New Steps of the Coup: the framing of the Pension Reform on Jornal Nacional

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to analyze the framing made on *Jornal Nacional (JN)*, of *Rede Globo* Television, of the pension reform presented by President Michel Temer (*MDB*). The hypothesis of this study is that *JN* provided a favorable framework for the Reform, with reports that highlighted the need for the measure approval. However, due to the difficulty inherent to proposing a bill to Congress, the narratives of the news program have proven to be contradictory by exposing the loss of political support and the conflicts between the government and part of the allied base. The analysis looks at 20 reports, from December 1st, 2017, to January 26th, 2018, with the highest concentration of news between December 4th and 16th, when Temer intended to submit the Reform to a plenary vote.

Introduction

Michel Temer (Brazilian Democratic Movement - *MDB*) became President on August 31st, 2016, following Dilma Rousseff's impeachment (Workers' Party -*PT*), in a lawsuit that was considered by analysts and political scientists as a coup to break the institutional logic (Souza, 2016; Santos, 2017). In addition, *MDB* was accused of betraying the previously signed alliance with Dilma and PT in the 2014 presidential elections. Nevertheless, the closing cycle of the 12 years of the Lula era showed signs of weakening. Singer and Loureiro (2016) identify that the waves of mass protests that began in June 2013, the tight re-election that secured Dilma's victory in 2014, and the disintegration of the government coalition in the National Congress, in addition to the adoption of tax adjustment policy that protected the economic elites in 2015, together represented signs of the weakness of the *PT* government.

Even before the impeachment took effect, Vice President Temer released a document entitled *Ponte para o Futuro* (Bridge to the Future) on October 29th, 2015, whose main proposal was to promote a tax balance through adjustments and cuts in public spending. Mancebo (2017, p.880) points out that *Ponte para o Futuro* is a program that intends to insert the country into an ultraconservative neoliberal policy by deepening the role of the lean and supposedly efficient minimal state; increasing the participation of the private sector; loosening the labour market regulation; and expanding international competition by leaving the door wide open to the sale of national assets.

Among the prerogatives of the *Ponte para o Futuro*, the principles of Labor and Social Security Reforms are worth highlighting due to the fact that they were presented by Temer as a way out of the economic and fiscal crises. Such reforms had the hegemonic press as their main guarantor. Therefore, within this scenario, we intend to analyze the framework of the Pension Reform in the *National Journal (JN)*, a news program.

The article brings the hypothesis that *Rede Globo* aired reports in *JN* seeking a positive framework to the adoption of the reform, treating it as a prerogative for the fiscal adjustments needed by the country. However, due to some variables, such as the loss of political support, the difficulty of submitting a controversial theme to a vote within a few days of parliamentary recess and the government conflicts with its own allies, such contradictions came to surface. Even though it sought to build a narrative entirely in favor of the Reform, *JN* showed that there were disputes and obstacles to the government strategy.

As theoretical bases, two theoretical axes were established: (a) the media as a political actor (Albuquerque, 2012; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Lima, 2006; Azevedo, 2006); and (b) the debate on public opinion (Bourdieu, 1983; Habermas, 1984; Lippmann, 2010). To test the hypothesis, 20 reports were selected on the pension reform broadcast by the television news in December 2017 and in January 2018. Framing theory was applied as the analysis methodology and therefore allowed us to list four interpretative axes: (a) Crucial Reform; (b) approval of the reform strategies; (c) loss of political support and reform at risk; and (d) News Network and the framing of the facts.

The Media as Political Actor and the Public Opinion

Discussing the role of the press as a social and political actor in Brazil necessarily refers to the debate about media systems linked to political systems. Here, the media was deployed and remains attached to economic and political groups, as is the case of *Rede Globo* and other conglomerates. Lima (2006, p. 97) points to concentration and cross-ownership as fundamental characteristics of the Brazilian media, in which a group detains control in the various media (radio, TV, print, portals etc.).

According to Lima (2006), family hegemonies are a feature of communication in Brazil since business journalism began in the first decades of the 20th century, which was the moment when mass press developed, reaching also radio and later in the 70's, with the emergence and consolidation of TV as a hegemonic media. The author explains the adoption of the Trusteeship system in broadcasting, in which the state has the power of concessions and private initiative is the main performer, coupled with the economic deregulation of the media in general, the history of political pressure and the lobbying by communication companies upon governments, the concentration of media ownership and the promiscuous relations between the communication and political fields in the country.

Lima (2006) explains that in the 1990's and 2000's, the deepening of yet another feature of the Brazilian media system has occurred: internationalization, with the law of Cable TV (1995), and the emergence and consolidation of internet. Digital technologies strengthen blogs, alternative sites and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, among others, that did not break the hegemony of the big groups, but open prospects for new mass media agents. As Albuquerque and Magalhães (2014) point out, the ideological framework of national politics is increasingly strained by phenomena such as the Expanded Progressive Blogosphere

(BPA), sites of criticism to the press, like the online media observatories or even by the entrance, via the internet, of journalistic coverage made by international press vehicles.

Therefore, it is relevant to discuss the relationship between political and media systems, which has been analyzed by several scholars. Hallin and Mancini (2004), cited by Chaves (2017), differentiate three ideal models and seek to apply them in Western countries systems: (1) Polarized Pluralist; (2) Democratic corporatist; and (3) Liberal. The Polarized Pluralist model (European Romance language-speaking countries, such as Italy, France, Spain and Portugal) is typical of countries with an authoritarian past and a recent democratization. They are marked by strong state intervention in the economy and low legal/rational regulation of the communication industry. They have low newspaper circulation and strong electronic media.

With respect to the Democratic Corporatist model (Nordic countries, Germany and Switzerland), it is characterized by great circulation of newspapers, high degree of professionalism of the journalistic class and high political parallelism, since press is traditionally linked to social movements and politicians, and seen by the citizens as an institution for the functioning of democracy.

 Finally, in the Liberal model (present in countries like USA, UK and Canada), the communications sector is organized under the market logic. Thus, the field of communication is markedly independent from the state and the political field. These are historically liberal-democratic states with little intervening tradition.

