

Volume 38
issue 3 / 2019

Contracampo e-ISSN 2238-2577
Niterói (RJ), 38 (3)
dez/2019-mar/2020

Contracampo – Brazilian Journal of Communication is a quarterly publication of the Graduate Programme in Communication Studies (PPGCOM) at Fluminense Federal University (UFF). It aims to contribute to critical reflection within the field of Media Studies, being a space for dissemination of research and scientific thought.

THE IDENTITIES ACTIONED IN THE JOURNALISM FROM THE DICHOTOMY BETWEEN PROXIMITY AND DISTANCE

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TO REFERENCE THIS ARTICLE, PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING CITATION:

Bavaresco, Marcionize Elis; Locatelli, Carlos Augusto. The Identities Actioned in the Journalism from the Dichotomy between Proximity and Distance. *Contracampo*, Niterói, v. 38, n.3, p. XXX-YYY, December 2019/March 2020.

Submitted on: 04 December 2019 / Revisor A: 28/05/2019; Revisor B: 15/06/2019; Revisor C: 24/06/2019 / Accepted on: 08 June 2019

DOI – <http://dx.doi.org/10.22409/contracampo.v38i3.28523>

Abstract¹

This work analyses the relationship between journalistic spheres and local/regional identities, in order to understand the activation of certain elements that form these identities in the struggle for the recognition of demands within the State. The empirical object consisted of news that characterized a specific Brazilian region - the Extreme West of Santa Catarina state - since the 1950s, analyzed from the theoretical-methodological perspective of the framing. The study demonstrated an invisibility of identities that are alternative to hegemonic ones and the actioning of identity elements such as strategy of political leaderships and news media to establish links with the local community. The dynamics of recognition were influenced by the proximity and the distance of the media in relation to the region.

Keywords

Journalism; Regional identities; Recognition.

¹ This paper updates the reading of data collected during a research that resulted in a dissertation, which were previously presented at the Congresso Nacional da Sociedade Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Jornalismo (SBPJor). This *study* was *financed* in part by the *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brasil (CAPES) - Finance Code 001*.

Introduction

At the end of the XX century, the world witnessed a rapid process of globalization, whose maximum symbol was the development of communication technologies that connected the globe and allowed a high-speed flow of information between points so far isolated by geographic distance. In the wake of this phenomenon, neither the national boundaries seemed to be no more relevant, nor the identities intrinsic to them. However, on the eve of closing the second decade of the 21st century, the theme of nationalism, the closure of borders, protectionism and the fear of the “other”, returned to the center of academic concerns, once again in the wake of empirical events: the Brexit²; xenophobic reactions to the refugee crisis; the conflicts generated around identity agendas; the arrival to the power of nationalist and protectionist political leaders in several countries.

Journalism, as a social agent in which circulate the discourses that explain society during events, cannot be oblivious to the context. Therefore, researches updating the discussion about the relationship between journalism and identities are fundamental for understanding the dynamics in which the production and dissemination of news information is inserted - and that feeds with symbolic inputs. Here, in particular, it is investigated the triggering of identity perspectives in journalism from the analytical viewpoint of proximity and distance.

These two dimensions guided the construction of the empirical object, in an attempt to mobilize situations that had the potential to encompass different models of journalism. Therefore, here we work with the plural of two central concepts for research: identities and journalisms.

Identity, journalism and framings

Identity is a concept that brings in itself a paradox (Hall, 2011; Santos, 1994; Woodward, 2007): at the same time that means integration, it also separates. “To be as it is” means to be different from the other. Journalism is one of the discourses where the identity characteristics are manifested with the status of reality. For this reason, it has the potential to contribute to the perpetuity or permeability of a given collective identification.

The relationship of the narration with the identity is constitutive; it only exists when told (Martín-Barbero, 2006; Bhabha, 2000; Marinas, 1995). This is one of the reasons that it makes the circulation of information fundamental to the building of identities, whether individual or collective. This is because, as Taylor explains (2000), the construction of identity was not carried out in isolation, but through dialogue with others, since it is dependent on collective recognition.

Our identity is shaped partly by recognition or by its absence, often by erroneous recognition on the part of others, so that a person or group of people can suffer real damage, a real distortion. If the people or societies around them return them a reductive, undeserving or despicable framing of themselves. Non-recognition or erroneous recognition can cause damage, can be a form of oppression, trapping someone in a modality of being that is false, distorted and reductive (Taylor, 2000, p. 241).

Therefore identity, as well as every social reality, is a construct.

According to Pollak (1992, p. 204), there are three essential elements in identity construction:

There is the physical unit, that is, the feeling of having physical boundaries, in the case of the person's body, or boundaries of belonging to the group, in the case of a collective; there is continuity within time, in the physical sense of the word, but also in

² The exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

the moral and psychological sense; finally there is the sense of coherence, that is, that the different elements that form an individual are effectively unified.

It is this last aspect, especially, that connects identity to individual and collective memory. "(...) memory is a constituent element of the feeling of identity (...) to the extent that it is as an extremely important factor of the sense of continuity and coherence of a person or group in their reconstruction of themselves" (Pollak, 1992, p. 204, emphasis by the author). He points out that both memory and identity "can be perfectly negotiated", considering these to be values "disputed in social and intergroup conflicts, and particularly in conflicts that oppose different political groups" (1992, p. 205).

However, although this peculiarity of elaboration, the memory (and it could be added the identity) when relatively constituted, performs by itself "a work of maintenance, coherence, unity, continuity of the Organization" (Pollak, 1992, p. 206). Saying this, although these values are fluid and changeable, there is a tendency to maintain those who have the most significant symbolic power to perform the maintenance work.

As denotes Bourdieu (1989)³, the symbolic power, and here we refer to the symbolic power of identity representations, after consolidated, gains autonomy concerning its agents. That is, if to some extent journalism builds a certain characterization of the region, it also ends up constructing journalism, especially the one that is embedded in the community of which it speaks and for which it speaks.

