



universität  
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# MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

„Power balloons: an analysis of spectacle around Dilma  
Rousseff's impeachment“

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master (MA)

Wien, 2019/ Vienna 2019

Studienkennzahl:

A 067 805

Studienrichtung:

Individuelles Masterstudium  
Global Studies – a European Perspective

Betreut von / Supervisor:

a.o.Univ.-Prof. Dr. Martina Kaller

Power balloons: an analysis of spectacle around Dilma  
Rousseff's impeachment

**Bianca Amorim dos Santos**

*Because, if I am not mistaken, we shall have to say that about men poets and story-tellers are guilty of making the gravest misstatements when they tell us that wicked men are often happy, and the good miserable; and that injustice is profitable when undetected, but that justice is a man's own loss and another's gain—these things we shall forbid them to utter, and command them to sing and say the opposite.*

*-Plato*

**Abstract:** In 2016, an impeachment process opened against the Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff ended with the termination of her mandate. Since 2015, protests against her government used air balloons to call attention to corruption scandals. Full of ironic symbolism, mocking the politicians and the political situation, the balloons pretend to turn the impeachment process into a story easier to catch up. The feeling of entertainment and spectacle was present in the media coverage. It could have been used to gain more audience and increase the interest of the population on the topic. This research traces the creation of those balloons by social movements, and the media coverage of the event. Using the theoretical framework Guy Debord's spectacle, pictures published by two Brazilian national magazines, *Veja* and *Carta Capital*, are analyzed.

**Abstrakt:** Im Jahr 2016 wurde ein Amtsenthebungsverfahren gegen die brasilianische Präsidentin Dilma Rousseff mit der Beendigung ihres Mandats abgeschlossen. Seit 2015 haben Proteste gegen ihre Regierung Luftballons eingesetzt, um auf Korruptionsskandale aufmerksam zu machen. Voller ironischer Symbolik, die die Politiker und die politische Situation verspottet, geben die Ballons vor, den Amtsenthebungsprozess in eine leichtere Geschichte zu verwandeln. Das Gefühl von Unterhaltung und Spektakel war in der Medienberichterstattung vorhanden. Es hätte verwendet werden können, um mehr Publikum zu gewinnen und das Interesse der Bevölkerung an dem Thema zu erhöhen. Diese Forschung verfolgt die Entstehung dieser Ballons durch soziale Bewegungen und die Berichterstattung über das Ereignis in den Medien. Anhand des theoretischen Rahmens von Guy Debord werden Bilder analysiert, die von zwei brasilianischen nationalen Zeitschriften, *Veja* und *Carta Capital*, veröffentlicht wurden.

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## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to, first and foremost, thank my supervisor for this work. Prof. Dr. Martina Kaller, for this guidance and support – this work would not have been possible without her. I am sincerely grateful to the Erasmus Mundus: Global Studies coordinators in Leipzig, Wroclaw and Vienna, for patience and support during the two years of master. I am thankful for the financial support provided by the Erasmus+ grant, without which I would not have been able to study in Austria.

I would like to thank Mouli Banerjee for incentive, emotional support and careful proof reading during the last few months. To my friends, for listening my complaints and cheering for all my small achievements. Finally, I would like to thank my family for all the love, positive vibrations and huge understanding, especially in the past few months. Obrigada!

This work would not be possible without their support.



## I. Glossary and Abbreviations

*Federação das Indústrias do Estado de São Paulo (FIESP)* – Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo. It is a trade association, founded in 1928. Named in this research, FIESP.

*Ministério Público Federal (MPF)* – Public Prosecutor’s Office

*Movimento Brasil* – Movement Brazil, political movement. Created in 2014.

*Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL)* – Free Brazil Movement, political movement. Created in 2014.

*Movimento Passe Livre* – Free Fare Movement, political movement. Created in 2005.

*Partido Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (MDB)* – Brazilian Democratic Movement Party. Founded in 1965, Michel Temer is affiliated to PMDB.

*Não vou pagar o pato*, campaign created by FIESP on September 3, 2015, against tax increase. Its symbol is a rubber yellow duck. The campaign symbol was known as Pato da FIESP.

*Operação Lava Jato* – In Portuguese, Car Wash Operation, initiated in 2014, it is an investigation conducted by Brazilian Federal Police and Public Prosecutor’s Office. Named in this research *Lava Jato*.

*Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB)* – Brazilian Social Democracy Party. Founded in 1988, Aécio Neves is affiliated to PSDB.

*Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT)* – Worker’s Party. Founded in 1980, Dilma Rousseff and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva are affiliated to PT. Used in this research as PT

*Partido Social Liberal* – The Social Liberal Party. Founded in 1994. Jair Messias Bolsonaro, Brazilian president in 2019, is affiliated to PSL.

*Polícia Federal (PF)* – Brazilian Federal Police

*Revoltados Online* – Online Revolted, political movement.

*Vem Pra Rua* – Come to the street, political movement. Created in 2014.

*Nas Ruas* – On the Streets, political movement. Created in 2011.

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# PART ONE

## 1. Introduction

In 2016, Brazilians witnessed the second impeachment process since the beginning of the “New Republic”, period started in 1985, after the end of the dictatorship. The impeachment of Dilma Rousseff was questioned by her supporters and celebrated by her opponents. The country was facing a big corruption scandal and the beginning of the worst economic recession of recent times. Protests around the country asked for her impeachment. With the support from the middle and upper classes, the economic establishment and industry owners, the demonstrations had a special symbol. Since 2015, tall puppet balloons were created to call attention to the protests against the government.

Full of ironic symbolism, mocking the politicians Dilma Rousseff, president, and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, former president, the balloons pretend to turn the impeachment process into a story easier to catch up with. Another balloon, a yellow duck, joined the group of symbols that might have affected the discussion by creating a feeling of entertainment and spectacle around the political discussion. The spectacle was something that media outlets might have used to gain more audience and increase the interest of the population on the topic.

This research will trace the creation of those balloons and its media coverage. Using the theoretical framework of spectacle, the pictures published by two national magazines, *Veja* and *Carta Capital* will be analyzed. The hypothesis of this thesis is that the use of pictures and balloons reinforced the spectacle of the impeachment. Therefore, the research question of this work is:

*In what ways and to what extent did the use of the pictures and balloons reinforce the spectacle of the impeachment?*

### **Research Design:**

To answer this, and to test the hypothesis, three questions should be answered.

I) To what extent did the air-balloons create a spectacle around the impeachment?

II) To what extent did the pictures of the balloons agree with their editorial political view?

III) To what extent did the media reinforce the spectacle of the protests supporting the impeachment?

### **Research Sources:**

The coverage analysis consists of the period from August 3, 2015, when the first balloon, Pixuleco, was launched, to August 31, 2016, when the final procedure of the impeachment happened, and Dilma Rousseff lost her mandate as the president of Brazil.

On August 16, 2015, Pixuleco, the balloon depicting Lula, was released in a demonstration in Brasília, the capital. On September 7, the Brazilian Independence Day, Pinoquia, first balloon depicting Rousseff is launched also in Brasília. On first of October, FIESP launches its campaign “Não vou pagar o Pato”. The 22 meters duck balloon is shown in front of the Congress, in Brasília. On December 2, Eduardo Cunha, president of the Congress, opens the impeachment process against Dilma Rousseff by accepting the documents from the lawyers Janaína Paschoal and Miguel Reale Junior. On December 17, the Supreme Court approves by majority of voters the petition for impeachment. On April 17, 2016, Congress approves the impeachment. On May 12, Senate suspends Rousseff from office pending a full trial. By August 31, 2016, Dilma Rousseff is impeached.

In the following sections of Part 1 I will be present a justification of the topic and the methodology used to investigate the events and a brief background context. Following that, in Part 2, a theoretical frame based on the ideas of Guy Debord and Mario Vargas Llosa will be compared with the media spectacle debated by Douglas Kellner. The position of the media is going to be discussed under the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu. In this section, a context around the two magazines studied in this research– Veja and Carta Capital – will be presented. A chapter will be dedicated to explain the impeachment process, and another to describe the creation of social movements. In Part 3, the three research questions will be debated, followed by the conclusion of the study.

The analysis shows that the creation of balloons turned the discussions about the impeachment into more fun and entertaining. The balloons dislocated the focus on the important aspects of the investigations, and reinforced the stereotypical perception of the population against PT, Rousseff and Lula.

The empirical evidence indicates a distinguished contrasting approach from *Veja* (conservative) and *Carta Capital* (progressive) in the publications of pictures. With large pictures of the symbols and the publication of Pixuleco in the cover of the magazine, *Veja* made its political position clear. *Carta Capital* avoided to present the balloons along with a mass of supporters. In the magazine most of the pictures of Pixuleco and Pato da FIESP showed negative messages about the protests. The analysis conducted in this thesis attempts to detect the extent to which both magazines were working to improve the debate or towards reinforcing their political views in the coverage. Based on the analysis provided in the subsequent chapters, the creation of a spectacle, as outlined by the theoretical framework, can be proven. Especially in the context of the unprecedented electoral process in 2018 in Brazil, further research and work on how the events analyzed here created long-term political ramifications, has become an even more relevant object of study.

## 2. Justification of the Topic

The events around the Brazilian impeachment in 2016 were extraordinary. The mass demonstrations, the polarization, and the symbols were relevant to any alert spectator. As a student of journalism and a professional TV news producer, I could observe how the situation was being constructed.

Supporting a local TV station, I covered the 2014 campaign and election in which Dilma Rousseff was elected for her second term in a tight result, (51.64% for Rousseff and 48.36% for Aécio Neves) <sup>1</sup>. Since the beginning of the demonstrations, I was involved in the media coverage, doing desk research and being an eyewitness of protests and demonstrations against the government.

When the impeachment process started, and the demonstrations asking for the end of Rousseff's government, a different setting was created in the work environment. The TV station RBS TV, affiliated to the national television network Rede Globo, had to follow many rules to maintain neutrality in a polarized country. It was not allowed to discuss impeachment in the local broadcast programs without the consent of the big national company. The color of the anchors and the reporter's clothes that went live on TV was guided by the station in Rio de Janeiro. Anything close to red or blue – colors of the most popular parties in Brazil – was avoided.

The practice of using humor to criticize the biggest political scandal of the country's history called my attention. The way the public opinion was dealing with the issue – in a very polarized way – made me question if this political event was even being taken seriously. With my professional and academic background, I could create a hypothesis about the events in 2015 and 2016. Being able to read Portuguese and being familiar with the national media made the research feasible.

Célia Ladeira Mota and Paulo Henrique Soares de Almeida express that to understand the real meaning of a speech the receptor should dive into the message, the process of creation, culture

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<sup>1</sup> For a matter of comparison, in 2010 Dilma Rousseff won the second round against Jose Serra with 54,24% against 43,95. The former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva won in 2006 with 60,83% against 39,17% of votes for Geraldo Alckmin and in 2002 with 61,27% against Jose Serra with 38,72%. (Gazeta, 2018)

and historical context (Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida 2017, 107). My background contributes to make my research and findings more accurate and related to reality.

The importance of the topic speaks for itself. At the time of writing this thesis, in 2018, Brazil is having/has had the most polarized presidential elections. One of the biggest democracies in the world is facing – since 2015 – political instability. The change in the command of the country is being discussed around the world as a new right-wing party elected the majority on Congress. As the chapters to follow will try to show, how the spectacle created by the social groups and the media might have influence the impeachment process.

### 3. Methodology

This research will analyze the topic of spectacle and the public-media relations vis-à-vis the demonstrations before the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in order to answer the following research question:

In what way did the use of the pictures by *Veja* and *Carta Capital* affect the process of the impeachment that followed?

To problematize the first question, secondary data collected from academic articles and an interview published by the magazine *Piauí* with the creators of the political balloons *Pixuleco* and *Bandilma* will be explored. In addition, academic articles about the rubber duck and its relation with *Pato da FIESP* will be presented.

To analyze the media coverage, answering the second research question, two Brazilian magazines were selected as samples: *Veja* and *Carta Capital*. *Veja* is the biggest and most powerful magazine in the country. Its coverage represents the establishment and the middle-upper class from the south and south-west regions. Due to its importance and being main printed media covering the impeachment, the choice for *Veja* is obvious. Selecting *Carta Capital* needs further justification. The magazine is not the second or the third most popular magazine in the country. However, it is a stable publication, created in 1994, and represents the social democrats and left perspectives in the political discussion. The magazine is usually aligned with PT, its politicians, and social groups. Thus, these two sources represent two different perspectives covering the same event.

*Veja* and *Carta Capital* are weekly magazines. However, for a reason of access, it was given priority for online pictures published by them on their respective *www* portals. The period analyzed covers from August 3, 2015, when *Pixuleco* was shown for the first time, to August 31, 2016, when Rousseff was impeached. After the impeachment process was completed, pictures of balloons were still published on the magazines' websites. However, the goal of this analysis is to identify the discourse during the demonstrations before the impeachment, for this matter, those pictures will not be used in this research.

