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The normalization of the coup: the emptying of politics in the journalistic coverage of Dilma Rousseff's “impeachment”

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Abstract

The article presents the results of research on the coverage of the impeachment process of President Dilma Rousseff between December 2015, when the process was opened in the Chamber of Deputies, and August 2016, when she was definitively dismissed by the Federal Senate. We analyzed 2,202 news articles published by the newspapers O Globo, Folha de S. Paulo and O Estado de S. Paulo for the methodological perspective of the multimodal framework, which considers by using content analysis the textual, visual and narrative aspects of the news. The data allow us to verify that there has been a slightly superior editorial orientation to a pro-impeachment position, but this can only be affirmed by joining the three modes of framing, since the news text followed the pragmatic coverage pattern. We argue that this pattern eventually normalized impeachment as a legitimate process, by depoliticizing it and by erasing the aspects that evidence it as a parliamentary Coup d'état.

Keywords

Coup d'état; Impeachment; Multimodal framework; Dilma Rousseff; Journalism

Introduction

On December 2nd of 2015, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Eduardo Cunha, authorized the "impeachment" petition against president Dilma Rousseff. At that time, this attitude was taken as a political revenge for the lack of support of the Workers' Party in a committee that judged the deputy. The petition which initially sounded like just an attempt to wear the Workers' Party administration, soon gained shape, especially when the vice president Michel Temer started to publicly admit that he would take the position if the impeachment was confirmed, and the PMDB (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party), Temer's and Eduardo Cunha's party, stopped supporting the administration of Dilma Rousseff. The impeachment was approved in the Chamber of Deputies on April 17th of 2016, with 367 votes for and 137 against, the president was removed from office and Michel Temer took over as interim president. Finally, on August 31st 2016, the Senate approved the "impeachment" of President Dilma Rousseff with 60 votes for and only 20 against. Michel Temer took office the next day as president of Brazil.

The process of the impeachment was, generally speaking, marked by a series of political disputes on both sides, but we highlight the direct clash for the narrative. On one hand, President Dilma and allies constantly denounced the petition as a parliamentary coup, since the alleged crime of responsibility committed by Rousseff, the so-called "pedaladas fiscais," or pedaling fiscal obligations into the future, had already been adopted by all the previous presidents and also was common practice of the governors in-service. Therefore, in practice, legal loophole in the constitution was being used exclusively to take power by force, as the Workers' Party had won the last four presidential elections. On the other hand, the supporters of the impeachment rejected the idea of a coup, since the possibility of the petition was in the constitution and the "pedalada fiscal" was in fact something prohibited for the chief of Executive. The fact that the Supreme Federal Court (STF) did not accuse the coup should be another reason why the impeachment was considered legal.

Therefore, through its own capacity of spreading messages and strengthening certain perspectives, the journalistic coverage of the impeachment was seen as something of great relevance for its development and its conclusion. The newspaper companies remarkably took sides favoring the impeachment and also rejecting, in general, the hypothesis of a parliamentary coup through editorials and opinion articles (Guazina, Prior, Araújo, 2017; Marques, Mont'Alverne, Mitozo, 2017). It is also important to note that the Worker's Party historically was given significantly more negative coverage from the press than that given to

candidates/politicians of centre-right orientations, particularly during the elections (Albuquerque, 2013; Aldé, Mendes, Figueiredo, 2007; Azevedo, 2009; Feres Júnior, Sassara, 2016; Miguel, 1999).

Nevertheless, this work argues that the bias taken by the great professional journalistic vehicles can happen in a much less obvious or explicit way than the one already reported by the literature, especially when the analysis is about the news and the journalistic articles and not only opinion material. For that reason, this work argues that the journalistic coverage of the process that became known as the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff presented this political event as an ordinary fact of national politics. In other words, professional journalism legitimated the impeachment by not highlighting the series of problems, disputes and alternative narratives. Finally, while not considering it as a unique political event with great repercussions of various natures, or still, by normalizing it, by emptying it to an ordinary political event, journalism made an important contribution to the coup against Dilma Rousseff.

Albæk et al. (2014, p. 77-8) classify this way of treating politics as a pragmatic conception of the role of journalism in democracy. According to this concept, journalists tend to deal with the news about politics by applying the same criteria and values they would apply to any other topic. This differs from a conception that the authors entitle sacerdotal, that tends to put politics as a separate field from the "mundane life". Taking a pragmatic approach when covering political facts leads to framing them into conflicts and/or games, which has already been verified by some authors (Iyengar, 1991; Porto, 2002). The news about Dilma's departure from the presidency followed this pattern, as will be demonstrated next, diminishing this event to a question of arm wrestling between government and opposition, treating the facts as victory or loss of one or another group.

Secondly, as we know, journalism can take roles according to an impartial dimension or, then, to a partisan point of view of any conflict in subject (ALBÆK ET AL, 2014). The first values the equity of the coverage while the second considers taking sides in political disputes is acceptable. The coverage of three Brazilian newspapers adopted the formally impartial dimension; this would lead to conclusion that the Brazilian press did not stand politically, as the news were mainly balanced. We claim that the multimodal framework analysis, which casts a series of minutiae and specificities of the journalistic coverage, is capable of exposing the pretense impartiality of our journalism. In other words, contrary to what is found in the literature in political communication, the bias against President Dilma is far from

being majority or very explicit, however it is present in several smaller parts in the journalistic writing, as we will seek to demonstrate later.

A third approach that is brought by the authors is the orientation of the news towards information or entertainment. In the last case, the news would deal with political events from what they call privatization of political news, of the emphasis on the private life of politicians and of the coverage of scandals. In the Brazilian case in analysis, the orientation was clearly informative, with sparse notes about the state of the affected politicians, as can be observed in the narrative framework. The scandal was not thematized, and the impeachment process, as said before, was treated like an ordinary fact of politics and not a coup with important implications for democracy.

In short, our argument is that the journalistic coverage normalized the coup by depoliticizing it (Vimieiro, Maia, 2017; Wood, Flinders, 2014); that is, it moves the discussion of the great conflicts, scandals, political consequences (here in its wider meaning) to the simple ordinary political game (i.e. horse race journalism), leading to the accession of the logic that "there are no alternatives", thereby drastically decreasing the possibility of being framed or discussed as a parliamentary coup.

Multimodal framework analysis of the journalistic coverage

Studies on framework seek essentially to understand aspects of journalistic narrative in the coverage of certain phenomena or events, highlighting the elements that are emphasized or hidden in the coverage. In other words, "framing is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more prominent in a text" (Entman, 1993, p.52, our translation), especially when these projections promote "a definition of problem in specific, a causal interpretation, a moral evaluation and/or a treatment recommendation for the described item" (Entman, 1993, p.52).

Although there are numerous ways of application (Matthes, Kohring; 2008; Mendonça; Simões, 2012; Pozobon, Schaefer, 2015; Vimieiro, Maia, 2011b),

at the core of this kind of operationalization lays a concern to understand how discourses establish frames of meaning, framing the world from specific perspectives. It is sought to think how the discursive content itself creates a context of meaning, convoking the interlocutors to follow a certain interpretative trail. (Mendonça; Simões, 2012, p.193).

According to Matthes and Kohring (2008), one of the problems of framework studies is in the application of methods with little reliability or replicability, because they are very broad, holistic applications or based on excessively broad cultural elements, and are therefore very questionable to the interpretation of the researchers themselves and unverifiable by the peers. The authors believe that a more reliable method lies in the verification of minor and more objective variables and categories in the products to be evaluated and that subsequently there would be a concern with the generation of the idea of framework.

Wozniak et al. (2014), in turn, criticized the fact that most of the analysis on framework are dedicated to the textual content of the articles, pursuing the application of broad categories of the concept of framework. The authors believe that a more thorough and systematic analysis of at least three communicative approaches present in journalistic articles is necessary, and they point out the narrative, the visual representation and the categories of framework, as suggested by Entman.

