

## HANDOUT

### Blogs, social media pages and media collectives – proactive audiences or non-industrial journalism?

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#### Outline of the presentation

In this presentation, I describe some journalistic conflicts in Brazil – one of the most unequal societies in the world – to reflect about how media and journalism have been instruments against human rights violations and criminalization of low-income Brazilians. **Do the people engaged in media activism characterize “proactive audiences”? Or do they produce another journalism outside the mainstream news-making industry?** The cases of conflict indicate the urgency to reflect on the meanings journalism have in today’s hyper-connected and increasingly unequal contemporaneity.

For most of Brazilian recent history, commercial media and journalism organizations dominated the processes of news production and distribution. Consequently, their news making processes have excluded or restricted societal debates about topics unrelated to their own (profit-oriented or political) interests. For instance, marginalized social groups have mostly depended on specific events to have issues of their interests raised in mainstream media. In many cases, these groups created their own media, but these mostly consisted of information ghettos with restricted audiences. However, the increasing popularization of mobile, digital and online media has facilitated the circulation of previously marginalized issues.

In this context, marginalized people in Rio de Janeiro have engaged with traditional and digital media, mobile technology and journalism to challenge mainstream narratives and reconfigure how society debates about them, their problems and demands. I believe these conflicts give us a great opportunity to reflect on the meaning of journalism in Brazil and elsewhere. **Are people producing content as “proactive audiences” in reaction to media or is it part of a greater struggle for democratic participation and human rights? Is it a corporatist/industrial or an ethical/values crisis? How can different, socially committed forms of journalism have room in neoliberal times?**

#### About the Speaker



Leonardo Custódio is a Brazilian PhD Candidate and project researcher at CMT, University of Tampere. His doctoral research (2009-2016) focuses on media activism among low-income youth in Brazil. In the project “Media Systems in Flux: The Challenge of the BRICS Countries” (2012-2016, <http://uta.fi/cmt/tutkimus/BRICS.html>), Custódio has also researched about the political economy and the socio-political roles of journalism in Brazil and elsewhere.

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