For each magazine, four pictures were selected and will be published in this document along the text to facilitate the interpretation of it. All the pictures, but one, were published in online



websites of the publications. The exception is the cover of *Veja* published on October 7, 2015, framing the balloon Pixuleco. Since it was an important and emblematic publication, a puppet representing a former president dressed as a prisoner in the cover of the most important magazine of the country, it was a choice to include it on the corpus of this research.

All the pictures published in this research were available on media outlets official channels. Most of them, pictures taken during demonstrations on the streets of Brazil. There are two exceptions:

- The previously mentioned, *Veja*'s cover on October 7, 2015. It is a manipulated design with a collage of a picture of Dilma Rousseff and the balloon Pixuleco.
- A Facebook print published by Carta Capital, collected from judge Pretta Neto social media page.

Being both magazines well know, formal media outlets, this research considers there are no electronic manipulations on the images. It is possible to criticize angles and positions of photographers, editorials criteria, but it is not expected that symbols have been manipulated, added or excluded from the images by the media outlets.

This is one of the reasons for choosing the formal media as the source of this research. With the polarization of this discussion and the spread of influence of the political movements, a range of news, humoristic images were released and used as propaganda. However, the source of those materials is, for many times, unknown. It is very difficult to establish who was supporting those releases. The choice for traditional media is an intent to have stronger control of the research, by using official data and scholar articles.

To discuss the third and last question, if the media reinforced the spectacle around the impeachment process, will be compared the findings of the Chapter before and the theoretical framework of the thesis.

Further, a debate about the media in Brazil and its structure will be provide in Chapter 5, the impeachment process will be explained in Chapter 6, and the recently created political movements will be analyzed in Chapter 7.

## 4. Background

The impeachment process against president Dilma Rousseff started on December 2, 2015. However, it was since the beginning of her second term, in 2014, that protests broke down all over the country against her and PT. After a tight election that polarized the population between two parties, Rousseff started her second term to lead the country in an economic recession, with little support from her party. Along with that, the biggest corruption investigation in the country's history was questioning her and her party's honesty. The political crisis in 2016 could be seen as similar to others Brazil had faced before: corruption scandals, massive demonstrations and a president stepping out of the office. Nevertheless, we could argue that new elements were included at this time.

Corruption is not a new issue in the country. Several scandals have led public opinion to perceive Brazilian politics as corrupt. Since the enforcement of the Corruption Perception Index in 1995, by Transparency International, Brazil has never scored more than 43 points – where 100 is the highest of integrity perceived (Trading Economics 2018). To cite some of the recent corruption investigations, in 2007 the Operation *Navalha* discovered public officials received bribes to fraud bids for one construction company, R\$610 millions were stolen. In 2006, Operation *Sanguessugas* found R\$140 mi devious for the purchase of overpriced ambulances – with prices up to 260% higher. With less money stolen but with a huge impact in society, in 2005 *Mensalão* proved that members of the Congress were paid to vote supporting the government agenda during the first term of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, from PT. Justice estimates R\$55 mi were deviated (Lima 2012).

An impeachment was also not an extraordinary political instrument. The first elected president after the military dictatorship, Fernando Collor de Mello was impeached from office. In 1992, an impeachment process led by the Congress, accused him of corruption. It started in September 1992 and by December of the same year Collor stepped out of the office (Bethell 2018, 162).

Massive demonstrations are not extraordinary either. Before Collor's impeachment, street rallies asked for his resignation. In 1983-1984 “mass mobilizations in favor of *diretas já* (immediate direct presidential elections)” broke down in the country (Bethell 2018, 160). Both political events – Collor's impeachment and the suffrage movement – had great media coverage. They were represented by symbolic images, and are remembered until today.

Even with similarities, the events of 2015 and 2016 had a different element that changed the stability of the situation. This corruption scandal was the biggest in the country's history. Social media helped to spread the word and create new social movements. Political symbols have increased the notion of spectacle around the theme.

Operation *Lava Jato* started in 2014 and is still ongoing in 2019, five years after, and it cannot be underestimated. Investigating municipal, state and federal levels, with the arrestment and conviction of rich and important people, the intense media coverage made this operation an institution in recent times. The distrust and anger against politics led the Brazilian population to massive demonstrations supporting *Lava Jato* and asking for Rousseff's impeachment. Citizens organized themselves via internet in newly created social movements. Self-declared non-partisan, *Vem para a Rua*, *Movimento Brasil Livre*, *Revoltados Online* and *Movimento Brasil* planned and coordinated rallies all over the country. Information about the protests spread all over the country with pictures, live videos and testimonials of informal reporters as well as coverage of all media outlets.

In August 2015, the protests against Rousseff included a new symbol created by *Movimento Brasil*. Two balloons depicting her and the former president Lula. *Revoltados Online* also created a second version of Rousseff's balloon. Those balloons were not the only ones used in demonstrations against the government. A balloon created by the Federation of Industries of the State of Sao Paulo (FIESP) in a campaign against the tax increase release in October 2015 was portrait as a symbol against corruption and the federal government. The yellow duck represented the campaign slogan "Não vou pagar o pato", in a direct translation "I won't be the duck", in a reference to being a fool or paying for something that is someone else's fault.

In the next chapters, the demonstrations before the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff will be analyzed, to understand how the spectacle framework is attached or not to the phenomenon.

## PART TWO

### 5. Theories

Scandal. Exclusive. Breaking news. The issues covered by the media have usually a strong and impressive call to the readers. A headline that many times is stronger or more urgent than the context asks for, but the eager to catch audience is the excuse to use of all the efforts to get people's attention. If it is annoying and dishonest in all types of news, from sports to the arts, the most dangerous impact is politics. The spectacle created around the political coverage transforms complex and boring discussions into something people are willing to read, buy, discuss, cheer for and fight over. The creative ideas to include political discussion on daily conversation could be celebrated, if the techniques did not make the subject simpler and with fewer nuances than it really has, making the discussion narrower than it should be.

In the era of information, meaningful and important discussions are losing their power. In 2012, from the 20.000 new book titles published in Brazil, how many can be said to have improved any significant discussion? Magazines, newspapers, online portals, movies, all of this content is being published, available to consume and share. For the inattentive observer, it could mislead to an idea of valorization of content. One could argue that what is really being created is a big buzz of information, with very little significant content. The spread of fun information is entertaining the audience, but not informing or educating.

The French theorist and philosopher Guy Debord and the Peruvian author Mario Vargas Llosa debate, from different perspectives, what they call the spectacle. For Debord, it is an effect of the last stage of capitalist society, where commodities turn to images that transform into spectacles to be consume by population. Vargas Llosa argues around the impoverishment of culture by the over-valorization of entertainment. The ideas of both authors, together with the concepts of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and the role of media and journalism, with form the base in this research to discuss a recent situation in Brazil. The introduction of Douglas Kellner's work is necessary to prove this phenomenon is not observed only in the Brazilian society. The author's ideas will be also compared.

In 1967, Guy Debord published the first edition of *Society of Spectacle*, a book that debates the changes in society during the last stage of capitalism. In 1988, the French neo-Marxist sociologist developed more arguments around the topic in *Comments on the society of Spectacle*. In 2012, the Peruvian writer and Nobel Prize winner, Mario Vargas Llosa, published *Notes on the Death of Culture: Essays on Spectacle and Society* discussing the transformations in society and its culture. Vargas Llosa's book, released 24 years after Debord's book on the topic of spectacle, acknowledges the French author's idea. While both delve into the same topic, the authors have distinguished approaches around the thematic.

Guy Debord discusses the spectacle of society based on the Marxist concepts of fetishism and commodities. Expectedly, sociologist Debord has a depth in his ideas, with a strong theoretical perspective. He elaborates the spectacle as the last stage of the deterioration of capitalist society. In contrast, Vargas Llosa argues that hedonistic pleasure around entertainment that would destroy the high culture and the capacity to interpret political debates.

The ideas about spectacle and information dissemination of Debord and Vargas Llosa have several links with the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and his ideas about the role of journalism. Everything that is not classified as entertainment (Bourdieu 1998, 6) is kept out of discussion on media to avoid the loss of audience attention – which will mean less profit coming from advertisement (Bourdieu 1998, 71). In a capitalist society, the need to commercialize everything, from products to content and entertainment, creates an obligation to transform even the political discussion into a product good that can be merchandised.

The ideas of the three authors converge and diverge in many aspects, and the relation between them can create a background for the discussion of political coverage in Brazil. Other researchers have also used this framework on the same topic. Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida (2017), use Debord, Barthes, Bourdieu and Vargas Llosa's ideas to analyze Veja's covers about Operation *Lava Jato*. Also focusing on *Lava Jato*, Nathália Roncador (2018) bases her study on Bourdieu's symbolic power and Luhmann's systems theory; Bruno Cardo Macedo and Cláudio Novaes Pinto Coelho (2016) use Debord's theories to study the same topic. Fausto Neto (2016) expands Barthes' concepts to study the logic behind the manufacturing of the event on the covers of weekly magazines about the Rousseff's impeachment, including publications where the air balloons Pinoquia and Pixuleco were framed.

Problematizing about media coverages in other parts of the world, across issues as broad as Occupy Wall Street, Clinton sex scandal and the Arab Spring, the author Douglas Kellner shows that the spectacle is not exclusive of Brazilian culture. He analyzes the effects of media

spectacle in different contemporary events. Using the same term as Debord's spectacle, Kellner makes sure to highlight the differences between the two concepts intensively. For Kellner, Debord has an abstracted and generalized notion of spectacle. Kellner focus on the media spectacle, by analyzing its production, distribution and function of media (Kellner 2003, 2). The American author tries, he says, to turn the spectacle "concrete and contemporary" (Kellner 2003, 11). Looking to Debord's position as framing the spectacle society as an authoritarian one. Kellner understands his as plural and heterogeneous, a field of "domination and resistance" (Kellner 2003, 11).

Kellner sees the media spectacle as a phenomenon that can work in two directions: other working in favor of the powerful other weakest side. He claims "media spectacle itself is a contested terrain that can be as force of political opposition and resistance, as well as domination and hegemony - and can be a site of contestation, reversal, and even revolution" (Kellner 2012, xvii).

As Vargas Llosa, Kellner differentiates his ideas from Debord's neo-Marxian references. However, different from the Peruvian author, Kellner presents his theoretical frame work by explaining that "Debord deploys a French radical intellectual and neo-Marxian perspective, while I employ a multi-perspectivist model, using Frankfurt School critical theory, British cultural studies, French postmodern theory" and others (Kellner 2012, xvi-xvii).

Another difference between the authors relates to the Debord's idea that "everything is part of the spectacle" (Kellner 2012, xvi-xvii). Nevertheless, even when analyzing the media spectacle, Debord's idea includes "packaging, promotion, and display of commodities and the production and effects of all media", while Kellner focuses on "the various forms of technologically constructed media productions that are produced and disseminated through the so-called mass media" (Kellner 2012, xv). In this part, Kellner seems to be closer to Walter Benjamin's critical position on the impact of mechanical reproduction of artwork.

The deterioration of culture is another point of divergence between Debord and Vargas Llosa. Vargas Llosa states that it is naïve to argue with education, that it would be possible to disseminate culture among the society. For him, this idea is one of the consequences of the impoverishment of the "high culture". As it is impossible to reach all society with such high-level culture, culture has to adapt and become more superficial to reach everyone (Vargas Llosa 2013, 10). He differentiates culture from knowledge. While culture is a group of habits and norms that are present in everyday life, knowledge on the other hand, is related to science and

technique (Vargas Llosa 2013, 10). For the author, it is not in school, but in the families that culture is transmitted. When families are dysfunctional, the transmission of culture is harmed.

For Debord, spectacle relates to capitalism and the oppression of the system. For him, the accumulation of money presents itself in form of images by the spectacle (Debord 2013, 17). The capitalist society turns the mass into an audience guided to an existence of contemplation and lethargy. He argues “the spectacle is the modern complement of money; a representation of the commodity world as a whole which serves as a general equivalent for what the entire society can be and can do” (Debord 2013, 21–22).

For Debord, “the spectacle’s social function is the concrete manufacture of alienation” (Debord 2013, 17). It goes beyond the media and the news. The spectacle is a structure in society that turns the population into spectators. The false creation of need and desire that turns people into observers of their own lives (Debord 2013, 16). Vargas Llosa sees Debord's ideas as a continuation of Marx theories. For him, Debord conceptualizes, from the perspective of modern industrial society, that the proletariat has been defeated by capitalism. The commodities have turn people into spectators and consumers, which the only value is to keep producing to buy the same products and enrich the owners of machines and industries (Vargas Llosa 2013, 12–13).

Debord argues that the spectacular distractions brought banalization, even in most advanced forms of society where commoditization creates a false idea of “variety of roles and objects to choose from” (Debord 2013, 24). Which could be, also, the over valorization of leisure time and vacations. Commodified moments work as compensation, the desire for them is encouraged. These extraordinary consumable moments are presented as part of real life, which is now a *truly spectacular* life (Debord 2013, 59).