The classic perspective of news framework, restricted to textual analysis, is not, in our vision, the most appropriate to address a multi-faceted political event as was the parliamentary coup of 2016. A prior analysis of the partial corpus¹ of this research showed as more efficient an approach that takes into consideration also the visual and narrative elements, because they allow a closer approach between the researcher and the general experience of printed newspaper readers (Rizzotto, Prudencio, Sampaio, 2017). The cross-check of the images analysis and the narrative analysis of² the news that put Dilma Rousseff as the main character of the event, whether in the role of victim, villain or heroin, showed the existence of a conflict of roles framework in 33% of the news. So, not rarely, she was presented in one way by the narrative construction and in another by the image (Rizzotto, Prudencio, 2017). It is based on this conflict that often the receiver constructs their interpretation of the news, and that is why we support the multimodal framework analysis as a more appropriate methodology for the analysis of the news coverage of this critical moment in national politics. Thus, our analysis,³ inspired by Wozniak et al. (2014), is systematized in Figure 1 below:

¹ This previous analysis was carried out in a corpus of 318 news, being 187 of the paper O Globo and 131 of the Folha de S. Paulo, published in December 2015, when the impeachment petition was introduced, and in May 2016, when Dilma Rousseff was provisionally removed from the presidency after the first vote in Senate.

² Sixty news of the partial corpus were analyzed here that associated to Dilma Rousseff some role in the narrative and that, at the same time, represented her in the image.

³ For further discussion about the methodology adopted see (Rizzotto, Prudencio, Sampaio, 2017).

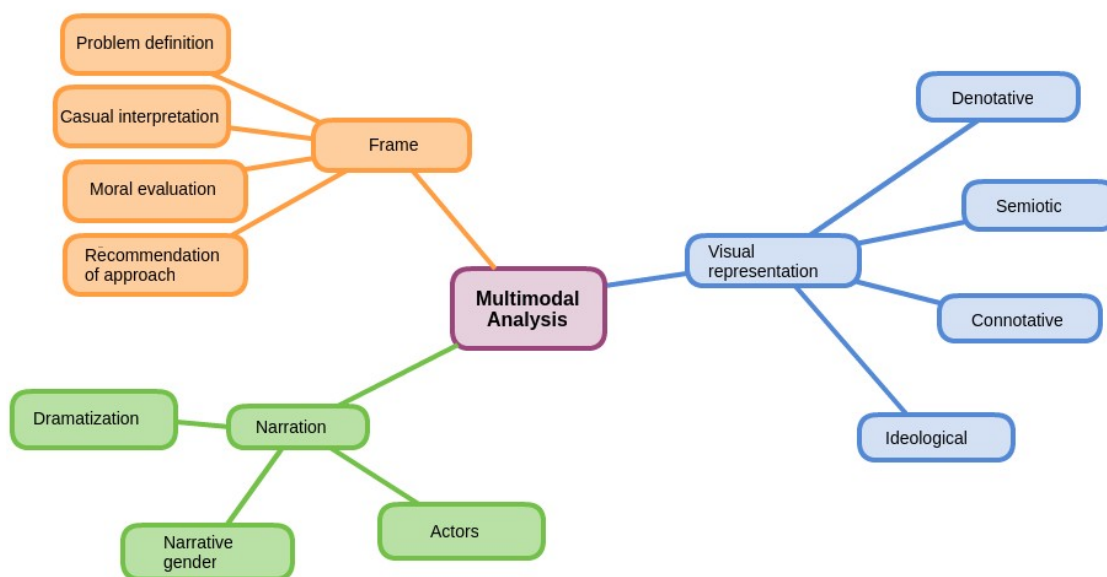


Figure 1 - Multimodal Analysis

Source: COMPA (2016)⁴

The referred multimodal analysis, based on manual content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004), was applied to a corpus of 2.202 news articles published by the papers O Globo, Folha de S. Paulo and O Estado de S. Paulo, from December 2nd of 2015 to August 31st⁵ of 2016. From the total corpus we analyzed only the photographs and excluded the infographic analysis, illustrations and others, resulting in 1,820 images analyzed. The news were coded by the members of the Research Group Communications and Political Participation (COMPA) of the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), who went through an extensive training followed by reliability tests⁶ to increase reliability and, to some extent,⁷ the validity of the data. The most relevant data for the discussion proposed in this article will be presented

⁴ The Codebook with the description and exemplification of all categories is available in: <https://bdc.c3sl.ufpr.br/handle/12345789/27>.

⁵ The news were selected initially by an automatic filter that sought the key word "impeachment" in the politics section of the 3 newspapers. Later they went through a manual filter that removed from the corpus opinion articles, interviews or news that did not contain images.

⁶ Framed component, 0.681 Krippendorff; Person represented in the image, 0.703 Krippendorff; Activity accomplished, 0.666 Krippendorff; Camera angle, 0.683 Krippendorff; Camera shot, 0.669 Krippendorff; Dramatization, 0.69 Krippendorff; Emotion, 0.703 Krippendorff; Personalization, 0.689 Krippendorff; Stylistic ornamentation 0.705 Krippendorff; Problem - actors, 0.67 Kappa, 71% agreement; Problem - sub-topics 0.55 Kappa, 62% agreement; Causes - 0.55 Kappa, 62% agreement; Moral judgment, 0.59 Kappa, 67% agreement. Treatment recommendation, 0.73 Kappa, 80% agreement. We choose to use Kappa measure in the categories of rare apparitions because Krippendorff's alpha is quite sensitive to disagreement in these cases, which are common specially in narrative and framework analysis. For more about the reliability test, see Krippendorff (2004).

⁷ The database is available in the repository of scientific databases of UFPR, in: <https://bdc.c3sl.ufpr.br/handle/12345789/26>.

next. As we can see, at some points the comparison between the three vehicles is significant, in others, the longitudinal comparison between two moments of the process is more important - before and after the provisional removal of the president.

The first important data that the longitudinal comparison allows us to realize is that the frequency of publications falls considerably from the period of which Michel Temer took office as interim (Graph 1). In the 165 days preceding the vote in Senate that temporarily dismissed Dilma, an average of 9.17 daily news were published; in the 108 days of coverage after her removal, about 6.37 news a day were published. The frequency of coverage provides evidence to conclude that with Dilma already out of the presidency, the impeachment ceases to be a recurrent topic, since there would be, following this thesis, low chances of reversing the situation, as demonstrated in Chart 1.

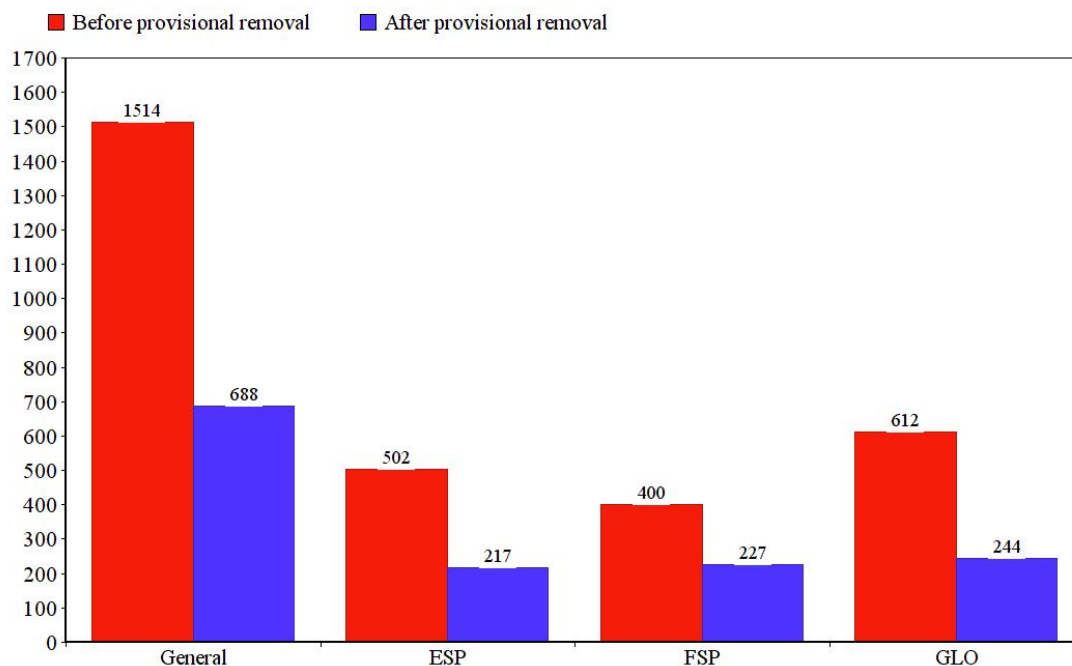


Chart 1 - Longitudinal frequency.

Source: COMPA.

With the situation practically consolidated, we also notice an attempt by the newspapers to legitimize Michel Temer as president, which can be verified from the increase of the attribution of the role of hero to Temer in comparison to the period

prior to his position as interim. The longitudinal evolution of the roles present in the narrative will be further discussed.

