

**Why Brazilian (Photo)Journalists Do What They Do:
A Peek Into How They Cover Race and Class Issues**

By

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Abstract

This pilot study uses the hierarchical model of news influences to better understand Brazilian journalism in an increasingly globalizing, democratizing and media-diversifying society. Discursively analyzing qualitative interviews with seven journalists from Brazil's leading national media, I explore cues to journalistic rationale for how issues of race and class are (not) covered, peeking into legally mandated journalistic training. Theories of the press and the notion of hegemony help elucidate how even after 25 years since Brazil's move to democracy, Brazilian media continue to be varied in their (limited) degrees of freedom. In brief, and aligning with cultural norms, Brazilian journalists are reticent to speak about covering race and class issues.

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“I believe we are achieving great advancement with respect to freedom of the press. What lacks is critical opinion and more political involvement, other than a clearer positioning within the mediums of communication regarding the political lines they follow.”¹

~ *Renata Cruz Oliveira, 31-year-old political reporter and
Diário Oficial de Notícias do Estado do Rio de Janeiro editor*

“We are all Brazilians and here in Brazil there is no difference or prejudice with relation to race.”²

~ *a female editor*

In 2008, the United States of America elected her first Afro-American president. Shortly after President Barack Obama’s win, the U.S. national print press proposed that popular media prepared U.S. citizens for a black president (Dargis & Scott, 2009). Concurrently, Americans voted Comedy Central “Daily Show” host Jon Stewart the most trusted newsman in America (CBS4, 2009³). Fiction and fact seemed to be working in tandem to help millions of U.S. audience members make at least key electoral decisions.

Meanwhile, Brazilian popular media was telling the story of young, poor Afro-Brazilian TV hero Evilásio Caó. At a time when the nation was gearing up for municipal elections, Brazilians would watch Evilásio run for then be elected vereador, or to city council, in the hit TV Globo 8 p.m. telenovela *Duas Caras* [*Two Faces* or *Two Faced*]. A telenovela is a Cinder(f)ella-like, rags-to-riches type mini-series, or a six-day-per-week, one-hour program with a pronounced beginning, plot development throughout its six to

¹ Her direct quote: “Acho que conseguimos avançar muito no que diz respeito à liberdade de imprensa. Falta mais opinião crítica e mais engajamento político, além de um posicionamento mais claro dos próprios meios de comunicação quanto à linha política que seguem.”

² Her direct quote: “Todos éramos brasileiros e aqui no Brasil não há essa diferença/preconceito com relação a raças.”

³ CBS4. (2009, July 23). “Poll: Jon Stewart most trusted newsman in America.” Information retrieved June 17, 2010, from <http://cbs4.com/entertainment/jon.stewart.trusted.2.1098089.html>.

eight month duration, and definitive end. Evilásio's heroic character and win were a first for TV Globo, the world's fourth largest TV network and leader of (inter)national telenovela production, since Globo had been accused of under-representing and negatively portraying Afro-Brazilians before (Araújo, 2000). Since Brazilian telenovelas have served as alternative news sources, fiction intertwined with fact seemed to be suggesting future possibilities at the polls for at least millions of Brazilian audience members.

Brazil, a democracy since 1985 and a BRIC nation recently tapped to host the 2014 World Cup as well as the 2016 Olympics, has a partly-free ranked press. While Brazil is undergoing media opening (Porto, 2007), its national print press lags behind its alternative news source, the telenovela (Straubhaar, Olsen & Nunes, 1993), in its degree of press freedom regarding core cultural, societal and political topics (Cantrell, 2009; Rosas-Moreno, 2010). Media opening is the "process by which mass media become more representative of societal viewpoints and more independent of official control" (Porto, 2007, citing Lawson, 2002, p. 381).

Applying the hierarchical model of news influences, this pilot study investigates an area of media sociology to better understand Brazilian journalism in an increasingly globalizing, democratizing and media-diversifying society. Using evidence from online interviews with seven journalists from Brazil's leading national media, I explore cues to journalistic rationale for how issues of race and class are (not) covered, peeking into legally mandated journalistic training. Theories of the press along with the notion of hegemony should help elucidate how even after 25 years since Brazil's move to democracy, Brazilian media continue to be varied in their (limited) degrees of freedom.

