

Citizen Sousveillance: The Use of Sousveillance in Protests.
The Case of *Midia* NINJA

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ABSTRACT

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Vinicius Teixeira

The power dynamics of the gaze have been examined from different perspectives, from the use of surveillance for safety purposes and the monitoring of citizens, to concepts that study how alternative gazes impact in society and its actors. One of these alternative gazes has been described as sousveillance (Mann, 1998). While surveillance refers to watching from above, sousveillance is its direct opposite, watching from below. Based on this dynamic, and using a Brazilian group of activists that practices sousveillance as a case study, this thesis proposes a new term called Citizen Sousveillance. This term highlights the particular, protective role that sousveillance can play in protest contexts, preventing police brutality and other forms of injustice, as well as its capacity to change the reality of protest as a whole.

Citizen Sousveillance encompasses five dimensions: 1. a *nonviolence dimension*—it can act as a nonviolent form of resistance and as protection against violent repression; 2. a *raw reality dimension*—it can work to spread, if not an unmediated version of reality, a more raw reality of protest than we would see in coverage produced by corporate mainstream media; 3. a *counternarrative dimension*—it provides material that can be used to create narratives that act as counterpoints to corporate, mainstream media coverage of protest; 4. an *archival dimension*—it can help accumulate media that records and preserves records of protest for historical purposes; and 5. a *virtual dimension*—it can work as a channel for those not involved in protests to still follow its developments. These dimensions — and the concept of Citizen Sousveillance itself — were discerned through an empirically-grounded analysis of the activities of a Brazilian activist group called *Midia* NINJA. The social media work of this group, as well as interviews with five members, make up the case-study around which this thesis is organized.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context: Introducing Citizen Sousveillance

The newscasts were not the same on a June 2013 evening in Brazil. People watched as the São Paulo riot police used tear gas, rubber bullets, and stun grenades to disperse a protest in the largest city of the country. Protesters that were marching peacefully were suddenly running, coughing, tripping and bleeding everywhere. The mounted police swooped in to finish the job of dispersing the crowd, and people – both protesters and bystanders – had to hide and wait for a calmer time to have a chance to go back home. Up to that point, what had happened was not very different from other protests around the country, but for one difference – the police actions and transgressions were recorded by people with their smartphones, and the images and videos spread like wildfire on social media. These new dynamics of demonstrations, which started in 2013, changed the reality of protests forever.

The phenomenon of ordinary people having the ability and means to monitor what authorities do, and how they behave, is given the name of sousveillance. However, to understand sousveillance, we first have to situate it in relation to surveillance. Surveillance refers to “processes in which special note is taken of certain human behaviours that go well beyond idle curiosity” (Lyon, 2007:13). The term also organizes a field of study that has many important contributions for a long time, from the historical studies about how the FBI would profile people, tap and record telephone lines, and have agents follow suspects around (Sankar, 1992; McCoy, 2014), to more recent whistleblower cases like Edward Snowden, who leaked mass surveillance secrets from the government of the United States. The idea that surveillance can be an instrument of oppression has been studied and documented, and the literature illustrating this dynamic is substantial (Lyon, 2002; Ball & Webster, 2003; Greenwald, 2015; Cohen, 2014; Noble, 2018). Less well characterized in the field, however, is the relation of surveillance to other veillances. Sousveillance, for example, has substantially expanded due to cheaper access to technology, helped by the expansion of social media. In a sense, sousveillance is the opposite of surveillance. While surveillance describes the top-down gaze, where the powerful in society watch and control

the ones below them, *sousveillance* involves regular people watching powerful ones, inverting the gaze to establish a bottom-up line of sight (Mann, 2002).

Today, it is not hard to imagine that we are being observed at all times. Especially with our online and offline lives overlapping the way they do. People are starting to realize that their every step is monitored. The consequences of this monitoring, the entities involved with it, or the purposes of these actions are far from being clear to the average people – those who do not actually study surveillance and its repercussions. Not only are surveillance processes and their wider ramifications not clear, but additionally, this subject does not usually become a point of public concern (Doctorow, 2013; Kelly, 2015; Lyons, 2017; Shelton et al. 2015). This happens mainly for two reasons. First, surveillance is an abstract concept. Although people know they are being watched, they may not have a good sense of the implications of this fact in their day-to-day lives. Second, how to fight it? Even those concerned with the subject find that it is difficult to stand up to the system and escape from surveillance.

After considerable reflection and research about this field of study, I propose in this thesis to analyze how *sousveillance* is used by protesters. The overall argument is that *sousveillance* can be used by protesters as a nonviolent defense mechanism to prevent police brutality, first and foremost, among other forms of injustice. The case I examine to support my argument involves *Midia NINJA*, an independent media activist network present in over 250 cities in Brazil, which had an important role during the unprecedented protests that occurred in June and July of 2013. I was able to interview five *Midia NINJA* members, and the goal of the interviews was to understand how they operate, how their experience has developed since 2013, and how they see the future of the use of new technologies for the benefit and articulation of protesters, activists and militant groups of all sorts. I use the concept of *sousveillance* to anchor my theoretical framework, which will be described below.

Building on top of the idea of *sousveillance*, what I propose is a new concept called Citizen *Sousveillance*. Citizen *Sousveillance* is a sort of *sousveillance* made in a group context; in situations of protests, citizen *sousveillance* can act as a form of protection against violent repression. I identify, in this thesis, five key dimensions of Citizen *Sousveillance*, which support activities that can transform the reality of protest. First, as noted, there is a *nonviolence dimension*. *Sousveillance* can act as a nonviolent form of resistance and as protection against

violent repression. Second, there is a raw *reality dimension*. Sousveillance can work to spread, if not an unmediated version of reality, a more raw reality of protest than we would see in coverage produced by corporate mainstream media. Third, there is a *counternarrative dimension*. Sousveillance provides material that can be used to create narratives that act as counterpoints to corporate, mainstream media coverage of protest. Fourth, there is an *archival dimension*. Sousveillance can help accumulate media that records and preserves records of protest for historical purposes. Lastly, there is a *virtual dimension*. Sousveillance can work as a channel for those not involved in protests to still follow its developments, while serving as a safety net to protesters.

Citizen Sousveillance is a concept that has the intention of filling a gap. It will give meaning to a specific use of a *veillance* in a specific context. Citizen Sousveillance relies on a broad base of knowledge that underpins its historical and sociological context, among other aspects. Citizen Sousveillance feeds from the literature on surveillance, *sousveillance*, citizen journalism, and the idea of the multimedia citizen, proposed by the case-study of *Midia NINJA*, which will be presented further ahead. This thesis will develop the concept of Citizen Sousveillance to help advance research in the field of surveillance studies, and to provide a novel lens for understanding the 2013 protests in Brazil.

This research contributes to a body of knowledge that is still in development. Many sorts of “*veillances*” are being created, adjusted, and polished, including *veillances* that take into consideration different settings, and different uses of the “*watchers*”. The use of *sousveillance* has been explored to some extent, but there is no indication that it has been analyzed in the context of protests with this magnitude of data, and using a Brazilian case study to substantiate the research. On top of that, I claim that this organically created method of using *sousveillance* in protests can be used as a nonviolent defense mechanism, which brings to the analysis its own full body of literature of nonviolent movements and techniques.

1.2 – Thesis Statement

This thesis examines the citizen-driven mediation of the 2013 protests in Brazil, using the case study of *Midia NINJA*. The research is based on 1. publicly available social media data, 2. data from interviews with *Midia NINJA* members, as well as 3. the consultation of numerous books and articles. This thesis will argue that, in a protest setting, sousveillance may encompass at least five different dimensions (described in the preceding section) that can transform the reality of protest, and that are therefore worthy of additional study.

Although sousveillance itself is not a new phenomenon, this thesis makes a contribution by approaching the subject of sousveillance from a specific angle, namely the peaceful/nonviolent angle. The ability of sousveillance to be used in protests as a nonviolent tool is not well theorized, developed, or studied, and this is what my thesis does. Getting to better know how this mechanism works will allow us to interpret how these grassroots, spontaneous movements can interfere in the power balance within societies.

1.3 – Research Question

The questions that this project proposes to answer are structured in a multilevel way, having the main research question at the heart of this entire thesis. Secondary questions, that are important to substantiate the building of knowledge, are discussed in different sections and chapters, but always to support the main idea. Also, it is important to note that, as the research evolved, other questions were added to the main idea, which were not captured initially.

Main research question:

- How has sousveillance been used as a nonviolent defense mechanism in protests in Brazil since 2013?

Secondary research questions:

Once I identified that it would be possible to interview members of *Midia NINJA* and develop a case study around this organization and its activities in the 2013 protests, I developed the following secondary research questions:

- What are *Midia NINJA*'s goals and aspirations?
- Where do they place themselves in this big picture of surveillance, sousveillance, privacy, and peaceful protests?
- How does *Midia NINJA*'s online activity help to understand sousveillance?
- How is *Midia NINJA* currently developing and what are their challenges?
- How does *Midia NINJA* foresee their activism developing in the coming years?

In summary, having access to all of this information and evidence will help us to understand and analyze what could be the future of *Midia NINJA*, as well as organizations that have a similar agenda, and if it will have enough strength to push for major changes in Brazilian society, which could be partially replicated by other peoples.

1.4 – Methodology

How do I propose to fill this gap in knowledge using the existing literature and the research performed so far? This thesis uses a case-study methodology (Feagin et al. 1991). It also draws on an analysis of numerous videos, articles, tweets and Facebook posts, as well as in-depth, qualitative interviews with key informants. These sources of information are used to substantiate the analysis and the argumentation on how sousveillance can be used as a nonviolent method. Below, I first discuss why I decided to substantiate this thesis using interviews, and also some literature on interview methodology. Following this, I explain how I collected the data, and how it was analyzed, drawing attention to the fact that all the interviews and raw data are in Portuguese, and not English.

1.4.1 – Interviews

With respect to the interviews I did with *Midia NINJA* members, these were in-depth interviews that aimed to capture the participant's perception of how their actions are part of a bigger picture, and contributing to the ideas/ideology they believe in (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006). The individual's reality has to be taken into consideration when analyzing their answers. We have to understand that the individual's responses correspond not only to their own reality,

both perceived and conscious, but also that this reality is based on social experiences paramount to the formation of that perception itself – for both interviewee and interviewer. To adequately address my research questions, it was important to use interviews as a way of complementing information derived from the other types of data I collected. The entirety of the interviews was informed and supported by the underpinning epistemology of this sort of data gathering (Gill et al. 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Therefore, once I decided to use interviews, I also decided to use *Midia NINJA* as a case-study, as it could substantiate and support my argument. I then built a study protocol that was reviewed by the Concordia University Research Ethics Unit, and after receiving approval for the study, I reached out to *Midia NINJA* and was promptly answered. They were willing to share their perspectives on the matter of surveillance, and share their experiences, as a group and also as individuals. The conversations were all done by email (13 exchanges), until we decided the best day to carry out the first interview. The interviews were planned to last approximately 45 minutes, and that was communicated with all of the interviewees. Some of them read and signed the consent form beforehand, and for some of them, it was read at the initiation of the conversation. I highlighted the fact that they were not required to answer any question, and they could stop the interview at any time, without any consequence to them or the group. It was also stated more than once that there is a minimal risk involved in participating, as at some point this thesis will be made public, and anyone could have access to it. All the participants understood and agreed. The interviews took between 40 minutes to 1h20m, and one of them had to do it on two separate days. Three interviews were done on Microsoft Skype, and 2 of them were done on Google Hangout. All of them were recorded using two different cellphones.

1.4.2 – Publicly Available Data

As for the rest of the data collection, everything was done online. The social media analyzed were Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The videos were spread among different platforms, from third-party websites to YouTube. I also used *Midia NINJA*'s official website, and interviews that *Midia NINJA*'s members have given to the Brazilian media. *Midia NINJA* not only shared, and still shares, content, but third-party movements do the same, forming a

network of information of all sorts, which on one hand is positive for the dissemination of information, but on the other hand, makes it extremely hard to make a comprehensive analysis without missing any important aspect of it. The method decided was to filter the content as much as the platforms allowed. For example, Twitter provides a mechanism to filter one's page by date, so it made it easy to go back to *Midia NINJA*'s tweets from June and July 2013. Instagram, however, does not have this option, so to go back in one's timeline, you have to actually scroll down, making it excessively time-consuming. Facebook allows word search in one's timeline, but not a timeframe search. Considering the particularities of each platform, and the intent of the data collection, I decided to use purposive samples of each social media platform to corroborate the interview analysis. My aim was to 1. show how *Midia NINJA* behaves online, and 2. show how it disseminated sousveillance of protest.

1.4.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection procedures: I collected a total of more than one hundred videos analyzed, dozens of articles, and hundreds of tweets, Instagram and Facebook posts, that together will help us understand the case of *Midia NINJA*. While abundant, tools that can manage this amount of information, and have access to it, are either paid or always gaining and losing access privileges. While researching for *hashtags* is a free and comprehensive way to analyze an online trend, it can be overwhelming. One popular *hashtag* can find millions of results, but without proper access and online tools, that analysis becomes unfeasible (Rogers, 2017). There are also, as mentioned, five interviews with members of *Midia NINJA*, which were carried out by Microsoft Skype (3) and Google Hangout (2), and audio recorded on two devices. The approximate length of each interview was 1 hour, and the focus was mostly on how they carry out their activities and how they see themselves being part of the larger activist media landscape.

Data analysis: All of this material was analyzed taking into consideration its ephemeral nature. Regarding the videos shared by *Midia NINJA* online, specific aspects of them were examined, while also trying to situate them in relation to the context in which they were produced. Of course, re-posting and re-circulation produces a shifting context (Harper, 2003), and I tried to account for this in the analysis as well. As for the interviews, there are more than five hours of audio recordings of conversations, trying to enter the world of people that are constantly

involved with the use of *sousveillance* as part of their lives. Because these interviews were conducted in Portuguese, and because this thesis is written in English, I decided to use selective verbatim transcription. There are many reasons behind approaching the interview data using a selective verbatim transcription. The costs associated with pure verbatim transcription, whether they concern time, or money, are high (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). Besides, recording and transcribing interviews can be problematic for cross-cultural and multilingual research (Loubere, 2017). Accordingly, I worked with my recordings in the following way. I first listened to each interview and took notes to identify the time stamp and content of parts of the interview that addressed my research questions. Then, drawing from Boyatzis, a thematic approach to the subjects discussed during the interviews was used. The most pertinent topics are put forth as the basis for the argumentation; these are fully transcribed in Portuguese and then translated to English. A hybrid of deductive and inductive coding was considered at the time of analysis. The same thematic approach is used to analyze tweets and posts on social media (Boyatzis, 1998; Fereday *et al.* 2006). The goal is to build knowledge of how *sousveillance* can be used as a peaceful tool in protests as a way to defend protesters.

1.5 – Thesis Structure

In Chapter 2, “Literature Review – understanding the theoretical basis of surveillance, *sousveillance* and peaceful protest”, I explore literature that will help me to build the theoretical framework of this study. Panoptic surveillance – proposed by Jeremy Bentham and theorized by Michel Foucault – is discussed, and critiques and applications of this concept are considered. This chapter also deals with the literature on the emergent concept of *sousveillance*, its disambiguation from surveillance, and how other *veillance* concepts have emerged in the field. The social scientific literature on important figures of nonviolent actions are also introduced. I also touch on supporting literature related to privacy, frame analysis and citizen journalism, social movements, and online activism, all of which help to conceptualize Citizen *Sousveillance*.

Chapter 3, “*Midia NINJA* – development, challenges and presence” is where some history of the group is discussed: namely, how they began their activities and positioned themselves in the Brazilian social arena. I also consider how they work to change a narrative that has long been dictated by the wealthy and powerful in society. This counter-point was important to bring to

light different versions of events that were largely known only through the biases of mainstream media, which tended to criminalize minorities, like LGBTQ+ communities, black people and poor people. How the online behaviour of *Midia NINJA* acted is also demonstrated in the chapter, giving special attention to the protests in June and July of 2013, and with the use of the most popular social media platforms in Brazil – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

In Chapter 4, “What is the relation of *Midia NINJA* and protests”, the actual presence and action of *Midia NINJA* are debated. The interviewed members of the group shared their experiences, which made it possible to briefly understand how they operate, how they behave in street protests, and what are the outcomes of their actions. They also engage with the paradox of surveillance/sousveillance in the face of privacy. How they balance the use of sousveillance in protests while still preserving privacy, and their position on strategies like Black Blocs, is presented. Lastly, the different impacts that online protest and street protests have on society have been considered. Interviewees shared their experiences and contributed to the building of knowledge concerning protests of different forms.

Chapter 5, “Conclusion and Final Analysis”, concerns how my findings will be inserted in the surveillance studies frame. I conclude this thesis by pointing out some aspects of how this field can still develop, and how many important changes are coming to play a role.

Finally, in an appendix, I propose that the term Citizen Sousveillance and its definition be added to Gene Sharp’s list of Methods of Nonviolent Action.

2. Literature Review – understanding the theoretical basis of surveillance, sousveillance and peaceful protest.

Introduction

Scholarly research on sousveillance is emerging as a new field of study, and to fully capture the idea and meaning of sousveillance, it is important to understand a more established concept, which is surveillance. Therefore, I will examine the following pieces of literature and concepts in this chapter: 1) literature that develops and critiques the idea of panoptic surveillance; and 2) literature that discusses the emergent concept of sousveillance. Additionally, to create a foundation for the conceptualization of Citizen Sousveillance, I will discuss 3) social scientific literature on nonviolent movements.

Taken together, these three streams of work will act as the main theoretical tripod that will be used to sustain the argument about how sousveillance can be used as a nonviolent tool in protests. Besides this tripod, there is a secondary literature that will add to the building of supporting discussions on themes of privacy, frame analysis, citizen journalism, social movements, and online activism.

2.1 – Panoptic Surveillance

While the sociology of surveillance is relatively new, tracing its origins in Anglo-sociology to the mid-1970s, we can see that canonical sociologists were concerned with issues related to surveillance, even if they didn't always speak of these concerns with respect to the 'sociology of surveillance'. It has collaborations from Karl Marx analyzing surveillance in the capitalist workplace; from Max Weber investigating how in bureaucracies officials keep tabs on others; and from Georg Simmel, when he discusses the importance of privacy and secrecy as protection against surveillance, all of which can be easily related to today's information society, among many others (Lyon 2007; Lyon, 1994, Coll 2012).

When it comes to modern panoptic surveillance, though, the world we know today has been developing particularly fast in the past decades. Garland (2001), has an interesting reading

about how the crime control landscape in the United States and the United Kingdom emerged at the turn of the century. For him, “today’s world of crime control and criminal justice was not brought into being by rising crime rates or by a loss of faith in penal-welfarism ... these were proximate causes...” (Garland, 2001:193). Garland’s “crime complex” concept (2001:193), says that the reactionary politics in place in both of these societies were used as foundation for the cultural formation that served as a base for the control culture to spread. This is a reality that is not necessarily replicated in Brazil, especially looking into the timeframe analyzed (June and July, 2013). However, it is hard to dissociate Brazil’s historical inequality from the formation of its own culture of control. This has manifested at many instances in history, lastly and more clearly in 2018, with the election of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro. Garland continues, “The dialectic between freedom and control could be said to have characterized the last thirty years... the social liberation of the 1960s and the market freedoms of the 1980s are now being paid for in the coin of social control and penal repression” (Garland, 2001:198). The underlying circumstances of the culture of control in Brazilian society are distinct from the ones Garland analyzed, but this social control and penal repression are very present in people’s lives today. It is more noticeable than previous surveillance practices that were in place before. It has developed to a point that it is fair to assume that we live in a culture of control, whether in the United States, United Kingdom, or Brazil (Lyon, 2007; Monaghan, 2006).

In this section, I will first discuss Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon. And the way that it was theorized by Michel Foucault. I will then consider applications of the panopticon, as well as critiques of it.

2.1.1 – Surveillance

Before going any further, it is necessary to clearly define *surveillance*. As the name suggests, the word surveillance comes from the French *sur* (over) and *veiller* (to watch), therefore it literally means to watch over (someone or something). Lyon (2007:14) defined surveillance as being the “...focused, systematic and routine attention to personal details for purposes of influence, management, protection or direction”. I would build on Lyon’s definition, adding the word *control*. Surveillance might seem a simple, straightforward concept at first,

however there are many nuances to it, which makes it a very rich field of study. It can be looked at from the safety perspective, when someone watches over someone else for safety purposes, like a lifeguard at the edge of a swimming pool. It can also be looked at from the control perspective, when a police officer watches over people with dubious or suspect behavior (Lyon, 2007).

For the purpose in question here, the idea is to think of surveillance as the big “umbrella” that covers all the studies under this realm, but to thoroughly look into some parts of the surveillance studies that corroborate with the main argumentation. Jeremy Bentham created the concept of Panopticon in the late 1700s, and it has an important contribution for us to understand how surveillance is used to monitor and control people, and how Michel Foucault read and reinterpreted it.

2.1.2 – The Panopticon, According to Bentham and Foucault

The Panopticon, as Jeremy Bentham originally envisioned it, consists of a circular prison with an observatory tower in its center. From this tower, guards or prison staff were imagined to have the perfect view of inmates, while the inmates could not know if anyone was watching them. The uncertainty of not knowing if there is anyone out there is what puts inmates in a permanent psychological state of feeling as though they are under surveillance, of feeling as though they are being watched all the time (Bentham, 1791). Bentham says

To say all in one word, it will be found applicable, I think, without exception to all establishments whatsoever, in which within a space not too large to be covered or commanded by buildings, several persons are meant to be kept under inspection. No matter how different, or even opposite the purpose: whether it be, that of punishing the incorrigible, guarding the insane, reforming the vicious, confining the suspected, employing the idle, maintaining the helpless, curing the sick, instructing the willing in any branch of industry, or training the rising race in the path of education: in a word whether it be applied to the purposes of perpetual prisons in the room of death, or prisons for confinement before trial, or penitentiary-houses, or houses of correction, or work-houses, or manufactories, or mad-houses, or hospitals, or schools (Bentham, 1791:2-3).

The most influential reinterpretation of the Panopticon, and one that has its own reinterpretations, is Michel Foucault's. In his book *Discipline and Punish* (1975), he examines Bentham's concept of the Panopticon, and this is where he develops a surveillance theory that is used and referred to this day in most studies on the subject. Foucault examines four main concepts in this work – 1. Torture, 2. Punishment, 3. Discipline, and 4. Prison. Foucault's argument ends up permeating different avenues of the epistemology of these areas. One of the practices touched by his studies on discipline is the hierarchical observation. It intertwines with the panopticon idea itself, and it is supported by administrative and physical mechanisms and knowledge structures. The subjection inherent to it is paramount for the understanding of how a structure that watches people, keeps people in place, and maintain a chain of power relations can be almost invisible. About this subjection, he says:

A real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation. So it is not necessary to use force to constrain the convict to good behavior, the madman to calm, the worker to work, the schoolboy to application, the patient to the observation of the regulations. Bentham was surprised that panoptic institutions could be so light: there were no more bars, no more chains, no more heavy locks; all that was needed was that the separations should be clear and the openings well arranged. (Foucault, 1975:202)

There are many nuances of Foucault's reading on the Panopticon that can be examined. However, besides the rigid hierarchical structure, and the apparent subtlety of power relations, which implies that there is always a stronger force in an interaction, something else that I would like to draw attention to, which concerns this project, is visibility and unverifiability. Foucault builds on the dichotomy of inmates having to be able to see the watching structure, and the guard's presence must be unverifiable to inmates: "Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so." (Foucault, 1975:201). This dichotomy is what makes the structure successful for its purpose. If at any point an inmate is not sure that there is someone watching, due to the fact that he cannot see the watching structure, or if he can verify when there is someone there and when there is not, the whole purpose is broken.

The structures used as examples by Foucault, like prisons, hospitals, schools, etc, are embedded in the idea that physical places alone have the power to interfere in one's behaviour due to the underlying perception of surveillance. Therefore, the claim is that one's behaviour changes due to the possibility of being watched.

It is possible to stretch this view, and combine it with the hierarchical observation that more flagrantly is an exercise of power between subjects, and apply to new scenarios. Those at the top of the hierarchy, and at the privileged seat in the structure, would not only exercise the power at their disposal, but would also be the ones telling how routine takes place. The routine of events is, then, determined and reported, only by this one person or group of people that are at this privileged position. The person or group is, therefore, the owner and controller of the narrative of how these events exist.

The control of how events happen, namely, the control of the narrative, falls directly into the discussion of how it is used in modern societies. Big corporations, powerful politicians, and other elites have had this sort of control for most of history. They were the ones defining and deciding what and how episodes in society should be reported. In a subsequent chapter of this thesis, the idea of who controls the narrative will be important to help us understand the way that *Midia NINJA* operates, and how they put the change in narratives as one of their main struggles. This narrative battle is also something that the concept proposed by this thesis, Citizen Sousveillance, addresses.

It feels necessary now to see what the applications of the panopticon are, and how it contributes to surveillance studies.

2.1.3 – Applications of the Panopticon in Surveillance Studies

There are many different reviews and interpretations of the Panopticon. It was used, for example, to analyze the neoliberal state and economic life (Gill, 1995), as well as visibility in contemporary urban settings (Koskela, 2002). In surveillance studies, discussion of the Panopticon became so commonplace that Haggerty (2006) argued that it was being overused (and that, in any case, it was not a good explanatory device for present-day surveillance).

Regardless, the Panopticon shows that the control purpose of surveillance can be smooth. The idea of a prison without bars was indeed revolutionary, and that was a concept that could be, and was, applied on many different occasions and places in society.

