



# **Verticality and horizontality in the Territory of Radio in Vale do Taquari/RS**

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## **Abstract**

In this article, radio is the center of the debate on the subject that brings communication closer to regional development. The theoretical/analytical approach to carry out this study was found in the concepts of verticality and horizontality by Milton Santos. The objective is to identify the verticality and horizontality that are materialized in the territory of radio in Vale do Taquari, in Rio Grande do Sul, specifically, in the process of spatial distribution of commercial broadcasters licensed to operate in that region. In theoretical/methodological terms, the concepts of used territory, and the verticality and horizontality are connected with the studies of Political Economy of Communications (PEC), supported also by Geography of Communication. This research is characterized by its qualitative approach. Based on the analyses, it is verified that verticality vectors stand out in the spatial occupation of the territory of radio in Vale do Taquari, firstly, from the action of exogenous forces, and, secondly, with movements within the territory itself, causing the formation of networks and concentration of ownership.

**Keywords:** Territory. Radio. Communication. Regional development

## **1 Introduction**

Throughout the twentieth century, as discussions on development reached academic prominence, the concept gained new dimensions beyond the economic perspective and progress. Aspects such as equal rights and access to goods and services are now incorporated into the development process. A new scientific approach is established, based on the context of interdisciplinarity. In this sense, the communicational perspective also enters the debate, but not without

challenges (FELIPPI, BRANDT, 2020). Peruzzo (2014, p. 189) argues that communication is part of the concept of development when development is understood with a view towards “economic democracy and the full growth of people”, built with “wide and deep popular participation” and when such communication is aimed at promoting citizenship and social transformation practices. This article aims at bringing radio to the discussions that put communication and regional development together.

Over more than 90 years, Brazilian radio has survived competition from important technological advances in terms of media, such as television and the internet. It has adapted to digital innovations and, regardless of the platform, transmits the message to receivers, who are no longer just listeners but also readers and spectators. Audience has expanded and combined with other formats and devices: it is on satellite or cable TVs, on computers and smartphones, whether in WhatsApp message groups, in live video streams on Facebook or in Instagram videos and posts. Radio is going through a convergence stage, characterized by the “influence of mobile devices — particularly cell phones — the internet and its correlates” (FERRARETTO, 2015, p. 219).

The TIC Domicílios survey (2019)<sup>1</sup>, “ICT Domiciles”, from the Regional Center of Studies for the Development of the Information Society (Cetic.br) reveals that, in Brazil, 61% of households have a conventional radio device. It is necessary to add to this figure the possibility of listening to radio also through other means, such as a computer, a notebook, a TV set, audio devices in private vehicles and public transport (buses and subways), and a cell phone or smartphone. In the case of cell phones, which have been widely used to listen to radio, TIC Domicílios indicates that 93% of households had these devices, and that internet access is available in 71% of households. Another survey, by Kantar Ibope (2019), deals with national audience and radio, and indicates that radio reaches 83% of people living in 13 metropolitan regions of the country, a figure that represents more than 52 million listeners, with average consumption of 4 hours and 33 minutes a day. In the Vale do Taquari region, Rio Grande do Sul, 96% of the population listens to radio, with an average time of 4 hours and 9 minutes a day (KANTAR IBOPE, 2018). Based on these numbers, it is possible to realize that radio is a communication vehicle that has high audience rates among the Brazilian population and has been adapting to different technological platforms to create journalistic, informative, musical, and advertising contents.

When analyzing the presence of radio in a territory, it is necessary to reflect on the transformations carried out by the advent of neoliberal globalization in different sectors of society, especially in the economy, in politics, in culture, and also in communication starting in the 1980s. The impact of this process resulted in changes in behavior in the territories based mainly on the capitalist logic of accumulation and profit, as imposed by the neoliberal model.

In Brazil, for example, social, economic and spatial inequalities have intensified in recent years. According to data from Human Development Indicators and Indices: Statistical Update 2018, made known by the United Nations Development

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<sup>1</sup> The last one available by the time of the completion of this article.

Programme (UNDP), Brazil is the ninth most unequal country in the world. This condition is partially caused by the advance of large international corporations that settle in the cities, attracted by advantages such as tax exemption and cheap labor, and, authoritatively, they modify the local livelihood. In relation to the Human Development Index (HDI), Brazil ranks 79 out of 189 countries, at 0.759. HDI measures a nation's progress based on three dimensions: income, health, and education (PNUD BRASIL, online).

At the same time, technological advances that have been brought about by the internet since the 1990s have revolutionized world communication and social relations. Castells (1999, p.354) sees far-reaching changes in this new scenario, stating that “the emergence of a new electronic communication system characterized by its global reach, integration of all means of communication and potential interactivity has been changing and will forever change our culture”.

Santos (2006) defines this historic moment of globalization based on the technical/scientific/informational environment. The territories are prepared to facilitate the circulation of information and the global logic is imposed on these territories. The dynamics is aimed at serving the interests of the hegemonic parties in the economy, culture and politics that are incorporated into the new world currents. “The technical/scientific/informational environment is the geographical face of globalization” (SANTOS, 2006, p. 160).

Santos (2000) also considers the current globalization as something perverse, whose arms are market democracy and neoliberalism. To resist this scenario, Santos (1998) proposes the return of the territory, that is, the strengthening of what he conceptualizes as used territory, in a perspective of horizontality as opposed to verticality. As explained by Cataia (2013, p.1136), “the used territory is the territory of all agents, all institutions, and all companies, and not only the space of hegemonic agents of politics and economics”. Therefore, it is possible to understand that, among **all agents** present in the used territory, the means of communication are included, among them, the radio (emphasis added).

