

# Narratives of the general strike of Argentina and Brazil in 2017: intrigues, conflicts and characters

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## Abstract

In this article, we present an analysis of the journalistic narrative about general strike occurred in Argentina on April 6, 2017 and in Brazil on April 28, 2017. Based on a comparative analysis of two major political events, we aim to identify similarities and differences in the journalistic narrative of the general strike in two newspapers with wide national circulation: Clarín and Folha de S. Paulo. The corpus is composed of headlines and covers calls of seven editions of each newspaper, treated quantitatively in the Iramuteq and qualitatively from the methodological reference of narrative analysis. The analysis of the corpus evidenced the construction of distinct journalistic narratives to report political events with similar patterns and pointed to the need of the media to guarantee space for the plurality of voices, as well as guarantee the space of the contradictory in the journalistic narratives.

**Keywords:** Journalistic narrative. Argentina. Brazil. General strike.

## Introduction

In this article we analyze the narrative of the general strike of Argentina and Brazil in 2017. In Argentina, the general strike occurred on April 6 and in Brazil on April 28. Analyzing the journalistic coverage of two national political events allows us to carry out a comparative exercise of the journalistic production of two Latin American countries with right-wing governments, which present social, cultural and economic specificities that are close in some moments and distant in others. The objective of this article is to present a critical analysis on the coverage of an event that is contrary to the interests of the elites which support the governments of these two countries, born of different institutional conjunctures, but similar in relation to the clientele that they attend.

The compared analysis is a tool to test our work hypothesis: that there is on course, in Brazil and Argentina, a process of synchrony among political and economic elites to minimize the protagonism of the left-wing and the social movements which were ahead of important

social changes in both countries for the last 15 years. The conservative governments face popular resistance and can count on the sympathy of the so-called great press, a political institution as an ally to suppress discordant voices in a way of “calming down the Market” and gain confidence to implement anti-popular renovations that gave rise to strikes.

We tested the hypothesis that, through the narrative that they build over the events, the newspapers dialogue with the political and economic elites and not with the common reader audience. Although sold in newsstands and targeted at a technically heterogeneous and mass audience, we argue that the coverage of economic and political affairs, even in generalist newspapers, is geared to the elites and interest groups of which the newspapers themselves are part.

The study contemplates only the headlines and covers calls of Clarín and Folha de S. Paulo during the week day (seven days) that coincides with the occurrence of the national strike in the respective countries. Both newspapers were chosen by the criterion of circulation and comprehensiveness: they are the most widely circulated newspapers in their countries and reach the totality of their territories, either by print or by digital platforms. The newspaper Clarín has an average circulation of 250.000 copies for a population estimated at 40 million people, while Folha de S. Paulo, the largest circulation among Brazilian newspapers, has an average circulation of 300.000 copies for a population of 200 million inhabitants.

The cover is the most important page of a newspaper, since we locate in it the main information and highlights of all the facts that will be reported inside the paper. As a showcase, the cover is accessible to anyone: even if a person does not buy a copy, this person can see the headlines in the newspapers exposed in newsstands and offices/internet portals. The choice of newspaper covers as an object of analysis is therefore justified by the fact that they are genuinely a space for journalistic representation, a place where the subjects that will be presented to the readers in the form of news are selected and hierarchized. In the covers, the journalistic companies offer a version of reality with the objective of winning the collective adhesion, and in them we can identify the ideological alignments of the press from the construction of the narratives of the featured subjects (CUNHA, 2007).

The *corpus* consists of Clarín covers published between April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> and Folha de S. Paulo published between April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015. In the Clarín newspaper, seven headlines and seven editorial calls were identified. We chose to remove from the analysis *corpus* the calls for editorials and articles, for although they refer in their text to the general strike, the short calls contained in the cover alone would not allow the reader to do this type of interpretation as the calls were not accompanied by leads. As our goal is to focus on the narrative of the cover, we removed the calls to editorials and articles from the analysis *corpus* but we recognize that calls could be a criterion of analysis because the way they appear is not free and is part of the strategy of enunciation or the narrative of the newspaper.

Eleven headlines, four article calls and three editorial calls were identified in the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* and, as mentioned earlier, we chose to exclude three editorial calls about the strike and four calls for articles from the sample. The *corpus* analyzed below is composed of 18 headlines and cover calls with their respective leads from the two newspapers that made direct or indirect reference to the general strike in the two countries. We have chosen for a comparative study using as a methodological tool the pragmatic analysis of the journalistic narrative (MOTTA, 2007; LAGO; BENETTI, 2007; MOTTA, 2013). The comparative method allows a systematic study of similarities and differences and, by adopting it in this study, we intend to know some of the underlying and ideological elements that influenced the construction of the journalistic narrative of the general strike in both countries. Narrative analysis allows us to understand the news as a cultural and political artifact (MOTTA, 2013). The unity of this narrative, the news, is a contextual product: it depends not only on the flow of events, but also on social, economic, cultural, political, organizational and even personal factors (of journalists). What is said is as important as what is not said: in the silencing there are also senses.