As Albuquerque (2012) points out, one must be cautious not to apply models without taking into account the specificities, for example, of the Brazilian case, which differs from the countries Hallin and Mancini (2004) took as a parameter. However, even with such remarks, Azevedo (2006, p. 92) argues that Brazil can be framed in the Polarized-Pluralist model for having

> (…) an authoritarian past (which of course implied the absence of press freedom for long periods), a relatively recent democratization, a partisan collision dynamics in presidential contests polarized between leftist forces (1989, 1994 and 1998) or center-left and center-right (from 1989 to 2002) , thus setting a clear polarized pluralism, although in recent years sparingly.

Albuquerque (2012) argues that, although Brazil always possessed a high degree of political parallelism and a close link between the fields of media and politics, since the consolidation of journalism in the business model, news vehicles of the country have sought to incorporate the discourse of journalistic objectivity. It reveals an adherence to the American model by the newspaper companies even if, at times, Brazilian press gives up such principles and takes clearly biased positions,

as in the case of the overturn of President Dilma Rousseff (*PT*) and even in the coverage on the *PT* governments.

As Albuquerque (2012) emphasizes, in some cases, as in Brazilian television journalism, the adoption of the informational model and predominantly under a supposed objectivity over openly interpretive and opinionated content has been precisely a way of camouflaging the historical position of the conglomerates which constantly interfere with the formation of public opinion and political decisions, especially in periods of instability.

Lima (2006) highlighted some relevant episodes of media activity in the political context, as the preference of *Globo* organizations for candidate Fernando Collor de Mello (National Reconstruction Party- *PRN*), manifested in the replay of the last debate between then candidates Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (*PT*) and Collor in the second round of the presidential elections of 1989 and in the support of the election and re-election of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Brazilian Social Democracy Party-*PSDB*) in 1994 and 1998.The presidential election of 2002 marked an important political change in Brazil. According to Albuquerque and Magalhães (2014), since 2003, with the victory of a center-left party, a change has taken place in the vicinity until then existing between mainstream media and the federal government.

Notwithstanding, during Dilma's impeachment, the role of the major media creating the conditions and the opinion climate necessary for the execution of the process became visible. During the period, the hegemonic prevalence of traditional media companies appeared, which can position themselves as interested and decisive agents in political events of national interest, especially in times of crisis.

Concerning Temer's government, one can recognize adhesion in a few moments and a critical positioning in others, even so because of the President's low popularity. According to a *Ibope* research, released on April 5th, 2018, the President is rated as bad or awful by 72% of respondents and as good or great by only 6%.[1]

The role of the media as a political actor also relates to the debate about its performance in the public space and in the formation of public opinion. Even though the discussion on public opinion, dates back to the classics and to liberals like Locke and Tocqueville, it became known in the field of Communication since the pioneering book of Walter Lippmann was released in 1922. Lippmann's argument on public opinion is that it is formed based on individuals' reactions to a world perceived or drawn in their minds. Such image of the world, formulated from cognitive shortcuts, is considered by the author as a pseudo-environment. Based on

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[1] Retrieved July, 2nd, 2018 from: <http://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2018-04/pesquisa-cniibope-aponta-que-popularidade-de-temer-mantem-se-estavel>.

the interference of the mass media, which were beginning to show signs of their manipulation power, the author casts a critical eye. Lippmann (2010) questions the legitimacy of public opinion within mass society, since individuals, in his opinion, would not be having a right access to reality. The author argues that, due to the complexity of the world, it would become increasingly difficult to learn it on one's own, independently. To form opinions, it would be necessary to trigger the information conveyed by the media. But this would be an access to the world mediated by the filters imposed by the media. Among these filters there would be components that were clouding the vision of reality, as stereotypes or personal perceptions over collective interests.

Bourdieu (1983), on the other hand, in the article *Public Opinion Does Not Exist*, questions the idea of public opinion from the analysis of a number of surveys done by specialized institutes, which classify opinions expressed by the interviewees in many contexts as truths. The author states that there were many methodological distortions in the collection and analysis of the gathered data. He uses three postulates as a starting point for his criticism. The first implicit assumption is that any poll assumes that everyone can have an opinion or that the production of an opinion is within everyone's reach. The second postulate is that there is a premise that all opinions have value. And the third postulate is that, by asking the same question to everyone, there is an implicit assumption that there is a consensus on the issues or an agreement on the issues that deserve to be discussed.

It is crucial to bring Habermasian contribution to this debate. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas (1984) speaks on a decadent public sphere and points to a pre-fabricated public opinion in order to meet market interests.

> Therefore, in general, the criticism made to a process of emptying in policy and political debate is correct; to the inconsistency of what has been called the public opinion; to quantitative and qualitative methods of data gathering of this opinion; to the bureaucratization and increasing commodification of public space; to manipulation; and the role that media and marketing exercise in this sense (Almeida, 2007, p. 1).

Habermas, however, in his current works, after the 1980's shift with the theory of communicative action, begins to discuss the existence of a multiplicity of public spheres, in which subjects are constantly restructuring their relations, as opposed to an only totalizing public sphere. In the perspective of Oliveira and Fernandes (2018), there is a degree of complexity in society that prevents one from seeing it in its entirety. The end of the ideal of the single and singular public sphere

makes it possible to observe the existence of overlapping and connected arenas, supranational, national, regional and local. In this sense, it is no longer a public realm under the domain of the interests of commercial bourgeoisie and one cannot work with the vision of a prefabricated and manipulated public opinion.

Michel Temer and Pension Reform

Upon taking office after the departure of Dilma Rousseff, government Temer announced a package of neoliberal measures, which included the Labor Reform and the Pension Reform, among other initiatives of fiscal adjustment. In this sense, one of the first actions of President Temer (*MDB*), still acting, was to edit Provisional Measure No. 726, on the same day of his inauguration, May 12th, 2016, transferring the National Social Security Institute (*INSS*) from the Ministry of Labor to the Ministry of Social and Agrarian Development. The Ministry of Finance received the National Superintendency of Supplementary Pension (*Previc*), the National Supplementary Pension Council, the Supplementary Pension Board, the Social Security Resources Board and the Social Security Information and Technology Company (*Dataprev*).