These aspects arouse our concerns, above all, in verifying the position of radio in the Vale do Taquari region, in Rio Grande do Sul, in the context of these impactful transformations. And we find in Milton Santos' concepts of verticality and horizontality the appropriate theoretical/analytical approach to carry out this study.

The analyzed area is taken into consideration with the scale-based division built by the Vale do Taquari Regional Development Council (Corede), made up of 36 municipalities<sup>2</sup>. The region, located in the center of the State of Rio Grande do Sul and about 150 kilometers from the capital, Porto Alegre, has 1.71% of the total area of the State (AGOSTINI, 2017). Total population is 364,180 inhabitants (FEE, online; PORTAL VALE DO TAQUARI, online). In the 36 municipalities that are part of Corede Vale do Taquari, according to data from the National Agency of

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<sup>2</sup> Corede municipalities in Vale do Taquari: Anta Gorda, Arroio do Meio, Arvorezinha, Bom Retiro do Sul, Canudos do Vale, Capitão, Colinas, Coqueiro Baixo, Cruzeiro do Sul, Dois Lajeados, Doutor Ricardo, Encantado, Estrela, Fazenda Vilanova, Forquetinha, Ilópolis, Imigrante, Lajeado, Marques de Souza, Muçum, Nova Brésia, Paverama, Poço das Antas, Pouso Novo, Progresso, Putinga, Relvado, Roca Sales, Santa Clara do Sul, Sério, Tabai, Taquari, Teutônia, Travesseiro, Vespasiano Corrêa and Westfália (FEE, online).

Telecommunications (ANATEL), there are 8 AM commercial broadcasters, 15 FM commercial broadcasters, 1 educational FM broadcaster, and 30 community radio stations licensed. Web radios were not taken into account. In order to carry out our analyses, we listed the 23 AM and FM commercial broadcasters, as shown in Tables 1 and 2<sup>3</sup>.

**TABLE 1 — AM commercial broadcasters of Vale do Taquari/RS**

CITY	BROADCASTER'S CURRENT NAME	CHANNEL
Estrela	Rádio do Vale AM	820 KHz
Encantado	Rádio Encantado AM	1580 KHz
Lajeado	Rádio Independente AM	950 KHz
Taquari	Rádio Açoriana AM	1560 KHz
Arvorezinha	Rádio Cultura AM	1450 KHz
Lajeado	AM 1540 (License granted. Waiting issuance)	1540 KHz
Estrela	AM 1500 (License granted. Waiting issuance)	1500 KHz
Bom Retiro do Sul	Rádio TEM AM	1460 KHz

**Source:** Prepared by the authors based on data from ANATEL/SDR 2020

**TABLE 2 — FM commercial broadcasters of Vale do Taquari/RS**

CITY	BROADCASTER'S CURRENT NAME	CHANNEL
Lajeado	Rádio Tropical FM	103.7 MHz
Encantado	Rádio Encanto FM	100.1 MHz
Estrela	Rádio A Hora	102.9 MHz
Taquari	Rádio Fraternidade FM	98.9 MHz
Teutônia	Rádio Germânia	88.3 MHz
Teutônia	Rádio Popular	96.9 MHz
Arvorezinha	Rádio Cultura FM	92.3 MHz
Cruzeiro do Sul	Rádio Independente	91.7 MHz
Arroio do Meio	Rádio Emoção dos Vales	90.1 MHz
Progresso	Rádio Emoção dos Vales	92.7 MHz
Roca Sales	Onda FM	97.7 MHz
Putinga	Rádio Clube Alto do Vale	101.1 MHz
Anta Gorda	Rádio Cultura FM	105.5 MHz
Nova Bréscia	Rádio Bréscia Mais FM	91.9 MHz
Encantado	NO NAME (waiting clearance)	106.9 MHz
Doutor Ricardo	NO NAME (vacant channel)	93.1 MHz

<sup>3</sup> This study is limited to commercial broadcasters, considering that they are the ones with the greatest presence and impact in the territory, given the predominance of the commercial media model in Brazilian broadcasting. For a view of the presence of the other models (community and educational) of radio stations in Vale do Taquari, see FEDRIZZI (2019).

**Source:** Prepared by the authors based on data from ANATEL/SDR 2020

The methodological procedures used in order to build the territory of radio in Vale do Taquari (based on the spatial distribution of commercial broadcasters and the historical identification of the owners of the broadcasters in that region) started with consultation of secondary sources, using the bibliographic research technique in texts by authors who wrote about the history of radio in Rio Grande do Sul. Research was also carried out in newspapers, bills of law, media outlets, and portals specialized in media contents. To list the current owners of the radio stations, we searched for information on the website of the State Tax Authority of Rio Grande do Sul (Sefaz/RS) and on ANATEL's Controlling Interest Monitoring System (Siacco), in addition to obtaining oral information from sources/professionals who work or have worked in broadcasters in Vale do Taquari and other regions.

## 2 Verticality and horizontality in used territory

Recent articles present wide theoretical diversity on the concept of territory, and Milton Santos' concept of used territory gets emphasis herein. Such territory is represented by soil plus identity, seen here as a feeling of belonging. "Territory is the foundation of work, the place of residence, material and spiritual exchanges, and the exercise of life (...). Territory helps to build a nation, so that the nation will later become fond of it" (SANTOS, 1999, p. 8). And he emphasizes that territory is formed from social relations. "The territorial configuration, or geographical configuration, therefore has its own material existence, but its social existence, that is, its real existence, is only accomplished by social relations" (SANTOS, 2006, p.38).