Context

Since its institutionalization, the Brazilian press has suffered traditional impasses, namely the cooptation of the media by government, the fragility of the country's market economy, and the problematic high levels of illiteracy or semi-illiteracy among Brazilians (De Melo, 2009, p. 13). This latter point created the tradition of Brazilian journalism being crafted and practiced by Brazilian elite for Brazilian elite. Yet civilian presidential candidate Tancredo Neves' 1985 victory, which pulled Brazil out of a military dictatorship and into democracy, proved a resurrection for democracy and an achievement for the press. It also provided opportunity for examining two important journalism questions. One addressed the media's role in democracy. The other surrounded journalists' roles in democratic media.

Brazilian journalism has been strongly impacted by the American and French models at different points in time. Nevertheless, Brazilian journalists maintain their own identity and embrace a particular pluralistic view regarding their role in society. They also appear to be very tolerant of controversial journalistic practices, although some critics argue that they lack a clear perspective on how to deal with foreign journalistic influences (Herscovitz, 2004). As one example, one differentiation from the U.S. model is that the transitional Brazilian press is more preoccupied with instrumental rather than idealistic practices; "meeting standards of accuracy, beating deadlines, juggling sources, and scooping competitors rank more prominently than bringing political reform or democratic accountability" (Waisbord, 2000, p. 187).

Following Brazil's third and so far final move to democracy in 1985, Brazilian journalists maintain a value system unique to their own culture and conditions

(Herscovitz, 2004). Their value system stems from the newsroom routines and organizational constraints they share; foreign influences on local journalistic patterns; specific historical conditions and contextual variables such as the route taken by democratic consolidation (Herscovitz, 2004). Stated perhaps another way,

Certain principles guide the organizations' journalistic activities, in which value is given to concepts such as neutrality, correctness, objectivity, clarity, independence, impartiality, precision and faithfulness to reality. Even though these concepts are not considered to be absolute, there is a search for the "truth" of the facts, an ethical and moral concern. (Moreira & Helal, 2009, p. 104)

Perhaps because the main goal of Brazilian journalism is collecting and exposing a great amount of factual information under a specific code of presentation, journalists are still viewed as intellectuals — which is how they started out — and are still respected (Candiani, 2009; Herscovitz, 2004). In 2001, "a study about the credibility of institutions among the population showed that newspapers ranked second, trailing only the Catholic Church" (Alves, 2003, p. 130). Further, prior to June 17, 2009, it was required for all Brazilian journalists to have studied collegiate-level journalism.

Nevertheless, disparities in degrees of media freedom are marked differentiations between print national news found in newspapers compared with similar topics found in newsmagazines and viewed on television in other informative formats, like the telenovela (Rosas-Moreno, 2010). For instance, race is an element missing from Brazilian news discourse, and race is a social concept that changes over time (Angier, 2000), particularly in Brazil. One reason for race's absence from news text is the notion of racial democracy, or the conception that all races in Brazil are equal. This idea has come under scrutiny for being a myth, according to many critical scholars (Chaka, 2005; Sheriff, 2001; Stam,

1997). Yet racial democracy remains a critical component of Brazilian national identity (De Sousa & Nascimento, 2008) and way of life (Htun, 2005).

Theoretical Approach:

Hierarchical model of news influences, Press Theories, Hegemony

The hierarchical model of news influences helps make sense of psychological and sociological influences on news content production. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) argue that journalists experience five levels of influence, including individual intrinsic factors, media routines, organizational norms, extramedia demands and ideological pressures (p. 64). Factors intrinsic to communicators that may influence the media content they produce include communicators' characteristics, personal backgrounds and expertise; communicators' professional backgrounds and experiences; communicators' personal attitudes, values and beliefs; communicators' professional roles and ethics; and communicators' power within the organization (p. 65).