Such measures already announced the intention of the government to dismantle Social Security as a body for social protection. Since then, the president has come to treat it as a source of problems for the federal government as a way of justifying a drastic reform. Another intention envisaged with these measures was to open up the public pension supplementary bodies to the private pension market.

Under the allegation that the Pension Plan accumulates a deficit of approximately R$ 270 billion, representing the main factor of imbalance of the public accounts, on December 5th, 2016,[2] the Executive Branch sent to the Chamber of Deputies the Proposed Constitutional Amendment n° 287 (Brasil, 2016), with indicatives for a pension reform, which, if approved, will make the right to benefits unfeasible for the system's taxpayer. It will mean the extinction of social security, especially for the most sensitive sectors of society. To public servants, the proposal represents the end of full retirement, forcing them to hire supplementary pension services.

With *PEC* 287 (Brasil, 2016), the Special Welfare Policy (*RPPS*) – for public servants -, the General Social Welfare Policy (*RGPS*) and social welfare will undergo a set of restrictions. The most relevant of them are: (a) the value of public

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[2] Retrieved January, 20[th,] 2018 from:
<http://www.camara.gov.br/proposicoesWeb/prop_mostrarintegra;jsessionid=097FD1E7A385683028C2 0F38239BE71E.proposicoesWebExterno2?codteor=1514975&filename=PEC+287/2016>.

servants' retirement is limited to the ceiling of the *RGPS* benefit, and it is incumbent upon each entity to implement a supplementary pension scheme for benefits above this amount; (b) to receive the pension benefit in the amount of the ceiling, both servants and the *RGPS* insured will have to contribute for 49 years; (c) Restriction rules are created for families of retirees and pensioners, with a prohibition on the accumulation of benefits in the event of the death of one of the insured spouses, as well as on the number of dependents; (d) the Continuous Benefit may be a sum lower than the minimum wage; (e) the minimum age for retirement was set by the government at 65 years for men and women without distinction; and (f) rural workers will have to contribute as a percentage of the minimum wage in the same way as urban workers.

In order to clarify Social Security accounting, Senator Paulo Paim, of the *PT / RS*, proposed a Parliamentary Inquiry Commission (*CPI*), which included Senator Romero Jucá, Senate Government Leader and *MDB* National President. After hearing representatives of civil society and the various spheres of government in 31 sessions, the CPI concluded that there is no deficit in the Social Security. What does happen is, among other factors, poor management of resources, lack of supervision, non-collection of debts from taxpayers and diversion of Social Security resources to other areas of government through the Federal Income Unbundling (*DRU*) mechanism.

Background: an analysis methodology

The first systematization of the concept of framing, called framing analysis, was carried out by Erving Goffman in his work *Frame analysis: an essay on the organization of experience*[3]*, published in 1974*. The framing idea (frames) derived from Goffman's concern to understand how each particular subject classified and organized a given social situation and attributed meaning to the reality around him or her. For the author, "frameworks are understood as more general interpretive frameworks, socially constructed, that allow people to give meaning to social events and situations" (Goffman *apud* Porto, 2004, p. 78).

During the period of research, Goffman paid attention to the issue of the audience in order to check how the public received and interpreted the information framed by the media. However, the first application of the concept of framing in the field of communication was published in 1978 by sociologist Gaye Tuchman in *Making News*. The research sought to demonstrate how the framing of information

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[3]The translated version arrived in bookstores in 2012 under the title: *Os quadros da experiência social: uma perspectiva de análise (*The frames of social experience: a perspective of analysis*)*.

can act in the sense of reinforcing political power by helping to construct or define a given reality (Porto, 2004).

Later, after numerous studies have broadened the notions of framing with analyzes of media discourse in the social and political spheres, Campos (2014) points out that there is still some theoretical imprecision in framework studies within political communication. However, he does not think the main cause of inaccuracies lies in the polysemy of concepts. According to the author, it would be in the absence of techniques capable of clarifying and rigorously identifying what each author may call framing. Considering that the construction of mediatic frameworks follows an informal routine, in which each researcher categorizes discourses and rhetoric by similarities and differences, and considering what is recurrent in the coverage of a given theme (Tankard Jr., 2001), it is necessary to resort to more accurate procedures of analysis for a correct application of the methodology.

In this perspective, the notion of interpretative packages (Gamson; Modigliani, 1993) is sought, since the framework presupposes the articulation of certain discourses in a given formal organization. Maia and Vimieiro (2011) define interpretative packages as groups formed by certain symbolic devices whose essence consists on framing. They are defined, in the view of the authors, as a certain standard in a given text, consisting of several elements.

> These elements are not words, but components or devices of previously defined frames. Instead of hardcoding the framework as a whole, we suggest dividing the framework into their isolated elements, which should be easily encoded in a content analysis. After that, an analysis of groups of these components should reveal the frameworks. (Mattes & Kohring, 2008, p.263 *apud* Maia; Vimieiro, 2011, p.261)

For a framing to occur, in the view of Gamson and Modigliani (1993), some devices that form the interpretive package are needed. As a way of identifying the interpretative packages, the authors divided the symbols into framing devices and reasoning devices. The symbols that make up the framing devices consist of metaphors - slogans or buzzwords, representations or visual images. On the other hand, reasoning devices are formed by elements that emphasize the differences by means of causal analysis (roots), consequences (effects) and appeals to principles (moral judgment). This analysis is based on the interpretative packages in order to identify the framework applied by *JN* in the approach to Pension Reform.

Framework for Pension Reform in *JN*

Choosing the *Jornal Nacional* is justified by two aspects: television still enjoys significant importance, being the preferred media by 63% of respondents (Ibope Inteligência, 2016); and the fact that the TV news still occupy strategic places in the television schedules, functioning recurrently as a collective expression of social reality construction. In addition, *JN* is the oldest and most watched television news program, with the highest ratings, adding 30 average points a year, [4] according to a survey published in December 14th, 2017.

