

Partisanship and journalistic fictions: the press in the 2010 Presidential election

Jakson Ferreira de Alencar

Abstract

The paper describes and analyzes Folha de S. Paulo newspaper coverage, in association with other Brazilian media, in the 2010 presidential election. Although it declares itself as neutral, objective and pluralist, the newspaper made a clear, even if not taken, option party in the elections against the candidate Dilma Rousseff and in favor of the candidate José Serra. This appears at the journalistic coverage and in the underlying editorial lines. The methodology combines a literature review and a field research, basing, mainly, on the theory about facts narration of Muniz Sodré (2009).

Key words

Press. 2010 elections. Partisanship. Folha de S. Paulo. Narration of facts.

1 Introduction

Despite the press discourse on impartiality, objectivity and plurality, particularly by the newspaper discussed here as representative of the way conventional media acted toward the 2010 presidential election, criticism of the journalistic coverage of Brazil's most recent presidential election were constant. *Folha de S. Paulo* stated that this criticism would disrespect freedom of press or would just be partisan manifestations. Nevertheless, not only politicians questioned it, but also a number of sectors of the society who are interested in consolidating democracy, its institutions, and in qualifying the press. *Folha*, as we shall see, had made a definite partisan choice and acted on behalf of one candidate, resorting to methods that, quite often, while praising ethical principles and their own *Style Guide*, simply disregarded both. Press partisan option was not limited to this one newspaper: it was almost unanimous in the traditional press of the country, with a few exceptions, which very much undermined the quality of journalistic information. A strong partisan trend in a

Jakson Ferreira de Alencar

jfalencar@yahoo.com.br

PhD student in Communication and Semiotics at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP).

significant part of the country's press made news cease to be information and become expressions of wishful thinking, on the brink of fiction.

Among organs of the media criticized for their performance during the campaign the following stood out: a *Globo* TV network, *Veja* weekly magazine and newspapers such as *Folha de S. Paulo*, *O Globo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo*. A feedback, or “chorus” effect, was even noticed among these organs, whose political content responded to one another. In this article, as a methodological option, we discuss only the written press, out of which the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*, as it is the newspaper with the largest circulation. According to Beatriz KUSHNIR's book, *Cães de guarda (Watchdogs)* (2004), which discusses *Folha de São Paulo*'s performance under the military dictatorship, this newspaper may be defined as a “privileged *locus*” for studying the performance of the press during that period of time. Based on what our research found out about this newspaper during the 2010 campaign, it may also be defined as the privileged *locus* for understanding the *modus operandi* of the traditional press in the 2010 election. Owing to space constraints, this article focuses on the period of the electoral campaign which runs from April 3 (six months before the election) until August 25.

2 Objectivity, narration, facts and factoids in journalism

According to the “positive spirit” of modern age, which still influences humankind and its ideas about

cognition, a fact is a sensorial experience of reality; to each fact should correspond a possible datum, a sensation, and so empirical intuition becomes the source of all knowledge. Only the empirically observable is valid. The world of facts is linked to the “state of affairs” and enunciations should have a transparent correspondence with this empirically provable state of affairs, identically valid for all subjects (SODRÉ, 2009, p. 28-31). For common sense, the meaning of the word fact encompasses occurrences and actions in general, thus including what is known about cases from observation and experience, rather than from inference.

Journalism embodies this positivistic spirit and common sense about facts, cultivating the “myth of neutrality”, idea according to which the press, in its “objectiveness”, works like a kind of mirror of reality. In the scientific world, after the critique of positivism, we know that today, despite all rigor, is not possible to achieve full objectiveness. Critique by philosophy and science's theories concluded it is impossible for facts to ensure sufficient rigor to knowledge. Based on this, a witty saying maintains that “journalists would be the last positivists on Earth”. We know, however, that news composition is based on fact construction strategies. Facts can not only be transformed by narrator's subjectivity, but may also often contain elements of fiction or be no more than factoids created for a number of different reasons.

In Sodré's (2009) conception, even though literary fiction is a separate entity, journalistic construction is close to it and produces effects

(on a different scale) that are similar to those that are literarily produced. Based on discursive rules and conventions, habits and social practices, journalistic narration also builds a narrative scheme that transforms factuality of life, involving plot or intrigue (SODRÉ, 2009, p. 27). Such a construction of journalistic narrative is permeated by representations of vicissitudes of social life and conflicts around hegemony of representations. The journalistic narration plot strives to confer spatial and temporal consistency to certain factual manifestations -which amounts to imitating reality-, but using aspects of reality to produce a discourse that is similar or homologous to it (SODRÉ, 2009, p. 37). In Brazilian history, there are several emblematic examples of the creation of journalistic narratives.

We will see a number of instances concerning the 2010 elections.