Preserving narrative memory, or memories, is one of the characteristics of journalistic mediums, especially the press. The selection of what to preserve and what to forget is given in the bulge of power relations, considering that memory is activated as legitimizing certain traditions and identities. In this sense, the actors with more power impose a version of the facts, a process described by Veyrat-Masson & Blanchard (2010) as a "war of memories", and consequently establish a power support.

Hall (2003) ponders that identities are mutable. For him, in reference to individual identities, it is not possible for the subjects to be characterized by a fixed, essential or permanent identity. The subjects should then be understood from multiple identities, such as nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexuality. These are produced, to use a term from Hall itself, in a process of symbolic dispute triggered in the field of discourses, of narratives. Santos align with this conception, by characterizing the identities (plural) as "ongoing identifications" (1994, p. 31). That is, the regional identity, which is the focus of this work, is a collective identity, group, and reaches individuals as one of the possibilities of individual identification (not the only one).

It is inherent from the cultural mix formed from these antagonisms, relations, and fragmentations that journalism feeds on meanings and for them provides symbolic ingredients through its discourses. Without the expectation of measuring the power of influence of these 'inputs' in the formulation of the senses by the audience, considering that all communicational synthesis is established from a process of interaction between active agents, it is inevitable that the contents disclosed have the potential to generate practical consequences in the social structure. However, why are these processes tools performed?

When one claims that journalism is set up in a specific discourse, one needs to understand what that means. Here is the notion of discourse defended by Fairclough (2001, p. 22), that "any discursive 'event'" (i.e., any example of discourse) is considered as simultaneously a text, an example of discursive practice and an example of social practice". One of the possibilities of looking at this specific discourse, journalism, is based on the *framing* conception.

The framing approach permeates different areas that comprise, to some extent, situations of communicational interaction. Researches based on this theoretical contribution have been developed in

³ It is worth noting that the research here described does not align with those defined as Bourdieusian, that is, based on the theoretical and methodological structure proposed by Bourdieu. The notion of symbolic power of the author was specifically mobilized to complement the discussion about the tendency to maintain specific symbolic definitions, which, at a previous moment, was approached from the framings' and the own definition of collective identities' perspective, which constitute the theoretical-methodological core of the present work. In other words, different theoretical approaches recognize this phenomenon, even if they understand the process by which they occur from different perspectives.

different fields, such as Sociology, Political Science, Psychology and Communication. Possibly due to its operationalization in different areas, the concept of framing is polysemic, as demonstrated by the analyses of Mendonça & Simões (2012), Maia (2009) and Reese (2008).

Here we will apprehend the theoretical synthesis of Maia (2009), also used in Locatelli (2011), which from the contributions of several authors defines the framings as “organizing principles” or “interpretative schemes”.

Maia (2009) emphasizes that, especially in contemporary societies, in which people are potentially exposed to a multiplicity of communication processes and, consequently, of framings, they compete with each other. That is, there is a competition between the framings, especially in situations of controversy. According to the author, “the approach of the framing competition provides a more realistic environment to ask how public opinion is formed in contemporary conditions” (Maia, 2009, p. 303-304).

By emphasizing certain cultural framings and rejecting others (consciously or not), journalism makes it possible to reach the public with specific approaches, with specific inputs that can be incorporated into the symbolic repertoire that allows the understanding of the social world.

Therefore, the core of the present work is the notion that enunciation has the potential to collaborate with the creation of the reality that it states. But what does this have to do with journalism, the central focus of the present study? Journalism here is understood as a social form of knowledge (Genro Filho, 2012; Meditsch, 2005) whose central function is to enunciate *reality* from a specific perspective in the discourse, based on the professional *ethos* (Traquina, 2012, p. 128) and in the social contract (Bernier, 2004, p. 15) established with its various audiences, whose principles are grounded in credibility and legitimacy.

For these characteristics, it is understood that journalism is a privileged actor in the war for recognition, fundamental for identities formation, whether this identity is individual or collective (Taylor, 2000).

This context becomes even more complex from the comprehension of journalism as a media subsystem that, although has characteristics that define it from common aspects, has internal diversity. As pointed out in studies such as the one of Camponez (2002) and Felippi (2006), there are particular elements of the social contract established among journalists, communication mediums, public and financiers according to the degree of proximity and distance from one another. This makes the different spheres of journalistic visibility tend to frame the news episodes in a particular way.

According to Peruzzo (2003, p. 67), “there is the impossibility of defining precise boundaries between regional, local and community”, especially because these delimitations involve more than geographic boundaries. “On the other hand, both the local and the regional can only be understood in relation to one another, or them in relation to other space dimensions, such as the national and the global,” details him.

An approach that helps in elucidating possible categorizations is the one presented by Camponez (2002). He inaugurates the concept of proximity in journalism that, although characterized as a possible journalistic practice in any communication medium, has its presence specially in the local and regional press. This proximity “is not measured in meters” (Camponez, 2002, p. 129), since in addition to the space sample, it is characterized by the type of relationship established with the different agents involved in the process of production, diffusion and reception of news.

In other words, in the case of regional and local communication mediums “proximity takes on its own meaning, marked by its specificity and identity” (Camponez, 2011, p. 36). Facing the impossibility of clearly defining the boundaries between the hyperlocal⁴, the local, the regional and the community, the concept of proximity in journalism, as a journalistic typology characteristic of these communication mediums, seems to be an appropriate nomenclature to conceptualize them together.

⁴ Term originally coined in the United States to refer to journalism made from, and to more restricted sociocultural, geographic and symbolic spaces than those limited by the city. The neighborhood or community newspapers may be cited as examples.

Camponez (2002, p. 122-123) makes a comprehensive review of literature about the particular functions of communication mediums that base their performance on proximity in journalism. One can highlight the characteristic of functioning as a community link among its readers; act to reduce the uncertainty of the reader in relation to the environment that surrounds it; and to serve as an important database on its space of influence, which relates it to the preservation of community memory, an aspect that anchors the group's own constitution, in order to be a fundamental element of tradition and identity.