The alienation and the over-valuation of leisure time relates to Vargas Llosa’s ideas about the strong value of entertainment in the cultural production in contemporary society. All cultural products are ephemeral, breezy and fun. There is no intention to make them last longer than their consumption time. “Culture is entertainment and what is not entertaining is not culture” (Vargas Llosa 2013, 17–18).

Debord discusses it by arguing the unstoppable circulation of information, mostly, useless information, distracts from the crucial information. Facts that influence and change people’s lives, what should be shared and reported, is published without care or thought (Debord 1990, 13). The media appeal of immediate information, that quickly will be the substitute for a new unimportant information, creates a buzz of “eternity noisy of insignificance” (Debord 1990,

15). This pattern will form a cycle of alienation, a consequence of the capitalist society in contributing to the media structure.

For Kellner, the phenomenon of information in synergy with entertainment creates the infotainment. For him, information and technology are changing entertainment. Moreover, entertainment is going further and influencing every domain of life, from economy, everyday life, including the politics (Kellner 2003, 12).

Kellner uses to explain that infotainment, the dissemination of news and information through entertainment format on the media coverages of Bill Clinton sex scandal, Osama Bin Laden assassination, and the Arab Spring, is the case of the coverage around the impeachment in Brazil. The discourse is similar to “us versus them” created on television series, or a Brazilian novela, where all the audience is looking forward to see what is going to happen in next.

The role of media is discussed by Bourdieu in his book *On Television*. He problematizes specific characteristics of journalism and broadcast journalism. The field brings to the public a different set of norms – that many times are not well understood by the majority of the population. Journalism is an instrument of dissemination of information. It throws journalism that ordinary people, scientists, artists, and scholars have access to “the space of mass circulation” or “public space” (Bourdieu 1998, 46). By holding the access to the public space, journalists have an incredible power over the discussions everyone has on the daily basis. The keeper of the news should acknowledge this fact and work having this in perspective, presenting important content, no matter what kind of result it brings.

On contrary, the political coverage goes in the opposite direction. By prioritizing audience ratings – and profits gain with that – the discussion around politics is kept out of the news as much as possible (Bourdieu 1998, 2). Being tedious and unappealing makes it a product that is taken out of the media. (Bourdieu 1998, 39). The goal of the market is always to sell more and increase profits, in opposition to the objective of journalism: inform and provide information to the population so they can make better decisions. The audience ratings create a shadow over all coverages, “as journalists are no doubt all the more inclined to adopt ‘audience rating’ standards in the production process” (Bourdieu 1998, 71). Political coverage can also build a distance between the public and the politics itself. Bourdieu argues it resembles the narrative of very competitive sports, where there are only two groups – athletes and spectators. For those who are “apolitical”, this reproduces the “fatalism and disengagement, which obviously favors the status quo” (Bourdieu 1998, 8).



Vargas Llosa, argues that the critical posture, attributed to journalism, is substituted by coverage that emphasizes entertainment and amusement (Vargas Llosa 2013, 69). To create an unreal feeling that politics are discussed, all the news on the topic will focus on frivolous and aspects that can easily be understood. It creates a phenomenon, which Bourdieu calls the “depoliticization and disenchantment with politics”, by giving space for stories that focus on scandals and spectacles (Bourdieu 1998, 6). This amplification of bad conducts creates in the mind of the audience the feeling that politics only relate to “people immoral, inefficient and prone to corruption” (Vargas Llosa 2013, 69). In this case, by not dealing with the tedious and unappealing topics, media deals with politics in a stereotypical manner. The final product is an audience that relates politics to dissatisfaction and dishonest behavior.

For Debord, the discourses of spectacular politics and spectacular justice are examples of “media excess”. “Thus the spectacle would be merely the excesses of the media, whose nature, unquestionably good since it facilitates communication, is sometimes driven to extremes” (Debord 1990, 6–7). Vargas Llosa problematizes the banalization of culture and the over valuation of frivolous topics encourage the proliferation of gossip and scandalous journalism (Vargas Llosa 2013, 19).

The will to create scandals and spectacles can be a product of both high or low autonomy. The autonomy and independence of media relate to the financial dependency of the media outlet on advertisement and states subsidies. The autonomy of journalists per se is dependent on four issues: the concentration of media ownership and the fear of being unemployed; the position occupied by the newspaper on media spectrum – with more or less recognition; the journalist reputation and salary on the newspaper or news medium; and last the capacity of the journalist on creating content (Bourdieu 1998, 69). All those aspects can increase or decrease the possibility of having a more accurate and good coverage on political topics.

Journalists fearing unemployment might produce a spectacular set of stories to sell more newspaper or have more audience. Media outlets can reinforce the narrow political discussion to guarantee financial or political support from the government or another influential group.

The government pressure is more than the financial support, as many can anticipate. Public officials can exert a heavyweight by not allowing the journalist to access legitimate information (Bourdieu 1998, 69). “Journalists occupy an ambiguous position in the political world, in which they are very influential actors but not full-fledged members. This position enables them to offer politicians vital symbolic support that they can't get for themselves” (Bourdieu 1998, 4).

For Debord, media and spectacles are the same things. The name media expresses more professionalism and unbiased structure, but in the end, the mass communication shared through mass media is a form of communication “whereby decisions already taken are presented for passive admiration. For what is communicated are orders; and with perfect harmony, those who give them are also those who tell us what they think of them” (Debord 1990, 6).

Journalists and media hold a communication power. Nevertheless, they are, at the same time, powerless and dependent on the political field to provide information and sources. Pressured by audience ratings and the need of keeping the spectators willing to listen to the news – even when they bring bad and tedious information – journalists and the media hear criticism from all sides. Bad political coverage is not the cause but the consequence of the culture impoverishment.

For Vargas Llosa, the open society would express relations between culture and politics. However, in a damaged civilization, this connection harms the political debates. Instead of promoting standards of civility, it contributes to the moral and civic deterioration, with politics “been increasingly replacing ideas and ideals, intellectual debate and programmes, with the mere publicity and an obsession with the physical appearance” (Vargas Llosa 2013, 67).

This oversimplification is not only present on the news and political discussion. As Vargas Llosa exposes in his narrative, these are the times of over-appreciation of entertainment. The culture has changed. People read; go to the movies or to the theater looking for entertainment, not culture (Vargas Llosa 2013, 70). Frivolous and superficial best-seller books replace high literature, created to last beyond time and be modern for many decades. In this culture, the only esteemed value is the commercial one (Vargas Llosa 2013, 17-18). Kellner brings the issue up that through “entertainmentization” of the economy, all the leisure industry became a major economic sector of the United States national economy (Kellner 2003, 3).

Vargas Llosa advocates that in the eager to democratize culture, quantity is prioritized over quality. This is the cause of the disappearance of a higher culture (Vargas Llosa 2013, 20). Besides the altruistic aim, the author observes the loss as too devastating. Now, the concept of culture is the one linked with the anthropologic discourse – a set of values, habits, and behaviors of a group. “When the idea of culture becomes an amalgam of this kind, then it is inevitable that it might come to be understood merely as a pleasant way of spending time” (Vargas Llosa 2013, 20).

For Kellner, however, the spectacle is not always an issue. It can be a tool of resistance against oppression (Kellner 2003, 16). He argues that “media spectacles are those phenomena of media culture that embody contemporary society's basic values, serve to initiate individuals into its way of life, and dramatize its controversies and struggles, as well as its modes of conflicts resolution” (Kellner 2003, 2).

Debord argues that the appreciation of commodities is implicating even to remote societies, underdeveloped regions, to be dominated by modern society. “Even where the material base is still absent, modern society has already used the spectacle to invade the social surface of every continent” (Debord 2013, 24). In this direction, he makes a point regarding the protests of the impeachment process in Brazil, as

“The bureaucratic regimes in power in certain industrialized countries have their own particular type of spectacle, but it is an integral part of the total spectacle, serving as its pseudo-opposition and actual support. Even if local manifestations of the spectacle include certain totalitarian specializations of social communication and control, from the standpoint of the overall functioning of the system those specializations are simply playing their allotted role within a *global division of spectacular tasks*” (Debord 2013, 24).

For Kellner, however, the spectacle is not always an issue. It can be a tool of resistance against oppression. The author is critical, though, to the vulgarization and banalization of culture (Kellner 2003, 16). In this point, he relates with the critics of Vargas Llosa and the way the Peruvian author sees the impoverishment of culture in the contemporary society. Kellner term, vulgarization, seems to be very close to the ideas Vargas Llosa presents, even though Vargas Llosa never called the phenomenon under scrutiny vulgar culture.

Vargas Llosa does put on the democratization of culture the blame on the need to spread extensively the higher culture. Debord discusses the loss of quality over quantity, but as a consequence of commoditization, as commodities are a product of quantity and produce quantity (Debord 2013, 18). In this point, Vargas Llosa can be seen as an elitist. If culture, in its most sophisticated form, is available only for a group, and those who have access are, usually, the ones in a higher economic-political position within society, then the concentration of knowledge and culture reinforces an unbalanced structure and more inequalities.

The need to make the news understandable to all, across a spectrum of spectators, is not only due to audience ratings. There is also a democratic objective to include all population in the same discussion. It can also happen that, for any time, this can contribute to the loss of quality over quantity. Therefore, in politics, it is debatable if there are bad or good outcomes to this spectacle.

## 6. Media in Context: Veja and Carta Capital

The media in Brazil is impressively concentrated. A research done by the organization Media Ownership Monitor showed that five groups or individuals, including several family groups, detain control of more than half of media outlets in Brazil (Media Ownership Monitor n.d). The Brazilian family groups, says Goldstein, “represents a reduction of diversity with respect to the confrontation of opinions and a narrowing of the public debate” (Goldstein 2016, 2). Bourdieu problematize the concentration of media as one of the aspects to decrease journalists’ autonomy (Bourdieu 1998, 69). Fear of losing the job in a scarce concentrated market is proportional from the autonomy and freedom of the journalist. To guarantee audience, media outlets and professionals may see the scandal and spectacle coverage as the way to maintain economic profits and jobs.

Civita Family, owner of Grupo Abril, responsible for *Veja*, is the seventh biggest media group in Brazil. The magazine is the most popular in the country, with the largest circulation, more than 1 million copies printed every week. Tania Almeida (2008) says it is the world’s fourth biggest weekly information magazine (Almeida 2008, 141). In the commercial information available on Grupo Abril webpage, the average readers figure is presented as 6 million in the printed form and an online audience of 25 million people (Publi Abril n.d).

*Veja* was created in 1968. Under the direction of the editor in chief Mino Carta, *Veja* has an editorial alignment in opposition to the Military dictatorship that began four years earlier. Mino Carta had editorial freedom to publish articles against the government (Media Ownership Monitor n.d). Under political pressure, Carta resigned in 1976, and *Veja* turned its coverage to a much more conservative editorial line (Media Ownership Monitor n.d). “With the redemocratization, the magazine always backed center-right and right-wing candidates in presidential elections” (Media Ownership Monitor n.d).

Mino Carta, Italian born in Genova, was a great opponent of the military dictatorship, sided of important Brazilian journalists as Vladimir Herzog, who was tortured and killed during the dictatorship (Renó and Souza 2008, 94–95). In 1994, Mino Carta created a magazine that personifies him and even presents part of his name on the title. *Carta Capital* is a progressive media, with much less influence in the Brazilian society, with its 65.000 issues per week, according to official data from 2015 (*Carta Capital* 2015b). Due to its size, the stories and

articles published by the magazine have reduced impact to influence public's debates and discussions.

With *Veja* supporting the central-right and *Carta Capital* in a clear political position standing with the left, several studies were conducted comparing both publications. As Danilo Amoroso and Tomás Eon Barreiros (2008), Denis Renó and Taís Rios Salomão de Souza (2008), compared the coverage of *Veja* and *Carta Capital* of the *Mensalão* corruption scandal. Amálio Pinheiro and Maria Lucia de Paiva Jacobini (2011) analyzed the discourse of the magazines around the economic development articles. Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida (2017) studied the magazines covers about *Operação Lava Jato*. With them, many others had compared the approaches of the media outlets around themes of political and economic discussion.

In a research comparing the coverages of *Veja* and *Carta Capital*, Renó and Souza brought light to the fact that *Veja* represents the mass media. It made opposition in important political periods, but also helped to create a mediatic scandal<sup>2</sup> around the Fernando Collor de Mello impeachment process in 1992 (Renó and Souza 2008, 94). For Célia Dias dos Santos was during the coverage of Collor's impeachment that the increase of "spectacularization" of Brazilian politics began (Santos 2012, 310). Almeida on her study about the covers of *Veja* during the first term of president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2011), states that the magazine treated its readers as empty boxes, asking questions and providing the answers. The study showed the lexical used by the magazine when mentioning PT, Lula and his government were: lack of competency, lack of ethics and involvement with criminal acts (Almeida 2008, 142). The author identifies the magazine as an active actor on the process of creating the government's image by relating all the government decisions and actions to PT (Almeida 2008, 142).