The sample covered the month of December 2017, as it was the period in which the negotiations for the approval of the Pension Reform were intensified, until January 26th, 2018, the month before the Reform vote in the Chamber of Deputies, initially scheduled for February 19th.

For the selection of the *corpus*, we used the collection of *JN* editions, published on the *Jornal Nacional's* website[5], whose descriptors point to the Pension Reform both in the report headline and in the content of the materials conveyed during the period. The sample comprised 20 reports on the subject as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Reports conveyed by *JN* on Pension Reform

Date	Report	Report Length	Length of *JN*
12/01/2017	Life Expectancy Increases and Impacts Retirement Calculation	2min24s	41min04s
Week 1	**Total**	**2min24s**	**41min04s**
12/04/2017	Government speeds pace of meetings with allies to vote Welfare	3min03s	42min14s
12/04/2017	Current Welfare contributes to inequality, says World Bank	6min20s	42min14s
12/05/2017	Government does the math and thinks Welfare can be voted in 2017	3min18s	46min50s
12/06/2017	*PMDB* and *PTB* will force members to vote for Welfare Reform	3min09s	35min00s
12/07/2017	Government intensifies search of votes in the Chamber of Deputies to approve	2min48s	46min05s

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[4] Retrieved January, 18th, 2018 from: <https://www.terra.com.br/diversao/tv/blog-sala-de-tv/bom-de-ibope-jn-se-aproxima-dos-30-pontos-de-media-no-no,b40044f0fe3a0f13adb74a0cc7ca918e2qqn6w6c.html>.
[5] Retrieved August, 28th, 2018 from: <http://g1.globo.com/jornalnacional/>.

	Welfare		
12/09/2017	Temer makes meeting at *Alvorada* to discuss Pension Reform	2min24s	42min01s
Week 2	**Total**	**21min02s**	**3h32min11s**
12/11/2017	Pension reform begins to be discussed in the Chamber on Thursday (14)	2min54s	41min29s
12/12/2017	Temer admits that Welfare vote may be postponed until February	2min47s	45min08s
12/14/2017	Date of vote on Welfare is a contradiction between Jucá and Temer	4min15s	35min10s
12/14/2017	Maia postpones vote on Pension Reform to February in the Chamber of Deputies	4min23s	46min43s
12/15/2017	Temer says vote on Welfare was postponed to avoid embarrassment	3min04s	41min33s
12/16/2017	*PSDB* promises to punish deputies who vote against Pension Reform	2min42s	40min57s
Week 3	**Total**	**20min05s**	**4h11min**
12/18/2017	In the effort for Welfare, *PMDB* says there is no room for betrayal	3min48s	41min16s
Week 4	**Total**	**3min48s**	**41min16s**
12/26/2017	I do not see it as blackmail, says Marun about the Pension Reform - video 42 seconds	42s	41min10s
12/27/2017	NE Governors Respond to Marun's Speech on Funding by *Caixa*	2min45s	42min03s
Week 5	**Total**	**3min27s**	**2h3min13s**
01/12/2018	Country cannot approve structural reforms, says Standard & Poor's	2min56s	42min58s
Week 6	**Total**	**2min56s**	**43min58s**
01/22/2018	Hole in Welfare fund in 2017 was the largest in history: almost R$ 270 billion	2min23s	41min15s
01/25/2018	In 2017, public debt grew R$ 447 billion and reached a record of R$ 3.6 trillion	43s	45min56s
01/26/2018	IR chart has not kept up with inflation for more than two decades	2min49s	40min39s

Week 7	Total	5min55s	2h7min40s
	Total	59min37s	14h0min22s

Source: prepared by the researchers.

As it can be seen in Table 1, there was a government effort, corroborated by the media - in this case *Globo* at *JN* -, to try to construct the idea that the Pension Reform is essential for the country due to the growth of public spending, which would put Brazil's economic situation at risk. In addition, it tried to show that the Reform could be voted on and passed by the Chamber still in 2017. However, the reports reveal that both the government's speech and that of *JN* were insufficient to convince the deputies, since in the week of December 11th to 16th, when it could be put to a vote, it was suspended for not having enough votes. This shows that the government was fragile in approving the Reform and that the alarmist speech of the media did not have effects in the government bench, revealing a more fragile government, besides the infeasibility to vote such a controversial subject at the end of the year, just a few days before the parliamentary recess. In terms of length, it is observed that, despite the biased coverage of the newscast with subjects that pointed to the risks in case of non-approval of the Reform, the time allocated to the subject was relatively small - 59 minutes and 37 seconds in a total of 14 hours and 22 seconds, which means 7% of the total.

Based on the reports of *JN*, it can be noticed that, from the 20 stories that were broadcasted from December 1st 2017 to January 26th 2018, most of them concentrated in December when there was a government effort to try to put the reform vote in the Chamber of Deputies. As it can be seen in Table 1, concerning the distribution of articles per week, the greatest number of reports was in the second and third weeks, during the period from December 4th to 16th December, a total of 12, six to each week, which corresponds to 60% of the total, i.e. 30% each, respectively. If the reporting times are added, this value is even higher - 68.98% of the total time, 35.29% in the second week and 33.69% in the third week. There was an attempt to emphasize the need for the Pension Reform even with a very short deadline due to the parliamentary recess in the first week of December. However, in the second week, facing an unfavorable situation, both the government and *JN* had to change the tone of the narrative by having to admit that the Reform would not go to a vote and would be put off to 2018, due to the lack of political support in the Congress.

Quantitative mapping with the help of MAXQDA qualitative analysis software identified the main interpretive packages of *JN*, which were structured into three main frameworks, as pointed out in Table 2.