Silveira (2011) understands that not only the State, but all the parties are included in the used territory. "[...] It is not an inert thing or a stage where life happens. On the contrary, it is a picture of life, a hybrid of materiality and social life". In addition to the "territory itself", it is part of "human works and men themselves today. It is the territory made and the territory being made, with techniques, rules, and actions". In summary, "as a pure concept, the territory is made up of objects and actions, it is synonymous with human space, inhabited space" (SILVEIRA, 2011, p. 153-154).

In this contemporary historical period, in which we are in a globalized environment, the used territory is also considered synonymous with banal space — "where everything was included, not only economic flows" —, a concept that Milton Santos found in François Perroux (SANTOS, 2000, p. 53). And it is in the banal space, or in the used territory, that the movements of verticality and horizontality occur.

Verticality reflects a predominant situation today, that is, the appropriation of territories by agents who hold the hegemony of power and capital. They are forces of external origin in relation to the territory, and they impose a spatial culture from top to bottom, without the participation of local parties and without taking into account the interests and demands of the place. According to Santos (1994), verticality groups areas or points to serve distant hegemonic parties. "They are the

vectors of regulated hierarchical integration, henceforth necessary in all places of production globalized and controlled from a distance” (SANTOS, 1994, p. 26).

In such vertical dynamics, macro-enterprises assume the role of regulating the space and even interfere in the functions of the State, which starts to act in a disguised way in the territory. The State, therefore, enforces regulation that is often subordinate and aimed at favoring hegemonic parties. Although integration occurs at broader economic and spatial levels, it is vertical, dependent and alienating, due to the fact that it promotes decisions that are foreign to the place and that comply with distant motives (SANTOS, 2000). The perspective of competitiveness and, consequently, of social exclusion prevails. “The current trend is for places to come together vertically, and everything is done for that end, everywhere. International credits are made available to poorer countries to allow modern networks to establish themselves serving the big capital” (SANTOS, 2006, p. 174).

On the other hand, the dynamics of horizontality is defined by Santos (1994, p. 26) as “the foundation of all everyday life, that is, of everyone’s daily life (individuals, collective entities, companies, institutions)”. It is built by the similarity of actions or by association and complementarity. Horizontality operates in a perspective of solidarity, equity, and common interest, comprising “the local production of solidarity integration, obtained through internal horizontal solidarity, of an economic, social, cultural and geographic nature” (SANTOS, 2000, p. 53). The reaction against perverse globalization and the possibility of building a new form of globalization is at the perspective of the new horizontality (SANTOS, 2006). Therefore, on the one hand, there is a global order, the verticality, and on the other hand, there is a local order, the horizontality.

Silveira (2007) raises an important question about verticality and horizontality in territories. The author states that the two movements are not static — on the contrary, “an element may have arrived vertically and, in the next moment, it may become horizontal”. For this reason, it is essential to identify the historical period to be analyzed. Santos (1994) also considers that the vector of verticalization in relation to that of horizontality causes changes that are characterized by regulation processes and conflicts in places. And as globalization advances and establishes “new vertical regulations and pre-existing horizontal regulations”, the conflict between “globality and locality, between the world and the place, increases. But the more the world asserts itself in a place, the more the latter becomes unique”. Based on this idea, it is possible to see that the promotion of regional development is connected with the dynamics of horizontality.

Baldessar, Moreira e Pasti (2014, p. 533) relate the concept of used territory and the interference caused by verticality and horizontality with Geography and Communication.

The different interdisciplinary dialogues between Geography and Communication Sciences must take into account the political dimension when analyzing the uses of a territory, identifying the hegemonic and hegemonized agents, as well as the existence of “places that command” and “places that obey” — based on information flows. Both the selective and unequal diffusion of communicational infrastructures and the actions of hegemonic agents in charge of communication bring important consequences to places and deserve the attention of our research.

Aguiar (2016) states that Brazil has been going through an intense process of “media regionalization” since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Contrary to what was advocated with the advance of the globalization of capitalism, that is, the weakening of local and regional realities, there was a closer look at small and medium-sized cities because they are now digitally interconnected, which furthers access to information, forms of communication, and a consumer market hitherto excluded.

In this process of media regionalization, disputes between media and telecommunications companies intensify and, consequently, affect all means of communication, including print (newspapers and magazines), electronic (radio and TV), and digital (web and mobile platforms) ones. This process, “in addition to involving media professionals and owners, has also been articulated by governments and parliamentary movements interested in the deconcentration of central power and in the redistribution of advertising funds in the three governmental spheres” (AGUIAR, 2016, p. 14). Media regionalization behaves as “regionalization restricted to a specific group or social subject that intends to produce, manage and/or represent its space in an articulated way, according to its own interests” (HAESBAERT, 2010, p. 190 *apud* AGUIAR, 2016, p. 111).

While analyzing journalistic practices based on reflections on region, regionalization and movements in territories, Aguiar (2016) also mentions the concept of “media regions”, which refers to “the spatial portions that serve as a reference for the marketing activities of newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations and news portals operated by companies or media groups” (AGUIAR, 2016, p. 121). In this sense, in media regions, attention is focused on the “relations of economic, political and symbolic power that emerge from the actions undertaken by the media organizations in each space in which they operate” (AGUIAR, 2016, p. 121). Considering this information about our research, we move on to theoretical and empirical reflections in the Geography of Communication and Political Economy of Communications areas.

### **3 Political Economy of Communications in the relationship with radio**

In a theoretical/methodological context, Milton Santos’ concepts of used territory, and verticality and horizontality are also connected with the studies of Political Economy of Communications (PEC). It is understood that the theoretical foundations of PEC appear as an essential opportunity to discuss the role of communication in contemporary processes, due to the fact that we are part of a “globally connected society, in which information is of fundamental importance in the political/economic spectrum” (DOURADO, 2013, p. 18).