Modern surveillance gained magnitude in the 1990s, with the rise of closed-circuit television systems (CCTV). The use of cameras connected to a TV system became popular rapidly. The days when physically following someone was the only option were mostly gone. The idea behind CCTV is that someone, a guard for example, would look at the TV screens, live or on recordings, and make assumptions. This guard would track and observe people that presented a suspicious behavior, with intent to prevent any wrongdoing from happening, or using the recordings for the possible legal action. However, under the pretext of being a crime prevention initiative, CCTV has always been implicated in the profiling of people, whether for one's race, gender, or social class. The operators of the system would have the power to define who was "acting suspiciously" (Norris and Armstrong, 1999:158). What can be deemed a suspicious behaviour, though? The very nature of CCTV systems is subject to debate, as a behavior, "suspicious" or not, is extremely subjective (Norris and Armstrong, 1999).

The surveillance supported and enabled by the use of a CCTV system made way for authorities to comprehend how powerful it can be at large scales. The Panopticon, as per Foucault, interacts directly with the idea of this contemporary sort of surveillance that developed from CCTV systems, to tracking everything we do online. It can be seen as the manifestation of Foucault's theory of power relation, hierarchy, and, to some extent, punishment. Having an operator tracking our movements from a privileged standpoint, even if through screens, relates to a form of hierarchical observation discussed by Foucault. On top of that, the awareness of being under scrutiny has the potentiality of changing one's behaviour (Shaw, 2017; Oulasvirta *et al.* 2012). Consequently, the disciplinary measure can end up in punishment, oftentimes depending on the parameters considered as regular or normal. The fact that camera operators have significant discretionary power to decide who to watch, and if someone is acting suspiciously, is troubling. Even more troubling has been the development of technologies and algorithms that monitor our online behaviour, classifying it according to predetermined patterns. But, predetermined by whom?

CCTV is only part of the surveillance apparatus that is present mostly in urban settings today. Koskela (2002) makes an interesting point when she discusses Foucault's social power relation, and the importance of physical space. That idea of transferring the panopticon from closed spaces like prisons, schools and hospitals, to place it in a higher level analyzing the entire city as a laboratory, is crucial to see how space has a direct connection with power relations between individuals. She says

Urban space will always remain less knowable and, thus, less controllable than the restricted panoptic space. Control is never completely hegemonic. There is always an element of resistance. Surveillance can be turned to 'counter-surveillance', to a weapon for those who are oppressed (Koskela, 2002:306).

The same way that space is analyzed as being determinant for how the power relations occur, there is also the claim that power creates its own kind of space. That is to say, the equation of power, space, and how the urban panopticon plays a role there, can be used to throw light upon *Mídia NINJA*. They are indeed inserted in urban settings, and mostly struggling with the notions of power in different scales. Being able to break away from the "institutional" panopticon, in the sense that they are not in a confined space, they are able to employ the "counter-surveillance", as per Koskela's suggestion.

Gill's theory, on the other hand, looks at the panoptic neoliberal state, and says that the panopticon antedates the modern bureaucratic state, and the use of technical innovations, however its use, can be somewhat beneficial, as modern societies require some degree of transparency. In an egalitarian and tolerant society, no citizen should have anything significant to hide from others, but at the same point, in places where one's political views or lifestyle can be deemed less worthy, such transparency can be clearly oppressive (Gill, 1995). Gill's theorization of the neoliberal state panopticon also shed some light on Foucault's understanding of invisibility and unverifiability, as they might be less present when the panopticon is present in labour processes and financial structure.

The use of surveillance employing some sort of panopticon, therefore, whether through the use of CCTV in urban settings, in the financial structures of society, in medical context, in workplaces, and many other places, has been evolving and developing through time. It is, then,

ingraining in every aspect of our lives, interfering in many different aspects of the way we behave as an individual or collectively.

This illustrates how the use and application of the panopticon varied and morphed through time, giving room to some critiques of it, which I examine next.

2.1.4 – Critiques of the Panopticon

Sometimes it is hard to separate the studies on surveillance from the panopticon. The panopticon, being a classic idea created by Bentham in the 1700s, and having Foucault's work in transferring and connecting this idea to modern society in the 1970s, was extremely successful, to the point of being hard for new studies to ignore it. The need to always refer to the panoptic starting point whenever examining surveillance created focal points, but also blind spots, in surveillance studies.

Haggarty (2006) summarizes well the influence of the panopticon in surveillance studies, as well as the ways scholars have worked to evolve this idea to try and explain new aspects of surveillance. As he notes, contemporary scholarship on surveillance has been prolific in its proposals of opticons modified to suit modern-day conditions. The list of new opticons includes the global panopticon (Gill, 1995), the panspectron (DeLanda, 1991), the myoptic panopticon (Leman-Langois, 2002), the fractal panopticon (De Angelis, 2011), the industrial panopticon (Butchart, 1996), the polyopticon (Allen, 1994), among many others. The creation of these new concepts clearly demonstrates that the original theory had its limitations, and it was not sufficient to understand modern society (Haggarty, 2006).

In response to critiques of the limitations of the panopticon, scholars have identified aspects of surveillance that are not well characterized by panoptic dynamics. One of these aspects concerns surveillance in contexts where hierarchical relations are less apparent, such as amongst users on social media. To capture these dynamics, scholars have proposed new concepts like "lateral surveillance," developed by Andrejevic (2005), and "participatory surveillance," developed by Albrechtslund (2008).

In a disciplinary society, as per Andrejevic, the relationship between two people can become a case of power struggle. Lateral surveillance flourished due to a climate of perceived risks. As Andrejevic defines it

Lateral surveillance, or peer-to-peer monitoring, understood as the use of surveillance tools by individuals, rather than by agents of institutions public or private, to keep track of one another, covers (but is not limited to) three main categories: romantic interests, family, and friends or acquaintances. (Andrejevic, 2005:488)

Lateral surveillance plays in a field that underpins this thesis, which is the developments on the idea of *where* the watcher is, and *who* the watcher is. In the case of lateral surveillance, one can be the watcher and the watched at the same time.

Extending from the lateral surveillance idea, participatory surveillance comes to examine the dynamics of the social and playful aspects of surveillance, specifically shedding light on online interactions where individuals willingly share their personal information, and details of their lives with no direct benefit coming out of it. For Albrechtsland, these “social and playful” aspects of surveillance were not well examined by concepts like the Panopticon. As he puts it, “frameworks such as Big Brother and Panopticon [...] do not seem to adequately describe the actual practice of online social networking.” (Albrechtsland, 2008:6)

These two concepts of lateral surveillance and participatory surveillance - primarily the latter - in conjunction with *sousveillance* and participatory *sousveillance*, permeate the understanding and theorization of Citizen *Sousveillance*.

Building on surveillance studies, particularly on work that proposes alternatives to the panoptic narrative, this thesis will develop the concept of *sousveillance*. To set up that development, it will first be important to consider different kinds of veillances.

2.2 – Veillances

Deborah Lupton presents a straight-forward list with the most popular and studied new concepts of the different types of veillance. Lupton blogged this list in an attempt to disseminate

a simplified approach to a very complex concept that is in expansion, with new concepts and studies coming to light every day. Some examples are:

Surveillance: watching from above (the powerful watching the less powerful)

Sousveillance: watching from below (the less powerful watching the more powerful)

Panoptic veillance: the few watching the many, leading to self-watching

Synoptic veillance: the many watching the few

Ubervveillance: watching from all directions, particularly with the use of tracking devices worn on or embedded into the human body

Liquid surveillance: watching that is dynamic, moving restlessly from site to site and using various types of technologies

Banoptic surveillance: exclusion of individuals or social groups via surveillance techniques

Participatory veillance: voluntary participation as a subject of veillance

Social veillance: watching each other via social media

Dataveillance/panspectric veillance: watching that involves the use of digital data technologies rather than human senses alone

Algorithmic veillance: watching using computer algorithms and digital data (Lupton, 2013)

This short list does not encapsulate all veillances, however, for people who are not familiar with the literature, it gives an idea of how rich and complex this area of research is. As said before, the one veillance that this thesis wishes to use as the basis of the analysis is sousveillance, which is diametrically in opposition to surveillance.

2.2.1 Sousveillance

Among all these concepts, there is one which expresses the opposite of the most common and popular idea of the veillances – surveillance – which is sousveillance. Sousveillance is diametrically opposed to surveillance in the sense that the one who is normally observed is now the observer. It means to offer panoptic technologies – like smartphones – to individuals and support them in observing the authorities. It is a kind of reflectionism, which is the use of technology to mirror and confront bureaucratic organizations (Mann, 1998).

A famous case of sousveillance, which helps to illustrate this discussion, happened in the summer of 2004, during the Republican National Convention. On that occasion, 1,806 people were arrested in the city of New York. Many of these people were peacefully participating in a group activity when they were approached by police officers and taken into custody. During the trial, accounts from officers were many times counterargued by videos of participants, along with bystanders who were not even taking part in the event, showing total cooperation with the police and still being taken into custody. This was a clear case of the use of sousveillance, which could also be read as a case of Citizen Sousveillance, that illustrates how sousveillance can be used to protect people in a protest setting, as well as the utility of having protestor-generated images and videos that can support litigation in police brutality and human rights cases (Dwyer, 2005).

Another famous example of sousveillance is in the case of Rodney King, a black man who was beaten by over 20 police officers in 1991 after he had been stopped for a traffic violation. The whole scene was captured on tape by George Holliday, a Los Angeles resident, sparking protests all around the city when the officers were acquitted. (Good-Williams, 1993; Mann, 2003).

These are cases with great repercussions and that had videos used to report police abuse and excessive use of force in court.

Mann, who is one of the main articulators of the concept of sousveillance, and who coined the term, describes this bottom-up veillance as referring:

both to hierarchical sousveillance, e.g. citizens photographing the police, shoppers photographing shopkeepers, and taxi-cab passengers photographing cab drivers, as well as personal sousveillance (bringing cameras from the lamp posts and ceilings, down to eye-level, for human-centered recording of personal experience). It should be noted that the two aspects of sousveillance (hierarchy reversal and human-centeredness) often interchange, e.g. the driver of a cab one day, may be a passenger in someone else's cab the next day (Mann, 2004:620).

Having this concept clear in mind is important, as it is the basis used in the new concept proposed by this thesis.

2.2.2 Developing the concept of sousveillance

The core idea of sousveillance is the bottom-up watch: the idea that the least favored in society still have some sort of micro-power to use, juxtaposed against surveillance by massive and powerful organizations. Gasnacia (2010:496) goes even further, suggesting that “local surveillance societies have now been replaced by a generalized sousveillance society, which reaches incredible proportions”, as these new societies are equally distributed, strictly egalitarian and delocalized over the entire planet. He proposes the antitheses of the Panopticon, which is the Catopticon. The Catopticon “allows everybody to communicate with everybody and removes surveyors from the watchtower” (Gasnacia, 2010:489). It consists in total transparency of societies and within societies, fundamental equality, which gives everybody the ability to watch – and consequently to control – everybody.

The point is that studies of sousveillance as opposition to surveillance have not been evolving for long, and sousveillance can be observed, at least to some extent, in many societies around the world today. Examining a group like *Midia NINJA*, who performs a sort of sousveillance on a daily basis, and contributes to this general idea of bottom-up veillance that sousveillance proposes, it is fundamental for us to understand its effectiveness, its reach, and its longevity. The idea, then, is to resignify the use of sousveillance in the context of protests, with the intent of self-protection and peaceful manifestation of an agenda, giving it a new name to instantly connect to this meaning: Citizen Sousveillance.

Sousveillance can even have other underlying features that are bringing more transparency, especially online, in the sense of exposing data that was gathered by companies like Facebook (Fernback, 2013). According to Fernback, an “informed knowledge society” describes people and communities that use sousveillance to expose Facebook data collection on Facebook itself, therefore raising individual empowerment and social responsibility and equality. Fernback highlights the importance of this transparency on social media, and the internet as a whole.

Today it is common sense that our everyday life is greatly impacted by our online life. Platforms like Facebook and Google have an important role in influencing people's opinions. It is a known fact that these companies collect data from their users for marketing purposes, but that is not all. In a recent scandal involving Facebook and data analytics firm Cambridge Analytica, it was demonstrated that millions of Facebook profiles of voters in the United States were harvested and used to influence choices at the ballot box during the 2016 elections (Cadwalladr *et al*, 2018). These episodes contribute to the understanding of the field as a whole. Whereas the case of Cambridge Analytica can signify a clear case of surveillance, the leak of information, and employees coming public about it, can be considered a sousveillance example.

Another way to interpret sousveillance/surveillance is to look at it as a response to anti-black racism, as Simone Browne does. The long history of racial formations has influenced how the surveillance operative is designed to be unequal and unfair towards black people. The Martiniquais psychiatrist Frantz Fanon described the embodied physical effects of surveillance such as nervous tensions, insomnia, fatigue, accidents, light-headedness, and less control over reflexes, as very severe threats to the human condition.

Browne argues that the branding of slaves in the 19th century was some sort of racializing surveillance at a time that the black body was seen as a mere commodity, building on top of Fanon's idea of epidermalization, or the black body "being an object among other objects" (Fanon, 2008:89; Browne, 2015). Without going into detail of the cruelty of slavery, we can see that the act of surveillance can be an act of oppression and racism. To this day, we do not have to go far to see that black people are more prone to be stop-and-frisked by the police (NYCLU, 2019), or taken aside for pat-downs at airports, especially hair pat-downs in black women (Medina & Frank, 2019).

Still drawing from Browne, some angles were used to substantiate the claim that "the historical formation of surveillance is not outside of the historical formation of slavery" (Browne, 2015:50). The point she makes, based on the rules created by Charles William Tait for governing enslaved laborers, "demonstrate how disciplinary power operated by way of set rules, instructions, routines, inspections, hierarchical observation, timetable, and examination" (Browne, 2015:51). The hierarchization, and the hierarchical observation within a white-controlled private household, can be read in relation to Foucault's concept of hierarchy, and, to a

certain degree, also read in relation to the change in narrative attempted by *Midia NINJA*, as the control of such narrative did not belong to slaves, but their white owners. Browne points to the theory that people who do not control the narrative can use sousveillance tactics against powerful regimes and, in so doing, start to change the narrative those regimes tell. In Browne's account, the apparent dominance of the regime of white slave owners was resisted through sousveillance, for example, through advertisements warning of the presence of slave catchers. In *Midia NINJA*'s case, the traditional media narrative is the dominant regime, and the live streamings and videos are the form of resistance. The understanding of Browne's work helps us understand how this insight about dark sousveillance is important for making sense of the work that *Midia NINJA* does.

For Browne, the term dark sousveillance comprehends not only the collection of data to neutralize surveillance, as described by Steve Mann, but it also englobes a "way to situate the tactics employed to render one's self out of sight, and strategies used in the flight to freedom from slavery as necessarily ones of oversight" (Browne, 2015:21). Her focus in dark sousveillance, which does not necessarily mean blackness, develops a view that slave narratives and "black looks" (a concept that Browne borrows from bell hooks) can be seen as a way to resist the oppression perpetrated by white slave holders (Browne, 2015).

All of that helps us understand the different nuances that the studies of the veillances might have, and most importantly, how to make use of these studies and experiences to promote a fairer society. The use of Citizen Sousveillance comes to light with the intent of spreading the idea of protection of protesters in a peaceful manner, precisely by understanding the importance of the subject.

2.3 Citizen Sousveillance

Although the many readings of sousveillance keep the bottom-up aspect, obviously there are few nuances and different readings of the concept. Mann, being the one who conceptualized it, has the "rawer" idea of sousveillance. Ganascia's *Catopticon* pays attention to the egalitarian potential of it. Fernback attends to its online use, and the possible transparency that it can bring with an informed knowledge society. Lastly, Browne examines the racism that can be embedded

in a top-bottom relation, as well as sousveillance as a form of resistance. I would claim that my reading on sousveillance, or at least the reading that will be used to make the argument of this project, and the reading that will be used to justify the newly proposed concept of Citizen Sousveillance, is embedded within two main ideas: 1. Sousveillance can be used as a way to show wrongdoings committed by the most powerful actors in society within a protest setting, and 2. Sousveillance can be used as a way to defend those opposing powerful actors, especially when it involves transgressing of human rights, which can be seen as common in protests. In the same way Browne describes dark sousveillance as a tactic to oppose the oppression of slaves, and as a way to resist black slavery by inverting not only the gaze, but the attitude of slaves, Citizen Sousveillance also can be seen as a way to resist. The notion of Citizen Sousveillance being used as a defense mechanism for protesters against state violence can be read in parallel to dark sousveillance. The overarching claim is that Citizen Sousveillance can be used as a nonviolent defense mechanism, using the group *Midia NINJA* as an example and executor of it.

What is proposed by this thesis, then, and what will be substantiated throughout the project is the utility of the concept of Citizen Sousveillance for highlighting the creation and expansion of the use of sousveillance in a very specific scenario. This scenario is real, hence the case-study on *Midia NINJA*; it explores what happened when sousveillance was employed with the intent of protecting protesters, especially against police brutality.

The utility of the new concept of Citizen Sousveillance is founded in the literature, specifically about sousveillance, developed over the years. As mentioned, there are five dimensions in which Citizen Sousveillance can be employed. They are:

1. Nonviolent dimension: which consists in the use of Citizen Sousveillance as a way for protesters to defend themselves and resist aggression to basic human rights. This is primarily based on Mann's idea that sousveillance exposes the powerful one. Although it ultimately can be seen as a defense tool, Mann does not reach that conclusion. He states the difficulty of pursuing the proper channels, and the unbalance in the dynamics between surveillance and sousveillance actors.

By definition, the sousveillance practitioner is not in a position of authority, and therefore, without verifiable documentary evidence, information reported by the sousveiller to any higher authority may be on its own insufficient to attain their goal and to meet the needs of the

sousveiller. Testimony can be challenged by other testimony, and in this situation, the person with greater authority has an advantage (Ali & Mann, 2013:246).

It might be counter-intuitive to think of sousveillance as having a nonviolent dimension, especially insofar as it may capture and disseminate images of state violence. The argument here, however, is that by helping to hold perpetrators of violence to account, the presence of Citizen Sousveillance may act as a deterrent to violence and result in a net reduction of brutality and violence.

2. Raw Reality dimension: which consists in the use of Citizen Sousveillance to disseminate a less mediated reality of protests. This is also derived substantially from Mann's work on how the use of sousveillance can balance and impose limits to surveillance. The dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance, for obvious reasons, overlap to some extent. For example, when I say that it portrays a raw reality, it will also be used as a counternarrative. For Mann,

Whereas radio and television generally provided curated and produced materials from centralized broadcasters, lifecasting gathered and broadcast ubiquitous information from below. With 24/7 streaming 'incidental' observations, events are captured as part of the continuous channel of information. Events captured by ordinary people then become an unofficial official record of events that may be used to challenge to authoritative history (Mann, 2013:27).

3. Counternarrative dimension: which consists in the use of Citizen Sousveillance as a manner to challenge traditional mainstream narratives. This relies considerably on Browne's work on dark sousveillance, and the way that the connection between racism and surveillance can explain how the use of sousveillance can be decisive when it is employed with the intent of protecting a group. When Browne (2015) recounts the stories of an ex-slave, she says

"...Maybe we (slaves) would be fiddling and dancing on the bridge and they'd say, 'Here come the paterollers!' Then we'd put out". Such playful tricks were a means of self-defense. These oral histories of ex-slaves, slave *narratives* [emphasis added], and runaway

notices, in revealing a sociology of slavery, escape, and freedom, recall the brutalities of slavery ... and detail how black performative practices and creative acts (fiddling, songs, and dancing) also functioned as sousveillance acts and were employed by people as a way to escape and resist enslavement, and in so being were freedom acts (Browne, 2015:22).

4. Archival dimension: which consists in the use of Citizen Sousveillance with the purpose of keeping and sharing media material with the intent of disseminating knowledge about the reality of protests. This observation is mostly based on the interviews I conducted with *Mídia NINJA* members. It seems that this one specific dimension has not been approached yet, and Citizen Sousveillance addresses it.

5. Virtual dimension: which consists in the use of Citizen Sousveillance with the purpose of working as an alternative channel for protesters who are unable to be physically present at a demonstration, to participate virtually. This relies on my interviews, as well as the reality that the technology that makes it possible is fairly new. In 2013, when the protests happened in Brazil, live streaming on Twitter was just beginning, in a very rudimentary way. Today it is a more established idea, the use and sharing of live activities being more common, and digitally more feasible.

2.3.1 – Citizen Journalism

Without a careful evaluation and a deeper analysis, a first impression of the new concept proposed by this thesis – Citizen Sousveillance – could be mistaken with the more popular and better-known idea of citizen journalism. Citizen journalism does not have a clear-cut definition (Lasica, 2003), however it usually:

includes practices such as current affairs-based blogging, photo and video sharing, and posting eyewitness commentary on current events. Sometimes the term is used quite broadly to include activities such as re-posting, linking, ‘tagging’ (labeling with keywords), rating, modifying or commenting upon news materials posted by other users or

by professional news outlets, whereby citizens participate in the news process without necessarily acting as ‘content creators’ (Goode, 2009:2).

The concept of citizen journalism can, therefore, refer to a broad range of activities.

The formal way news is commonly reported, and the fact that for many there is not a reflection of themselves when they watch news reporting, can be seen as producing a disassociation between the piece of news and the rest of society, creating a dichotomy of “us and them”. Citizen journalism can be a bridge to make this news more “real”. Allan (2007), believes that “At stake is its perceived capacity to create discursive spaces for empathetic engagement—of bearing witness—at a distance, especially where human rights violations are concerned.” (Allan, 2007:373).

The ability to connect people to the reality of events, even if it’s from a distance, is part of what Citizen Sousveillance is, and a reality of what *Midia NINJA* does. The fact that both concepts bear the word ‘Citizen’ is not by mistake. Citizen, in both instances, implies that a regular citizen in society has the ability to connect with other citizens, and report events independent of big corporations’ curation. Also, the “human rights violations” aspect raised by Allan incorporates, and intertwines with, to some extent, other purposes of Citizen Sousveillance, such as being a nonviolent method of protection of protesters. Citizen journalism can be used to read an important aspect of the usefulness of Citizen Sousveillance.

However, there are important distinctions between Citizen Sousveillance and citizen journalism. Citizen Sousveillance focuses attention more on the specific dynamics and politics of watching in ways that are not necessarily foregrounded in concepts of citizen journalism. Additionally, citizen journalism does not have in its core the importance of originating outside of traditional media. Because Citizen Sousveillance may be less edited/produced than citizen journalism, it can present a more raw reality. In the context of the 2013 protests in Brazil, this less-mediated reality was not easily assimilated by mainstream media. This feature, too, may distinguish Citizen Sousveillance from citizen journalism; the former may be less easy to assimilate into mainstream media coverage than the latter. Additionally, Citizen Sousveillance

may be more 'activist' than citizen journalism, which might have journalistic objectivity as a goal. With respect to resisting police violence, therefore, Citizen Sousveillance may be more active and 'activist' than citizen journalism. Finally, the archival dimension of the Citizen Sousveillance studied in this thesis has as a purpose the organization of a challenge to existing power hierarchies. It is in this sense perhaps more political than citizen journalism.

2.3.2 – Frame analysis

Another important dimension that is part of Citizen Sousveillance's purpose, is the support it gives to one of the main goals of *Midia NINJA* – the change in narrative. As said before, the power relations amongst the different actors in society carry with them the evidence that the most powerful have the edge when it comes to reporting and sharing events.

On the other hand, social movements, *Midia NINJA* included, have the abstract challenge to aggregate people and move towards a symbolic goal of a fairer society, never forgetting to take into consideration people's own challenges. Jameson (1976), says that “meanings, in everyday life, are the projection of the structure or form of the experiences in which they are embodied, and that they may most adequately be dealt with in terms of the ways in which such experiences are framed” (Jameson, 1976:119).

Benford and Snow (2000) also examine the use of collective action frames and frame processes in relation to social movements. For them “collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization” (Benford & Snow, 2000:614). Their study of social movements under the concept of frames derives from Goffman's dense work on it (1974). For Goffman, “social frameworks provide background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being” (Goffman, 1974:22).

Snow and Benford (1988) also discuss the importance of the meaning to participants of such a frame, as meanings are produced in the course of interactions. Social Movements

assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists (Snow & Benford, 1988:198).

Snow and Benford (1988) identified four sets of factors that influence the powerfulness of mobilization, or the powerfulness of a movement's efforts and activities. In the form of questions, the factors are 1. How robust and thorough is the framing effort? 2. What is the internal structure of the larger belief system? 3. What is the relevance of the frame to its participants? And 4. Is this frame within a cycle of protests? Furthering their analysis, they add another layer of interpretation to the study of collective frames, which are the core framing tasks. They divide those into three component parts: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing.

The concept of frame analysis, while not necessarily central to the understanding of sousveillance, nor Citizen Sousveillance for that matter, adds a depth to the understanding of the importance, motivations, and goals of social movements to take to the streets. Jameson, Goffman, and Snow and Benford look into how one's perspective impacts the dynamics of social movements. Citizen Sousveillance relies on the context of people who enable, and want, change. These changes can many times happen in conflictual and hazardous circumstances. "Why" people are willing to partake in such situations should also be flagged as a deeper foundation for the use of Citizen Sousveillance.

Citizen Sousveillance has as one of its utilities the possibility of helping in the change of narratives, or change of frame, so that it can help to change established ideas, concepts, and events. Citizen Sousveillance can corroborate to a new reality – potentially a new way of life for many. It can be employed in different structures, although in this thesis it is examined only within a specific context, namely, the 2013 Brazilian protests.

2.3.3 – Citizen Sousveillance and the Multimedia Citizen

Finally, it is worth noting and investigating a concept mentioned by members of *Mídia NINJA* during the interview process, which is the *Cidadão Multimídia* (Multimedia Citizen).