3 The press takes sides

A forum convened on March 1, 2010 by an institute associated with most of the main media organs in the country and bringing together representatives from these organs dismissed possible doubts about these press sectors' political stance in that year elections. This is the 1st Democracy and Freedom of Expression Forum, which had an impact on the orientation of the journalistic coverage by most of the press thereafter. This Forum was convened by an NGO associated with the main traditional media organs in the country,

the Millennium Institute, which, according to its website, has no political affiliation and promotes democracy, individual freedom, private property and market economy. (INSTITUTO MILLENIUM, 2010) This event worked as a kind of counterpoint to the 1st National Communication Conference, convened by the federal government in December, 2009 to discuss social communications with representatives from society, social movements, politicians and media entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, these last refused to participate in the Conference, arguing that the government aimed at impairing freedom of press. Among Millennium Institute counselors who attended the Millennium Institute forum were Roberto Civita (Abril publishing house), Otávio Frias Filho (*Folha of São Paulo* newspaper) and Roberto Irineu Marinho (*Globo* Network), as well a number of the main journalists working with these organs. This event was supported by entities such as the Brazilian Association of Radio and Television Stations (Abert - Associação Brasileira de Emissoras de Rádio e Televisão), National Association of Magazine Publishers (Aner - Associação Nacional de Editores de Revista), National Newspaper Association (ANJ - Associação Nacional de Jornais) and the Brazilian Association of Advertisement Agencies (Abap - Associação Brasileira de Agências de Publicidade).

Reporter Bia Barbosa covered the event and wrote a story for the *Carta Maior* Press Agency. According to her, the original explanation was provided by sociologist Demétrio Magnoli, who

said that PT is an apparatus controlled by trade-unionists and Castrists, that it has responded to its grassroots by resuming and restoring a political program stemming from old communist parties. Another speaker, Denis Rosenfield, stressed arguments against alleged threats the PT would represent: Stalinism and attack against freedom of press and of expression (BARBOSA, 2010). Debaters also addressed what they saw as a risk: Dilma Rousseff's election, which is clearly stated in this speech by Arnaldo Jabor (apud BARBOSA, 2010), Globo network commentator, among others:

What is in the head of those who might definitively access power in the country is a state patrimonialism. Lula, with his conciliatory disposition, had the true merit of keeping Bolsheviks and Jacobins away from power. But I know communists minds, I was a CP member, and it won't change, it's made of stone. The danger is that the mind of this new state patrimonialism thinks that society is not trustworthy. They feel really superior to us, they feel like they own a correct line and are entitled to rule and correct society according to their ideological rights. My concern is that if next President is Dilma, there will be an infinite infiltration of ants in this country. Those who will rule will be Zé Dirceu and Vaccarezza. The question is how to politically stop this old left thought that should no longer exist in this world.

While the Millennium Institute stresses on its website that it has no political associations, debates during the Forum revealed radical partisanship, as we can see in the above Jabor quote and in the following one, from Demétrio Magnoli (apud BARBOSA, 2010): "If Serra would win, we would party celebrating freedom. It would

be bad for smokers, but it would change a lot in terms of freedom of expression. But Rousseff is expected to win." Jabor proposes that the press should take an aggressive stance during the campaign in order to avoid the alleged "risks": "So, the greatest danger haunting us is for us to remain abstract while the others are objective and stubborn, drilling through our resistance. The class, group and people associated with the press must take an offensive, not defensive stance." (BARBOSA, 2010). Reinaldo Azevedo (apud BARBOSA, 2010), columnist for *Veja* magazine, complemented: "When the press makes its mind and starts to uphold values pertaining to democracy, market economy and individualism, and shows it will not encourage those who wish to undermine these values, we will start to change a certain culture."

A statement by ANJ president and *Folha* superintendent to the newspaper *O Globo*, made even before the forum, left no doubt about the partisan coverage by the mainstream press:

Freedom of press is a major good that should not be subjected to any limits. The counterpoint to this general right is always the issue of media responsibility. And the media is clearly accounting for opposition in this country, as the opposition is deeply fragile (AZENHA, 2010).

This statement was made in the context of criticism by the press against the Third Human Rights National Plan which, from their point of view, posed a threat to freedom of press. Coincidence or not, after the forum news

tone and intensity were enhanced against the government and its presidential candidate, as we will see below, with slight differences between the main organs having attended that meeting.

While most of the press organs that were represented in the forum expressed their political views, virtually none published editorials informing their readers about their own option for one or another candidate. While the impartiality discourse was upheld, agendas and information were thoroughly contaminated by partisan options.

4 Overview of *Folha de São Paulo*'s coverage between April and late August, 2010

During this period, *Folha* raised a series of topics that were detrimental to Rousseff's campaign, federal government and the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores - PT), and beneficial ones for Serra's –sometimes, texts sound like press releases from his campaign, as we will see below–, mixed with a small number of other topics that were slightly negative for Serra, but that were less important or were given less space or visibility, and hardly any positive ones for Rousseff; these latter were always accompanied by a negative bias or counterpoint.