Table 2. Frameworks carried by *JN* in the analyzed period

Framework	Description	Total News	Length
Crucial reform	The Reform is essential to reduce the ceiling on public spending, so that the country will grow again, expand the supply of jobs and reduce inflation and interest rates. One of the pillars of fiscal adjustment.	05 (25%)	14min39s (24)
Strategies to Reform approval	This framework refers to the negotiations around the adoption of the Reform, in which the political field becomes a space of dispute between winners and losers, with emphasis in the negotiations signed among parliamentarians. Negotiations based on pork barrel practices are included. Emphasis on strategies and on the scoreboard.	06 (30%)	17min36s (29%)
Loss of political support and Reform at risk	The framing relates to the news articles that disclose the fragility of the government with loss of political support, in addition to the difficulties in taking the Pension Reform to vote in the Congress and guaranteeing its approval. It also shows resistance of political groups concerning the proposal and conflicts between the government and the allied base.	09 (45%)	27min22s (47%)
	Total	100%	100%

Source: prepared by the researchers.

A mapping of the 20 reports was done based on the framework categories listed above. Out of the total twenty, nine fall under the category *Loss of political support and Reform at risk*, which means 45%. As for the length, we have 27 minutes and 22 seconds, which represents 47%. On the other hand, the *Strategies to reform approval* framing had six reports (30%) which combined lasted 17 minutes and 36 seconds (29%). Finally, *Crucial Reform* got five reports (25%) and 14 minutes and 39 seconds (24%). In this sense, the data show that, in spite of major government mobilization and favorable media coverage, there was fragility about political support, which led to the postponement of the vote until 2018.

Crucial reform

The *Crucial reform* framing appeared in five reports of *JN*. Television news has awarded space to specialists in economics and clarified the importance of the reform, linked to the end of the recession and to the balance of fiscal accounts. Pension reform was treated as the main obstacle to economic growth, upturn in employment and the end of inflation.
Table 3 shows the reports.

Table 3. Crucial reform

Date	Report
12/01 2017	Life Expectancy Increases and Impacts Retirement Calculation
12/04/2017	Current Welfare contributes to inequality, says World Bank
01/22/2018	Hole in Welfare fund in 2017 was the largest in history: almost R$ 270 billion
01/25/2018	In 2017, public debt grew R$ 447 billion and reached a record of R$ 3.6 trillion
01/26/2018	IR chart has not kept up with inflation for more than two decades

Source: prepared by the researchers.

The first report, entitled *Life Expectancy Increases and Impacts Retirement Calculation*, is an attempt not only to schedule the issue of Pension Reform, but to frame it as a necessary and urgent measure due to changes in the expectation of life, which would increase the number of beneficiaries. The increased longevity of the Brazilian population appears as a problem to be solved urgently. According to the report, the increase in life expectancy will impact on actual gains for retirement, with a downfall of the value received over the years. Throughout the narrative, that brings data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*IBGE*), the television news explains the damage to citizens ' pockets if the current scenario remains unchanged. In this sense, it explains: "The logic is as follows: the more time you have to enjoy, the more the benefit money has to last. Only the years of contribution remain the same. So, Welfare divides the cake into more slices, which are smaller than before "(*JN*, December 1st).

In the December 4th report, *Current Welfare contributes to inequality, says World Bank*, the news brings a connection between the data published by the World Bank and the government spending with Welfare, which is, according to the report, the main obstacle to the adjustments that the country needs. Without mentioning

the fact that the World Bank study was commissioned by the Government's economic team[6], *JN* declares that the fiscal hole promoted by Welfare inhibits investments in health, education and road building.

Upon data analysis, it can be noted that the framing was only resumed in January when the government had lost the first battle by postponing the vote from December 2017 to 2018. On January 22nd, 2018, the report *Security Hole in 2017 was the biggest in history: almost R$ 270 billion* informed, through an interview with the Social Security Secretary, Marcelo Caetano, that the Pension deficit grows in approximately tens of billions of *reais* per year, a sum that would be enough for the government to invest in areas such as education, housing and security. At the same time, the January 25th and 26th reports, broadcasted with the headlines *In 2017, government debt grew R$ 447 billion and reached a record of R$3.6 trillion* and *IR table does not follow inflation for more than two decades* associate pension reform approval and a solution to the troublesome fiscal situation, as well as assign the responsibility for the growth of public debt to welfare. In the voice of presenter William Bonner: "The welfare hole has a great weight in this account. The delay in approval of the reform was one of the factors cited by the agency Standard & Poor's to downgrade Brazil at the beginning of this month ".

Strategies to Reform approval

The *Strategies for Approving the Reform* framework appeared in six articles of *JN*. From December 4th to 11th , when there was the possibility of putting the reform to a vote in Congress, *JN* acted in line with the Government in order to create the expectation that the measure could be approved still in 2017 and showed the government strategies in pursue of support. The news did not mention the difficulties and the possible postponement of the vote. Table 4 shows the reporting of this framework.

Table 4. Strategies to Reform approval

Date	Report
12/04/2017	Government speeds pace of meetings with allies to vote Welfare
12/05/2017	Government does the math and thinks Welfare can be voted in 2017
12/06/2017	*PMDB* and *PTB* will force members to vote for Welfare Reform
12/07/2017	Government intensifies search of votes in the Chamber of Deputies to

[6] Commissioned by Temer, World Bank study defends pension reform. Retrieved January, 20th, 2018 from: <https://www.cartacapital.com.br/economia/Encomendado-por-Temer-estudo-do-Banco-Mundial-defende-reforma-da-previdencia>.

	approve Welfare
12/08/2017	Temer makes meeting at *Alvorada* to discuss Pension Reform
12/11/2017	Pension reform begins to be discussed in the Chamber of Deputies on Thursday (14)

Source: prepared by the researchers.

The *Strategies to reform approval* framework can be found in six reports, concentrated mainly from December 4th to 11th, 2017, when there was the possibility that the Government would put the constitutional amendment on the issue to a vote in Congress. The news program features a stream of news that shows how the measure could be put to discussion and vote in Congress and how there was strong mobilization by the government towards the allied base. Nevertheless, it does not make a critical contextualization clearly pointing out the difficulties of the government in obtaining enough votes on such a controversial topic and in an unfavorable moment, since it was a few days before the parliamentary recess.

