



## 25 YEARS OF LEGISLATIVE TV IN BRAZIL: IMPRECISION IN LAWS IMPACTS DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** This article makes a socio-historical reflection on the 25 years of the legislation that foresaw the implementation of Legislative TVs in Brazil. With qualitative research, it addresses the advances that occurred in parliaments with the creation of TV Senado, TV Câmara, in addition to the pioneering role of TV ALMG, from Minas Gerais. It reveals that the lack of clarity in the laws ends up allowing deviations in the objectives of a Public TV. He considers that it was necessary to define financing models so that TVs can work independently. The paper also discusses the impact on the Santa Catarina parliament with the emergence of TVAL in Santa Catarina.

**Keywords:** Public Communication Policies; Public Communication; Legislative TVs; Parliament; TVALSC.

### 1 Introduction

The dispute for spaces in the public sphere by the mass media does not seem to have been understood as a problem by political actors in Latin America, not even from the second half of the 20th century onwards when social movements began to mobilize in search of democratization of the media. In Brazil, the broadcasting legislation does not present clear definitions of the public, private, and state systems, forming a gray area with room for appropriation and deliberate use by groups surrounding the political and economic powers. Chapter 23 of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 presents the principle of complementarity of systems, which divides but does not define what is state and what is public.

The private system is the easiest way to understand as it is the most widespread in Brazil. It is broadly composed of private companies that make it possible to sell advertising. Large private communication groups dominate the television sector, which for Bucci (2008) makes it difficult for Brazilians to understand another model: “In here, commercial television has become synonymous with television. Saying commercial television is like going into a pleonasm” (BUCCI, 2008, p. 256). It is also necessary to recognize that the monopolies and oligopolies of this private media system compromise freedom of expression and the exercise of citizenship, and this can be seen in the scheduling, focusing on, framing, a low plurality of voices, among other

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deficiencies, that the coverage of the events in the constituted powers present. Barros, Bernardes, and Rodrigues (2014) identify these problems of the private media in relationship to parliaments.

Seeking an understanding of the definition of the role of the public and state systems is more difficult, and the reasons may lie in the differences in the terms used for television concessions themselves. Most non-commercial TVs in the country have an educational concession, even though it does not define them as public or state-owned. Law No. 8,977 of 1995, known as the Cable Law, is still in force today, which established community and legislative television, TV Justiça and NBR – television of the federal executive branch. However, this regulation also does not clearly indicate what a public or state system is. For Bucci (2008), the politicians and professionals have informal concepts, according to their interests, about the differences between the state and the public, as Bucci (2008, p. 259) indicates when considering that “the common sense of professionals – and politicians – in the area, he consecrated the preposterous Manicheism that state communication is the one that 'defends the government's point of view' and public communication is the one that 'gives society a voice’”.

The author understands that these definitions are imprecise and that no state vehicle should serve as a platform to defend the government's interests. He considers this patrimonialism, even recognizing that this scenario has been established over decades because the State has been the keeper of these vehicles. The impasse over their role extends to legislative houses across the country, with journalists and parliamentarians seeking to support their views, even without clear legislation to support it. Barros and Lemos (2019) identify the challenges found by media makers in defending programming as an instrument of transparency in legislative activities, public debate, and national culture.

The position of media makers finds clashes and conflicts when being opposed by deputies who increasingly claim coverage of their activities in the House and electoral bases, in addition to rejecting the need for cultural programming as indicated by the research of Barros and Lemos (2019), who also, through interviews, identified that the public perceives the TV Câmara as a tool for monitoring legislative activities:

This means that, for the public, TV Câmara's most relevant function is to increase political transparency. The public's interest in documentaries and cultural programs is relatively low... which reveals that the public's perception is more in tune with the parliamentarians' view and not with the opinion of media makers. From the data, we can deduce that this is an interested public in the activities of the parliament. This indicates that since its creation, in 1998, until today, TV Câmara has built communities of interest, that is, groups that are willing to follow the news, the transmission of legislative sessions and debates and interviews with parliamentarians (BARROS; LEMOS, 2019, p. 128).

In the study of which this article is a result, the qualitative research type and the dialectical method of dynamic and totalizing interpretation of reality were adopted. The facts must be studied

within a social, political, and economic context. With the data collected from the sources, subsidies were sought to develop a socio-historical analysis of the analyzed TVs, reveal the editorial criteria used, and understand how the imprecision in the laws regarding these criteria impacts development.

## **2 Public TV in Brazil**

It can be considered that community, educational, university TVs, and those of the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches, belong to the scenario of Public TV in Brazil. However, they are governed by imprecise legislation. Paulino (2019) draws attention to the case of university TVs in which the normative deficit compromises the development of public policies that can guarantee the operation of channels as a “space for popularization, dialogue between universities and society and dissemination of scientific knowledge” (PAULINO, 2019, p.23).

Concerning community channels, the author recognizes that the low stimulus for their existence makes it difficult to make them available on open TV, although they are provided by Law 8.977/95, known as the Cable Law, as an open channel for free use by non-governmental and non-profit entities. Nevertheless, its legal provision contributed to occupying a space on cable TV, creating a contradiction, which still needs debate in the judiciary's legislative, executive practices and guarantees (PAULINO, 2019).