Mosco (1999, p. 98) defines political economy as the “study of social relations, especially of power relations, which constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources”. Carniello and Oliveira (2016) reinforce the idea that the debate on communication as a development factor in the contemporary national media context “runs through the political economy of communications and leads to questions about the structure of

the national media, characterized by large private groups associated to a political elite” (CARNIELLO e OLIVEIRA, 2016, p. 2).

Bolaño (2007) also takes into account the ideal Political Economy perspective to understand and analyze communication policies in Brazil and the main trends through which hegemonic parties influence regulatory and legislative processes. According to Liedtke (2003), in Brazil, political clientelism, whose characteristic is striking in national politics, also affects the control of the media. Comassetto (2013) points out that until the 1990s, the family oligarchies that controlled the media are favored, due to the form of concession from the Executive Power, and that there is strong political interference. The president of Brazil at the time, José Sarney, stands out for being the head of state who authorized the highest number of concessions for new radio and TV stations. Between 1985 and 1988, 1,028 broadcasters were granted concession (two of them were for Sarney’s own family members who resided in the State of Maranhão). The number, according to a study by Bolaño (2007), represents 30% of all concessions granted in Brazil since 1922.

Bolaño (2007) defines the model of regulation of Brazilian audiovisual resources, developed in the 1960s, as “nationalist and concentrationist”. If, on the one hand, it protects local capital previously installed from competition from abroad, on the other hand, “it limits local expression and the development of a diversified audiovisual panorama, basically serving the hegemonic political and economic interests that are articulated within it” (BOLAÑO, 2007, p. 17).

The theoretical concept of development is based on various paradigms (PERUZZO, 2014). According to Servaes (2000), there are three major paradigms that have guided the relationship between Communication and Development throughout history: Modernization (development seen as a synonym for growth); Dependence (it occurs when some countries can grow with their own strength, while others, placed in a position of dependence, can only grow as a result of the expansion of dominant countries); and Multiplicity (it emerges as the need to create a new concept of development that focuses on cultural identity and multidimensionality).

The paradigms are embedded in history, but they still exist in the present in the studies and practices of communication in development, materialized in two communication models for the development: the diffusionist one, committed to “ideas of diffusion of innovations and the incentive to change of habits” (PERUZZO, 2014, p. 177) through “linear and unilateral” communication with the receiver (PERUZZO, 2014, p. 178); and the participatory one, in which development “only makes sense if it promotes equality in relation to access to wealth and the full growth of a person and everyone, that is, if it has the human being as its mainspring” (PERUZZO, 2014, p. 181).

In the case of PEC, Mello (2016) points out two aspects that justify the use of this theoretical perspective for the study of present-day informational radio programming. The first one refers to considering the vehicle as cultural industry, bringing together the various factors that influence it, such as media groups, private property, globalization, new information and communications technologies, and the relationships of the parties involved (MELLO, 2016, p. 65). The second aspect considers broadcast programming as a communication business, and, in this sense, it must be considered that the production and transmission of its product must also

be explained by means of the managerial and financial operation of the radio company (MELLO, 2016, p. 65). In this sense, we will use PEC to present the territory of radio in Vale do Taquari.

#### **4 The territory of radio in Vale do Taquari**

The construction of this item is based on the fundamentals of the Political Economy of Communications. Thus, the economic and political elements contextualize our research in order to interpret the verticality and horizontality that characterize the emergence and spatial distribution of commercial broadcasters in Vale do Taquari. Throughout the text, elements such as nature of ownership, network associations, and the formation of communication groups serve as the basis for our approach. Who are the owners/groups of the commercial broadcasters in Vale do Taquari and where do they originate? This is the question that guides this stage of our analysis.

It is also important to remember that verticality, as defined by Milton Santos, is related to a global order, that is, to forces from outside the territory, without the participation of local parties and without taking into account the interests and demands of the location. Horizontality, on the other hand, is situated in a local order, in a perspective of solidarity, equity, and common interest. We understand that following a historical order of establishment of commercial broadcasters in Vale do Taquari facilitates the work of interpreting verticality and horizontality, since, as previously mentioned, the two movements are not static. The process can start vertically and, subsequently, become horizontal (SILVEIRA, 2007) and vice versa.

Likewise, in an environment characterized by the technical/scientific/informational context, it is also necessary to consider, in this process of radio stations using a territory, the formation of networks, which is a characteristic of verticality. And these vertical actions (which until then originated exclusively from actions of parties from outside Vale do Taquari), over time, begin to manifest themselves internally in a territory, with the creation of new communication groups, led by parties that identify themselves with the territory of Vale do Taquari, and which start to move to nearby municipalities, that is, they begin to “bring orders and commands from another place to a specific place” (SILVEIRA, 2007, p. 3), a rather typical vertical movement.

##### **4.1 Emissoras Reunidas: first aspects of verticality in Vale do Taquari**

The arrival of commercial radio in Vale do Taquari is influenced by strong vertical relations. The initiative is launched by entrepreneur Arnaldo Pignome Ballvé, from Porto Alegre. In the mid-1940s, he began to structure the Emissoras Reunidas group and acquired several radio stations in Rio Grande do Sul, including Rádio Alto Taquari, in Estrela (1948), and Rádio Encantado (1951), in Encantado.

At this point, Ballvé adopts the strategy of “granting equity to entrepreneurs and people from the local press in the business. [...] In each municipality where he

establishes his stations [...], he first collects information about who can be used in the new business” (FERRARETTO, 2007, p. 55). In this situation, Ballvé even carries out training courses for inexperienced aspiring broadcasters, a fact that constitutes new vertical practices. As Santos (2000) points out, this is the act of macroparties from outside the territory determining the internal modalities of action.