The degree of narrativity, which considers *dramatization*, *emotion*, *personalization* and *stylistic ornamentation*, presents important differences between the three vehicles, as demonstrated by Chart 2:

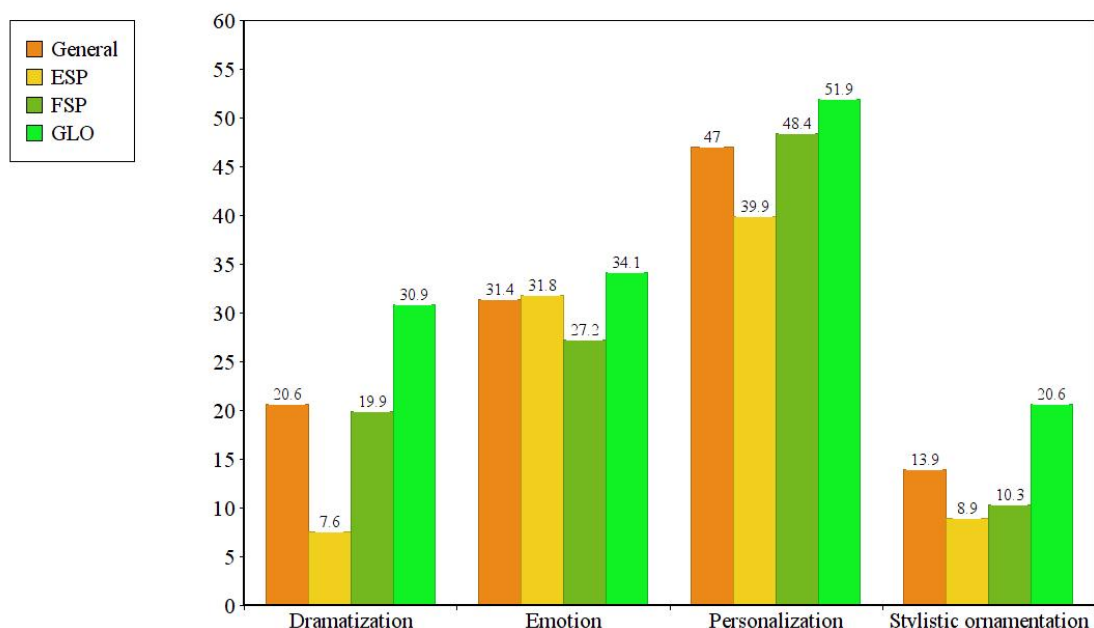


Chart 2 - Degree of narrativity.

Source: COMPA.

Dramatization appears in 20.6% of the news analyzed, emotion in 31.4% and stylistic ornamentation in 13.9%. Considering, however, the characteristics of Brazilian journalism, which has American influence, with strong presence of the ideal of objectivity, marked by the techniques of lead, inverted pyramid and copy desk, as well as the technical education that shaped its professionalization (Traquina, 2004; Ribeiro, 2000), this number seems quite expressive. In the same direction, the personalization present in 47% of the news says a lot about the remoteness of contemporary Brazilian journalism from the approach based on facts that marked the second half of the 20th century; almost half the news is focused on characters, their actions and their statements. According to Ribeiro (2000), the techniques adopted in the newsrooms and the ideas of objectivity and neutrality marked the journalistic field along with the refusal of connections with literature

and politics, creating the conditions for their consolidation from the 1960s. The results presented here, however, indicate the use of language strategies with the purpose of "making believe" and "making feel", in addition to "making know" that characterizes the "view of information" as explained by Charaudeau (2007). The author completes:

In the speech of information, however, it's not about the truth itself, but the truth linked to the way of reporting the facts: it is not quite about the conditions of the rising of truth, but the conditions of veracity. It is the responsibility of the mediatic instance to authenticate facts, to describe them in a verisimilar manner, to suggest causes and to justify given explanations. (Charaudeau, 2007, p.88)

The news published by the paper O Globo on June 12th of 2016, entitled "All for impeachment" (Figure 2), totally focused on Michel Temer's performance after his first month of interim government, presents the four elements of narrativity previously cited, and represents the changes in the journalistic craft to which we refer.

UM MÊS DEPOIS

Tudo pelo impeachment

Temer assume recuos e cede a pressões de aliados para tentar se manter no poder

SIMONE BARRETO E CASSANDRA ALLENCASTRO
reportagem especial

análise. Há exatos um mês no comando interino do país, Michel Temer constrói uma aliada ter a impressão de que já se passaram anos. Nos primeiros dias, governando sob intensa pressão, demitindo ministros, enfrentou grupos com diálogo pouco republicano envolvendo a cúpula de seu partido, o PMDB, desculpando promessas e entendendo pressões que chegavam à porta de sua casa, em São Paulo. Noveas 30 dias, o presidente interino buscou administrar cotidianos e, na maioria das vezes, teve que ceder pela percepção elementar de que seu governo não é um governo de fato, mas interino. E, ironicamente, apesar da pressão, a decisão no Brasil é seguir nessa trilha. Ao mesmo que agindo, quando ocorreu no Senado o julgamento final do impeachment da presidente afastada Dilma Rousseff, Temer decidiu entrar no jogo do Congresso e engatar muitos sapatos, construindo as alianças necessárias para garantir sua permanência definitiva.

Com maioria fragil no Senado — 59 votos contabilizados por sua equipe a favor do impeachment de Dilma, apenas cinco a mais que os 54 necessários —, o presidente interino tem se desenvolvido em direção aos senadores, de quem tem ouvido centenas de pedidos. Quase todas as demandas, com raros exceções presidenciais, se resumem a cargos. Em seu gabinete, recorre em audiência oficial ao maior dos senadores. Nessa semana foi pela segunda vez ao Congresso desde que assumiu a Presidência, agora para entregar o projeto que estabelece regras para os gastos públicos. Um gesto de aproximação e de cordialidade com deputados e senadores que na gestão Dilma reclamaram da falta de atenção da presidente.

O governo acredita ter a situação sob controle e publicamente nega que esteja agindo com vista à votação do impeachment. Cassandra Galvão Vieira Lima, Secretária de Governo, nega que Temer esteja sendo chantageado por senadores por conta da manutenção do voto contra Dilma e garante não ter uma aliança com o PMDB.

— Não temos preocupação com isso — afirma Galvão.

No entanto, desde que voltou ao Senado depois da efetiva posse pelo Ministério do Planejamento, Romero Jucá (PMDB-RR) tem se dedicado prioritariamente a tarefa de garantir os votos que enterrem a possibilidade de Dilma voltar ao Palácio. A propósito, o líder de Jucá



O jogo mais duro. Temer alinha Jucá do PMDB após grupos parlamentares, a decisão mais difícil que tem de se tomar

DIMA, PMB e PPS e da opinião pública para evitar uma crise.

Apesar de ser conhecido há anos na liderança a pedido do cenário, o presidente interino continua sendo alvo de pressões do grupo por suas ações. Na semana passada, o líder pelo comando de diálogo público, apesar de garantir a votação em segundo turno da Dilma.

A rebelião foi contida antes de chegar ao plenário pela pressão de Temer de que o assunto não é resolvido. O presidente explicou que seu governo é interino, mas que a partir de agora, se o Senado afastar definitivamente a presidente Dilma, as negociações serão aceleradas.

Se por um lado a imortalidade causa incômodo aos novos jogadores do Planalto, que esperam para acabar o mandato da Comissão do Impeachment no Senado, por outro, serve como uma boa desculpa para Temer negociar com mais credibilidade os espaços de cada aliado no poder. Apesar de ter se apresentado antes mesmo da confirmação do afastamento de Dilma como preparado para a função, Temer e sua equipe não estavam com as expectativas e desdobramentos de Lava Jato e as cobranças de que tem sido alvo desde que assumiu o poder.

— Ele me dá a confiança. De fato, há uma atmosfera mais pesada no Palácio do Planalto, mas não ficamos dando graças a Deus à cada dia que passa com as estruturas mantidas pela sobrevivência — diz um assessor.

Um assessor próximo de Temer admite que os acontecimentos relacionados à Lava Jato o obrigaram a adotar um comportamento mais cauteloso, com os pés no Escalafão, o olho no Legislativo e atento aos movimentos do Judiciário. Além disso, teme fazer que atenuem o peso de suas instituições, Jucá e Falcão Silveira (Trazquadrilha e Combate à Corrupção), também pegou em grupos, o afastamento do presidente da Câmara Eduardo Cunha gerou uma situação de fragilidade no comando da Casa, por onde precisam passar as matérias econômicas.