Peruzzo (2002) highlights the configuration of community TVs, which are generally characterized by having technical teams for preparing scripts and recording linked to entities such as NGO-Non-Governmental Organization, Church, University, Union, etc. In these cases, the most used production strategy has been the local population's participation in the stages of the definition of the theme, in the idealization of the script, in editing, in the performance of the role of actor, singer, among others. In the case of educational television, most are conducted by universities, which contributes to the programming being qualified by combining students' practice with the knowledge and experience of professors and professionals. This model also relies on foundations, which in the case of Brazil, there is TV Cultura in São Paulo as the main example. This TV is managed by Fundação Padre Anchieta and represents a dilemma present in many educational TVs in the country.

Coutinho (2001) discusses the relationship between the state and Educational TVs in Brazil. The author asks the following question: after all, has it been used as an official instrument of the government or a channel of representation for civil society? The answer seems to be the same, both in the 1980s and today. “[...] depending on the context and the forces acting in the political scenario, it can either be considered an instrument of representation of civil society or be used to consolidate the power of an authoritarian and centralizing State” (COUTINHO, 2001, p. 1).

The reflection on Educational TVs proposed by Coutinho (2001) considers Habermas's

(1984) concept of the public sphere, indicating that these channels can be intermediaries between the public power of the State and the private sphere; individuals, families, and businesses. Thus, a free and appropriate environment for the debate on public issues of collective interest is essential for exercising citizenship. In this context, public television would present itself as a democratic space, independent of commercial and political interests.

Other authors point out television as a space for transmitting sounds and images with cultural characteristics of people, enabling the creation of identities that are placed in communication processes. Thus, Barbero, Rey & Ríncon (2019) indicate public TV as an alternative to private TV. This one, linked to commerce, establishes a relationship with its viewers only as consumers. It encourages the production of homogenized programming, repeating established formulas that appeal to a medium mass of audience, without interest by audiences that do not identify with the predominant taste of the audience. For the authors, public TVs cannot reproduce the characteristics of private channels. However, they must assume a commitment to citizenship by guaranteeing the expression and strengthening of the cultural identity of populations as an educational project of peace and coexistence.

Public television must be understood as a meaning of making/creating culture since television is the privileged scenario in which the deepest transformations in the sensibilities and identities of social majorities are expressed. [...] This means that public television must work expression as a strategy, citizenship as a project, the experimental as an aesthetic, and identity experience. (BARBERO; REY & RINCÓN, 2019).

In this way, initiatives emerged in Latin American countries to create Public TVs and Legislative TVs. In Brazil, the process is driven by the National Forum for the Democratization of Communication (FNDC), composed of lots of segments of civil society, which proposes the reservation of television channels for the legislative sphere. In summary, the emergence of these channels provided new opportunities for citizens to follow parliamentary activities, now without the guidelines imposed by the traditional press.

Bolaño and Brittos (2008) highlight that the debates on the Cable Law took place at a time when Brazil was going through an electoral process to choose the first President of the Republic by direct vote, after almost thirty years, which may have contributed to the participation of sectors of society, that were at the heart of the discussions on the elaboration of the Federal Constitution. For the authors, the result of this process of inclusion of non-commercial broadcasters, especially Legislative TVs, is an advance and, at the same time, is configured as an anomaly within the closed television industry.

The logic of the legislative and judicial channels, of accountability, is obviously that of open mass public service television. But even university and community broadcasters, including local private channels (which ended up also developing within paying television systems, according to an essentially advertising logic), could hardly be classified as closed television, even if

segmented. Its inclusion in the mandatory basic cable TV package should be given the same title as commercial networks (BOLAÑO and BRITTOS, 2008, p.8).

In the article "Is it possible to make Public TV in Brazil?" Bucci (2010) deepens some reflections based on the recognition of the vicious context of these channels, such as the subordination to State authorities, which makes public broadcasters, in fact, not public. According to the author, the worldview from the state and governmental perspective makes the editorial line and programming distance themselves from society's concerns. "Subservience to public branch, in this case, is more than harmful, it is deadly. It prevents the broadcaster from transmitting a critical look in relation to power" (BUCCI, 2010, p.5).

Remembering that, despite the problems of origin and use of public broadcasters, these are communication instruments funded by society and should prioritize the public interest. In this sense, Bucci (2010) emphasizes that the journalism of these channels should guarantee, in the first place, the citizen's right to ask and demand and not to meet the dissemination interests from those who command public bodies:

Public broadcasters, in sum, exist to help society, they are a deformation that denies the reason for their origin (BUCCI, 2010, p. 5) of performing the ideal of the press - which is a social institution, independent of the State, in freedom of expression, responsible for overseeing power. They only have social and historical meaning if they are at the service of society and citizens' rights. When they serve the government and its propaganda needs.

The author also defends the view that public broadcasters should not be subordinated to the market since once it happens, they cease to be public and compromise their role in society. An example brought up by Bucci (2010) is the model adopted in Chile, which may even achieve administrative and financial success, but does not work as an instrument of public communication. Despite being considered public, TVN (Televisión Nacional de Chile) works as a commercial broadcaster, including in its schedule a program with humor, news, and sports, but not committed to the public interest. Thus, with most of the revenues coming from advertising, these stations only differ from commercial ones in their legal nature, which according to the author, implies aesthetic and ethical effects in the language and audiovisual codes.