In 1990, the family of Nelson Luiz Proença Fernandes, who was a federal deputy in Rio Grande do Sul, took over the management and changed the group’s name to Rede Comunidade. Administrative control of these stations is handled by a central office located in Porto Alegre, a situation that characterizes yet another verticality vector in Vale do Taquari, since among the AM stations were the Estrela and Encantado stations.

Another strong vertical movement, this time with repercussions on the programming of broadcasters in Vale do Taquari, occurs in February 1994, when Rede Comunidade establishes a partnership with Rede Líder, from São Paulo. This agreement allows the repetition of programs by the broadcaster from São Paulo on Alto Taquari and Encantado radio stations. Only a few hours and commercial breaks are intended for local production. The remaining schedule is filled with information and advertising contents from São Paulo (JORNAL OPINIÃO, 1994). This initiative is not successful and lasts only for a few months. In 2002, the Proença family negotiates Rádio Encantado and, later, Rádio Alto Taquari, from Estrela — the latter was already part of Rede Tchê de Comunicação, former Rede Comunidade, which also belonged to the Proença family.

#### **4.2 Grupo Independente de Lajeado: first aspects of horizontality**

Mobilization for the creation of the first Lajeado broadcaster, Rádio Independente AM, takes place through horizontal practices, encouraged by a local entity, the Commercial and Industrial Association of Lajeado (ACIL). Schierholt (2011) mentions that, as they have few resources to invest in the construction of their own headquarters, the ACIL board is uncomfortable with the advertising expenses of the companies in Lajeado on Estrela’s radio. Led by ACIL’s president, Pedro Albino Müller, the debates among the associates strengthen the idea of creating “Estrela’s own independent broadcaster” (SCHIERHOLT, 2011, p. 23). Thus, in 1950, a company called Rádio Independente Limitada was founded, with the objective of putting to good use radio broadcasting services. According to the author, 96 people are members of the company. Of these, 79 live in the municipality of Lajeado (at the time with nine districts), 8 are from Estrela, 4 are from Arroio do Meio, 3 are from Encantado, 1 is from Taquari and 1 is from Porto Alegre. In other words, all the municipalities in Vale do Taquari at the time have a representative in Rádio Independente Limitada.

According to Schierholt (2011), the choice of Emissoras Reunidas by the municipality of Encantado to establish Rádio Encantado leads to Independente doing the same in the municipality of Roca Sales, with the establishment of Rádio Independente de Roca Sales in 1957, in a vertical action from the territory of Lajeado over that of Roca Sales. However, the station is soon sold due to the economic infeasibility caused by poor advertising capacity of the municipality of Roca Sales.

The power of the Müller family at Rádio Independente was strengthened in the 1980s, when there were only 13 members left of the 99 members who participated in the creation of the company (SCHIERHOLT, 2011).

The establishment of the first FM broadcaster in Vale do Taquari, Rádio Tropical, in 1982, takes place through a horizontal perspective, for it is managed by parties with ties in the municipality of Lajeado, but it can also be interpreted as a vertical action within the territory, as it belongs to the same group that manages Rádio Independente AM.

At present, the Rádio Independente Ltda company has as members the descendants of Lauro Mathias Müller, João Pedro (son) and Gabriel (grandson), and Ricardo Brunetto, a professional hired in 2009 as executive director.

In January 2007, the Rádio Alto do Vale Ltda company, related to Grupo Independente, acquired the concession for another AM channel in Lajeado, on the 1540 KHz frequency. In this case, it is possible to observe a situation in which horizontality and verticality appear almost simultaneously. If, on the one hand, we have a verticality vector, caused by the concentration of ownership of Grupo Independente in the territory of Lajeado, on the other hand, it is possible to see characteristics of horizontality, due to the fact that the new station is under control of a local company.

Disputes between the municipalities of Lajeado and Estrela reached a new level in 2011, when Grupo Independente acquires the concession of Rádio Alto Taquari, in Estrela. The company takes advantage of the weakening of the network belonging to Rede Tchê, owned by the Proença family, to carry out the purchase in 2011.

One of the first consequences, which reinforces a behavior that comes from top to bottom, is the name of the radio station, which is changed from Rádio Alto Taquari to Rádio do Vale. This modification, however, does not have a good impact on Estrela's community, which considers the name "Rádio Alto Taquari" cultural heritage of the town (oral information). The station's headquarters remain in Estrela. The administrative department is located in Lajeado, at the headquarters of Grupo Independente (O INFORMATIVO DO VALE, online). The acquisition of channel 91.7 FM, headquartered in Cruzeiro do Sul, in 2017, is another investment of Grupo Independente characterized by verticality. The new broadcaster is used as a relay station of Independente AM's programming (PORTAL INDEPENDENTE, online).

### **4.3 Encantado: reaction to external forces**

Before selling Rádio Alto Taquari, from Estrela, to Grupo Independente de Lajeado, the Proença family had already sold Rádio Encantado. Until then, this process had been characterized by vertical movements; however, there was a reversion to horizontality vectors, since the LB Sistema de Comunicação do Vale Ltda company, owned by Antonio Alberto Lucca and Leonardo Carlos Bratti, both business owners from Encantado, acquires the broadcaster in 2001 (FERRI, 2007). In 2004, the name was changed to Rádio Encanto AM 1580. The strategy aims at strengthening the "Encanto" brand, which is the name of the town's first FM broadcaster, Encanto FM 100.1, also owned by Lucca and Bratti and two other

investors. It started operating in 1989, in yet another action characterized by horizontality vectors in the territory of Encantado.