Pela situação atípica em que vive a Câmara, o presidente abandonou o interino, Volody Myroshnychenko (PMDB), sem muitos respaldos dos parlamentares, o Pluralismo visto como segundo vice da base aliada. Rodrigo Rocha Loures, assessor especial de Temer, diz que Temer acredita que o Congresso deve ser o protagonista do jogo governamental.

"Bape". Corrente que André Moraes lidera no governo

Temer decidiu entrar no jogo do Congresso, construindo as alianças necessárias para garantir permanência definitiva



Temer. Protetor em frente à casa de Temer, em São Paulo, vítima do sermão

do governo foi considerada pelo presidente interino a situação política a mais difícil que enfrentou até agora. Ele garantiu de manter-se pela realidade que o precedeu, mas desde o início do processo de impeachment e por considerá-lo altamente capacitado para o cargo. No entanto, Temer precisava lidar com primeiras horas após a revelação das gravações das conversas entre Jucá e Sérgio Machado que seria impossível suportar a pressão da opinião pública. Ao fim, Temer trabalhou para minimizar os danos e mantê-lo como um importante aliado. Acima inclusive das questões políticas, é Jucá que mais tem Temer do sexto mes-

Figure 2 - All for impeachment

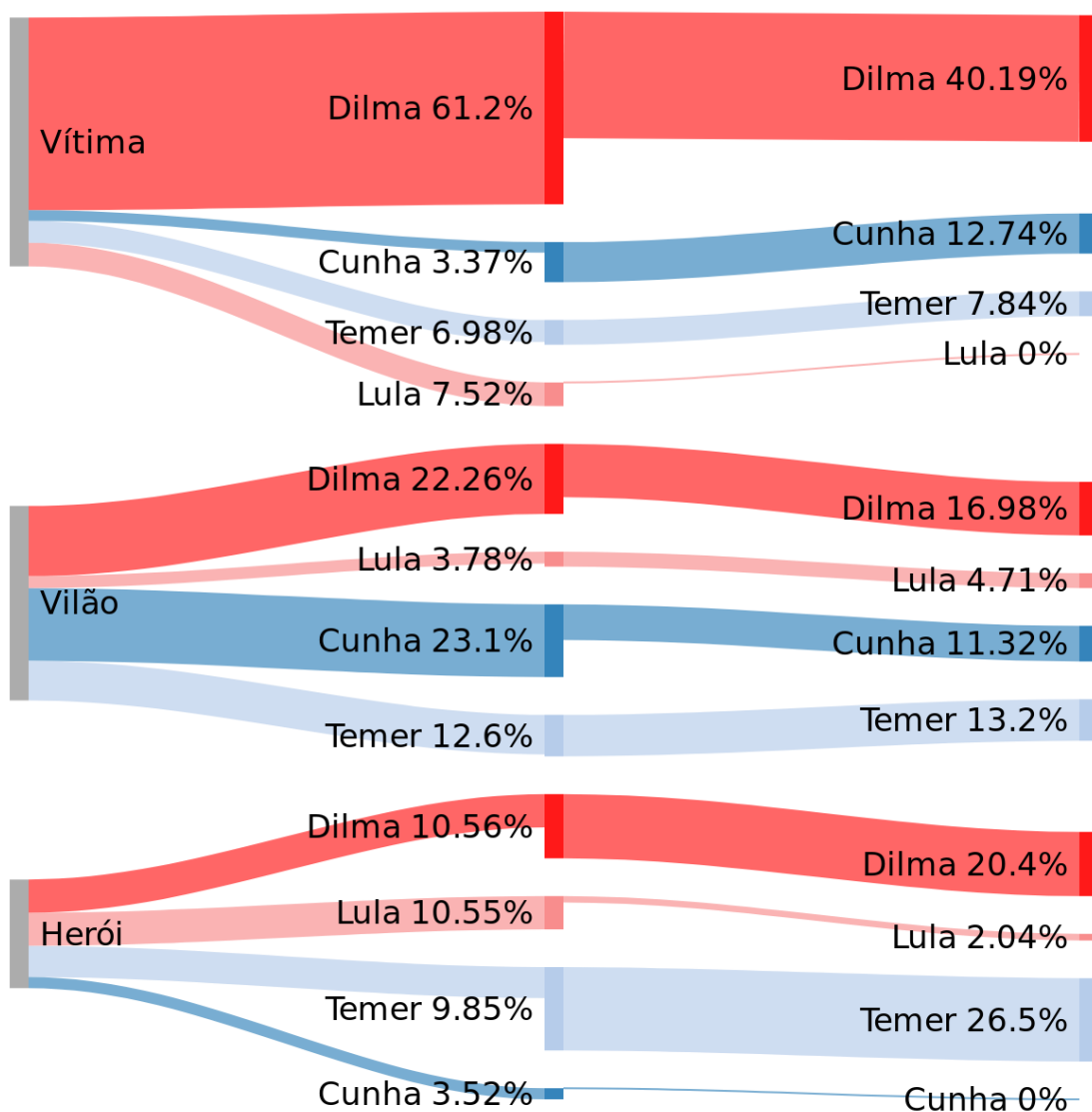
Source: O Globo, June 12th of 2016.

The following section needs to be highlighted:

Beyond all political issues, the fact that really shook Temer mad at that time was the protests in front of his house that made his wife, Marcela, and his youngest son Little Michel, scared of an invasion. On the day he announced his first economic measures, Temer fled to his usual discreet tone, he slammed his hand on the table and said that when Secretary of Security of São Paulo, he "used to deal with criminals", in a message to the protesters. (IGLESIAS, ALENCASTRO, 2016)

Stylistic expressions like "shook Temer up" and "Temer fled to his usual discreet tone" help to build a narrative in which Michel Temer is the victim of the institutional political game, placing him among the "pressure of allies" and the aggression of opposition, materialized in the actions of the demonstrators who protested in front of his house and in Dilma's performance as president, which "deputies and senators [...] complained of the lack of attention they got" (Iglesias, Alencastro, 2016). Protesters and Dilma Rousseff are thus the real "villains" in the narrative construction of this news. The main image that illustrates the article also corroborates this point of view, Temer seems reflected and concerned about hearing what Romero Jucá (at the time minister of planning, budget and management) has to say, in a condition of passive subject who is victim of circumstances. It is also noted that the news in question is totally based on the so-called reporting journalism, quoting, however, only two identified sources – the secretary of government Geddel Vieira Lima and Temer himself - and abusing of anonymous sources - "an auxiliary", "a close adviser to Temer".

As for the roles assigned to the characters of the process, they appear in a low number of news - 13% present a victim, 15.6% a villain and 8.6% a hero or heroin. When they appear, they are distributed as followed between the most recurrent subjects of the news about the process - Dilma, Lula, Cunha and Temer (Chart 3):



[Victim; Vilain; Hero]

Chart 3 - Longitudinal evolution of roles.

Source: COMPA

In the period before the interim removal, Dilma Rousseff appears as the most frequent victim (61.2%), followed by Lula (7.5%), Temer (6.9%) and Cunha (3.3%); after removal, Cunha and Temer's frequency playing the role of victims increase (12.7% and 7.8% respectively), while Dilma loses incidence in this role (40,1%) and Lula disappears. In the role of villain, Dilma goes from 22.2% before her removal down to 16.9% after; Lula from 3.7% to 4.7%; Cunha from 23.1% to 11.3%; and Temer from 12.6% to 13.2%. Dilma appeared more often as heroin after her removal (10.5% against 20.4%), Lula was hero more often before

removal (10.5% against 2%), Temer after removal (9.8% against 26.5%) and Cunha appeared only as a hero before removal (3.5%).

Associated with the analysis of news framework that will be exposed to later, these numbers lead to a construction of the process of impeachment in which Dilma was mainly victim, sometimes of the political game and Cunha's blackmail while establishing the process, and other times of her own incompetence; sometimes villain, whether for her "strict" conduct (and in this case we highlight the sexist vision that characterizes a woman's seriousness as strictness, but does not do that with a man with the same behavior), or for her political inability that was responsible for the Brazilian crisis; and heroin when she defended Lula on the occasion of his coercive conduct and his appointment as chief of staff, when she defended herself, especially on August 29th when she participated in a session in Senate that lasted more than 10 hours, or when she received a tribute of hundreds of women who gathered at the Palácio do Planalto in April 19th of 2016 to support her administration. On the other hand, even when the supporters of the impeachment were portrayed as villains, they were presented as intelligent villains, who knew how to move adequately in the chess game behind the impeachment vote or even, in the case of Cunha, to manipulate Parliament's rules in favor of his agenda.