The author reinforced the need for independence of these channels and autonomy in work and decision-making criteria, but this can only happen with critical distance from political, state, and market branches. A big dilemma arises because the separation can be confused with isolation and thus not be well accepted by society. However, the search for balance is essential. These broadcasters do not convey an image of ethical self-sufficiency nor give in to pressure to render accounts to the government or capital. Bucci (2010) argues that the commitment to transparency of these channels is with society, in relations that should be of interdependence.

Note that the functioning of public TVs in current democratic regimes is under pressure

from the market, which seeks to meet private interests, emptying their role as an instrument of public communication for promoting citizenship. European and North American experiences demonstrate that the regulation of fully public broadcasters, or those with a hybrid constitution with the private sector, can be an alternative to achieve legitimacy despite questions about costs, functionality, and efficiency. A process that mainly strengthened freedom of expression through regulatory frameworks, preventing attempts at censorship or government interference in editorial policy.

In the case of Brazil, Bucci (2010) highlights that the lack of regulation combined with the full-time character of the public sector of most public broadcasters leaves them vulnerable to the interests of political authorities, weakening their function of serving the public interest. Even more serious models are educational and community TVs entrusted to foundations and associations linked to churches, in which ideological and economic interests deforms the programming schedule.

In this regard, the author proposes three criteria for the definition of a public broadcaster in Brazil. The first has a legal nature, in which the foundations of private law fit; the *Oscips*, which include civil society organizations of public interest; NGOs, Non-Governmental Organizations; and state-owned companies, which range from university to legislative. It is worth mentioning here that the legal constitution itself does not guarantee the fulfillment of the role of serving the public interest; the absence of commercial activity and political interference is fundamental.

The second prerequisite indicated by Bucci (2010) is related to financing. Although it may originate from direct administration or public and private funds, it should not bind the interests of governments or companies. The author studies the successful case of the British Broadcasting Corporation, better known by its acronym BBC, which since 1922 has operated as a public radio and television corporation in the United Kingdom and has as one of the financing possibilities the charging of a fee in each household with TV, provided by the law. Another way of funding the station's operation is through voluntary donations, which also bring results and is adopted by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), also known as the US NPR. In this case, it receives donations from the private and public sectors. In both cases, the challenges are related to editorial management that cannot be submitted to directions, pressures, or any discretionary act of public authority.

The third fundamental prerequisite for a TV station to be public is independent management, which, according to the author, means administrative, financial, and editorial autonomy without the need to be accountable to political agents or dispute an audience. Independence becomes an ethical factor that paves the way for thinking about aesthetic flags of programming, which should aim at the invisible and “[...] pierce the fabric of visibility, which wraps what we call reality like a wrapper. Here is where the duty of language experimentation is

inscribed” (BUCCI 2010, p.15). In this respect, public TV should not collaborate with the illusion generated by entertainment and demystify the idea that only the visible contains the criterion of reality.

In addition to aiming for the invisible, Bucci (2010) also proposes some aesthetic banners to dismantle the entertainment industry's offer of pre-fabricated enjoyment. The author explains that Public TV should not promote advertising pieces like commercial TVs, which creates a cycle of immediate enjoyment, often superior to the act of consumption itself, which leads to another aesthetic banner that is the search for content that does not fit in the Commercial TV, so public TV must not copy aesthetic genres and formats so as not to succumb to the impulse of the imperatives of the commercial audience logic:

Its vocation is to problematize this primitive mode of seduction - or affective begging. It must dismantle this dead-end game and unmask the traps. Its communication proposal is more uncertain, more ungrateful, more provocative — indispensable for diversifying languages. Either it will be like that, or it will not be able to stop being an auxiliary line of the industry, sometimes even supplying one with products for commercialization (BUCCI, 2010, p.16).

With the mission of emancipating citizens, public TV must understand its space for disseminating information, culture, and critical thinking, thus avoiding copying and adapting entertainment programs from commercial broadcasters, which are more committed to commercial ideas and values. These and other concerns and recommendations of BUCCI (2010) regarding the programming of public TVs face as an obstacle the fear of the “boss”, which the administrators of these channels experience because their decisions always put their positions at stake. The author states that it is necessary to get rid of fear and the way to do that is the awareness that the real bosses should not be the rulers, as well as expanding the audience should not be the objective of the channels. In this way, the public interest will have priority and democracy strengthened.

Understanding how public and private interests are articulated becomes complex when considering the financing modalities and production models of public channels within pay-TV systems. The authors understand that the gaps in Brazilian legislation generate distortions in the organization model of the television system, making it closer to what was implemented during the military regime than those in force in democratic countries. However, in Brazil, there is the aggravating factor that open public service channels, such as TVs Senado, Câmara, and Justiça have not yet found their place in the UHF or digital signal in all regions of the country. The system is still dominated by the private oligopoly of commercial TV and favors the market reserve of open channels and the advertising market.