The analysis of the journalistic narrative followed the following steps: identification of the narrator/voices that tell the story; identification of characters; identification and reconstruction of intrigue; analysis. The study of the headlines puts us before the first narrator, the collective we call the newspaper. According to Motta (2013, p.227 – Our translation),

First narrator (extradiegetic, out of history): it is the press (newspaper, magazine, television news, portal) that states the headlines, titles, teasers. His narrative performance is carried out with the purpose of attracting the generally defined audience, selling the story through a seductive presentation of the conflicts, tensions and contradictions reported on the pages and screens. The press thus plays a game of attraction, seduction and persuasion in the semiotic sense of the word, but which also puts into operation the commercial and institutional interests of this narrator.

The history of present that the newspapers deliver to the reader is a history mediated through texts that are superficially informative. The news, however, written according to the strictest technique of journalistic writing, always brings an intentionality, is never a neutral or innocent speech (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995; VAN DIJK, 2015).

The article unfolds from the theoretical reflections of journalism in the political context of Argentina and Brazil. In sequence, traces the journalistic coverage of the general strike in Argentina and Brazil analyzing the intrigues, characters and narratives of the newspaper *Clarín* and the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* on the strike. Finally, we present some considerations about the distances and approaches of the journalistic narrative in the mentioned countries and we emphasize the importance of the means of communication to guarantee space for the plurality of voices.

## **Argentinean and Brazilian Journalism: reflexions on the political context**

The mass media in Latin America have a level of concentration that has exceeded its function of counterbalancing the power of governments to become supporters of those same governments and reproducers of an increasingly concentrated and unjust social order that is not at the service of citizens. According to Gómez (2011), Latin American governments have made little progress in the democratization of media communications.

The communication groups throughout history of Argentina and Brazil have been cultivating close relations with the political power, which has resulted in the scarce regulation of the sector. to Becerra (2014, p.57 – Our translation),

La concentración de la propiedad en pocos grupos tiende a la unificación de la línea editorial y a la reducción de la diversidad. La concentración, además, vincula negocios del espectáculo (estrellas exclusivas), del deporte (adquisición de derechos de televisión), de la economía en general (inclusión de entidades financieras y bancarias) y de la política (políticos devenidos en magnates de medios, o socios de grupos mediáticos) con áreas informativas, lo que produce repercusiones que alteran la pretendida “autonomía” de los medios.

Although some Latin American countries have advanced in legislation on the media, as in the case of Argentina and Uruguay, for example, the region still presents a scenario of large communication monopolies that have a direct impact on quality and diversity of information that reaches the citizen. However, the existence of a legal framework is often not a guarantee of the implementation of a public policy.

Brazil did not make progress in the creation of a law for the means of communication, even having experienced a favorable period for this creation during Lula and Dilma's governments, considered progressive. Even the regulation of the media being a historical banner of the Workers' Party, there was no effort to confront the economic groups that hegemonize the media in the country, as is the case of Rede Globo. Despite the mobilization of the social movements led by the National Media Democratization Forum (FNDC), which always debated the issue, any attempt to institutionalize the theme was seen by the media as censorship.

The low diversity of media ownership in the two countries produces situations that are peculiar from a practical point of view and that need a reflection from the theoretical knowledge on Communication and Journalism. The press - referring to the reference newspapers, traditional press, linked to well-established economic groups - behaves as a political institution. Cook (2005) and Sparrow (1999) show on their researches that the press is a political institution as any other, protected its specificities, and that the collaboration of this institution is necessary for the governments to be stable. In *Governing with the News:*

*the news media as a political institution*, Cook (2005) shows throughout American History how the presidents sought harmony with the press.

In Brazil, there are studies that demonstrate that governments that are not aligned with dominant political and economic groups have had to deal with opposition from the press (see, for example: GUAZINA, 2011; LATTMAN-WELTMAN; CARNEIRO; RAMOS, 1994; LIMA, 2006). In the case of President Dilma Rousseff, the opposition of the press, which behaved like political adversary since Lula's first term, was a preponderant factor for her weakening and consequent fall through parliamentary maneuver.