4.1 Efforts to “resuscitate” past scandals

One of *Folha*'s strategies –which, as we will see, matches PSDB members' discourse in that time– was to evoke scandals that the press and the opposition named “mensalão” (“monthly payments”) and “aloprados” (“crazy ones”).¹ In April 4, the newspaper published a story under the headline *In Rousseff's campaign there is no room for grassroots PT* (p. A10). In the story, the newspaper states that, in Rousseff's campaign staff there are no PT founding members, from back in the 80's, as these would have been done away with by government corruption scandals. Side by side, and taking the same space, which suggests impartiality, another story: *Serra calls upon the same group that helped him four years ago*, i.e., it is implied that Serra can call upon this old timers, as nobody in the PSDB would have been done away with by scandals. Nevertheless, “four years ago” is not the same as “30 years ago” (1980). While seeming to be equivalent, these two stories are not, as no Serra's comrades from more than four years ago are mentioned. For instance, no PSDB members involved in scandals that occurred during Fernando Henrique Cardoso's administration are mentioned.

The day after, the “aloprados” from the 2006 election were given the same treatment: *Judge*

¹ This was the scandal around the alleged dossier against toucans during the 2006 Presidential campaign, which, publicized 15 days before its first round, became the virtually sole topic discussed by the large-circulation media on the period preceding the poll. This case was discussed in Florentina Souza's PhD thesis (2007). The author shows how this case and the massive way the media worked on it were relevant in taking that election to a second round.

says that an “aloprado” took a bagful of money (p. A4). The inquiry into this case is still ongoing, but it had been forgotten after the ballot was counted in 2006, which is a sign that the only reason for being interested in this case was influencing the election, and trying to recall it on the eve of the new election points to the same target. In April 6, this topic once again made the most important areas of the newspaper: *Let resuscitate the aloprados*, says ‘toucan’ (PSDB’s symbol) senator (p. A6). This was a quote from the National PSDB President, then-senator Sérgio Guerra that made the headlines of the *Folha*. This story sounds like a Serra’s committee press release. New topics were coming up or being created, but “mensalão” and “aloprados” were always mentioned, either in interviews, infographics or timelines.

Newspaper content and Serra’s comrades discourse are one. In the Sunday, June 6, edition, two pages are devoted to a “mensalão” recollection, which included an infographic that recalls, in six bullets, the main facts of the case under the headline *MENSALÃO – highlights of the main corruption scandal in Lula’s administration* (p. A4). At page A8 of the same edition, the headline in large fonts, different from regular headlines in the same newspaper, states: *Where they have been*. This headline is placed in the middle of a circle also featuring large photos of those involved in the case, from which arrows point to their names, bios and charges during the scandal. In August 25, the headline of a story advertised the content of José Serra’s TV show: *During his*

TV appearance, Serra links Rousseff to mensalão and to Dirceu (p. A 11); the subtitle complemented: “Look who is trying to come back’, says the TV announcer showing a picture of former minister Dirceu next to the PT Presidential candidate.”

4.2 “Divisions” versus “unions”

At the same time it went back to the previous election scandal agenda, *Folha* focused on another topic that was not new either, but that was being recalled: PT would be a divided party and it would cause divisions; there would be dissent among the governing coalition, which would split. The main headline on Sunday, April 11, was the following: *Serra criticizes the PT for dividing the country and upholds dialogue – PSDB’s pre-candidate disapproves of the ‘hatred bunch’ and the false dispute between North and South, poor and rich*. Very often, this is how Serra and his allies statements’ make *Folha’s* headlines during the campaign. Below this headline and the cover catch line, a photo of an open-armed Serra making a speech, and the caption: “TOUCANS IN FLIGHT – José Serra at PSDB Presidential pre-candidate launch; in an exclusive interview, former governor advocates industrial development and ‘state activism’”. Inside its first section, another headline in the same tone: “Serra accuses PT of dividing the country and backing impunity”. In the text, the candidate calls opponents the “hatred bunch”. A smaller story, below, praises what, for the newspaper, was the successful

launch of PSDB's pre-candidate: "Heat, crowd, muses and technology are hallmarks of the event". The text of the story says that the audience at the launch was the double of what was expected. Still in the same edition: "Aécio states he will be 'side by side' with Serra"; and one "analysis": "*Toucans* start united". The newspaper praised the alleged *toucan* "union", although the country has witnessed a fierce dispute between Aécio and Serra over who would be the PSDB presidential candidate.

According to the newspaper, the PT was always divided and causing division, although this party was showing more internal cohesion around Rousseff than the PSDB around Serra. In contrast, headlines and stories about "divisions", "splits" and "disagreements" within Rousseff's team and among her allies were often published, always looking for any elements that would be hooks tell stories about these topics, either concerning presidential or state governor candidates. In April 3: *Rousseff's team disagree on pre-campaign schedule* (p. A8); in April 15: *Rousseff discusses regional problems with governing coalition* (p. A9); in April 23: *Due to problems between PT and PDT in Paraná state, Rousseff cancels trip* (p. A7); in May 15: *Crisis with Jader upsets PT allies in Pará state* (p. A9); in May 2: *A split PT votes in primaries for Minas Gerais state government elections* (p. A9); in May 16: *PT and PMDB wage judicial war in Bahia state* (p. A10). These are only a few examples of how disagreements between PT and its allies are highlighted.