Considering factors like unequal access to technology in an unequal society such as Brazil's, the emergence of a multimedia citizen is new. One interviewee said

Quando a gente começou a ir para a rua, a ideia era entender que todo mundo poderia ser um cidadão multimídia. Todo mundo com um celular na mão, e com câmeras poderiam fazer fotos, poderiam fazer vídeos, poderiam fazer uma transmissão e mostrar as coisas que estão acontecendo, diferente do que a gente veria num resumo no jornal a noite. A partir de 2013 especialmente foi quando as pessoas começaram a ir mais para as ruas, quanto a usar mais esse serviço de streaming. Porque você já podia fazer transmissão pelo Twitter, mas nem todo mundo usava isso, então a partir de 2013 as pessoas começaram a usar essa ferramenta muito mais. E a usar o Facebook muito mais para isso também. Em 2013, quando a gente começa a falar do cidadão multimídia, é isso. É inverter essa lógica de você ser sempre o vigiado, e conseguir ser também o vigilante. Você não precisa necessariamente estar em um protesto. Você pode estar em uma situação comum em um metrô e ver uma pessoa ser agredida e você pode ou transmitir aquilo ao vivo, ou filmar e levar isso para frente depois. Esse vídeo pode viralizar e virar uma denúncia – o que pode ser uma prestação de serviço, de certa forma (Interviewee #2, 2018).¹

As it is shared by this interviewee, the multimedia citizen can act and be present in any instances of social interactions within a society. It does not have boundaries, and it does not have a formal limit. As long as there is a human interaction where a third party has the capability to register in video – or in audio or photograph, for that matter – the idea of a multimedia citizen is feasible.

¹ When we started taking to the streets, the idea was to understand that everyone could be a multimedia citizen. Everyone with a cellphone at hand, and access to cameras could take pictures, make videos, or start streaming to show exactly what was happening, differently from what people would watch in the evening news. Especially from 2013 on, when people started going to streets to protests more often, they started using streaming more. You could broadcast via Twitter before that, but not everyone would use it, so in 2013 people started using this tool [Twitter streaming] more often. And to use Facebook for that too. In 2013, when we started to talk about multimedia citizen, it was about that. It inverts the logic of being always the watched, allowing them to also be the watcher. You do not necessarily need to be in a protest. You can be in an ordinary situation in a train, and see someone being assaulted, and you can broadcast that live, or record it and share it afterwards. This video can go viral and become a complaint – what can be considered a service provided to society, in a way.

The relevance of this way of being a citizen, encapsulated by *Mídia NINJA* participants in the idea of a multi-media citizen with access to various means of media production, is that it helps to understand the possibilities of multimedia interaction in contemporary Brazilian civic participation.

I would like to trace a distinction, for the purposes of this thesis, between the idea of the multimedia citizen and the concept of citizen sousveillance. While Citizen Sousveillance emphasizes the power dynamics of the gaze in protest settings, the multimedia citizen is, in many instances, the agent of it. The multimedia citizen is the person who performs the Citizen Sousveillance. Citizen Sousveillance works in the sense of being a nonviolent tool for protection, a way to portray a more raw reality of protests, to challenge mainstream media narrative, to archive raw material for future studies, and to provide virtual accessibility. The multimedia citizen is the agent actually responsible for it.

2.4 – Nonviolent Resistance

In this section, I intend to examine nonviolence and demonstrate why it is important to understand Citizen Sousveillance. Nonviolent action, like surveillance, is not a new concept, and it has been studied and used for a long time. It has a record of successful outcomes and it has world-renowned names that used nonviolence to substantiate their ideals for a cause, most notably Henry David Thoreau, Martin Luther King Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi. Nonviolent action, however, has been used before and after the struggles of Thoreau, King, and Gandhi. In South America, there are dozens of documented instances where nonviolence was employed. From the nationalization and control of gas reserves in Bolivia in the mid-2000s, to the occupation of mines by women in Chile in 2010, to protest job losses (Global Nonviolent Action Database, 2019).

Before delving into the angles of nonviolent resistance, it seems important to give a brief explanation about the theorization of it.

2.4.1 – Theory of nonviolence

The use of nonviolence can be examined from a wide range of perspectives. It can be discussed taking into consideration different factors, such as the religious, social, or political background of a struggle, for example. However, nonviolence of any kind can hardly be separated from two pillars of its theory: power and violence. Proponents of nonviolence theory such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Gene Sharp, debated, theorized and acted on the idea that a conflict could be resolved in a conciliatory manner, and that power (brutal power) can be faced with a peaceful attitude (Atack, 2012).

The field of nonviolence research has developed considerably in the last century. It is also possible to find studies permeated by nonviolence theory in many fields, ranging from research discussing the ambiguity of nonviolence, the intrinsic relation of violence to human behavior, the morality of violence (Stiehm, 1968), the jurisprudence of nonviolence within a cultural feminist prism (Murray, 2010), and analyses of empirical data to better understand the psychological aspects of nonkilling and nonviolent struggle (Mayton, 2012). Hence, there are many angles from which the study of nonviolence can be approached. I would like to point to one, specifically, that discusses two ideas of nonviolence: pragmatic nonviolence and principled nonviolence. Drawing from Atack, we can assert that the most renowned proponents of nonviolence, like Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, and David Thoreau are exponents of what is considered nonviolence by principle. This means that not only would they not engage in confrontation with opposing forces, but they would accept the consequences of their actions, knowing it is implied in the theory of nonviolence. However, nonviolent methods can be used pragmatically too. When there is a calculation, consciously or unconsciously, about confronting the opposing forces or not, this may be called a pragmatic exercise of nonviolent methods. Some nonviolent movements, Gandhi's included, had principled advocates of nonviolence, as well as pragmatic ones, meaning, people that were part of the movement only because the alternative choice was not necessarily realistic, or too dangerous. Many times, movements use nonviolent methods pragmatically, without necessarily knowing that these are nonviolent methods.

One important distinction to make here is about the term used to describe the peaceful political manifestation of an idea or an action. Gene Sharp, one of the main theorists of

Nonviolent resistance, wrote in one of his most known and important books, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*:

The term used in this context was introduced by Robert Helvey. “Political defiance” is nonviolent struggle (protest, noncooperation, and intervention) applied defiantly and actively for political purposes. The term originated in response to the confusion and distortion created by equating nonviolent struggle with pacifism and moral or religious “nonviolence.” “Defiance” denotes a deliberate challenge to authority by disobedience, allowing no room for submission. “Political defiance” describes the environment in which the action is employed (political) as well as the objective (political power). The term is used principally to describe action by populations to regain from dictatorships control over governmental institutions by relentlessly attacking their sources of power and deliberately using strategic planning and operations to do so. In this paper, political defiance, nonviolent resistance, and nonviolent struggle will be used interchangeably, although the latter two terms generally refer to struggles with a broader range of objectives (social, economic, psychological, etc.) (Sharp, 1994:1)

The above description used by Gene Sharp in *From Dictatorship to Democracy* is pertinent, as in the end it underpins a clear political stand. However, for the benefit of this thesis, the term nonviolence should be more connected with the idea of nonviolent political action. Attack (2012:86) defines it as “collective action outside the formal institutions or procedures of the state that avoids the systematic or deliberate use of violence or armed force to achieve its political or social objectives”. Based on Attack’s definition of nonviolent political action, I would add the following: a protester behavior that anticipates possible human rights violations from police forces with the objective of dissipating it. Also, the use of these terms could be employed interchangeably: nonviolent methods, nonviolent action, nonviolent struggle, nonviolent tool, all of which are within a nonviolent movement context.

Everything considered, nonviolent movements are still political movements with objectives, and strategies to achieve these objectives. Movement leaders such as Gandhi and King knew that on one hand, they could be considered pacifists, but on the other hand, whenever

there was some sort of confrontation, they knew they would likely gain sympathetic support from bystanders (Gurr, 2000). That could be interpreted as a pragmatic result from their peaceful approach, or another way to look at it would be to see them as *pragmatic pacifists*. Considering that the classic definition of the pacifism ideology is the “belief that not only violence is evil but also that it is morally wrong to use force to resist, punish, or prevent violence” (Narveson, 1965:259), Howes (2013:428) says that “Pragmatic pacifism reformulates pacifism as a principled commitment to non-violence grounded in a realistic understanding of the historical record and the inherent political liabilities of violence”. The muddied waters that often seem to cloud the definition of nonviolence and pacifism made room for these new approaches, amongst which was pragmatic pacifism. Pragmatic pacifism helps to understand the protest setting and what I take to be the primary objective of Citizen Sousveillance. Howes gives the following definition of pragmatic pacifism:

Against the conventional wisdom, pragmatic pacifism maintains that the advocates of violence are prone to unrealistic ideological commitments that are often doomed to failure, whereas nonviolence offers a self-limiting, pragmatic, and realistic approach that accounts for the manifold difficulties of politics. In contrast to traditional pacifism, which rejects violence on moral grounds, this brand of pacifism relies upon political as opposed to moral principles to make the case against violence. Violence may be immoral, but recent empirical and theoretical work pushes us toward the perhaps more important insight that violence is counterproductive to politics (Howes, 2013:428).

The connection made between nonviolence and pacifism, and their pragmatic understanding, set the bases for the nonviolent mechanism that Citizen Sousveillance can bring to a protest situation.

Nonviolence is a broad term. It can refer to a movement, where people behave in a non-violent manner; it can also be considered a tactic when people decide not to physically engage in confrontation with opposing forces; and it can be a theory, as studied by Sharp, to see where these movements and techniques are inserted in society, and how they play a role in protests and revolutions. Some of these terms can be used somewhat interchangeably during this research, as

the meaning of nonviolent struggles, resistance, movements, action, and methods can overlap depending on the context, use, and intention of the author.

The idea that I put forward in this thesis of juxtaposing the use of sousveillance as a nonviolent tool in protests, in one dimension, implies as well to underline the positive highlights of peaceful movements. First, it is important to note that throughout this project some generalizations are made, as there is not a unified consensus of what constitutes nonviolence – if there is no interaction with one’s physical body, could an action still be considered violent? John V. Bondurant (1988) defined violence as “the willful application of force in such a way that it is intentionally injurious to the person or group against whom it is applied”, hence the use of force or intentional injury cannot be present in nonviolent methods. The concepts of violence and nonviolence are, obviously, exclusionary of each other (Bondurant, 1988). Although important definitions, there is still an open debate about what especially constitutes nonviolence. This conception differs among authors, and differs depending on whoever is practicing a nonviolent action. Second, according to Nojeim, the principle of nonviolence can be due to religious commitment and training, or some sort of secular conviction, therefore slightly different from Sharp’s, as for Sharp it is clearly political (Nojeim, 2004).

For the purpose of this project, nonviolence will be considered a political movement (encompassing other commitments and convictions) in which the participants of a nonviolent movement would avoid physical confrontation with police forces, for example, and take non-physically confrontational actions, like strikes, refusal to pay taxes, picketing, praying and worshipping, among others, to advocate for their causes. These concepts have not changed much throughout time and are still close to the ones used in the past. It is worthwhile to first briefly consider some examples of nonviolent resistance.

Not paying taxes, for example, was the method found by Henry D. Thoreau to non-violently protest the government. The question at the heart of his famous essay “*Civil Disobedience*” is what citizens should do when they have a president that they whole-heartedly oppose. In his case, he was against James K. Paul’s administration, who was in favor of slavery and wars. For him, paying taxes would be a way of financing the government during the Mexican-American war that started in 1846, and he therefore refused. He spent a night in jail for not paying the five dollars of taxes that he owed. Some friends even offered to pay it for him,

disregarding the fact he had the means to do so himself – in the end, someone paid it for him, against his will, and he was freed. Not paying his taxes was his way of saying that he would not contribute to the war. It was his way of saying that he would not finance a government that was pro-war and pro-slavery. Because of the repercussion of his essay, Thoreau's refusal to pay taxes is today considered one of the first examples of documented nonviolent action.

Mahatma Gandhi, to take another famous example, is someone that was influenced by Henry Thoreau. Gandhi gained notoriety when he marched to protest the taxation imposed by Britain on the salt produced by villagers from where he was born in colonial India, in what was known as the Salt March. Gandhi was also responsible for formulating, clarifying and qualifying the doctrine of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* is a philosophy of nonviolence propagated by Gandhi, but it is also a concept used in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Gandhi spent a great part of his life polishing and developing this concept, and although a very religious man, he tried to disconnect it from the strict religious sense, where many times it was only used in reference to saints, and not men. (Iyer, 1974)

The sentiment of non-conformity towards decisions judged unfair also permeates the actions of Martin Luther King Jr. King's main cause was the racial division that was in place, especially in the south of the United States. He led the civil rights movement from the mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968. He had a vital role in ending the legal segregation of African Americans, and he was a prominent advocate of nonviolent methods.

What these three figures have in common is that they are considered by many as important actors in the history of nonviolent movements and their effectiveness. They acted at different times, for different reasons, and with particular purposes, but they all carried common traits in the way that they decided to do things, which was the nonviolence against those whom they were fighting or protesting.

As for Latin America, Sharp also identified movements, such as the downfall of General Jorge Ubico in Guatemala (1944), the peaceful protests of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina (1977-1983), and the Chilean marches against the Pinochet regime (1985-1989). In Latin America, however, it happened more in a collective way, as actual collective movements. For example, when the workers of a cement factory in São Paulo, Brazil, went on strike. Records tell that some workers were cajoled to go back to work, but when the cement trucks were leaving

the factory, protesters threw themselves in front of it, and were run over. The names of these people are unknown. The way that these events have been recorded in Latin America are usually an artefact which relegates important individuals to a lesser known place in history (McManus *et al.* 2004).

Besides Latin America, examples of successful nonviolent campaigns are plentiful and can be easily found in history. Nonviolent movements became more “modular”, easily spreading around the world (Tarrow, 1994). Examples can be found in the Iranian Revolution in 1977 – 1979, the first Palestinian Intifada in 1987 – 1992, the Philippine People Power Movement in 1983 – 1986, and more recently in Egypt, Ukraine and Tunisia (Chenoweth *et al.*, 2011). These are many different occasions where nonviolent struggles were used. There are many different methods of nonviolent action and how they can be employed. According to Sharp (1973), there are some 198 different methods of nonviolent action. Sharp classifies and exemplifies all sorts of demonstrations that can be considered a nonviolent method against a dictatorship, a government, the police, or anyone that exercises power in society. He divides them into three broad categories: 1. Nonviolent protest and persuasion; 2. Noncooperation (social, economic and political), and 3. Nonviolent intervention.

The use of nonviolent techniques is, therefore, proven to some extent. There are examples of nonviolent movements that worked, and instances where it did not achieve the end goal. The objective here is not to analyze the movements themselves, but just use them as a background, where the use of Citizen Sousveillance will be added as a nonviolent tool. Citizen Sousveillance can, then, be added as a defense mechanism, in any sort of protest context, but most interestingly to be analyzed, in the context of nonviolent movements.

3 – *Mídia NINJA* – development, challenges and presence

Introduction

The main argument to be defended at this portion of the thesis is that *Mídia NINJA* represents a key case-study of sousveillance in the Brazilian context. To make this argument, I begin my examination of *Mídia NINJA* as an institution, considering in what context this initiative came to light, so later on, we can also look at it from the sociological perspective that they are a part of, and elaborate a debate on their importance to today's Brazilian society. To follow that, I will dwell on the idea that what *Mídia NINJA* does is aim to possibly diminish the influence of powerful, traditional media², and give an alternative source of information to people. These mainstream channels will also be critiqued in this chapter. Considering that social movements and media frames are constrained due to a long and established history of narratives being controlled by few, *Mídia NINJA* proposes to facilitate access to different frames (Benford & Snow, 2000). To substantiate this discussion, it will also be critiqued how the perception of a protest can change, depending on the framing, the narrative, and the actors involved in it. Cases like the *Jornadas de Junho*, and the protests in Turkey in 2013, show that the framing of protests can change in any direction (Mendonça *et al*, 2019). The members that I interviewed spoke with details about how they usually act on these matters, and what they do to try to approach this narrative battle. Lastly, I make a connection between these attempts to change the narratives with all of *Mídia NINJA*'s online exposure, mostly analyzing all the material I accessed as a means to understand how they act regarding their online initiative, and how they spread their work on social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

I will use the interviews I conducted with five members of *Mídia NINJA*, along with the online material gathered, to examine their online behavior to corroborate the main argument. Also, the information collected in these interviews and online activities helps us to have insight on how *Mídia NINJA* is developing, how they perceived sousveillance before and after they started using it, and how their participation in the Brazilian protests' scenario has affected the

² The concept of *traditional media* used in this thesis refers to, mainly, long-established newspapers, television networks, and magazines.

way they have positioned themselves in society. All of this will underpin the importance of *Mídia NINJA* as an important case study in the field of veillances.

3.1 A brief account of the development of *Mídia Ninja*: How it all started – *Jornadas de Junho* in 2013

It feels necessary, at this point, to discuss and understand more about how *Mídia NINJA* became what it became, and it is hard to talk about *Mídia NINJA* without mentioning the June Journeys (*Jornadas de Junho*). *Jornadas de Junho* was a sequence of manifestations that happened in June 2013 all around Brazil. It all started with protests against the increase of public transit fare in the city of São Paulo, mostly organized by students and left-wing activists. Transit fare hikes are common in Brazil whenever a new administration comes to city offices around the country. It usually happens in the first year of the city administration, as they would have four years for people to assimilate it, having less impact in a possible re-election campaign (Wainer, 2014; Saad-Filho, 2013). At that time, the one-trip ticket went from R\$3 to R\$3,20 – a 20-cent hike (approximately CAD\$ 0.07). A group of protesters named *Movimento Passe Livre* – MPL (Free Fare Movement), which advocates for free transportation for everybody, took to the streets right after the increase was announced. At that point, it was a localized manifestation, not big in numbers, and only in the city of São Paulo. Everything changed when the police dispersed the protesters with tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber bullets. Here, I like to say that the modern history of Brazil changed – empowered by the use of sousveillance, and having *Mídia NINJA* as an important representative of the movement, the images of police brutality dominated the news and spread widely with the help of social media. What started as small protests on June 6th, hit its peak on June 13th, 2013. That day is when everybody watched clearly unprepared police forces beating and bombing everyone. The Riot Police (*Tropa de Choque*) made no distinction that day. They attacked protesters, reporters, bystanders, and anyone that was near the area. A reporter of the very influential newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* was shot in the face with a rubber bullet, which almost blinded her (Vallone, 2013). A reporter of a smaller newspaper was shot in the face and was blinded (Reis, 2016). The outcry was instantaneous, forcing the mayor of the city of São Paulo at the time, PT's Fernando Haddad (Workers' Party – center-left), and the governor of the state of São Paulo, PSDB's Geraldo Alckmin (Social Democratic Party – center-right), to make official statements about what happened. At first, both of them tried to defend the actions

perpetrated by the police forces, and they were backed up by traditional media, which criminalized the social movements. However, they were not yet aware of the repercussion of what was live-streamed by groups like *Mídia NINJA*. The videos of police brutality were way too clear and honest. Soon after, the mayor and the governor had to make new statements condemning the actions of the police and they claimed to punish whoever had exceeded their functions. They also promised to look into the transit fees hike again, which actually happened and the transit fee hike was canceled (Wainer, 2014; Saad-Filho, 2013; Santos, 2018).



Figure 1: June 2013 protest in Rio de Janeiro on June 20, 2013.

The outcome of June 20th, 2013 was a general revolt, having as a consequence a sequence of protests that took over the entire country. However, the cancellation of the transit fare hike made the agenda of the protests spread into an extremely diverse one, and sometimes conflicting. There was a mix of people still fighting for the free transportation issue, and people asking for more rights, fewer privileges for the political class, and the classic trifecta of health, education and security (Saad-Filho, 2013). I say that this is a game-changer in Brazil's modern history precisely because at that time, society was not polarized, as it is now. People from all across the political spectrum were attending the same manifestations, which is unlikely to happen again in the short term. One of my interviewees talked about his impressions about that time:

Junho de 2013 foi certamente uma época que mudou nossas vidas, mudou a história política do Brasil, e trouxe à tona diferentes aspectos da sociedade brasileira. O começo dos protestos foi liderado pelo MPL e com o foco de baixar a tarifa de ônibus – eles sempre estiveram nas ruas e então sabem o que o pobre precisa. A repressão foi muito grande, o que confronta até mesmo a democracia no país – nenhum país democrática poderia permitir isso. Mas acho que isso acabou levando a incentivar pessoas a irem aos protestos, pessoas que nunca estiveram em um protesto antes. Com muitas agendas nos protestos, isso acabou diluindo as demandas e perdendo a efetividade – aquela história de pessoas gritando para acabar com a corrupção, mas usando uma camisa da CBF, umas das organizações mais corruptas do Brasil ... não fazia sentido. Essa diferença veio de todos os campos políticos. Do pessoal da esquerda, pedindo desapropriação de prédios públicos em São Paulo, aos extremistas da direita, pedindo uma intervenção militar para acabar com a corrupção. Ambos no mesmo protesto (Mídia NINJA, Interviewee #3, 2018).

3

Below is a chart of a poll done while the protests were still happening. It shows the wide range of demands, and consequently, the wide range of different people attending the same events, something that is not likely to happen any time soon in Brazil, due to today's polarization.

³ June 2013 was a time that certainly changed our lives, changed the political history of Brazil, and brought out many different aspects of Brazilian society. The beginning of the protests were led by a group that has always been on the streets, that knew and knows what are the needs of poor people – therefore their agenda of accessible public transit. The repression that was thrown upon the protests was just unbelievable. No democratic country should allow this sort of conduct by its police forces. That, however, fuelled people to take the streets – people that have never been in a protest before. As it got diverse, many different agendas were also brought to the streets. The variety of people and agenda, obviously, did not work out. People asking to “end corruption”, while wearing the Brazilian soccer team jersey, which is controlled by *Confederação Brasileira de Futebol* - CBF, one of the most corrupt entities in Brazil... it made no sense. The difference in agendas covered mostly all of the political spectrum, from people more to the left, asking for the government to expropriate empty buildings downtown São Paulo, to people on the extreme right, protesting for military intervention, as the only solution to corruption – *in the same event!* (Mídia NINJA, Interviewee #3, 2018).

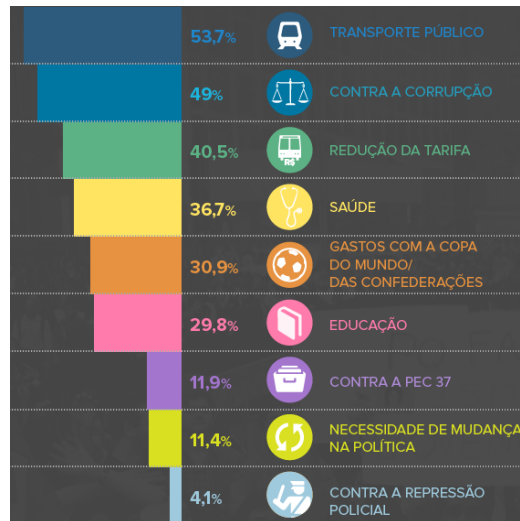


Figure 2: Reasons why people attended manifestations in June, 2013 in Brazil
 Translation from Portuguese to English. 53,7% Public Transit – 49% Against Corruption – 40.5% Reduction of Transit Fee – 36.7% For a Better Public Health System – 30.9% Against the Expenditure with Soccer World Cup – 29.8% For Better Public Education – 11.9 Against Bill 37 – 11.4% For Changes in The Political System – 4.1% Against Police Brutality.

While these kinds of figures are illustrative of the diversity of interests that people brought to the protests, they also tend to reduce the complexity of the narrative, for example in communicating the idea that people would be motivated to protest by a single issue. Sometimes, as the research below suggests, sousveillance can help to complicate such frames.

Mídia NINJA's role in bringing a coherent “diagnostic” frame to the protest—one that emphasizes the complex connection between the socio-economic and political conditions of Brazilian politics and police violence—helps us to understand the importance of this organization, and how influential sousveillance can be in a society. *Mídia NINJA*'s involvement with the manifestation, covering many of them, independently, on the ground and in real-time, made them an alternative to the mainstream media. The attempt of the traditional media to delegitimize and suppress the manifestations at first was not successful precisely because there were videos of *Mídia NINJA* and independent protesters being massively shared on social media. The impact and visibility that these videos achieved when they went viral got to a point that mainstream media could not control the narrative anymore, and as in every power-oriented actor in that field, it did not want to be on the losing side of history, or to be accused of biased

coverage of events, so they also started blaming the police brutality and the lack of political ability of the mayor and the governor.

The *Jornadas de Junho* is the perfect example of how sousveillance can empower alternatives to traditional media channels, and most importantly, how it can bring to light the reality of protests, which, most of times is about giving voice to minorities and populations that are excluded from society. In tandem with that idea is the fact that sousveillance itself can be a powerful and nonviolent tool to bring change to society, as this thesis argues. Sousveillance is an impressive tool/technique, and as we can see, it has the power to change sociological stigmas long solidified in people, in an instructive manner, and seems to go hand-in-hand with education. This whole idea, encapsulated in a very specific concept of the use of sousveillance, and as a peaceful tool to protect protesters, is what I call Citizen Sousveillance. The five dimensions that can be explored within the concept of Citizen Sousveillance are exemplified later, with the help of *Mídia NINJA*'s social media platform examples.

Before I go further into the analysis of *Mídia NINJA* and how they are agents of one sort of sousveillance themselves, I believe that it is important to go a little deeper to understand where *Mídia NINJA* comes from. It was not straight-forwardly formed as a collective of individuals that started streaming protests on the ground, but as a branch of a bigger group that was created in 2002, named *Fora do Eixo* (or Off-Axis). *Fora do Eixo* (FdE) started as a cultural collective, where people would promote independent festivals (especially music festivals), as well as all sorts of cultural and art events. The objective was to allow independent musicians and artists to reach out to people and to give people accessible entertainment and cultural options. Sadly enough, culture, access to culture, and subsidy to culture are considered a left-wing agenda in Brazil. (Capilé, 2013).