Empirical sample: identity formation in the Extreme West of Santa Catarina

Several Brazilian regions would serve as an object for an analysis of the activation of identity aspects by journalism. Here, however, we opted for the peculiarity of a state known as the "Brazilian Europe" and which is self-asserted precisely by the supposed singularities of its regions. The particularities of the territory occupation, the geography and economic aspects led, especially in the 1960 and 1970 decades, several authors to describe the state as formed by "regional islands". Singer (1968, p. 83) addressed this fragmentation under the economic prism: "Santa Catarina presents, today, a curious aspect: the whole state divides into several economically autonomous zones, each relying on a regional capital." Lago (1975, p. 121) recognized in the state, "at least sociologically", different "cultural islands".⁵ Piazza also refers to the "islands" or Catarinenses cultural "small archipelagos", in a work published in 1979.⁶

All these perspectives sought, in the history of specific development models and the colonization⁷ of the state, explanations for the diagnosed "cultural and identity fragmentation" of Santa Catarina territory. Two aspects are recurrent to explain, at least in part, this phenomenon: the organization of the territory as a "space of immigrants" - to use a statement present in Lago (2000, p. 69) - , and the "physical-territorial integration of the Catarinense area" (Piazza, 1988, p. 353).⁸ These processes would have resulted in "non-integration, either social, economic, or even cultural, in addition to the difficulty of accepting by the populations of the political-institutional aspects" (Piazza, 1988, p. 353).

The morphology of Santa Catarina would have favored the establishment of the cited archipelago. The Serra do Mar and Geral practically divide the state in two, delimiting the hydrological drainage systems and, consequently, limiting the possibilities of penetration in the territory by river, as recalls Singer (1968, p. 81).

Peluso Júnior (1984, p. 267) gives to geographical features part of the responsibility for isolation, considering that "the economic life of the state" would have been "always difficult to articulate", because the irregular topography would not favor "the proximity within the various regions". But it adds political content to the debate and, to a certain extent, power in interregional relations, such as the unequal distribution of infrastructure.

⁵ In his most recent work, the geographer refined this perception, pointing out that from the 1960's there was a political commitment to consolidate the state integration, leaving behind the times of "economic and social islands" (Lago, 2000, p. 27), which is a controversial question to date.

⁶ In this paper, the work is referenced from its second edition, published in 1988.

⁷ In this article the concept is used as a reference to a specific type of territory reoccupation - considering that it was inhabited by indigenous and Brazilian, using the term suggested by Renk (1997) - which foresees the fixation of the colonists and the economic exploitation with the State's consent and encouragement, either through direct governmental action, or through the transfer of land for the purposes of colonization to the private sector. In the words of Piazza (1988, p. 12), colonization means "more than populate, is to enjoy the land, removing it at the same time as the popular, the benefits of economic-social order". It is necessary to observe that this statement is given by the eyes of the colonizers, for whom colonization meant progress, which should be problematized, since the traditional peoples were excluded from this process.

⁸ Piazza uses this enunciate to refer to the fact that the territory of Santa Catarina was being defined in a split way, with the integration of territorial ranges in different periods and with questions about its limits until the mid-20th century.

The 'absence' of the state, as a public agent, is highlighted in relation to the Western Region, the farthest from the initially populated areas and which contemplates the Extreme West, the territory of this work:

The West was populated by people who migrated from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the pioneering wave that occupied the forest lands of the Vale do Rio do Peixe and the Western region of this river basin. These farmers fought in the forest to make it productive, resolving their problems without any assistance from the state of Santa Catarina; created their economy dependent on the Rio Grande do Sul's economy; opened roads, built cities, and only from 1946 onwards, with the extinction of the Território do Iguçu, the region began to feel, in reality, the presence of the government of Santa Catarina (Peluso Júnior, 1984, p. 272).

Peluso Junior is responsible for formulating the concepts of "*Catarinensismo*", which refers to "acceptance of community bonds" *Catarinenses*; and of "*Catarinização*", which would be "the process of attraction, to the heart of the community, the fraction of people that is distant from it" (Peluso Júnior, 1984, p. 259). At the beginning of the decade of 1980, the author had the perception that the intensity of *Catarinensismo* could be summarized as:

- a – The feeling of *Catarinensismo* is strong in the capital (Florianópolis) and throughout the microregion of Grande Florianópolis;
- b – *Catarinensismo* loses strength from this central region to the periphery, that is, as the researcher distances himself from the capital, reaching its lowest levels in the Western areas in the State territory, and in those that are located near to the states of Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul;
- c – the common and most evident form of the intensity of the bonds that unite the community of Santa Catarina is the reaction manifested to the role of the capital exercised by Florianópolis⁹, and thus may this role of Florianópolis serve as an indicator of the degree of *Catarinensismo* (Peluso Júnior, 1984, p. 261).

During this period, the search for characteristics that represented the identity of Santa Catarina was the motto of many intellectuals linked to the Santa Catarina Historical and Geographic Institute (IHGC).¹⁰ The idea was to demonstrate, or even construct, a legitimately *catarinense* identity, in view of the fragmentation being seen as a problem. However, the attempt at homogenization was unsuccessful. On the contrary, in recent decades the state has perceived in the logic of the cultural islands potential for tourism development and, consequently, economic development as well. This is how the typical Germanic festivals, colonial cafes, Austrian architecture, among other elements, were developed.¹¹

It is worth noting that regionalization processes are complex and changeable. In addition, according to different objectives, there are overlapping settings. Marcon (2009) makes a detailed compiled of these different regionalization, which cover those promoted by the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE)*, by the Government of the state of Santa Catarina and, even, by the articulation of the counties around associations. The researcher deals with this overlap of distinct regional cutouts as a problem (2009, p. 171), because it makes each county integrated into different regions for specific purposes, which difficult data systematization and integrated actions. To some extent, the press preserves in its pages the indications of these processes of regionalization, sedimenting concepts through the adoption of certain nomenclatures and regional characteristics.

⁹ At that time, as in later periods, was discussed the possibility of the state capital be transferred to a city more centrally located in the Santa Catarina territory.