Difficulties of this same kind among *toucans* – as it became known later on, mainly through other channels, such as particularly the blogosphere – had major proportions in different Brazilian states, but this was not often seen in the pages of this newspaper and similar press organs. Just to mention one example: in Paraná state there was a division between Beto Richa and his group, on one side, and Álvaro Dias' on the other. Richa was chosen as the candidate and Dias did not support him, having rather supported his opponent, Osmar Dias, who was allied with the PT.

The greater division concerned the choice of José Serra's vice President, as many of those who were nominated would not accept this role. This process knew many comings and goings. And the candidate ended up choosing a vice President from his own party, Álvaro Dias. This announcement was highlighted by the whole media. On the following days -despite DEM party protest, demanding to choose the vice President as a condition to entering a coalition with the PSDB- there was a replacement and the DEM member Índio da Costa was chosen. *Folha* would hide facts, publish optimistic stories that would play down the significance of these difficulties. For example, in October the 29th the newspaper would again use a Serra's sentence as its headline: *Vice President crisis will be resolved, states Serra*, with this subtitle: "'Don't worry', says *toucan* to a journalist after reiterating that 'a few difficulties' are to be expected in politics" (p. A4). There is an obvious difference in the treatment of this

kind of problems in stories about PT and PSDB candidates. *Toucans* were allegedly united when their campaign started, and the other side was allegedly divided, as published in this newspaper: this was full of journalistic fiction elements.

4.3 “Misses” versus “hits”

During the first months of the pre-campaign, up to the conventions, which took place in June, Rousseff had gone up in the polls and was closer to Serra’s figures. Besides the above mentioned topics, the newspaper took as a leitmotif during this period what it called Rousseff’s “mistakes” in the campaign, her alleged difficulties, according to the newspaper, in adopting a candidate posture, in being charming, in engaging in one to one contact with voters, her lack of charisma, which, according to *Folha*, would certainly hinder her campaign. Serra, on the contrary, was shown as a good manager and the leader of a successful campaign. In April 8, a story would state that *Rousseff still strives to act as a candidate and face one to one contact with voters* (p. A4). Nevertheless, the photo was in contrast with this information: the candidate is smiling, surrounded by people whom she was greeting.

In April 26, a cover catch line about Rousseff’s participation in a TV interview states that *Lula calls Dilma and complains about her performance on TV* (p. A4). Inside the first section, another headline says “pre-candidate’s advisors think that, in this phase of the campaign, José Serra is doing better and showing his experience”. The text in the

story states: “in the words of an ally of the minister [Rousseff] who would not be identified by name, ‘Serra’s experience in campaigns is making the difference, he is conveying the impression that he is more experienced by speaking calmly, by conducting a more govern-like campaign than Dilma”. The following excerpt summarizes a good part of what this newspaper and most of the press was saying about Rousseff during this period: “On the other hand, the PT candidate is being worn out, has been in a higher number of arguments, has insisted too much on a comparison between Cardoso’s and Lula’s administrations and left her proposals, which might attract voters, in the background”.

Sources that were quote as having informed the content of the alleged private conversation between the then-President and his candidate were general “advisors” and “allies that would not be identified”, no names are cited. It is odd and not really reliable to disseminate relevant information about private conversations between such important figures during a campaign but not reveal its source. It is even odder for an advisor that would be so close to a President and his candidate to issue -to the press that is hostile to her- statements that sound rather like a press release from her opponents. Some fragments seem very different from what a campaign advisor would say, and the structure of the sentence sounds quite strained, fitting perfectly with the newspaper’s editorial line and all it says about the candidate. Other fragments of the same story (April 26th, p. A4), such as the one about

Rousseff's difficulties, sound like an article or editorial, not like an informational story; for example when it says that Serra is making the difference, thus conveying the impression that he is more experienced, which is a subjective impression, not based on a concrete set of data. One of the characteristics of the political section of this newspaper during the campaign was this excessive use of alleged off the record statements.

The topic of Rousseff's alleged "misses" is recurrent. In June 13, the newspaper published a whole page about Rousseff, but the largest part of the page was taken by a caricature showing the candidate using a hairdryer (p. A6). Below, pictures of the candidate with the different hairdos she wore when her hair started to grow back after chemotherapy. Those images, not coincidentally, are allusions to what the opposition, supported by a number of sectors of the press by that time, was saying about Dilma Rousseff: the candidate would have many faces. The headline, in very large fonts: *Dilma Rousseff (PT) TO DEBATE OR NOT TO DEBATE*, with this last part in much larger fonts, suggesting an alleged indecision of the then-minister about participating in debates or not participating. One of the theses upheld by *toucans* and their supporters during this period, which include most of the mainstream press, was that, during the debates, Serra would do better and gain advantage over Rousseff in the polls as, according to these sectors, he was better prepared for debates.