### **3 The Law of Cable TV**

Lemos et al. (2011) report that in the process of debate that led to the approval of the Cable Broadcasting Law (Law 8.977/95), known as the Cable Law, alternatives were provided to

bring the population closer to the discussions that take place in municipal, state, and in the National Congress, and thus, to provide popular participation and control in the legislative process. This contribution is also highlighted by Paulino (2019), who considers the Cable Law as a reinforcement of the “public DNA” of legislative channels, mainly TV Senado and TV Câmara, which should be references for financing and management of other state and municipal legislative TVs. From the perspective of institutional actors, the intention was that the channels promote the image of the Legislative Branch. Thus, the final wording of the Law, enacted on January 6th, 1995, forced cable TV operators to allocate free channels:

I - BASIC CHANNELS FOR FREE USE:

(...)

- b) a municipal/state legislative channel, reserved for shared use between the City Councils located in the municipalities in the service provision area and the Legislative Assembly of the respective State, being the channel aimed at documenting parliamentary work, especially live broadcast of the sessions;
- c) a channel reserved for the Chamber of Deputies, for the documentation of their work, especially the live broadcast of the sessions;
- d) a channel reserved for the Federal Senate for the documentation of their work, especially the live broadcast of the sessions (...) (BRASIL, Congresso, 1995).

Paulino (2019) reports that in the process of drafting the Cable Law, the concern was to guarantee the transmission of legislative sessions, which in itself would justify the existence of channels for municipal chambers, assemblies, and the National Congress. In this regard, it is noted that the omission of the Cable Law, in some aspects, was compensated over time by the journalistic production that would be in charge of presenting new content, which gradually became available on the internet, thus meeting the recommendations of the MacBride report - UNESCO (1983)<sup>3</sup>.

The mandatory availability of free channels for the Government, universities, and socio-cultural movements was criticized by large business communication groups, which claimed to be a maneuver for the use of the public machine by parliamentarians, with exclusively electoral objectives.

Letícia Renault (2004) investigates the contribution of these channels to the interaction between social communication and democracy in Brazil. In the presentation of the work, the author exposes a series of criticisms made by the mainstream media to these channels, such as that by journalist Boris Casoy on TJ Brasil, shown by SBT, when on February 5th, 1996, TV Senado began broadcasting. “[...] journalist Boris Casoy used his catchphrase “This is a shame” to emphasize that it was a shame to use public resources for the dissemination of legislative acts

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<sup>3</sup> The MacBride Report, also known as "Many Voices, One World", was a UNESCO document published in 1980 and written by a committee chaired by the Irish Nobel Peace Prize winner Seán MacBride. It aimed to analyze communication problems in the world in modern societies, particularly in relation to mass communication and the international press, and then to suggest a new communicational order to solve these problems and promote peace and human development.



through its own TV” (RENAULT, 2004, p. 5).

The author observes that the moment marked the peak of the theory of the minimum state, with criticisms about government actions that could be carried out by the private sector being common. Several press vehicles also understood that the coverage of the acts of the three Powers was being carried out by their private groups with success and printed headlines attacking the Legislative initiative.

Jardim (2006) attributes the origin and development of legislative TVs in Brazil to debates on the democratization of communication, undertaken by social movements and class associations, such as the National Federation of Journalists, which since the period of the Constitutional Convention Assembly mobilized for the democratization of society and social rights that should be guaranteed regardless of the government's will. One of the democratic achievements in communication was access to “basic channels for free use”, expressed in the “Cable Law”. Nevertheless, the path to recognizing this right was not easy and only materialized after articulation with organized groups of private communication companies, which acted professionally to maintain their patrimonial interests.

The fact that private communication groups influence politicians to guarantee norms and laws that serve private interests through a public communication service concession indicates the gravity of the patrimonialism logic that prevails in the country. Based on the sociological concepts of Weber (1999), studies on patrimonialism in Brazil seek to define it as the appropriation of state resources by public agents, in this case, politicians and business groups. According to Sorj (2000), this situation contradicts the modern liberal and neoliberal bases, in which the State and the market are not associated, the laws and rules in force are universal, and the government acts guided by organized civil society. For the author, patrimonialism in Brazil has become a traditional, bureaucratic, and political practice.

The transformation of patrimonialism may have been so profound and effective that it had already been noted by Schwartzman (1988) when he adopted the term “neopatrimonialism” to indicate that it is not just about the survival of traditional structures in contemporary societies but a way of a social group, even without resources or legitimate merits, dominate the political system through the state bureaucracy. According to Fedozzi (1999), political and technocratic practices can identify patrimonialism in the domination model.

For the author, another aspect of patrimonialism in Brazil is the authoritarian character, which is demonstrated when the use of power by the State is permeated with strategies of co-optation and exclusion, without taking into account the demands of society and the social contract, which recognizes rights of citizens and the differences between the public and the private.

In this respect, the patrimonial characteristics that private communication vehicles in Brazil present with their persistent domination strategies in telecommunications as well as in other sectors of society are noteworthy. As the public concession holders to produce and display content

with the potential to influence large masses and profit from the sale of advertising, these groups have achieved sufficient mobilizing power to ensure that politicians serve their purposes.

#### **4 Legislative TV in Brazil**

The Cable Law resulted in only a part of what was left of the Democratic Information Bill that did not get enough support to pass through the Congress, recalls Sant'Anna (2019). The need to consolidate a model for public communication in the country makes it necessary even today to reflect and propose public policies and rules for regulation, management, and social control, especially for legislative TVs.