¹⁰ This aspect is discussed in greater detail in the article "The identity of Santa Catarina in the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Santa Catarina" (Serpa, 1996).

¹¹ Tourism has expanded in Santa Catarina, especially from the 1970s and 1980s (Lins, 1993). Citing an emblematic example of this process of "reinvention of ethnicity", the first Oktoberfest in Blumenau, a party that attracts a large number of tourists annually, was held in 1984, according to the historic available on the event website. Retrieved July 30th 2017 from <http://www.oktoberfestblumenau.com.br/oktoberfest/historia/>.

In this case study, it was observed that in the local newspapers, produced and distributed from São Miguel do Oeste, the main city of the analyzed space, the Extreme West Region, appeared since the end of the decade of 1950's. The newspapers of the time used the expression to refer to their own area circulation, linking the utterance to a sense of progress and socioeconomic development.

On the other hand, in the first analyses carried out in state newspapers published in the same period, it was perceived that the Extreme West practically did not appear. Even references to the West of Santa Catarina were rare. In a material produced in 1948, the journalist Zedar Perfeito da Silva, who traveled the West of Santa Catarina, describes the image that a portion of the population of other parts of the state had of the region near the border between Brazil and Argentina: "there was situated our **Far-West**" (Silva, 1950, p. 7, *emphasis by the author*).

The comparison shown in the two preceding paragraphs points to a diversity of perceptions and definitions about the same geopolitical, social and symbolic space, which vary according to the proximity or distance of the emitters in relation to the region.

Studies prior to the described herein demonstrate that there are hegemonic identity characteristics in the region, which manifest themselves through different discourses and power relations. By 'hegemonic', we understand the conceptions that are imposed on others, either through the constant incidence in the discourses, or by the symbolic capital they mobilize, gaining privileged space in the public sphere. The root of this identity is in the "myth of the pioneer" (Hass, 2007, p. 22), which unfolds the valorization of certain forms of work, initiative and in the very sense of a community that is amalgamated by origin (aspects also addressed in Mombelli's research [1996]).

Journalism is at the center of the mechanisms of reproduction, negotiation or rupture of identity hegemony, in view of being the social agent of the enunciation on a large scale with the status of verisimilitude with reality.

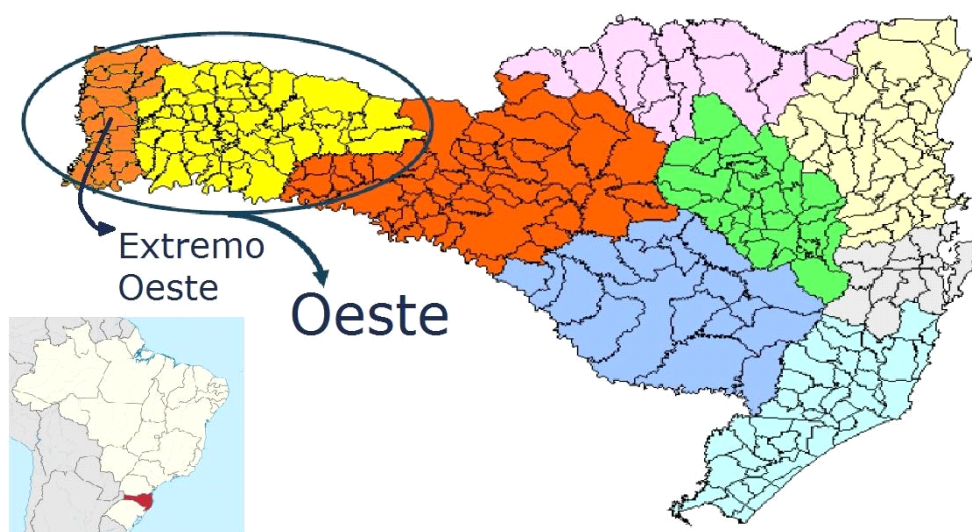
To clarify this work, we opted for the Extreme West definition in equivalence to the municipalities that comprise the Association of the Municipalities of the Extreme West of Santa Catarina (Ameosc)¹², and of the West based on the division presented on the website of Government of the state.¹³ The option for these regionalization models was made because they were common by both the State and municipal administrative bodies as well as by civil society organizations and by journalism itself. It is worth noting that this division is not equivalent to that of IBGE, although similar to the most recent version of the Regional Division of Brazil, launched in 2017 by the institute, which defined the immediate and intermediate geographic regions.¹⁴

¹² Founded in 1971. Currently has 19 associated municipalities: Anchieta, Bandeirante, Barra Bonita, Belmonte, descanso, Dionísio Cerqueira, Guaraciaba, Guarujá do Sul, Iporã do Oeste, Itapiranga, Mondai, Palma Sola, Paraíso, Princesa, Santa Helena, São João do Ocidente, Santo José do Cedro, São Miguel do Oeste and Tunápolis.

¹³ Retrieved July 12th 2019 from: <https://www.sc.gov.br/index.php/conhecasc/geografia>. This division defines eight main regions of Santa Catarina: Litoral, Northeast (Nordeste), North Plateau (Planalto Norte), Vale do Itajaí, Serrano Plateau (Planalto Serrano), Sul (South), Midwest (Meio-Oeste) and West (Oeste - the latter integrated by 79 municipalities). Much of the State policies, especially those linked to economic and social development, take into account this division. As an example, we can cite the Plano de Desenvolvimento de Santa Catarina 2030 (Governo do Estado de Santa Catarina, 2018).

¹⁴ Retrieved July 14th 2019 from: https://ww2.ibge.gov.br/home/geociencias/geografia/default_div_int.shtm..

Map 1 – Extreme West (*Extremo Oeste*) according to Ameosc and West (*Oeste*) Macroregion according to regionalization of the government of the state of Santa Catarina



Source: Edited by the authors from Governo do Estado de Santa Catarina (2018, p. 156)

Corpus, methodological and analytical strategies

As the regional identity subject is not, in itself, an everyday journalism agenda, but a question that goes beyond several broadcasted themes, it was chosen to delimitate the agendas to claims from regional segments which have become public controversies. It's in these moments, when there is conflict or concurrence of framings, that the positions of the social actors and the power relations become clearer.