Initially, in addition to Lucca and Bratti, the group that acquires the concession of Encanto FM also includes José Raimundo Tramontini and Ronei Spielmann. The four investors are coworkers at Banco do Brasil, in Encantado, and found the entity using the trade name Sociedade Rádio Difusora Encantadense Ltda (FERRI, 2007). Years later, Lucca and Bratti took over the company entirely, and when they bought Rádio Encantado from the Proença family, the first composition of Rede Encanto de Comunicação was consolidated, with both an AM and an FM stations (oral information). In the first half of the 2000s, Lucca and Bratti dissolved the company. As per the agreement that follows, Lucca takes control of Rádio Encanto AM (now Rádio Encantado) and the concession of an FM channel in Roca Sales on frequency 97.7, and Bratti alone takes over the management of Rádio Encanto FM. Years later, Bratti purchased the FM radio stations of Arroio do Meio and Progresso from the Proença family, consolidating Rede Encanto de Comunicação, in two more vertical movements in Vale do Taquari.

With the establishment of Rádio Energia Pop 97.7 FM (now Onda FM) in Roca Sales in 2009, the Lucca family consolidates its presence as the owner of broadcasters in the upper region of Vale do Taquari and structures Grupo Encantado de Comunicação. At the same time, in 2013, Lucca's company won the right to use another FM channel in the municipality of Encantado, on frequency 106.9 (BRASIL, online). In this sense, if on the one hand the new FM broadcaster of Encantado fits into a horizontality vector, for being under the control of a local company, on the other hand it can be seen as a vertical movement, due to the fact that the owner already manages a broadcaster in the town.

#### 4.4 Taquari: radio in the government's hands

Radio broadcasting in Vale do Taquari stays concentrated in the AM stations of Estrela, Lajeado, and Encantado for about 20 years. The expansion to other municipalities began in the late 1960s, with the foundation of Rádio Açoriana Ltda 1560 AM, in Taquari, in 1968. The Açoriana case is unprecedented in the region, as it is the only broadcaster managed by the Municipal Executive Power. This period is characterized by conflicts between political parties, employment claims, fear of exogenous forces, and uncertainties regarding the continuity of activities. In this context, the vertical and horizontal movements are frequent.

The Federal Gazette of December 7, 1978, publishes the authorization for the transfer of units of ownership from Kurt Pedro Freitag (150 units), Fredolino Tiggemann (20), Claudio Pedro Candiago (10), Carlos Cananéa Ribeiro (10), Nelson Ferro (5), and Antonio dos Reis Martins (2) to Lothário Armando Bender, a well-known business owner in the town. It also authorizes Julio Carlos Bender and Vitor Hugo Bender to become members of the company (BRASIL, 1978). The negotiations are carried out by local parties, therefore, with horizontality vectors. The Bender family manages the station until 1984, when Mayor Namir Luiz Jantsch sanctions Law no. 1,119, passed by the City Council, which authorizes the Municipal Executive Power to acquire the rights to a radio and a newspaper. That year, Municipal Law

no. 1,121 is enacted. It founds Empresa Jornalística e de Radiodifusão Açoriana (EJORA) as a state-owned company, made up of Rádio Açoriana AM and O Açoriano newspaper (TAQUARI, 1984).

After years of debates and discussions between the Executive and Legislative Powers, mainly due to the financial difficulties of the broadcaster and the substantial public resources allocated to EJORA, in 2017, the Executive Power hires a legal advisory firm from Porto Alegre to prepare the notice of sale of the radio station. As there are no interested parties in the purchase, on August 31, 2019, activities are suspended, and on September 5, 2019, the City Council passes the bill that terminates EJORA. The Açoriana channel is returned to the Ministry of Communications (JORNAL O FATO, online).

#### **4.5 Grupo Cultura controls the territory in the northern region of Vale do Taquari**

Horizontality is a characteristic of the arrival of radio to another corner of Vale do Taquari, in the municipality of Arvorezinha. With the granting of concession in 1977, Aniceto Pastório Paganin, together with 10 other members, founds Rádio Cultura AM (GRUPO CULTURA DE RÁDIO, online). During this period, Paganin is in the office for a second term as the town's mayor (1973–1977). With the establishment of Rádio Cultura FM 92.3, also in Arvorezinha, Paganin begins to structure Grupo Cultura de Rádio, in a moment of horizontal and vertical interrelation. At this time, it is also possible to see vertical practices, with the foundation of two other FM stations (also known as Rádio Cultura) in territories far from Arvorezinha, in the municipalities of Fontoura Xavier and Anta Gorda, on frequencies 88.9 and 105.5, respectively. The four broadcasters are representative of the concentration of ownership in the region located north of Vale do Taquari. Currently, there are four members, all belonging to the Paganin family (ANATEL/SIACCO; SEFAZ-RS, online).

#### **4.6 Teutônia: radio in local parties' hands**

In 1989, in the municipality of Teutônia, Germânia FM 88.3 and Popular FM 96.9 radio stations were founded. Both cases are characterized by horizontal movements, with the participation of parties identified with the territory.

The Empresa de Radiodifusão Teutônia Ltda company, holder of the concession of Rádio Germânia, has five members: lawyer Fritz Follmer (manager), Leda Follmer (his wife), Ivone Teresinha Villa, Sueli Neiva Schneider, and Joel Paulo da Costa (ANATEL/SIACCO, online). In the early 2000s, there is another change in the company. Ivone, Sueli, and Joel sell their units of ownership to a business owner from Estrela, Ricardo Wagner, who then holds 50% of the capital. The other half is shared between Fritz (37%) and Leda (13%). The new managers launch a new radio project. Germânia's name is changed to Rádio Usina 88.3 FM, and its programming starts to focus on a younger audience. The experience does not last long, and soon the station returns to its old style, using the name Rádio Germânia (oral information). Teutônia's other commercial broadcaster, Popular FM, was founded in 1989. It belongs to Empresa Radiofônica Ouro Branco Ltda, created by Silvio Brune and Valdir Inácio Schardong. With the death of Schardong in 2016, the members of

Rádio Popular changed. Schardong's widow, Tania Maria Schardong, and their two daughters are included in the company, which already has the participation of Arno Von Muhlen. The management is in charge of Silvio Brune, the company's majority shareholder (ANATEL/SIACCO, online).