FdE worked, and still does, as a big incubator for new ideas and cultural initiatives. They are a network of collectives (communal houses of like-minded people) who organize festivals and general art initiatives. It is within this atmosphere that *Mídia NINJA* was born, with people interested in sharing the reality of protests with a bigger audience, and people that were dedicated to doing something about the control of the narrative imposed by the traditional media.

These people started covering music festivals and various art events, and soon after it developed to protests and manifestations coverage (Capilé, 2013).

Today, *FdE* counts almost three thousand people divided into more than 200 houses spread throughout the country. The events they organize give them a financial return, with the sale of tickets, food, and beverages. This revenue is used to cover the common expenses of these collective houses such as the internet, food, clothes, trips for those who will work, etc. *Mídia NINJA* was still incipient when the *Jornadas de Junho* happened in 2013, and their coverage made them very popular. Today there are fully committed members to *Mídia NINJA*, and although it is part of *FdE*, *Mídia NINJA* has a bigger reach and exposure than its creator (Capilé, 2013).

Only members know the very structure of *FdE*, but one of my interviewees gave some superficial details about it. *FdE* is divided into 4 fronts, or pillars, as he describes: “há a *Universidade Fora do Eixo, que cuida das ações de formação. O Banco Fora do Eixo, que cuida das ações de sustentabilidade. O Partido Fora do Eixo, que cuida das ações de articulação E a Media, que cuida da comunicação especificamente.*”⁴ (*Mídia NINJA*, Interviewee #2, 2018). My participant focused his remarks on how the *Fora do Eixo* University works, as he was more involved with that area. The university, which was structured as it is in 2011, is an initiative of spreading and sharing knowledge among everyone that is part of the organization. For example, if someone is known for being a photographer, or skilled in preparing public bidding projects, s/he can organize an online workshop for everyone interested in acquiring, developing or polishing this skill. For people more interested in a specific theme, there are the “*vivência*” (experiences), which is to shadow a senior member in person to get more connected with the ins and outs of how to maximize resources, better share productions, etc. (*Mídia NINJA*, Interviewee #2, 2018).

As for the *FdE* Bank, it can be complex. There is no central department that runs all the transactions for them, but instead, this “financial control” is spread all around the collective houses. They communicate and share the bills and payments that have to be paid. It can also get

⁴ ... there is *Fora do Eixo* University, in charge of training initiatives. There is the *Fora do Eixo* Bank, in charge of the sustainability initiatives. There is the *Fora do Eixo* Party, in charge of the articulation initiatives, and the media, which is in charge of the communication, specifically.

extremely complex because they have even created an alternative currency to use internally, named “cards”. The total expense of someone living in one of the houses is approximately R\$ 900 per month (CAD\$ 300). This is the estimated cost in “real currency”. The “cards” are counted/used according to the work that one provides to the whole network. For example, if a photography job costs R\$ 2000 (market price) for an event when someone within *Fora do Eixo* does it, s/he earns the equivalent amount in “cards”. If this job is to help in the organization of a festival that will tour the country, doing 50 presentations, for example, instead of hiring different people in different cities, it is all done by this one person, so s/he accumulates 50 x 2000 cards. These cards are commonly shared with the house in which this individual is based. However, the details of how these operations take place are known only to the members (Capilé, 2013). The pillar concerning the communication is where *Mídia NINJA* is inserted, and is the biggest part. Most people working in this “department” also work for *Mídia NINJA*, and there are only a few projects that are not run by the *Mídia NINJA* “brand”. The pillar of communication also takes care of all the audio-visual productions and all general communication of the organization.

Understanding more details about this organization, and how they operate and are spread out, helps us to have a better grasp of the size of the group, some of its history, how they finance themselves, what is the “culture” underneath the actions, and so on. Needless to say that this concise account is not enough to fully capture how *Mídia NINJA* operates and how they came to be what they are today, but for the objectives of this thesis, it is sufficient.

Also, understanding some of the origins of *Mídia NINJA* and *Fora do Eixo* is relevant to help illustrate what the intentions of their current actions are. The use of sousveillance, and as a consequence the proposed use of Citizen Sousveillance, can be a different angle to be explored by what this group of activists proposes. Their history shows that they have a nation-wide structure, that they have people interested and motivated by what they are doing, and people that believe that they could be an important actor in these turbulent (and as of 2019, also troubling) times that the Brazilian society faces. The use of sousveillance – and Citizen Sousveillance – by this legitimate group of people make its importance even more pronounced. The sociological arena shifts and changes directions incredibly fast, so it is hard to predict how and if protests will be more or less popular than in the timeframe of 2013-today, however, the advancement of alternative narratives by legitimate groups like *Mídia NINJA*, in addition to the use of

sousveillance and Citizen Sousveillance, is a great achievement for the plurality of ideas in Brazil. This will be discussed in more detail next.

3.2 – *Midia* NINJA’s challenges – Changing the narrative

In 2013 Brazil went through what many consider the most important sociological and transformational experiences in its recent history. The protests called *Jornadas de Junho* that took over the entire country were comparable to the ones that Anglo Media has dubbed the “Arab Spring”. One of the results of those intense months of protests, especially June and July, was that people had then discovered the power of social media to disseminate videos and different accounts of events, and consequently, the narrative that historically has been in the hands of few in Brazil, now had a powerful competitor.

One way that *Midia* NINJA goes about their narrative is by treating complex subjects in a more approachable manner, and working as an alternative channel for people to become informed – in a way, perfectly aligning to one of their published objectives, which is “strengthen narratives that have no visibility on the conventional means of communication” (*Midia* NINJA, 2013). This approachability could be read in relation to diagnostic framing, by “focusing blame or responsibility”, in the sense that *Midia* NINJA helps regular citizens to navigate more complex issues (Benford & Snow, 2000:616). This change in narrative works as an alternative to traditional communication channels, and as it is done in a more accessible manner, they have a better chance of connecting to their audience at a different level. As reported by some of the members I interviewed, people that follow their work and later on become “ninjas” themselves are not uncommon – the interviewees being an example of how the duo “connection to people” + “becoming a ninja” can happen. The fact that they speak a language that can easily be relatable to common individuals makes *Midia* NINJA’s narrative more approachable, and consequently, more credible for many people. As they can also be described as a social movement due to their political agenda, power of congregation, and sociological activism, they manage to have many people identifying with their cause in a more grassroots manner, inspired by their stance on social issues, as many people see them as a representative of their own situation. It is fair to assume that having a more accessible language is instrumental for the reach that *Midia* NINJA has today. During the interviews, the background of the interviewees itself can attest to that –

most of them started working at *Mídia NINJA* due to the identification with the ideas, and the social connections developed in events supported and covered by the organization.

That is exactly the opposite of what happens with the so-called traditional media like influential newspapers and wealthy networks. They have been established for so long that the way they portray their reality does not necessarily take into consideration this “connection” with people. Historically, this traditional media has not been worried about how people on the other end would receive or connect with the information (although, an exception is made when it comes to the marketing practices of mainstream media). The competition has always been slim, especially before the advent of the internet, so it was a comfortable position to dictate what should or should not be delivered to people. Having said that, it is important to note that the development of “the media” happens in an extremely fast manner. It is hard to keep track of, given the speed with which social networks gain and lose relevance, and the changing ways that they influence people. The difference between this new media, compared to the broadcast media of before, is that far more people have a voice now. It went from a one-to-many communication, to one that provides access, participation, reciprocity and peer-to-peer connection (Jenkins, 2006). On one hand, we have these webs of communication, where people interact with one another and are subject to different filters. On the other hand, the narratives portrayed by these main representatives of mass communication channels tend to be biased and loaded with their own agenda. Everywhere, mass communication vehicles have as a common characteristic the influence that they practice over a society in many different fronts such as behavioral, economic, and obviously, political (Desgualdo, 2014).

When we juxtapose this standard scenario of how traditional mainstream media works – carrying its own agenda and an almost-always biased narrative – with the Brazilian society and what are its main influencers, we must identify one specific powerful actor: Rede Globo (Globo Network). Rede Globo, or just Globo, is the 14th biggest media company in the world, ahead of Yahoo and Warner – mounting up to an incredible 4.8 billion dollars in media revenue (O’Reilly, 2016). Such wealth gives Globo the strength to be present in any sort of media in Brazil, from an extremely popular TV channel, to newspapers, and it recently increased its online presence. The foundation of Globo in 1965, during Brazil’s Dictatorship regime, supporting its

project of national and economic integration, is only a small demonstration of how intertwined it has always been with power and politics. It helps us to understand why Globo is still so influential (Porto, 2007, 2012). Globo's power of manipulation and political meddling is well known in Brazil and very well documented (Lima 1988, 2001; Straubhaar, 1989; Amaral & Guimaraes, 1994; Miguel, 2000, 2004). Such power is evident in how Globo dominated the narrative of what was considered the truth in Brazil for decades. Even today has considerable credibility among Brazilians, determining if an event is "good" or "bad", and imposing its own agenda. (Borelli *et al*, 2000)

The presence, power, and influence of this one media company make it evident that having capable alternatives to long-established and biased narratives is vital for a fairer and more equal society, where people should be free and able to access different channels of communication and information, and not be a hostage to only one group whose main concern can be questioned as keeping its agenda and relevance. (Borelli *et al*, 2000). This is where *Mídia NINJA* sees itself in this bigger political/sociological spectrum – being the flipside of this traditional media, and consequently a decent alternative to Globo. On *Mídia NINJA*'s "about us" official website (2018), we can find the following statement:

As grandes corporações de mídia vivem uma intensa crise. Esse momento pode ser entendido em dois aspectos principais: no âmbito econômico, de um modelo pautado pela venda de anúncios e a circulação física de publicações que não conseguem se adaptar aos novos tempos digitais. E de credibilidade, por anos e anos de omissão e manipulação de informações em prol do poder econômico e de grupos políticos de seu interesse. A velha mídia está amarrada a uma linguagem e a um padrão de qualidade que são paradigmas do jornalismo comercial, com pouca abertura para experimentação e adaptação às novas formas de produção e interação com a informação permitidas pela explosão das redes sociais (Ninja, 2018).⁵

⁵ The big media corporations are under an intense crisis. To understand the current situation, we have to examine two distinct aspects: from the economic perspective, they have a model based on selling advertisements, and the physical circulation of their publications whichi struggles to cope with the new digital era. And from the credibility perspective, due to year after year of omission and manipulation of information in favor of big economic powers and

We have to have a clear understanding of how the traditional media in Brazil has been married to political power for a long time. Being a source of information is not necessarily the priority for these powerful corporations. There is an evident disconnection between them, and the great majority of Brazilian society (Lima 1988, 2001; Amaral & Guimaraes, 1994). *Midia NINJA*'s stance also helps us to deconstruct myths that are well spread, and have been told as the only truth, without anyone to disaffirm or contradict them. There are many of these “myths”, but for this project, a specific one is more pertinent, which is that social movement members are more easily manipulated, and in general, uneducated: in other words, just pawns in the political and sociological game played by the government, big media corporations, unions, political parties, etc. This view was consolidated in the past, especially because the media coverage of protests, and social movement coverage in general, was consistent with a specific – read: biased – narrative that was modeled by the main actors in Brazilian society (Arruda, 2016).

Jochen Peter (2003) did a study to investigate whether a media coverage that is mostly aligned towards the same goals affected support for European integration. The results showed that the consonant coverage has an important role in shaping citizens' opinions about political parties and politicians (Peter, 2003:145). For Peter, consonant media coverage is “a very similar presentation and evaluation of issues in all media of a particular country” (Peter, 2003, 144). This concept of “consonant media coverage”, when combined with mainstream media coverage with the goal of spreading a certain narrative, can be borrowed and used to explain how particular views are rooted in the Brazilian society. Globo, which was the first nation-wide network, influenced all the other media organizations that came after them, establishing what is considered a standard of professionalism. This standard was followed by smaller and newer networks, and this media consonance almost organically created. The narrative created by Globo was, usually, also followed. One of these narratives, consolidated over decades, is that social movements are, in their majority, composed of poor, uneducated, and manipulated people.

Although the dominant media claims to be impartial, a deeper examination of its content easily helps us understand how their intentions are pervaded with the ideology of the dominant

political. The old media is tied up to a certain speech, and a “quality standard”, that became the commercial journalism paradigms. This way of portraying news leaves little space for new experiences and adaptation to new forms of production and interaction with the information, now enabled by the explosion of social medias. (Ninja, 2018).

class. Fragments of news are distributed as being the entirety of the reality of facts. This practice is correlated with the criminalization of social movements (Guimarães, 2015). Still drawing from Guimarães (2015:739 – apud Sader, 1995:193), there is a “consonance” (again the *consonance*) between Brazilian right-wing forces and new versions of modern ideologies. The combination of older and newer actors always fed the perpetuation in power of the elites, and the conservative and anti-democratic mentality that still permeates the country. This predominance and power of the elites was very successful in making a great part of Brazilian society distrust social movements.

All of this highlights the need for new narratives and new ways of portraying the reality of many, which is what *Mídia NINJA* has been doing for some time now. Giving space to people that are often at the margins of society is a constant, endless, necessary fight if we want to see a more equalitarian and fair society. *Mídia NINJA* gives these people a space where they can voice their concerns. They show them an alternative way of accessing information. The work done by *Mídia NINJA* has a side, as they say. They identify as “*mídia ativistas*” (media activists), in the sense that they use all media outlets available to them to defend and support most groups that fall into the more progressive side of society, such as workers, feminists, prostitutes, the LGBTQ+ community, and minorities in general. One of the interviewees explained it very well when I asked her where she sees *Mídia NINJA* in the big societal picture. She said:

Eu acredito que a Mídia NINJA é uma poderosa e criativa narrativa. A gente sempre se posicionou dessa maneira, está até mesmo no site ... tudo tem um lado. A Mídia NINJA não é diferente e também tem um lado, e sempre somos bem transparentes em qual lado nós estamos. Portanto nossas narrativas são construídas dessas perspectivas, não somos uma voz sozinha, mas milhares de vozes ... e isso faz com que o que eles chamam de minorias, que na verdade são maiorias, tenham uma voz. Aqui na Mídia NINJA temos mais de 33 editoriais falando sobre tudo, feminismo, indígenas, prostitutas ativistas, padres progressistas, professores pessoas com uma trajetória bem diferente. Tudo isso faz com que a construção da narrativa que espalhamos seja composta de diferentes pessoas dentro do campo progressista que nos posicionamos. Nós não entendemos a Mídia NINJA, nós não nos entendemos como jornalistas, mas mídia ativistas. Essa diversidade na agenda agregado ao fato de estarmos em um lado bem definido politicamente hoje, somado a

*nossas posições, e como levantamos certas bandeiras ... tudo reforça nosso ponto de vista e o mídia ativismo que promovemos (Interviewee #1. 2018).*⁶

The legitimacy of *Mídia NINJA*, hence, comes from its base of supporters, and people that they reach out to, so they can expose their stories. These stories corroborate with their narrative and give them more meaning, making the work of *Mídia NINJA* an important piece for people to get information about parts of society that do not often make to the big media. Having different opinions, and representing different points of view about such an impactful topic, is fundamental for a healthier society, and I would argue that *Mídia NINJA* addresses that.

The fight is not fair. *Mídia NINJA* is inserted in a niche where extremely powerful actors have been playing for a long time, so, unquestionably, the challenges faced by the group are monumental. The importance of placing *Mídia NINJA*'s presence closer to the mainstream is yet to be seen whether beneficial or not. The mainstream media, at times, replicates *Mídia NINJA*'s contents to claim impartiality. Still, the gain of presence and reach that *Mídia NINJA* has achieved since its birth is remarkable, and it is verifiable upon examining their success, online and offline, which will be done later in this project. Most importantly, it works to deconstruct false ideas that are ingrained in some parts of society, and such false ideas feed the hate between different groups within society.

Almost six years after the *Jornadas de Junho*, we can see that the alternative media has spread in Brazil. The narrative control that powerful players like Globo had is now pulverized in different channels. *Mídia NINJA* continues to be an important part of that, being a reference to many, but many other groups and channels are now available, on both sides of the political spectrum, including extremists. The election of Jair Bolsonaro in 2018, against powerful and

⁶ I believe that *Mídia NINJA* is a creative and narrative power. We always undertook this position – it is even in our website guidelines – everything has one side. *Mídia NINJA* will always have a side, and we were always very clear in which side we are on. Therefore, our narratives are composed and built from these perspectives, so we are not a voice alone, but thousands of voices coming from the idea that the “minorities”, as they are named, are actually the majority. We have more than 33 editorials at *Mídia NINJA* and they cover issues ranging from feminist groups to indigenous people, from activist prostitutes to progressive ministers and teachers ... People from very diverse walks of life. All that makes the narrative construction composed by different people within the progressive left field. We do not understand *Mídia NINJA*, we do not understand ourselves as journalists per se, but as media activists. This diversity in agendas, combined with the political spectrum that we identify ourselves, the way we conduct our actions, our lifestyle ... all are factors that strengthen the media activism that we preach. (...) (Interviewee #1. 2018). [...]

wealthy campaigns, was mostly based on the alternative media, popular Youtube channels, and fake news, and is proof that traditional media lost the absolute control it once had (Baronas *et al.*, 2019)

The importance of analyzing this diverse range of existing narratives today is crucial for the understanding of *Midia NINJA* and how they have played an important role in Brazilian society. The underlying intention of this thesis is to examine how protesters are leveraging new technologies as a form of resistance and protection against state violence, potentially in a peaceful manner. Emphasizing the importance of how narratives were controlled previously is crucial to make sense of the nature and necessity of *Midia NINJA*'s resistance. In this process, it felt important and helpful to propose and develop a concept that would encapsulate this new phenomenon, as the existing literature did not fully contemplate what Citizen Sousveillance proposes. This new term can be further used and studied in the ever-changing dynamics of protests. The use of social media is part of these constant changes, and the publicly available interactions of *Midia NINJA* will be reviewed next.

3.3 *Midia NINJA*: A Social Medias Analysis.

The power and longevity of sousveillance are still to be proved. Steve Mann may have come up with the incipient idea of sousveillance a couple of decades ago, obviously without using the current nomenclature, but it actually has only recently gained notoriety. A search for the word "sousveillance" on Google scholar shows that each and every one of the results in the first ten pages are articles, books or citations made since the year the 2000, with the majority having been published in 2010 or later. This is to highlight the one aspect that made sousveillance, if not possible, important to the extent it is, which is the social media platforms.



Figure 3. Ngram of the use of “sousveillance” in Google.

The popularization of the internet, and better and cheaper services, made it possible for millions of people to get online. A study conducted in 2018-Q3 shows that out of the 7.6 billion people on Earth, 4.1 billion have access to the internet, and 3.3 billion are active social media users (Kemp, 2018). The magnitude and reach of social media are only second in magnitude to television (Nagel, 2017). However, television concessions, in its great majority, have to pass through the filters of powerful governmental institutions, and are subject to private interests, as is the case in Brazil. The internet is a less regulated land of information, so there is this major different characteristic between these two channels of information. Because the essence of sousveillance is to go against the top decision-makers, the mainstream media (ie. television) is not the best channel to spread the results of its production, and the internet therefore ends up being the best way to share sousveillance content. And, because there are so many people using social media in the world, the importance of these platforms for sousveillance is evident. It is worth noting that these techniques or tools evolve. Surveillance today is far from what it used to be when it started. Sousveillance is borne in the digital age, but this does not mean it will not evolve; therefore, what we can say is that for today, social media platforms are essential for its survival and importance.

In Brazil, some platforms are not as popular, such as Ozone, Douyin, and Sina Weibo, so the ones most used are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter (Kemp, 2018). Social media platforms now are a major competitor in the news segment. Besides television channels that rival social media to be the preferred source of information for people, there is now a new platform

gaining importance, namely chat applications: specifically Whatsapp and Telegram. There are reasons to believe that the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil were heavily influenced by the content shared on the Facebook-owned application Whatsapp. There are around 120 million Whatsapp users in Brazil and at a time when the traditional press is being discredited, the use of a tool with a reach such as this can be extremely powerful (Oliveira, 2018). The information shared on Whatsapp brought to light a debate regarding fake news, which is believed to have helped elect the extreme-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro for the presidency in 2018, in a campaign riddled with inaccuracies (Almeida, 2018; Baronas *et al.*, 2019). While the election of Bolsonaro and the debate about fake news is relevant to what this thesis analyzes, my focus is less on the distribution platforms and platform politics, and more on the street-level and citizen-led content production side of sousveillance.

As is expected, and is the nature of social media platforms, the online content available overlaps quite a lot. One unique piece of news is usually shared on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, for example. A video will be shared on all of them. Each social media platform has its characteristics and a way to influence the followers of an account (Cha et al, 2010). For example, on YouTube, *Midia NINJA* has over 160 thousand subscribers to their channel, where they have published over 600 videos since 2013, gathering more than 13 million views (Social Blade, 2018). However, some content has more reach and exposure on Facebook, for example. Also, some of the content produced by *Midia NINJA* was shared by other important pages and accounts, and from there it is hard to keep track of how far this content goes, meaning that it is fair to assume that it has reached a much larger number of people than those registered on their accounts.

To corroborate the analysis developed in this chapter so far, I decided to present some of the online initiatives used by *Midia NINJA*. The importance of analyzing their publicly available online content is in serving as proof of behavior that underpins the entire culture inside *Midia NINJA*. However, analyzing their online behaviour (read: their attitude on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) in a quantitative way is difficult, at least by using conventional methodologies. There is a clear need to further develop the methodology to research social media material. The few available tools are in constant change and can be costly, as they obey a marketing logic, and as social media companies are always seeking more revenue,

and therefore changing the access that tools can have to their databases. The more manual search (eg. researching keywords and hashtags) “is necessarily limited, and will not capture [...discussions] which do not explicitly include the chosen terms.” (Bruns & Burgess, 2012:4).

Among these different approaches, I decided that selecting a defined corpus of data, from the start of June to the end of July 2013, would be the most feasible. I used this parameter to analyze the Twitter platform, as their search engines are straightforward and easy to use. *Midia NINJA*'s general use of social media, and how they portray themselves online, can be drawn from these examples. Citizen Sousveillance examples are more abundant on Twitter, where this content was shared in real-time, at least in 2013. The usage of the other platforms, like Facebook and Instagram, are used as examples of more recent activity.

If we consider that *Midia NINJA*'s most relevant work started in June 2013, it would not be possible to go through all tweets, posts, and comments since 2013 until 2020. The idea here, then, is to understand how they operate, and a sample of this material was used as a way to support this argumentation. It would be extremely interesting and useful to perform a quantitative analysis of *Midia NINJA*'s online behavior, but that is beyond the scope proposed by this thesis. The rationale behind the qualitative approach used here is to select posts and comments on the three most popular platforms in Brazil: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. As they are the most popular platforms in Brazil, they are also, consequently, the ones on which *Midia NINJA* is more active. In Brazil, chat applications such as Messenger, Telegram, and WhatsApp are just as popular, but as they are mostly private, it is not feasible to gather material for a research purpose. The analysis starts in June 2013, as this was the timeframe in which protests took over the entire country. Just as important would be to see how these protests, narratives, and actions evolved after some time. For the purpose of this thesis, which is to demonstrate how *Midia NINJA* used Citizen Sousveillance, what makes the most sense is to delimitate the analysis timeframe, primarily, to June and July 2013, which is when they were very active, especially on Twitter.

The publicly available data below will be examined from the lenses that support the use of Citizen Sousveillance by *Midia NINJA*. The question is: How do these images and texts support the use of Citizen Sousveillance? How are they connected? Citizen Sousveillance is based on the idea of the gaze, ie. the bottom-up sousveillance heretofore examined. However, the

complementing piece of the use of sousveillance in protests relies on the fact that sousveillance media have to be available, and people should know they exist. Hence, the use of social media platforms is important for sharing sousveillance media, and for supporting it with additional textual content.

It is important to notice that, throughout the many years of completion of this thesis, the concept of Citizen Sousveillance, as expected, has morphed and developed into something that was not previously anticipated. Hence, the analysis of *Midia NINJA*'s online presence, though fixed in the defined timeframe, has changed according to how the main argument of the thesis evolved. Consequently, it makes sense to examine the online initiatives of the group through the lenses of the different dimensions of the proposed new term, Citizen Sousveillance, which are presented next.

Some of the images presented in the following sections depict peoples' faces. In these cases, where the pictures presented are of protestors who are not public figures, I have pixelated their faces in order to preserve their anonymity

3.3.1 Protection and nonviolence

The first dimension to be examined concerning the use of Citizen Sousveillance relates to its primary purpose – to be used as a nonviolent mechanism in protests. Within this dimension, we can unpack and, based on how *Midia NINJA* utilized and shared this sousveillance data on social media, see how the idea of solidarity was integrated to the idea of protection and defense of protestors. At this point, I believe that it is important to bring to the conversation the concept of solidarity, as it helps us examine how the connection within a group can be the strength of this dimension of Citizen Sousveillance.

Hechter, (1988), brings an interesting definition that can be applied to this context. A ... group's solidarity is a function of two independent factors: first, the extensiveness of its corporate obligations, and, second, the degree to which individual members actually comply with these obligations. Together, these provide the defining elements of solidarity. The greater the average proportion of each member's private resources contributed to collective ends, the greater the solidarity of the group (Hechter, 1988:18).