The second framework focused mainly on the scoreboard or in the battle for the approval of the reform. In this framework, the reports highlighted the government efforts to get the 308 votes needed for approval in the Chamber of Deputies. Reports privileged only the government-friendly scoreboards showing daily the increased adhesions around the topic. On December 4th, the report *Government accelerates pace of meetings with allies to vote Welfare* indicates that the government has a base of 260 parliamentarians, but needs from 315 to 320 to bring the Reform to vote.

The reports of the 5th, *Government does the math and thinks Welfare can be voted in 2017*, and December 6th, *PMDB and PTB will compel MPs to vote in favor of Welfare*, deal with the necessary votes counting, indicating that the government did not yet have sufficient support for the approval of the Reform.

The report on the next day updates the score, with 270 favorable votes (*JN*, December 7th). Thus, it is perceived that the television news uses the *horse race* framework, very common in electoral periods, especially in situations in which the evolution of the campaign is conceived as a race among the candidates (Porto, 2004), to deal with the approval of the Reform. Nonetheless, in this game, there is no opponent. The news highlights only the favorable votes and remains silent about the efforts of the opposition or about how many lawmakers balk at the proposal, as in the report of December 7th , under the title "Government intensifies search for votes in the Chamber of Deputies to approve welfare", in which the President still

counted on 270 votes. Subsequent reports join the government battle in search of undecided deputies.

It is worth mentioning that during the analysis period, *JN* prioritized interviews with Reform-friendly politicians from the government base, as the report with excerpts of the interview with the Minister of Planning, Dyogo Oliveira, endorsing the relationship between economic growth and approval of the reform. In Oliveira's words: "The economic growth we are having and the positive expectations that all economists and market players have for the coming year and the next few years is closely tied to the reform agenda" (*JN*, December 7th, 2017). The television news also provided space for the Reform rapporteur in the Chamber of Deputies, Arthur Maia (Popular Socialist Party-*PPS*), who claimed that the change will correct and cut privileges. By promoting only the voices of the government and economists who support the changes without discussing any counterpoints, the television news agenda makes a skewed approach, bundling the responsibility for the fiscal imbalance in the public accounts to the way the benefit is structured.

Loss of political support and Reform at risk

The *Loss of political support and Reform at risk* had the largest number of reports – nine. *JN*, despite being aligned with the federal Government, in an attempt to play for pension reform, could not silence about the failure of the Government to put it to a vote. On December 12th, Temer announced at a press conference that he would seek to put the theme to vote in February. Then, on December 14th, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Rodrigo Maia (Democrats-*DEM*), announced that, in fact, the vote was postponed until the following year. Then the reports reveal conflicts in the allied base, such as the report on the 16th, in which the news report states that the *PSDB* has promised to punish those who did not vote in favor of the amendment. Table 5 shows the reports.

Table 5. Loss of political support and Reform at risk

Date	Report
12/12/2017	Temer admits that Welfare vote may be postponed until February
12/13/2017	Date of vote on Welfare is a contradiction between Jucá and Temer
12/14/2017	Maia postpones vote on Pension Reform to February in the Chamber of Deputies
12/15/2017	Temer says vote on Welfare was postponed to avoid embarrassment
12/16/2017	*PSDB* promises to punish deputies who vote against Pension Reform

12/17/2017	In the effort for Welfare, *PMDB* says there is no room for betrayal
12/26/2017	I do not see it as blackmail, says Marun about the Pension Reform - video 42 seconds
12/27/2017	NE Governors Respond to Marun's Speech on Funding by *Caixa*
01/12/2018	Country cannot approve structural reforms, says Standard & Poor's

Source: prepared by the researchers.

The reports disclose the contradictions in the news itself. Although it sought to schedule and frame the Pension Reform as an urgent and necessary measure, the television news ended up showing that the government was experiencing a delicate moment of loss of political support. Some reports show pork barrel practices, conflicts in the allied base and even clashes between governors of the Northeast with Congressman Carlos Marun (*MDB*), who had taken office on December 9th, 2017 at the Secretariat of Government precisely to be a political articulator at the Congress alongside political leaders.

Government fragility becomes evident in the news of the week from December 11th to 16th 2017 when it recognizes not having the political support to implement the Reform. Whereas there had been a strong mobilization in the previous week and *JN* ratified the government's speech without pointing out the difficulties and resistance to the allied base, it became clear in the pronouncements and decisions of the government and its articulators in the following week. On the 12th, Temer admitted that the Reform could be postponed. On December 13th, the report *Welfare vote date is a contradiction between Jucá and Temer* indicates the negative reaction of the market, as a falling dollar and rising stock market, after misunderstandings of parliamentarians around the issue. The news points out that, after Jucá's statement on the postponement of the vote until 2018, the mood of the market fluctuated and the Ibovespa index closed down more than 1% (*JN*, December 13th). On the 14th, Rodrigo Maia finally announced that the Reform had been postponed until February 2018.

The theme was once again defended by the news program in the report *Temer says Reform was postponed to avoid embarrassment*, in which the narrative brought the president's concern about the rise and fall of the financial market due to the non-approval of the Reform (JN, December 15th). However, the report already showed a fragile president without the necessary support base for the reforms that were his main promise in taking over the government after the coup against President Dilma.

The framework of patronage was present in some reports in which the Pension Reform was being discussed. Negotiations involving financial sums, political

offices and approval of projects that meet the interests of parliamentarians have become the hallmark of the Temer government. This is what happens in the reports that point the suspicious bargaining. While the reform project was following a calendar of approval, the newscast conveyed new government promises such as: releasing R$ 250 million to healthcare in Minas Gerais; approving projects of the liking of several groups, especially the ruralists; release of R$ 2 billion tp states and municipalities, as well as the return of positions to deputies who voted against the continuation of the accusations against Temer. On December 16th and 18th, the reports praised the government's negotiating position in order to secure more votes and use the newly created electoral fund, an essential funding for candidates in 2018, as a bargaining chip.