Today, the legislative means, mainly the Chamber and Senate, have the format they have due to an editorial vision, a journalistic vision, a vision of citizenship of those professionals who have passed through them, but there is no article that, for example — you will think it is absurd - ban advertising on legislative channels. And we know that there are already municipal channels that are thinking about this possibility of selling spaces in the programming to fund their legislative coverage work. No legislation establishes that the channel must be plural. All current values were created by the generations that formed the legislative channels. And from the example of TV Senado and TV Câmara, these values were taken to States and Municipalities (SANT'ANNA, 2019, p.17).

Just the consideration of a remote hypothesis of advertisements in legislative channels already shows the proportion of risks that conflicts of public and private interests can bring to the exercise of citizenship and the democratic regime. Sant'Anna's provocation should serve as a warning for society to pay attention and mobilize to regulate the media, especially public vehicles.

The author proposes a regulatory framework for legislative communication with transparency as one of the pillars, like in France, where the choice of the director of the Parliament's TV is made by public notice, guaranteeing management autonomy and compliance with the editorial project, regardless of the political configuration of the legislative house.

It is not possible to say with certainty that the French model or any other would be ideal for Brazil. However, a regulatory policy would avoid sudden changes in editorial routines, interruption of serial programs, among other problems that the frequent replacement of directors causes. With the inconstancy of the boards of legislative TVs, bringing damages to editorial planning, there are live broadcasts that can cover different activities and approaches of the parliament, guaranteeing the possibilities of accountability as a conquest of society, regardless of regulation. Thus, it is up to journalists and technical professionals to find ways of producing content that provide meaning to these public communication tools, preventing them from being just spaces in the public sphere at the mercy of strategic disputes by politicians who seek to highlight their personal, party images, and forget public and institutional commitment.

For Renault (2004), legislative channels highlighted aspects and characteristics that were essentially new in Brazilian television, with formats and contents completely different from

commercial TV, presenting the internal routine of legislative houses without the need for commercial breaks.

The author understands that the Legislative Branch sought its own place in the public sphere as a visibility strategy to guarantee free access to media that served the political interests of parliamentarians. However, the intention would be to search for media space and establish a communication channel between representatives and those represented, increasingly critical with access to information and symbolic content through a global media, which technology is in charge of taking to any geographic point.

This new public potential may have influenced the change in the behavior of parliamentarians after the implementation of legislative channels, according to Freitas (2004). The author understands that, although it is difficult to attribute changes in the behavior of senators to the beginning of TV Senado's activities. It is possible to say that the new channel resulted in changes in the functioning of the house, as well as in the activities of parliamentarians.

Muniz Sodré (2001), in an article published in the *Observatório da Imprensa*, observes a process of change in the behavior of senators since the beginning of TV Senado broadcasts in February 1996. The author attributes to the millions of potential audience viewers, the senators' attitudes changes, who became more aggressive in the debates, sought to refine the linguist, and became more careful with the quality of information and physical appearance.

#### **4.1 Legislative TV of Minas Gerais: the pioneer**

The centralization of debates on the installation of Legislative TVs in the National Congress, especially in the Senate, indicated that the first channel would show up in Brasília, but that was not what happened. In Minas Gerais, debates between state deputies were also advanced, and on November 30th, 1995, the TV Assembly of Minas Gerais began broadcasting throughout the state. According to Renault (2004), the occasion was marked by the inauguration speech, by the then president of the Legislative Assembly of Minas Gerais, deputy Agostinho Patrús, who confirmed the strategy of bringing the parliament closer to society, through the creation of their own TVs, having as an argument the opinion polls, which revealed the citizens' lack of knowledge about the work of their representatives. "In here [TV Assembleia], this rendering of accounts will be done in a serious, permanent, and direct way, with qualified information" (RENAULT, 2004, p. 43).

The author explains that at the beginning of TV ALMG there were only two and a half hours of daily programming with priority for the plenary sessions. However, nine months later, in 1996, the station reached 12 hours a day already with material produced in the studio. Over time, TV Assembleia's programming reached 230 cities and started to have 24 hours daily programming, which, according to the former director of Radio and Television at ALMG, Rodrigo Lucena, "filled a gap in relation to what other broadcasters offered. TV started to act as

a bridge between the Legislative, what happens in the Executive, and what interests society” (Astral, 2012, p. 25).

The Revista Astral (2012) also brings a speech by the former director of Institutional Communication at ALMG, Ramiro Batista de Abreu, who highlights the contribution of Legislative TV to citizens' understanding of the parliament functioning.

According to the ALMG website, in 2007, the programming started to be transmitted over the internet in real-time, expanding the reach of TV Assembleia. In 2009, migration from analog to digital signal began, acquiring new equipment and a leap in sound and image quality.

#### **4.2 TV Senado**

Less than a year after the beginning of ALMG's Legislative TV broadcasts, it was TV Senado's turn to go live on February 5th, 1996, complying with the creation Resolution dated June 8th, 1995, based on Law 8.977/95, as explained by Monteiro (2011). The author also rescues the institutional work of the Central de Vídeo that recorded parliamentary work since 1993. During the signing ceremony of the official act of creation of TV Senado, José Sarney highlighted the channel's objectives to meet the need for transparency of legislative institutions.