Frederico Brandão Tavares, Crista Berger and Paulo Bernardo Vaz (2016) highlight the magazine position since the first year of president Lula's government conducting a critical political coverage, in a discourse in opposition to the party leftist orientation (Tavares, Berger, and Vaz 2016, 22). The authors believe the biggest attention was given to articles with corruption, denouncement linked to PT. The article's sources were documents leaked to the publication, which would provide its line of interpretation to the readers (Tavares, Berger, and Vaz 2016, 22).

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<sup>2</sup> *Veja* published a cover story with the president Fernando Collor's brother, Pedro Collor de Mello, on May 13, 1992. Intimacy information about president Collor was revealed, turning the corruption scandal into a mediatic coverage (Renó and Souza 2008, 94).

Amoroso and Eon Barreiros also pointed out Veja's use of adjectives and aggressive posture against Lula during the coverage of the corruption scandal *Mensalão*. For the authors, Carta Capital tried to delink Lula's image as much as possible from the investigation. They claim Carta Capital even omit some of the reference to Lula to preserve his image front of the audience (Amoroso and Eon Barreiros 2008, 130). Renó and Souza likewise pointed out that Carta Capital was openly declared in favor of Lula's government, in opposition to Veja criticism of the government (Renó and Souza 2008, 94–95).

Nevertheless, it was not only with Lula and his government that the publication presented a critical coverage. Santos (2012) analyzed the editorials of Carta Capital in 2010, year of Dilma Rousseff first run for presidency, and concluded that this magazine had a clear political-ideological position align with the left. (Santos 2012, 311). On the other hand, for Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida, Veja was the biggest political opponent to Dilma Rousseff's government (Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida 2017, 102).

Veja's editorial tendency did not pass without notice by the party. PT's politicians mentioned the unfriendly relation between the publication and the party in many occasions. For instance, in the last presidential debate, broadcasted by Rede Globo on October 24, 2014, Dilma Rousseff accused Veja of creating political terrorism. For her, the magazine was trying to link her and Lula to the episodes involving Petrobras without prove, based only in personal statements of criminal people. Rousseff claimed the magazine was creating a systematic campaign against her and former president Lula<sup>3</sup> (Chaia 2016, 51).

In their study, Amoroso and Eon Barreiros mentioned that the opposite editorial lines were a reflex on the ideology of the one's who control the media outlet. It is based on this ideology that the content, source and structure of articles are be stablished (Amoroso and Eon Barreiros 2008, 124).

In March 2016, Justice released several telephone records of people investigated by *Lava Jato*. In one of them, Lula is heard saying he suggested an article to Mino Carta, editor in chief of

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3 Transcription of Dilma Rousseff statement published in Portuguese by Vera Chaia (2016) “Meus amigos e minhas amigas, eu gostaria de encerrar minha campanha na TV de outra forma, mas não posso me calar frente a esse ato de terrorismo eleitoral articulado pela revista Veja e seus parceiros ocultos. Uma atitude que envergonha a imprensa e agride a nossa tradição democrática. Sem apresentar nenhuma prova concreta e mais uma vez baseando-se em supostas declarações de pessoas do submundo do crime, a revista tenta envolver a mim e ao presidente Lula nos episódios da Petrobras que estão sob investigação da justiça. Todos os eleitores sabem da campanha sistemática que a revista move há anos contra Lula e contra mim, mas dessa vez a Veja excedeu todos os limites (...)” (Chaia 2016, 51).

Carta Capital. The topic of the article is the political situation, which the former president saw in two directions: the demand of population for stronger control of corruption and a denial of the politics. Lula believes it would lead to an authoritarian political future (O Globo 2016). After the release of this audio record, Mino Carta recorded a statement published on Carta Capital YouTube channel explaining his 40-year friendship with Lula. Carta mentioned the regular telephone calls and meetings he has with the former president. However, Mino Carta calls himself an incorruptible person, a journalist that would not write about something he does not believe in (Carta Capital 2016b). Proving, by his point of view, Lula's indication would not interfere in the magazine editorial line.

In 2017, another link between Carta Capital and PT was published on media outlets as Folha de S. Paulo, O Estado de S. Paulo and Veja. The articles brought information of plea bargain transcripts of Emilio Odebrecht and Marcelo Odebrecht, owners of the construction company Odebrecht, and Paulo Cesena, former business executive of the company. Odebrecht is the main actor in the investigation of *Lava Jato*. In the articles published by the media outlets, the three suspects claimed Lula and the former economy minister Guido Mantega asked the for financial to support Carta Capital (Tavares 2017) (Carvalho 2017) (Rangel et al. 2017). At the time, the company carried out the transfer of R\$3 million to Carta Capital.

The magazine controllers answered the accusation with an open letter explaining the negotiation was made directly between the magazine publishers and Odebrecht executives, in a regular commercial negotiation. The magazine's statement says it is a common practice of news outlets to sell advertisement space in advance, which would be used in the course of several years, and it does not implicate in a loan. Carta Capital claims that the plea bargain document mentions that other media companies had settled deals with Odebrecht for future advertisement campaigns, as Correio Braziliense, Jornal do Brasil, A Tarde and O Estado de S. Paulo (Carta Capital 2017). That statements ends by presenting a suspect that the leak of the out of context quote relates to the fact that Carta Capital have not abdicated the journalistic duty to point out the errors and abuses of *Lava Jato* (Carta Capital 2017).

The relation of the magazine and the party was so obvious that in its article a simple word could show it to attentive readers. During the presidency of Dilma Rousseff, the president indicated to her subordinates to be addressed as "presidenta", with additional feminine suffix A to the word president. Presidenta is not a common word in Portuguese, in which presidente is usually applied either for man and woman. The idea to reinforce the "a" at the end of the word, reminds Rousseff is a woman and the head of the country. By calling the president Dilma Rousseff

presidenta, one could be put into the category of supporters of PT. In the articles of Carta Capital, Rousseff was referenced as presidenta, when in the other magazines, including Veja, she was always the presidente.

In the coverage of the impeachment process, another significant difference could be notice between the magazines. In some articles, Carta Capital referred to the political process as a coup, word used largely by PT supporters. Veja would classify the impeachment as a political legal instrument, without putting in doubt the procedures of public attorney and justice. When discussing the position of Veja about the impeachment, Schott Lopes believes it presents a vehemently pro-impeachment position, while other outlets – he mentions Globo's internet-based news portal, G1 – were more neutral (Schott L. 2016, 11).

In the analysis, Amoroso and Eon Barreiros abstain to judge with coverage was “truer” than the other. By questioning the called journalist impartiality, Amoroso and Eon Barreiros present that, both coverages were highly influenced by the editorial line of the magazines. They presented different truths, with information and sources chosen to be highlighted or taken aside (Amoroso and Eon Barreiros 2008, 130).

In this regard, Debord discusses the end of “incontestable bibliographical truth”, he claims it is impossible to reach since the archives can be manipulated in the computerized era (Debord 1990, 20). The spread of versions and accusations of fake news, not only frames are being questioned, but the facts per se. Veja and Carta Capital, however, may chose different angles to tell stories and publish pictures, but they do not create a false information to spread to the public.

Problematizing the relation of politics and media, Bourdieu explains that both fields are strongly linked, and indeed media can contribute to social change. As he claims, power of journalistic field, or media, “reinforces the tendencies of political actors to accede to the expectations and the demands of the largest majority. Because these demands are sometimes highly emotional and unreflective, their articulation by the press often turns them into claims capable of mobilizing groups” (Bourdieu 1998, 76–77). In the next chapters, this link is going to be further explored and debated.



## 7. Impeachment

The impeachment is an extreme measurement in a democracy. Since the democratization, in 1985, Brazil had two. Leslie Bethell, a historian author specialized in the country but rather not be called “brazilianist”, explains that, when compared with other countries, Brazil has a favorable count in the number of elections since the independence of Portugal in 1822. Only for eight years, between 1937 and 1945, Brazil did not held elections (Bethell 2018, 147). Polls are, indeed, part of a democracy. However, they are not the only tool that guarantees it. He explains that, elections in the country were rather non-democratic, restricted to a part of population and “rarely completely honest” (Bethell 2018, 147).

For Bethel, after the Constitution of 1988, the presidential elections in 1989 and the congressional elections in 1990, Brazil consolidated itself as a democracy – the third largest in the world, after India and the United States. According to the Democracy Index all of them are “flawed democracies”. This refers to nations where elections are fair and free and basic civil liberties are honored but may have issues (e.g. media freedom infringement). These nations have significant faults in other democratic aspects, including underdeveloped political culture, low levels of participation in politics, and issues in the functioning of governance (Democracy Index 2015). Indeed, the “political/institutional crisis arising from the impeachment of president Dilma Rouseff (sic) of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT, Workers’ Party) in 2016 was a reminder that liberal representative democracy in Brazil is relatively new and perhaps less than fully consolidated” (Bethell 2018, 148).

In 1992, the first directly elected president of the “new republic” Fernando Collor de Mello (1990-1992) was impeached from his office due to allegations of corruption (Bethell 2018, 162). The scenario of Rouseff’s impeachment was a bit different. Under accusations of crimes of fiscal and administrative responsibility (popular known as *pedaladas fiscais*) (Bethell 2018, 172), the Congress and Senate considered president Dilma Rouseff guilty. However, it was a parallel investigation carried out by Federal Police and prosecutors of Paraná, the biggest problem Rouseff was facing. Started in 2014 and active until now, 2018, Operation *Lava Jato* began as a money laundering investigation in a car wash. From that, the investigation found roots of corruption in federal, state and municipal levels. *Lava Jato* follows the path of money laundry, bribe and corruption especially at Petrobras, the national oil company.

Although there has never been proved if Dilma Rousseff knew what was happening on Petrobras, or if she was somehow benefited from the crimes, the impeachment process was linked with it. As explained by Bethell, “the grounds for impeachment were not, as in the case of Collor de Mello in 1992, personal corruption, nor any involvement the president might have had in the various corruption scandals involving Petrobras” (Bethell 2018, 172). Public opinion saw her as guilty and, possibly, most of people participating in demonstrations would say the impeachment happened because of corruption on Petrobras. Regardless of the fact that the investigation proving the corruption on oil company was happening for several years with different presidents, the protests focused against PT, because the party was ruling the country since 2003, under president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva between 2003 and 2010, and later Dilma Rousseff from 2011 to 2016.

The amount of money is scandalous to the population. Until now, *Lava Jato* disclosed that more than \$10 billion dollars were diverted resources from the country (Granjeira 2017). Several politicians from the whole spectrum of Brazilian politics, right, left and center, were arrested or are under investigation. Including, in 2018, the former president Lula, who was convicted for 12 years for corruption involving a triplex apartment in São Paulo. He is currently imprisoned in Curitiba, capital of Paraná.

*Lava Jato* explains part of Rousseff’s impeachment. Nevertheless, the process was a complex combination of economic crisis, discretization of politics, loss of political support and a crime of administrative responsibility.

The accusations Dilma Rousseff faced, crimes of fiscal and administrative responsibility in violation of the constitution and the law, were seen as leading the re-election in 2014 under positive unrealistic data. It was considered an improper manipulation of the public accounts in 2014 by transferring funds from the state banks to cover up a huge fiscal deficit and mounting public debt (Bethell 2018, 172). Pedalas fiscais are a practice of National Treasury, of deliberated delays on money transfers to banks, from public and private sectors to artificially improve federal accounts. By presenting the expenses lower than those practiced, it informed an unrealistic scenario to the financial market, as a way of to forge an optimistic political and economic framework in the pre-election period (Fernandes, Furlan, and Dias 2016, 203).

In 2015, Rousseff signed six decrees of supplementary credit, which were not approved by Congress. It represented a delay on the payment of R\$3.5 billion to finance a credit program to a state bank. It forced the “bank to finance itself, the government borrowed money from one of its own institutions” (Schott L. 2016, 13). Pedalada fiscal is an “attempt by Rousseff to hide the

true state of the nation's finances, and equivocation that has serious consequences for Brazil's fiscal credibility abroad (Schott L. 2016, 13).

Schott Lopes explains that, according to Article 1 of Brazilian impeachment law (Lei 1.079;1950) sanctioned by president Eurico Gaspar Dutra, a Brazilian president can be impeached if he or she commits a crime of administrative responsibility, which, “contrary to a common of a white-collar crime, is intrinsically connected to the nation's administrative duties (Schott L. 2016, 13). In this case, presidents can be impeached for maneuvers that are not corruption per se, but are proofs of administrative crime. During the impeachment process, Schott Lopes remembers, Rousseff repeatedly said she could have committed mistakes, but she did not have any bank account abroad, or had never committed corruption, as, she would claim, was not guilt (Schott L. 2016, 11). “From the beginning of impeachment proceedings, Rousseff called numerous press conferences, always seeking to defend herself from the alleged charges made against her” (Schott L. 2016, 11).