The newspaper Clarín belongs to the Clarín Group, which owns channels and means of communication in Argentina. As in many countries, the group was built from a convergent relationship between the journalistic company and the public power. It is edited in Buenos Aires and it was founded in 1945 by Roberto Noble, who directed it until 1969, when he died. His wife, Ernestina Herrera de Noble, inherited the company. In 1965, it became the newspaper with greater circulation in the capital and it kept growing during the following decades because of the variety of its activities (SILVEIRA, 2009).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the newspaper shows strong growth. The company diversified, indebting itself in dollars. At that time, according to Silveira (2009), US investment bank Goldman Sachs paid US \$ 500 million to acquire 18% of the group and Clarín conglomerate was also strengthened with state financing. According to Silva (2009), data, purchases and bids reveal group relations in the political, economic and social field, marking historical phases of newspaper composition and that are visible in the form of narrative production that is shown on the pages of the journal.

The 1990s are marked by innovations in the Clarín newspaper: first, in 1995, with the launch of its website and the following year it is being edited in color. In 2003, the daily newspaper underwent a huge graphic reformulation and also in the same year, until 2006, as highlighted by O'Donnell (apud PINHEIRO, 2008, p.30-36) in his book "*Propaganda K: una Maquinaria de Promoción con el Dinero del Estado*", the company earned the equivalent of 22 million Brazilian reais in official advertising.

In 2008 Clarín had the first conflict with the Argentine government at the time when Cristina Kirchner was president, when it gave space to journalistic coverage for the protests of rural producers, outraged by the increase in the grain export tax (SILVA, 2009). According to Silveira (2014), the disruption and increasing hostilities between the government and the business group generated extremely tense moments and were even more intense with the approval of the Argentine Means Law, which sought among its objectives to restrict the concentration of property of TV channels and radio stations.

Created in 2009, the Audiovisual Communication Services Act (LSCA) represented a milestone for the sector built on the accumulation of social movements, legislation from other countries and international human rights treaties. The LSCA replaced the dictatorship's

decree-law and its discussion and approval process relied on the government's political will to promote it and with broad participation from civil society (LARA, 2013). With the arrival of Mauricio Macri to the government of Argentina in 2015, the law was not repealed but items that forced the Clarín group to divest and to get rid of some companies fell by decree.

The Folha de S. Paulo newspaper belongs to the Folha Group and has been circulating with the name since the beginning of the 1960s. It was preceded by three other newspapers launched between 1921 and 1925, all belonging to the Company Folha da Manhã SA, known as Folha da Noite (the Night Edition of Folha), Folha da Tarde (the Afternoon Edition of Folha) and Folha da Manhã (the Morning Edition of Folha). Edited in the city of São Paulo, it was founded by a group of journalists led by Olival Costa and Pedro Cunha on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1921. In January 1931, the newspaper was sold to Octaviano Alves Lima, a coffee grower who prioritized the defense of interests and defended liberalism. In 1945 the newspaper closed ranks with the defenders of the consolidation of democracy in the country, until 1950 assumed an eminently agrarian editorial line and in the 1950s began to reinvent itself in terms of publishing, by the emphasis on the urban and industrial sectors (SILVEIRA, 2014).

The early 1960s witnessed profound changes in the newspapers. One of them of more formal order was the change of name to *Folha de S. Paulo*. Another was the strike of journalists in 1961 and finally the change of direction of the company on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1962, when "The editorial line from then on became frankly anti-Jango and pro-mobilization for the movement that culminated with the events of 1964" (VERBETE FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO, 2017). In the early 1970's, Folha de S. Paulo initiated the technological revolution and the modernization of its printing complex (MOREIRA, 2006). In 1978, the newspaper initiated a series of changes in the internal structure of the newsroom and the editorial council was created.

In 1986, Folha became the newspaper with the largest circulation in the entire country, a position it has been maintaining since then. In 1995, one year after surpassing the one million mark on Sundays, the newspaper inaugurated its new printing complex, considered the largest and most technologically updated in Latin America. In the 2000s, the newspaper strengthened as a major communications company, the center of a series of activities in the communications industry, covering newspapers, database, opinion and market research institute, news agency, service real-time information and entertainment, magazine printer and carrier (MOREIRA, 2006).

In a study on the street demonstrations that took place in Brazil in 2015, led by the Movimento Brasil Livre (the *Free Brazil* Movement) and Vem Pra Rua (The *Come to the Streets* Movement), whose main flags were the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff (PT), Veloso, Vasconcelos and Cardoso (2017) highlighted that Folha de S. Paulo concentrated its journalistic coverage to stimulate the manifestations against the government

of the PT, giving little or almost no space in the coverage for the manifestations in favor of the Dilma government organized by the Popular Brazil Front, for example. In the same direction, Vieira (2017) points out that the great Brazilian media - of which Folha de S. Paulo is a part - acted in a skewed way in the coverage of impeachment in attempt to blame the former president and her party for the economic, social and political problems that the country was experiencing.