The solidarity idea that permeates Hechter's words can be read in relation to the reality of protests. Having interviewed *Mídia NINJA*'s members, I drew some conclusions. First, protesters and ninjas often share many similar values; this makes sense, considering they likewise often share the same progressive political background. Second, both groups have decided to act on the fact that they do not accept a certain measure, attitude or order from superior instances – usually governments – and therefore protest their indignation together. These two factors combined increase the potentiality of a sense of solidarity with one another. The feeling that they are fighting for the same purpose – and the sense of purpose here unites these people. Empowered by large numbers, as well as the feeling of belonging, street and online protesters tend to feel more secure in both their actions, and how the events will develop. All facilitated and improved by the use of Citizen Sousveillance. Below are some examples of *Mídia NINJA* using their social media to spread their Citizen Sousveillance practices.



Figure 4. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Facebook. Translation from Portuguese to English. A photojournalist is helped by firemen after being hit in the leg by bomb shrapnel,

allegedly thrown by the police. The reporter was covering the protesters that were trying to get close to Mineirão Stadium this afternoon, in Belo Horizonte. Watch live: [link] Photo: *Mídia NINJA* [links]

Protesters came together to help an injured photojournalist during a protest. They helped him while firemen and paramedics were en route. The claim is that Citizen Sousveillance can be used as a nonviolent protection for protesters against abuse of human rights. They help each other based on the solidarity amongst protesters, which strengthens the effects of this tool. The act of filming, streaming or photographing the actions of police forces has the potential to change behaviours. As a *Mídia NINJA* interviewee puts it

Há uma mudança significativa na própria produção de narrativa e no próprio engajamento também das pessoas nas ruas. Só pelo fato de você poder ir na rua ... e você ter um celular na mão, e você usá-lo como uma ferramenta de poder diante de um policial, por exemplo, é significativo. Você falar para o policial “estou aqui narrando esse fato para duas mil pessoas”. Isso dá um poder para esse cidadão que está com o celular, que antes não era possível (Interview #2, 2018).⁷

This *Mídia NINJA* testimonial is extremely rich, to the point that it can be framed in a way to be a representation of the five dimensions that Citizen Sousveillance proposes to enact. The two thousand people online, watching the events, demonstrates a situation where a nonviolent method is being employed with the intent of self-defense, and at the same time it is also a way for people to virtually follow what this protester is doing. If the protesters are confronting a police officer, for example, there are witnesses of such interaction. Besides these two dimensions, such a situation can clearly portray a raw reality of protests, and can also be used to challenge any narrative that might be created by mainstream media – usually in favor of the police. Lastly, such videos could be archived, and used for future references.

⁷ There is a significant change in the narrative production itself, and in the engagement of people on the streets. Just by the fact that you can go to the streets, and have a cell phone at hand, and use it as a power tool before a police officer, for example, is significant. Being able to tell a police officer “I am here narrating this event to two thousand people”. It gives a power to this citizen with a cell phone that was not possible before.

Below are some other examples of *Mídia NINJA*'s social media usage that reinforce the claim that Citizen Sousveillance was employed by them. In the instances below, it was used with the intent of a nonviolent defense mechanism.

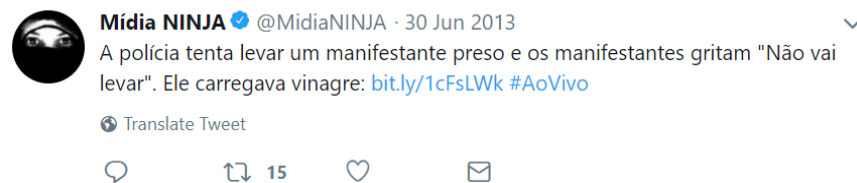


Figure 5. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Twitter. Translation from Portuguese to English. The police try to take a protester in custody but the other protesters keep chanting “Don’t take him”. He had vinegar on him. [Links]

Figure 5 shows another example of how *Mídia NINJA* used its social media to share a use of Citizen Sousveillance. They shared online (and in real-time) that the police were taking a protester into custody only for the fact that he had on him a bottle of vinegar. Vinegar, as it is known, reduces the effects of tear gas bombs. At this point in time in certain protests in 2013, people were being taken into custody for the mere fact of having vinegar on them. Protesters and ninjas were following the police’s action, chanting, filming, and trying to defend the person being taken. It is a use of a nonviolent technique, with the intent of defending a protester with the use of Citizen Sousveillance. Figure 6 below shows a picture of such events.



Figure 6. Police try to take a protester into custody for having vinegar on him.

3.3.2 A more raw reality of protests

Portraying a more raw reality of protests, especially compared to what is depicted by traditional media, is one of the dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance. Below are examples of *Mídia NINJA*'s social media activity illustrating sousveillance in protest settings, and highlighting this 'raw reality' dimension of Citizen Sousveillance. Instant sharing of events can be seen as an underlying feature of Citizen Sousveillance as a whole, and for this dimensions it is no different. Reporting the raw reality of protests while they happen, in real-time, is a strong feature of Citizen Sousveillance.

The series of tweets and pictures below will be analyzed afterward.



Figure 7. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Twitter. Translation from Portuguese to English. Thousands of people on the streets in BH right now and the POSTV is live broadcasting everything! Check it out. [link]

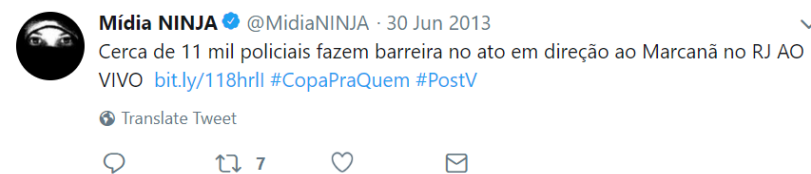


Figure 8. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Twitter. Translation from Portuguese to English. About 11 thousand police officers are blocking the protest that is going towards Maracanã Stadium in Rio – LIVE. [links]



Figure 9. Picture of protests in Rio de Janeiro on June 30th, 2013 – reflecting *Mídia NINJA*'s coverage and posts.

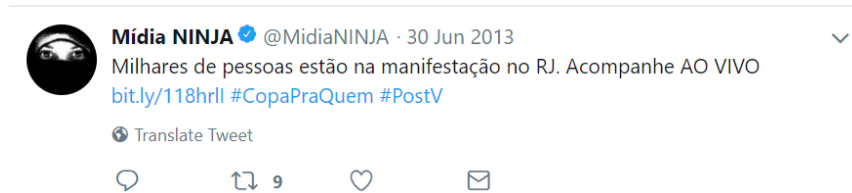


Figure 10. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Twitter. Translation from Portuguese to English. Thousands of people are at the protest in Rio. Follow LIVE [links].

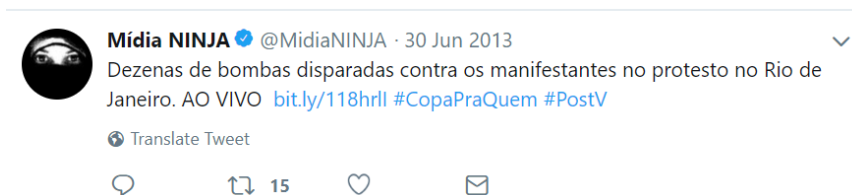


Figure 11. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Twitter. Translation from Portuguese to English. Dozens of bombs are thrown against the protesters in Rio de Janeiro – LIVE [links]



Figure 12. Picture of protests in Rio de Janeiro on June 30th, 2013 – reflecting *Mídia NINJA*'s coverage and posts.

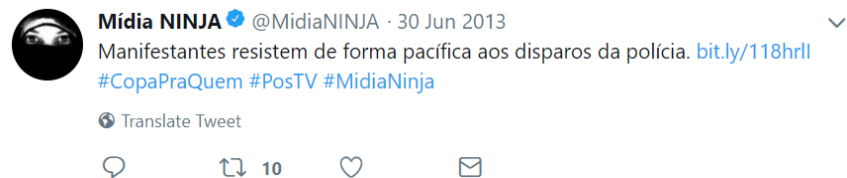


Figure 13. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Twitter. Translation from Portuguese to English. Protesters peacefully resist to police firing. [links]



Figure 14. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA* Twitter. Translation from Portuguese to English. From the streets of Maracanã (Stadium). Police disperse peaceful protest with rubber bullets. [link]



Figure 15. Picture of protests at Maracanã Stadium, in Rio de Janeiro on June 30th, 2013 – reflecting *Mídia NINJA*'s coverage and posts.

These tweets and pictures show how *Mídia NINJA* used its Twitter account to share the development of different protests, live. In many of the above examples, there is the word *ao vivo* (live), which highlights the immediacy of how these events are shared. The fact that they are happening “right now”, and being shared “right now”, strengthens the dimension of Citizen Sousveillance that discusses the raw reality of protests. The raw reality of a given protest can indeed be presented at a later time without necessarily compromising its credibility, however, the immediate sharing of such events *ao vivo* guarantees that this material is unedited, and therefore raw. These tweets were shared with a base of millions of followers, directly and indirectly. The images, streaming of content, and videos were seen by people who are engaged in social movements, but also by people that are not necessarily engaged politically in any cause. It is fair to assume that bringing the reality of protests, without the editing that is used when portrayed by mainstream media, to a bigger audience has the possibility of impacting people differently. This is one of the purposes of Citizen Sousveillance – to bring to light what a group of citizens is doing to pursue certain change(s) in society. Having this action done in the context of protests is very pertinent precisely because it is one of the main practices used by movements to act on their agenda.

3.3.3 Challenging mainstream narrative

Citizen Sousveillance also provides material that can be used to challenge mainstream narratives. The change in narrative is one of *Mídia NINJA*'s main battles. As discussed, before the internet especially, people depended mostly on mainstream media for information about news, whether local, national, or international. Powerful television networks like Globo were the ones dictating what was shared, under what light it was shared, and would persuade people to reach certain conclusions.

Below are a few examples of how *Mídia NINJA* has used Citizen Sousveillance intending to be an alternative narrative. Afterwards, these posts were shared on their social media platforms.



Figure 16. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Facebook. Translation from Portuguese to English. BECAUSE I WANTED. Captain Bruno, Brasilia Riot Police, when asked about his motivations to attack peaceful protesters answers: "Because I wanted". The group took the "Unfair Player" yellow flag created during the Confederation Cup to parade in front of Congress, as shared yesterday by *Mídia NINJA*.

Figure 16 shows a captain who attacked peaceful protesters without reason, but had his action recorded; this is a clear example of the way that Citizen Sousveillance can challenge a mainstream narrative. This sort of video can be used to give context to the event, and it can also be used to counterpose any position presented by traditional media, by the police (as an institution), or by the captain himself. The video was shared on *Mídia NINJA*'s Facebook.

Another example:

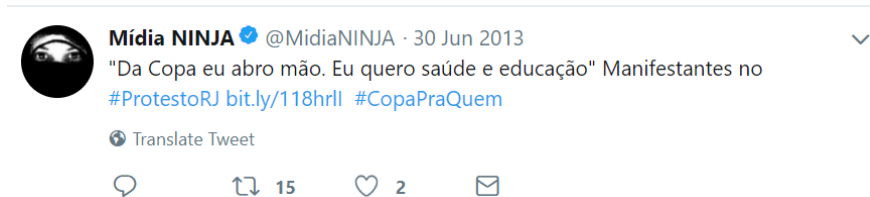


Figure 17. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Twitter. Translation from Portuguese to English. "We don't want the World Cup. We want Health and Education" Protesters at #ProtestRJ



Figure 18. Protesters carry a sign "Fifa Go Home". Showing their protest against the World Cup of soccer.

Brazil was the host country of the World Cup in 2014 and the Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. The official government narrative during the campaign to host such huge events was that the entire country was behind the bid. During the protests in 2013, one demand that was frequently heard in protests was that people were actually *against* these events, as the

priorities of the country should be, mainly, improving the quality of public health and public education. Again, this can be seen as the use of Citizen Sousveillance to challenge official narratives put forward by the government, and replicated by mainstream media. *Mídia NINJA* helped concerned citizens voice their protest against what was being depicted then.

And a final example concerning changes in narratives:



Figure 19. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Twitter. Translation from Portuguese to English. [1] We are LIVE directly from the City Hall to an exclusive interview with [Rio de Janeiro's] mayor Eduardo Paes, check it out [links]. [2] Breaking. #EduardoPaes will talk to #midianinja in an exclusive interview, live at 7 pm. Send your questions.

Figure 19 is an example in which a powerful actor in society was connected to an organization using Citizen Sousveillance. *Mídia NINJA* had an exclusive interview with the mayor of Rio de Janeiro, Eduardo Paes. The fact that *Mídia NINJA* had an exclusive interview with Rio de Janeiro's mayor says a lot. In such a situation, they were able to pose questions that, for different reasons, would not be asked by a Globo reporter, for example. Besides that, the manner in which they shared the information from this interview was uncurated and unmediated. If other media vehicles asked the mayor similar questions, there would be a way to cross-check the answers, and the implied narrative.



Figure 20. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Twitter. Translation from Portuguese to English. [1] @LeiSecaRJ serious. We were censored today at the collective interview. This is how the Government of the State of Rio deals with the free press! [2] We are live in front of the house of Governor of Rio, Sergio Cabral.



Figure 21. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Facebook. Translation from Portuguese to English. NINJA CENSORED. Another *Mídia NINJA* censorship episode. We were the only vehicle impeded to broadcast the press conference now at the Palácio Guanabara, where the governor of the state, Sérgio Cabral makes a statement of the protests in Rio de Janeiro. Follow the negotiation #LIVE: [links]

Figures 20 and 21 show two *Midia NINJA*'s tweets and a Facebook post after they were barred from attending a press conference of Sergio Cabral, the governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro. This is an example of how alternative media vehicles do not always have the same access traditional media does. NINJAs were not permitted to speak to a powerful actor – in this example, the governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Being excluded from a press conference with the governor shows a not-so-hidden facet of such government.

3.3.4 Historical records

Citizen Sousveillance can also be used as a way to record events from alternative perspectives, which can be helpful for future studies on the reality of protests. The importance of this particular benefit is that, especially in Brazil, the attention and value given to the country's history is not embedded in people's or government's culture. The lack of investment for infrastructure, which would preserve aspects of the history of the country, and how it unfolded, is minimal. Besides that, even if there was some sort of policy concerned with preserving the historical aspects of protests in Brazil, they would then be from a certain perspective – one that would likely be ingrained in a certain world view. One that portrays a reality known for not favoring social movements, progressive thinking, or the sharing of wealth and power.

Citizen Sousveillance can, then, be used to create material for an archive that will secure this alternative access to what protests are like in this fraction of the 21st century. It will combine the other three aspects of Citizen Sousveillance (protection against violence, depicting a more raw reality of protests, and challenging mainstream narratives), to be available for future uses.

Below, we can find material taken from *Midia NINJA*'s social media that show how it can be useful when explored by a future generation.



Midia Ninja

26 jun 2013 · 🌐

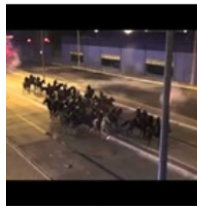
Durante as marchas e atos que vem acontecendo no país nos últimos dias, tem sido recorrente a necessidade de os manifestantes lidarem com o despreparo e com a repressão truculenta por parte do Estado.

A Desmilitarização da Polícia já é um tema que vem surgindo com muita adesão em diversas das assembléias populares que estão acontecendo no Brasil.

Enquanto isso a população ainda precisa resistir para garantir o direito de expressão, principalmente nas cidades onde estão sendo realizados jogos da Copa das Confederações.

Esse Vídeo mostra o embate de Manifestantes de Belo Horizonte com a Cavalaria da PM do Estado.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_p3DvkDsicM



YOUTUBE.COM

Manifestantes Resistem a Cavalaria - Belo Horizonte, 22 Junho 2013

Durante os confrontos do último sábado, em Belo Horizonte, uma das cenas que marcaram foi...

👍 197

23 commentaires 232 partages

👍 J'aime

💬 Commenter

🔗 Partager



Figure 22. Screenshot of *Midia NINJA*'s Facebook. Translation from Portuguese to English. While all sorts of protests have been happening everywhere in the country in the last days, a recurrent necessity has also been that protesters have had to deal with State's unpreparedness and truculent repression. The demilitarization of the police is a subject gaining followers in many different popular assemblies around Brazil. Meanwhile, the population still needs to resist to have the right of free expression guaranteed, mainly in cities where the Confederation Cup games are taking place. This video shows the clash between protesters in Belo Horizonte and the Police's Mounted Forces. [links]



Figure 23. Screenshot of *Midia NINJA*'s Facebook. Translation from Portuguese to English. More shocking scenes of Temer's democracy at Paulista Av tonight. By Democratize.

Both images above show *Midia NINJA* coverage of protests. Both posts lead to videos of the repression suffered by protesters, and how they were being beaten and attacked by police forces. Just as important as the videos themselves is the narrative that will accompany it. Although some television networks might have shown videos of these protests, the perspective, and editing of such material, could easily be twisted to make it show something that was not exactly what happened. The historical importance of such material, being unedited and uncurated, with the added narrative independence, can be extremely valuable for future work that challenges mainstream narratives.



Figure 24. Screenshot of *Mídia NINJA*'s Twitter. Translation from Portuguese to English. Live from Belo Horizonte now. Occupying the City Council.



Figure 25. Picture of Belo Horizonte City Council occupancy.

3.3.5 Virtual accessibility

Mídia NINJA also employs in Citizen Sousveillance through its social media platforms when they live-stream events, in real-time, and they are an option for people who can not be present to engage virtually. In the pictures below, we can see how many people were able to follow what the protesters were doing, and how the protest evolved. Since these pictures show the aftermath of the events, they do not necessarily show how many people engaged with the protest as it was occurring. The actual number of people watching it live, for obvious reasons, can only be seen while the broadcast is also live. As it is impossible to get these numbers for events that happened many years ago, I decided to add a screenshot of an event that I actually watched live, just for the sake of illustrating how to identify the number of people in the audience. The use of new features in the social platforms has also evolved in recent years, and today one that is very popular for Brazilians is the use of “stories” on Instagram, where you can share a picture or video that auto-deletes in 24 hours, but that you can also start broadcasting live with the click of a button.

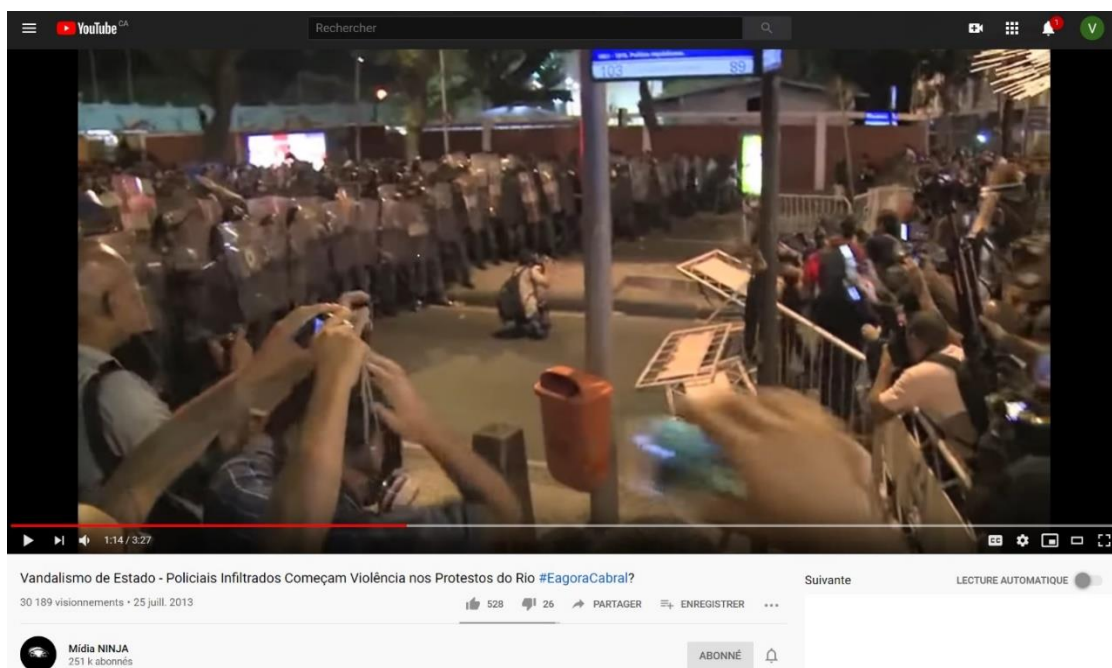


Figure 26. Protester detained by police. Screenshot from *Mídia NINJA*'s youtube. Title Translation from Portuguese to English: State vandalism – Undercovered police officers start violence in protest in Rio #EagoraCabral? – 25/Jul/2013.

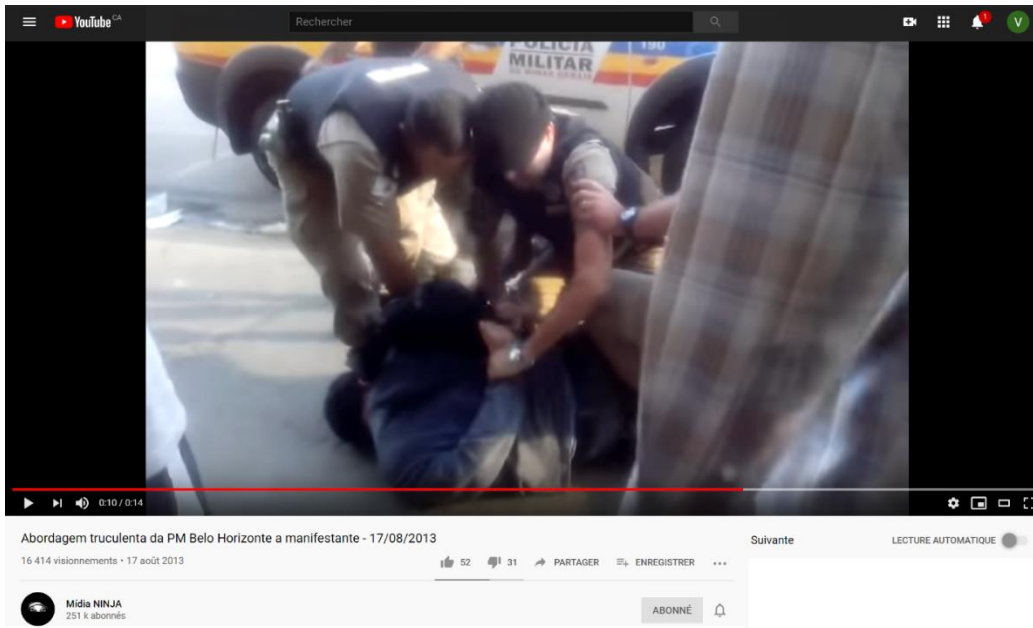


Figure 27. Protester detained by police. Screenshot from *Midia NINJA*'s youtube. Title Translation from Portuguese to English: Military Police truculent approach to a protester in Belo Horizonte – 17/AUG/2013.

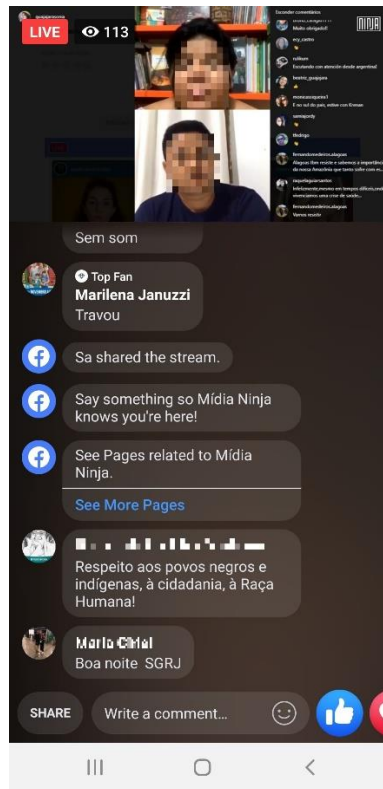


Figure 28. Screenshot of a live interaction from *Midia NINJA*'s Facebook account. 113 people are engaging with them live.

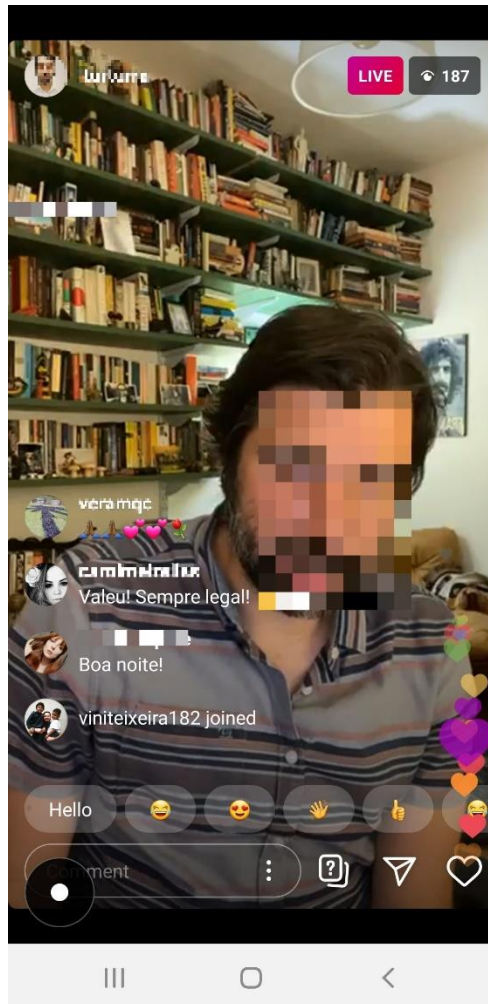


Figure 29. Screenshot of a live interaction. 187 people are engaging live.

