

# THE RJ PARTNER SEGMENT ON TV GLOBO:

## Democratization or Opportunism?

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LILIAN SABACK

*Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil*

**ABSTRACT** - This article examines the TV Globo/RJ Partner segment with the objective of contributing to the debate on journalism and democracy. The analysis was performed from a review of literature on the subject and interviews with residents and cultural activists from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. The survey considers that favela residents who participate in the RJ Partner segment are aware of the station's interests in securing a wider audience in the territories where they live, and allow for opportunism to occur in an attempt to give more exposure to their communities.

**Keywords:** Journalism, Democracy, RJ Partner, Favela, Community Communication.

### **QUADRO PARCEIRO DO RJ/TV GLOBO: Democratização ou oportunismo?**

**RESUMO** - Este artigo traz uma reflexão sobre o quadro Parceiro do RJ/TV Globo, com o objetivo de contribuir para o debate sobre jornalismo e democracia. A análise foi feita a partir de revisão bibliográfica sobre o tema e entrevistas realizadas com moradores e ativistas culturais de favelas do Rio de Janeiro. O levantamento entende que os moradores de favela que participam do quadro Parceiro do RJ estão no projeto cientes dos interesses da emissora em obter mais audiência nos territórios em que vivem e permitem que o oportunismo ocorra na tentativa de dar visibilidade às suas comunidades.

**Palavras-chaves:** Jornalismo; Democracia, Parceiro do RJ, Favela, Comunicação comunitária.

### **“PARCEIRO DO RJ/TV GLOBO”: Democratización o oportunismo?**

**RESUMEN** - En este artículo se aporta una reflexión sobre Parceiro do RJ/ TV Globo, con el fin de contribuir al debate sobre el periodismo y la democracia. El análisis se realizó a partir de revisión de la literatura sobre el tema y entrevistas con residentes y activistas culturales de las favelas de Rio de Janeiro. La encuesta considera que los residentes de las favelas que participan en la tabla RJ pareja son conscientes del diseño de los intereses de la estación con mayor audiencia en los territorios en los que viven y que permiten el oportunismo se produce en un intento de dar visibilidad a sus comunidades.

**Palabras clave:** Periodismo; Democracia, RJ Partner, Favela, Comunicación Comunidad.

## 1. Introduction

This article considers journalism and democracy while examining TV Globo/RJ Partner segment. This segment, between 2011 and 2015, included news reports produced by youths living in communities in Rio de Janeiro and were broadcast on the television program *RJTV 1st Edition*. The project got its start in 2008 after the first Police Pacification Unit (UPP) was installed in the Santa Marta favela, in the district of Botafogo, in the South Zone (Zona Sul). The first group of news reports aired in 2011/2012 and covered nine regions. The second group of reports covered eight regions, some of which the first group had already visited such as Rocinha, Vidigal, Complexo do Alemão and Duque de Caxias.

The project selected 16 youths between the ages of 18 and 30, all from different educational backgrounds and lives, and who were living in communities. Professionals at Rede Globo selected them to be a part of the news station's journalist team. After a month of full-time training learning journalism techniques and theory, the youths went to work as reporters in the communities they lived in. They were outfitted with a backpack and given a video camera, a microphone and a sungun (a portable light gun).

The project gave the members of the communities in Rio de Janeiro the chance to have their local stories broadcast on one of the largest Brazilian public television stations. This community participation helped obtain the first of twenty points for the campaign "For the Expression of Freedom – a new law for a new era", advanced by the National Forum for the Democratization of Communication (FNDC) "to secure the plurality of ideas and opinions in communication mediums".<sup>1</sup> Yet, was this the legacy the project left behind or are we looking at a strategy of opportunism employed by TV Globo in order to boost ratings?

In order to compare the concept of opportunism to the democratization of community, one needs look no further than the Leninist debate on the struggle of social classes, which described the existing "flexibility" in opportunistic politics as a strategy to garner immediate results. With this ideology in mind, the thinking is that if TV Globo included a narrative in its programming that "blends" with its standards of journalism, then it would be able to reach and attract more viewers and operate according to Pierre Bourdieu's 'audience ratings mentality' logic as it pertains to television journalism. "The

world of journalism is a field, but it's under pressure from the economic field through the viewer ratings". (1997, p. 177). Bourdieu's 'audience ratings mentality' describes TV Globo's constant search for ways to increase its audience. So, while including a space for community might very well be an example of democratization of communication, this is not the station's objective. Its objective is to increase its viewer audience in order to make more money.