The television news also points out the importance of the reform to the business community by establishing a relationship between its approval and the increase of investments in the country. The subject *Temer admits that Welfare vote can be postponed until February*, published on December 12th, recounts the call that 150 entrepreneurs from various sectors have made to President Temer for its approval. In the same vein, reports in subsequent days sought to establish a relationship between the stability of the financial market and the approval of the reform.

The Minister of the Secretariat of Government, Carlos Marun (*MDB*), became involved in a controversy to act as the main articulator of the Government in the battle for the Reform. In a meeting with governors and mayors of the northeastern region of the country, he was accused of blackmail, by tying the release of funds from public banks to the States and municipalities in exchange for the support of Deputies to the pension reform[7]. With wide media visibility, *JN* just pointed out the event and aired part of an interview to Marun in which he justifies blackmailing as something important for the Country (*JN*, December 26th).

The news report failed to mention the highly pork barrel practices in the government, which could be seen in the December 27th report, with the headline *Governors of the NE react to Marun's talk about Caixa finances*. Despite mentioning the radicalism in the Minister's speech, the only speech shown by the report was that delivered by the government, especially President Temer, who praised the urgency of the Reform so that the country would not face radical situations such as those experienced in some European countries. The report did not grant voice to the governors of the North-East; it just mentioned an excerpt of the open letter directed to Temer, in which seven out of the nine governors stated that they would

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[7] Retrieved January, 18th, 2018 from: <http://economia.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,marun-admite-que-usa-banco-publico-para-pressionar-por-reforma-da-previdencia,70002131403>.

not hesitate to promote the political and legal responsibility of the officers involved if Marun's threat were confirmed.

The negative framework of disqualifying Temer government, even though unintentionally on behalf of JN, reappeared on January 12th, 2018. The report *Country cannot approve structural reforms ', says Standard Poor's & features* the downgrading of Brazil by the credit ratings agency. The report pointed out that the main staff economist, Lisa Schinellar, decided for the relegation for understanding that the fundamental problem of the country is the fiscal situation, because Brazil spends more than it collects. In this sense, the television news program invests in a framework that treats Social Security as the main obstacle to the country's fiscal stability.

News Network and the framing of the facts

Journalism theories point to one of the factors that interfere in the process of producing news with considerable weight, which are the sources. The news network is strategic for some editorials. Traquina (2001), when working with Structuralist Theory, explains that there is a strong relationship between the news vehicles and primary defining elements. According to the author, the practical pressures of the work, as, e.g., time, as well as the requirements of the supposed impartiality, are combined to produce an exaggerated access of the media to those who withhold privileged institutionalized positions. This occurs significantly in the case of the covering politics, with a faulty net of sources in the political institutions.

In Picture 6, the sources used throughout the news reports on the Pension Reform are mentioned. It becomes clear that the official sources linked to the government were consulted and, especially, that the opposition was silenced, since no representative or political leader of the opposition parties was heard. This shows a lack of the plurality of voices, which breaks the principles of journalism.

Table 6. News Network and their respective frameworks

Type of Framework	News Network
Crucial reform **(five reports)**	IBGE - (1) Conde Actuarial Consulting - (1) Edgar Vanjari (HR analyst) - (1) Newton Conde (welfare consultant) - (1) Martin Raiser (Director of World Bank in Brazil) - (1) Henrique Meirelles (Minister of Finance) - (1) Paulo Tafner (researcher at Fipe) - (1) Gustavo Veloso (administrative assistant) - (1) Dárcio Reis (Chief Financial Officer) - (1) José Pereira (retired) - (1)

	Helenio Barros (director of Fenajufe) - (1) Marcelo Caetano (Secretary of Social Security) - (1) National Treasury Department – (1) Cláudio Damasceno (President of the National Union of Tax revenue Auditors) - (1) Marcelo Nunes Alves (Accountant)-(1) Roberto Vertamatti (Director of Economics, Anefac) - (1)
Strategy for reform vote (six reports)	Michel Temer (President of the Republic) – (5) Rodrigo Maia (Congress President) – (5) Beto Mansur (PRB Deputy) – (4) Henrique Meirelles (Minister of Finance) - (1) PP (1), PTB (2), PRB (1), PSDB (1), DEM (1), PR (1) and MDB (1) Alberto Goldman (President of PSDB) – (2) Baleia Rossi (deputy and MDB leader) - (1) Rodrigo Pacheco (MDB Deputy) - (1) Ciro Nogueira (PP deputy) - (1) Arthur Maia (PPS deputy and rapporteur for the Reform) - (3) Eliseu Padilha (Minister of the Civil House) - (1) Gilberto Kassab (Minister of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communications) - (1) Marcelo Caetano (Secretary of Social Security) - (1) Arthur Lira (PP deputy) - (1) Aguinaldo Ribeiro (PP deputy) - (1) Dyogo Oliveira (Minister of Planning) - (1) Carlos Marun (Deputy and Minister of Secretary of Government) - (1) Eunicio Oliveira (President of the Senate) - (1)
Loss of political support and Reform at risk (nine reports)	Dyogo Oliveira - (1) Henrique Meirelles – (3) Michel Temer – (3) Rodrigo Maia - (3) João Martins (National Confederation of agriculture) - (1) Romero Jucá (leader of the Government in the Senate) - (2) Beto Mansur - (1) Arthur Maia - (2) Moody's and Fitch Agency – (1) Carlos Marun - (4) Geraldo Alckmin (Governor of São Paulo) – (2) Eliseu Padilha - (1) Governors of the North-East - (1) Lisa Schinellar (Standard & Poor's Economist) - (1)

Source: prepared by the researchers.

When taking the reports from the frameworks as a parameter, in the case of the *Crucial Reform* framework, it was found that *JN* sought supposedly more technical official sources to deal with the Pension Reform theme, as specialists in the subject. Nevertheless, the framework was extremely supportive of the Reform

with an alarmist speech about the risks of not voting the bill in Congress and having disastrous consequences in the future. There were virtually no dissonant voices, limiting the sources and characters to those who reproduced the dominant discourse.