Tuchman (1978) argues that the power structure of society is perceived as the legitimate site for gathering news. (Sub)Consciously, this can even affect the stories journalists choose to cover as well as the sources journalists use to reflect society's desire for moral order (Gans, 1979). Research shows a pale circumstance with regard to race, class and gender news issues, with "white" news—content determined by white managers—dominating even local print and broadcast markets (Heider, 2000).

News content production seems quite incestuous. Editors often read prestige publications such as *The New York Times* for story ideas, and reporters stand a better chance of having their story ideas accepted if the subject has already been covered in such a publication (Gans, 1979). Journalists routinely use journalists from other media

organizations as well as other publications as points of reference (Bennett, 2007; Crouse, 1972; Dunwoody, 1997; Kiernan, 2003; Reineman, 2004). This can lead to a pack mentality, which provides journalists with a “modicum of certitude” and aids them in performing their jobs in an uncertain environment (Sigal, 1973; Cassidy, 2007). Further, a consistent pattern of official sources dominates news reports (Bennett, 1990; Sigal, 1973), although “...journalists naturally resist being overtly manipulated by sources or their own managers” (Reese, 1997, p. 425).

As another dynamic, the systems in which media operate affect the sociological production of news content. Stated perhaps another way, “the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates. Especially, it reflects the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted” (Siebert et al, 1956, pp. 1-2). Although times and technology have changed circumstances in and conditions under and within which they work, journalists remain heavily influenced by their socio, cultural and political environments. And calls have been made for such normative theories of the press to be revisited and revised (see Nerone, 1995; Nordenstreng, 2006), even buried (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Although great and serious strides have been made toward defining normative press theories (notably, Christians, et al, 2009), conceptualization and explication seem limited to a *democratic* sphere. Even then, “There is no one-to-one correspondence between the normative traditions outlined and a particular model of democracy. Indeed there is no agreement on how to classify or arrange the various concepts and forms of democratic politics in the modern world” (Nordenstreng, 2006, p. 42). For this study’s intents and purposes, it seems noteworthy to consider the Brazilian partly-free ranked media system

as one working toward “media opening” (Porto, 2007) 25 years after its move from military dictatorship to democracy. Again, media opening is the “process by which mass media become more representative of societal viewpoints and more independent of official control” (Porto, 2007, citing Lawson, 2002, p. 381).

The combination of psychological and sociological influences on journalists leads them to craft organizing principles reflected in news media content that can lead to hegemony, or an understood and oftentimes unchallenged way of being. Hegemony is not to be mistaken for simple domination. Rather, in Gramsci’s (1971) notion of hegemony, hegemony relates with the capacity of a social group to exercise intellectual and moral direction over society (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1998). News media institutions serve a hegemonic function by continually producing a cohesive ideology, a set of commonsensical values and norms, that serves to reproduce and legitimate the social structure through which the subordinate classes participate in their own domination (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 237). Hegemony becomes particularly problematic as journalists work (unknowingly) within it and reinforce it through a perpetuated and crafted worldview. In other words, news practitioners engage in a framing process at micro and macro levels, syncing with the hierarchical model of news influences (McCoy, 2007).

Problem Statement

Audiences seek news and information from increasingly diverse sources, and in Brazil, mass media experience different levels of press freedom. While Brazil is undergoing media opening (Porto, 2007), its national print press lags behind its alternative news source, the telenovela (Straubhaar, Olsen & Nunes, 1993), in its degree

of press freedom regarding core cultural, societal and political topics (Cantrell, 2009; Rosas-Moreno, 2010). The disparity in medium-particular freedom introduces challenges to the professional practice of journalism, a trade that prior to June 17, 2009, legally required all Brazilian journalists to have studied collegiate-level journalism. Mass media's ability to advance social causes and potential to move society toward racial equity and social justice rise in importance, particularly when considering Brazil's partly-free and differentiated press system concurrent with its rise as an international player. Hence, I pose the following research questions:

RQ1: How do Brazilian (photo)journalists cover issues of race and class in Brazil? Are they sensitive to the issues of race and class? If so, in what ways?

RQ2: What impact, if any, has their journalistic training had on their sensitivity to race and class news issues?