### **Narratives about the strike: journalism in dialogue with the elite**

Narrative analysis presupposes looking at some aspects of a story. In this article, we chose to analyze three of these aspects: the characters, the intrigue and the narrative that was constructed from the interaction between the intrigue and the characters. In the following two tables, we reproduced the headlines and cover calls that are part of the *corpus* (we did not reproduce leads, although they were also processed for this analysis) and that were extracted from the first page of the newspaper Clarín, Buenos Aires, Argentina, from April 2<sup>nd</sup> to April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and from the first page of the newspaper Folha de S. Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil, from April 23<sup>rd</sup> to April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

**Table 1** – Headlines/Cover calls of O Clarín

<b>Date</b>	<b>Headlines/Cover calls of O Clarín</b>
April 2nd	A citizen demonstration with political impact. The march of support to Macri surprised the government, crowded the square and was felt in the interior
April 3rd	Strengthened by support marches, the government seeks to relaunch its management
April 4th	the government's firm grip on the unions. Prior to the strike, Macri spoke of mafias and slammed labor unionists
April 5th	Former president increasingly complicated with justice. Cristina is sued for illicit association and has \$ 130 million blocked
April 6th	Unions demand changes in economy Macri faces the first strike and there will be events because of the threat of cuts
April 7th	first CGT strike against Macri's administration. The stoppage was strongly felt, but the government controlled the pickets

Resource: Created by the authors.

**Table 2** – Headlines/Cover calls of Folha de S. Paulo

Date	Headlines/Cover calls of Folha de S. Paulo
April 23rd	Contribution to Pension grows despite unemployment
April 24th	No highlight in the front page
April 25th	PSB positions against the President’s reforms
April 25th	Brazil needs to have discipline to negotiate reforms
April 26th	Labor reform advances and will voted today
April 27th	Strike acts plan closing SP Airports on Friday
April 27th	House approves bill to flexibilize labor law
April 28th	Country on General Strike and Acts against Reforms
April 28th	Federal Government sees risk of conflicts with black blocs
April 29th	Strike reaches transportation and schools in a day of confrontations
April 29th	Temer congratulates Doria for attitudes against stoppages
April 29th	Main capitals of the country wake up in the mood for a Holiday

Resource: Created by the authors.

From this *corpus*, we processed the titles and leads of the News in the software Iramuteq to extract quantitative and similarity data to support the qualitative analysis made along the lines of narrative analysis, which we present hereafter. Iramuteq is a free software and it was chosen for allowing deeper analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, through the mining of textual data. The program allows knowing the most used words in a text (quantitative data) and how these words are related building senses that extrapolate the text (qualitative data). For data processing it is necessary to type the texts in a wordpad with commands that Iramuteq can read. The default command is `***N_`, being N the number of the text. Every text starts with this command added with personalized information of this sample. In this work, the commands were `*** *N_1` to `*** *N_12` for Clarín and `*** *N_1` to `*** *N_18` for Folha de S. Paulo. We used only the command of number of text because all of them belonged to the same category, not being necessary to make differences by sections and type of headlines, for example. Each group of texts was processed in two different files, one for each newspaper. As Iramuteq recognizes only one language at a time it was not possible to join the headlines of both newspapers in a single file for a group analysis.

### **The characters: Macri, Temer, social movements/left-wing**

Every narrative is a discursive process that presupposes interactions: between the speakers, the speakers and the listeners, which is said in a form determined by multiple factors that contribute to give life to what is said (and to which it is not said either, since silence and erasure are part of the narrative). The characters are essential elements to understand the intrigue that makes up a narrative.



Macri and Temer are the main characters in the narrative about the general strike built in the two newspapers. In the Argentine newspaper, the president is built on the idea that the people understand their actions and agree with them (after all, there was no support march to Macri in the days before the general strike?). In the Brazilian newspaper, the president is directly associated with the subject of the actions (reforms) that would take the antagonists to the streets.

The reforms both in the Brazilian and Argentinean newspapers constitute themselves as characters that make up the narrative thread. Social movements and the left-wing are portrayed as antagonists: they oppose the protagonists (presidents). There is also a muted character on the covers: the audience. As we shall see later, Macri, Temer, reforms and social movements/left-wing dominate the layers whose headlines and calls dialog with the political and economic elites and exclude from the debate the public/people. In this coverage, the public was synonymous only with spectators: they were not called to dialogue with the story told.

The presidents should not be the naturalized protagonists of a news about strike against reforms that withdraw labor rights and pensions. The newspapers used the criterion of newsworthiness “importance of those involved” as a way of masking the political choice to allocate the protagonism to only one side, the government, in this case. The criteria of newsworthiness and news-values, categories consolidated in journalism theory to explain the choices of what will be published or not (SOUSA, 2002; TRAQUINA, 2005; WOLF, 2003), although seen as technical criteria they can also mask the political choices that pervade the news.

