whether the arrangements were considered independent or alternative. We observed a significant difference in the responses obtained from this contact, in relation to the data collected in the texts available in the "about/who we are" sections of the websites. In these, only 30% declared themselves independent and 5% alternative. As already reiterated, this indicates a certain fragility in the textual presentations addressed to audiences, also bringing a methodological caveat, since the data collected on the websites need supplements to certify their reliability.
- 17 There are significant differences in this aspect with respect to the arrangements in São Paulo and Ceará, which declare themselves to be independent less frequently: 38.5% of those from São Paulo, and only 9.5% of those from Ceará.
- 18 Traditional, in reference to the format (transmission of soccer matches) and distribution of news content.

- 19 Relative to the state of São Paulo.
- 20 In the PráxisJor-UFC report, the entrepreneur and innovator categories were addressed in an integrated manner.
- 21 The CNPJ is a unique number that identifies a legal entity and other types of legal arrangement without legal entity (such as condominiums, public agencies, funds) with the Brazilian Federal Revenue (organ of the Ministry of Economy).
- 22 MEI is a type of registration that allows the self-employed professional/worker to obtain the formalization of their business on their own, with simplified bureaucracy and lower cost compared to other types of companies.
- 23 In the CPCT survey, this relationship between arrangements with and without legal status is reversed: in São Paulo, 39 (55.7%) do not have an identified legal status (Figaro, 2018a).
- 24 Text related to the company's brand or product.
- 25 SembraMedia (2017) also reported that ten vehicles did not want to report their monthly revenue, six of which were Brazilian.
- 26 Something between US\$ 180 and US\$ 550, according to the exchange rate in April 2021.
- 27 In the 2018 elections, retired Army captain and right-wing extremist Jair Bolsonaro (no party, formerly Partido Social Liberal – PSL) was elected president in Brazil with 55% of valid votes. In Santa Catarina, Military Commander Carlos Moisés da Silva, from the same party as Bolsonaro at the time (PSL), was elected governor with about 30% of the valid votes.

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