


**RADIO IN TRANSITION: THE AM-FM MIGRATION OF BRUSQUE-SC RADIOS IN THE  
CONTEXT OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE**

**O RÁDIO EM TRANSIÇÃO: A MIGRAÇÃO AM-FM DAS RÁDIOS DE BRUSQUE-SC NO  
CONTEXTO DA CONVERGÊNCIA MIDIÁTICA**

**RADIO EN TRANSICIÓN: LA MIGRACIÓN AM-FM DE LAS RADIOS DE BRUSQUE-SC  
EN EL CONTEXTO DE LA CONVERGENCIA DE MEDIOS**

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**Nicole Zanon Basílio<sup>1</sup>, Rodrigo Gonçalves Basílio<sup>2</sup>**

**ABSTRACT**

This article investigates the transformations that have taken place in the commercial broadcasting sector of Brusque-SC following the migration of local stations from the AM to the FM band. Completed by the stations in 2022, this transition is part of the National Policy for the Modernization of Sound Broadcasting, regulated by Brazilian Decree No. 8,139/2013, which aims to improve the technical quality of transmissions and strengthen the competitiveness of regional radio. Adopting a qualitative approach, the research is structured as a case study and is based on documentary research, systematic observation, and semi-structured interviews conducted with managers of the two commercial radio stations in the city that underwent the migration process: Rádio Araguaia and Rádio Cidade. The analysis covers the period from 2021 to 2025, focusing on the impacts of the migration on technical, editorial, and identity-related aspects. The results show that the change of band not only raised the technical standards of the stations but also boosted digital presence strategies and reconfigurations in sound aesthetics and audience relations. The study concludes that the radio stations of Brusque successfully adapted to the logic of media convergence, reconciling technological innovation with the preservation of community ties and local identity.

**Keywords:** Radio. AM-FM Migration. Media Convergence. Brusque-SC.

**RESUMO**

Este artigo investiga as transformações ocorridas na radiodifusão comercial do município de Brusque-SC com a migração das emissoras da faixa AM para FM. A transição, concluída pelas emissoras em 2022, insere-se na Política Nacional de Modernização da Radiodifusão Sonora, regulamentada pelo Decreto nº 8.139/2013, que visa aprimorar a qualidade técnica das transmissões e fortalecer a competitividade das rádios regionais. Adotando uma abordagem qualitativa, a pesquisa estrutura-se como estudo de caso e baseia-se em pesquisa documental, observação sistemática e entrevistas semiestruturadas realizadas com gestores das duas rádios comerciais da cidade que participaram do processo de migração: Rádio Araguaia e Rádio Cidade. A análise abrange o período de 2021 a 2025, focalizando os impactos da migração sobre aspectos técnicos, editoriais e identitários. Os resultados revelam que a mudança de faixa não apenas elevou o padrão técnico das

<sup>1</sup> Specialist in Broadcasting Company Management. Centro Universitário Internacional (UNINTER).  
E-mail: nicolezanonn@gmail.com ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-7525-6885>

<sup>2</sup> Specialist in Investigation, Constitution and Defense Law. Universidade Anhanguera (UNIDERP).  
E-mail: rgbasilio04@gmail.com ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9365-766X>

emissoras, como também impulsionou estratégias de presença digital e reconfigurações na estética sonora e na relação com os ouvintes. O estudo conclui que as rádios brusquenses souberam adaptar-se às lógicas da convergência midiática, conciliando inovação tecnológica com a preservação de vínculos comunitários e da identidade local.

**Palavras-chave:** Rádio. Migração AM-FM. Convergência Midiática. Brusque-SC.

## RESUMEN

Este artículo investiga las transformaciones ocurridas en la radiodifusión comercial en el municipio de Brusque, Santa Catarina, con la migración de estaciones de la banda AM a FM. La transición, completada por las estaciones en 2022, se enmarca en la Política Nacional de Modernización de la Radiodifusión, regulada por el Decreto No. 8.139/2013, que tiene como objetivo mejorar la calidad técnica de las transmisiones y fortalecer la competitividad de las radios regionales. Adoptando un enfoque cualitativo, la investigación se estructura como un estudio de caso y se basa en investigación documental, observación sistemática y entrevistas semiestructuradas realizadas a gerentes de las dos radios comerciales de la ciudad que participaron en el proceso de migración: Rádio Araguaia y Rádio Cidade. El análisis abarca el período de 2021 a 2025, centrándose en los impactos de la migración en los aspectos técnicos, editoriales e identitarios. Los resultados revelan que el cambio de banda no solo elevó los estándares técnicos de las estaciones, sino que también impulsó las estrategias de presencia digital y las reconfiguraciones de la estética sonora y las relaciones con los oyentes. El estudio concluye que las radios de Brusque se han adaptado con éxito a la lógica de la convergencia mediática, conciliando la innovación tecnológica con la preservación de los vínculos comunitarios y la identidad local.

**Palabras clave:** Radio. Migración AM-FM. Convergencia Mediática. Brusque-SC.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Radio, even after more than a century of presence in Brazil, remains one of the most resilient, accessible and rooted means of communication in popular culture. Over the decades, it has reinvented itself in the face of successive technological, economic, and behavioral transformations, maintaining its relevance as a channel for information, entertainment, and community dialogue, especially in regional contexts.

The transition of stations from the AM to FM band was made possible by Decree No. 8,139/2013, which authorized the adaptation of the grants and boosted the modernization of the sector. In the state of Santa Catarina, several broadcasters joined the process. In Brusque, in the Itajaí Valley, two commercial radio stations underwent the migration: Radio Araguaia and Radio Cidade. In 2021, the local scene brought together four commercial stations (Araguaia, Cidade, Diplomata and Massa) and, in 2023, all of them were already operating on FM, consolidating a new technical-editorial arrangement and practices more aligned with media convergence.

Thus, the study analyzes the developments of the conversion from AM to FM in Brusque-SC, in the period from 2021 to 2025, with emphasis on the technical, editorial, identity and digital transformations in the two stations that made the migration. The analysis focuses on the reconfigurations in the modes of content production, in the audience profile and in the digital insertion strategies adopted locally.