The discussion of this topic –her alleged lack of preparation and experience- lingered up to the end of the campaign, as well as the one over an alleged past that, according to a story published in August 10, Dilma would like to forget: *Filmmaker says that Rousseff tries to hide her past* (p. A7). The filmmaker who made it to an important page in the first section of the newspaper by accusing Rousseff of having participated in the armed resistance against the military dictatorship was Fernando Meirelles, who was active in Marina Silva's campaign. One of the more controversial fragments in his statement was published in a box (highlight), in bold and larger fonts: "I don't know whether there is a biography of Dilma [Rousseff], but her guerrilla past, which 90% of the population is not aware of, would not be convenient for her. She would omit a part of her biography". The hook in this story is the launch of a biography of Marina Silva. In another fragment, between inverted commas, Meirelles adds: "Maybe she would rather keep quiet. Not publishing a biography, not entering debates. The less exposure, the better". The story gives no space to someone that would offer a counterpoint; there is no "other side". And the only "film-maker" that had this kind of space in the newspaper was someone who had a specific opinion about the guerrilla, aligned with the newspaper position concerning the topic treated in a number of stories during that period. No opinions of other "film-makers" that would think differently.

The "lack of experience" and "lack of preparation for debates" topic started to cool down after the first debate on Band TV network on August 5,

in which candidates' performance, according to their own advisors, was balanced, which was confirmed by press organs from different political horizons (MACHADO, 2011). Nevertheless, the newspaper kept on backing the thesis that the PSDB candidate would be more experienced than his opponent. In August 7, the story *Serra will further insist on comparing his and Rousseff's background* explored what, according to the former and the newspaper, would be José Serra's much better background.

The same day, the newspaper publishes a two-page interview with José Serra in which its support to this candidate is made clear. Headline and subtitles set the tone of the interview: *The worst thing that can happen is for a person to look like someone he/she is not; I only have one face – Toucan says he has a 'popular content', but he admits not being born in a humble cradle; he is a candidate for the second time, he says he is now more prepared to rule the country* (p. A14-A15). In addition to featuring a photo that takes two-thirds of one of the pages and shows a smiling José Serra, as well as others from different moments of the candidate's life, the same way it is done on his TV electoral propaganda, questions he is asked are benevolent and no thorny questions are asked, not even about problems in São Paulo

state administration, such as the case Alstom,² for example. These usually are questions that would help the candidate state his views. Let's quote a few examples: "You were the President of UNE [National Student Union / União Nacional dos Estudantes] in 1964, when the military coup d'état was executed, and you were exiled, but *you did not engage in armed struggle* [italics added]. Why is it?";³ "Would you say you are a developmentalist?"; "In your campaign, you will advocate the active State. What does this means?"

4.4 Journalistic stories sound like campaign press releases

Many stories published during this period also sound like press releases from São Paulo state administration or José Serra's campaign. In May 25, one cover catch line, with a picture that took two thirds of the upper half of the cover, bears the headline *Subway of the future*. The catch line and the text in the story (p. C3) treat the São Paulo state administration works and plans for concluding the construction of the subway before 2014 as facts. In this case, campaign promises, and in many others we don't cite here, become news as if they were facts. The tone is of praise: "São Paulo state administration plans on extending the subway network up to 520

² Accusations of bribes in state administration contracts passed with Alstom, a transnational company, for the procurement of subway trains.

³ Armed struggle and Rousseff's alleged participation in it was Folha's obsession during the campaign; months before it, in April 5, 2009, the newspaper published a false file establishing a connection between the candidate and the armed struggle and a number of "crimes" not committed by her, but that were on that file, that was highlighted on the cover and took three pages of the newspaper' first section.

km - 59% longer than the current 327 km- before 2014, year of the World Soccer Cup. The already signed contracts add up to R\$ 23 billion”. After the inauguration of Geraldo Alckmin as the São Paulo state governor in 2010, his team announced: the pace of work and the state budget would only allow us to complete one subway line (the *yellow line*) before 2014, all the other projects would be postponed to an indefinite future.

On the other hand, federal government works and plans were treated quite differently. In April 8, the story *Serra analyzes data from PAC [Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento – Growth Acceleration Program] for his speech as pre-candidate* (A7) addresses “bottle-necks” and “problems” the *toucan* pointed out in the program. This federal government program was often on the news: delays in works, environmental problems, suspicion of embezzlement, even suspicion of not existing altogether. Little is known through this newspaper about works that were being completed and their possible benefits for the population. The journalistic coverage of Serra’s administration is quite different. In the summary, in bold font, at the beginning of the story, the newspaper states that “former governor wishes to showcase ‘lines of action’ and praise results achieved by his administration in order to stress his investment capacity”.