A bibliographic review of academic writings on the RJ Partner project was performed in order to address these aforementioned issues, which had been defended and presented in conferences up until the beginning of 2014. Individual and group interviews were also conducted with the residents and cultural activists from the favelas in Rio. These semi-structured interviews (they did not have pre-defined scripts) collected the respondents' opinions about the segment and how it related to community communication. The interviews were conducted using the Bauer and Gaskell method, described as "a conversation which generally lasts between one hour and one hour and a half. Before interviewing the subject, the researcher will have prepared a topic to cover the main issues and problems in the research" (2002, pp.82-83). The semi-structured interviews were conducted in the respondent's place of residence or work, whenever possible.

## **2. Skeptical participation from the community**

The first few academic analyses on the RJ Partner segment act as the background to investigating the production of community journalism on a local level for a commercial broadcaster. In an article she presented at Compos 2012, Beatriz Becker explained the first few analyses of this segment's 2011 reports:

The inclusion of new actors in media production could alter the content and esthetics of journalism through more contextualized and creative reports capable of generating reflection, more knowledge and more dialogue. Currently, the anchors, commentators, reporters, and RJ Partners all appear on the television screen, yet each one remains in their segments. After all, the media does not stop producing inequalities, exclusions, biases, and power struggles from the real world (BECKER, 2012, p.13).

The result of Becker's analysis shows that the RJ Partnership had a positive contribution towards the plurality of voices, something needed

in order to produce high quality audiovisual journalism. However, it ensures that “the inclusion of new social actors in the RJ Partner segment does not increase the quality of RJTV’s television journalism” (ibidem, p. 16). Lara Linhalis Guimarães’ article “The new approximations between television news and viewers: the public and its participation in the RJ Partner segment”, directed by Becker, takes a clipping from the RJ Partner segment and uses it to show how viewers are being “invited” to produce news television. “The material from the partnership appears to be disconnected from the body of “legitimate” materials which make up news television. It is the community’s voice filtered through other broadcasting channels” (GUIMARÃES, 2012, p.14).

Samira Moratti Frazão’s master’s dissertation on journalism from the Federal University of Santa Catarina also focuses on the broadcaster’s opportunism. Frazão sees the RJ Partnership segment as practices of participative journalism through analysis of the addressing mode of television newscasts which basically “describes how a specific program is able to relate to its viewers by creating a style of program” (GOMES, 2011, p.28). After applying the method, the author identified that “both the segment and the actual discourse used serve as a marketing channel to not only promote the broadcaster’s journalism, but also its own ability to captivate the viewers”. She concluded by saying that “user participation cannot be disregarded, it should be qualified, so that there is mutual interaction and growth between the media and the public, not just preservation of the profession of journalism and the journalists” (FRAZÃO, 2013, pp.135 – 146).

Lastly, there is another study which offers a systematic view of the RJ Partner segment. Researcher Andréa Pestana Caroli Freitas, a Communication graduate from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), looks at the RJ Partner segment from a different viewpoint. She follows the issues and scheduling of partnership segments in an attempt to understand “how broadcasters use these new agents for building and legitimizing their addresses on citizenship” (FREITAS, 2014, p.21). After analyzing 148 reports from the first group of the project on the problematic issues of urban infrastructure, religiosity and cultural expressions, she reached the conclusion that there is a pre-censorship that exists once partners have submitted their segments to the journalist teams at TV Globo.

The RJ Partner segment, while regarded as a program that promotes “real speech”, follows the same production rules that all journalism broadcasting is submitted to. This is why, as the analysis shows, the segment does not meet the broadcaster’s expectations in terms of the expected results on issues of diversity in thought, creation and production, and for breaking the standards for TV Globo journalism. The issues, suggested by the “partners”, go through processes of evaluation, authorization and distribution which can all be seen as pre-censorship (idem, p.124).

Just as the aforementioned researchers have done, I spent a few years familiarizing myself with the segment reports in order to better understand the partnership mode of producing television news. Even though my thesis is not a study on the response to the RJ Partnership segment, it did identify Facebook posts from the residents of Rocinha stating their opinion of TV Globo journalism and the RJ Partner segment. Interviews were conducted with residents from Rocinha and Vidigal as well as with researchers who are concerned about the favelas and the large media’s intervention in them. All of these interviews brought forth other questions about the issue presented in this article.