Journalism is a way of knowledge (PARK, 1969; GROTH, 2011) and it has implication in the real world: the knowledge that journalism builds is in the intersection between the common sense and the scientific knowledge and it is more accessible to the society and the last one. Therefore, by using news as a political artifact and taking sides on one side of the dispute that is reported, journalism interferes with the perception of what is real from those who have access to that biased source of information. The world’s knowledge of the public turns into a puzzle in which parts are permanently missing. By denying the protagonism to the citizen who feels affected by the reforms, and by stopping the opposition to these reforms to a niche - the left, the social movements -, the journalism practiced by Clarín and Folha de S. Paulo provides a puzzle with missing pieces for an, a priori, ignored public in this same narrative.

The social movements/left-wing configure the antagonist character in this narrative. We consider in this analysis the labor unions as social movements/the left-wing, as the categorization in the newspapers themselves. We know that social movements, left-wing and labor unions are not synonyms. In the newspapers, however, the public is induced to recognize them as a single force, a single character and, of course, an enemy that disturbs the

right to come and go with their stoppages and blockades. It is not by accident the emphasis on the “disruptions” that the general strike would bring to the means of transportation used by the worker in his way to work. The people, by the way, are brought only at this hour to the narrative: as someone who will be harmed by the strike, not by the reforms that the governments of Brazil and Argentina propose.

### **The intrigue and the narrative**

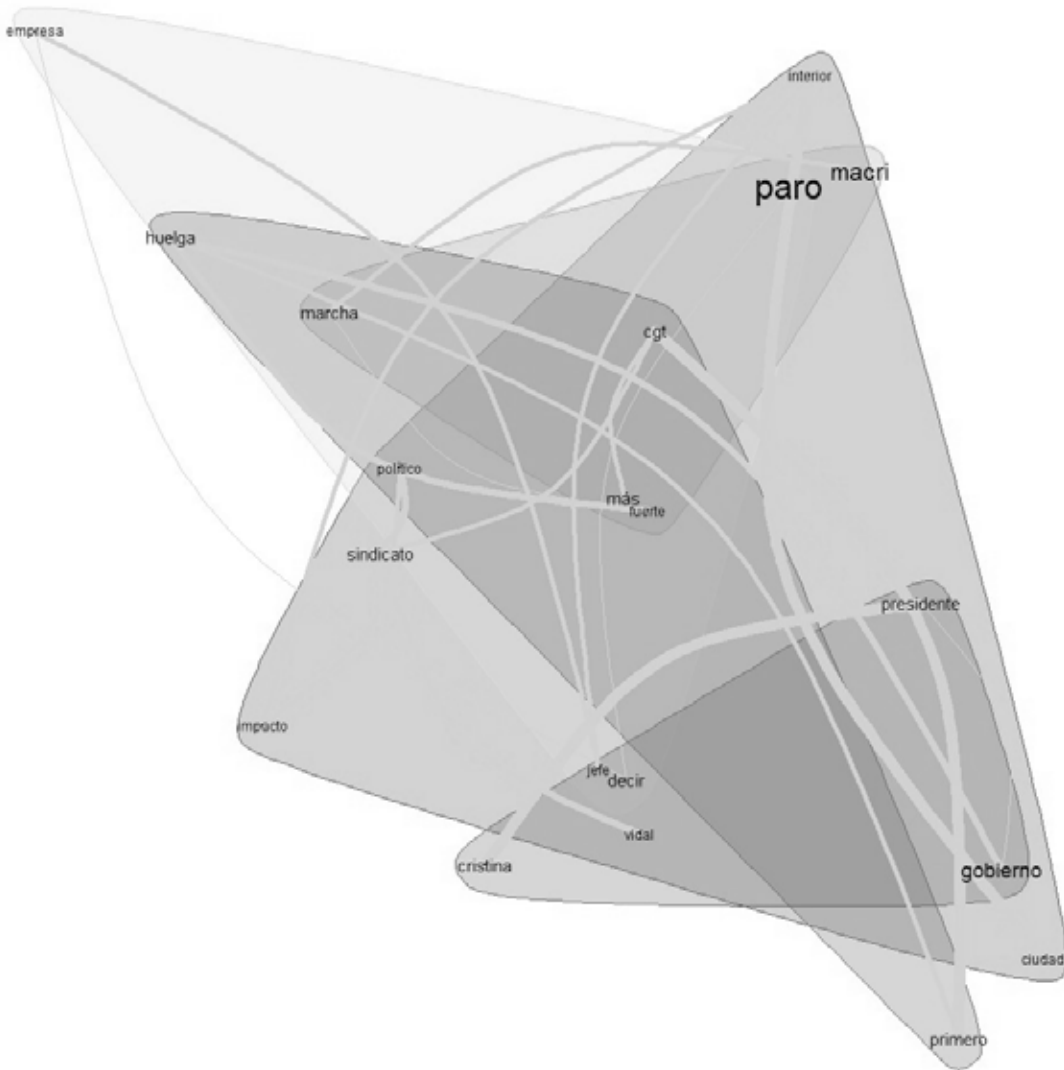
Clarín and Folha built their narrative with similar intrigue: general strike is the result of the discontent of sectors of the left-wing. The emphasis newspapers have on this information - leftist social movements and labor unions - was slightly different, though. The construction of the Clarín intrigue isolated President Macri and his reforms on one hand, and the discontent of the protesters on the other. In Folha de S. Paulo, it is argued that the narratives treat the reforms of the Michel Temer government as necessary and that even being necessary they motivated the strike.