In this context, the research seeks to answer the following question: what were the impacts and transformations resulting from the migration from AM to FM in commercial broadcasters in Brusque-SC, between 2021 and 2025, considering technical, editorial, identity, and digital aspects? The discussions are organized in thematic blocks that articulate historical, technical and symbolic dimensions of broadcasting, aiming to contribute to the understanding of the ability of regional radio to adapt to the demands of an increasingly multiplatform ecosystem.

Thus, understanding the social role and transformations of radio in the context of media convergence becomes fundamental to analyze the process of AM-FM migration of Brusque stations, a theme addressed in the following topic.

## 2 HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF BROADCASTING IN BRAZIL

The first radio broadcast in Brazil took place on September 7, 1922, during the celebrations of the centenary of Independence, with the broadcast of the speech of the then

president Epitácio Pessoa. The transmission was carried out from Rio de Janeiro and captured by 80 imported receivers, installed at the top of Corcovado (Ortriwano, 2003). This technical demonstration, financed by the American companies Westinghouse International and Western Electric Company, aimed to promote their radiotelegraphy, radiotelephony and radiocommunication equipment to the Ministry of Transportation and Public Works (Ferrareto, 2014).

Despite its punctual nature, the experience aroused the interest of private sectors in the new possibilities of sound communication. Among the enthusiasts was anthropologist Edgar Roquette-Pinto, who, alongside scientist Henrique Morize, founded Radio Society of Rio de Janeiro on April 30, 1923, officially identified as PRA-2 and considered the first regular radio station in the country. Continuous transmissions, however, began on May 1 of that year, a consolidated milestone in Brazilian broadcasting (Ortriwano, 2003). With a strong educational and cultural character, the station was conceived as an instrument of social inclusion, at a time when illiteracy reached 65% of the population, according to data from the demographic census of the 1920s (Ministry of Communications, 2022).

Roquette-Pinto systematically resisted the transformation of Radio Society of Rio de Janeiro into a commercial station, a practice that became widespread among Brazilian radio stations after the legalization of radio advertising, and chose to transfer the ownership of the station to the State, under the condition that its founding principles, centered on the dissemination of cultural and educational content, were maintained. The federal government, through the Ministry of Education and Health (MES), accepted the donation, establishing the Ministry of Education Radio. The initiative was formalized in January 1937, through Law No. 378, whose article 50 established the Educational Broadcasting Service (SRE), with the purpose of ensuring, on a permanent basis, the transmission of educational content (Milanez, 2007).

Although Rádio Sociedade do Rio de Janeiro is widely recognized as the first official broadcaster in the country (Barbosa, 2013; Ferrareto, 2014; Ortriwano, 2003), Rádio Clube de Pernambuco also claims this title. Founded in 1919, it began its broadcasts in February 1923, preceding the inauguration of Radio Society by three months. According to Ferrareto (2014), however, the broadcasts of Pernambuco radio used amateur stations, whose operation was considered illegal by the legislation of the time. For this reason, the trajectory of radio in Brazil is usually attributed to Roquette-Pinto and to the Radio Society of Rio de Janeiro, which operated within the established legal frameworks.

The expansion of radio in Brazil occurred at an accelerated rate in the decades that followed its introduction, consolidating it as the main means of mass communication in the country during the first half of the twentieth century — a period consecrated as the so-called "Golden Age" of Brazilian radiophony. An emblematic milestone in this process was the takeover of Rádio Nacional do Rio de Janeiro by the government of Getúlio Vargas, in 1940. After its nationalization, the station — which already had a large structure and expressive audience — maintained the commercial operating model. Paradoxically, although under state control, Rádio Nacional became the main reference of national private radio, assuming the role of the country's standard radio and reigning with absolute prestige during the Golden Age of Brazilian radio (Zuculoto, 2011).

The emergence of television in 1950 represented a rupture in the Brazilian communication scenario, threatening the hegemony exercised by radio until then. The new technology attracted investments and advertising, significantly reducing the revenues of radio stations (Prata, 2008). Initially, TV adopted formats already established in radio, reproducing its structure and language as a way to ensure communicative effectiveness. Despite this impact, radio has undergone important adaptations that have contributed to its permanence as a relevant means of communication. The introduction of the transistor, for example, allowed greater mobility and individualized consumption of the media, by replacing the bulky valves and allowing the use of batteries in the devices (Ferraretto, 2007; Lopez, 2009). This mobility made the radio stop being an entertainment centered on the domestic environment, starting to accompany the listener in his daily life.

From this brief historical evolution, it is possible to see that the medium has maintained its relevance precisely because of its remarkable ability to adapt to social, political, and technological transformations. Even with the emergence of new media, such as television and the internet, in addition to streaming platforms already in the twenty-first century, radio has been able to preserve its essence as a tool for proximity, flexibility and daily presence.

## 2.1 RADIO IN THE DIGITAL AGE: CONVERGENCE AND REINVENTION

In recent decades, radio has remained one of the most used communication vehicles by Brazilians, thanks to its portability, proximity to the public and the low cost of receivers (Magnoni; Miranda, 2012). However, despite reaching large audiences, radio coexists with modest advertising revenues and considerable structural limitations, such as fragmented networks, regulatory barriers, and difficulty in competing with more dynamic digital media

(Magnoni; Miranda, 2012). The technological transition requires modernization of studios, adaptation of languages and redefinition of editorial strategies to ensure their continuity and adequacy to the challenges imposed by the contemporary media environment (Magnoni; Miranda, 2012).

The understanding of these necessary transformations is deepened from the concept of media convergence, developed by Jenkins (2008). The author argues that convergence refers to the circulation of content through different platforms, cooperation between sectors of the media industry and the active participation of consumers. Jenkins (2008) exemplifies how musical content can be accessed through different channels — car radio, smartphones, cable TV, internet radio stations — showing that the sound experience is fragmented and expanded by a connected and decentralized consumption logic. According to the author, this process transforms the role of the media and repositions the public, who start to act as participatory subjects in the construction of narratives and in the consumption of content.