According to Jaílson de Souza e Silva, the general coordinator of the Favela Observatory, Rene Silva’s Twitter updates on the military occupation of the Alemão favela complex in 2010 summed up the moment in which Rede Globo created the RJ Partner segment.

Globo did not create community media, quite the contrary. In some way, it actually does not want community media to grow or to be more autonomous and independent due to other differences. It has no interest in this. Globo did not help one bit towards the emergence of more organized, systematic community media that could work together. It has no interest in this. On the contrary, it still wants to maintain a monopoly. What I think is that there is a communication process that can give roots to and ground different sectors of people, more than the media does. These are common people who are increasingly involved in communicating. Renê might be one of the biggest examples of this. But, there are more and more people who are becoming witnesses to their own territory and, subsequently, becoming more a part of it. The Internet is essential in this process.<sup>2</sup>

Jaílson criticizes the institution of the RJ Partner segment because he knows there are people isolated inside the station who are fighting to bring more attention to the daily life in the favelas. He states that large media corporations find themselves in a predicament. They want to retain their legitimacy, to reach out to the emerging social classes and to redefine their form of communication. Jaílson’s

sentiments are echoed by Rocinha activists who participated in a group interview on July 30, 2013.

A two-hour conversation with Rocinha community activists Antônio Carlos Firmino (geography graduate and coordinator of the Rocinha Centre for Culture and Education), Flávio Mendes 'Pé' (cultural producer and *rapper*), Fernando Ermiro (cultural producer and writer), and Michel Silva (journalism student, founder and editor of community newspaper Fala Roça) showed that further dialogue between Rede Globo and the community was needed in order that the project effectively represents democracy within the community. In Firmino's opinion, the major issue here is representation:

The partnership represents an institution. It is representing an institution. Therefore, it is the institution's interlocutor within the community. Even though it does not have one, the community's interlocutor was not elected by the community itself. (...) So, basically, the RJ Partnership will do a report, and this report will follow the approved scheduling<sup>3</sup>

Firmino, along with the other young participants in the group, did not represent the community in the second term of the Rocinha & Vidigal Partner project because they were not selected by the residents of the favelas. Ermiro believes that the youths who were selected for the project work as professionals but do not have the freedom to create. "He is addicted. He is using addictive material. What do you think Globo wants me to say?" questions the cultural producer. Ermiro further states that "the material, the reporter and the segment do not make any difference. Globo has this thing, like, I will take you and put you here and now you are represented. That is not how it is. It's a lie." Rapper Flávio "Pé" is more emphatic when he says that not only does Globo not represent them, it contributes towards the non-growth of community media.

I believe that the future of communication is at a local level, but the media hinders this. So, in order to appear transparent it creates this kind of tool, and this is of interest to the media because they continue saying that "we're close to you". Maybe they their interest is simply for interest's sake. (...) That's why I say that the RJ Partner segment might continue because the broadcaster has an interest in it, or it might come to an end because the favela says: hey, you don't represent me.<sup>4</sup>

Flávio's greatest concern is the superficiality that he believes TV Globo reports transmit. Flávio speaks ironically when he says that the project participants "are excellent RJ partners. According to Globo,

they are giving the community a voice.” Michel Filho agrees and adds, “I don’t think this is why they are there”. At the time of the interview, Michel was studying to get into journalism at college, and his view of the RJ Partnership was much different from what he considers community. His issue is with the fact that the segment belongs to a news television program from a large media corporation. Not only did he recognize the differences between the Partner program and his own work for [vivafavela.org](http://vivafavela.org) and the newspaper *Fala Roça*, but on August 16, 2013 he also proudly posted a meeting on Facebook between Aline Marinho and Leandro Lima; two partners from Rocinha and Vidigal.