Although it is recognized that these elements are present in every journalistic discourse, in times of normalcy, the traces from which it is possible to trace these aspects become more subtle. It is as if in situations in which there is no divergence, the debate sides come closer in a way that they almost mix, while in times of controversy, these sides get more defined and sufficiently apart, what allows a better visualization.

To select these claims, at first, a prior contact with the empirical material was performed. It was perceived that two themes were recurrent in different journals and that, at various times, subjects on these agendas had generated discussions around the characterizations attributed to the Extreme West region: a) about the mobilizations around the creation of the state of Iguaçú, covering the West and Extreme West of Santa Catarina and the Paranaense Southwest and West; b) on the construction of an international road link between Brazil and Argentina passing through São Miguel do Oeste and later also by Paraíso (this is because the range of the territory bordering Argentina began to integrate Paraíso from 1992, when this county was emancipated from São Miguel do Oeste).

After the agendas were delimited, a scan was carried out in the following collections: Digital Library of the Biblioteca Nacional (digital files); digital collections of the newspapers *Folha de S. Paulo*, *O Globo* and *Estado de S. Paulo*; State Public Library of Santa Catarina, located in Florianópolis (physical archives); Memory Center of the West (Ceom), in Chapecó (physical archives); José de Alencar Municipal Public Library, located in São Miguel do Oeste (physical archives); private collection made available by Lady Maria Regina Meneguzzi Baldissera¹⁵, in São Miguel do Oeste (physical archives); clipping of journalistic articles which

¹⁵ Maria Regina Meneguzzi Baldissera is the manager of the Rede Peperi de Comunicações, a company that maintains seven radio stations in the Extreme West region of Santa Catarina. She is the widow of the journalist Ademar Baldissera, who was the only one who organized the archive of newspapers from the end of the 1950's and the beginning of the 1960's that the company has.

constitutes a private collection made available by Mr Darci Zanotelli¹⁶, in São Miguel do Oeste (physical archive).

This tracing has found 232 journalistic articles on the selected agendas, published by the local, regional, state and national press in the period from 1953 to 2016.¹⁷ After reading the material were excluded the informative and opinative articles, leaving a corpus of 161 texts (100 about the Road Corridor of Bioceanic Integration and 61 on the Pro-state Movement of Iguaçú) in which the indirect analysis of framing was applied. This methodological proposal was elaborated by Vimieiro & Maia (2011)¹⁸ and predicts the decomposition of the *frames* into elements, which are smaller units and possible to be identified in journalistic texts.

For Vimieiro & Maia (2011, p. 241), the notion of framing elements is similar to the idea of “interpretive package”, by Gamson & Modigliani (1989). The focus of the methodological construct is that the interpretative packages have an internal structure that contains a central organizing idea, the framing. “The packages offer a number of condensed symbols – they call them devices – which suggest the core of the framings” (Vimieiro & Maia, 2011, p. 241). That is, it would be possible to identify the framing not in a direct way, but by tracing these devices or elements. With this, it is possible to make it clearer from which indications the framings were formed and reduce the interference of the analyst since when tracing the elements, the researcher does not know in which framing the analysis will result.

Based on this proposal and the empirical research carried out by Gamson & Lasch (1980), Gamson & Modigliani (1989), Entman (1993), Matthes & Kohring (2008), the table of elements traced in this research was defined as follows: the terms used to qualify and denominate the region; the mobilized examples; metaphors, slogans or buzzwords; the origins of the reported problems; the consequences for the region of the reported episodes; the presence of visual images and what they indicate in terms of representation of the region or its population; the indications for the solution of the matter; and the actors involved (who speak for the region, who speaks of the region, who speak in the region, who speak beyond the region).

These elements were initially traced in a sample of 30 texts. Based on the results found, they were unfolded into subcategories. For example, it was possible to observe that among the “qualifier terms,” there were words that identified the region as abandoned, others as rich, etc.

¹⁶ Darci Zanotelli is a transport entrepreneur, with his company’s headquarters based in São Miguel do Oeste-SC. It is one of the main activists of integration projects between the Extreme West region and the MERCOSUR countries.

¹⁷ The temporal cut begins with the creation of part of the municipalities that now comprise the Associação dos Municípios do Extremo Oeste de Santa Catarina (Ameosc) and ends due to the deadline for the conclusion of this research.

¹⁸ This methodology was used by Vimieiro (2010), in his master’s thesis. In the research, she thoroughly describes the procedures adopted.