The news framework analysis was carried out from 5 variables - actors, definition of the problem, causes of the problem, moral judgment and recommendation of treatment (Entman, 1993; Vimiero, Maia, 2011a). Chart 4 shows who were the actors that appeared in the news before and after Dilma's interim removal:

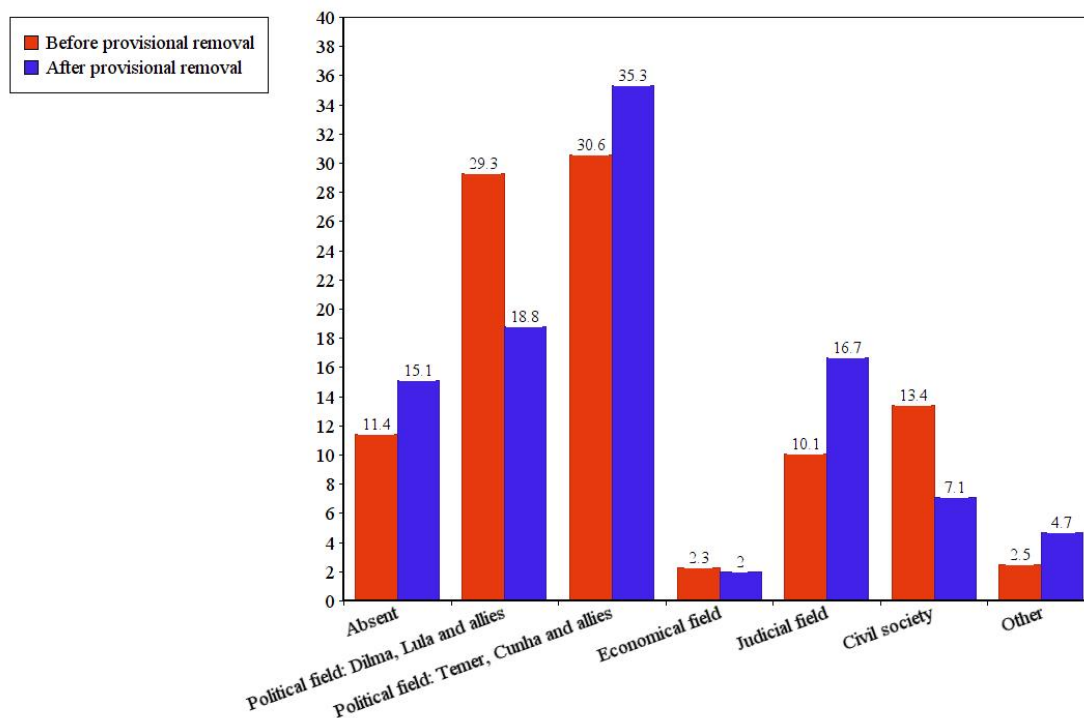


Chart 4 - Actors.

Source: COMPA.

Before removal, the prevalence is of pro-impeachment politicians (30.6%), followed closely by Dilma and allies (29.3%). Then civil society appears (13.4%), the judicial field (10.1%) and economic field (2.3%). It is not surprising that the two opposing political fields are the most recurrent characters, as also shows the variable which determines the definition of the problem, since the process of impeachment was depicted mainly as a political fight, featuring a bias of stripping political content. Civil society appears in the news about the protests, both favorable and contrary to the coup, and in these cases is generally embodied as the "hero" character. The judiciary appears more often when it comes to discussions about the legality of the process. The economic field rarely appears, indicating that the newspapers had little discussed the fundamental issue that led to the accusation against Rousseff, the so-called "pedaladas fiscais". After the removal, Temer and allies' presence becomes considerably higher (35.3%) than Dilma's and allies (which falls to 18.8%); with Dilma out of the picture, the judiciary field and Temer's group's actions and statements are the ones who receive the most attention of the news, suggesting the legitimization and normalization of the event (going up to 16.7% almost the same number as Dilma's presence and of other

politicians against the impeachment). This presence is confirmed by the news images, as we can see in Chart 5, which points out a small prevalence of the political group led by Temer and Cunha:

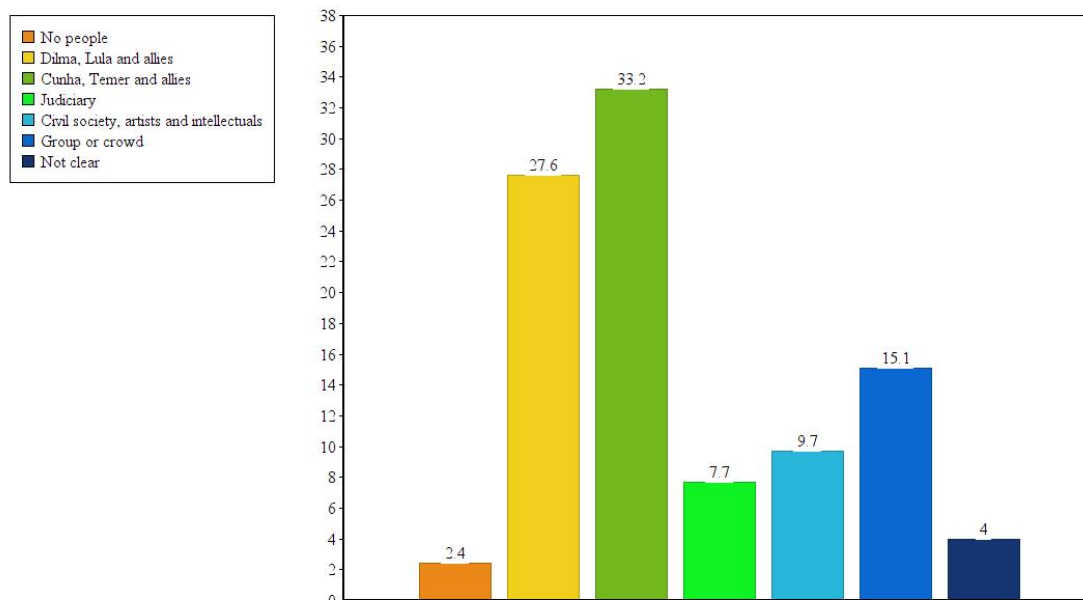


Chart 5 - Person represented in the image.

Source: COMPA.

The main problem of the news is centered on the *crisis scenario* (31.8%), i.e. news that do not directly address the impeachment but present elements that can be used to strengthen the thesis of the impeachment, such as the economic scenery, accusations from the Car Wash Operation and corruption etc. Then the *political dispute* appears (24%), indicating that the motivation of the petition for the impeachment is the dispute or political game and/or fight for power. The *impeachment petition* itself is also recurrent (21.1%), these news approach legal technicalities and often count the votes of the deputies and, subsequently, the senators. The *future post impeachment* (11.2%), the *repercussions on the population* (9.2%) and the *history recovery* (2.4%) of the political scenery appear less frequently (Chart 6).

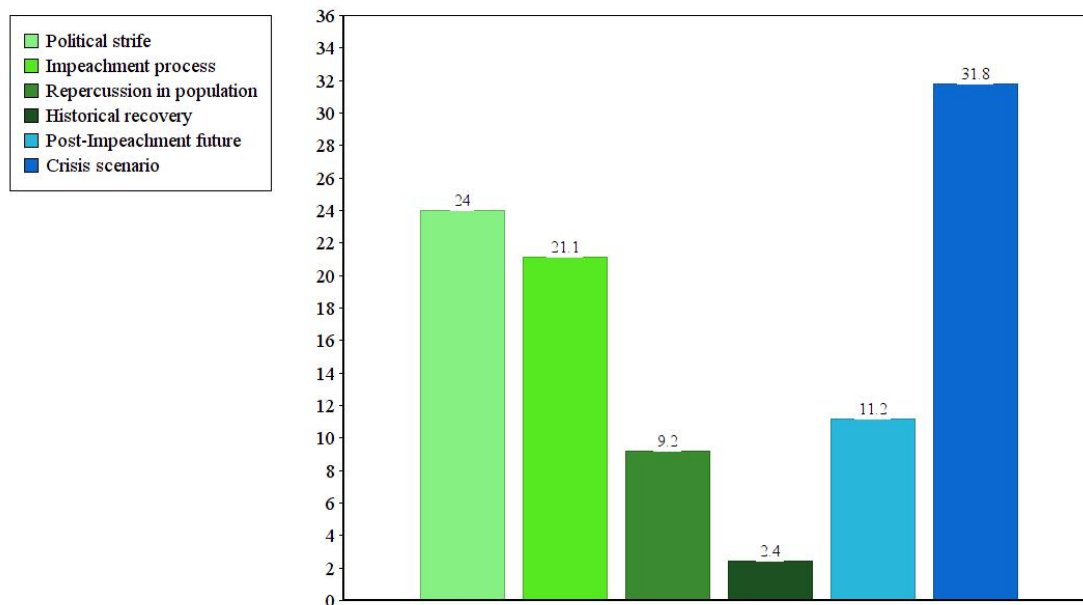


Chart 6 - Definition of the problem.