Method: Interviews with Journalists, Discursively Analyzed

It seems inherent that journalists would be interviewed about their views and opinions on journalism, given that journalists primarily perform interviews as a way to gather information. Likewise, interviews have a long and rich history as a methodological tool for exploring the sensemaking of social actors, drawing out the rhetorical construction of their experience and perspective (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 173). In journalism and mass communication research, this has been particularly true in seminal studies of news creators (White, 1950; Breed, 1955; Tuchman, 1973; Gans, 1979, among others) and in more recent work on journalistic authority (Robinson, 2007) and professional identity (Deuze, 2005).

Given time and space constraints, in-depth interviews were conducted through

email with Brazilian journalist respondents indicated through a purposive snowball sampling technique, with the author contacting Brazilian media professionals who were asked to refer journalist friends. In this way, seven complete interviews were captured.

One of the challenges posed by this study was the inhibition Brazilians might feel in speaking of race and class issues in general, or in the news, specifically, given the cultural sensitivity to this elephant-in-the-room notion. Thus, I worked with a native Brazilian with print and online journalism experience in formulating the interview protocol questions to carefully attempt getting at these issues⁴. In addition, I began the interview with basic questions, asking preliminary demographic information and inquiring into daily newsroom routines and practices. For example, how many years experience as a journalist do you have? At which medium are you currently working? What are your responsibilities at your work?

The interview was divided into three parts: a “today,” with questions centering around journalistic routines; a “yesterday,” with questions focusing on backgrounds and educational experiences; and a “tomorrow,” in which journalists were asked their opinions about the current state of Brazilian journalism and the ideal form(s) of journalism. Perhaps the most important questions were the ones delving into diversity in their university classes, given recent affirmative action legislation. For example, did they receive any instruction — theoretical or practical — regarding source or subject diversity? How diverse were their course compositions? Of course, diversity includes issues of gender, race and class, although the latter may be more difficult to observe.

Once gathered, email in-depth interviews were discursively analyzed (Van Dijk,

⁴ I extend my special thanks to Vanessa de Macedo Higgins Joyce for her immeasurable help with the interview protocol.

2000). Contemporary discursive analysis helps to study and describe different discourse structures and strategies, which are typical of political and media language. Further, it makes it possible to correlate them within the social and political context. Interviews were read through to see what commonalities emerged from the journalists' backgrounds and experiences, keeping in mind the hierarchical model of news influences at micro and macro levels.

Findings

This pilot study's purpose was to peek into how and why Brazilian journalists do what they do, or, more specifically, how and why they cover or do not cover race and class issues. I expected journalists to have a difficult time speaking to issues of race and class, given the sensitive nature of these concepts particularly within the Brazilian culture. A careful reading of interview responses revealed that while answers aligned with the hierarchical model of news influences, the journalism Brazilian journalists practice is more complicated than anticipated through mutual satisfaction with the current status quo.

Respondent Overview

Interviewees—four female and three male—range in their experience from 10 to 25 years, averaging about 16 years in the Brazilian news industry. Almost all have advanced degrees, and almost all come from backgrounds in which both parents worked white-collar jobs. Generally, interviewees indicated journalism as their chosen vocation because they enjoy writing, asking questions and have interest in politics. Although primarily associated with print national news publications, at least one reporter is a photojournalist and another has a history in television news production. Yet another

works for Rádio Globo, the radio side of the world's fourth largest television network, TV Globo. In brief, respondents work at premier national publications, including the *Folha de São Paulo*, *Valor Econômico*, *Diário do Comércio* and *O Estado de São Paulo*.

Media Routines & Learning By Doing

Brazilian journalists interviewed indicated they practice a routinized form of journalism, relying heavily on other news sources and journalists for ideas and news content. Pedro Dias Leite, a 31-year-old editor at *The Folha*, Brazil's newspaper of record, said, daily,

I wake up and read the four [main] nationals (Folha, Estado, O Globo, and Valor)... [and] arrive at the office around midday. I discuss the *principle themes of the day* and speak with the branches and correspondents. At 4 in the afternoon we have a meeting, coordinated by the editor in chief, and discuss with the staff the materials we have for the issue... I really like helping reporters and editors exchange ideas about topics and coverage and help them to deliver *a more complete package*.⁵ (Italics added.)