According to De Farias and Zuculoto (2017), the incorporation of new technologies in the radio ecosystem has required broadcasters to continuously adapt to emerging digital dynamics. Contemporary radio projects beyond conventional broadcasts, operating on multiple platforms that include mobile apps, digital environments, and simultaneous AM and FM channels. These transformations, according to the authors, represent a new evolutionary stage of the medium, marked by technical advances and changes in listening practices, especially in AM radio, which seeks to reposition itself in the face of the demands of the connected public. In this context, the concept of "expanded radio", formulated by Kischinhevsky (2016), which recognizes the migration of radio to environments such as social networks, cell phones and digital platforms, redesigning the contours of the sound experience in the twenty-first century, gains relevance.

It should be noted that the need to reinvent radio in the face of the digital scenario is not limited to technological innovations or media convergence, but is also manifested in the institutional and regulatory movements that have shaped the sector in recent years. An emblematic example is the process of migration of AM stations to the FM band, a public policy that sought to revitalize the segment and ensure its survival in the face of technical transformations and public demands. Radio consumption, previously centered on the traditional battery-operated radio, now occurs on a variety of digital devices, such as smartphones and computers, which requires broadcasters to be more able to adapt to the new listening dynamics (De Farias; Zuculoto, 2017).

Listening takes place on AM/FM, shortwave and tropical, but also on cell phones, multimedia players, computers, notebooks, tablets; It can take place live (on the dial or via streaming) or on-demand (podcasting or by searching for files in directories). Listening takes place in multiple environments and temporalities, thanks to digital technologies that also allow the production, editing, and broadcasting of audios to social actors previously deprived of access to their own means of communication (Kischinhevsky, 2016).

In this way, the migration to FM not only provides improvements in the technical quality of transmissions, but also allows significant transformations in programming formats and in the identity of broadcasters, which were led to resignify their role in communities and in the market. It is, therefore, a movement that goes beyond the technical dimension and is consolidated as part of the continuous effort to modernize and reinvent radio in Brazil (De Farias; Zuculoto, 2017).

## 2.2 AM AND FM SYSTEMS: TECHNICAL AND EDITORIAL SEGMENTATIONS

To understand the distinctions between AM (Amplitude Modulated) and FM (Frequency Modulated) transmission systems, it is necessary to consider two fundamental axes: the technical and the editorial. Technical segmentation refers to the operational differences between the two spectrums, such as operating frequency, sound quality, territorial range and susceptibility to interference. In general, the AM system has greater geographic coverage, especially in remote areas and during the night period, although it is more susceptible to electromagnetic interference. FM, on the other hand, despite its more limited territorial reach, provides superior sound quality, which has contributed to its consolidation as a favorite of the general public over the last decades (De Farias; Zuculoto, 2017).

AM radio is marked by an intimate language, focused on companionship and proximity to the listener. This characteristic, which defines it as a "friendly radio", goes back to the conception of Edgar Roquette-Pinto, who considered the radio "the free entertainment of the poor; the animator of new hopes; the comforter of the sick and the guide of the healthy" (Tavares, 1997). With regard to programming, AM radio has consolidated itself as a territory for radio journalism and the provision of services to the community. This informative character is highlighted by Cyro César (2000), when he recognizes that the essence of Medium Waves lies precisely in the centrality of information and in the commitment to the listener.

As for AM radio advertising, it is common to use testimonials, with advertisements read live by the communicators themselves, betting on the credibility of these professionals as

consumer influencers. The advertisers, in this case, are generally from local and regional commerce (De Farias; Zuculoto, 2017).

In contrast, FM has historically presented a proposal focused on musical entertainment, inspired by North American radios, adopting a more relaxed language, use of musical vignettes and focus on segmented audiences, especially young people (Ferraretto, 2001 apud De Farias; Zuculoto, 2017). In addition, there is a differentiation in terms of the form of audience segmentation. While AM usually specializes in time slots and listener profiles, FM is structured by market niches — such as pop, sertanejo, adult-contemporary, all news — evidencing a more refined and targeted commercial logic (Ortriwano, 1985 apud De Farias; Zuculoto, 2017).

Production and operating practices are also distinguished. In AM radios, there is usually a group of professionals divided between voiceover, technical operation and production, often in physical spaces separated by acoustic insulation, as in the so-called "aquarium" studios. In FM, especially in music stations, the communicator usually accumulates multiple functions, operating a microphone and automation and editing software autonomously, which results in leaner functional staff (De Farias; Zuculoto, 2017).

For decades, these technical and editorial segmentations established a separation between the two formats: on the one hand, AM, with a focus on journalism and service to the community; on the other, FM, centered on music and entertainment (De Farias; Zuculoto, 2017). However, this scenario has been transforming with the advance of the migration of AM stations to the FM band, promoting a reorganization of content and requiring both technical and editorial adaptations. It is, therefore, a convergence that could redefine the future of Brazilian broadcasting.

### 2.3 THE NATIONAL MIGRATION POLICY FROM AM TO FM

On November 7, 2013, "Radio Broadcaster's Day", Decree No. 8,139 was published, which deals with the extinction of the local medium wave radio broadcasting service and the adaptation of the current grants for the execution of this service. From it and Ordinance No. 127, of March 12, 2014, of the then Ministry of Communications, several radio stations in the country began the process of migrating transmissions from Amplitude Modulated (AM) to Frequency Modulated (FM). The initiative was articulated by entities representing the sector, such as the Brazilian Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters (ABERT), with technical support from state broadcasting associations (ABERT, 2025).



The migration of radio stations from the amplitude modulated (AM) service to the modulated frequency (FM) in Brazil was made official through Decree No. 8,139, of November 7, 2013, which authorized and regulated the process. According to the Brazilian Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters, the measure was conceived as a response to the difficulties faced by medium-wave broadcasters, whose transmissions have become progressively unfeasible due to electromagnetic interference and environmental noise, especially in densely populated urban areas (ABERT, 2023).

The change allowed for a significant improvement in sound quality, greater stability in transmission and reception by mobile devices, such as cell phones, which generated an immediate increase in the audience and revenue of the migrated radio stations (ABERT, 2023). In addition to increasing the competitiveness of the sector, the main objective of the policy was to ensure the sustainability of small broadcasters, whose continuity was threatened. Also according to the Association, the adaptation of the grants for the FM band is a successful case of public policy aimed at preserving and strengthening local broadcasting.