What Michel is most likely trying to relate through this “joke” is that even though TV Globo is an institution, it would be prepared to use the same professional experiences from the two friends. Michel wants experience, wants to learn more techniques, and gain more knowledge. In 2014, he was studying journalism at the Pontifícia Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio). His work history already included work experience at Canal Futura, participation in a North American community reporter exchange program supported by the United States Consulate in Rio de Janeiro, working alongside the Canal 13 journalist team in Chile, as well as producing *Fala Roça* and [vivarocinha.org](http://vivarocinha.org) and participation in the “Narrative Regions” course; an exhibition of films and photos of 90 youths and adults living in Rocinha, held in the Park Library. Even with all this work experience under his feet, he has not ruled out the possibility of one day participating in the RJ Partner segment.

Flávio “Pé” (journalist Flávio Carvalho) works at the Rocinha Park Library and is also a reporter for community media like [faveladarocinha.com](http://faveladarocinha.com). He singles out the superficiality of the reports.

I’ve watched a few segments which were quite cool, but they didn’t portray the story very well, they were very superficial. There is no way that the large structure of Globo, which covers the whole city, can offer good coverage of a place like this. It is very superficial. I saw a lot of material talking about social projects. I had already talked about these things in other materials I had previously produced. Two of their reports came out very similar to two which I had done for Wark and Tio Lino; two people from the favela.<sup>5</sup>

Journalism student Milena Lourenço has lived in Rocinha since she was born. She told of how she registered for and was accepted in the first RJ Partner selection process, but decided to not participate

in the end. She said that while she was participating in the process she noticed that there were many people who were more connected to the community than she was. “There were many people who knew each other in Rocinha and had already participated in projects in the favela, and I was never like that because my parents never let me walk around in Rocinha”, said Milena. She said she could have been a good reporter but not a good Rocinha partner.

On June 20, 2013, residents of Vidigal were interviewed in a report on the floods that were threatening many homes. They had a positive view of the RJ Partner segment. Public servant Francisco Eduardo Custódio, a resident of Vidigal for 46 years, spoke highly about the segment. He said that both Rocinha and Vidigal illustrate the problems that favelas have. He talked about the importance of Aline being a resident of the same favela he lived in:

They used to try and cover it up (sic), but not anymore. Now, they really see it, they are exposing it, the girl is from here (from Vidigal), in other words, she knows the problems, the issues, and knows how precarious the situation is that Vidigal is going through. So, in other words, it makes it more public, that is what it is doing.<sup>6</sup>

Homemaker Leda da Costa holds the same opinion. She has lived in Vidigal for more than 40 years. Just like Francisco, she sees the RJ Partner project as a way of solving the low-visibility problem of the day-to-day lives in favelas:

This was a really good thing because we did not have any way of speaking out, so there has to be someone who can speak for us. This has been going on for three months now. If this is not made public, it will be forgotten about. So I think it is really good, was good.(...) [moving towards the television] they resolved it quickly. They resolve it because it's put on the air, on the big company stations, you know : (...) Oh, there is a difference because we watch Globo a lot. Everyone watches Globo, so the whole population will know about it. The president. Everyone.<sup>7</sup>

Marcelo Roberto de Lima, a resident of Vidigal for more than 20 years, is also believes that Rocinha and Vidigal represent the community. He clearly understands the power that television has towards offering solutions to the problems in both communities:

I have seen many reports. I think their work is more about helping the actual community because we do not have a voice. Actually, that is what it is, the community does not have a voice loud enough for the media to hear. They are the only real voice now because what we have to complain about and the solutions we want, they are able to relate to the media, and the media

makes it public in hopes that the authorities solve the problem, you know? (...) the press only comes when there is a war. They came when there was a war; they came when someone died, but for resolving community problems they never come.<sup>8</sup>

The reason behind this collection of statements for the thesis proposal was to recognize the singularities of the narratives given by those who live in the favela, in other words, the day-to-day life narrated by those who live it. The paper confirmed the hypotheses that the RJ Partnership segment reports are an inclusive narrative and that its “style of television news” has singular features which blend with Globo’s standard of journalism. However, the issue proposed in this article was whether the RJ/TV Globo Partner segment contributed towards the democratization of communication or if it was used as opportunism by the broadcaster to reach a wider audience, one which had been previously out of reach.

### **3. A possible two-way street**

Upon examining the benefits that the RJ Partner segment brings to communities, it is clear that the solutions to the problems presented in the reports are not enough. Actually, they are not much different from the *RJ Móvel* segment, also shown on the same news channel. If TV Globo reporters could move around the favela like they do in other suburban neighbourhoods in Rio, the result would be different.