Source: COMPA.

A good amount of the news do not present causes for the problems described (23.4%), according to Chart 7 below. When they appear, the causes focus mainly on *political-ideological controversy* (30.8%), confirming what was previously stated about stripping political content, described as a institutionalized locus of disputes and, therefore, distant from the population. The *Widespread corruption* (15.4%) and the *political inability of Dilma's administration* (9%) are also presented as causes of this crisis scenario that justifies the removal of the elected president. The *legality of the impeachment process* (13.5%) is the justification consistently associated with the problem *impeachment petition*, defining it as legitimate because it is constitutional.

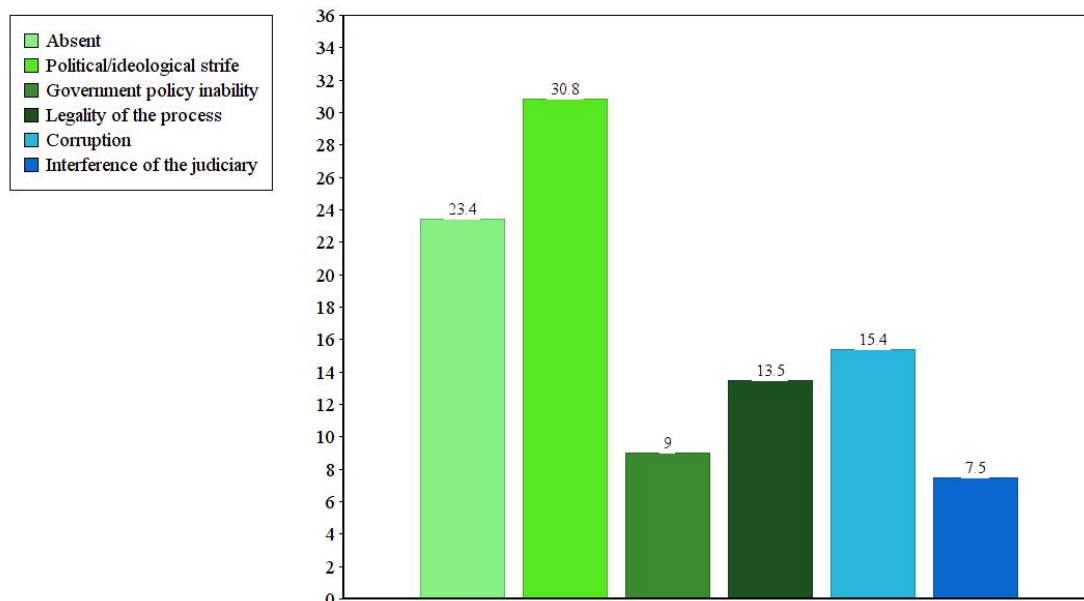


Chart 7 - Causes of the problem.

Source: COMPA.

The moral judgment (Chart 8) is absent in the vast majority of the news (71.9%), justified by the inheritance of journalistic neutrality that prevents the execution of judgments in an explicit manner. When it appears, it often leads to Dilma's culpability for his own destiny (10.7%), followed by criticism of political fights (7.8%), the formal aspects of the impeachment (5.2%) and the politicians who used it as a type of revenge (4.1%). This result points to the depolitization of the coup, while presenting itself as neutral, journalism in this case emphasize Dilma's guilt, by not questioning the process, or the disputes that make politics a "dirty" area, from which the population must remain apart.

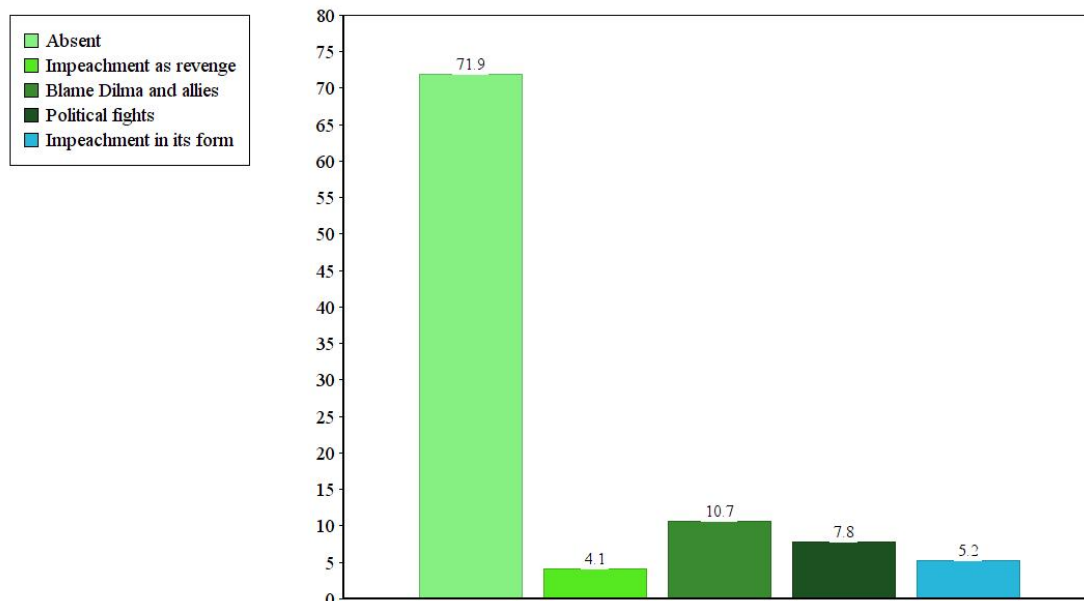


Chart 8 - Moral judgment.

Source: COMPA.

Finally, the last variable about the news framework marks the existence of a recommendation for treatment (Chart 9), absent in most cases (80.6%) - which is also explained by the inheritance of the values of neutrality and objectivity. When present, the recommendation is for the impeachment in 11.5% of the cases, against the impeachment in 6.6%, and in favor to hold new elections in 1% of them. This data is another indication that the journalistic coverage either opted to empty the political discussions and consequences of the impeachment or, in a lesser frequency, tended to position itself more favorably to the impeachment.

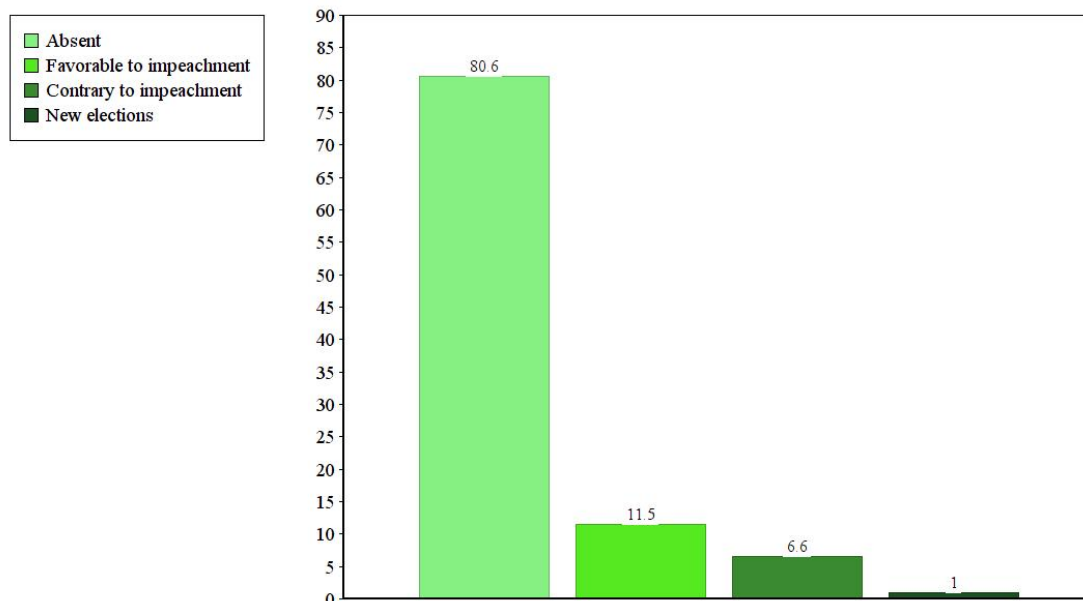


Chart 9 - Treatment recommendation.