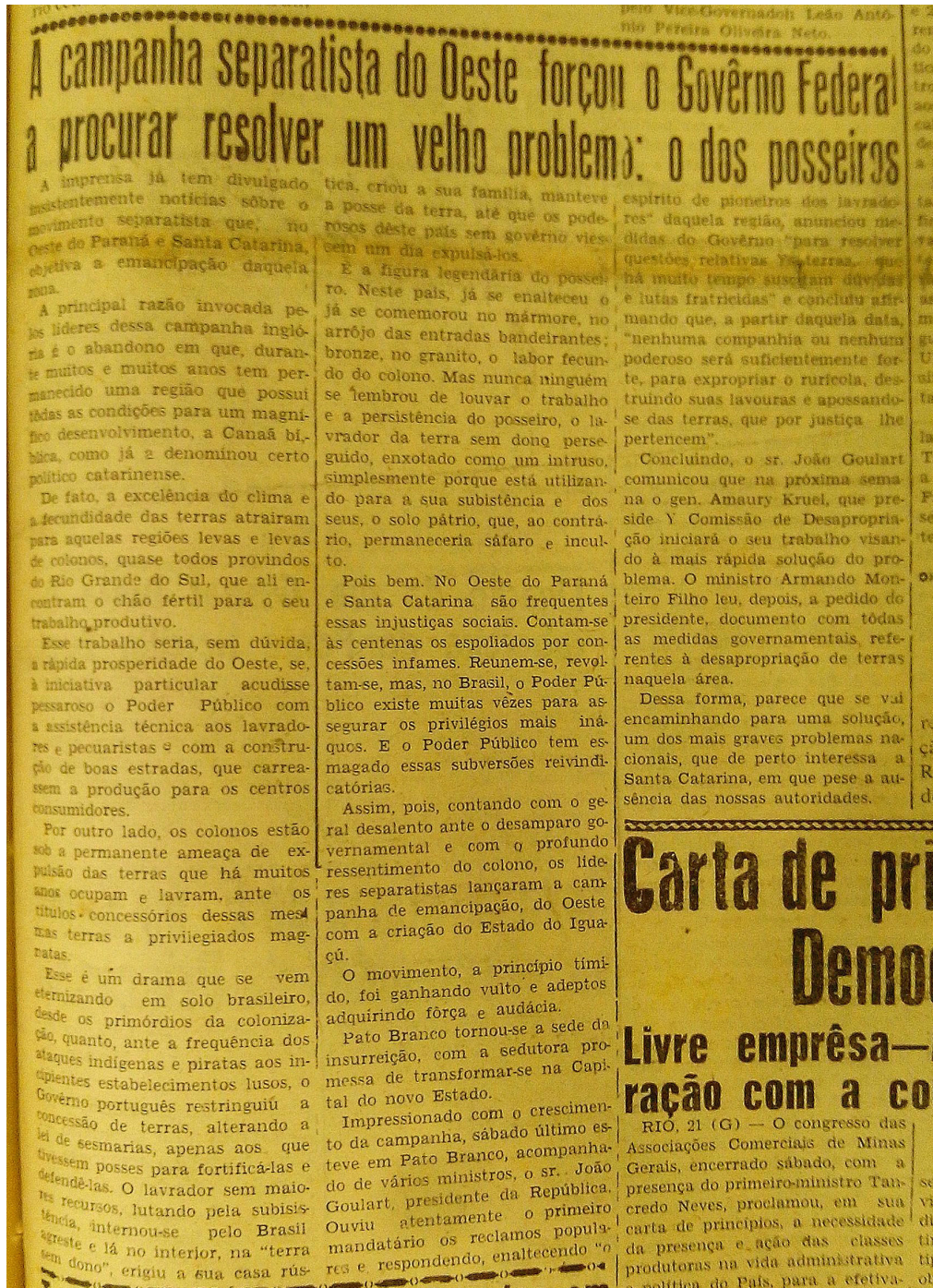
Table 1 – Example of the deconstruction of the element “qualifier terms” in subcategories

Qualifier terms
Abandoned region (forgotten; derelict)
Region with poor economy
Region with potential (of development; of future)
Region with social injustice (exploitation)
Region of an organized people (peaceful movement; that follow the laws)
Region of suffered people (distressed; dissatisfied)
Region of working people (productive; working population; fighting; initiative)
Strategic Region for National Security
Fertile region (rich in agricultural terms; major food producer)
Region inhabited by settlers (farmers/rural proletariat)
Homogeneous region (ethnically; culturally; in terms of origin)
Isolated region (cornered, “sertão”(backcountry))
Region where laws are not followed (land conflict)
Region that wants to emancipate (separatist; divisionist)
Rich region (prosperous; power; abundant; wealthy; self-sufficient; strong economy)
Vast Region (huge)

Source: The authors

Each article was individually analyzed and had its framing elements traced and described according to the subcategories¹⁹, as shown in the following example.

Figure 1 – News article published on the cover of the newspaper A Gazeta, from Florianópolis, in the 22nd of March of 1962



Source: The authors

¹⁹ The final codebook consisted of 12 categories and 187 subcategories of framing elements.

Table 2 – Example of analysis

Agenda: Iguazu Pro-State Movement		Text: 22
Newspaper: A Gazeta	Genre: Informational text	Format: News article
Date: 22/03/1962	Localisation: Cover (center of the page)	
Title: The separatist campaign of the West forced the Federal government to try to solve an old problem: the squatters one		
Terms Denominators	Qualifiers	Subcategories: Abandoned region (“It is the abandonment in which, for many and many years, has remained”); Region with potential (“region that has all the conditions for a magnificent development”); Region inhabited by colonists (“by Take of settlers”); Region of a working people (“who find fertile ground for their productive work”); Homogeneous region (“almost all of them from Rio Grande do Sul”); Region of social injustices (“They count on hundreds of them”).
	Subcategory: West (Western).	
Exemples		Subcategory: Development Potential (excellence of climate, fertility of the land); Of social conflicts (squatters at risk of being expelled from their lands).
Metaphors, slogans or buzzwords		Metaphors, slogans or buzzwords subcategory: which indicate abundance/wealth (“The Biblical Canaan”); that indicate something unfair (“infames concessions”).
Origin of the problem		Subcategory: State (caused due to the absence of the State or the ineffectiveness of government actions).
Consequence		Subcategory: Claim for autonomy (separatist campaign – title; separatist movement which, in the west of Paraná and Santa Catarina, aims at the emancipation of that area); Sensitization of the authorities (“region could thrive quickly, if to the particular initiative acusaid the Public Power”); Social injustice (problems related to land tenure, with hundreds of spolised by infamous concessions).
Visual images		It doesn’t apply.
Solution indication		Subcategory: Government should provide infrastructure (technical assistance, good roads); Government should curb arbitrarities and violence (fratricidal struggles); Government must intervene in favor of the weakest (“no company or no powerful will be strong enough to expropriate the Rurícola”); Government should better distribute the works, services and resources (until then the region was abandoned by the government, which needed to be reversed).
Active actors	Who speaks for the region	It doesn’t apply.
	Who speaks for the region	Subcategory: representant of the governmental instance
Passive actors	About who it is being spoken about in the region	Subcategory: Rural worker (Colono; Posseiro (squatter) farmer); Farmer (rancher); Civil society organization representative (campaign leaders); Generic collectivities (Pioneers).
	About who it is being spoken about beyond the region	Subcategory: Member of Government organ (Chairman of the Dispossession Committee, General Amaury Kruel); Representative of the governmental instance (President João Goulart; Ministers; Minister Armando Monteiro Filho); Generic collectivities (magnates, privileged, authorities).