At the same time, in the *Strategies to reform approval*, there was, again, a preponderance of official sources linked to the Government, mainly from the political sphere, in an optimistic tone regarding the possibility of approval of the reform still in December 2017. The news program did not care to listen to those who were against the reform in much of the news. In the six reports, official sources were predominantly of deputies, Ministers and governing leaders and President Temer himself.

With regard to the *Loss of political support and Reform at risk* framework, although it showed that there were conflicts in the allied base, the recurrence to the news network linked to the government was maintained. The biggest sticking point was the entrance by Mr Carlos Marun (*MDB*). Numbers are quite illustrative of how the news network was ruling markedly: President Temer and Rodrigo Maia lead as sources in eight of the 20 reports each (40%), followed by Mr Arthur Maia (Rapporteur), who has been the source in six reports (30%), just above Mr. Beto Mansur (Brazilian Republican Party-*PRB*), Henrique Meirelles and Mr. Carlos Marun (*MDB*) – each one being a source in five reports (25%).

Final considerations

Upon resuming the theoretical arguments and the empirical analysis of the reports of *Jornal Nacional,* it is important to highlight in the first place how television news, unlike the supposed model of journalistic objectivity, clearly positions itself as a political actor (Albuquerque, 2012; Azevedo, 2006; Lima, 2006). Nonetheless, despite attempting to interfere in the formation of public opinion, it is observed that there is a complexity in the understanding of the public sphere. If authors as Lippmann (2010), Bourdieu (1983) and Jürgen Habermas (1984) pointed to an audience that could be easily manipulated by the media, it can be noted, from the own review that Habermas makes of his works, that there are multiple public spheres that may be interconnected. In an environment where the media are present, individuals have access to diverse sources of information.

In that sense, from a perspective of extended and multiple public spheres, even companies like *Globo* network and its news programs will ultimately reveal the tensions between their interests and the political field and in relation to the opinion of the public. In the case of the Pension Reform coverage, *Jornal Nacional* showed

that there were strong resistances in the political field in approving the measure, just as it reflected opposing positions in the social fabric. Such contrast between the editorial line of *Globo* and the unfolding of the facts reveals that the attempt to impose a worldview in that particular case was thwarted.

This refers to another important point in the work of the press that concerns the news framework. As Tuchman points out, quoted by Porto (2004), the information framework can reinforce the political power by emphasizing certain aspects of reality at the expense of others. Such strategy is accomplished, according to Gamson & Midigliani (1993), in the articulation of the discourses, in the metaphors used or in relations of causality and in the attempt to point out possible developments of the facts. In the case of pension reform, *Jornal Nacional* sought to emphasize aspects that indicated possible causes for the urgency to change the retirement rules, as well as to create disastrous symbolic scenarios if the measure were not to be approved by Congress. In spite of being an important political actor, *JN* had to report that, in the multiplicity of public spheres and of interest disputes, there was no favorable climate to the approval of the reform, disclosing the weakness of the government and tensions in the political field. Thus, the media also reproduces the dynamics of society, marked by conflicts and power disputes.

Taking such issues as a starting point, it is important to point out more specific aspects of the news coverage by *Jornal Nacional* on the pension reform in the period studied, from the 20 stories aired on television news in this article. It is worth mentioning that the pension reform entered the television news agenda by means of a framework favorable to the arguments used by the government and by the economic team to justify such changes. During the short period of analysis, it is noteworthy that *JN* did not grant space to the critics of the Reform, social movements, or for politicians of parties opposing to the government.

Thus, by identifying the interpretative axes from the framework analysis, it was found that the coverage was clearly in favor of the pension reform. The data eventually revealed, in their reports, the contradictions and conflicts inherent to the political field. In 5 out of the 20 reports (which means 25% of the total), the emphasis was more technical, in the *Crucial Reform* framework, in which the news sought from the voices of experts to reveal a dramatic picture in the public accounts and the urgency of the reform, under the risk of putting the future of the country in jeopardy as a result of the increase in life expectancy and the welfare expenditure growth.

Throughout the decisive week to try to accomplish the vote and approval of the reform in Congress, namely the period from December 4 to 11, *JN* clearly took

a framework focused on the scoreboard and in the strategies of the government among the congressmen. The *strategies to reform approval* framework was present in six reports (30%), specifically restricted to such period, just before the parliamentary recess. During this period, JN expanded the governing voices. In the six reports, there was a significant emphasis on the need and urgency of the Reform with pronouncements and speeches by government-aligned politicians.

Lastly, while favoring the Reformation and using the space of open TV to try to make the discourse on the urgency of voting for the measure in Congress in 2017 succeed, *JN* eventually revealed the contradictions and conflicts of the political field. In nine of the 20 reports (45%), the operating framework for the *loss of political support and reform at risk* clearly shows the weakness of the government, as well as the loss of support by parliamentarians and the government conflicts with the allied base and governors. This became evident in the speeches of the governors themselves.

The explicit positioning of news from group *Globo* in favor of the reforms reinforces a tendency of news to promote a discussion devoted to neoliberal precepts in which welfare is treated as a barrier preventing the Federal Government from adjusting public accounts. It reveals how the media exerts the role of a political actor, even under the supposed idea of journalistic objectivity, which can be understood from the way the media system in Brazil has always been strongly linked to the hegemonic political system (Azevedo, 2006). In this sense, according to Albuquerque (2012), it contradicts the principles of the American model of a more informative journalism, which the *Globo* group sought to build in order to camouflage its political and ideological positioning.

On the one hand, it was possible to identify how the news program stands as another actor by the government team in an attempt to build a score in favour of Reform when it gives ample room for governing sources and the voices of opposition are silenced. It can even be observed that the news report ends up bringing to the forefront the corrupt web of Temer government with negotiations that involve the use of public funds for the approval of the Reform. The news merely described such abusive practices by the government. However, as the data reveal, there is a close relationship between the political field, the media sphere and public opinion. Therefore, even though it was favorable to the Reform, it was identified that *JN* had no way of silencing the fragility of the government, the loss of support in Congress, and the difficulties of approving the Reform. These contradictions are inherent to social and political logic which are present even in hegemonic narratives.

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