### **2.3.1 History of migration**

The process of transition from the medium wave broadcasting service to modulated frequency formally began in May 2010, with the publication, by the National Telecommunications Agency (Anatel), of a technical study on the feasibility of migration in the state of Santa Catarina. In June 2011, ABERT, together with representatives of state broadcasting associations, expressed unanimous support for the proposal to allocate channels 5 and 6 of analog television for the operation of AM radios throughout the national territory (ABERT, 2023).

The Ministry of Communications, under the management of Paulo Bernardo, announced in 2012, during the 26th Brazilian Congress of Broadcasting, the beginning of technical and regulatory studies to make the migration viable. In September 2013, the proposal was sent to the Civil House for analysis, culminating in the signing, by then-President Dilma Rousseff, of Decree No. 8,139, on November 7, 2013 – the date on which Radio Broadcaster's Day is celebrated (ABERT, 2023).

Subsequently, the regulation was formalized through Ordinance No. 127, of March 12, 2014, also signed by Paulo Bernardo. The first migration permits were granted in August 2014. With the change in ministerial management, the then minister André Figueiredo

prioritized, in 2015, the definition of values for migration, which was consolidated with the issuance of Ordinance No. 6,467, of November 24 of that year (ABERT, 2023).

Subsequently, on May 23, 2017, the Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communications published Ordinance No. 2,771, regulating the return of mediumwave channels to the Union. Finally, on January 25, 2018, Decree No. 9,270/2018, signed by the then president of the Chamber of Deputies, Rodrigo Maia, in the exercise of the Presidency of the Republic, reopened for 180 days the deadline for remaining broadcasters to request their migration to the FM band (ABERT, 2023).

## 2.4 RADIO AS A MEDIA OF PRESENCE AND PROXIMITY

Proximity radio is mostly concentrated in the local territory, aimed at meeting the information demands that involve geographical, social, and psycho-affective dimensions of the community (Lima, 2023). Inserted in the multiplatform era, this model has undergone significant changes in format, language, and content, in an effort to preserve its relevance in the face of constant technological transformations. In turn, Prata (2008) conceptualizes this process as "radiomorphosis", a term that expresses the ability of radio to remain active and meaningful, even in the face of the impacts of the internet and digital technologies, through the adoption of a language adapted to new supports.

Alongside the traditional transmission by radio waves, the so-called "antenna radio" (Lopez, 2010) gradually incorporated resources from the digital environment, making programming available simultaneously on different platforms and devices. If, at the end of the 1990s, the online presence of broadcasters was restricted to the conventional dial and institutional pages, there is currently a strategic movement aimed at multiplatform circulation, with the objective of reaching both digital natives and local audiences that are outside the range of the radio signal, benefiting from transmission via the internet (Lima, 2023).

Despite its longevity and the competition of new technologies, radio remains in contemporary daily life, making its presence felt in homes, workplaces, vehicles and, increasingly, connected to digital ecosystems, whether by providing music, journalistic information or even emotion during sports broadcasts. More than the simple replication of the signal, the appropriation of multiplatform tools and the use of mobile devices expand the possibilities of journalistic production and make the interaction with the audience more dynamic and immediate. In this scenario, the dispute for the attention of an increasingly fragmented audience demands multimedia communication models that go beyond the web

space, strengthening through integration with social networks, applications, and other digital resources, in order to articulate traditional and contemporary practices in radio (Lima, 2023).

As De Farias and Zuculoto (2017) point out, radio sustains a constant symbolic presence, supported by a language marked by orality and affective bonding with listeners. Its nature makes it possible to consume it simultaneously with other activities, without the need for exclusive visual attention. Unlike television or print media, it accompanies the public in a fluid, practical and non-intrusive way, integrating itself into everyday life in a spontaneous way.

The relevance of radio in the contemporary scenario is reinforced by recent research. According to the Inside Audio 2024 study, carried out by Kantar Ibope Media, 79% of the Brazilian population still listens to the radio, with an average of almost four hours a day of consumption of the medium. In addition, 38% of listeners say that online listening has transformed their habits, demonstrating the importance of digital platforms in the repositioning of the vehicle. In the context of Santa Catarina, the survey "Meio Rádio 2024" (ACAERT) points out that eight out of ten Santa Catarina people maintain the habit of listening to the radio regularly, with a daily average of between seven and eight hours of listening per person.

Consumption occurs mainly at home and at work, but it is also significant in the car (40%) and on cell phones (20%), revealing the versatility of the medium in the face of new mobility and connectivity habits. The same survey shows the credibility of radio: 64% of listeners trust the commercials aired, 65% consider the announcers influencers and 63% point out that radio advertisements are more reliable than those broadcast over the internet. The diversification of formats also boosts this presence: music (69%), news (65%), podcasts (33%) and sports broadcasts (40%, in the case of men) are part of a grid that is shaped by the varied interests of the audience. Thus, as can be extracted from the results of the research, radio maintains its role as a media of symbolic and affective proximity, adapting to digital transformations without losing its centrality in the regional daily life.

### **3 SANTA CATARINA BROADCASTING: FROM PIONEERING TO REGIONAL EXPANSION**

The history of broadcasting in Santa Catarina began in 1932, with the foundation of Rádio Clube de Blumenau, considered the first broadcaster in the state and the fourth in the country. Conceived by João Medeiros Júnior, recognized as the patron of Santa Catarina radio, with the support of local businessmen, the station carried out its first broadcasts on

March 19 of that year, initially through loudspeakers, until it won an official license and the prefix PRC-4, granted by the federal government during the Vargas Era (ACAERT, 2022).

Rádio Clube has established itself as a regional reference in information, culture and social integration, being the protagonist of important political, sports and international coverage. Since 2001, it has remained under the administration of the Vieira family, preserving its historical relevance and its link with the community of Vale do Itajaí. The pioneering spirit of this station marks the beginning of a solid trajectory of Santa Catarina broadcasting, which over time has expanded in diversity, reach, and sociocultural influence (Acaert, 2022).