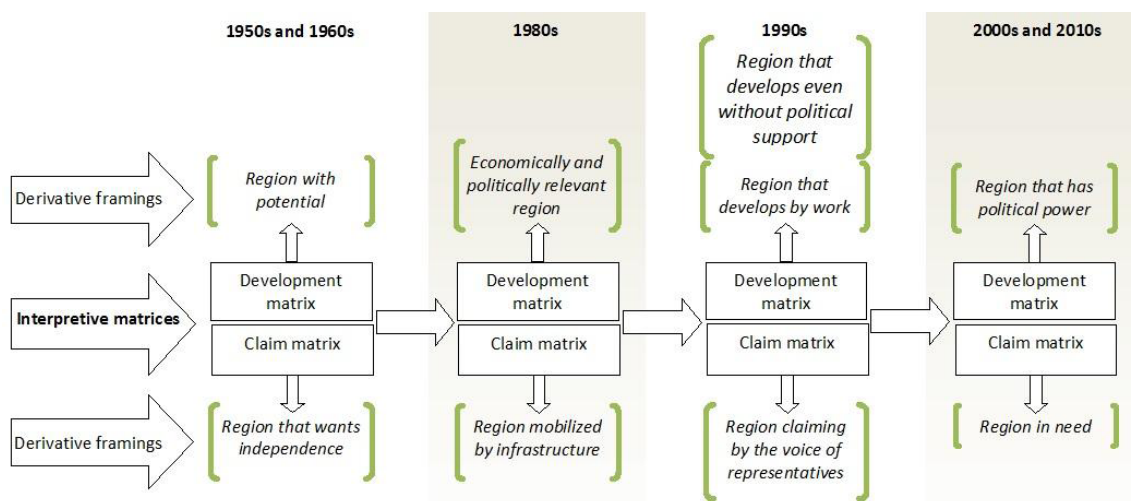
Source: The authors

As noted in the example, each text may contain more than one subcategory about each element. In other words, in the same journalistic story, it is possible that the region is defined as an abandoned region, especially by governments, but at the same time with great potential for development. What defines the framing is the combination of several subcategories present in a group of texts that occur over a period of time.

In the case of the above example, as in the other 24 texts, the predominant framing was identified as “region that wants to separate”. The main elements that characterize it are: the use of qualifier terms that point to an “abandoned region”; the name of the region as “West”; the identification of the origin of the problem reported as “state”; whose consequence is the “claim for autonomy”; the actors who speak in the region are generally generic collectivities; the actors who speak beyond the region are the “representatives of governmental bodies” and “members of government agencies”.

This methodology led to the identification of nine framings during the studied period, in the journalistic texts analyzed. From the tracing of these framings, similarities and differences were observed, so the results synthesis can be observed in the diagram.

Chart 1 – Synthesis of the relationship between the interpretative matrices and the framings



Source: The authors

Journalism and fights for recognition

Over the period of time of this study it was noted that the segregation between the Catarinense West and Extreme West, in the journalistic discourse, was being delineated over time and from a different perspective in the local/ regional and state/national journalism. While in the state and national press the Extreme West statement was kept at sporadic levels, in regional and local newspapers its use has increased.

In the 1950's and 1960's, it was common for Chapecó and São Miguel do Oeste to refer to the region as West. From the 1970's, with the creation of the *Ameosc*, they are limiting the West, most of the time, to the region closest to Chapecó and the Extreme West to that closest to São Miguel do Oeste.

It should be taken into consideration the nature of the guidelines studied here: the oldest texts, in general, deal with the *Pró-Estado do Iguaçú* Movement, which would encompass all this space; but the most recent are on the Bioceanic Corridor which apparently did not mobilize this whole area. This is an indication that the idea of a West or Extreme West is claimed according to the momentary interests of the actors involved.

Another aspect is the complexity of the discursive plot that constitutes the public space. The identity characteristics of the region are mobilized by different agents in narratives of also diverse areas, so that it is impossible to establish to what extent journalism appropriated the inputs – to use an expression of Maia (2008) – of other Social spheres to establish the frameworks and to what extent it provides these elements through their narratives.

As already discussed, Pollak (1992, p. 204) points out three essential elements in the construction of the identity of a group: boundaries of belonging; continuity within time, in the physical sense of the word, but also in the moral and psychological sense; sense of coherence.

About the first case researched, one perceives a dispute for this “boundary of belonging”, illustrated in the fact that different communication vehicles resort to distinct regionalization models to refer to the same space. Obviously, these borders are not only territorial, since the region that draws from the reports consists of a specific population (descendants of Europeans, Gaúchos), with specific values (work, productivity, economic development), central traces of what appears to be an hegemonic regional identity.

Both territorial landmarks and the symbolic characteristics of the region have a continuity in time (according to Pollak’s point). However, for this identity to be coherent (third aspect) there are a series of deletions, the main of them, of the voices of the black and indigenous populations living in the studied space. The narratives found in journalistic content, mostly, deal with the region from the perspective of the colonizers and their descendants.

The squatters (“*posseiros*”) cited in the news presented in this article, by way of example, already constituted this group of settlers coming from Rio Grande do Sul. Unlike the squatters of *Contestado*, who mostly were descendants of black and Indian people, some with Spanish or Portuguese ancestry, who were massacred in the second decade of the 20th century, opening space for the project of colonization with “the desired people” (RENK, 1997, p. 49).

It was pointed out, by demarcating the theoretical-methodological perspectives of the research, that in situations of public controversies there is a greater possibility of visualizing competing framings. In this research, however, the controversies surrounding the themes (the creation or not of the state of Iguaçú; the viability or not of the road corridor via the Peperi-Guaçu International Bridge) did not represent profound divergences about the object that tangential both discussions: the identity characterization of the Extreme West of Santa Catarina.