In Clarín, in the prior to the strike days, the cover calls reported the march in favor of Macri, the verbal clash between the president and the labor unionists (called “mobsters” by Macri), the problems that former president Cristina Kirchner faces with justice and spoilers that there would be a general strike. On the day of the strike, Macri is brought to the center of the narrative: the centrals hold their first strike against the government and the newspaper opens up space for the president’s ironic assertion during a forum with businessmen on the day of the strike: “*Qué bueno que todos estamos aquí... trabajando*” (CLARÍN, 7 apr., p.1, 2017).

It must be noted that government and president as semantic choices in the two newspapers, refer to different characters within the narrative. President is an individualizable subject: there is only one. Government is a collective entity: it is the president, but it is also the whole network of auxiliaries, ministers, civil servants and state agents.

The following similarity graphic (Graph 1), produced from the cover calls and leads published during the week of the strike in Clarín shows as the narrative of the newspaper seeks to isolate Macri and his government from the motivation of the strikers and as there is a projection of Cristina Kirchner as a character beyond the problems of justice, who keeps connections with the marches contrary to the changes that motivate the stoppage. The former president and the social movements are criminalized a priori in this narrative.

**Graph 1** – Similarity Analysis in Clarín



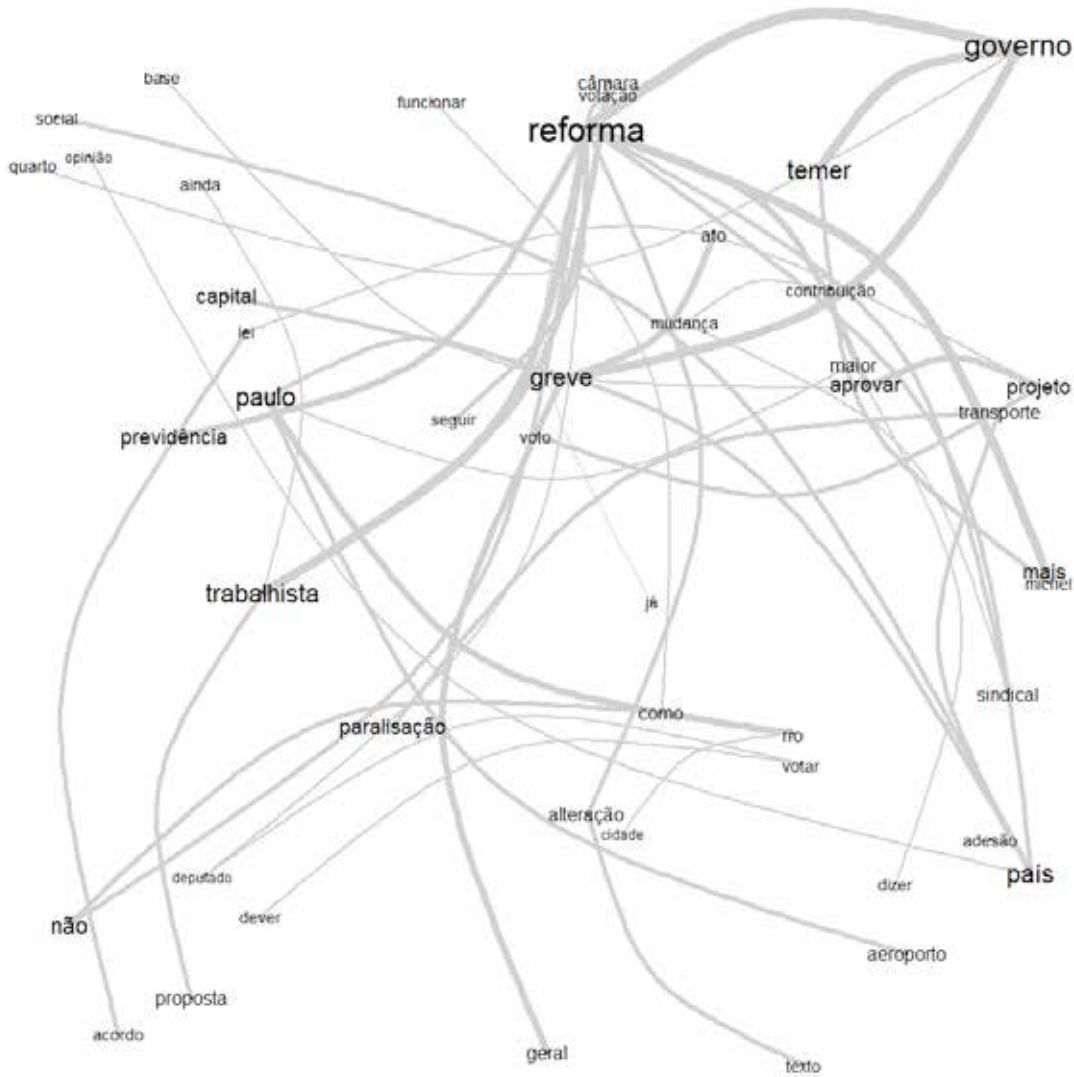
**Resource:** Created by the authors from a text processed in Iramuteq.