Blumenau's pioneering experience boosted the creation of stations in other regions of the state. In 1938, for example, technician Wolfgang Brosig founded the first radio station in Joinville, which even broadcast, in an improvised way, a speech by President Getúlio Vargas. Initially operating from the attic of his home and with German-language broadcasts, the station began to have continuous programming of six hours a day. It obtained a federal grant in 1940, officially becoming the Rádio Difusora de Joinville, with informative programming and community solidarity campaigns (Medeiros, 1998).

In the capital, Florianópolis, radio arrived in 1942, with the creation of Radio Guarujá, idealized by Ivo Serrão. The name was inspired by Rádio Atlântida, heard from the Santos neighborhood of the same name. With pictures such as "musical offer of listeners", "literary hour" and "time of the Ave Maria", the station quickly conquered the city's audience. In 1946, it was acquired by the then governor Aderbal Ramos da Silva and, in 1949, transferred to the Martinelli Club, starting to have its own auditorium and a strong political presence, especially as an ally of the PSD, during the post-1945 democratic period (Medeiros, 1998).

In the same context, competitors such as Rádio Diário da Manhã, aligned with the UDN, emerged, which began to compete for the audience in the capital with a more journalistic and objective language, anticipating more modern formats in the following decades. From 1954, the Rede Coligadas de Blumenau emerged, one of the milestones of radio expansion in the interior of Santa Catarina. The network brought together six stations, including Rádio Araguaia de Brusque, Clube de Itajaí and Difusora de Blumenau under the coordination of Rádio Clube. Despite the pro-PSD political orientation of the network, commercial interest prevailed, with a focus on the sale of advertisements and the strengthening of local brands (Medeiros, 1998).

Thus, the trajectory of broadcasting in Santa Catarina reveals not only the pioneering spirit of cities such as Blumenau, Joinville and Florianópolis, but also the importance of radio as a means of regional integration, cultural diffusion and strengthening of local identities (Medeiros, 1998). Among the municipalities that express this dynamic, it is possible to mention the city of Brusque, whose insertion in the radio panorama will be explored below, considering its historical, economic and cultural context, as well as the performance of local broadcasters.

### 3.1 RADIO IN BRUSQUE: IDENTITY, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY RELEVANCE

Located in the Itajaí Valley, the municipality of Brusque was officially founded in 1860 as Colônia Itajahy and had its formation marked by German immigration, which left a legacy focused on work, entrepreneurship and associativism (Prefeitura Municipal de Brusque, 2025). Recognized as the cradle of the Santa Catarina textile industry, the city has diversified its economic profile over time, achieving significant indicators of human and industrial development (IBGE, 2025). With an estimated population of 152 thousand inhabitants, it has a high rate of urbanization and good educational and quality of life indexes, sustaining an economy based on the textile, metalworking, clothing, ceramics, plastics and services sectors (IBGE, 2025; Brusque City Hall, 2025).

As discussed in chapter 2.4, proximity radio is characterized by the affective bond with the listener and by meeting the demands of information and service of local interest. In Brusque, this model finds fertile ground due to the strong community identity and the relevance of local media in mediating between different segments of society.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, when Radio Araguaia was founded and later became part of the Blumenau Affiliates Network, the municipality has consolidated its participation in the regional radio scene (Medeiros, 1998; ACAERT, 2022). Currently, Brusque has four commercial stations: Araguaia, Cidade, Diplomata and Massa, each with its own editorial profile and target audience. These radios represent different approaches to the production and dissemination of content, moving between more traditional formats and strategies adapted to digital demands. This study, however, focuses exclusively on the two stations that went through the process of migration from AM to FM, a movement that synthesizes a set of technical, editorial, identity and digital transformations that occurred over time.

By reconstructing the trajectories of these broadcasters and analyzing the impacts of migration on the local media ecosystem, we seek to understand not only the structural and language changes, but also how they position themselves in the face of the demands of a contemporary, multiplatform and fragmented communicational scenario. This analysis also considers the role that such radios play in maintaining affective and cultural bonds with the community, preserving the logic of proximity that characterizes the history of radio in Brazil (Lima, 2023; De Farias; Zuculoto, 2017).

#### 4 METHODOLOGY

The present study is inserted in the historical-communicational perspective and adopts a qualitative approach. According to Soares (2019), this type of research seeks to develop concepts, facts, ideas or opinions, interpreting and understanding the data in an inductive way. It has an exploratory, subjective and spontaneous nature, using methods such as direct observation, interviews, analysis of texts, documents and records of behaviors to better understand the phenomena studied. In addition, it has a descriptive character, because, according to Gil (1999), it aims to present the characteristics of a phenomenon or establish relationships between variables, without intentionally manipulating the factors under analysis. The research is outlined as a case study, which, according to Yin (2015), consists of an investigation method that analyzes in depth a contemporary phenomenon in its real context, recognizing that this analysis involves relevant contextual conditions. This methodological choice is justified by the need to understand the complexity of technical, editorial, identity and digital changes related to band migration in local broadcasting, a phenomenon that goes beyond numbers and requires a contextualized analysis of media practices and their sociocultural meanings.

Considering the defined methodological approach, the object of analysis covers two commercial broadcasters in Brusque-SC: Rádio Araguaia and Rádio Cidade. In the municipality, there are only four commercial radio stations in operation, so the study focuses exclusively on this segment, not contemplating community or educational radios. Among the four commercial stations, only Rádio Araguaia and Rádio Cidade originally broadcast in AM and experienced the transition to FM, which motivated their choice as units of analysis. Both historically represent relevant milestones in local broadcasting and, at the same time, face the challenge of adapting to a multiplatform communication scenario.

With regard to data collection, it was structured in three stages: documentary research, systematic observation and semi-structured interviews. According to Gil (2002), documentary research has relevant advantages because it constitutes a "rich and stable source of data", implying low cost, not requiring direct contact with the research subjects and allowing an in-depth reading of the sources. Although it has similarities with bibliographic research, it is distinguished from it by the nature of the material used, which has not yet received analytical treatment or can be reworked according to the objectives of the investigation. In this study, this stage involved the analysis of institutional records, reports, technical documents and publications related to the historical trajectory and the editorial and technological characteristics of the selected broadcasters. To this end, institutional radio portals, regulations on the migration policy from AM to FM and public databases of bodies and entities in the sector were consulted, such as the National Telecommunications Agency (Anatel), the Brazilian Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters (ABERT) and the Santa Catarina Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters (ACAERT).