For example, in the article titled “The Separatist campaign of the West forced the federal government to solve an old problem: that of the squatters” (Image 1, page 15), it is perceived that the hegemonic identity characteristics are mobilized in the news conveyed in a newspaper written from Florianópolis, in the 1960’s, to justify the need for the state of Santa Catarina to make itself more present in the West, in order to avoid the emancipation of this territory and the creation of the state of Iguaçú. On the other hand, the economic achievements of the region achieved without governmental support, which would have been possible due to the working people, are part of the argumentation of much of the news and reports published in the local and regional press that defended the creation of the state of Iguaçú.

It is evidenced that local and regionally the symbolic characterizations about the Extreme West are mixed with the communication vehicles themselves, an aspect consistent with the definition of journalism of proximity of Campones (2002; 2011). With a history of direct linking between journalistic mediums and economic and political elites, this condition creates a tendency to strengthen identification elements linked to the hegemonic identity – also influenced by these powers, as pointed out by Renk (1997), Hass (2007) and Mombelli (1996).

There is in this relative discursive homogeneity regarding regional identity, especially in proximity journalism, a symbolic capital that counteracts the historically constructed narratives about the Extreme

West as a space of violence, a lawless land, “our far-west”²⁰. On the other hand, as already demonstrated, there is also exclusion.

The detachment cannot be inadvertently pointed out as a solution to the lack of plurality observed, since the analyzed examples point to a restricted visibility of regional claims in this sphere. Still, the state and national press often fail in the calculation, falling in the ease of using stereotypes. This does not occur only in the contents of the first decades analyzed. In 2016, the publication of a news report in the Brazilian *Exame* magazine generated controversy. In it, by denouncing the lack of customs control at the border, the journalist stated that “currently, cross over the bridge [*Internacional Peperi-Guaçu*] 2.000 drivers per day, among *unwary tourists and smugglers* (BRANCO, 2016, p. 22, *emphasis added*).

The way in which the bridge users are characterized is symptomatic. No workers, small businessmen or traders, but smugglers and unwary tourists – the latter, naïve enough to cross the Extreme West of Santa Catarina towards the beaches of the coast. As Taylor (2000) points out, both these simplifications, which refer to stereotypes, as well as the aforementioned silencing, cause damage to the affected groups, are a tool of oppression. The Extreme West is more than a smuggling route, and is also more than a community of European descendants focused on work. By ignoring this complexity, journalism plays a limited role in its ability to foster a meaningful public debate.

But if there is so much homogeneity in the characterizations of the Extreme West of Santa Catarina, why delimitate nine different framings? Because the analysis of framings performed allows more than the identification of the general lines of this identity constructed discursively by the press and that, as exposed, is consistent with that evidenced in discourses from other fields, such as those produced by researchers from the Santa Catarina Historical and Geographic Institute in the second half of the 20th century. It was possible to infer, for example, that the predominant framings about regional identity derive from two cognitive matrices – ‘development’ and ‘claim’ – which mobilize similar elements in different levels, a kind of specific identitary elements system. It is important to inform that, mostly, the texts of the local/regional communication mediums showed a predominance of the ‘development’ matrix framings, while those of the state/national newspapers concentrated in the ‘claim’ matrix framings.

For example, in the “region that develops by work” framework, there is an emphasis on the protagonism of the regional political and economic actors, who have managed to build an international bridge without support from state and federal governments. Already in the framework “region that claims by the voice of Representatives” there is, in a sense, a recognition that the actions of local elites, even working and focused on economic development (aspects of the hegemonic identity mapped), are limited, therefore the need to claim to the competent organs and institutions the fulfillment of demands.

It is worth to notice that concerning the framings of the ‘development’ matrix, there was an evolution over the researched period. The first traced framings, “region with potential,” unfolds into an “economically and politically relevant region,” which “progresses even without political support” and “develops by work” to, currently, set up in a “region that has political strength.” The ‘claim’ matrix already points to framings that do not interweave in such an obvious way.

The two agendas selected for the research continue to be discussed until the present day. Specifically in the case of the *Bioceânico* Road Corridor, the discussion about the opening of the road that integrates the project appeared for the first time in the newspapers analyzed more than 50 years ago, it took about 30 years for the construction of the International Bridge and, nowadays, it is necessary to build a new passage for the project to be viable.

²⁰ This aspect was analyzed in greater detail in Bavaresco & Locatelli (2017).

Thematic and context: the determinants of journalistic coverage

The data collected in the research realized for this article demonstrate that by adhering to or triggering specific identity characterizations, journalism is involved in a dispute by the power to symbolically determine, through enunciation, how is the space and the population to which it refers configured, what are its potentialities, qualities, and to define who it is. The data indicate that the selection of to which identity give visibility and to which invisibilise is not arbitrary, but rather reflects the social, economic, and political spheres in which the journalistic media is involved.

It is also clear that the difficulty in seeing plurality in this supposedly homogeneous space is not directly related to the fact that it is a proximity journalism or based on the remoteness (distance) of the community, but much more with the theme and the socio-political context at the time of coverage.

It was evidenced that the struggles for recognition permeate journalism in its different types, but at least in the one studied here, made from private communication companies, there are few possibilities for alternative identity conceptions, in opposition to the hegemonic ones. As a critical and investigative discourse, based on the public interest, journalism should problematize the hegemonies and, although this does appear sporadically in the analysis, these initiatives are still incipient.

On the other hand, the triggering of identity elements as a strategy of political leaderships and of the news vehicles themselves to establish bonds with the local community demonstrates that recognition can also be used as exchange currency. In other words, at the local level the recognition of certain identities is matched by an acceptance of those agents as representatives of local demands. In the context of political agents and journalistic mediums that are more distant from that reality, a counterpart is a release for them to manifest themselves on the region and the group on the agenda.

It is left open the possibility for researches that include in this type of analysis, already complex and with a large volume of variants involved, also the digital scenario, which would potentially allow the expansion of the voices involved in the battle for recognition, in addition to a broader typology of communication mediums.

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