#### **4.7 Estrela and Cruzeiro do Sul: more verticality**

Exogenous forces appear again in the radio territory of Vale do Taquari by means of the direct participation of Grupo Dial de Comunicação in the establishment of two FM stations in the municipalities of Cruzeiro do Sul and Estrela. The company, headquartered in Novo Hamburgo, belongs to Hilmar Kannenberg's family. Light FM 91.7 is established in Cruzeiro do Sul. In 2016, the channel starts to transmit the programming of Rede Felicidade Gospel, also founded by Grupo Dial, and stays in operation until 2017, when the frequency is acquired by Grupo Independente de Lajeado to repeat the audio from Rádio Independente AM, as mentioned above. Headquartered in Estrela, Rádio Sorriso 102.9 FM started operating as part of Rede Sorriso, which was made up of other four FM broadcasters, from the municipalities of Gramado, Candelária, Glorinha, and Panambi. At present, Rede Dial de Comunicação is owned by Hilmar's wife, Martha Ingeborg Kannenberg, and his grandson, Daniel Grassi Kannenberg, son of Alexandre Kannenberg, former manager of the company, now deceased (SEFAZ-RS, online).

#### **4.8 Rede Fraternidade: new verticality in Taquari**

The 1990s saw the arrival of the first broadcaster focused on religious programming in Vale do Taquari. This movement in the territory happens vertically, with Fundação Fraternidade Nossa Senhora da Evangelização, based in Porto Alegre, a nonprofit entity (FUNDAÇÃO FRATERNIDADE, online). After that, Rede Fraternidade de Comunicação is born, initially with two FM broadcasters called Rádio Fraternidade, in the municipalities of Taquari and Ijuí, in Rio Grande do Sul, on frequencies 98.9 and 97.5, respectively.

#### **4.9 Recent movements**

From the mid-2000s on, with new radio concessions being granted in Vale do Taquari, business groups with no ties to those already present in the region end up managing the broadcasters, a fact that characterizes three new cases of verticality in the use of radio territory. The first one is related to Sistema Plug de Comunicação, from Cascavel, in the State of Paraná, which acquires the concession to operate channel 1460 AM, in the municipality of Bom Retiro do Sul. The second one happens in 2007, when the concession is authorized to EZR Comunicação (a company based in Santa Cruz do Sul) to manage another AM station in the municipality of Estrela, on frequency 1500 KHz. The third case is related to Sociedade Rádio Santa Felicidade Ltda, a company based in the municipality of Erechim, in Rio Grande do Sul, belonging to the Spagnol family. The company is authorized to operate a broadcaster in Putinga, on frequency 101.1 MHz. The station is part of Rede Colinas

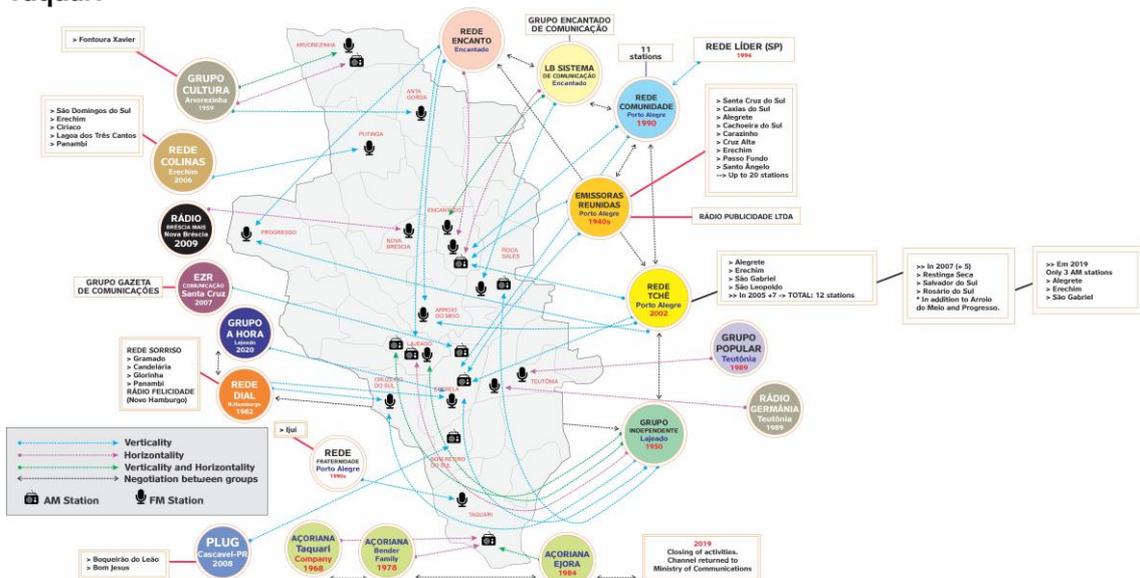
FM, from Erechim, which in 2014 establishes a partnership with Rede Transamérica Hits, from São Paulo (COLETIVA.NET, online) and, in 2019, with Rede Clube FM, from Brasília.