4.5 In search of new scandals

The dossier against the *toucans* which, later on, will be often discussed by this newspaper and most

of the press between August 26 and September 11, was already addressed by *Folha* in June. On June 4, the cover headline stated: *PT cites Serra*, and the subtitle: “party wants *toucan* to confirm his statement blaming Rousseff for the dossier; for the PSDB, ‘they wish to present the victim as the defendant’” (p. A4). *Toucans* bring up the dossier, accusing the PT, but say they are the victims of what they disseminated themselves, although they are not able to say what the content of the alleged dossier is. In June 12, the cover headline states, in large fonts: “PT dossier contains secret tax information about *toucan* leader –Rousseff’s pre-campaign team investigated Eduardo Jorge; PT president denies party involvement” (p. A4). There were no evidences that the dossier had been prepared by the PT. Federal Police investigations found out that the dossier was put together in a different way, and that sale of Ministry of Finance data (tax return data) by civil servants was not associated with political parties. Open access was given to bank data of people from different parties, including PT. The following day, June 13, a cover catch line states that, according to *toucans*, the PT had committed a crime by putting together the dossier:

It is visible that everything *Folha* can find out that could be negative for the PT candidate, even irrelevant topics, would get page space. Figures Rousseff mentions, for example, are always checked and, whenever there is a slight gap, criticism or denial would be published, even resorting to the very expedient they accused the candidate of: tampering with figures. The

other candidates, particularly José Serra and his administration, were not targeted by such a critical monitoring by the newspaper.

The newspaper succeeds in turning even Rousseff's visits to religious temples into negative news. In a story published in May 15: *Afro-Brazilian religion priestess blesses Roman Catholic Rousseff*, with this subtitle: "PT Presidential candidate attends Mass in the morning and Afro-Brazilian *Oxalá* ceremony in the evening" (p. A6). According to the newspaper, being a Roman Catholic, she should only visit Roman Catholic places of worship. A fragment in bold font, below the subtitle, already mentioned the abortion issue, which later on would become a strong motto: "Asked about abortion, Presidential pre-candidate says that 'no woman favors abortion', but that the state has to enforce the law". But the newspaper had no doubt about José Serra's religious orthodoxy: *Father Marcelo asks prayers for Serra* (June 4, 2010, p. A7). It should be taken for granted that, in state that is supposed to be secular, candidates to public office should not prove their religious allegiance, as these stories suggest.

Negative news about the federal government and its candidate were disseminated through numerous other cover headlines and stories, of which we provide a list below. On Sunday, May 2, the cover headline stressed that *Federal Police sees billionaire fraud in Petrobrás*; the subtitle stated that "contractor illegal fees increased cost

by R\$1.4 bi; Petrobrás and contractor deny it". According to a catch line and the story that takes the whole A4 page, "At least 5 Petrobrás works bidden during Lula's administration included contractor secret agreements and machination that, according to the Federal Police, entailed additional costs".

On the following page, A5, there is a full-page advertisement and only on the page after it, A6, under a column on a different topic, does the newspaper publish the "other side" text about the Petrobrás story: "State-owned Company denies works overpricing". Petrobrás informed that the difference in the amount is due to discrepancies between technical parameters used by the Federal Court of Audits and the Federal Police (FP), on one hand, and those used by the company's engineers. According to Petrobrás, the Federal Court of Audits and the FP based their accounting on Sinapi (Sistema Nacional de Pesquisa de Custos e Índices da Construção Civil - the national Brazilian system for surveying construction costs and indexes), which is used for sanitation and housing works, as well as on Sicro (Sistema de Custos Rodoviários – Road Construction Cost System), used by DNIT (Departamento Nacional de Infraestrutura de Transportes – National Department of Transportation Infrastructure) for road construction. Petrobrás "believes that these criteria are not applicable to works such as oil refinery construction, which is more complex and has its own specificities". Here the newspaper also informs that one of the works mentioned in the

previous story, the Caraguatatuba Gas Processing Plant, had already been reevaluated by the Federal Court of Audits, which concluded there was no overpricing. The “other side” was concealed, in contrast with the cover headline and story, which branded the government and the company as corrupted. On the other hand, suspicions, with strong signs, against Serra or his allies in São Paulo both state and municipal government were not informed to the population by newspapers and magazines having wide circulation and big audience TV news. Only alternative channels, such as the blogosphere, and smaller circulation magazines, such as *Carta Capital*, reported and made journalistic investigations about these topics.

5 Conclusion

Partisanship on the part of an organ of the press is not unlawful *per se*; however, it is honest toward readers and the general population to disclose this option in editorials, as it is done in many countries. In Brazil, this is usually done only by the *Carta Capital* magazine at the beginning of the campaigns. In such situations, while pledging support for a candidate, it seeks to restrict it to editorials and opinion texts, separating partisan choices and information, though, as we have seen, the whole narration of facts involves subjectivities and there is wide range of forces at stake when producing news. In the case of *Folha* and its role in the 2010 election, there was no disclosure of party preference, which the newspaper sought to camouflage, and, what is more problematic,

there was no separation between support for party and information. The newspaper, in various occasions, expressed not only his partisanship, but a militant partisanship that seemed mindless of the credibility of the newspaper. The *Folha* coverage, in chorus with many other organs of the press, echoing these latter or being echoed by them, often mixed facts with opinions and rumors, as well as with rooting; wishful thinking disguised as information; flimsy arguments and little logic; strategies that were obvious and already worn out by repetitive use in several elections; basic inability to analyze economic and social processes in order to build stances and criticism with a minimum of sophistication; incongruous theses and hypotheses; biased narratives and interviews; poor credibility sources and off the record statements. Many strategies and narratives were at the same level as the 60's-80's anti-communism, and took the role of a crusade against the “dangers” that would haunt this sphere.