When you see what the youths participating in this project bring back to their community, you see a more positive result. They return to their communities with knowledge they acquired while working with the Globo journalism team. Those who were already working with community communication (for example, Marcos Braz, Cecília Vasconcelos and Leandro Lima) came back even more knowledgeable. As soon as the project had ended, the communities of Rocinha and Vidigal started looking for sponsors to set up a community WebTV. At the age of 32, Cecília Vasconcelos summoned up the courage and decided to realize her childhood dream: to study journalism. It was a dream she had pushed aside since adolescence when a high school teacher had told her not to study journalism because it required “cultural baggage” which, according to that teacher, she did not have. This project saved her self-esteem.

Leandro Lima, who had already produced the news site

faveladarocinha.com was able to use the new techniques he had learned and apply them to his work, and then went back to study journalism. At the time this text was being finalized, he was undertaking an internship working as a cameraman for Canal Esporte Interativo. “My job is exactly what I want to do, it’s too bad I earn so little”, said Leandro while chatting to a researcher on Facebook. He earns R\$650 a month as an intern and his monthly school tuition is R\$1,400.

It is important to state that four youths helped in the research for this article; three from Rocinha and one from Vidigial, in the Zona Sul of Rio de Janeiro. It is also important to state that the Maracanã partners, Luiz Gustavo (who was studying Law when he entered the project) and Leonardo de Oliveira went on to study journalism. Leonardo is already working for the SRZD, a news site directed by journalist Sidney Rezende. Luiz Fernando de Souza, from Maraneira, is working as a printing assistant in a company.

Júlia Rodrigues, a partner from Niterói, ended up switching her studies from law to journalism, afterwards she moved on to publicity. Jéssica Araújo Sá, from Caxias, was finishing her journalism studies at the School of Communication at UFRJ and trying to get another job with the Globo journalism team, but this time as an intern.

When you look at the ‘more sensitive issues’ in this two-way street between TV Globo and the young residents of the favelas, you see a bold proposal. The partner reporter is an unconditional ally for local journalism at Rede Globo. As rapper Flávio ‘Pé’ touched on, the youths who participate in the project “are excellent RJ partners”. The partner reporter must follow all the rules set out in order that his participation is shown on public TV, however, he does not make Globo a partner within the community; the broadcaster is still looked at unfavourably by Rocinha residents. The segment is inclusive in the fact that the broadcaster includes the day-to-day life in the favela on its local news channel, but that does not make it exempt from criticism of its journalistic production.

The residents learned to communicate with the RJ partners, not with Globo journalism. This confirms that the partner reporter really is *just anyone* as Agamben put it in his thesis on “the community that comes” (1993). The partner reporter is able to maintain healthy relationships within the community and also create new, effective relationships with TV Globo professionals. He understands that each group is advancing to another level which preserves them as both singular and universal human beings.

They do not intend to be the Globo of the favela nor the favela of Globo. They want to speak about issues of the favela in reports that are broadcast on TV Globo. It might not seem to make a difference, but it really does. They want to move around both the favela and TV Globo as reporters. They get the ingredients, the affection, and the desire for change from the favela, and TV Globo gives them the techniques needed to mould the ingredients, professional support, and the ‘audience ratings mentality’ to give their desire for change some exposure.

While participating in the project, the young residents of the favelas in Rio de Janeiro experienced situations which professional broadcast journalists experience every day. For example, they were encouraged to “try their hand” at making suggestions in meetings; not for the pre-censoring of any material, but for approving or disapproving it before giving it to the television news editor.

In this way, it is different to be a favela and speak about the favela or be Globo and talk about Globo. The partner reporter understands that there is an adjustment or tolerance period to go through in order to garner respectability for their voices. As Jaílson dos Santos put it, TV Globo is an institution; therefore, they serve the institution. However, an institution is also made up of people who want to pave the way for a better city, and not just of people who do not. It is an exchange of affection with those who aspire for change.

Leandro Lima’s post comments and Rocinha resident Flávio Carvalho’s Facebook comments, both on October 3rd 2014, offer a clear view of the partner reporter position. Flávio questions the impartiality at Rede Globo in its second debate between the then 2014 presidential candidates Aécio Neves from the PSDB and Dilma Rousseff from PT. Leandro Lima, a Rocinha and Vidigal partner (2013/2014) states:

Flávio Carvalho: “For shame, having a PSDB audience in a debate. This is the impartiality of Globo.” / Leandro Lima: “The audience is split between the candidates, Flávio.Relaaaax,haha / Flávio Carvalho: “Relax..it is Globo’s impartiality that led to Collor being elected.” / Leandro Lima: “Ooooooh”.