In Nova Bréscia, although the same group of business owners responsible for the creation of a community radio in the municipality also manages the commercial broadcaster, Bréscia Mais FM 91.9, in operation since 2009, it is possible to see horizontal practices, since the three members, José Paulo Valandro, Osmar Martins Nichel, and José Carlos Corrêa Moura, have ties to the location.

The last movement in the territory happens in February 2020, when Rádio Sorriso FM 102.9, from Estrela, hitherto managed by Grupo Dial de Comunicação, from Novo Hamburgo, is acquired by Grupo A Hora, from Lajeado, belonging to Adair Gilberto Weiss, Fernando Antônio Weiss, and Sandro da Rosa Lucas (SEFAZ-RS, online). Present in the communication market for 18 years, A Hora manages two printed newspapers, a news portal, a publishing house, and distribution, research, and events companies. It is possible to see two vertical movements within the territory of Vale do Taquari: first, because the station established in the municipality of Estrela was acquired by a company from Lajeado, and, later, when the new owners transfer the main studio from Estrela to the company's headquarters in Lajeado. The name is also changed from Sorriso to Rádio A Hora.

Image 1 graphically summarizes the results obtained in the research of this article, illustrating vertical and horizontal aspects in the use of the radio territory of Vale do Taquari throughout history, from the original movements of radio broadcasting to current times. The blue arrows identify the verticality vectors, and the purple ones identify the horizontality vectors. The green color represents actions of interrelation between verticality and horizontality. The two-headed black lines represent negotiations between business groups which resulted in changes in the management of the broadcasters.

Image 1 — Vertical and horizontal aspects in the use of the radio territory of Vale do Taquari



In total, 25 vertical actions, 9 horizontal movements, and 5 moments of interrelation between the two vectors in the use of the territory can be seen.

### Final considerations

To finish this article, we have selected some situations involving the use of the territory of Vale do Taquari by radio stations that deserve some reflection. In the municipality of Estrela, to the present day, outside forces control the local radio. In the municipality of Encantado, Rádio Encantado AM only began to be managed by endogenous forces after 51 years of its foundation. In the municipality of Taquari, Rádio Açoriana, which stopped operating in 2019, was characterized by being a favorable environment for vertical and horizontal movements to happen parallelly and constantly. The analysis offered us several elements, mainly in the political and economic field, which interfere with radio activity in a territory. In the municipalities of Putinga and Bom Retiro do Sul, the influence of vertical actions weakens radio performance in these territories. In Putinga, until 2018, two professionals managed part of the programming, focused on local aspects. Today, as these professionals are no longer part of the company, the signal repeats the contents of the network. In Bom Retiro do Sul, the radio is not active and does not provide much information through their website.

Another characteristic in our analysis that is evident in the use of radio territory in Vale do Taquari are the movements that combine verticality and horizontality vectors within the territory. This situation occurs at the consolidation of the communication groups and, consequently, constitutes the cases of concentration of ownership. In our analyses, we selected three examples coming from the municipalities of Lajeado, Encantado, and Arvorezinha.

The first case involves Grupo Independente, from Lajeado. After establishing Rádio Independente AM, based on an initiative of parties identified with the location, thus becoming the first horizontal action in the region, the group begins to expand its presence in Lajeado and the surrounding area. First, it acquires the concession for Rádio Tropical FM, from Lajeado, and for another AM channel in the town. Later, it expands its activities to Estrela and starts to manage Rádio Alto Taquari AM, even changing its name to Rádio do Vale. Its latest vertical action refers to the acquisition of the FM channel based in Cruzeiro do Sul, aiming at repeating the programming of Rádio Independente AM. Those movements by Grupo Independente indicate two market strategies: first, to expand its area of activity, with the goal of attracting a new audience and new sponsors, that is, defining/increasing its “media region”; and second, to prevent other competing groups from occupying these spaces and, as a result, becoming a threat to the interests of Independente.

In the municipality of Encantado, the same group made up of local parties acquired the concession for both the first FM broadcaster in town (Encanto) and, later, Rádio Encantado AM, in this case, interrupting a period of five decades of external control of the broadcaster. Later on, the division of members creates two new communication groups, which also results in vectors of verticality in Vale do

Taquari and in the municipality of Encantado itself: Rede Encanto, also owner of the FM broadcasters of Arroio do Meio and Progresso, acquired from the Proença family, and also an alternative studio of Encanto FM, repeating in Lajeado, and Grupo Encantado de Comunicação, responsible for the management of Rádio Encantado AM, for the establishment of the FM station in Roca Sales, and for the management of the new FM channel in Encantado, still waiting for clearance to start operating.

In the municipality of Arvorezinha, through the initiative of parties identified with the location, Cultura AM and FM stations were born. Subsequently, the already established Grupo Cultura expands its area of operation in a vertical manner to the municipalities of Anta Gorda and Fontoura Xavier, with two more FM stations.

Finally, it was possible to see that, based on our analysis, the verticality vectors stand out in the spatial occupation of the radio territory of Vale do Taquari. First, due to the action of exogenous forces, and second, with movements within the territory itself, resulting in the formation of networks and concentration of ownership.

It is important to note that when we established the theoretical/analytical pair of verticality and horizontality, we were aware of the difficulties in identifying these two vectors in their entirety. It is understandable that other interpretations can be made in terms of spatial distribution of the broadcasters. However, we believe that this research provides an opportunity to see important signs of how radio still stands as an active means of communication in Vale do Taquari, both regarding audience and disputes over administrative control of concessions.

Finally, this research indicates the need to strengthen the investigation of communication phenomena in the context of Regional Development, from a position of communication agent, in the construction of territories. Especially because “Communication is a power structure, and therefore, in any society, those who control communication get involved in an important sphere of power.” (BOLAÑO apud EPTIC, 2015).

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