Similarly, Renata Cruz Oliveira, a political reporter who follows Rio Governor Sérgio Cabral and serves as editor of the *Diário Oficial*, said, "I work with intelligent people and *the exchange of ideas is constant*"⁶ (italics added).

What results from the newsroom began in the newsroom, regardless of legally required preparatory instruction at the university. A disconnect between university courses and newsroom practice exists. According to José Roberto de Toledo, 44-year-old director of the agency PrimaPagina and blogger at *O Estado*, "[M]y main schooling was

⁵ Exact quote: "Como editor... Acordo e leio os quatro jornais nacionais (Folha de S.Paulo, Estado de S.Paulo, O Globo e Valor)... Chego à redação por volta de meio-dia, discuto os principais temas do dia e falo com as sucursais e correspondentes. Às 4 da tarde temos uma reunião, coordenada pelo pauteiro, que bate com a equipe as matérias que teremos na edição... Também gosto bastante da parte de ajudar repórteres e redatores, trocar ideias sobre os assuntos de cobertura e ajudá-los a entregar um material mais completo."

⁶ Exact quote: "Convivo com pessoas inteligentes e a troca de idéias é constante."

in the practice”⁷. A female journalist who wishes to remain anonymous elaborates.

The university didn’t help in my formation of day-to-day journalism. The courses were very theoretical and few spoke about the reality of writing... I actually learned *how* to do journalism while an intern at *The Folha*, the best [paper] of the land... There I learned the basic techniques of reporting, choosing sources, being careful with verification, and always hearing the other side. I also learned how to do an independent and pluralist type of journalism. We had classes with the principal journalists of the house and would hit the streets with them to report, something that didn’t happen at university.⁸

Organizational Norms & Both Sides to Stories

Interview respondents indicated a certain structure to how stories are processed in the newsroom and the kind of stories they aim for. Pedro Dias Leite, the 31-year-old editor at *The Folha*, said, “As editor, I like to make decisions that will determine the repercussion of a determined topic. The same material, depending on how it’s edited, can have a completely different effect...”⁹

Editors work to package a certain type of news content. A female journalist who prefers to remain anonymous said that the best form of journalism is “journalism practiced with independence and with a critical eye. And always with space to hear the two sides of the story.” Pedro Dias Leite, a 31-year-old editor at *The Folha*, elaborated, saying,

⁷ Exact quote: “Mas minha principal escola foi na prática.”

⁸ Exact quote: “A universidade não ajudou muito na minha formação do dia-a-dia do jornalismo. Os cursos eram muito teóricos e pouco se falava sobre a realidade das redações. Aprendi mesmo a fazer jornalismo quando entrei como trainee no jornal Folha de São Paulo, o maior do País... Lá aprendi as técnicas básicas de reportagem, a escolher as fontes, a tomar cuidado com a apuração, a ouvir sempre o outro lado. Aprendi também a fazer um jornalismo independente e pluralista. Tínhamos aulas com os principais jornalistas da casa e íamos para a rua com repórteres fazer reportagem, coisa que não aconteceu na faculdade.”

⁹ Exact quote: “Como editor, gosto muito de tomar decisões que sei que vão determinar a repercussão de determinado assunto. Uma mesma matéria, dependendo da maneira como for editada, pode ter um efeito completamente diferente...”

The critical principle is *not diversity*... The newspaper always has to be attractive to the reader, and for this, it's fundamental to always tell good stories with good texts and photos that attract their attention.¹⁰ (Italics added.)

Extramedia Demands: The Government, The Internet, and The Market

Newsroom actors recognize that additional, extramedia forces act to influence news content. Brazilian journalists specifically named the government, the marketplace and competition, and technology, or the growth of the Internet.