Figure 26 and figure 27 show screenshots of videos shared by *Midia NINJA* on their Youtube channel. These two pictures illustrate how Citizen Sousveillance can be a source for people to access protests without being physically present. In figure 26, more than 30,000 people watched the video, and were impacted with a narrative of how and why that protest happened. In figure 27, more than 16,000 people watched it. The virtual dimension of Citizen Sousveillance serves to give access to people to follow these developments. These two figures show the number of people who watched these videos after they were uploaded. As for figures 28 and 29, they represent how many people are interacting with *Midia NINJA* in real-time. Figure 28 is taken from *Midia NINJA*'s Facebook, while they were having a talk with participation of a guest. In this example, 113 people were engaged in the conversation. Figure 29

shows an influencer doing an Instagram live. In this screenshot, 187 people are engaging with him. Such real-time engagement has the power to also be used as a way to non-violently defend protesters, when employed in a protest – which is not the case of these examples. Having other people watching online gives protesters a more comfortable safety network, especially in situations where there is a confrontation with police forces.

Conclusion

Having presented all of this material, the analysis of *Midia NINJA*'s social media platforms demonstrates how sousveillance has been used in protests in Brazil since 2013, and why *Midia NINJA* represents a key case-study of that. Their social media were used to disseminate their content. The content consisted of pictures, texts, analysis, and in many instances, videos of protests that they covered – occasionally, even protests that they were attending and streaming in real-time. The analysis in this section of the thesis shows how *Midia NINJA* operationalizes its sousveillance. While some were attending a protest, part of the team stayed behind to give this support and work on the sharing of information coming from members covering it. Looking at what they shared, and how they shared, it is possible to identify key dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance. For the purpose of the analysis, I divided the posts, messages, and tweets in the different usages of Citizen Sousveillance; however, these examples can overlap. One tweet, for example, can potentially demonstrate more than one dimension of Citizen Sousveillance. Citizen Sousveillance, though, is supported by the idea that the five dimensions of it were identified based on the material gathered in the case study, and also in the literature referenced in this thesis. Although some dimension examples can illustrate two or more usages of Citizen Sousveillance, their unique contribution to the development of sousveillance studies, and ultimately, to their usage in a context of protest, can be observed separately. The reading and usage of Citizen Sousveillance and its dimensions are open to changes and adaptations, especially with the analysis of new groups and new realities that are present in protest settings since 2013.

Further, the next chapter will look into the relation between *Midia NINJA* and protests. Also, it will discuss an important critique of sousveillance, which concerns the privacy of individuals.

4 – What is the relation of *Midia* NINJA with protests?

Introduction

Following the discussion of the previous chapter, which presented some of Brazil's and *Midia* NINJA's recent history, along with an account of *Midia* NINJA's sousveillance activities as they manifested on social media around the 2013 protests, this chapter examines *Midia* NINJA's approach from the vantage point of key actors in the organization. I will present some data that I gathered from interviews carried out with *Midia* NINJA members. Having access to an inside perspective like that can cast light upon the organization's intentions, challenges, modus operandi, and sousveillance tactics. In presenting this interview data, I have taken care not to disclose what *Midia* NINJA members would consider sensitive information about their organization's operations.

Thus, this chapter is set out to elucidate three main questions. First, can the reality of a protest be changed due to the use of sousveillance and/or by the presence of *Midia* NINJA? Second, in a protest context, what are the precautions, if any, taken with respect to the privacy of participants, given that this is a concern present in some sousveillance studies and many surveillance ones (Lerch, 2014; Ganascia, 2010)? Third, what is the importance of people attending protests in comparison to people watching the videos online? Answering these questions will support the idea of the use of Citizen Sousveillance as an important aspect of protests, giving room for different angles of analysis of this phenomenon.

4.1 – Can sousveillance change the reality of a protest?

When interviewing *Midia* NINJA members, four out of the five of them acknowledged that the use of sousveillance in a protest is unprecedented and has the power to change the whole dynamics of protests – but to what extent?

The notion of a surveillance coming from the bottom, which describes sousveillance concisely, can be applied in many different scenarios.

When Mann created the concept of sousveillance, it encompassed much of what *Midia NINJA* would use in the future. On one hand, the attempt to change the narrative against traditional media can be understood as a form of hierarchy reversal. On the other hand, being on the streets, with protesters trying to portray this reality, we have an illustration of human-centered sousveillance. I argue that these aspects of sousveillance can be found within the proposed five dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance. Whether we are examining the nonviolent tool to be used in protests, the challenge Citizen Sousveillance imposes to traditional media, or reporting a more raw reality of protests, the essence of Mann's aspects of sousveillance is present. As protection, we see a hierarchy reversal of the gaze and a human-centeredness on, for instance, human suffering; as a representation of a more raw reality we see a hierarchy reversal, as compared to images presented in mainstream media and a human-centeredness in accounts of the events. Mann's concept works as a foundation for the dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance.

Citizen Sousveillance tackles different angles regarding the reality of protests, before and after people are on the streets. It is based in the literature on framing, on citizen journalism, on the literature of the veillances, and the literature of nonviolent movements. It also converses with the idea of "Multimedia Citizen", brought up by *Midia NINJA* members. The concept of Citizen Sousveillance is unique, especially because it is confined within a protest framework. This "citizen" view complements Mann's idea of sousveillance, with the focus on how social movements, protesters and activists are inserted in the big picture of veillances.

The role played by *Midia NINJA* in this big picture can be seen as revolutionary and unprecedented. Cammaerts (2012:118) argues that mediation enables a connection between media and communication to protest and activism. There is an obvious asymmetry when it comes to the strength mainstream media and political elites have in comparison to activists and regular citizens. Particularly taking into consideration the current framing processes. *Midia NINJA* engages with media and communication in an aggressive (not violent) way, tweaking this balance of power.

Due to the size and numbers of where *Midia NINJA* is inserted, being present and operating in the fifth biggest country in the world – in size, population, and with an historical background of inequality – the group is then an important case to be studied, and its representation in the sousveillance field can be deemed substantial for the field. They are first

and foremost an element in protests that can work in favor of the less fortunate in society, and secondly a source of study, to examine the impacts that these new tactics will bring, the effects they will have, and if they should and could be replicated elsewhere.

As explained in chapter two, *Mídia NINJA* was not born or created with the intent of covering protests, but as the communication branch of *Fora do Eixo*. The coverage of music and art events soon became more political, and with the 2013 protest all around Brazil, *Mídia NINJA* doubled in size of affiliates (Interviewee #2, 2018), and became known to a greater part of Brazilian society, especially those who were following the developments of those protests online. The relation that *Mídia NINJA* has with protests, though, is impressive. Even excluding consideration of any coverage done before the protests in 2013, the amount of content they have produced is remarkable. According to their official website:

De 2013 até aqui estivemos presentes em todos os momentos decisivos da história de nosso país. Foram mais de 7.500 transmissões ao vivo, 100.000 fotos no nosso banco de imagens, cerca de 4.000 horas de imagens filmadas e mais de 10.000 cartazes e memes. Fizemos cerca de 150.000 posts e atualmente temos mais de 2 milhões de seguidores que nos acompanham em todas as redes. Esse ano iniciamos ainda a Rede Ninja de Opinião, junto a mais de 100 colunistas (Mídia NINJA, 2018).⁸

This data shows the magnitude and reach of *Mídia NINJA*. There are well over a million people interested in what *Mídia NINJA* has to say. A quick search shows that they have over 3 million followers in the four main social media platforms: Facebook 1.98 M – Instagram 561k – Twitter 445k – YouTube 165k (*Mídia NINJA*, 2018). Obviously, these followers overlap to some extent, as the same individual can be a follower on all four platforms; nonetheless, this a substantial number of followers. It is also worth noting that usually, their content has a viral appeal, meaning that it has the characteristics of contents that are commonly shared on social media, making the reach of it almost incalculable.

⁸ From 2013 to today, we have been present in every crucial moment in the history of this country. We have made more than 7,500 live broadcasts, and currently have over 100,000 photos, 4,000 hours of recordings and more than 10,000 posters, banners and memes stored in our database. We shared more than 150,000 posts, and we currently have more than 2 million people following us on every platform. We also count on the help of more than 100 collaborators/columnists that write to our audience (*Mídia Ninja*, 2018).

The example of *Midia* NINJA as a representative of Citizen Sousveillance helps us to understand its importance and impact. Sousveillance in the context of protests came to light only recently, and its repercussions are still being analyzed. The fact that media activism makes it possible for people who cannot attend protests to watch – online, in real-time, and not subject to mainstream editorials – is unparalleled. With *Midia* NINJA, media activism is helping to transform protest in ways that would have been unimaginable twenty years ago: protesters no longer need to be at the place of assembly to be a part of it (Landesman et al, 2018). This thesis discusses that specific issue later on, as this exact question about the importance of people at protests and people watching from home was posed to NINJA’s interviewees. The topic under examination, for now, is the connection of sousveillance and protests, having as an important actor *Midia* NINJA.

Midia NINJA not only has an amazing reach and significance, but I would also claim that they provoke a behavior change in protests. It was mentioned by the interviewees, in the same context, that the relation between content and viewer went from a passive watching to a more active, engaging participation (Landesman et al, 2018: 62; Interviewee #2, 2018). Not only has the behavior of protesters somewhat changed since the introduction of Citizen Sousveillance in protests, but the behavior of the police is morphing too. On the protester side, because of the exposure *Midia* NINJA had, many times its members have been identified in the crowd, and their presence was requested by protesters to safeguard them against police abuse. In Brazil, it is not uncommon for police officers to plant evidence on protesters, so as to have a reason to take them into custody; consequently, whenever there is a stop and frisk at a protest, it is common to hear people chanting “*Midia* Ninja!” so they can go over and record and live-stream everything (Landesman et al, 2018:61; Interviewee #4, 2018). Now protesters seek *Midia* NINJA to be around them, as a form of protection. Protesters also look for NINJAs to speak out and make a protest inside the protest. The reach that *Midia* NINJA has is now known, and being in front of a NINJA’s camera can mean being in front of thousands, and even millions, of people that are watching it from their homes. (Interviewee #3, 2018; Landesman *et al*, 2018).

On the police side, major developments have also happened. The use of technology has increased significantly in recent years. It is common now for the police to have officers filming protesters during manifestations too. It is believed that the police intelligence holds a

considerable database of videos and pictures of protesters, which according to some members can be very worrying, as the right to protest is ensured by the constitution. It is not clear what they will do with this material (Interviewee #1, 2018). According to one of my interviewees, this fast response of the police, to start filming people in protests soon after it became more popular on the side of protesters, shows how impactful it was. Especially in Brazil, where bureaucracy is almost cultural, having the state organizing this new approach so fast means that they were clearly worried about losing the power and the ownership of narrative. At the same time, it was a counter-offensive using the same model as the protesters.

It is important to note here that the use of *sousveillance* in protests implies that the order is being somewhat inverted. The definition of *sousveillance* consists in an inverted surveillance, where the less powerful have the means to watch the more powerful, hence the bottom-up idea, where protesters who are at the bottom can watch those at the top. The use of the exact same technology by the police during protests, ie. cameras and phones to record people, does not constitute the use of *sousveillance*, as it is not bottom-up. It should be classified as plain surveillance, as it is still a top-down sort of *veillance*.

Something else that has developed in recent years is the use of what is called P2. P2 are undercover police officers that infiltrate amongst the protesters, mainly to collect information and collaborate with police intelligence on how protesters operate. A case of undercover police inside *Mídia NINJA* happened in 2014/2015, in what became known as the Balta case, which will be discussed in section 4.5 of this chapter.

4.2 – *Sousveillance* as a tool of nonviolent resistance: Changing protest through protection

It would be impossible to discuss *Mídia NINJA* and protests without touching on the concept of *sousveillance*, and it makes a lot of sense to bring up *Mídia NINJA* when we are examining *sousveillance* in a protest context, as they are a clear, genuine, and powerful representation of what this new mix of technology, technique, and perspective can achieve. The fact that all the data collected indicates that this is something not likely to go away makes it even more important, as the tendency is for *sousveillance* to adapt, improve and spread in societies around the world.

Therefore, I claim that one of the dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance is to be used as a way for protesters to protect themselves against abuses of human rights, which are not uncommon in a protest context. Besides, there are the other dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance, such as the sharing of the raw reality of protests, the fact it serves as a way to challenge mainstream narratives, the historical importance of having videos of these protests for future studies, and being a virtual option for people who want to engage in a cause, but can not be physically present in a protest. One of the interviewees talked a little about the importance of recording and live-streaming protests as a form of protection as something that can bring more justice and fairness to unequal realities in protests. To this interviewee, the use of this sort of tactic in protests:

... é imprescindível, pois na sua base, inclusive garante a manutenção das vidas das pessoas. Já houve casos em que a nossa extensiva produção de conteúdo já tirou gente da cadeia, quando foi necessário provas para processos judiciais, ou então quando conseguimos comprovar através das imagens que aconteceu uma coisa e não outra, como é colocado na grande mídia. Nosso processo de produção extensivo de conteúdo em tempo real, acaba sendo de grande benefício para defensores de direitos humanos, especialmente quando estamos lidando com violência policial que é tão alta aqui no Brasil (Interviewee #5, 2018).⁹

The importance of *Mídia NINJA* increases at the same proportion that their reach and exposure do. At this point, it is not possible to say that it rivals in number of viewers the long-established TV channels, but it does appeal to a specific part of society that more and more look for information that represents their needs.

Having *Mídia NINJA*'s material used in court and making it an alibi that helps people be freed from jail are clear examples of how sousveillance can be used to protect people in a peaceful way.

⁹ ... in its core, helps in the maintenance of many things, including people's lives. There were cases where our content got people out of jail. We were used as evidence in litigations, and our videos shown in court. We contribute to the truth, when our videos help to clarify what happened was one thing and not the other. Our extensive production of material ends up being of great value to human rights field, especially when we talk about police brutality, which unfortunately is very common in Brazil. (Interviewee #5, 2018)

Mídia NINJA supports and relies on a core value, which is the change of narrative. The sousveillance performed by *Mídia NINJA* has this change of narrative as a goal. It aims to give an alternative account of facts that will not be biased in favor of the actors in society that are already amongst the richest and most powerful. The inversion of perspective, and a tweak in the scale of power, even if minimal, has already brought impressive results as described above. If we think of the context in which the NINJAs are inserted, considering developments in the medium and long term, inversion of perspective has even more significance. The reality of protests today, with police forces being aware that they are being recorded, and protesters organizing themselves to become what *Mídia NINJA* calls Multimedia Citizens, is shaping the new battle for narratives, and in a way, sousveillance is also used in the polarization that is more and more clear these days. One of the interviewees elaborated a little about that:

... Dá para observar muito bem como a Mídia NINJA atua nesse sentido, no sentido de inverter um pouco essa lógica da vigilância, trazendo inclusive dentro de uma lógica que é a do cidadão multimídia, de como cada um agora tem o poder de ter a narrativa nas próprias mãos ... a gente consegue subverter um pouco dessa lógica – de ter esse grande olho olhando para todo mundo. Em contraponto a isso temos as tecnologias de comunicação nas mãos, fazendo com que a gente consiga também ter o poder de vigilância constante, que há 20, 30 anos não seria possível. Eu acho que a Mídia NINJA trás essa quebra de lógica, especificamente quando a Mídia NINJA nasce, que é de dar uma narrativa diferenciada das grandes manifestações, especialmente em junho de 2013, que foi quando ela teve essa grande notoriedade (Interviewee #2, 2018).¹⁰

In this passage, my participant comes very close to describing the logic of sousveillance, without actually naming it as such. The participant emphasizes that *Mídia NINJA* acts to help multimedia citizens invert the logic of surveillance. They help their followers to subvert the

¹⁰ ... It is possible to well observe how *Mídia NINJA* acts in the sense of inverting, even if just a little, the logic behind surveillance. Bringing about, inclusively, within the logic of what we commonly call multimedia citizen. That means it is now possible for everyone to have the ability and the power of the narrative at the fingertips, being literally a multimedia citizen, and subvert this idea of having a big eye watching everyone. Now, we have this communication technology at hand, making it possible for us to be the constant watcher, which would be impossible 20-30 years ago. I believe that *Mídia NINJA* represents well this logic break, and a clear illustration of that is the moment when *Mídia NINJA* is born, where it was possible to give a different narrative in the 2013 major manifestations all around Brazil, which is when we got considerable notoriety (Interviewee #2, 2018).

protest-detering effect of "having a big eye watching over everyone". This effect of sousveillance, this "logic break" was born in and helped to subsequently transform protest.

One other effect of the use of Citizen Sousveillance is related to the behavior of protesters and police forces. Before, the state/police were the only ones with access to surveillance videos, and in the few places where wearable on-officer devices were available, these videos were always used to favor police forces; no civilian or attorneys had access to these footages. Now, protesters can also have a way to protect themselves with the aid of technology. A video with images that contradicts a statement can go a long way. How much this new reality has changed police officers' behavior is hard to measure. In itself, police excessive use of force can be determined by a number of factors, such as officers' age, tenure, gender, and race, for example. External factors have an impact like the subculture of policing too (Lersch & Mieczkowski, 2005). The work environment, and the "rotten apple" theory, which claims that problem-prone officers are very few, but they cloud the good reputations of the police as a whole, also play a role. The rotten apple theory has been dismissed by many researchers, who critiqued it for not examining in depth the structural problems within the law enforcement system. No theory, however, is able to provide a complete explanation about police officers' behavior. Now, added to that, there is the fact that officers are being, in many instances, watched and recorded, which also has its own implication on their conduct and general behavior (Brucato, 2015).

As time passes, and the exposure of *Midia NINJA* increases, their own perception of where they are embedded in this new reality of protests changes. People now have an extra channel that they can use to protest, and be heard by many people. The reach *Midia NINJA* has can be a productive space for people that many times are at the margins of society. The democratization of the media channels, like *Midia NINJA*, boosts the participation of more people in the whole democratic process, as the more information people have access to, the more aware of their situation they may be, and the harder it might be to manipulate them. Also, as time passes, the idea of sousveillance spreads. As it spreads, so does knowledge of how sousveillance can be used to change narratives that before were owned by few. This combination can give new perspectives, and makes us believe that change and a more equal society are possible; therefore, the presence of an actor enabled by the use of sousveillance can indeed change the reality of protests. Brazil, being one of the most unequal societies in the world (Chancel et al, 2017), is

definitely a great field to see the use of sousveillance happen, and *Mídia NINJA* is a great case-study for that matter.

It is possible to state that the reality of protests is changing. The incorporation of new technologies to public demonstrations itself already has its own significant impact. Added to that, we have activists that have organized themselves to make the use of these new technologies a tool to show a different reality of protests, breaking an old paradigm of how protests were portrayed. Not only that, but also even the legal repercussions of images and videos can support the theory that the media that used to control the narrative now has a strong competitor for the information.

Nevertheless, the debate about the benefits of Citizen Sousveillance, and about whom it benefits, is valid. In the next section, I consider a part of this debate, which concerns the privacy of activists and other actors in the protest context.

4.3 – What is the balance between sousveillance and privacy in a protest context?

As should be clear by now, the overarching goal of this project is to claim that sousveillance can be used as a defense mechanism for protesters against police brutality, and it can change the reality of protests in different ways, and by different means. Having access to smartphones and a decent network is vital for the success of sousveillance, therefore in places where cheaper technology is available, sousveillance has more chances to see it flourish. However, as many as the benefits of sousveillance are being demonstrated, critics of this technique have at least one concern that needs to be investigated. This concern relates to privacy.

4.3.1 Scholarship on Privacy

Before getting to the discussion about sousveillance and privacy, it feels necessary to consider privacy in the context of surveillance, which is a more established phenomenon and already studied by many academics. Governments claim the right to look into people's activities so that they can guarantee fairness and equal access to services and the law. In this day and age,

access to one's personal information may mean having access to someone's full name, address, phone, and social security number. It may also include having information on bank transaction history, purchases made on credit cards, and with the advance of technology, access to one's browser history, conversations on social media, online purchase history, and places visited (Lyon et al, 1996; Lyon, 2015). All of this information is stored and kept with the use of powerful computers and used by the government as well as by the private companies that control platforms, like credit card providers, Facebook, Google, etc. On one hand, governments use their own discretion to access this information if they want to investigate someone, as they have this immense data stored and have relatively easy access to it. On the private company's side, all of this information is bought and sold with the intent of targeted marketing, in a market aiming to influence, especially, people's buying behavior (Lyon, 2015).

There is longstanding literature that investigates privacy as both a social value and a fundamental individual right. Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), says that "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks." (United Nations, 1948).

It should be noted that privacy was seen as an individual value or right, which was incompatible with the idea of the "social" to some extent. For Alan Westin (1968), privacy is "the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how, and to what extent information about them is communicated to others" (Westin, 1968:7). This definition does not contemplate "social privacy", or privacy in context with the nuances of the social. As the concept of privacy evolved, the social value of it began to be considered and the conversation on how and where it happens started to be analyzed, whether it was in relation to citizens and governments, or consumers and businesses (Westin, 2003). Also, the debate about how to ensure the appropriate flow of information we share online, and not only how to limit the access to it, is now a priority to governments (Nissenbaum, 2010).

Nonetheless, the concept and definition of privacy can be gray, depending on the day and age, country, or even political situation that it is outlined. Nissenbaum (2010), highlights this difficulty in conceptualizing and solidifying the concept of privacy. She says

Almost as many who have taken up the subject of privacy in relation to information technology have declared it deeply problematic, referring not only to questions and disagreements about its value, benefits, and harms but to its conceptual morass. Attempts to define it have been notoriously controversial and have been accused of vagueness and internal inconsistency – of being overly inclusive, excessively narrow, or insufficiently distinct from other value concepts (Nissenbaum, 2010:2).

In Brazil, for instance, Ferraz Jr. (1993) defines *privacidade* as “*o direito de o indivíduo excluir do conhecimento de terceiros aquilo que a ele só é pertinente e que diz respeito ao seu modo de ser exclusivo no âmbito de sua vida privada.*” (Ferraz Jr., 1993:439)¹¹. In general, the Brazilian laws and jurisprudences do not take individuals’ rights to privacy as their priority. Recent examples show that the disclosure of public employees’ salaries, the unauthorized publication of the details of peoples’ lives, or employers accessing employees’ business email accounts, were not considered violations of privacy (Ávila & Woloszyn, 2019).

In 2014, the *Marco Civil da Internet* (Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for the Internet) was signed by President Dilma Rousseff. The bill was well received by specialists in the field, as it made progress to regulate some aspects of internet usage in Brazil, which was fairly unregulated. However, while there was an effort to guarantee freedom of speech and establish several rights for internet users, the privacy aspects of it were given less importance, and the provisions needed to support the law were never put in place. Companies such as Google and Facebook continue to operate collecting and utilizing users’ private information, for example (Rodriguez & Pinho, 2015).

While it is not the intention here to go into this literature in-depth, I would still like to provide an illustration of work that argues that privacy is essential to one’s freedom. In the book by American investigative journalist Glenn Greenwald, *No Place to Hide* (2013), he describes the journey that he and film-maker Laura Poitras went through to meet with former NSA employee Edward Snowden. He describes how Snowden contacted him, what the security checks Snowden imposed were, such as the use of specific phone applications, and all the precautions taken so Greenwald could help Snowden in publishing what can be considered one of the biggest

¹¹ The right of the individual to exclude from a third party’s knowledge what is only pertinent to him, and that concerns his way of being in the scope of his private life.

and most important leaks in the United States' history. Among many readings that can be drawn from Greenwald's work, the main message of the book is to examine how the Surveillance State can interfere with and control one's life, and how harmful surveillance can be. When Snowden disclosed that the American government was monitoring its own citizens, as well as foreign citizens (including world leaders), we became aware of the magnitude and power of this twenty-first-century surveillance. Greenwald elaborates for a whole chapter about the importance of how giving up the right to privacy is umbilically connected to the right to freedom itself, and how pernicious surveillance can be. He says:

Privacy is essential to human freedom and happiness for reasons that are rarely discussed but instinctively understood by most people, as evidenced by the lengths to which they go to protect their own. To begin with, people radically change their behavior when they know they are being watched. They will strive to do that which is expected of them. They want to avoid shame and condemnation. They do so by adhering tightly to accepted social practices, by staying within imposed boundaries, and by avoiding action that might be seen as deviant or abnormal. The range of choices people consider when they believe that others are watching is therefore far more limited than what they might do when acting in a private realm. A denial of privacy operates to severely restrict one's freedom of choice (Greenwald, 2013:173)

There are many angles to approach the subject of privacy, especially if we build it on top of other concepts, such as surveillance and sousveillance. Adding to that, if we consider the social aspect of privacy, taking into consideration a protest context, such as the one being analyzed here, answers can be conjectural. I will delve into this subject a little further in the coming sections of this thesis.