The newspaper’s vocabulary choices seek to weaken the strike as news: the word **paro** (stoppage) was used more often than the word **huelga** (strike): ten against four, what takes the word “**paro**” to have stronger connections (thicker and more connected lines in the graph). Graph lines do not show a direct connection between **gobierno** and **Macri** with **paro** and **huelga**. It is the dissociation of which we highlighted previously: for the reader of Clarín, the strike could happen in any government, under any circumstances, given its promoters: the labor unions and the social movements.

The Folha de S. Paulo narrative did not isolate President Michel Temer and his reforms of the motivations of the unions and social movements that called for the strike. In the days leading up to the stoppage, the newspaper published on its cover news on the progress of reforms, on the increase in population contributing to unemployment despite unemployment (for example, no reason to strike) and on the preparations for trade unions and government for strike day. Unlike Clarín, that separates government and president, in Folha de S. Paulo, the character “government of President Michel Temer” does not separate from President Michel Temer. There is no personification of the actions in the president: the personification is of the collective entity and this collective entity, the government, is strongly related to Michel Temer, the individual. It’s an unexpected semantic choice.

The similarity graph (Graph 2) shows that the newspaper’s narrative has not failed to identify the government with the reforms that motivate the strike, but treats the reforms in its narrative as something necessary for the good of the country. Unlike Clarín, Folha uses the word **strike**, not semantically weakening the wall movement. The words **reform**, **strike** and **government** appear, respectively, 14, ten and ten times. The sample then reads **Temer** and Labor (relating to reform) eight times. The word **Paulo** (referring to São Paulo, which Iramuteq separates because it does not recognize the composite name of the city) appears seven times in the sample, which evidences the newspaper’s concern with the impact of the stoppage exclusively in the largest capital of the country, corroborating with the its proposal of existence as a communication structure created by and for the defense of the *Paulista* and *São Paulo’s* elite. Even in the chart, **Paulo (São)** forms a vertex from where starts one of the points of the newspaper’s narrative.

**Graph 2** – Similarity Analysis in Folha de S. Paulo



**Resource:** Created by the authors from a text processed in Iramuteq.

The similarity graph that refers to Folha de S. Paulo is more “robust” because the newspaper’s leads are larger than those of Clarín, so there are more words for the Iramuteq to process and associate. In observing the texts, we note that government actions are indeed identified as the source of dissatisfaction that leads to the strike. In the edition the day before the strike, Folha has on its cover teaser<sup>1</sup>of what promises to be the shutdown (closing

1 A brief call for the story inside the newspaper.

of airports and stop of public transport services in major cities) and informs the approval of the labor reform in the Chamber. On the day of the strike, for example, the newspaper puts on the cover calls for two articles that show different positions on the movement: one favorable (Paralization is demagogic, one does not reform country with vandalism) and another unfavorable (Cry of the streets will be categorical not to withdrawal of rights of the people) (FOLHA DE S. PAULO, 28 apr., p.1, 2017).

The two articles were excluded from the *corpus* of the analysis as said on the methodology, but here we made the choice of referencing it to give examples that texts by writers with opposing positions on the cover have the function of providing the reader with proof that the newspaper practices the principles of impartiality: it is a crumb of debate on controversial subjects that the newspaper throws at readers as a form of “accountability” of journalism that should listen to the various sides of an issue. It is a controlled concession to the reader, since what is published on the cover is, in general, what feeds the dialogue between the economic and political elites who speak through the newspaper and who in that context yearn for the reforms.