For Renault (2004), the attitude taken initially by legislative TVs had the purpose of transforming the voter's lack of knowledge into some understanding, inverting the logic of private communication groups. A demonstration that, from then on, society would exercise the right to dialogue, promoting the viewer to a citizen.

Agência Senado (2016) highlights that boosting publications on social media from 2014 has started a new audience cycle for TV Senado, reaching in 2016 a record number of views on the YouTube platform, with the impeachment process of the then President Dilma Rousseff.

Seeking to fulfill the role of a reference Legislative TV in Brazil, TV Senado has had as a guideline "to contribute to the full exercise of citizenship through innovative, interactive, democratic, and transparent communication between the Senate and the National Congress with society" (PLANO ESTRATÉGICO 2010- 2018, p. 09). The document also guides the radio and other digital platforms, which, together with TV Senado, are managed by the Special Department for Social Communication at the House. SANT'ANNA (2009) emphasizes that TV Senado's differential lies in the mandatory live broadcasts of plenary sessions above any other agenda or content.

It should be noted that any limitation in the display of content produced by TV Senado, due to the priority of live broadcasts of plenary sessions and committees, was overcome by the availability of programming on the house's website and other digital platforms, promoted from 2009 onwards. In this way, Sant'Anna (2009) highlights that the new possibilities for disseminating content are multiplied in different formats and devices, contributing to TV Senado fulfilling its role of serving the public interest.

TV Senado's initiatives seek to make it a reference for legislative channels in the country, both in language and content format and interaction strategies through digital social networks such as YouTube. The challenge is not to let the channels be just an extension or space for posting television material already broadcast, recognizing that there are differences in languages.

### **4.3 TV Câmara**

TV Câmara was created on January 20th, 1998, when the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Michel Temer (PMDB-SP) placed the Bill of Resolution 158/97 for consideration by the plenary, which was symbolically voted and approved by federal deputies. TV Câmara appears as a tool to establish a communication channel between parliamentarians and society, enabling the transmission of plenary sessions and committees in a transparency movement, as Santos (2005) proposed. He also highlights as decisive factors for the creation of the station the difficulties of deputies in occupying space in the mainstream media and even in elections to establish contact with voters. The needs and challenges were practically the same as those of its predecessors, TV Assembleia de Minas and TV Senado.

Thus, TV Câmara became part of a scenario in which Brazilian public institutions began to comply with the 1988 constitutional directive of redefining the communication systems created and developed by the military regime. Gradually, the new institutional dynamics show signs of transparency by the most diverse media and present objectives in tune with democratic airs, which, in the perspective of Karlsson (2013), value political participation, interactivity, accountability, and responsibility.

TV Câmara is one of the many tools that are part of the dissemination structure of the Chamber of Deputies. According to the Institution's online portal, the sector has a Public Relations Department and a Media Department divided into TV, Radio and Online News Agency, and Social Media.

Barros, Bernardes & Lemos (2008) explain that the emergence of new technologies has not affected the appreciation of TV Câmara, among parliamentarians, as the main vehicle for legislative interaction. The authors indicate that this is due to the strategies used so that the information draws attention and instigates the citizen to know more about the activities, structure, and functions of the Legislative Branch, as well as about the basic notions about the legislative process, in a movement that it can be an alternative of political education.

The effectiveness of these strategies in the legitimacy and credibility of parliament can be questioned, especially if analyzed in isolation. Miguel (2002) understands that no matter how positive a piece of information is, it must be associated with other strategies to have the expected effect and overcome the skepticism of a large part of the population regarding the functioning of democratic institutions, especially with regard to the perception of the distance that the common citizen has from decision-making.

A dilemma of TV Câmara and other legislative channels can be translated from the understanding of Entman (1994) about the news framing. The author warns that the simple dissemination of information as a movement that generates an illusion of open and participatory democracy can leave citizens far from the reality of institutional dynamics that present themselves as closed structures and enclosed in their decisions. This happens in the process of news framing chosen by the media when choosing some aspects of reality and excluding others.

In 2006, the president of the Brazilian Association of Legislative Television and Radios (Astral), Rodrigo Lucena, said at the 1st National Forum of Public TVs that the development of legislative broadcasters in the country was marked by the reproduction of structures and relations of the Legislative Branch, which are beyond broadcasts and journalistic coverage, also suffering the influences and limitations of the power they represent.

Lucena (2006) explains that the sociopolitical function of these stations is fulfilled with difficulties due to the lack of social control mechanisms and internal rules, such as the functional stability of their directors. On the other hand, some factors contribute in its favor, such as party pluralism in the legislative branch and the live broadcast of plenary sessions and public hearings.

However, as part of the administrative structure of the Legislative Branch, TV Câmara acts in the production and dissemination of content using publicity as criteria and countering the negative agenda of the private media on the institution. Barros, Bernardes, and Rodrigues (2014) observe that the two arguments that follow institutional precepts aim to guarantee to the citizen the constitutional principle of the right to publicity of the acts of public institutions, present in representative government systems, which, according to Guizot (2008) have as features the division of powers, elections, and publicity, the latter being the main one for linking government and society.