More than a legal procedure, the impeachment depends much on the political support. As Congress and Senate judge the impeachment, it cannot be approved without the support of majority of both chambers. Schott Lopes states that “since the impeachment was a juridical-political process, it depended on her overall popularity and congressional alliances, both of which were at an all-time low” (Schott L. 2016, 12).

Rousseff’s support was not stable. Bethell affirms “president Dilma had begun her second term with the support of 69 per cent of the Chamber of Deputies and 72 per cent of the Senate, although only 16 per cent of deputies and 17 per cent of senators belonged to the PT” (Bethell 2018, 171). Facing a long period of economic recession and the political instability started with Operation *Lava Jato*, “Dilma found it increasingly difficult to maintain and manage her multi-party coalition government” (Bethell 2018, 171).

Eduardo Cunha, president of Congress, opened the impeachment process by accepting the documents from the lawyers Janaína Paschoal, Miguel Reale Junior and Hélio Bicudo, accusing president Dilma Rousseff of committing a crime of administrative responsibility. On December 2, 2015, the process started. The Supreme Court approved by majority of voters the petition for impeachment on December 17, 2015. Transmitted live via TV, internet and radio, on April 17, 2016, the Congress approved the impeachment with 367 votes for the impeachment and 137 against (Bethell 2018, 172). During the session, that lasted 9 hours, deputies voted openly, in a public speech, justifying it. Many that voted for the impeachment did it in the name of god and

their families. Some used the speech time, live broadcasted in open TV, to send happy birthday wishes to family members.

After that, on May 12, 2016, “the Senate voted (55 votes to 22, with four senators absent) to suspend Rousseff from office pending a full trial” (Bethell 2018, 172). Dilma Rousseff stepped out of the office and the vice-president Michel Temer assumed as president interim. Three months after the beginning of the processing in the Senate, on August 31, 2016, with 61 votes for and 20 against the impeachment, Dilma Rousseff was impeached by the Senate (Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida 2017, 109). As an event “spread over almost nine months”, after presenting all the dates, voting and procedures, Bethell sees the impeachment was “entirely constitutional and legal” (Bethell 2018, 172).

If compared with the timelines, Rousseff’s impeachment was seen to have followed all the legal procedures and appealing periods. In comparison, the impeachment of president Fernando Collor de Mello had a faster procedure. It was approved by Congress on September 29, 1992, and by the Senate on December 29, 1992, when Fernando Collor stepped out of the office (Bethell 2018, 162). However, even with the legal procedure flow, PT and Rousseff’s supporters questioned the impeachment, with several allegations of coup.

João Feres Júnior pays attention to “the way in which the perception of political institutions is formed in a large, diverse, and complex society such as Brazil”. For him, even though there were several socio-political changes in the country since the end of the military dictatorship, the media has kept being concentrated “in the hands of half-a-dozen families that control the sector for decades” (Feres Júnior 2017, 368).

The political science professor Leonardo Avritzer brings out that, Eduardo Cunha, former president of Congress, responsible for accepting and opening the impeachment process, “led the impeachment and had his mandate suspended a few months later and ended in prison placing additional doubts on the legality of the process” (Avritzer L. 2017, 349). The role of the president of Congress is important in this legal procedure. It is him or her who decides what bill will be voted first. Even though Cunha was a member of PMDB, party in the coalition with PT, he announced a break with the government and declared himself 'opposition' in May 16, 2015. He claimed the government was orchestrating denunciations against him (Calgaro et al. 2017). In 2018, he was sentenced for 24 years in prison for involvement in the scheme that diverted money from the Federal Bank, Caixa Econômica Federal (Souza 2018).

Several other authors question the legitimacy of the impeachment process, of *Lava Jato*, and the justice procedures. This research does not intend to prove that the Dilma Rousseff and PT were victims of a conspiracy or a coup. Neither will it be argued that the impeachment was a legal, regular procedure. The objective is to discuss how political movements – and their balloons – were framed by media and if it reinforced the spectacle around the event.

## 8. Social movements

In June 2013 in São Paulo, police responded with violence the demonstration against the increase of R\$0.20 in the ticket fare of public transportation. Organized by *Movimento Passe Livre*, several people were injured after the protest, including journalists (Mendes 2017, 60). The police violence, usually exclusively enforced on poor and marginalized population, was done, and recorded by journalists, to middle class in the most important economic center of the country. With support of the media, series of new demonstrations happened all over Brazil.

*Movimento Passe Livre* is a leftist social movement, which focus on demanding free transportation fare to population. It is not supported by the capitalist establishment. Nevertheless, the increase of the transportation cost became the trigger for a series of new demonstrations. The uprising of June was soon formed by a diverse group, with participants that are not usually on the streets to demand rights. Upper-middle class population joined the groups demanding the lower transport tariff, anarchist groups, working-class, among others. The demonstrations were mixed, without a clear agenda. Fabiano Santos and Fernando Guarnieri state it will “forever mark the civic conscience and political socialization of the Brazilian people” (Santos and Guarnieri 2016, 485). As James Holston describes, when the protests started in 2013, member of the left and the right could not anticipated what they were, but they could see what they were not,

“They were not organized by recognizable, tried-and-true forms of social protest (social movements, political parties, labor unions, churches, professional associations, human rights groups, NGOs); they were leaderless; they lacked political articulation; they had no consolidated agenda; they refused the Press; they disdained elected politicians and rejected a decade of ruling Workers' Party (PT) mega-publicity about Brazilian successes. In short, they were splintered, anarchic, unrepresentative, unverifiable, ungrateful, and apolitical. Yet, by mid-June, more than a million people were participating in street demonstrations, clearly mobilized by something rather than nothing” (Holston 2014, 887).

Mendes claims that the tactics of the MPL and police repression, “were the triggering factors that provided the masses with a window of opportunity to join the protests, and in this process, publicly show their dissatisfaction with a variety of issues while (re)discovering the appeal of the streets” (Mendes 2017, 61). It had a diverse demand. From the initial decrease on transportation fares, to better education, health, no more police violence. One can argue that by questioning the demonstrators on the streets at the time several ambiguous answers would

appear in the same group. The demonstrations of 2013 – known in Portuguese as *jornadas* – made clear that a different group of society, the privileged ones, could also take part of demonstrations on the streets.

As the recent protests as Occupy and the Arab Spring, most of the organization was done via social media. Mariana Mendes claims that it proves how powerful were “media networks and digital platforms” *Clique ou toque aqui para inserir o texto.* (Mendes 2017, 61). Asking the population to “take the streets”, or “*Vem Pra Rua*”, they were capable to mobilize parts of the population in all the regions of the country.

Paulo Sotero claimed the demonstrations in 2013 showed “exasperation towards an unresponsive and often self-serving political class as a whole, rather than against the President in particular” (Sotero 2014, 35). For him, the political image of Rousseff as a “honest and hard-working public servant was not affected by the mass rallies” (Sotero 2014, 35).

However, we cannot ignore that the consequence of those events would influence in the impeachment process in 2015 and 2016. The share of population, middle and upper class, that not used to protest, joined the streets to demanded changes – some of them also demanded in 2013. The increase of 20 cents in the ticket fair created a mass of people capable of demanding changes. For Sotero, “it brought to the scene a new generation of Brazilians formerly disengaged from social and political involvement” (Sotero 2014, 35). As Mendes explains that during huge publicized corruption scandals, as the *Mensalão*, there was not substantial wave of popular indignation. However, with an R\$0.20 increase in public transportation fares that “would hardly have qualified as a possible trigger for large-scale protests. And yet it was” (Mendes 2017, 60).

Something had changed in the country. After the election of Rousseff for her second term in 2014 and the first articles about *Lava Jato* started to be published, groups of middle and upper-middle class used the organization previously used in the protest of June 2013 to create new structured groups. By the end of 2014, the biggest and better organized group against the government of Dilma Rousseff was formed. *Movimento Brasil Livre*, name that links with the antecessor *Movimento Passe Livre*, although has a completely different political position, was created through social media and became an offline important social movement. Supporting the free market and opposing to corruption, MBL is formed mostly by middle and upper classes, people against PT, former president Lula and Dilma Rousseff, and corruption. Its creation was established after the beginning of the corruption investigation *Lava Jato*, strongly supported by the movement.

In his study comparing recent protests in Brazil and Argentina, Juan Ferrero exposes a change in the pattern of mobilization in 1990 and nowadays in both countries. If in 1990, the unions represented the population during rallies and the anti-neoliberal agenda was questioned, now the anonymous groups, organized through internet, non-partisan, advocate in pro of anti-corruption, institutions and republic (Ferrero 2017, 21).

Ferrero highlights the importance of three organizations, *Movimento Brasil Livre*, *Vem Pra Rua* and *Revoltados Online*. For him, the last, *Revoltados Online*, is the most popular, due to the number of “likes”, or subscribers, to its Facebook page (Ferrero 2017, 15). What we observe is a bigger influence of MBL, which, in 2018, elected two of its members for congress in the state of São Paulo. The leader of *Vem pra Rua*, Carla Zambelli, was elected for congress in the same election. Many of those politics are the new conservative movement in the country, and became popular after the social movements which rally against Dilma Rousseff.

Although Jair Messias Bolsonaro align with the conservative agenda of most of marchers during the protests against Dilma Rousseff, was not their leader. In March 15, 2015, he tried to give a speech in a protest happening in Copacabana, in Rio de Janeiro. He was booed and had to give up on talking to the crowd (Extra 2015). Other politicians that opposed to the government were also not welcome in stages during the demonstrations, as Aécio Neves and Geraldo Alckmin in São Paulo in March 13, 2016 (G1 2016). The movements had, at least in the beginning, an attempt to show dissatisfaction against all political class.

It was not only civic society that was against the PT government and Dilma Rousseff. A strong and rich actor decided to declare opposition to the government. FIESP, the Federation of Industries of the State São Paulo unites 130 thousand industries of the state, and represent 130 employers’ unions. Financed with union’s tax, paid by the companies, FIESP represented the industry owners of the richest state of the country. The FIESP pro-market and neo-liberal agenda had a symbol against tax increase in 2015. The yellow duck was more than a puppet that represented the opposition to taxation. It was used to showed the industry owners dissatisfaction with Rousseff government.

With a diverse political agenda, another recent demonstration used balloons to protest against the government. The demonstrations “We Won’t Let Belgrade D(r)own”, used a duck balloon as a symbol to oppose the construction of the infrastructure project “Belgrade Waterfront” in Belgrade, Serbia. Done by architects from Dubai, the project was controversial due to its lack of transparency, strong dependence from foreign influence and remove of families of the affected area against their will (Surk 2018). Yet, different from the Brazilian protests organized



by the non-partisan liberal groups which had pro-market focus, the protests in Belgrade had a strong anti-neoliberal connotation (Matković and Ivković 2018, 35–36).

The duck, which in the Serbian slang represents the male sexual organ, is used on social media as an “equivalent of ‘show them the middle finger’” (BBC 2015), was launch in April 2015. In this case, months before even the first Brazilian balloon, Pixuleco, was released, in August of that same year. Due to its differences in discourse – anti-neoliberal in the Serbia case – and pro market in the Brazilian one, - it is not probable, that Pato da FIESP, was inspired in the Belgrade counterpart.

If in Belgrade the duck movement lost its battle to the capitalist project, in Brazil the social movements were successful in the support for the impeachment process. Santos and Guarnieri understand MBL created an indirect pressure to mobilize the main party in the opposition, PSDB. The party, in fear of losing its political power, took the lead in the impeachment process (Santos and Guarnieri 2016, 492). The authors understand the social movements as an “act in this play”, that gave opposition parties the right to act “in name of the ‘people’” (Santos and Guarnieri 2016, 492). As “people”, Santos and Guarnieri remember, the participants of demonstrations “were men (57%), predominantly white (77%), with an average age of 45 (40% under 50), highly educated (77%) and on high incomes” (Santos and Guarnieri 2016, 492).

Next sections will analyze the role of the puppet balloons and the coverage of *Veja* and *Carta Capital* in this theoretical and contextualized framework.

## PART 3

### 9. To what extension the air balloons create a spectacle of the demonstrations supporting the impeachment?

The demonstrations against Dilma Rousseff and the PT started on March 15, 2015. Many participants all over the country met to protest against the government, corruption and support of operation *Lava Jato*. As the months passed by, Paulo Gusmão, participant of *Movimento Brasil*, observed that there was a big focus on the number of participants, and not in the protest anymore. In an interview for journalist Roberto Kaz in the magazine *Piauí*, Gusmão explains the media was losing interest in the demonstrations against president Dilma Rousseff. News outlets were too concerned about the number of participants and not about the event per se (Kaz 2015). He decided to create a new symbol for the rallies, something that would take the focus away from the number of participants.

Paulo Gusmão, responsible for the marketing of the social movement *Movimento Brasil*, took the lead in a group to create a balloon depicting the former resident Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. With 15 meters high and weighting 100 kilos empty and 500 kilos when inflated, it costed R\$12,000.00 (3,000 euros). Money paid by supporters of *Movimento Brasil* (Kaz 2015). Fabricated in São Paulo, the balloon had its debut on August 16, 2015, in Brasília, the capital.