Leandro’s comments on Flávio’s *post* come across like he is almost defending TV Globo. He does not, however, pressure or judge his friend, or impose his personal opinion on him, but it is clear that he tries to play down the situation. The “oooooh” which Leandro gave in response is almost like he was saying, ‘just forget about it, we’re

going to go ahead no matter what your opinion is', but did so in a friendly way. The fact that Flávio and Leandro have been partners in social activism in the Rocinha favela for years is something that caught the researcher's eye. They are partners in the community, but even still they do not share the same opinion when it comes to evaluating the broadcaster's position, the broadcaster which Leandro had previously worked for.

The favela they live in is like this: the feeling of belonging does not overlook the singularities. Not debating does not silence their voices; instead it strengthens their resolve for socioeconomic development in Rocinha, especially community communication. Leandro, Michel and Flávio are proud of their ties to Rocinha and/or Vidigal without presuming it to be either singular or universal.

On June 29, 2014 Michel Silva posted the following comment on his Facebook profile: "The favela is not just a place with needs; it is a place with power. Changing the favela means changing the city and giving it the right to community". All the criticisms directed by residents at the TV Globo project do not revoke the power of the youths participating in the project; it takes back that 'needy' and 'deprived' label that the media insists on giving the favela and its residents.

The RJ Partner project contributes to the plurality in both Flávio's *post* criticizing TV Globo and in Michel's *post* on his thoughts about the favela. He borrowed and included the following phrase from sociologist Marília Pastuk which she had used on the opening of the last day of the "Favelas are Cities" debate at the XXVI National Forum: "The favela is not just a place with needs; it is a place with power".<sup>9</sup> Flávio and Michel showed this power of plurality in the series Favela Chat as well as in many reports produced in Rocinha and Vidigal. The favela cannot be represented by someone who does not have an intimate knowledge of it, who is not sensitive to its issues, its deficiencies, its problems and also to its alternative solutions.

Another *post* of Flávio Carvalho's, this one on May 12 2014, stated that the favela is not a place with needs, but a place with power. He asserts that "When we read an article with the headline Event promises to bring more culture to needy communities throughout the city, we can immediately see the prejudice behind the expressions bring culture, community and needy." Yet the favela has culture, and how exactly are the residents needy? Flávio's outrage strengthens community communication. "Starting in 2014,

I will make a documentary about the memories of Rocinha. This is a wonderful thing! A homemade film produced by residents for residents”, writes Michel on Facebook. What is important for him is that it is “produced by residents for residents”. This explains why the participants in the RJ Partner project, despite some criticisms, were able to establish community communication in the favelas. They are residents speaking to residents.

#### 4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In conclusion, the partnership between professional journalists (who represent Rede Globo) and the favela residents (who represent community) exists, but with various strains and diverse measures. This partnership is seen as a new way to consider the hegemony of Rede Globo in the field of community and local journalism. The favela residents who participate in the RJ Partner segment are also aware of the broadcaster’s interests for reaching a wider audience within the favelas. In other words: opportunism is allowed for the objective of democratizing communication.

The youths who participate in the project know that even with the installation of the Police Pacification Units (UPPs), Globo journalists are still not very welcome in the communities. To add to that, most of the communities do not watch Globo news as much as they do Rede Record. However, the youths are aware of the station’s broadcasting power. They are not blind to the fact that they can reach a vaster audience by having their stories broadcast on *RJTV – 1st Edition*.

The issue of non-representation expressed by the residents of Rocinha working with cultural development in the community is important. After all, when it is the broadcaster choosing the partner, and not the residents of the favela where that partner lives, you have a case of planned selection. After talking to the youths who participate in the project, I was convinced that no one single side was being represented here, however, there were references of life within a carioca community. These references are evident in the warmth shared between people who may not know each other very well but share a community, in the pride exhibited behind the desire to show the best of the favela, and in the awareness of speaking out against what is wrong and fighting for equal rights.