Systematic observation, as highlighted by Prodanov and Freitas (2013), is characterized by the intentional and planned monitoring of phenomena, with a careful record of the observed occurrences, based on a previously defined script. In this study, the technique was applied through active listening to the traditional programming of the broadcasters and continuous monitoring of their digital platforms, such as institutional websites and social networks. This strategy made it possible to identify and record practices of editorial adaptation and online presence, as well as to understand how radio stations structure their content and interactions in a multiplatform communication scenario. The records obtained were systematically organized, allowing comparisons between the stations and analysis of trends in their communication strategies.

As for the semi-structured interviews, these were applied to managers of the stations with the purpose of expanding the understanding of the radio stations analyzed. According to Duarte and Barros (2006), this interview format is developed in a flexible way, allowing the interviewer to deepen relevant points identified throughout the conversation, while the interviewee is free to formulate his answers according to his own perspective. The interviews were conducted in March 2021 with the managers of the two selected radio stations, according to the script available in the Appendix, addressing historical, technical, editorial and digital aspects, in order to record perceptions during the transition phase from AM to FM.

The conduction followed previously defined topics, preserving the flexibility to explore emerging issues, and the record was carried out through detailed notes. All participants authorized the use of the information, ensuring anonymity and compliance with the ethical principles of scientific research. It was decided not to conduct new interviews in 2025, considering that the current analyses are based on updated documentary and observational sources, representative of the post-migration scenario. In this context, the 2021 interviews play the role of a comparative basis, allowing the identification of differences and continuities between the transition period and the contemporary configuration of the broadcasters.

## 5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The combination of interviews, documentary analysis and systematic observation enabled a broad and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, allowing us to reconstruct the trajectories of radio stations, analyze the impacts of migration on the local media ecosystem and evaluate the ability of stations to adapt in an increasingly fragmented communication environment, but still marked by the logic of proximity and community bonding. The information obtained by the applied research methods is organized in the following topics.

### 5.1 FOUNDATION AND INSTALLATION OF THE STATIONS

Radio Araguaia was the first radio station founded in Brusque and the seventh to start operating in the state of Santa Catarina. It was inaugurated on September 6, 1946, officially debuting the next day, with the live broadcast of the traditional civic parade of September 7, held on Avenida Cônsul Carlos Renaux, in the city center. Initially operating on AM 970 kHz, it installed its studios in the center of Brusque, in a space provided by one of the founders. The definitive operation was authorized on July 29, 1950, when the station received an official license, since, until then, it was registered with the State Board of Trade.

Rádio Cidade began its transmissions on November 2, 1982, operating on AM 850 kHz. It was the second station to be installed in the municipality of Brusque, after Radio Araguaia. In the initial years, the station faced difficulties, such as the flood of 1984, which damaged its transmitter and left it off the air for months, requiring technical efforts and procedures with the Ministry of Communications to resume operation. Still in the 1980s, he stood out for actively participating in the history of electronic voting in Brazil, covering the electoral count.



At the time of their foundations, the two stations reflected different historical contexts and objectives. Radio Araguaia was born as a pioneer and instrument of social integration, with a focus on local information and cultural preservation. Rádio Cidade, on the other hand, emerged in a consolidated commercial radio environment, prioritizing entertainment formats to win over audiences. These initial differences show how the historical moment influenced the editorial vocation of each station.

## 5.2 INITIAL EDITORIAL LINE AND EVOLUTION

Since its foundation, Radio Araguaia has structured its editorial line based on proximity journalism, privileging the coverage of local and regional facts and the appreciation of traditionalist music. This combination aimed to reinforce cultural identity and strengthen the bond with the community, serving both urban and rural audiences. The program was interspersed with service provision boards, such as community warnings, weather bulletins and guidelines in case of floods. Over the decades, journalism has remained the central core, but has adapted to new languages and platforms, incorporating more dynamic bulletins and interviews mediated by digital channels. The broadcaster highlights the live broadcast of football games, especially from Santa Catarina clubs, with complete coverage of regional championships and amateur tournaments. In the civic field, it has become a constant presence in parades, solemnities and municipal festivities, reinforcing the symbolic link with the local identity.

Rádio Cidade was initially focused on popular entertainment, with musical programs, raffles and interactive attractions, with "Música da Gente" being one of its first frames, which remains on the air to this day. Over time, however, the station underwent administrative changes and, from 1999, under new management, began a process of editorial reorientation, which consolidated its journalistic focus and public utility, maintaining a strong community insertion. The station began to dedicate a good part of its programming to informative programs, interviews and debates, keeping music as a support element, and no longer as a central axis. This change also dialogues with the pioneering spirit in local web journalism, which began in 2007, which expanded the station's relevance as a source of information in real time.

Although they have followed different trajectories, both stations converge to an informational-community model, in which journalistic content and the provision of services take center stage. Radio Araguaia preserves a balance between information, sports and

cultural appreciation, while Radio City intensifies factual coverage and opinionated journalism. In critical situations, such as floods and other extreme weather events that historically affect Brusque and the region, it is noted that both broadcasters fully reorganize their programming, prioritizing public service bulletins, interviews with authorities and security information.

### 5.3 OPERATION IN MAM AND MOTIVATIONS FOR MIGRATION

During the operation in the medium wave band, each station presented technical and editorial specificities that marked its performance for decades. Radio Araguaia broadcast on AM 970 kHz. At this frequency, it enjoyed a good nocturnal signal propagation, which allowed it to reach more distant locations, expanding the regional coverage. However, the frequency was subject to noise, interference and instabilities, problems aggravated in urban areas with high electromagnetic density. Rádio Cidade, on the other hand, operating on AM 850 kHz, stood out for its strong urban and rural coverage, ensuring a presence both in the center of Brusque and in peripheral locations and rural areas of the municipality. At night, however, the signal suffered a loss of quality, affecting the sharpness and stability of the transmissions.