Source: COMPA.

As regards the visual framework, the predominance of the variable medium shots and close-ups (Chart 10) contributes to the result about the personalization of the news in the narrative. The images portray the characters of the news, without background scenery and in closed environments in 65.4% of the corpus. This data associated with the people portrayed in the images (Chart 5) reinforces the framework of the process as a dispute between two opposing groups, and Cunha, Temer and allies appear in 27.5% of the images while Dilma, Lula and allies in 22.8% of them. The wide shot allows us to identify the location and the situation in which the fact occurs, but was only identified in 23.5% of the images, which intensifies the framework of the event as a cabinet problem.

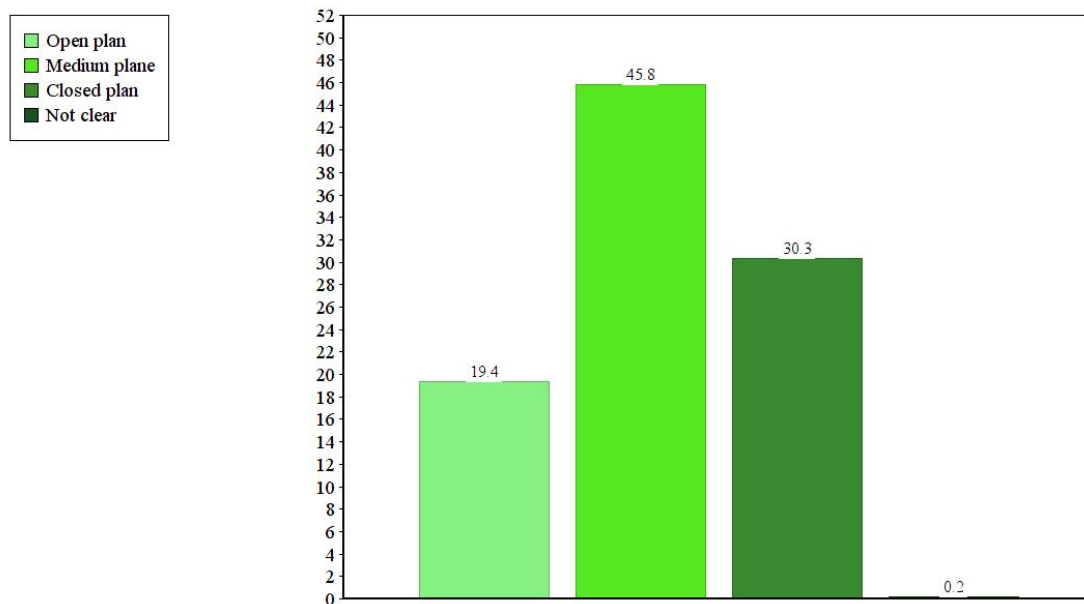


Chart 10 - Camera shot

Source: COMPA.

The variable position of the camera indicates the construction of meaning for the ones portrayed in the image. A high-angle camera shot diminishes the importance of the portrayed; a low-angle camera shot positively values the object or person in the image; and the regular angle of the camera is protocol. Chart 11 shows that the coverage benefited from the regular angle of images (78.4%), consistent with a pragmatic and objective perspective of Brazilian journalism.

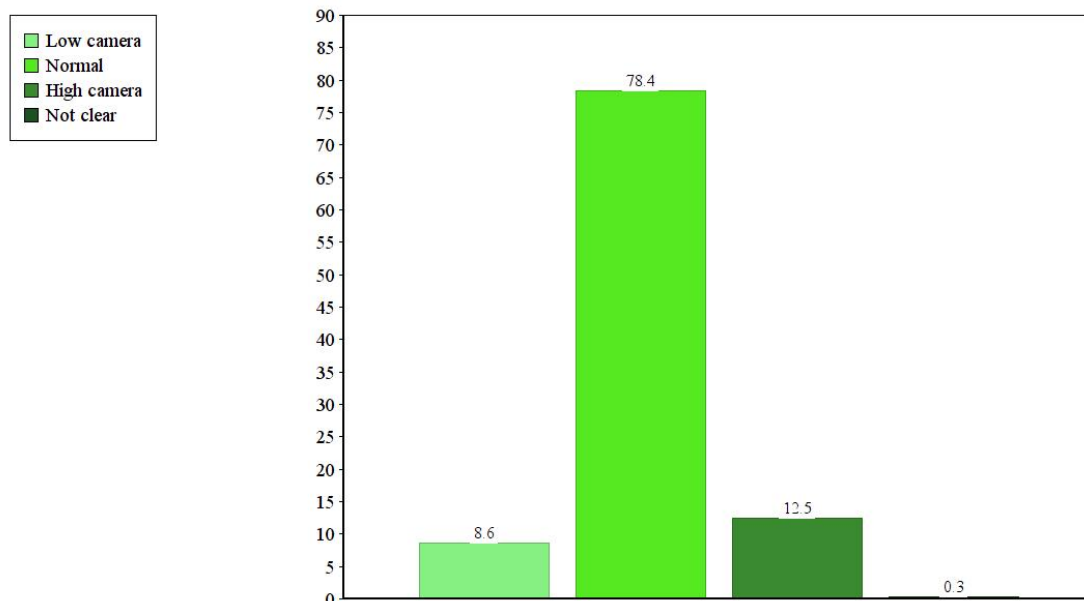


Chart 11 - Camera angle.

Source: COMPA.

The activities that these politicians develop in the images (Chart 12) are basically none (32.3%), presentation or speech (20.2%) and spotted everyday activities (15.5%). What we verify is a selection of images in which people are in a passive state, because there is no information in the images that indicate the activity. Very distant from this are the protests images, with only 8.1% of the corpus. These images could grant the news an indication of the presence of other social actors in the discussion of the impeachment/coup, as there were popular demonstrations in favor and against what was happening in the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Senate.

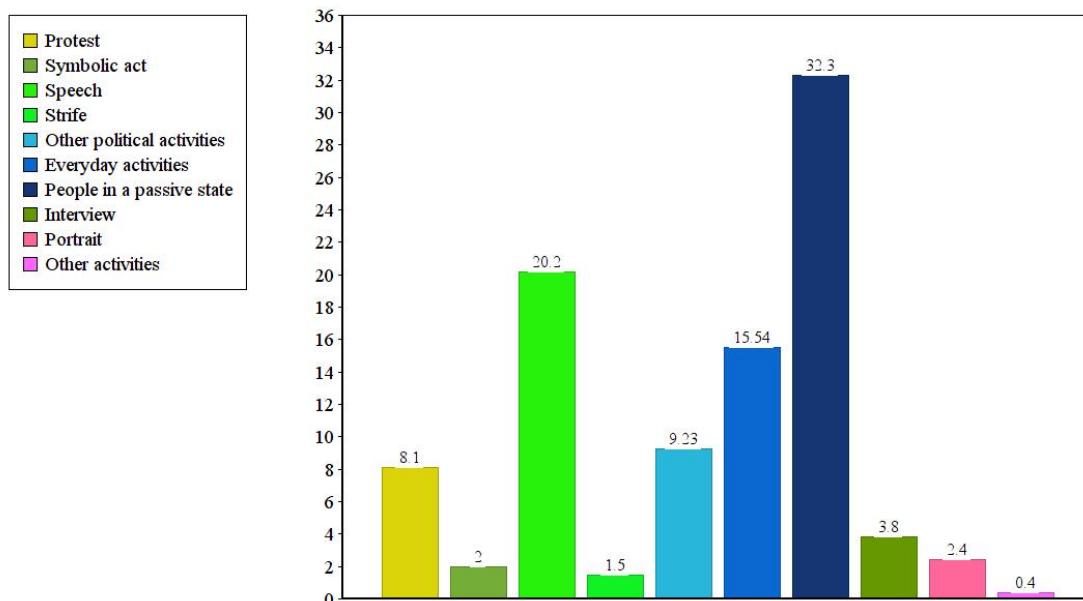


Chart 12 - Developed activity.