Regarding the government, journalists point out problems in the national press as well as the smaller papers located in the interior of the land. The press is protected from censorship and considered “a form of conscience” to call out corruption at all levels of Brazilian politics, according to *Diário do Comércio* editor Regiane Bochichi. Yet other journalists openly realize they specifically choose stories and sources that positively reflect the government. As one female political reporter said, “I have to choose personalities who speak favorably about some service or realized work. I can't cover anyone who complains or speaks badly of the government”¹¹.

Political influence penetrates all media levels in Brazil. A female journalist who prefers to remain anonymous said, “The big problem is the small newspapers, television stations and radio stations from the interior of the land that are still very susceptible to political influences and to economic power to survive and end up practicing a very partial

¹⁰ Exact quote: “Mas o critério principal não é a diversidade... [O] jornal também tem de ser atraente para o leitor, por isso é fundamental contar sempre boas histórias, com bons textos e fotos, que atraíam sua atenção.”

¹¹ Exact quote: “..tenho que escolher personagens que falem favoravelmente de algum serviço ou obra realizado. Não posso colocar alguém que reclame ou fale mal do governo...”

journalism”¹². Further, stories that *should* be told are not. According to 31-year-old *Folha* editor Pedro Dias Leite, “After so many years of dictatorship, we’re still extremely stubborn sometimes and *leave out stories considered ‘lesser’ that could* reap great benefits, if well worked”¹³ (italics added).

Market forces are also drivers within the Brazilian media system at the extramedia level. According to Jose Roberto de Toledo, 44-year-old director of the agency PrimaPagina and blogger at *O Estado*,

There is a *perceivable force of bettering the representation of Brazilian society* in communication mediums, not only through necessity of being politically correct, but also because *social levels that until a short time ago were excluded* have begun to *exert their power in the consumer market and want representation* in the media. But there’s still a long way to go.¹⁴ (Italics added.)

One route to greater diversity, in general, in news and media seems to be through technological avenues and advancements. A female journalist who wishes to remain anonymous said that

Brazilian journalism, with the Internet and the strengthening of the economy, is becoming better and more independent. With more people consuming more news, there’s less dependence on official propaganda and, therefore, more space for independence. The phenomenon of the Internet in lesser communities of the nation... has guaranteed access to information and plurality of news.¹⁵

¹² Exact quote: “O grande problema está nos pequenos jornais, emissoras de televisão e rádios do interior do País, que ainda são muito suscetíveis a influências políticas e ao poder econômico para sobreviver e acabam fazendo um jornalismo muito parcial.”

¹³ Exact quote: “Depois de tantos anos de ditadura, ainda somos 'duros demais' de vez em quando, e deixamos de lado histórias consideradas 'menores' que poderiam render grandes matérias se fossem bem trabalhadas.”

¹⁴ Exact quote: “Há um esforço perceptível de se melhorar a representatividade da sociedade brasileira nos meios de comunicação, não só por uma necessidade de adequarem-se ao politicamente correto, mas também porque estratos sociais até há pouco tempo excluídos começam a se inserir no mercado de consumo e querem ver-se representados nos meios de comunicação. Mas ainda há muito a avançar.”

¹⁵ Exact quote: “...o jornalismo brasileiro, com a internet e o fortalecimento da economia, tende a ser cada vez melhor e mais independente. Com as pessoas consumindo mais notícias, haverá menos dependência da propaganda oficial e, portanto, mais espaço

The Internet, however, is currently limited because of lack of accessibility. Again, according to 31-year-old *Folha* editor Pedro Dias Leite, “Since the Internet doesn’t yet have the same penetration here that it has in other places, the newspapers will yet have a few good years of financial stability, moving forward...”¹⁶.

Ideological Pressures & A Land Of, For, By Elite

News actors indicated several forces affect news content at the ideological level. University experiences, media ownership, and general literacy levels combine to form another layer of influence on news content.

Regarding formal education, and reflecting on their own experiences, interviewees recalled predominantly white classmates. Pedro said that “the universities of Brazil are still basically attended by the elite”¹⁷. Another male editor said, “There was a female majority, but few poor and very few blacks.” A female journalist said, “The larger part of my class was comprised of whites and coloreds. It’s changed a bit today, with more democratic access to the university”¹⁸. In other words, as Marco pointed out, “Now, with the [affirmative action] quotas, blacks have been benefitted in various public institutions, in general”¹⁹.