4.3.2 Privacy and Sousveillance

If we consider that the right to have our privacy is fundamentally linked to our right to freedom, how would we look at the relation of sousveillance and privacy? If we accept that surveillance is a form of social control (Lyon et al, 1996), would sousveillance not have that characteristic too? The fact that sousveillance is veillance from below does not automatically

discredit the fact that people being watched might not agree to be exposed. That is a concern already on the radar of scholars (Michael, 2015; Mann *et al.*, 2002; Rhodes *et al.*, 1999), but no substantial work has been done so far. Although there were significant cases of whistle-blowers before, the Snowden case burst a bubble and reached people that were not usually concerned with surveillance. Since then, five years ago, scholars have been studying, developing, and polishing the field of surveillance studies even further, in face of the magnitude of new information, and at the same time, social and political movements concerned with this theme have multiplied and reached meaningful size, making more and more people aware of the subject. I posed a question about the theme of sousveillance versus privacy to *Mídia NINJA* members. As this is a new debate, understanding the perspective of a group that practices sousveillance on a daily basis seems very important. One member elaborated about that when asked about his/her perception on the subject:

Eu acho que esse trabalho, de você ir para a rua e filmar o que está acontecendo em uma grande mobilização social, ele é um trabalho que não fere, de modo algum, uma outra característica que para mim é muito importante, na verdade um valor que é muito importante, que é o direito a privacidade das pessoas. Quando você está indo para a rua manifestar, há momentos que é importante privar e preservar a privacidade das pessoas que estão lá, mas também cada pessoa que está presente é um partícipe social e político. Não são só indivíduos, mas são indivíduos coletivos que estão ali se manifestando em prol de uma demanda, de uma causa, ou uma luta social. Então geralmente as pessoas que estão indo para as ruas por uma mobilização social, eles estão se enxergando enquanto um cidadão coletivo. Há casos, claro, que temos que privar os cidadãos que estão ali. Há coberturas e cenas que vemos que decidimos tomar cuidado com a questão da privacidade da pessoa que está ali naquela manifestação. De uma forma geral, todos são cidadãos políticos coletivos, acho que não teria problema nenhum, e é diferente de uma luta que se faz pela privacidade especialmente online. É um outro debate. É um debate muito complexo e mais profundo, e é superimportante e temos uma afinidade muito grande

*também com essa luta, mas não é um debate que a Midia NINJA ainda teve (Interviewee #3, 2018).*¹²

As we can see, the debate about privacy and surveillance/sousveillance is important, but also complex, and one that has not yet been the subject of formal, internal debate, so there are no solidified positions. *Midia NINJA*, as expressed by one of its members, still haven't embraced the debate over sousveillance versus privacy, but it is something they might do at some point. There is a difference between privacy wishes and privacy rights, and being in a protest can fall more into a state of a wish to be private, which, as per *Midia NINJA*, might not be practical. The thin line of practicing sousveillance and still complying with individuals' privacy can be grey, and this thought brought up by this interviewee about "collective citizens" while in manifestations might be a good way to start thinking about it. Although these "guidelines" were not entirely set at *Midia NINJA*, one of the members mentioned during an interview that there is some common sense when they are covering protests. This common sense would prevent them from publicizing images or videos that could compromise someone attending a protest, for example. Situations where protesters block streets and highways by setting car tires on fire - which in Brazil is fairly common - is a good example of a coverage where *Midia NINJA* would try their best to avoid showing anyone's face. Other examples would be protests involving women bearing their chests, as their videos and pictures could corroborate to the objectification of women, or any protest where there are clearly underaged activists, for example when secondary school students occupied over 200 schools in the state of São Paulo in 2015, arguing for better conditions, and advocating against the closure of many of these schools (Interviewee #1, 2018; Catini et al, 2016).

¹² I believe that when you go to the streets to record what is happening in a social manifestation is a kind of work that does not necessarily hurt a value that is of utmost importance to me, which is the right to privacy. When you take the streets to protest, there are times where it is important to protect and preserve the privacy of people that are attending, but we have to bear in mind that, nonetheless, when you are attending a protest you are there as a social and political participant. We are a collective of individuals advocating for a cause and a social struggle, therefore we have to see ourselves, at that time, as collective citizens. Again, there are situations where we take care and try to prevent the exposure of someone; however, the general idea is that we are there as political collective citizens. The debate about privacy and data protection is deep and complex, and definitely a struggle that we are in line with, but *Midia NINJA* never really had an internal debate about that yet (Interviewee #3, 2018).

4.3.3 Unmasking Power

In tandem with this conversation, I also asked *Mídia NINJA* participants to weigh in on the matter of protesters using masks so that they cannot be identified. Again, this blurry line of privacy and the importance of sousveillance can bring forward different interpretations of values and rights. If on one hand it can be argued that it is important to protect the identity of people that go to protests, then on the other hand, sousveillance, especially in those situations where it is used to live-stream events, cannot guarantee the anonymity of participants. Anyone wearing a mask can prevent their identity from being public, however, they inevitably also become a target for police forces. One of the interviewees raised some interesting points:

Não existe um juízo de valor de nossa parte em torno das escolhas de privacidade que as pessoas têm. Não é uma prática da Mídia NINJA, apesar da assinatura coletiva, de não nomear nossa atuação, nenhum de nós fica se divulgando. Não existe uma pessoa que seja a cara da MN, não temos um perfil individual. Mas também não existe uma busca pela invisibilização. No caso de iniciativas que fazem isso, acreditamos que eles tenham seus motivos, principalmente porque estamos falando de desobediência civil. Não nos sentimos no direito de julgar, mas também não promovemos esse tipo de coisa, então estamos em uma área cinza (Interviewee #5, 2018).¹³

The issue of privacy in the context of the use of sousveillance, including here the use of masks by protesters, needless to say, is complex and filled with nuances, so that even *Mídia NINJA* does not take a firm stance on that. In Brazil, during the manifestations of 2013, after movements were being organized in every major city, a new phenomenon that had a substantial impact on that issue came to light – the protest participants engaged in direct action using black bloc tactics. Protesters using black bloc tactics are usually identifiable as masked individuals

¹³ *Mídia NINJA* does not make a value judgment about people's privacy choices. It is not our practice. Although we do appreciate some sort of anonymity by using collective signatures in communications, and no individual credits to pictures or videos, there is no self-promotion of any kind ... there is not a face. [People and initiatives that have the habit of wearing masks in protests], even if we do not do it ourselves, they have our respect, as we are sure they have their own reasons, especially because in some occasions we are talking about civil disobedience. We do not feel we have the right to judge them, the same way we do not foster these initiatives, so we just stay in a grey area on this issue (Interviewee #5, 2018).

who wear black clothes and form a contingent within rallies. They usually have a more anarchical approach. The idea behind the tactic is to send a message using performative violence, while at the same time confronting global capitalism and the state (Juris, 2005). Their actions are constantly categorized as civil disobedience, and this modus operandi that started in Seattle in 1999 has spread to manifestations in Canada, Mexico, Turkey, some countries in Europe, and Brazil (Dupuis-Déri, 2014). In Brazil in 2013, due to the fact that they always covered their faces, and because they were most of the times watched and recorded breaking private property, they had a considerable influence on public opinion about the protests, mostly negative, and about the conversation on the right to privacy in protests.

The black bloc participants are a good way to illustrate this conundrum of privacy versus sousveillance. Should a group that operates violently against private properties, always wearing black clothes and masks, have their identities preserved? They may not have mainstream support in society (Dupuis-Déri, 2010), however, what constitutes “social disobedience” practiced by them? Are the smashed windows the one factor that fuels people to be against them? In Brazil, the legality of the use of masks in protests is still to be ruled on by the Supreme Court, where the bill has been sitting since 2016. States like Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais already passed their own bills forbidding it, while the federal legislation is not yet in place (Luz, 2016). This is not a debate happening only in Brazil. In the United States, this discussion can be traced back to the times of the Ku Klux Klan, when bills were passed aiming to prevent their actions and symbolism (Haag, 2017), and today having different versions in different states. In Canada, the use of masks in protests was banned in 2013, and today it can carry a 10-year prison sentence (Fitzpatrick, 2013). The debate about the limitations of privacy for individuals, and the limitations of privacy for people under sousveillance are still blurry, and it is hard to say that it will be possible to have a more permanent resolution anytime soon. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, and its convergence with Black Lives Matter protests around the world, the debate over wearing masks in protests has taken on new dimensions and complexities. As for *Mídia NINJA*, when the interviews were conducted, they did not have a formal position on the matter of black blocs participants, masks during protests, or the right to privacy, which can be understandable and expected. All these debates are new, and it can be risky to make assumptions without knowing the full extent and developments of these issues.

While, understandably, *Midia* NINJA abstain themselves from the debate about protesters wearing masks, they are more vocal when it comes to powerful actors in society not identifying themselves in a protest setting. Their position is clear when it comes to cases of police officers not wearing a name tag. Considering their stance, we can draw an analysis of how sousveillance relates to power. The assumption that sousveillance is the bottom-up sort of veillance makes it clear that the inequality of power also plays a role in how laws are bent on each side. While there can be a justification for the ones on the bottom to wear masks, there is not a clear reason for the ones on top to hide. The duality on how to read these circumstances comes embedded in the different available strengths and structures on each side. If *Midia* NINJA were to out the masked protester, they would only be playing a part for the stronger and more powerful side, meaning, they would not, to any extent, be practicing sousveillance, but they would only be a mere surveillance instrument.

The main goal of this section was to open the debate about how important privacy is, and how it can interfere and be a part of a protest context. Drawing from Greenwald, Nissenbaum, Ávila and Woloszyn, and Ferraz Jr., the value of privacy is undisputed, as it can be seen as the value of freedom itself. The debate here is how this value plays a role when a group of people decides to expose their point of view, with the intent of drawing the most attention possible to their agenda, which includes the use of technologies like social media to amplify their reach. If on the one hand there is one's privacy to be protected, then on the other it may be difficult to preserve one's identity when protesting. There is also the fact that was brought up by a *Midia* NINJA member who said that once you are in a protest, it should be assumed that you are automatically, to some extent, relinquishing your right to total privacy, as you are in a public space, protesting and trying to draw attention to your cause. Having said that, it is possible to link this debate with the one that deals with the importance of people attending protests physically, versus online activism.

The privacy issue discussed above can be read in relation to the fourth and fifth dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance – the archival and virtual ones. These dimensions, which will be explored next, concern the opportunity created for people that can not attend a protest physically to do so virtually. Having that option, people that are extremely concerned with their privacy still have a way to support such protest from their homes. Using the example of *Midia* NINJA, while

ninjas are covering the protests and live-streaming its developments, people that for whatever reason are unable to participate can feel and be part of it.

4.4 – People in protests vs people online: what is more important? The archival and virtual dimension of Citizen Sousveillance

The power of social media is unquestionable these days. It influenced Barack Obama's election in 2008 and subsequently in 2012 (Cogburn et al., 2011). It had a considerable role in Macron's election in France in 2017, supported by the "advance" of fake news (Ferrara, 2017). And, in Brazil, far-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro's popularity was fueled by social media and chat applications, such as *Whatsapp*, the latter being fundamental for his election in 2018 (Campos, 2018). It is not news that if this technology is well employed, it has a magnificent power of aggregating people with the same views on certain controversial issues. It is not news either, that what you see on your social media feed is what social media platforms want you to see. The famous "algorithms" decide what you should see. Algorithms are the codes that decide what kind of content should be on your timeline, and they also make "suggestions" of what kind of people or community you should follow (Sunstein, 2017).

The role played by these new channels when it comes to people manifesting their dissatisfaction with public policies is also substantial. The ease of use of these tools – the intuitive and uncomplicated nature of their applications and platforms – made them something that is part of how people organize, communicate, and interact before, during and after a protest. *Midia NINJA* was born in an age in which these technologies were already established in the Brazilian society, having extensively penetrated all layers and corners of the country. Just to have an idea of how rapidly it developed, we can look only to Facebook, the most popular social media platform in Brazil, which went from 12 million users in 2011 to 67 million users in 2013. Today, it has over 90 million users, and is expected to surpass the mark of 100 million users by 2021, which means almost 50% of the entire population (Statista, 2018; Hohagen, 2013).

If the premise is that the popular social media are extremely influential, the reflection that I propose now is a critical discussion of the dichotomy between online protest and offline protest, which is the foundation of the dimensions of the concept proposed by this thesis – Citizen

Sousveillance. In this sub-chapter, I use the responses provided by *Midia* NINJA members concerning their perception of online and offline protests, which illustrate two dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance – the archival and virtual ones.

One of the first questions that came to my mind, when I reflected on the questions I would ask the participants of this project was: Is it more important for people to protest on the streets, or is it more important than a video of a protest, like the ones *Midia* NINJA makes, reaches the biggest number of people possible? What would cause a more important impact in society, and consequently have more chances of a response from policy-makers? There is no intention here to make a claim in favor for or against being in the streets, or being online. And, in any case, the online protests that *Midia* NINJA facilitated would be of an entirely different character if there hadn't been people in the streets, a fact that troubles the idea of a strict dichotomy between online and offline activity. One of the hypotheses here is that both sorts of protests have their own effectiveness and reach, however, the objective is to examine if there is a tendency of online protests, and their reach, to become more “important” than having people on the streets, blocking avenues, picketing and so on. Besides examining the perceived effectiveness of these sort of protests, there is the claim that online/virtual protests unquestionably open the possibility for more people to follow these protests in real-time. This is exactly one of the dimensions of the use of Citizen Sousveillance, the virtual dimension. The virtual dimension observes how the use of sousveillance in protests opens a window of possibility that was inexistent before. People that are not in the same geographical space as a given protest, with the use of sousveillance/Citizen Sousveillance, have the opportunity to follow it online.

I posed a question about the differences of online and offline protests to all of my interviewees. *Midia* NINJA members are the ones participating and covering protests, and as such, they know exactly how the dynamics occur; additionally, they are the ones streaming it over social media and sharing it online after the stream has ended, so they know how impactful that can be as well. The evolution of manifestation can be stagnant for many decades, but it is also always prone to new ways of connecting people, and the combination of sousveillance with social media can be, and in a way already is, a new form of protest. The challenge is to understand how the classic and the new ways will interact from now on. One of the interviewees said

Acho que as coisas são diferentes, mas ao mesmo tempo elas são complementares. A gente faz um trabalho em rede mesmo, uma rede em movimento, e uma produção de conteúdo que a gente sabe que quanto mais pessoas a gente atingir e de diferentes lugares, do Brasil profundo, da América Latina, do mundo. Então quanto mais a gente atingir isso, mais daremos visibilidade e força ao que está acontecendo nesse lugar. Sem presencial também não existe esse online, essa pauta online – precisamos dela, pois elas se retroalimentam. Quando as pessoas vão para as ruas dentro das manifestações, quanto mais gente na rua também significa mais pessoas transmitindo, mais pessoas gerando conteúdo, mais pessoas usando uma mesma tag, mais pessoas reverberando isso, e mais a gente consegue extrapolar as bolhas. Ano passado, dia 31 de maio aconteceu a greve geral no Brasil, o que foi um momento ímpar no percurso das greves gerais, e a gente recebeu conteúdo do Brasil todo. E notamos que quando a gente posta um conteúdo de uma cidade “X”, aquela pessoa que mandou, compartilha e esse conteúdo viraliza, e isso explode a nossa bolha Midia NINJA, até chegar nos contatos que essa pessoa têm, na rede que ela tem, e ajuda a gente a se reverberar, mas ao mesmo tempo muitas vezes a gente posta algo e o alcance do post ele pode ser muito maior que a quantidade de pessoas daquela cidade (Interviewee #3, 2018).¹⁴

According to this interviewee then, they complement each other, most importantly, when it comes to the reach that protest has. Where, before the sousveillance aspect, the indignation of the people many times would not be heard, now it can reach a wider audience. This small city prism is interesting because it can be very easy for someone that has always lived in big cities to overlook the reality of how the dynamic of protests works in smaller cities.

¹⁴ I believe that these are different topics, but one complements the other at the same time. The main issue for us will always be the collaborative work and the content production, we are aware, the more people we reach, from different places, either from small towns in Brazil, Latin America or the world, the more we will give visibility and strength to what is actually happening in that “physical” place. And without what actually happens on the streets, the online does not exist. They feed each other. When people take to the streets to protest it also means more people getting involved, more people broadcasting, more people creating new content, more people using the same hashtag, and more people passing on the message, which in the end means that we can reach people out of our bubble. We noticed that when there was the general strike in 2015, we received videos from every part of Brazil, and we replicated that, so these bubbles – ours and theirs, were extrapolated reaching people that would never know if it were not because of this work. Sometimes if we replicate a content that happened in a small city, the penetration of that content can reach even more people than the number of people that actually lives in this city (Interviewee #3, 2018).

The dichotomy of such different views can be used to read one of Citizen Sousveillance's dimensions, which talks about the virtual access to protests. Smaller cities tend to echo what happens in bigger cities concerning the general dissatisfaction of the population, which can be considered one of the major triggers for protests in Brazil. Once smaller cities have the chance to share not only their common challenges, but also their particular demands, that creates a new mass and democratic element that is enabled by *Mídia NINJA*. The access that more people now have to particular demands in smaller cities, in a way, makes these demands go from a personal trouble perspective, where it can be seen as being something happening mostly to this small group of individuals, to a public issue perspective. Using the notion of the sociological imagination, proposed by Mills, protests help to turn personal and even local issues into public issues pertaining to everyone, identifying them as structural problems in our society (Mills, 1959). It helps turn local problems into social problems.

Obviously, this is one opinion about the difference and importance of these two scenarios of protests. Unquestionably, there are differences when it comes to protests in small and big cities, and usually, access to information in big cities tends to be easier. This is not the only factor, though.

The characteristics of the demand being made by protesters can be a determinant of whether or not offline or online tactics are favoured. When asked about these differences, another interviewee commented:

Toda vez que a gente se engaja em um processo de mobilização, a gente sabe que é muito importante fazermos mobilizações dos mais diversos tipos possíveis. Eu acho que vai depender muito de cada momento, enfim, que aquela circunstância pede, e as vezes é mais interessante você ter uma mobilização de rua muito forte naquele momento do que ter uma mobilização mais forte nas redes sociais. Acho que isso é muito intrínseco um ou outro. As vezes a gente consegue, por exemplo, fazer uma manifestação em prol do Marco Civil da Internet, que a gente fez há um ou dois anos, para nós era muito mais interessante, já que não conseguiríamos mobilizar um milhão de pessoas para ir às ruas em prol daquela política, mas a gente vai conseguir mobilizar nas redes muito bem, então fazemos “tuitaço” até porque aquilo não tem uma demanda muito grande de mobilização de rua de fato. Então fica claro, há circunstâncias e circunstâncias. Agora é claro, que o

impeachment, por exemplo, e o golpe que o Brasil sofre, isso vai mobilizar e vai demandar uma atividade de rua muito forte. A própria morte da Marielle no Rio de Janeiro, conseqüentemente vai mobilizar cada vez mais pessoas a irem às ruas, com uma força muito maior por conta do que a própria violência gera, do que aquele próprio acontecimento gera nas pessoas. Então eu acho que a mobilização de rua e nas redes sociais são termômetros do que a gente vive hoje. É claro que se a gente tem uma mobilização de rua enorme, e várias pessoas estão indo para rua por conta de algo, e por causa do momento em que o Brasil e o mundo estão vivendo ... fica claro que há algo forte acontecendo ... porque mobilizar para a rua é muito difícil. Obviamente é muito mais difícil do que mobilizar para as redes sociais, até porque é muito mais fácil você se mobilizar para as redes do que ir para as ruas. Acho que são dois termômetros que são diferentes, mas que são também complementares, um ao outro. E reforçando, vai depender muito da circunstância dos acontecimentos do mundo.. que o país ou o mundo está demandando (Interviewee #4,2018).¹⁵

As pointed out by this interviewee, the “mobilization” aspect is fundamentally decided depending on the agenda. In this case, the interviewee paid less attention to the external factors, like big or small cities, as the first interviewee pointed out, and highlighted the agenda as being more of a priority when it comes to gathering people to make a demand. It is fair to assume then, that the combination of both could be used, with the objective of examining and analyzing the

¹⁵ Whenever we engage in a mobilization process, we know it is extremely important for us to mobilize for a wide variety of agendas – and this is somewhat influenced by the moment that the country is going through. Sometimes it is better to have a strong street mobilization at certain moments, instead of having something strong happening on social media. Other times, for example, when we decided to mobilize for a cause like the “Marco Civil da Internet” * [Civil Rights Bill for Internet in Brazil] about 3 years ago, for us, it was way more important and interesting the internet presence, as we would not be able to mobilize one million people to go to the streets for that bill. We would be able to mobilize people on social media fairly well, even because this sort of cause has no appeal for street mobilization. On the other hand, during the impeachment of president Rousseff, for example, that culminated in the Coup D’Etat that Brazil is currently under, it mobilized and demanded a strong street organization and activity. The death of Marielle Franco [Rio de Janeiro city councillor assassinated on March, 2018], in Rio de Janeiro, will mobilize more and more people to take the streets, due to the effect that cases like these have on people. I believe that the mobilization on the streets and on social media are thermometers of what we are living today. Obviously, if we see that many people are taking the streets for a cause, we have to pay attention and see, as something significant is happening – street mobilization is really hard, way harder than to mobilize on social medias, as it is easier for you to go on line, than to go to a street protest [...] And again, the circumstances imposed by the world or the country will determine the demand impact (Interviewee #4, 2018).

proposed question about the importance of protesters on the streets versus the importance of protesters online.

Here, then, we have what could be a limitation of sousveillance, but a strength of Citizen Sousveillance. On the one hand, depending on what kind of protest and what kind of agenda, the utility of sousveillance may be minimal, as it would add no value as a defense mechanism, or a way to pressure powerful actors to be in accordance to the rule of law. On the other hand, though, other dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance are still employable. The archival dimension of Citizen Sousveillance can be used to show the support such an agenda has, and citizens can potentially influence government decision-making. It can be used as a record, demonstrating that citizens were for or against a given bill, and because it was online, anyone with an internet connection was able to participate.

The online and offline debate, however, had other interesting answers from members of *Mídia NINJA*, which in a way reflects how this specific issue has not been thought out entirely, and analyses like this are important to help us make a clear reading of it all.. The interviewee showed the concern they have with the historical value that these videos will have in the future – again, addressing the archival dimension of Citizen Sousveillance.

Praticamente falando, de forma objetiva, é mais importante que as pessoas vão até as manifestações, sem dúvida nenhuma. A gente entende nossa importância para o registro histórico, no caso estamos falando de algo local, mas além disso, pelo serviço informativo mesmo. Mesmo com um número arrebatador de pessoas em uma manifestação, se não existe uma narrativa que acompanhe esse movimento, por exemplo, a gente pressiona menos o governo, a gente imprime menos a realidade para fora daquela cidade, a gente pressiona menos a grande mídia a falar sobre aquilo. Quantas vezes grandes aglomerações de pessoas aconteceram e a grande mídia simplesmente ignorou? Se não é a gente falando sobre aquilo, e fazendo eles passarem vergonha por não estarem noticiando aquilo ... existe uma outra pressão, em um outro nível. Eu acho que é definitivamente mais importante a presença das pessoas nas marchas, mas existe um grande peso em torno do

que fazemos no pós, e da pressão que advém disso (Interviewee #5, 2018).¹⁶

This view can overlap with citizen journalism to some extent, as it stresses the “information service” that *Mídia NINJA* provides. However, what is clear from my fieldwork is that there is more than the provision of an information service. The Citizen Sousveillance concept comes to encompass some angles of how the dynamics of protests happen.

Related to the specific history and political economic context of *Mídia NINJA*, there is a concerted effort to counter "mainstream media" narratives and to exert "symbolic pressure", as the interviewee expressed. This touches a third dimension of Citizen Sousveillance, which is to challenge mainstream narratives. The effort mentioned suggests something that is perhaps more activist than citizen journalism, which may be guided by ideals of journalistic objectivity. At the same time, this is not at all about making 'fake news'. Rather, it is about having videos of protests that actually happened - of massive gatherings of people - so that the demands of the protest cannot be easily dismissed by mainstream media. These videos, grounded in the reality of protest, are examples of Citizen Sousveillance that *Mídia NINJA* leverages.

For this interviewee, it is more important for people to attend a protest rather than simply following it online; however, protests have to be followed by a narrative that “explains” what the issue is. The protest alone might not be sufficient, especially if people do not understand the depth of the claims being made, and if other narratives, mostly controlled by big corporations and traditional media, either discredit or ignore that movement. The issue is mass communication, and online activism plays a big part. *Mídia NINJA* relies on Citizen Sousveillance to help mobilize people. This is about making protests heard, and rendering them virtually so that they can reach a wide number of citizens who might not otherwise be connected

¹⁶ Objectively speaking, it is more important that people go to manifestations instead of following it online. I understand the importance of *Mídia NINJA* for the historical record, and how this could impact the coming generations. Beyond that, the importance of our work is the information service aspect. Let's say there is a big manifestation and there are thousands and thousands of people, if there is not a narrative that follows that cause, there is less impact on policy-makers, and in general, less impact on people that are unaware of it, or out of that local space. Besides, that also pushes less – or it does not push at all, how the mainstream media will report it. There are countless cases of massive gathering of people demanding something and the big media just ignored it due to its political views. So, if we have videos and push this piece of news through, it also pushes them, the big media, to talk about it. Having said that, I believe it is definitely more important people attending protests, but there is certainly a great value on what we do, which includes a lot of after work and the symbolic pressure that comes with it (Interviewee #5], 2018).

to them. Making the issues of the protests heard by a larger number of people, and making the issues actually within a narrative that is in line with what was proposed at the protests is part of social movements' struggles now.

As it is demonstrated by the accounts of *Mídia NINJA* members, the fact of more people physically going to a protest or more people following it online are not necessarily in conflict. These two different sorts of protests act in different fields, having different impacts on people and governments. Having more people online protesting does not make street protests less important, and having a lot of people on the streets applies the same pressure that it always has. What could be drawn from these reports is that they work together most of the time. Online protests can make street protests gain repercussions and reach. Besides, online participation will bring a different crowd to the “conversation”, making this virtual dimension of Citizen Sousveillance important to provide accessibility.

Moreover, it can signify the accumulation of historical material, which didn't previously exist in the history of protests, and which is one of the usages of Citizen Sousveillance. The material of the archive, built by people in the streets capturing images, by the use of Citizen Sousveillance, provides the fundamental material necessary to change narratives of current and future protests. It can contribute to making possible protests that would never make it to the streets because of their nature. Therefore, *Mídia NINJA* is bringing to the reality of protests the use of Citizen Sousveillance, which can be a game-changer on the streets, as well as a contribution to the historical archive of protests in Brazil.