It was Gusmão, together with the marketing team, who defined the appearance of the balloon. In its stature, it is similar to a South Park cartoon character (Kaz 2015). It has grey hair; the face has big eyes and a mouth expressing sadness. Gusmão explained to the *Piauí* magazine reporter, Roberto Kaz, that the team intent to create it looking tired and scared (Kaz 2015). The balloon has four fingers on the left hand as Lula, who lost a finger in 1964, working as a metalworker (Silva 2010). The ears are big and asymmetric, as Lula. The balloon dresses a prisoner's uniform, where is written "13-171" in the front. The numbers have a clear meaning in Brazil: 13 is the party number of the PT, it is well known and constantly reminded, especially before elections; 171 is the article number of white-collar crimes in Brazilian's penal code, used in informal conversations as a slang (one-seven-one), synonym to cheater. The balloon has chained to its feet an iron ball with *Operação Lava Jato* written on it. On the back, "Lula never again" is written, along with the logo of *Movimento Brasil*.

The name of the balloon was an important aspect to keep its popularity among government opponents. Pixuleco was the name of 17<sup>th</sup> phase of *Operação Lava Jato*, phase started in August 3, 2015, 13 days before the first appearance of the balloon. In this phase, prosecutors accused João Vaccari Neto, PT's treasurer, of demanding bribery from construction companies to seal contracts with the government. Federal Police stated Vaccari called the bribery pixuleco (Congresso em Foco 2015). Media repeated this unusual and funny name several times in the week before the first run of the balloon in Brasilia. After the demonstrations, Brazilian media published photos and videos of the balloon along with the name, Pixuleco.

Due to its popularity among supporters, other movements create balloons in different forms, colors, and sizes. For the demonstrations on September 7 (Brazil's Independence Day, with official parades happening all around the country), *Movimento Brasil* prepared a balloon depicting president Rousseff.

Pinóquia has a big nose, as Pinocchio, the wooden puppet whose nose grows when he lies. The name, however, was not as catchy as Pixuleco. It uses a red dress (PT's color) with mark of a white star (PT's symbol) on the left side, and the presidential belt. One of the hands is along the body, the other holds the presidential belt, as it was being taken off. The balloons have black stains on the clothes, in a reference to the corruption investigation at oil company Petrobras. It has a tired and scared face.

Later, another social group, *Revoltados Online*, created a new balloon of president Rousseff. With a much scarier face, Bandilma (combination of Dilma and the word criminal in Portuguese) also uses red dress, has the presidential belt where is written "impeachment". It wears a criminal mask, which could be related with Rousseff participation resistance movement against the military regime. Bandilma has oil stains on the dress, with one hand on the waste, in a posture showing power or "bossy" characteristic. As Pinóquia, Bandilma did not had the same popularity among opponents of the government.

The relation with the guerrilla groups was used several times by Rousseff's opponents. Involved in Marxist groups since 1964, when the military dictatorship started. She was arrested in 1970. In prison she was tortured and was captive until 1972 (Instituto Vladimir Herzog n.d). Opponents say she participated in the armed resistance, with the group VAR Palmares, responsible for bank robbery and kidnaps. The journalist Reinaldo Azevedo, writing for *Veja* online, calls those organizations terrorists and ask questions: if she was not taking guns, was she playing piano at the resistance? (Azevedo 2017). Rousseff denies participating in armed events, but assumes to participate in resistance groups.

Even with two different balloons, Pinóquia and Bandilma never had the same popularity as Pixuleco. It could be not only in regards to the look of the balloons, but also to Dilma Rousseff recognition. She was not so popular as Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. He, former union's leader, came from the Northeast of Brazil, the poorest region, and had a strong connection with the lower-class population. She, former political prisoner, economist, was never elected before becoming president, was not as popular or good in public speeches, and he masters it. Ariel Alejandro Goldstein states that Rousseff was portrait as a figure of less charisma (Goldstein 2016, 6). Some studies analyze the narrative construction that Dilma Rousseff is a bossy woman. With the economy going bad, the increase of fuel prices, her popularity was decreasing and the hate against her was spread all over the country. It could be a reason to create Pixuleco looking afraid and Bandilma frightful.

With its popularity also came a sentiment of anger against the puppet from supporters of Rousseff, Lula and PT. Attacks, with knives and scissors tried to take out Pixuleco from the streets. On its first month, after a protest in Rio Grande do Sul, Pixuleco had been stabbed 15 times (Kaz 2015).

The balloons were available to buy during the demonstrations in a small version. It is still possible to find online stores to purchase the balloon, T-shirts and sticks supporting the *Operação Lava Jato*. The official Pixuleco store [pixulecooficial.com.br](http://pixulecooficial.com.br), persuades possible buyers by claiming the profits will finance the organizations and the demonstrations against corruption in Brazil. The balloon costs R\$20.00 (equivalent of 5 euros) (Colombari 2016).

On the official website it is possible to buy, also, a small version of Pixuleco with red eyes, in an allusion to Lula's alcoholic addiction. This idea, spread around his opponents, became more popular after an article of the journalist Larry Rohter for the New York Times, where he describes the president drinking issues and how it could affect in the government (Rohter 2004).

Brazil has a history with colorful inanimate figures in the media. Every year, during carnival, big *carros alegóricos* are seen in parades in different parts of the country. The most famous parade, in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, have around 120 thousand people participated on site, and millions watched it from home. Usually, each samba-school has between 10 and 12 *carros alegóricos*, which can be generally a platform for standing participants of the parade, or have a figure of a person or animal.

Also, in carnival, in the state of Pernambuco, big puppets are used in parades around the streets of Olinda. The *bonecos de Olinda* are usually inspired on famous personalities, like singers and

politicians. The puppets, carried by one person on top of his or her shoulders, are a tribute, and the parade is fun and cheerful.

The balloons are not a flattering representation of Brazilian politicians. However, they were never forbidden. This was not the case of two balloons that represented members of the justice. Petralowski (union of the names Petralha<sup>4</sup> and Lewandoski) represented Ricardo Lewandoski, Supreme Court minister who was responsible to lead the trials on federal level of *Lava Jato*. The balloon was dressed with a vampire cap, had the red star of PT, holding in one hand the scale with the Brazilian flag in one side and the PT symbol on the other. It shows that it was not balanced, but privileging PT. The traditional judge hammer was on the other hand, and on his feet and legs, several rats are climbing – in a representation of dirty people taken over him.

The same happened with Enganô, balloon representing the general prosecutor of Brazil from 2013 to 2017 Rodrigo Janot. Its name has a similar sound – Janot and Enganô – and “enganou” means fooled, or what should represent he is fooling the population. Enganô has a big blocked file container, with several padlocks, in front of his body. The file container has written Petralhas, how pejoratively PT supporters and politicians are called. Enganô is filing a document, representing he will never again bring the subject of *Lava Jato* in to justice, he will file, block it, and the process will never progress.

The Supreme Court security secretary and the Federal Police fast investigated both balloons. The document send from Supreme Court to the Federal Police says those images extrapolate freedom of speech. They put into question the decisions of the court, and are intolerable attack on the honor of the Supreme Court President, consequently, the very dignity of the Brazilian Justice (Turolo Jr and Bilenky 2016).

The decision to interfere in the demonstrations was criticized by lawyers, professor and creators of *bonecos de Olinda*. The representatives of the carnival puppets, however, claim all the dolls depicting politicians are created after official approval. Created by the popular movement *Nas Ruas*, Petralowski and Enganô were soon taken out of the streets and were never present in other demonstrations.

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<sup>4</sup>Petralha is a term created by the journalist Reinaldo Azevedo, with joins PT and Irmãos Metralha, or the Beagle Boys, the characters from Donald Duck universe who are a family of organized criminals. Irmãos Metralha are a common slang in Brazil and Petralha became a popular pejorative way to call supporters of PT. Reinaldo Azevedo was, until May 2017, a reporter and columnist of *Veja* website and magazine.



Figure 1 Folha de S. Paulo: “Petrolowski and Enganô” in protest in São Paulo<sup>5</sup>

Another famous symbol of the movements against president Rousseff – and coincidentally or not, a balloon – is the yellow duck created by Federação das Indústrias de São Paulo (FIESP). The campaign “Chega de pagar o Pato” (Enough of paying the duck) against the increase of taxes, used balloons to boost its popularity and noticeability. The balloon, popular called FIESP’ Duck, was exhibited in front of the Brazilian Congress in Brasília on October 1, 2015. Together with the big puppet of 22 meters high, 1,000 small ducks were disposed at the water mirror. “Chega de pagar o pato” is equivalent in Portuguese, as “I will not pay the bill”. “Pagar o pato” means in Brazil as playing like a fool, responding or paying for something that you do not own.

Pato da FIESP is a rubber yellow duck. It is a copy of the yellow duck toy used by kids in bathtubs. Usually in a small version, the big yellow balloon was first known as a piece of art created by the Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman. After the presentation of Pato da FIESP, Hofman accused the organization of plagiarism of his artwork Rubber Duck (Senra 2016). Hofman

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<sup>5</sup> From the article of Folha de S. Paulo, “Supremo é criticado por 'caça' a bonecos Petralowski e Enganô”, published on the newspaper website on July 10, 2016. Picture’s credit: Facebook reproduction (Turollo Jr and Bilenky 2016).

exposition consisted in displaying a traditional yellow duck in a gigantic size in several cities of the world, as Amsterdam, Osaka, Hong Kong, Sydney and São Paulo. The sculpture, however, was not transported for the different countries. Due to logistics limitations, Hofman's sculpture was produced locally in every region. The company responsible for fabricating it in Brazil produced both balloons, Hofman's and FIESP's. This argument was used by Hofman to claim it was a copy of this artwork. Nevertheless, FIESP claims the two ducks are different; as Hofman's Rubber Duck has a rounded eye and the FIESP's Brazilian version has a cross in the space for the eye. Hofman's team affirms that FIESP transformed the artwork in a political parody, which is illegal and infringes copyrights (Senra 2016).

"Não vou pagar o pato" campaign was also under investigation of fraud in the public bidding. The advertising person Renato Pereira, responsible for the marketing campaign, admitted, under plea bargain procedure, having privileges to win the bidding, claiming it was not a fair procurement process. He told the prosecutors that the campaign was part of a project to increase popularity of Paulo Skaf, FIESP's president (Maia 2017). In pictures published by the media, Skaf was portrait siding the yellow duck. He ran for Governor of São Paulo in 2018 but lost, with passing to the second election round.

If the Pato da FIESP was not symbolic enough to guide Skaf to become governor of São Paulo, Hofman's art is also not well received by the critics. Martin Zebracki questions the originality of the project, as he says Hofman "drew inspiration for Rubber Duck from the Tolo-patented yellow bath toy" (Zebracki 2017, 527). For him, the item was inspired in a commercial item and had its launch in Tokyo only with previous financial support. Jordan LaVine, the intellectual property attorney, doubts Hofman's originality, and questions of it "has enough originality that copyright would attach to it. A rubber duck is an extremely common thing, and making a very large one does not necessarily give someone copyright rights in that artistic expression"(Dreyer 2016, 278).

More than a copyright issue, the duck was criticized for the message it spread. Citylab (apud Dreyer 2016, 278) believes the Hofman's rubber duck infantilize messages of communication and public art. The author believes "inflatable spectacles", which "don't belong in every harbor in the wide world" (Citylab apud Zebracki 2017, 538). The duck seems not to be an unanimity between population of the cities the exposition took place, as Dreyer describes that, "annoyed locals" stabbed the rubber duck 42 times in Belgium in 2009 (Dreyer 2016, 278).

In an interview for a broadcasted Dutch show, Hofman said the creation of the rubber duck was in the intent to unify the whole world, as "the worldly waters have become our bathtub",

(Zebracki 2017, 536). In the same show, the artist claimed “that his artwork reconciles and breaks down all barriers between people” (Zebracki 2017, 536). By citing the citizens of Pittsburgh who demanded the extension of the display of the duck on its waters, he believed “people seem to fall in love with it and want to keep it” (Zebracki 2017, 536).

Although, Hofman connects the duck with memories from the past (Zebracki 2017, 539), he also believes the rubber duck represents more than pleasure and fun, it is a pedagogical piece that remembers people to own and appreciate their public space (Zebracki 2017, 540). Zebracki, cites Hofman’s webpage, where rubber duck is explained as a piece of art that relive and define “global tensions”, for him it is suitable for all ages (Zebracki 2017, 527).

Those infantilized art and symbols, connected to people and are harder to forget. In the Brazilian case, is evident that all balloons, Pixuleco, Pinoquia, Bandilma and Pato da FIESP represented the dissatisfaction with government and with Rousseff. In the connotative level, they represented PT’s corruption, Rousseff and her government and misuse of public money. Those accusations, repeated innumerous times, did not left a space for debate or rejoinder. In this matter, Debord claims,

“But in fact, false accusations are rarely necessary. Once one controls the mechanism which operates the only form of social verification to be fully and universally recognised (sic), one can say what one likes. The spectacle proves its arguments simply by going round in circles: by coming back to the start, by repetition, by constant reaffirmation in the only space left where anything can be publicly affirmed, and believed, precisely because that is the only thing to which everyone is witness” (Debord 1990, 19).