In the first conversation, the project's founder and journalist Erick Brêtas firmly stated that broadcasters needed to have dialogues with the communities in Rio de Janeiro. Viewer surveys showed that this was a legitimate concern, but the same survey also showed the broadcaster's eagerness to alter the standards of Globo in order to overcome the impasse which Jailson de Souza and Santos had pointed out: "to not lose legitimacy, to reach out to the more common classes and give new meaning to its form of communication."

Furthermore, I believe that the continued drop in Rede Globo viewer ratings since the last century has been a factor towards creating the RJ Partner segment. Due to the rise in pay-tv subscriptions, standalone programs and the growth of the Internet, all of which turn youths away from watching TV, the broadcasters and other public access television channels need to reinvent themselves. One way of doing this is to create "viewer niches" like the ones they are trying to establish in the favelas with the RJ Partner segment. Opportunism exists for broadcasters in this case.

Interviews with the segment participants and posts gathered from Facebook are evidence that the project brought the existing plurality in the communities into light. This does not, however, mean that TV Globo journalism has won over the favelas, the broadcaster has invested in other strategies that will allow it to reach more community residents. Once again, Bourdieu's audience ratings mentality speaks louder and makes broadcasters continue to produce new segments or further alter their standards of journalism whether that means exaggerating the reporter's position on *RJ Móvel* or interviewing cultural and artistic producers from the favelas on programs such as *Mais Você* with Ana Maria Braga or *Encontro* with Fátima Bernardes.

We cannot forget that the youths also believe they need TV Globo and other public access television media's expertise, capital, technology and viewer audience. What this partnership brings is the opportunity for the youths to show that the favela/community/neighbourhood in which they live is not the one the media has been portraying to its audience over the years.

The greatest threat to the public's lives is not the violence which the UPPs swear to combat; it is the lack of sanitation which the responsible authorities have ignored for years. The favela/community/neighbourhood is not trying to portray itself as being excluded; it is trying to garner the attention it deserves. Aline Marinho, a partner

in Rocinha and Vidigal between 2013 and 2014 referenced this on her April 18th 2014 Facebook post when she wrote: “sometimes the problem is so close to us that it becomes normal. Thanks to the RJTV partner project, I am able to look at the place I live with a broader, more critical view.”

The RJ Partner Project helped Aline to examine and question where she lives, to step away from the conformity, yet also to demand more equal exposure for the other residents of Rio de Janeiro. It gave her the chance to try to put an end to the stigma surrounding the favela and its residents. She was able to express her views about the problems and happiness, and the good and the bad in the favela she lives in, and have them broadcast nationally.

TV Globo opened space in its journalism standard to include a narrative that requires technique but does not forget about where the producers of that narrative come from. Consequently, community journalism can be likened to a *sponge*, absorbing everything. It is then squeezed and washed and ready for new ingredients. The *sponge* metaphor seems a bit aggressive, but it can also be seen as productive and healthy. You just need to mind what kind of liquid you put on the *sponge*, and especially how it will be used.

If TV Globo allows the favela residents to choose what kind of liquid they can use with the sponge, then they will know how to put that experience to use. However, in order for this sponge to absorb the ingredients capable of representing Zona Sul as a beautiful city, those who use it must want to fight together for it.

This is the only way that everyday life in a community will be represented; separated from the purchasing power of its residents and with all journalism being community. Citizens will then be subjected to fewer reports on tragedies if all territories receive equal coverage. The subjects may be singular, but the rights are, and should be, universal.

\* This paper was translated by Lee Sharp

## NOTES

- 1 Available at <http://www.paraexpressaraliberdade.org.br/uma-nova-lei-para-um-novo-tempo>.

- 2 Interview conducted on July 15, 2013.
- 3 Interview conducted on July 30, 2013.
- 4 Idem.
- 5 Interview conducted on February 8, 2013.
- 6 Interview conducted on June 20, 2013.
- 7 Idem.
- 8 Ibdem.
- 9 The Forum was on May 12, 13 and 14, 2014, in Rio de Janeiro.

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**Lilian Saback** is a professor for the Department of Social Communication at PUC-Rio. She holds a Master's Degree in Communication from PUC-Rio, a doctorate in Communication and Culture from ECO/UFRJ, and is a member of the research group Journalism Theories and Professional Experiences/CNPq. E-mail: [liliansaback@puc-rio.br](mailto:liliansaback@puc-rio.br).

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