One interviewee said

A narrativa que a gente produz tranquiliza pessoas a se sentirem mais seguras para sair de casa para irem a protestos, porque nós acabamos desmitificando uma série de coisas de que elas tinham ideia que acontecia em uma manifestação. Só o efeito antecipado já muda o rumo das manifestações. Muitas pessoas que estão nas manifestações, estão ao mesmo tempo nos assistindo, então se mostramos que lá na frente está acontecendo enfrentamento

com a polícia, elas decidem se querem ir para lá ou não. Impacta o ato e a sociedade.
(Interviewee #3, 2018).¹⁷

Therefore, the element mentioned by the above *Mídia* NINJA member, is that with the coverage of demonstrations, it makes it easier for people that do not usually go to protests, or are unable to go, to see how it usually flows. Hence, it “demystifies” the dynamics of them. Once again, the virtual accessibility that Citizen Sousveillance brings to this scenario addresses that. Added to the challenge it poses to mainstream narratives, and the archival value that this material has, it now can be “consumed” by different citizens, many times persuading some to attend a protest.

4.5 Citizen Sousveillance and its use

After presenting and sustaining my argument about Citizen Sousveillance, and making the case that it is important to bring this new concept to the study of veillances, I would like to summarize the uses of Citizen Sousveillance.

The way Citizen Sousveillance is supposed to be interpreted, and the usefulness of it, is underpinned by the five below aspects:

1. Nonviolent Dimension.

A theoretical gap that Citizen Sousveillance proposes to fill is the idea that it can be used as protection for protesters. It can be seen from an individual perspective when one has a smartphone and starts recording something unusual, or through a collective action, where the number of citizens involved in such action, with smartphones, and through solidarity, acts a way for protesters to be safer. There are two strands that can be seen here: 1. Consider Citizen Sousveillance as an actual nonviolent method, and within a protest setting, it can be a deterrent

¹⁷ Our narrative reassures people to feel safer to leave their homes to go to a protest, so we demystify a series of prejudgements that people thought happened at a protest. This anticipated effect alone already changes the course of a protest. Also, many people that are at a protest are at the same time watching it on their personal devices, so if we show that there is some sort of confrontation with police forces ahead, people can decide to join it or not. It impacts the society as a whole (Interviewee #3, 2018).

for the transgression of human rights by the state apparatus. And 2. After a protest, the material created by Citizen Sousveillance can be used in court litigations, showing that a protester or bystander was wrongfully taken into custody, and even sentenced to jail time. Both situations illustrate the deployment of Citizen Sousveillance as a nonviolent defense mechanism.

2. Raw Reality Dimension

The use of Citizen Sousveillance can be seen as a way to spread a more “raw” reality of protests. People attending protests, with their smartphones in hand, and connection to the internet, can in a matter of seconds start streaming. They can share their perspective of the developments of such protests. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram “lives” are more common today than ever, and in a way, this new technology, and the way people are interacting with it, make everyone a potential, as *Mídia NINJA* puts it, Multimedia Citizen.

3. Counternarrative Dimension.

Another important aspect of Citizen Sousveillance is to work as a way for alternative channels to challenge the mainstream and traditional media. In a way, this is one of the main goals of *Mídia NINJA*. As discussed before in this thesis, while big and powerful corporations often have some hidden agenda besides reporting the news, Citizen Sousveillance can bring a different perspective to any story. The possibility to have an alternative way to access what happens in a protest, and the possibility to have more developed users of Citizen Sousveillance – like *Mídia NINJA* members, talking to protesters on the spot, and getting their reasons to be there, is an important advancement in many different fronts.

4. Archival Dimension.

Specifically talking about the Brazilian reality, the history of the country is not taken seriously. Investments in museums, just to take one example, are minimal (Santana, *et al.* 2018). The lack of importance to the memory of the country is not embedded in Brazilians cultural priorities, therefore it is not uncommon to see historical facts manipulated to serve a certain agenda. Citizen Sousveillance has the potential to partially fill this gap in Brazilian society’s history. The amount of data collected by Citizen Sousveillance can be significant, and if it is organized and stored for

future generations, it can be of great value. Accessing videos of protests and interviews in 30, 40 or 50 years will give the possibility of a close connection to what is happening today. Whereas mainstream media creates a record of the voices of the powerful, Citizen Sousveillance creates a record of the actions and voices of those who have been historically disenfranchised.

5. Virtual Dimension.

Lastly, Citizen Sousveillance can be important and useful when it concerns being an accessible way for people to engage with protesters virtually. It is not uncommon that the major protests happen mostly in big cities. Gathering enough people to make a noticeable demonstration seems more feasible in a city with millions of inhabitants, than in a city with tens of thousands.

Therefore, this dimension of Citizen Sousveillance can be powerful for small cities to have a channel so more people can follow their protests, and it can also be a chance for a big city to maximize their protests' reach. Having said that, besides being this extra channel of accessibility for protesters and citizens sympathetic to certain causes, this dimension of Citizen Sousveillance also plays a part in being a nonviolent defense mechanism for protesters on-site. If Citizen Sousveillance is employed in real-time, people that are engaging with it virtually can be seen as a nonviolent defense mechanism for the protesters on-site. There are instances where protester, when confronted by the police, said they were broadcasting it to thousands of people. This virtual assurance that protesters are not alone can serve as a deterrent for police from committing brutality.

4.6 – Does Citizen Sousveillance prevent violence?

With respect to the question of whether Citizen Sousveillance prevents violence, we face a sort of paradox. If Citizen Sousveillance was used as a defense mechanism and it stopped violent repression, how could we see its protective effect? For example, if the police *did use* excessive force captured by Citizen Sousveillance, then arguably Citizen Sousveillance did not fulfill its role as a defense mechanism. Alternatively, if the police did *not* use excessive force while protesters were filming, then we would not have ultimate confirmation that the brutality was not committed uniquely due to the fact that there were cameras and phones around filming.

Talking to *Midia* NINJA members, I asked if they believed that recording protests could have prevented police forces from using force excessively. Their answers fell into such paradox. Some said it might have prevented violence – but it is hard to be sure without a doubt that excessive force was not used due to the sousveillance aspect. Some said it did not prevent violence and abuse, and they have witnessed protesters being attacked by police despite people recording it. A possible way to have a better idea would be to analyze a considerable number of protests, and verify which ones ended up with some sort of confrontation between police and protesters. However, not even a qualitative study like that, if feasible, would bring a definitive answer, as the variables in a protest are countless.

Also, it would not be very reasonable to assume that police forces willingly used brutality against protesters, *because* they were being filmed. Therefore, the only conclusion is that the efficiency, as in any other defense tactics or mechanism, has a maximum reach, and it is not 100% effective. The unanimous answer from *Midia* NINJA members, though, is the fact that when sousveillance is employed in a protest, at a greater or lower level, it changes the behavior of authorities and protesters alike.

An example of Citizen Sousveillance that actually revealed abuse by authorities is what became known as the Balta case. In Brazil, it is not uncommon for undercover police officers to infiltrate a protest and start a riot, so the uniformed police, or the riot police, have a reason to disperse the crowd with tear gas, bombs, and rubber bullets. The Balta case happened in 2016, when one of these undercover officers known as P2 was caught starting the riot. This one officer was part of the army intelligence forces, and he was responsible for the arrest of 18 people during a protest against former president Michel Temer, who took office after Worker's Party Dilma Rousseff's impeachment. He infiltrated social movements, especially through the popular dating service mobile application Tinder. Once connected with people, he would attend protests with them and start riots. Because he was in protests with social movements, and because they were being recorded, the protesters had no doubt about him being behind these riots. After being discovered, his case was sent to court, but he was found not guilty (Rossi, 2018).

To conclude this chapter, I should note that there are still many questions to be asked and analyzed. The basis used to sustain the argument in favor of Citizen Sousveillance can and should be explored further. The privacy issue is unresolved – one must wonder whether a

resolution is even possible. And the expansion of the use of social media tends to be an even bigger part of this discussion. This question tags along with the debate of the number of people in a protest versus online. *Midia* NINJA acknowledges the importance of both, and it would be fair to assume that at this stage the two sorts of activism complement rather than rival each other – though street protest will never become obsolete. Finally, the use of Citizen Sousveillance can indeed change the reality of a protest. It can and was used to free innocent people, and it is used to raise awareness about certain agendas that can no longer be hidden and controlled by few actors in society.

5 – Conclusion and final analysis

This thesis aimed to further our understanding of sousveillance. When I set out to write a thesis, I was immersed in the outcomes of two major events that happened in 2013: 1. the unprecedented street protests that took place in Brazil, as examined, due to many different factors, and 2. the case of Edward Snowden, the NSA contractor that revealed to the world the extent of America's mass surveillance. These two cases were connected, at least from my perspective, because both were embedded in the study of veillances, or could be analyzed through such lenses. In Brazil, while the biggest protests in the country's 21st century history were happening, people were sharing videos recorded on smartphones, and these videos were impacting national policy – for example when congress rejected bill 37¹⁸. And the Snowden case showed us how extensive mass surveillance perpetrated by the Five Eyes Allies was, and how it captured even global leaders. It also revealed how the manipulation of data and our online behavior could be so powerful. Backed by these two major events, I dove into the field of surveillance, and I came across extremely interesting material. However, soon after, I realized that there were unexplored areas or gaps in the literature that could be further developed. Hence, I decided to combine some aspects of the studies of the veillances, like sousveillance, with a study of social movement activism in Brazil, and in particular the case study of *Midia NINJA*. Also, as a background, I added how sousveillance in protests can be used as a nonviolent method, creating a new concept I call Citizen Sousveillance.

One of the primary goals of my thesis was to fill a gap that I felt would benefit the entire community that studies surveillance. When I engaged in the process of research, I noticed that the study of sousveillance could be further developed. Sousveillance was more alive than ever. Although we can track back the use of sousveillance as far as the American Civil War at least, as per Browne (2015), new dynamics of cheaper access to technology, and better infrastructure that provides better internet connections to more people could substantially resignify how sousveillance works. Gasnascia (2010) proposes that we live in a generalized sousveillance

¹⁸ Bill 37 (*Proposta de Emenda Constitucional 37*) was a constitutional amendment that would change how crimes were investigated in Brazil. It would withdraw from the Prosecution Office or Public Ministry (responsible for most white-collar investigation) the right to oversee or perform such investigation, leaving it all for police departments, which do not have the resources to do so.

society, which is also only made possible by technology. Fernback (2013) works with the idea of an informed knowledge society, also based on the technologically-mediated interaction between people, especially via social media. The fact is that the Multimedia Citizen brought up by *Midia NINJA* can already be considered a reality. A citizen with this sort of technology in hand has the capability of spreading news as fast as traditional networks, and all of this is ubiquitous and available in many places around the world, right now. Citizen Sousveillance is supported by, and contributes to, each one of these perspectives.

Looking back at 2013, and being under the shocking revelations of Edward Snowden, there was something special about the protests in Brazil that year. It brought to light a very new, complex, and interesting sociological actor, *Midia NINJA*. In chapters 3 and 4, I delved into what it means to have *Midia NINJA* playing a role in Brazil. I presented a piece of their history, and I discussed how what started as a collective of artists and musicians became an important organization that helped to insert and strengthen the use of sousveillance in the country. I argued that the *Midia NINJA* case study exemplifies several important dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance.

One of the limitations of Citizen Sousveillance is, in a way, the same limitation of sousveillance itself, which is the challenge of balancing the protection aspect of it with the respect and care for one's privacy. The blurry line that divides one's power to use a gadget to stream a protest, or any other situation for that matter, will always encounter the dilemma of the right to privacy that everyone should be entitled to. Moreover, the very present debate in different societies around the world about the legality of protesters wearing masks falls into this piece. While law enforcement agencies, and the judicial system as a whole, often criticize the practice, protesters still attempt to remain anonymous in a protest. The complexity of this discussion involves, on one hand, protesters that wish to stay anonymous due to personal reasons, as well as protesters that wish to remain anonymous due to the fact they use civil disobedience as a way to protest. On the other hand, there are the law enforcement agencies that wish to have the control, and the possibility to hold protesters accountable for any "misconduct" in protests. Therefore, the use of sousveillance, or Citizen Sousveillance can, in a way, work against protesters. The conversation about privacy in public spaces, its legality, and practicality, has to be analyzed from different perspectives. It is a debate that is not settled, not even by

groups like *Midia NINJA*, as explored in chapter 4. An extra layer of complexity to this debate was added in 2020, with the new COVID-19 pandemic. Protests in Brazil, and most notably, the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States that sprawled all around the world, counted many protesters wearing masks to prevent the spread of the virus.

In this thesis, I have illustrated the key dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance. Many veillances have been used to monitor, inspect, and oppress certain communities in society. With recent developments and cheaper access to technology, this is a scenario that is changing. The 21st-century use of sousveillance is heavily based on this accessibility to technology. Citizen Sousveillance names a specific aspect of sousveillance, which is its use in a protest setting. Along with the research, and after analyzing the interviews conducted with *Midia NINJA* members, and reviewing their online exposure, the following dimensions were identified. First, Citizen Sousveillance was used as a nonviolent defense mechanism in protests. Second, sousveillance could be theorized as a way to report a more raw view of protest. The obvious asset of having a different perspective of protests became a reality. Besides that, one of *Midia NINJA*'s main battles, which is to free the narrative from powerful actors in society, can also be read through Citizen Sousveillance. Sharing a different view of a protest – one that will not be curated by whoever detains the power in such events – certainly aligns with the overall idea of Citizen Sousveillance. After all, the word Citizen was not chosen by chance. The strength of citizens fighting a battle together to remain free from manipulation is inspiring. There is also the dimensions that speaks about the importance of archiving this material, with possible educational purpose. The material produced with the use of Citizen Sousveillance can be seen as a way to collect data, and ultimately, a different perspective of events. In this day and age, the importance of a broad perception of how history happened can be paramount to how future generations base their knowledge, understanding, and even policies about protests. And lastly, that can be more explored, and has significant contribution to the field – the virtual accessibility Citizen Sousveillance gives to protesters.

While research into the veillances and the use of sousveillance in a protest setting can be illuminating, this thesis also made an effort in regards to the understanding of protests through the lens of Citizen Sousveillance, by adding an extra component: the nonviolent movements, and nonviolent techniques in general. The research question of this thesis reflects how I intended to

join the literature on sousveillance with the literature on nonviolent protest under one roof. I argue that one of Citizen Sousveillance's uses is as a defense mechanism. Nonviolent movements have their own solid scholarship, and while this thesis fed from the body of literature of the veillances, adding literature on nonviolence gave the research a unique twist. Although the subject of surveillance can be found in studies about nonviolence (Martin & Varney, 2003; Chenoweth *et al.*, 2017), it is not possible to find a more direct connection between studies of nonviolence and sousveillance. One uniqueness of this thesis is precisely the fact that it seems to be the first one to make that connection. I argue, then, that Citizen Sousveillance should be added to the list of methods of nonviolent actions elaborated by Gene Sharp (1973). The current 198 methods, which can be found in the appendix of this thesis, could be expanded to include Citizen Sousveillance as its 199th. This would grow the list of methods to 199 (it currently describes 198 methods of nonviolent protest, persuasion, and social noncooperation). And, it seems most fitting to add Citizen Sousveillance at number 50, within the Public Assemblies subcategory of methods of nonviolent protest and persuasion

This thesis addressed how the use of sousveillance can be employed in protests with the intent of being used as a defense mechanism. It argued that Citizen Sousveillance can change the reality of protest, perhaps with the effect of making violent repression less possible. *Midia NINJA* was used as a case study to substantiate this claim, and the concept of nonviolence was added as a way to demonstrate how Citizen Sousveillance can be considered a method of nonviolent action.

5.1 What is the future of Citizen Sousveillance?

Lastly, it feels important to briefly speculate about the future of Citizen Sousveillance. From the beginning of the writing of this thesis, much has changed. We saw that the American government has not pardoned Snowden; we saw a far-right government elected in Brazil; and we saw that the 2013 protests gave way to an extremely polarized society. This polarized society came to the point of having different and divided protests – the ones in favor of “left” agendas, and the ones in favor of “right” agendas. Nonetheless, the importance of the endless battle for a fairer society continues. Protests are a vivid part of democracies all around the world, and, again,

the use of technologies becomes more accessible everywhere, every day. That alone makes the use of Citizen Sousveillance still incipient, and with great possibilities to be used, adapted, transformed and resignified in the future.

As for *Mídia NINJA*, it continues to carry out extremely important work when it comes to portraying a truth that is different from the mainstream narratives. *Mídia NINJA* keeps its journey towards the “*O empoderamento das pessoas a partir das tecnologias de comunicação*”¹⁹ (Interviewee #4, 2018). However, the political determination is the core matter that will bring considerable changes to society as a whole. One of the interviewees talks about that when asked how he sees the future of *Mídia NINJA*

Ha várias motivações políticas que vão fazer com que a gente chegue no futuro que a gente está querendo – mais solidário, mais coletivo, mais colaborativo. Não é só o poder da comunicação, e o poder das tecnologias de comunicação que vão trazer isso. E também não é só a Mídia NINJA, que vai fazer com que isso aconteça (Interviewee #2, 2018).²⁰

However, it is also added by the interviewee that

Mais pessoas conseguindo entrar nos papéis, e nas institucionalidades, vai fazer com que mais pessoas consigam ter uma mobilidade urbana, e uma mobilidade social para poder participar mais das mobilizações sociais e das mobilizações de rua. O ideal é fazer com que mais pessoas tenham o poder e protagonismo de narrativa de fato (Interviewee #2, 2018).²¹

The power of narrative is the foundation of *Mídia NINJA*'s actions. Their main agenda, empowered by the use of Citizen Sousveillance in protests, is to give a different narrative to events that concern and impact marginalized communities in Brazilian society. Citizen Sousveillance, which was and still is used by *Mídia NINJA*, is a part of this complex picture of

¹⁹ The empowerment of people through communication technologies.

²⁰ There are many political motivations that will make us achieve the future we want – more solidary, more collectivity, more collaboration. It is not only the power of communication, and the power of communication technologies that will bring this future. Also, it is not only *Mídia NINJA* that will make that happen.

²¹ More people having access to roles within the institutional structures, will make more people achieve urban mobility, and social mobility, being able to take part in social and street mobilization. Ideally, more people should have the power and protagonism when it comes to a narrative.

how society changes constantly, and how protests are part of, and a driving force for, these changes.

This thesis focused on how Citizen Sousveillance can be used. The five dimensions of Citizen Sousveillance identified here can form a foundation to help guide future research on this topic. The use of new technologies in protests seems inevitable, and just as inevitable is the new stance from police forces when confronted with sousveillance. These dynamics will always evolve, the same way that the concept of Citizen Sousveillance also will.

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Appendix A

Gene Sharp's 198 nonviolent methods

THE METHODS OF NONVIOLENT PROTEST AND PERSUASION

Formal Statements

1. Public Speeches
2. Letters of opposition or support
3. Declarations by organizations and institutions
4. Signed public statements
5. Declarations of indictment and intention
6. Group or mass petitions

Communications with a Wider Audience

7. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
8. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
9. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
10. Newspapers and journals
11. Records, radio, and television
12. Skywriting and earthwriting

Group Representations

13. Deputations
14. Mock awards
15. Group lobbying
16. Picketing
17. Mock elections

Symbolic Public Acts

18. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
19. Wearing of symbols
20. Prayer and worship
21. Delivering symbolic objects
22. Protest disrobings
23. Destruction of own property
24. Symbolic lights
25. Displays of portraits
26. Paint as protest
27. New signs and names
28. Symbolic sounds
29. Symbolic reclamations
30. Rude gestures

Pressures on Individuals

31. "Haunting" officials
32. Taunting officials

33. Fraternalization

34. Vigils

Drama and Music

35. Humorous skits and pranks

36. Performances of plays and music

37. Singing

Processions

38. Marches

39. Parades

40. Religious processions

41. Pilgrimages

42. Motorcades

Honoring the Dead

43. Political mourning

44. Mock funerals

45. Demonstrative funerals

46. Homage at burial places

Public Assemblies

47. Assemblies of protest or support

48. Protest meetings

49. Camouflaged meetings of protest

50. Teach-ins

Withdrawal and Renunciation

51. Walk-outs

52. Silence

53. Renouncing honors

54. Turning one's back

THE METHODS OF SOCIAL NONCOOPERATION

Ostracism of Persons

55. Social boycott

56. Selective social boycott

57. Lysistratic nonaction

58. Excommunication

59. Interdict

Noncooperation with Social Events, Customs, and Institutions

60. Suspension of social and sports activities

61. Boycott of social affairs

62. Student strike

63. Social disobedience

64. Withdrawal from social institutions

Withdrawal from the Social System

65. Stay-at-home
66. Total personal noncooperation
67. "Flight" of workers
68. Sanctuary
69. Collective disappearance
70. Protest emigration (hijrat)

THE METHODS OF ECONOMIC NONCOOPERATION: ECONOMIC BOYCOTTS

Actions by Consumers

71. Consumers' boycott
72. Nonconsumption of boycotted goods
73. Policy of austerity
74. Rent withholding
75. Refusal to rent
76. National consumers' boycott
77. International consumers' boycott

Action by Workers and Producers

78. Workmen's boycott
79. Producers' boycott

Action by Middlemen

80. Suppliers' and handlers' boycott

Action by Owners and Management

81. Traders' boycott
82. Refusal to let or sell property
83. Lockout
84. Refusal of industrial assistance
85. Merchants' "general strike"

Action by Holders of Financial Resources

86. Withdrawal of bank deposits
87. Refusal to pay fees, dues, and assessments
88. Refusal to pay debts or interest
89. Severance of funds and credit
90. Revenue refusal
91. Refusal of a government's money

Action by Governments

92. Domestic embargo
93. Blacklisting of traders
94. International sellers' embargo
95. International buyers' embargo
96. International trade embargo

THE METHODS OF ECONOMIC NONCOOPERATION: *THE STRIKE*

Symbolic Strikes

- 97. Protest strike
- 98. Quickie walkout (lightning strike)

Agricultural Strikes

- 99. Peasant strike
- 100. Farm Workers' strike

Strikes by Special Groups

- 101. Refusal of impressed labor
- 102. Prisoners' strike
- 103. Craft strike
- 104. Professional strike

Ordinary Industrial Strikes

- 105. Establishment strike
- 106. Industry strike
- 107. Sympathetic strike

Restricted Strikes

- 108. Detailed strike
- 109. Bumper strike
- 110. Slowdown strike
- 111. Working-to-rule strike
- 112. Reporting "sick" (sick-in)
- 113. Strike by resignation
- 114. Limited strike
- 115. Selective strike

Multi-Industry Strikes

- 116. Generalized strike
- 117. General strike

Combination of Strikes and Economic Closures

- 118. Hartal
- 119. Economic shutdown

THE METHODS OF POLITICAL NONCOOPERATION

Rejection of Authority

- 120. Withholding or withdrawal of allegiance
- 121. Refusal of public support
- 122. Literature and speeches advocating resistance

Citizens' Noncooperation with Government

- 123. Boycott of legislative bodies
- 124. Boycott of elections
- 125. Boycott of government employment and positions
- 126. Boycott of government depts., agencies, and other bodies

- 127. Withdrawal from government educational institutions
- 128. Boycott of government-supported organizations
- 129. Refusal of assistance to enforcement agents
- 130. Removal of own signs and placemarks
- 131. Refusal to accept appointed officials
- 132. Refusal to dissolve existing institutions

Citizens' Alternatives to Obedience

- 133. Reluctant and slow compliance
- 134. Nonobedience in absence of direct supervision
- 135. Popular nonobedience
- 136. Disguised disobedience
- 137. Refusal of an assemblage or meeting to disperse
- 138. Sitdown
- 139. Noncooperation with conscription and deportation
- 140. Hiding, escape, and false identities
- 141. Civil disobedience of "illegitimate" laws

Action by Government Personnel

- 142. Selective refusal of assistance by government aides
- 143. Blocking of lines of command and information
- 144. Stalling and obstruction
- 145. General administrative noncooperation
- 146. Judicial noncooperation
- 147. Deliberate inefficiency and selective noncooperation by enforcement agents
- 148. Mutiny

Domestic Governmental Action

- 149. Quasi-legal evasions and delays
- 150. Noncooperation by constituent governmental units

International Governmental Action

- 151. Changes in diplomatic and other representations
- 152. Delay and cancellation of diplomatic events
- 153. Withholding of diplomatic recognition
- 154. Severance of diplomatic relations
- 155. Withdrawal from international organizations
- 156. Refusal of membership in international bodies
- 157. Expulsion from international organizations

THE METHODS OF NONVIOLENT INTERVENTION

Psychological Intervention

- 158. Self-exposure to the elements
- 159. The fast
 - a) Fast of moral pressure
 - b) Hunger strike
 - c) Satyagrahic fast
- 160. Reverse trial
- 161. Nonviolent harassment

Physical Intervention

- 162. Sit-in
- 163. Stand-in
- 164. Ride-in
- 165. Wade-in
- 166. Mill-in
- 167. Pray-in
- 168. Nonviolent raids
- 169. Nonviolent air raids
- 170. Nonviolent invasion
- 171. Nonviolent interjection
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Social Intervention

- 174. Establishing new social patterns
- 175. Overloading of facilities
- 176. Stall-in
- 177. Speak-in
- 178. Guerrilla theater
- 179. Alternative social institutions
- 180. Alternative communication system

Economic Intervention

- 181. Reverse strike
- 182. Stay-in strike
- 183. Nonviolent land seizure
- 184. Defiance of blockades
- 185. Politically motivated counterfeiting
- 186. Preclusive purchasing
- 187. Seizure of assets
- 188. Dumping
- 189. Selective patronage
- 190. Alternative markets
- 191. Alternative transportation systems
- 192. Alternative economic institutions

Political Intervention

- 193. Overloading of administrative systems
- 194. Disclosing identities of secret agents
- 195. Seeking imprisonment
- 196. Civil disobedience of “neutral” laws
- 197. Work-on without collaboration
- 198. Dual sovereignty and parallel government