Subject matter within the classroom also seemed devoid of difference. A female

para a independência. O fenômeno da internet nas comunidades menores do País também tem se... garantido acesso à informação e pluralidade da notícia.”

¹⁶ Exact quote: “Como a internet ainda não tem a mesma penetração aqui que em outros lugares, os jornais ainda terão alguns bons anos de estabilidade financeira pela frente...”

¹⁷ Direct quote: “Havia poucos negros, principalmente porque as universidades no Brasil ainda são frequentadas basicamente pela elite, onde há muito poucos negros.”

¹⁸ Her direct quote: “A maior parte da minha turma era de pessoas brancas e mulatas. ...Hoje mudou um pouco, com acesso mais democrático à universidade.”

¹⁹ His direct quote: “Agora, com as cotas, negros têm sido mais beneficiados em várias instituições públicas, sobretudo.”

journalist who prefers to remain anonymous said that she and her classmates learned about “different *sources* of information, but not about sex, race, and so forth, about the attempt to seek the maximum information to have an impartial vision of the facts that’s more complete, more whole”²⁰ (italics added). Toledo echoed these thoughts:

The only thing I remember about diversity was the sources of information were a common point, one of the basic principles of journalism, and hearing the maximum number possible of sources to show various sides to the same story... But *without equal emphasis* on the perspective of representing gender or race.²¹ (Italics added.)

To complicate the media scene, Brazilian media in general suffer from few owners. “[T]his impedes... the plurality of information,”²² according to Marco Aurélio Lisan, a 41-year-old journalist who is the online coordinator in charge of reporters and local news at Rádio Globo in Rio de Janeiro. A female photojournalist who wishes to remain anonymous said Brazil “...needs to stop thinking about news as a business that needs to aim for gain and seek great stories”²³.

Additional difficulties faced ideologically within the Brazilian media system are those of a general lack of access, based on socio-economic level, and literacy. According to 31-year-old political reporter and *Diário Oficial* editor Renata Cruz Oliveira, currently, “Just a part of the population (the middle and upper classes) have access to newspapers or

²⁰ Exact quote: “Ouvi sobre diversas fontes de informação, mas não exatamente sobre sexo, raça e sim, sobre a tentativa de buscar o máximo de informação para ter uma visão imparcial dos fatos e mais completa, mais ampla.”

²¹ His direct quote: “A única coisa de que me lembro sobre diversidade das fontes de informação era o lugar comum, um dos princípios básicos do jornalismo, de ouvir o maior número possível de fontes para mostrar vários lados de uma mesma história... Mas sem uma ênfase igual na perspectiva de representatividade de gênero e raça.”

²² His direct quote: “Poucos grupos detêm grandes corporações e isso impede um pouco a pluralidade da informação...”

²³ Direct quote: “Deixar de pensar o jornalismo como empresa que precisa visar o lucro e buscar grandes reportagens.”

weekly magazines... What lacks, in my opinion, is that the population has *more access to education* and the mediums of communication”²⁴ (Italics added). Forty-four-year-old

Diário do Comércio editor Regiane Bochichi also said,

The principle change [that needs to happen] not just with regard to journalism, but is a foundational problem: Better the population’s *level of education* so that the people themselves can augment their access to information, their understanding, and, above all, their *use of information to be conscientious citizens*.²⁵ (Italics added.)

Interviewees recognize that “...diversity might be more apparent on TV, in the novelas, which are seen by the great majority of the population. The Brazilian cinema also addresses diversity, but, like newspapers, these films don’t get to the great majority of people”²⁶.

Analysis and Discussion

At least two points seem quite clear from the interview responses with seven Brazilian journalists from Brazil’s leading media outlets with regard to the initial research questions. First, Brazilian journalists talk *around* covering issues of race and class. And second, their journalistic training has had very little impact on their sensitivity to race and class news issues. While these current sensitivities might change with the next generations of news actors preparing to enter news production, the status quo seems

²⁴ Her direct quote: “Porque apenas uma parte da população (as classes média e alta) tem acesso a jornais ou revistas semanais... O que falta, em minha opinião, é que a população tenha mais acesso à educação e aos meios de comunicação.”