The symbols, present in every demonstration broadcast and covered by the media, reinforced the accusations, with space for defense or argument. They represented the discredit of voters with the government – and sometimes, attached to the perception of all politicians in power. One can question: is it possible to discuss politics with a balloon? If the accusations were not true, or the discussion was more complex than balloons represented, would be possible to problematize with the use of an item more than 10 meters high?

At the same time, using balloons on a tedious and serious topic, avoids seeing it with the huge boredom it represents. Those are the exact ideas of Vargas Llosa about the civilization of spectacle, where entertainment and “having a good time” is the universal passion (Vargas Llosa 2013, 24).

In September 2015, after the launch of Pixuleco, the company Icon Games released an online game in which Pixuleco need to collect as much money as possible and run away from the



marchers trying to stab him (O Estado de S. Paulo 2015). Called “Pixuleco, the game”, it reinforces the idea of valuing the entertainment above subjects and discussions. It, along with the balloons sold to receive financial profit, is a high stage business opportunity sustained by the society of spectacle. Vargas Llosa cites Debord’s ideas that, the wider the range of commodities available to consume by the population, the more it diminishes its freedom (Vargas Llosa 2013, 15). What seems to be a personal choice is, in fact, the clear proof of the process established by the economic system and capitalism itself (Vargas Llosa 2013, 15).

The idea of changing the focus of the demonstrations was the strategy of Gusmão to create the first balloon, Pixuleco. To decrease the importance of the number of participants and make it visible for the journalists and the media, which needed something new to publish in all occasions. By giving the significance only to “what is immediate, and to what will be immediate immediately afterwards”, replacing it for another insignificant information, “media guarantee a kind of eternity of noisy insignificance” (Debord 1990, 15).

The demonstrations against the government reflected this. If in the original rallies of *Movimento Passe Livre*, demanding the free tickets to public transportation or against the price increase of those tickets, there was violent repression against demonstrators. The one’s organized by *Movimento Brasil Livre*, *Movimento Brasil* and the other groups against PT, had series of selfies published on social media, groups of families with babies and kids. The police respected it and, sometimes, encouraged it in some way.

The middle and upper middle class dressed in yellow t-shirts, especially the expensive football original ones, to protest against corruption and the government (Willmersdorf 2016). One iconic photo and article was done in Rio de Janeiro. An upper class couple went to the demonstration with two babies and the nanny (Willmersdorf 2016). The nanny, dressed with the traditional white uniform, pushed the stroll behind the parents, dressed in yellow. There was many critics against this behavior, claiming the nanny was obliged to protest, and the division of class and racism – white parents with regular clothes, black house worker in uniform on a weekend – represented clearly the stereotype of the marchers.

For those who claim this was all over-critical, it is important to reinforce that Brazil was the last country in the American continent to abolish slavery, only in 1888. There is still a big inequality, in socio-economic terms, between the white and black population. During the colonial times, black women were responsible for breastfeeding the babies of the rich women. They were the ones responsible to take care of the children, creating a big connection with them. It needs to be stressed to be understood the symbolic power of the nanny in a protest. As Debord

says, “the destruction of history, contemporary events themselves retreat into a remote and fabulous realm of unverifiable stories, uncheckable statistics, unlikely explanations and untenable reasoning.” This is why the media is important, to question the “imbecility presented by the spectacle” (Debord 1990, 16).

In the next section, the role of media in the spectacle created around the balloons will be explored. Pictures published by Veja and Carta Capital will be analyzed in this context.

## **10. To what extent did the media frame the pictures of the balloons agreeing with their editorial political view?**

### **10.1 Veja**

On the launch of Pinoquia on September 7, 2015, Brazil's Independence Day, Veja published on the website a picture of Pixuleco and Pinoquia in Brasília, the capital, as part of a series of pictures of the webpage about protests that happened that day. In the picture below, a small number of marchers are along the balloons. Pixuleco is taller than Pinoquia, In the background, the Brazilian Congress, a construction designed by the well-known Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer. Niemeyer modernist architecture is a symbol of Brasilia, a capital build on the center of the country in a region with low population density at the time, in 1950's. Niemeyer had ideas linked with the left. He joined the Brazilian communist party in 1945 and party president in 1992.

In the picture, Pixuleco is blocking partially the vision of the chamber room, and its rounded shape on the building. Due to its unusual shape, Brazilians easily recognize Congress. It represents the Congress' power, and for some, the incognito rule of politicians. The perspective of the balloons, high enough to contrast with the building, represents how those puppets can challenge the Brazilian government authority. Although it is not the official presidential office, one could argue it shows the challenges the government will face with the street protests. Being the building constructed by an architect align with the left, the puppets can be seen as challenging the left ideology, represented by the time in Brazil by Rousseff's government.

On the background, it is possible to see the Brazilian flag, attached to a very thin, almost invisible flagstaff. It shows the fragility of the patriotic symbol, as the whole country is on an unstable structure. The Brazilian flag, that could be a symbol of patriotic pride, was largely used during the military dictatorship propaganda. The nationalist discourse during the undemocratic started with the coup in 1964 used several patriotic symbols to differentiate "good and bad" citizens. The slogan, Brazil love it or leave was an example of how the critics were treated at the time.



Figure 2 Veja. On Pinoquia's launch, both balloons are framed in a demonstration in Brasilia.<sup>6</sup>

Veja in its printed issue published a picture of Pixuleco on the cover page of October 7, 2015 printed edition. One month after the demonstrations on Independence Day. In a manipulated picture, president Rousseff puts the presidential belt on Pixuleco. It transmitted the message that she lost power and gave autonomy to Lula to lead. At that time, Lula is the most popular important politician in Brazil. Rousseff is seen as a puppet president, controlled by him. By putting the presidential belt on him, she recognizes his command and proves she cannot control the country anymore. The presidential belt also covers part of the numbers 171, the article number of white-collar crimes in Brazilian's penal code. The other part is covered by Dilma Rousseff left hand, which is over the center of Pixuleco's chest. Rousseff has the right hand on the puppet shoulder, showing her support and affection. The balloon Pixuleco has usually a sad expression, but on the magazine cover's it shows a smile, proving he is satisfied with the gesture.

Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida, in their analysis of the spectacle around the corruption scandal in Brazil claim that Veja's covers represents the spectacle of politics and *Lava Jato* (Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida 2017, 110). The cover of Pixuleco and Rousseff is just

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<sup>6</sup> Picture of Cristiano Mariz/VEJA, published along the "Protestos durante o 7 de setembro em Brasília", published on Veja Website on July 18, 2015 (Veja 2015).

one version of manipulated pictures at the cover of the most important magazine in the country. Tavares (et al 2016) claims the magazine uses its covers as a mediatic space anti left (Tavares, Berger, and Vaz 2016). The publication had already covers, where snakes come out of Lula's head (reference to the mythological figure of Medusa), Rousseff and Lula fighting over the presidential belt and had been source for several searches. Almeida researched about the magazine covers during the presidency of Lula and claimed it shows irony by presenting metaphoric images (Almeida 2008, 136).

Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida believe the covers are almost entertainment, in reference to the concept of Debord and Vargas Llosa (Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida 2017, 110). It is possible that the image of a smile puppet can bring some joy to the long and tedious corruption scandal. The authors also call attention for the use of the word exclusive on the cover for a story related to *Lava Jato* – which they called *Petrolão*, an offensive nickname to reference the corruption scandal on Petrobras. The emphasis on the exclusive stories is also discussed by Bourdieu, as he calls it the journalist's "unquestioned bias in favor of the news that is the newest and hardest to get" (Bourdieu 1998, 6). The journalistic coverage of *Lava Jato* was full of exclusive information and several information leaks. Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida question the coverage of *Lava Jato*. For them, *Veja* released information slowly to keep the audience's attention. With biased leaks and suspects plea bargain accusing each other, the authors put in doubt origin of the information and the real journalist investigation on news regarding the operation (Ladeira Mota and Soares de Almeida 2017, 110).



Figure 3 Veja's cover page with Pixuleco receiving the presidential belt from Rousseff. <sup>7</sup>

In the picture of the president Rousseff is using a red jacket. The red color stands for communism, the PT and other leftist's parties in Brazil. By choosing a picture of Rousseff dressed in red, Veja reinforces opposition of red and yellow. Yellow is the predominant color of the social movements that are pro-impeachment. On the calls for the demonstrations, the movement organizations asked people to dress in yellow. One of the songs sang during the rallies against the government says, "our flag will never be red", meaning the party will never come above to the country. The reference to red is so strong that the most important TV network in Brazil, Rede Globo, forbid the use of this color by journalists during the demonstrations on live broadcast.

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<sup>7</sup> Hard copy published on October 7, 2015. Edition 2446.

On April 17, 2016, the Congress vote for the impeachment of president Rousseff. Because the extraordinary session of parliament happened on a Sunday, the protest supporting and against the impeachment had many participants. On the main street and the financial center of Sao Paulo, Paulista Avenue, population was side by side with the three balloons, Pixuleco, Bandilma and Pato da FIESP. The headquarters of Federation of Industries of Sao Paulo is located in this avenue. The duck was, usually, in front of the building during the whole campaign (Prado 2017), representing how the industries' owners opposed to the government and the tax increase. The building also served as the headquarters for FIESP organizers during the protests.

At this demonstration on August 17, 2016, the puppet Bandilma was present. The balloon has much scarier face when compared with frightened Pixuleco. In the picture posted by Veja online, Bandilma, Pixuleco and Pato da FIESP are situated with a large number of demonstrators. It is not possible to see where the mass of people finishes, giving the impression of uncountable participants. The number of participants was important during the news coverage to estimate the power of the movement and the impact of the government. Since the demonstrations of 2013, one word presents in the country's atom, giant, in relation with Brazil, is repeated to show the street's power: the giant woke-up.

Pato da FIESP is in the top right corner. The size, larger than Pixuleco and Bandilma, calls attention in the image. The structure does not fit completely on the image, and half of its body and its back is out of the frame. On its left side, the traditional Brazilian *trio elétrico*, a truck where musicians play for the audience during carnival parades, is shown on the center of the image. Partially blocked, it is possible to read parts of the sign hanged on the truck. Democracy, Justice Now, written in the colors of the flag, blue and green over a yellow sign. A blue heart completes the design.

On the left corner on the bottom part of the picture, Bandilma is sided by Pixuleco. The balloon depicting Lula is on its back, where is possible to read Lula never again and the name of the organization responsible for the balloon, *Movimento Brasil*. Bandilma is facing the photographer and looks directly to the viewer. Over Pixuleco's head is the entrance of the metro station in São Paulo, Trianon Masp, showing the demonstration happened in front of the São Paulo Museum of Art. Masp is located 300 meters of distance from FIESP headquarters. The proximity to FIESP building is not a coincidence. One month before, in March 17, 2016, demonstrators that camped in Paulista Avenue to protest against the government were offered lunch with filet mignon. Questioned by the newspaper Valor Econômico, FIESP claimed the



lunch was offered to the leaders of the social movements pro-impeachment. The official statement said the organization was transformed into the headquarters of Rousseff's impeachment.



Figure 4 Veja: Bandilma, Pixuleco and Pato da FIESP at Paulista Avenue, SP<sup>8</sup>

Besides using pictures of Pixuleco during demonstrations, when the puppet was present and used as a reference to the political movement, *Veja* also published a photo of the balloon in reference to Lula. In an article published in October 15, 2015, about the one procedure of the *Lava Jato*, the photo used to illustrate the article is a picture of Pixuleco. The image is completely out of the context, since the topic was related to the hearing of former president Lula, and not about rallies. In this occasion, *Veja* was using the picture to call attention to a phase of the investigation that could be seen as tedious and unappealing. But everything the

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<sup>8</sup> Picture of Nilton Fukuda/Estadão Conteúdo, published along the article “Manifestações pró e contra o impeachment ocorrem em 25 Estados e no DF”, published on *Veja* website on April 17, 2016 (*Veja* 2016).



politics raises as important and has a tedious characteristic, the journalism finds a scandal or spectacle to get audience's attention on the topic (Bourdieu 1998, 6).

In the picture, it is possible only to see Pixuleco and its sad and frighten expression. Part of the balloon's head and all of his body is out of the photo framed. It is not possible to know where the balloon is located, if there are people around him. The sky is blue with some clouds, showing it is an open space, during the day, in a sunny weather.



Figure 5 Veja: Picture published in an article about procedures of *Lava Jato*<sup>9</sup>

The extensive use of the balloons in other contexts relates with Debord's concept that when "spectacle stops talking about something for three days, it is as if it did not exist" (Debord 1990, 20). However, instead of changing topics and moving for something else, as the author suggested, *Veja* reinforced the image of the balloon, not letting it be forgotten by the audience.