In this sense, for both radio stations, the decision to join the migration process from AM to FM was guided by a set of technical, economic, and symbolic factors identified by managers and informed during the interviews conducted in 2021. Among the technical motivations, the promised substantial improvements in sound quality were mentioned, with significant reduction in noise and interference, as well as greater compatibility with contemporary devices, such as smartphones, digital car radios and portable speakers. This advance aimed to improve the listener's experience and also adapt broadcasters to new media consumption patterns.

Another motivation highlighted by the managers was economic, as the FM transmission provides a cleaner and more attractive sound, an aspect considered more relevant for advertisers. This feature would expand the potential for commercial return and allow the adoption of new advertising formats, such as spots with superior sound quality and insertions integrated with multiple platforms. There was also a relevant symbolic aspect, as the change represented the opportunity to reposition the brand as modern and aligned with technological transformations, without breaking with the historical and community ties built throughout the trajectory in AM.

#### 5.4 CHALLENGES AND INVESTMENTS IN THE TRANSITION

The process of migrating from the AM to FM band implied significant technical, financial and operational challenges for both stations in Brusque, requiring rigorous planning and adaptability to ensure the continuity of transmissions. According to the managers interviewed, the changes involved not only the replacement of equipment, but also a reorganization of the work routines and the physical infrastructure of the radios.

Radio Araguaia invested in the modernization of transmitters, replacing old analog models with digital equipment capable of operating on the new frequency with greater stability and energy efficiency. It was also necessary to update the towers and radiating systems, adapting them to the technical specifications required for FM. In the studios, there was the renovation of sound desks and the implementation of programming automation systems, allowing greater precision in the control of the grids and integration with digital platforms. These investments aimed not only to meet the requirements of the migration, but also to improve the overall performance of the station and offer the listener a more "clean" sound experience.

Rádio Cidade also directed efforts to update transmitters and completely remodel its studios. The project included sound insulation suitable for the FM standard and lighting adapted for video broadcasts, meeting the growing demand for multiplatform content and live broadcasts on Facebook and YouTube. Editing and streaming software was acquired that enabled the integration between radio and video and the production of content for different distribution channels. This strategy represented the company's search for strengthening its digital presence as a competitive differential.

According to the managers, despite the specifics of each project, both radios had to implement digital STL (Studio-Transmitter Link) systems, which guarantee the transmission of audio from the studio to the tower with quality and low latency. The process required rigorous financial planning, since costs were high and needed to be absorbed without compromising the daily operation. Another critical challenge was keeping transmissions on the air during construction, requiring carefully crafted schedules and, in some cases, interim operation with alternate equipment to avoid schedule disruptions.

It was also found that, while Radio Araguaia concentrated efforts on the technical updating of its transmission chain and internal automation, Radio City invested more heavily in the convergence between radio and video, adapting its studios to multiplatform transmissions. In addition, regardless of the broadcaster, what can be seen is that the

investments necessary for the AM-FM migration were not limited to the change of frequency, as they also involve a comprehensive process of technological modernization and strategic repositioning.

## 5.5 MIGRATION MILESTONE

Radio Araguaia migrated to FM 104.5 MHz on September 6, 2022, the date on which it also celebrated its 76 years of operation (Tudoradio, 2022). Originating in the AM 970 kHz frequency, and having occupied, along the way, other channels such as 1580 AM and 590 AM, the station began to operate as a B1 transmission class, reaching several municipalities in the Itajaí Valley, including Gaspar, Itajaí and Navegantes. (Tudoradio, 2022). The change resulted in greater regional coverage and clarity of the audio, strengthening its journalistic and sports coverage and preserving the community bond that marks its history.

After 40 years of operation on medium waves, Rádio Cidade completed the transition to FM on October 3, 2022, starting to transmit on 92.3 MHz. The change allowed it to expand its reach in urban areas, reducing shadow zones and improving reception inside buildings. After the migration, what can be observed when following the station on its dial and through social networks, is that it maintained its traditional audience, strongly linked to local journalism and the provision of services, but also started to reach new listeners attracted by the superior sound quality and the possibility of accessing content via streaming and social networks.

Despite the technical advances, the managers of both radio stations stressed that the improvement of infrastructure, by itself, does not guarantee a lasting impact on the audience. According to them, the reception gains need to be accompanied by editorial innovation and multiplatform integration, in order to maintain the relevance of radio stations in a scenario of high competition with digital media and streaming services. In this way, migration is perceived not as an end point, but as an initial milestone for new strategies to approach the listener.

## 5.6 MODERNIZATION IN FM MIGRATION

At Rádio Araguaia, the renewal of the brand included significant adjustments in the sound identity, with vignettes and calls that were more agile and appropriate to FM tuning. Despite the aesthetic modernization, the station maintained the editorial tripod that characterizes it: local journalism, sports coverage and appreciation of regionalist music. Digital expansion has also intensified, with online transmission and expansion of direct interaction channels with listeners, through messaging applications such as WhatsApp. The

studio was renovated, receiving a new acoustic treatment with specific panels for reverberation control and sound insulation, improving the quality of the transmissions.

Rádio Cidade maintained traditional frames and programs, such as "Música da Gente", but incorporated new, more dynamic formats, such as "Conexão 92" and "Estação 92", aimed at bringing the audience closer through interviews, debates and real-time services. The station intensified the use of video transmissions via Facebook and YouTube, adapting to the logics of media convergence, and modernized visual and sound resources to maintain a contemporary appeal without losing its consolidated identity in proximity journalism.

It was observed that the two stations sought to balance tradition and innovation, preserving community ties, but without losing sight of the technological appeal increasingly evident in contemporary society. This fact is in line with Kischinhevsky's (2016) observation, for whom radio has the ability to reinvent itself without breaking with its historical audience. In addition, in both stations, the editorial and identity reconfiguration was not limited to aesthetic adjustments, but reflected conscious strategies to maintain relevance and competitiveness in the current multiplatform scenario.

## 5.7 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND DIGITAL PRESENCE

Radio Araguaia expanded its digital presence with simultaneous broadcasts via streaming and production of short videos and multimedia content for social networks, especially Facebook and Instagram. In the latter, it publishes visual content that mixes news, institutional campaigns, records of community events and sweepstakes, stimulating engagement and reaching younger audiences accustomed to the agile consumption of information. In addition, it uses messaging apps for direct interaction with the audience, maintaining the proximity built throughout its trajectory.