Therefore, considering Thompson's (1995) proposal that visibility is of the nature of power, TV Câmara expands the diversity of options so that society has access to information on the activities of parliamentarians, reducing dependence on private communication vehicles. Freitas (2004) and Renault (2004) present research demonstrating that Legislative TVs have become channels of access to information that was not previously disclosed and influenced the legislative production process, such as the increase in the frequency of parliamentarians in plenary sessions and committees. The authors report that to take advantage of the visibility space offered by TV itself, parliamentarians began to take care of the visual and oratory, seeking to gradually increase the time for speeches and the number of speeches. This process generated greater demand for service and hiring more press professionals for institutions and offices, boosting detailed coverage of events in real-time and eroding the mainstream media's monopoly on setting the public agenda.

Barreto (2019) expands the discussion on the challenges of live broadcasts and the demand for transparency, highlighting the dynamics affected in parliament with mediatization.

Accountability and responsiveness actions on the part of parliamentarians are evidenced, which affect the pace of work, the discussion on the platform, and the representation of intentions and interests. Therefore, although many changes have contributed to increasing the workload and visibility of parliamentary activity, the quality in the elaboration of public policies is not guaranteed if we take into account the environment permeated with conflicts of interest between politicians and the media that only relate to each other with interdependence and guarantee of mutual benefits. Even on legislative TVs, the complexity of this context can induce parliamentarians to focus their actions on gaining visibility, leaving aside political relevance and technical issues in the discussion of agendas.

Renault (2004) observes that the possibility of expanded coverage of the events that legislative TVs offer can be considered the main difference from other TV channels as if it were a mirror placed in front of the institution that gives a diagnosis of the representatives chosen by the citizen.

Contrary to what is conventionally expected from television, the Legislative channels would not have come to fulfill the traditional task of entertaining a consuming public but to feed a citizen public. Their function would be to exhibit and communicate to society the routine of these parliaments. Once the live transmission of the legislative process is assured, a seed would be launched to help the action of the citizen-viewer, of organized groups and society in front of Parliament. The electronic access made from the legislative TV channels seems to offer society an additional mechanism to enable the monitoring of parliamentary activities and, thus, enable instruments for inspection and measurement of the Parliament, which is elected by this society (RENAULT, 2004, pp. 134-135).

For Queiroz (2007), it is impossible to identify the role of TV Câmara clearly, nor to define the organization and objectives of the channel, observing only the existing legislation. According to the author, some answers can be found by analyzing the context of the channel creation since the Chamber of Deputies was chaired by Deputy Ibsen Pinheiro (1991-1993), who conducted studies to reorganize the communication of the Chamber of Deputies, in line with the social demands that emerged with the country's redemocratization.

In the institutional communication project, the ideas for creating a system formed by radio, TV and newspaper were outlined. There was also a central question: these media should pay special attention to events that were ignored by the majority of the commercial press – the debates in the committees (where most modifications to the projects are made, including with the participation of civil society); the various stages of processing a proposal and the discussions and votes in plenary. There was a need to reverse the logic imposed by the traditional press, which covered the party struggle, political differences, intrigues, and denunciations much more than the process of discussion and voting on the laws. It was necessary to show the richness of debates held in parliament; the legislative routine and not just the spectacular events. (QUEIROZ, 2007, p.84 and 85).

Malavazi (2004) reports that the Chamber of Deputies sought to standardize the work of

communication professionals in 2004 with the launch of the “Secom Writing Manual”, which already included recommendations from Márcio Marques de Araújo, the then secretary of Social Communication. The intention was for the manual to be a kind of script that would point out the paths of balance between journalistic and political criteria, guaranteeing fair coverage of the work of parliamentarians. The Manual also highlighted the priority of the public interest as a criterion for measuring the importance of news across all of Secom's media platforms.

Regarding TV Câmara, the manual points out that the channel's focus is to overcome the challenges of producing and disseminating news with balance, quality, and precision regarding the legislative process and parliamentary activity. The text also emphasizes that what should guide TV coverage is the public interest and that the broadcaster's programming should reflect the country's diversity.

The Manual also recommends that, when guiding journalism in the public interest, TV Câmara must identify the relevance of events, the activities of the House, and their effects on citizens' daily lives, and then explain how they are processed in the political environment. The document also guides that audiovisual production must deal with the country's history, art, and political-cultural news, seeking new audiovisual languages.

Another dynamic of TV Câmara, dealt with by the Manual is the role of the Editorial Board, whose objectives are to decentralize its decisions and try to avoid political interference. According to the Manual, the council must be composed of employees of TV Câmara with leadership positions, who must periodically meet to decide on the editorial line, focus and format of the productions.

#### **4.4 TVAL (Santa Catarina)**

TVAL, the TV of the Legislative Assembly of Santa Catarina, went live on October 25th, 1999, being the second public TV set up by legislative assemblies in Brazil. At that time, ALESC was chaired by former deputy Gilmar Knaesel, who wanted to create a structure similar to TV Senado and TV Câmara to bring citizens closer to the Assembly and, at the same time, making legislative acts transparent (ALESC 2019). According to Monteiro (2011), TVAL started its activities with the broadcast of the plenary sessions under the slogan “The image of democracy” and gained repercussion beyond what was expected.