It is valid to repeat that the intrigue is the strike as an expression of discontent of social movements and sectors of the left-wing. In the edition of April 29<sup>th</sup>, Folha shows the conclusion of the narrative that it has been building by relating the strikes to the reforms “that the country needs), the strike being constructed by movements that bring the caos to the public order because “the Strike reaches transportation and schools in a day of confrontations”. The main picture is a *black bloc* breaking a glass window. It is valid to say that Clarín also used pictures of hooded strikers as a direct allusion to badgers/terrorists. The narrative of Folha is the publicity of an elite and middle-class thought, that strikes is a daily disorder of someone who wants only to come and go and fulfill his errands. It is not by accident that the cover of April 29<sup>th</sup> brings a call to the news that President Temer called São Paulo’s mayor João Dória to compliment him by his contention actions of the disturbances caused by the stoppage (FOLHA DE S. PAULO, 29 apr., p.1, 2017).

The set of news both in Folha and Clarín shows a journalism clearly on the side of governments. In the case of Folha, it is a compatible position with that of the São Paulo business groups that supported the impeachment process of President Dilma with the narrative that her government was detrimental to the country’s economy. In the case of Clarín, it is an editorial position in line with the anti-Kirchnerist partisanship that the Clarín group has maintained since it broke with the Kirchners in the first term of Cristina Kirchner. Identifying the left-wing with kirchnerism and, consequently, with bane and lack of commitment with the country is part of the narrative nucleus that the newspaper tries to feed.

Data shows us that political parallelism between Clarín and Macri’s government is greater than the one between Folha de S. Paulo and Temer’s government. the “convergence of objectives, means, approaches and audiences between certain newspapers and certain

political parties” (ALBUQUERQUE, 2012, p.8) or some governments is more open in the narrative of Clarín, but it also exists in Folha and it is possible to identify voices that speak in consonance with this convergence in the newspaper: the economic groups based in São Paulo, the same that support to Temer’s government.

The functionalist tradition, which explains the press as an institution that has the function of being the “watchdog” of society, does not explain political parallelism, but more critical reviews of “why news is as it is (TRAQUINA, 2005)” advance on the understanding that the press is a political institution and its interests are not in line with this function of the media watchdog: the press can be a lawyer, it can be an adversary and may eventually act as a watchdog. In the case we are analyzing, we see government advocacy journalism in practice, with more emphasis on Clarín pages than Folha’s.

The critical analysis of the narrative built by both newspapers about the strikes leads us to a central questioning: what Clarín and Folha de S. Paulo print on their cover pages during the period of strike coverage is journalism or publicity? The journalism theory defines that the first one has as characteristics the exemption, the impartiality and the objectivity (TRAQUINA, 2005; SOUSA, 2002; GROTH, 2011). But there are other characteristics that ensure the peculiarity of journalism: the criteria of newsworthiness and the value-news. Publicity is defined as activity in the means of communication, in which the News are put in second place at the expense of opinion, orientation to be given to the audience, trench to be defended (BAHIA, 2009). Journalism is guided by resources, by investigation, sides to be heard; in publicity it is a detail that can be ignored or even hided – it is possible to use such criteria and values to make a propaganda of an action (as the reforms in question), to defend a position and attack other, to promote ideas and subjects. Journalism of the reference media of the XXI century, although more technological, flerts with the partisan journalism of the XIX century.

### **Final Considerations: similarities and differences in the narratives from Argentina and Brazil**

The general strike occurred in Argentina and Brazil have signaled dissatisfaction of great proportion of population against the economic measures adopted by the government of Macri and against the reforms of labor laws and pension proposed by the government of Temer. It was sought to show throughout the article that neither the Clarín newspaper nor the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper highlighted these dissatisfactions in their editions, and what was evident in the weeks of the strike analyzed here was the construction of a journalistic narrative favorable to the actions proposed by Macri and Temer governments.

Considering the influence that a newspaper of great circulation can cause as it is the case of Clarín and Folha de S. Paulo, the game of words and expressions can direct the audience to a certain type of interpretation and the analysis of the newspapers’ covers

presented the tendency easily identifiable of support to the referred governments throughout the week that was assembled the general strike against the reformist measures. The highlight to the general strike itself was minimal and a protocol (the agenda could not be ignored, but it was not emphasized) and, when it was referred to in the newspapers of both countries it was to try to disperse the strike, to try to gain a collective accession against the strike and to hardly criticize its occurrence. There was no proper space so that the labor union centrals could expose the objective the stoppages.

The research shows a necessity of the means of communication guarantee the plurality of voices, as well as guarantee the contradictory space in the journalistic narratives of the given newspapers. Presenting a single version of the reality as being the version that can gain collective adhesion having in mind the potential influence of the newspapers analyzed here do not contribute to the exercise of social responsibility of the journalism to inform the reader.

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