Source: COMPA.

Combining the variables camera shot, camera angle, people portrayed and developed activity we get a visual framework of politics as a scene of interaction between two political groups, with little visibility to the other groups. Regular angle and medium shots or close-ups indicate the absence of proximity to the observer, once again putting a distance between politics and society. The Image 3 below is representative, illustrating the political fight between two opposing groups at the same time when it presents these groups distant from the reader. In the coverage of the paper O Globo, the emphasis on political debate is also clear by the choice of the expression "The Battle of the Impeachment" as the kicker.



Testemunhas viram alvo

No 1º dia do julgamento de Dilma, defesa e acusação levantam suspeita sobre depoentes

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O primeiro dia do julgamento do impeachment da presidente afastada, Dilma Rousseff, foi marcado por uma tentativa de politizar ainda mais o processo, esvaziando o debate técnico. Os dois lados apostaram em pedir a declaração de "suspeição" das testemunhas. Além do impacto jurídico de invalidar os depoimentos como prova testemunhal, a medida permite contestar o conteúdo das falas, já que elas são feitas sem juramento. A defesa de Dilma teve sucesso no caso do procurador junto ao Tribunal de Contas da União (TCU), Júlio Marcelo de Oliveira, que depôs ontem como informante, e não como testemunha. Como reação, o DEM levantou questionamento em relação a Esther Dweck, ex-secretária de Orçamento Federal, que acaba de ser nomeada para trabalhar no gabinete da petista Gleisi Hoffmann e foi escalada para ser ouvida pela defesa de Dilma.

Júlio Marcelo foi o responsável pelas representações que levaram o TCU a condenar as práticas das "pedaladas fiscais" e dos decretos de crédito sem autorização. O advogado de Dilma, o ex-ministro José Eduardo Cardozo, pediu que ele fosse declarado impedido por sua atuação no tribunal e por ter compartilhado em redes sociais convocação para um ato pela rejeição das contas de Dilma. Questionado pelo presidente do processo de impeachment, ministro Ricardo Lewandowski, o procurador disse ter divulgado em sua rede social comentário sobre uma convocação, que considerou pertinente.



Ânimos exaltados. Senadores discutem no primeiro dia do julgamento do impeachment, marcado por pedidos de suspeição das testemunhas de um lado e de outro

Image 3 - Spirits running high.

Source: O Globo, August 26th of 2016.

In the news above, "Witnesses turn into target. On the 1st day of Dilma's trial, defense and prosecution raise suspicion about deponents", the first paragraph draws attention, which brings the conclusions presented in this article about the coverage's emptying of politics while emphasizing that the debate held in the trial should be technical and not political - even though the newspaper also leaves aside the technical aspects over the period analyzed as demonstrated by the analysis of the variables of the news framework presented before: "The first day of trial of the impeachment of the removed president, Dilma Rousseff, was marked by an attempt to politicize the process even more, deflating the technical debate." (Jungblut et al, 2016)

Final considerations - the depolitization of the coup

When looking at the variables analyzed, it is possible to realize that the journalistic coverage of the period of which the national congress worked for the

deposition of President Dilma Rousseff was favorable to her dismissal. This inference, however, does not come from quantitatively significant data, but from a perspective crossing the variables. This highlights the importance of research that avoids very broad categories, opting for the verification of the coverage's minutiae, as suggested by Mathes and Kohring (2008). In short, in the three newspapers analyzed, the press favored the impeachment, even without supporting it emphatically. It is precisely this pretence of neutrality that we are calling here "normalization of the coup".

In the absence of crime of responsibility, the facts to be reported were in the political game between adversaries. Thus, the coverage used characters to lead the stories (the resource of personalization). In less than 15% of the corpus, these characters were associated with the roles of victim, villain or hero. This is also a factor of normalization, as it uniformes the fields in conflict, as if they were in equality of dispute and of reasons. Dilma Rousseff was framed in all the roles, depending on the context in which the news was inserted, but was certainly more approached as a villain for her own incompetence or as the victim of her persecutors (who were smart and devious in the political game), having possessed little chance to be portrayed as heroin that leads the resistance to the attack of the opponents.

Therefore, the textual news framework emphasized conflict and political game; without moral judgments about the conduct of actors and processes, putting the ordinary world of politics as the cause of conflicts, which, in our vision, ended up naturalizing the coup as impeachment and the impeachment as an acceptable event in a democracy and especially as a everyday political event such as any other political vote. In turn, the visual framework reinforced the image of politics as inhabited by figures distant from society, in purely technocratic situations with no ties to social demands. Unlike what was imagined, the images also strengthened a vision of "politics as usual", not denouncing the extraordinary character of a petition for impeachment.

This kind of pragmatic coverage (Albæk et al., 2014) favors what authors like Wood and Flinters (2014, p. 152) treat as depolitization, a phenomenon related to the growth of mistrust in democracy. They define depolitization as a movement of displacement of political decision from the center of the political system - in the sense of deresponsibilization by decision - to other social spheres. But not only the political system is depoliticized; the authors also deal with societal and discursive depolitization. In the first, in which the media act together with other groups of interest, public affairs are removed from the agenda of political deliberation. And

discursive depolitization is operated by⁸ *the refusal* of contingency (which characterizes the realm of politics), is the spread among individuals that certain subjects are "normal" and "natural", in addition to the accession to the logic that "there are no alternatives". The result of this broad process of depolitization is, according to the authors, provision for a disinterested democratic culture, opening a dangerous space for an anti-political environment (see also Vimiro, Maia, 2017)

The results of the research on the coverage of the three newspapers allow thus to affirm that the tone of the news was highly depoliticized, it did not present the impeachment/coup as the object of public discussion, but as a normal fact of the daily routine in the Palácio do Planalto. The population watched the episodes of a boring soup opera, which script is already common in political news. As defined by the authors, "Depoliticized politics, therefore, would present little debate about the main social issues or political options alongside a very sterile political scenario in terms of public engagement and social dynamism" (Wood & Flinders, 2014, p. 159).

Therefore, the impeachment was essentially presented as legitimate for the population, as its dimension as a democratic rupture was rarely on focus. The coverage was dedicated to arrange the different actors as favorable or contrary to the petition, and was absent from discussing the controversies and negative consequences that could involve the process. This becomes evident in the variable "treatment recommendations", where the news took a stand (11.58% favor and 6.67% against) without discussing what this represented to democracy. Another indication in this direction is the confluence between the variables "definition of the problem" and "causes of the problem" that had greater⁹ incidence in the political dispute. Broadly, Brazilian journalism treated the issue as political, with political causes and merely political consequences, and it didn't emphasize the impacts on the democratic order or even the population.

Thus, we have coverage classified as pragmatic (Albæk et al., 2014), with information content that was restricted to recording facts. The fact for the three newspapers was about an impeachment process of a president without the presence of a crime of responsibility. As far as this absence of crime didn't consist at least of a reflection with discussion about its implications, the newspapers ended up treating the event, even though formally according to the general principles that

⁸ Biroli and Mantovani (2014, p. 204) observe something similar in relation to the journalistic coverage of the corruption process of the so-called "mensalão", also of the Workers' Party. According to the authors: "the News are presented, in turn, as narrative attached to facts and, as such, not positioned. The angle presented as legitimate for coverage is naturalized at the same time as the positions in dispute, which would involve distinct perspectives for the production of the news, are excluded or domesticated as reactions to facts."

⁹ As a matter of curiosity, we had an initial check of all the titles of 2202 subjects and only 36 present the word coup. And in all, it was only to emphasize that certain political actor considers that it is in fact a coup or not, or that raises the thesis of a coup.

make journalism a reference of reality, as something inexorable and undebatable, therefore, without the possibility of deliberation. The political choice was reduced to simply taking a stand in favor or against it, as represented in the news by the positions of the political actors involved, divided into two opposing groups.

Future research and even critiques need to be attentive of this way to "implicitly" support a certain side triggered by this so-called independent journalism. This "super neutral" journalism, which only didn't take position in appearances, acted as normalizer of the coup, which was possible to demonstrate by the relation between the variables facilitated by the multimodal framework.

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