Rádio Cidade, in turn, significantly expanded its reach by investing in audiovisual broadcasts on Facebook and YouTube, complementing traditional programming. One of its differentials is the news portal, which registers between 1.5 and 2 million monthly views, driven by the coverage of public security agendas, a topic of high interest to local and regional audiences. On Instagram, it maintains frequent updates with news calls, behind-the-scenes programming and interactive content, including sweepstakes that generate great engagement and expand the reach of publications. The station also strengthens its proximity

to the public through WhatsApp, a channel that allows the sending of messages, audios and demands from the community.

The transition to FM coincided with the strengthening of the digital performance of both stations, confirming their adaptation to the logic of media convergence described by Jenkins (2009). Rádio Cidade has consolidated itself as a reference in regional digital journalism, while Rádio Araguaia has diversified formats and integrated its platforms, consolidating itself as a multiplatform agent without losing ties with its traditional audience. This movement confirms trends pointed out by Lopez (2010) and Kischinhevsky (2016), according to which local radio reinforces its social function by adapting to the demand for content of immediate interest, investing in participatory formats and constant interaction with the audience, enhanced by social networks and messaging applications.

## 5.8 STRATEGIC LESSONS FROM THE MIGRATION FROM AM TO FM IN BRUSQUE

From the experience of migrating from AM to FM in Brusque's stations, it is possible to extract a set of relevant lessons for other radio stations that may face similar processes. In this sense, it was realized that the previous definition of a budget and the search for financing alternatives were fundamental to enable the necessary investments in equipment, infrastructure and technical adjustments. The elaboration of a realistic schedule, in turn, with the proper forecast of contingencies, minimized risks and avoided the interruption of transmissions. The adoption of improvements in stages, such as the updating of transmitters, soundboards, radiant systems and automation software, made it possible to adapt to technology without compromising daily operation. This gradual process also allowed teams to become familiar with the new features. Both broadcasters understood that migration should not break with the identity built over decades. The maintenance of traditional programs, well-known voices and the coverage of local agendas ensured the continuity of the relationship of trust with the audience.

The active presence on social networks, the offer of online broadcasts and the adoption of audiovisual formats have consolidated the role of radio stations as multiplatform agents. The use of channels such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp has become essential to dialogue with different audience profiles and expand the scope of programming. Informing the audience about each stage of the migration, explaining the technical benefits and providing guidance on the new tuning were decisive strategies to avoid losing listeners. This direct communication, reinforced by campaigns on the radios

themselves and on social networks, also generated engagement and a sense of belonging. These lessons indicate that the success of migration is not limited to the change in frequency, but depends on a set of strategic decisions that reconcile planning, modernization, identity preservation and integration with the new logics of media consumption.

## 6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The choice of the year 2021 as the analytical starting point of this research allowed us to record the moment when radio stations Araguaia and Cidade were preparing to operate in the new band. Between 2021 and 2023, a decisive phase of transition and reinvention was consolidated, in which both broadcasters began to adopt similar technical standards, especially in terms of audio quality, transmission infrastructure, and use of digital resources, accompanied by more aligned communication strategies, reflecting the standardization brought about by the new operating model.

The transition from the AM to FM band revealed a broader process of technical, editorial and strategic reconfiguration in regional broadcasting. Along the way, the gradual incorporation of convergence resources, such as audiovisual transmissions, active presence on social networks, on-demand content production, and the use of mobile applications, has shown that local radio not only resists digital transformations, but also finds in them opportunities for expansion, visibility, and reinvention of its language. Even in the face of challenges such as audience loyalty and financial sustainability, broadcasters have demonstrated the capacity for innovation and symbolic repositioning in the contemporary media environment. In 2025, after observing the entire migration process and the main transformations of recent years, radio's ability to continuously adapt to new technologies is reaffirmed. The two stations modernized their operating models while preserving tradition, so that, even with the technical changes resulting from the migration from AM to FM, they maintained their institutional identity and the historical link with the community.

More than reporting the change of band, this study sought to understand how the radio in Brusque has been resignifying its social function in a context marked by the multiplicity of listening channels and the logic of media convergence. The results indicate that the transition from AM to FM did not constitute a rupture, but rather a strategic and continuous movement of modernization. The broadcasters reaffirmed their role as mediators of proximity, belonging and regional identity, attributes that remain central to the relevance of radio in local contexts.

As a result for future research, it is proposed to investigate the effects of migration from the perspective of the audience: how have traditional AM listeners reacted to the change and how has the usual FM audience perceived the migrated stations? This approach can deepen the understanding of the dynamics of reception and listening practices in the face of recent transformations in Brazilian radio.

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## **APPENDIX - INTERVIEW SCRIPT CONDUCTED IN 2021 WITH MANAGERS OF THE SURVEYED BROADCASTERS**

### **CONTEXTUALIZATION**

This script was used to carry out semi-structured interviews, of an exploratory nature, conducted in 2021, with managers of radio stations Araguaia and Cidade. The questions were elaborated with the objective of understanding historical, technical, editorial and digital aspects of the stations, as well as the perceptions about the migration process from Amplitude Modulation (AM) to Frequency Modulation (FM). The answers obtained contributed to the qualitative analysis of the study, complementing the information from documentary and observational research.

#### **1. Trajectory and historical context**

- 1.1 How was the process of founding the radio and what were the main milestones throughout its history?
- 1.2 What cultural and community elements were decisive in consolidating the station's identity over the decades?

#### **2. Editorial line and evolution**

- 2.1 What was the station's editorial line like in the first years of operation?
- 2.2 What factors have motivated changes in programming and editorial content over time?
- 2.3 How does radio balance tradition and innovation in its schedule?

#### **3. Community role**

- 3.1 How does the station get involved with civic, sporting and community events?
- 3.2 How does the station act in times of crisis, such as floods or other disasters?

#### **4. Operation in AM and migration to FM**

- 4.1 What factors weighed most in the decision to migrate to FM?
- 4.2 How was the process of technical adaptation to the new frequency?