References

- AZEVEDO, Antônio. Mídia e democracia no Brasil: relações entre o sistema de mídia e o sistema político. **Opinião Pública**. Campinas, ano 12, n. 1, p. 88-113, abr/maio 2006.
- BARBOSA, Bia. **Grande mídia organiza campanha contra candidatura de Dilma**. *Carta Maior*. São Paulo, abr. 2010. Disponível em: <http://www.cartamaior.com.br/templates/materiaMostrar.cfm?materia_id=16414>. Acesso em: 18 abr. 2010.
- FOLHA DE S. PAULO. **Manual da redação**. São Paulo: Publifolha, 2001.

FOLHA DE S. PAULO. [Toda a cobertura política nos meses de abril a novembro de 2010]. São Paulo, 2010.

INSTITUTO MILLENIUM. São Paulo, 2010. **Quem somos**. Disponível em: <<http://www.imil.org.br/institucional/quem-somos/>>. Acesso em: 20 mar. 2010.

KUSHNIR, Beatriz. **Cães de guarda: jornalista e censores do AI-5 à constituição de 1988**. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2004.

LIMA, Venicio A. de. **A mídia nas eleições de 2006**. São Paulo: Perseu Abramo, 2007.

MACHADO, Maria Berenice da Costa. Debates nas campanhas presidenciais: Brasil 1989-2010. In: ENCONTRO NACIONAL DE HISTÓRIA DA MÍDIA, 8., 2011. Guarapuava. **Anais...** Guarapuava, 2011.

SODRÉ, Muniz. **A narração do fato**. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2009.

SODRÉ, Muniz. **Espaço público brasileiro**. Luis Nassif OnLine. São Paulo, 2010. Disponível em: <<http://www.advivo.com.br/blog/luisnassif/o-espaco-publico-brasileiro-por-muniz-sodre>>. Acesso em: 29 set. 2010

SOUZA, Florentina das N. **O Jornal Nacional e as eleições presidenciais 2002-2006**. 2007. Tese (Doutorado em Comunicação) – Escola de Comunicação e Artes, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2007.

WOLF, Mauro. **Teorias da Comunicação**. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2003.

Partidarismo e ficções jornalísticas: a imprensa na eleição presidencial de 2010

Resumo

O artigo descreve e analisa a cobertura do jornal *Folha de S. Paulo*, em associação com outros órgãos de mídia brasileira, na eleição presidencial de 2010. Embora se declare como neutro, objetivo e pluralista, o jornal fez uma evidente, mesmo que não assumida, opção partidária na eleição contra a candidata Dilma Rousseff e a favor de José Serra. Isso aparece na cobertura e nas linhas editoriais subjacentes. A metodologia combina revisão bibliográfica e pesquisa de campo, embasando-se, sobretudo, na teoria sobre a narração dos fatos de Muniz Sodré (2009).

Palavras-chave

Imprensa. Eleição 2010. Partidarismo. *Folha de S. Paulo*. Narração dos fatos

Partidarismo y ficciones periodísticas: la prensa en la elección presidencial de 2010

Resumen

El artículo describe y analiza la cobertura del diario *Folha de S. Paulo*, em asociación con otros media brasileños em la elección presidencial de 2010. Aunque se declare como neutro, objetivo y pluralista, el diario há hecho una evidente, aunque no assumida, opción partidaria em la elección, contra la candidata Dilma Rousseff y a favor del candidato José Serra, lo que aparece em la cobertura periodista y em las líneas editoriales subyacentes. La metodología combina revisión bibliográfica y pesquisa de campo, embasándose, principalmente, em la teoría sobre la narración de los hechos de Muniz Sodré (2009).

Palabras-clave

Prensa. Elección 2010. Partidarismo. *Folha de S. Paulo*. Narración de los fatos.

Expediente

A revista E-Compós é a publicação científica em formato eletrônico da Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação (Compós). Lançada em 2004, tem como principal finalidade difundir a produção acadêmica de pesquisadores da área de Comunicação, inseridos em instituições do Brasil e do exterior.

E-COMPÓS | www.e-compos.org.br | E-ISSN 1808-2599

Revista da Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação.

Brasília, v.16, n.2, maio/ago. 2013.

A identificação das edições, a partir de 2008, passa a ser volume anual com três números.