In an article published on the ALESC portal on October 25th, 2019, in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the station, the former president of the Assembly, Gilmar Knaesel reports that at that time of TVAL's creation, the institution's financial situation was difficult, which contributed for low investments. Another report is from the first director of the station, journalist Ilson Chaves da Silva, who remembers the team with only six professionals, to perform the exhibition of the material through a computer. According to him, a cheap form and little used at that time, but other states replicated it.



Similar to what was seen in the pioneering legislative TVs in Brazil, TV Senado and TV Câmara, TVAL also influenced the change in the behavior of Santa Catarina parliamentarians, who began to see the network as an opportunity to show their work.

According to the ALESC website (2020), TVAL is present in the 63 largest municipalities in Santa Catarina, in some on an open signal. The programming is also fully available on YouTube, which in the evaluation of the station's former director, Ilson Chaves da Silva, contributed to the channel becoming a generator of agendas for other communication vehicles in the state.

According to ALESC (2020), TVAL's programming includes the transmission of plenary and solemn sessions, meetings of ALESC's technical committees, seminars, forums, and other events organized by the Legislative. Three daily news programs are also produced, a special news program per week, debate programs, and interviews with deputies on a wide range of topics, in addition to coverage of elections and parties in Santa Catarina.

By integrating the Directorate of Social Communication (DCS) of ALESC, TVAL is subject to Resolution No. 001/2006, which deals with the communication attributions of the Legislative Assembly of Santa Catarina.

- I - to enable the Legislative Assembly's relationship with society, in its most diverse segments, using the means and techniques of communication and marketing through journalism, advertising, opinion poll, and public relationship;
- II - organize the strategic planning of communication and the articulation of the information dissemination instruments available in the Legislative Assembly, ensuring the unity of language and objectives, based on Santa Catarina's public opinion and political determinations of the Table;
- III - arrange for the collection of internal information, distribution, and facilitation of access to information on the activities of deputies and the Legislative Assembly to the media and segments of society;
- IV - to be responsible for the creation, revision, and formatting of publications, preserving the visual and editorial unity of graphic pieces produced by the Legislative Assembly;
- V - to elaborate the contents, formats, and update the Legislative Assembly page on the worldwide web.
- VI - to manage and to supervise the activities of professionals hired by the Legislative Assembly to provide services in the area of communication;
- VII - to be responsible for writing texts and messages disseminated by the sound service of the Legislative Assembly; and
- VIII - to monitor and control contracts with advertising agencies. (ALESC, Resolution No. 001 of 2006, art. 49)

According to Lucinda and Bertasso (2017), the DCS mission was to present to society the activities of the Santa Catarina Parliament and its deputies, mainly through the production of news, which the commercial media would broadcast. From 2015, the sector decides to increase the harmony between the issues discussed in society and the legislative agenda.

The authors interviewed the then ALESC DCS Director Thamy Soligo, who explained the four strategies for achieving the new goals. The first is content segmentation: "We are

segmenting the content a lot, trying to talk to niches, different audiences, respecting the language of each of these” (SOLIGO, 2016). The other three are the search for new languages, the diversity of channels, and the occupation of spaces. For Lucinda and Bertasso (2017), these measures can ensure communication as a tool of visibility for the Legislative, also contributing to institutional decision-making.

## 5. Conclusion

It is possible to notice that even after 25 years of the creation of TV ALMG, pioneer of Legislative TVs in Brazil, evasive legislation is still the cause or justification for obstacles in the elaboration of public policies that guarantee the promotion of citizenship through these channels. By taking the Cable Law of 1995 as the main reference for any discussion and implementation of legislative TVs in Brazil, which does not provide for delimitation in the differences in attributions, costs, and forms of operation between public TV and state TV, political actors find loopholes for creation of institutional communication instruments, or even personal promotion, failing to meet the role of a public communication channel fully.

Even without financing, management models, and attributions provided for by law, these channels are subject to the discretion of the governing bodies of the legislative houses, with decision-making being ultimately exercised by the presidents of the parliamentary houses. It is necessary to recognize the Cable Law's contribution to communication in the country. However, its guidelines are insufficient to guarantee a financing plan for these TVs, in addition to that stipulated by the parliamentary administration, which uses the twelfth to fund salaries and all parliament activities.

Thus, it is understood that even with the migration to the digital signal and the availability of content on the internet, further discussions will be necessary in the National Congress to create new legislation that directs the role of legislative TVs and how they should act. Overcoming dilemmas regarding its role as a Public Policy (PP) for Communication should be one of the goals of future legislation, after all, it will be necessary to have an answer to the question of the positioning of these channels. Should they be exclusively institutional tools, or can they expand their editorial range to fulfill the role of promoting citizenship as a public policy in accordance with the concept of Public Communication?

This question should be extended to reflect on educational channels, which are public stations, and undergo the same digitization process, increasing the number of people impacted by the messages disseminated. Furthermore, like the legislative channels, its use as a political bargaining chip over time had the effect of its use by foundations and entities linked to churches, which transformed public policy into a channel for disseminating religious ideas without commitment to democratic precepts.

Thus, it is urgent to reflect, discuss and find a definition of the role of this Public Policy

in the Brazilian State so that it can be known and disseminated to all social actors involved. A clear definition of this PP can contribute to decision-making by managers, to raise awareness among citizens, and also to avoid one of the greatest risks to recent democracies, which is the appropriation of public goods and services for private interests and personal promotion.

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