²⁵ Her direct quote: “A principal mudança não diz respeito apenas ao jornalismo, mas é um problema de base: melhorar o nível educacional da população para que se aumente o acesso à informação, o seu entendimento e acima de tudo, o uso dela para a formação de cidadãos conscientes.”

²⁶ Renata’s direct quote: “...a diversidade fique mais aparente na televisão, nas novelas, que são vistas por grande parte da população. O cinema brasileiro atual também trata bastante da diversidade, mas, assim como os jornais, não chega a boa parte das pessoas....”

largely in place and unlikely to change in the near future. A large reason for this stems from journalists' current satisfaction with the ways things are in Brazilian media.

Aligning with Waisbord's earlier quoted assessment of Latin American journalists in general and Brazilian reporters specifically, the transitional Brazilian press is more preoccupied with instrumental rather than idealistic practices; "meeting standards of accuracy, beating deadlines, juggling sources, and scooping competitors rank more prominently than bringing political reform or democratic accountability" (Waisbord, 2000, p. 187). Whispers of appeals for Brazilians in general to experience greater educational opportunities that will lead to greater access to information and more informed decision making are strong. Similarly, a recognition that local press systems are in danger of stifling political and economic control exists. But a desire for any type of large-scale political reform is absent, even when reporters recognize they must put the best face of Brazilian government forward. Again, Brazilian journalists seem quite content with the current Brazilian (media) way of life.

What does this mean, both for the Brazilian press and for the Brazilian population? If journalists are not seeking out the "lesser" stories they *should* be telling nor working toward bettering their stories through a more complete verbal and visual representation of Brazil's mixed society, change seems impossible. The press will continue to be of, for and by elite. Journalists interviewed here recognize that social actors are increasing their market push and gaining strides in *other* media, namely the novelas, yet a disconnect between mainstream media outlets like television and the press is clear. Journalists interviewed foresee the Internet changing the population and its

access to information, but they do not seem to connect that technological revolution with their medium nor with what greater access to news could afford.

Journalists do perceive themselves in line with Altschull's seventh "law of journalism": "Press practices always differ from press theory" (1995, 441). Yet press practice is needing serious change. While speaking about difficult and sensitive issues like race and class are difficult, especially given Brazil's (cultural) history, pointers should be taken from alternative news sources, like the telenovela, for greater "media opening" to occur. Those pointers should happen both in the newsroom as editors look to other media to guide their news production and in the academic newsroom as professors attempt to prepare their students for the world of journalism.

Conclusions and Limitations

This study is part of a larger investigation into an increasingly powerful world economic player and democratizing nation's media as Brazil and its media transition over time. Underlying this research is a question regarding (inter)national mass media's ability to advance social and class causes as well as their potential to move society toward racial equity and social justice. Also, in what conditions do the media defend the status quo, and when/why do they foment "media opening?"²⁷

In brief, a multi-method approach of interviews and discursive analysis of interviews has been employed to attempt to understand how Brazilian journalists might cover race and class issues. While a small response of seven interviewees cannot claim to be representative of all Brazilian journalists, it does reflect at least diversities of gender, medium and educational experience. That the participants stem from different Brazilian

²⁷ I owe this helpful insight to Dr. Allen Palmer.

news organizations helps to cut through potential organizational biases, providing a more horizontal albeit not vertical look at how Brazilian journalism is currently practiced.

This pilot study should be used toward further investigation into the practice of Brazilian journalism. It needs to be expanded, with the qualitative information gathered being used to inform a larger survey that could be administered in universities to journalism students. Similarly, the information can be used to interview journalists working at local media outlets, since local media have been indicated as troubled spots. Somehow, someday, at least Brazilian journalists at all levels need to recognize that until more diverse representation ensues in *all* news content, press freedom and independence, in general, are compromised and endangered.

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