CONSELHO EDITORIAL

Afonso Albuquerque, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brasil
Alberto Carlos Augusto Klein, Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Brasil
Alex Fernando Teixeira Primo, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Ana Carolina Damboriarena Escosteguy, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Ana Gruszynski, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Ana Silvia Lopes Davi Médola, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Brasil
André Luiz Martins Lemos, Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brasil
Ângela Freire Prythton, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brasil
Antônio Fausto Neto, Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Brasil
Antonio Carlos Hohlfeldt, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Antonio Roberto Chiachiri Filho, Faculdade Cásper Líbero, Brasil
Arlindo Ribeiro Machado, Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil
Arthur Autran Franco de Sá Neto, Universidade Federal de São Carlos, Brasil
Benjamim Picado, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brasil
César Geraldo Guimarães, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brasil
Cristiane Freitas Gutfreind, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Denilson Lopes, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Denize Correea Araujo, Universidade Tuiuti do Paraná, Brasil
Edilson Cazeloto, Universidade Paulista, Brasil
Eduardo Peñuela Cañizal, Universidade Paulista, Brasil
Eduardo Vicente, Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil
Eneus Trindade, Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil
Erick Felinto de Oliveira, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Florence Dravet, Universidade Católica de Brasília, Brasil
Francisco Eduardo Menezes Martins, Universidade Tuiuti do Paraná, Brasil
Gelson Santana, Universidade de Anhembi/Morumbi, Brasil
Gilson Vieira Monteiro, Universidade Federal do Amazonas, Brasil
Gislene da Silva, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brasil
Guillermo Orozco Gómez, Universidad de Guadalajara
Gustavo Daudt Fischer, Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Brasil
Hector Ospina, Universidad de Manizales, Colômbia
Herom Vargas, Universidade Municipal de São Caetano do Sul, Brasil
Ieda Tucherman, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Inês Vitorino, Universidade Federal do Ceará, Brasil
Janice Caiafa, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Jay David Bolter, Georgia Institute of Technology
Jeder Silveira Janotti Junior, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brasil
João Freire Filho, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
John DH Downing, University of Texas at Austin, Estados Unidos

José Afonso da Silva Junior, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brasil
José Carlos Rodrigues, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
José Luiz Aídar Prado, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, Brasil
José Luiz Warren Jardim Gomes Braga, Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Brasil
Juremir Machado da Silva, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Laan Mendes Barros, Universidade Metodista de São Paulo, Brasil
Lance Strate, Fordham University, USA, Estados Unidos
Lorraine Leu, University of Bristol, Grã-Bretanha
Lucia Leão, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, Brasil
Luciana Panke, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Brasil
Luiz Claudio Martino, Universidade de Brasília, Brasil
Malena Segura Contrera, Universidade Paulista, Brasil
Márcio de Vasconcellos Serelle, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brasil
Maria Aparecida Baccega, Universidade de São Paulo e Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing, Brasil
Maria das Graças Pinto Coelho, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil
Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil
Maria Luiza Martins de Mendonça, Universidade Federal de Goiás, Brasil
Mauro de Souza Ventura, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Brasil
Mauro Pereira Porto, Tulane University, Estados Unidos
Nilda Aparecida Jacks, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Paulo Roberto Gibaldi Vaz, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Potiguara Mendes Silveira Jr, Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora, Brasil
Renato Cordeiro Gomes, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Robert K Logan, University of Toronto, Canadá
Ronaldo George Helal, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Rosana de Lima Soares, Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil
Rose Melo Rocha, Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing, Brasil
Rossana Reguillo, Instituto de Estudios Superiores del Occidente, Mexico
Rousiley Celi Moreira Maia, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brasil
Sebastião Carlos de Moraes Squirra, Universidade Metodista de São Paulo, Brasil
Sebastião Guilherme Albano da Costa, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil
Simone Maria Andrade Pereira de Sá, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brasil
Tiago Quiroga Fausto Neto, Universidade de Brasília, Brasil
Suzete Venturelli, Universidade de Brasília, Brasil
Valério Cruz Brittos, Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Brasil
Valerio Fuenzalida Fernández, Puc-Chile, Chile
Veneza Mayora Ronsini, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Brasil
Vera Regina Veiga França, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brasil

COMISSÃO EDITORIAL

Adriana Braga | Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Felipe Costa Trotta | Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brasil

CONSULTORES AD HOC

Alexandre Barbalho, Universidade Estadual do Ceará, Brasil
Ana Carolina Escosteguy, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Ana Gruszynski, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Arthur Ituassu, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Claudia Lahni, Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora, Brasil
Francisco Paulo Jamil Marques, Universidade Federal do Ceará, Brasil
Jiani Bonin, Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Brasil
José Luiz Braga, Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Brasil
Leonel Aguiar, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Luciana Panke, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Brasil
Marcelo Kischinhevsky, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Raquel Paiva, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Sandra Rubia da Silva, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Brasil

EDIÇÃO DE TEXTO E RESUMOS | Susane Barros

SECRETÁRIA EXECUTIVA | Juliana Depiné

EDITORAÇÃO ELETRÔNICA | Roka Estúdio

TRADUÇÃO | Sieni Campos

COMPÓS | www.compos.org.br

Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação

Presidente

Eduardo Morettin

Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil

eduardomorettin@usp.br

Vice-presidente

Inês Vitorino

Universidade Federal do Ceará, Brasil

ines@ufc.br

Secretária-Geral

Gislene da Silva

Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brasil

gislenedasilva@gmail.com