## 10.2 Carta Capital

In an online search, it is difficult to find pictures of the Pixuleco published by *Carta Capital*. On the first appearance of the balloon, *Carta Capital* had a timeline with pictures and information

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<sup>9</sup> Picture of Paulo Whitaker/Reuters published along the article "Lula depõe sobre tráfico de influência para a Odebrecht", published on *Veja's* website on October 15, 2015 (Borges 2015).

related to demonstrations happening that day, August 16, 2015. In the timeline, a picture of Pixuleco was published, however, once the reader clicked on it to be guided to the main article, the text is sided by a new picture, where Pixuleco is not framed. The timeline picture has a reduced size, and it is not possible to see all the details. It has the balloon Pixuleco on the background; on the forefront are two people with Brazilian's flag, probably two women.

The two persons in the front are blurry and it is not possible to see many details. The choice of using the two people on their backs, does not personifies the protest. The two people have no face, eyes or expressions that could bring empathy. It decreases the possibility of readers to relate with those people and see themselves as similar with the population on the protest. It created a distance between the groups. They are dressed with the Brazilian flag and could be interpreted as patriotic people. Important to highlight they have white skin, and the one on the right has blond hair. In a country with inequalities as Brazil, the black Brazilians are usually in a lower socio-economic position. The newspaper Nexo Jornal brings the information that African descendants represent 70.8% of the 16.2 million people who live in extreme poverty in the country (Carmo 2017). The two people are an example of what was the demonstrations against the government of Rousseff, the middle and higher class in Brazil.

On the background, the balloon is taller than the buildings on its side. The buildings are the headquarters of different ministries in Brasilia. The balloon's large size compared with the stable structured buildings, makes the ministries small and less intimidating. Under Pixuleco is sign with the name of the social movement *Vem Pra Rua* and a phrase against corruption. The another banner against corruption is on the center of the picture. In many occasions on the demonstrations and on art designs against the government, the word *corruptos* had a strong mark as capital letters or different colors in the characters PT in the center, linking corruption to the Workers Party.



Figure 6 Carta Capital: Pixuleco's first appearance on demonstrations against president Rousseff<sup>10</sup>

In this case, Carta Capital chose not to give relevant coverage of new element launched that day, a symbol of the movements against the government. Debord calls attention to the fact that, after the long absorption of spectacles, we turned “contemporaries into ideologues” (Debord 1990, 30). He believes it implicates in the loss of the capacity to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information. (Debord 1990, 30). Carta Capital might have let the ideology speak up in this matter, and chose not to amplify the coverage around a balloon, not posting a relevant picture, even though it was the indeed the news of the day.

Most of the times, Carta Capital published Pixuleco in a critical tone. It happened when the magazine published a picture of Pixuleco shared on Facebook by the judge Itagiba Catta Preta Neto. The judge was responsible for deciding about the permission or not of former president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva of taking a seat as minister of president Rousseff's government. The judge denied the permission. In the article, Carta Capital published frames of his personal Facebook account. There are posts of Preta Neto inviting friends to demonstrations, and picture

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<sup>10</sup> Picture of Valter Campanato Agência Brasil. Published along the article “Manifestações no dia 16 de agosto”, published on Carta Capital website on August 16, 2015 (Carta Capital 2015a).

of him on rallies using stamps of Rousseff's opponent, Aécio Neves. Carta Capital presents Preta Neto as a biased judge; incapable of decision making in a political case he already had a personal opinion. In this case, Pixuleco was published to make a point and prove how the justice system is unfair. The presence of Pixuleco is not harming PT's and Lula's image, but presenting them as victims.

The picture was shared on Pixuleco's launch, on August 16, 2015. Along with the picture, judge Preta Neto published a feeling, feature used on the social media network Facebook. He is feeling "fed up", or *de saco cheio*, in Portuguese slang. He also mentions being with five other people at the congress, proving Preta Neto is probably taking part of the demonstration. In this case, it is possible to assume he is *fed up* with the government. Carta Capital used the strategy after the end of the impeachment process. The magazine published an article with posts of a judge, Marcela Filus, who had as a profile picture on Facebook a small Pixuleco, to prove she was biased to judge a case related to a social movement of the left, the MTST, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto*, Homeless Worker's Movement. After several political manifestations of judges and prosecutors, in 2018 the National Council of Justice (CNJ) created regulation to ban judges of declaring support for politicians and making personal attacks on candidates or parties to disqualify them (Cury 2018).

On the picture published by judge Preta Neto, Pixuleco is on his back, with the sign in red, "Lula never again" and the logo of *Movimento Brasil*. Part of the chain that is attached to Pixuleco's feet is visible. It is possible to see the balloon's supporting ropes, proving the picture was taken in a short distance. On the background, it is visible part of the Congress building. Along with the Pixuleco there are two Brazilian flags on the right, one close to its bottom part and the other up on the flagstaff. Very few participants are framed on the picture shared by the judge.



**Itagiba Catta Preta Neto** 😡 sentindo-se de saco cheio com **Emmanuel Caldas e outras 4 pessoas** em **Congresso Nacional do Brasil**.

16 de agosto de 2015 às 18:38 · Brasília, DF · 🌐

Copiando minha amiga Simone Maria Rodrigues Borges.



Figure 7 Carta Capita publishes Facebook post from Judge Preta Neto personal profile<sup>11</sup>.

Carta Capital not only published picture to show biases on the process of impeachment, but also published pictures of Pixuleco to show the resistance against the balloon. As *Movimento Brasil* started to sell small versions of the balloon, the magazine published a picture of a PT's supporter hitting a small Pixuleco, held outside of a car. The woman, dressed with a red t-shirt, holds her purse with the left and hits Pixuleco with the right. The driver who holds the small balloon is a man. The picture shows Pixuleco in blurred form, giving the impression that it was taken on the action. The picture shows the demonstrators in a closer perspective. Some are holding flags and signs. There is no Brazilian flag on the picture. The majority of people on the picture are women, and most of them have dark skin color. There is no important building on the background.

The picture, however, was not taken by Carta Capital photographer. Its copyrights and sources say Lula Marques- Agência PT. This means, in the journalistic context, that PT has the rights

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<sup>11</sup> Snapshot of the Judge Preta Neto's Facebook page. Image published along the article "Juiz que barrou posse de Lula participa de protestos contra Dilma", published on Carta Capital website on March 17, 2016 (Beirangê and Martins 2016).



in this photo, taken by a photographer linked with the institution or hired by them. Carta Capital can publish it, but only with the party's approval.



Figure 8 Carta Capital: PT's supporter hits small Pixuleco<sup>12</sup>

It was not possible to find any picture of Baldima or Pinóquia on publications by Carta Capital. It could be in the intent to avoid spreading the presence of those balloons on the media. In fact, there were cases when the magazine references the balloon Pixuleco on the text and does not show its picture. Here, also, the concept of Debord is also valid, as “when the spectacle stops talking about something for three days, it is as if it did not exist”(Debord 1990, 20). The magazine did not want to have the image of Pixuleco more famous than it already was

The same pattern of avoiding pictures of Pixuleco, Bandilma and Pinóquia, Carta Capital did not display many photos of the Pato da FIESP. Articles from the period of demonstrations against Rousseff usually framed the duck alone or with very few people around. In the picture below, Pato da FIESP is in front of the FIESP headquarters. It is not possible to identify the building, whatsoever. But, the photo caption explains the location of the picture. Pato da FIESP is not framed in the whole picture. It is not possible to see its bottom or the left side of its face.

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<sup>12</sup> Picture of Lula Marques, Agência PT, published along the article “Brasil e a democracia fraturada”, published on Carta Capital website on May 25, 2016 (Carta Capital 2016a).

The head is also partially cut out. It is behind the bars of the building, without people around it. On its body it is possible to read the campaign slogan and website, [naovoupagaropato.com.br](http://naovoupagaropato.com.br). The signs sided by the balloons ask for the extermination of PT, for Rousseff's impeachment and wish a happy new year, 2016. The aggressive tone helps to reinforce the aspect of irrationality and violence of the social movements who support the impeachment.



Figure 9 Carta Capital: Pato da FIESP in front its headquarters in Sao Paulo<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, in articles published after the impeachment, to discuss the fraud on public bidding of FIESP or to point out errors committed by the Federation, Carta Capital shows extensively the balloon during the protests. It seems to attain the idea of “who to blame for the impeachment” to the demonstrators. After the end of the process, it might be that during the stability period, the goal was to show the duck as a product of that Federation, with little or no support from the masses.

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<sup>13</sup> Picture published on Carta Capital website on March 24, 2016 along the article “Uma semana de Occupy de direita na Avenida Paulista”. The picture has no authors' credit (Estarque 2016).

## **11. To what extent did the media reinforce the spectacle of the protests supporting the impeachment?**

The creation of the balloons was an idea to call attention to the political situation of the country. Making fun of the politician for being handicapped, for using red, or being part of armed resistance during the dictatorship creates a stereotype used in the debate. The fact that the social movement and the Federation of the Industries of São Paulo created the balloons was fruitful for a spectacle in the media coverage. However, media and journalists could choose how to deal and cover it.

Veja published the pictures of Pixuleco when it was not the main subject of the article. In an article that has not up-to-dated picture, it is a pattern to use a regular archived photo related with the subject. Veja used Pixuleco as substitute of a picture of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in a story about a legal procedure. The magazine used the space to reinforce the link between the politician and the puppet, by presenting it even when the subject of the article was not a demonstration.

When the magazine published the puppet as the cover of the week printed version, it also reinforced the relation between the balloon and the human figure. By creating a manipulated version of president Rousseff handing over the presidential belt – and the power – to Lula, the magazine was reinforcing the scandal, showing she has no command of the country and is not the real leader.

When the magazine used Pixuleco's pictures in a context of demonstration and protest, if the objects were big or small in photos, could be argued the non-intentional choice. The intention to publish pictures of the balloon representing the former president in an article about legal procedures, or a balloon in the cover of the magazine, cannot be denied. Veja took part in the spectacle.

Carta Capital used the picture of the balloons to express a message – against the movement pro-impeachment. By presenting judges involved in the corruption investigation process as biased, the magazine showed one of the sizes – pro-impeachment – as unfair and corrupted. However, it can also be a prove of journalist research, since the pictures were indeed published in the personal accounts and in Brazil judges cannot express their political positions (Conselho Nacional de Justiça 2018).



The fact that Carta Capital posted a photo of a government supporter beating a small Pixuleco does not show the magazine's bias. The same aspect is the publication of Pato da FIESP side by side with signs of violence ("Let's exterminate PT"). These are a relevant information that must be shared. However, the lack of picture of Baldima, Pinoquia or Pixuleco in big demonstration is an editorial choice that can harm the journalist coverage. The use of a picture taken by the official photographer of the political party, in the case of the photo of a marcher beating Pixuleco, is also questionable, since the party has a clear message to share, and the magazine should be unbiased and balanced. By using the picture of one specific political party – and not from all the others –, the magazine is presenting relation with the party that can be reprehensible. Even more when taking in consideration the close relation between Carta Capital editor in chief, Mino Carta, and the former president.

For Debord, the discourse of spectacular politics and spectacular justice are examples to 'media excess'. "Thus the spectacle would be merely the excesses of the media, whose nature, unquestionably good since it facilitates communication, is sometimes driven to extremes" (Debord 1990, 6–7).

Veja and Carta Capital discussed the same subjects, but with a different framework and perspective. Bourdieu claims it is a characteristic of journalists to look closely to the coverage of other news outlets. To guarantee some important information will not be forgotten – like a book review – and to learn by the mistakes and success of the competitors. This creates a uniformity on the news coverage (Bourdieu 1998, 72). Veja and Carta Capital covered the same topics but with an unlike perspective. Because they are opposites in the editorial line, the coverages were distinct.

It is relevant to stress that regarding the pictures published and analyzed in this research, both magazines did not create false stories in their coverages. One can question the decisions of how to use photos, but the stories itself are real. When Veja published a picture of Pixuleco on its cover in a manipulated image, it is understandable that it is a Photoshop montage. No one would see it and think it is true. Still, it can generate incorrect interpretation. Debord's concept of disinformation walks along with this phenomenon. He says that, "unlike the straightforward lie, disinformation must inevitably contain a degree of truth but one deliberately manipulated by an artful enemy" (Debord 1990, 45).

He claims that, "disinformation" gains power in a world where is not possible to check information. For the author, the risk is on the computerized catalogues, which can be remove, any residual trace (Debord 1990, 20). It is ironic that, today, with all the information available

on the internet, it is indeed difficult to find correct and reliable information. The amount of content, the number of different untraceable sources, the lack of expertise of the audience, let them be as manipulated as people that, centuries ago, did not have any access to formal journalistic information. It is the duty of a newspaper, magazine, TV station or any journalistic media to keep the audience well-informed about the political issues, and not laughing and dealing in a breezy way with important issues. Regardless of audience rates.

## 12. Conclusion

Analyzing the photos published by *Veja* and *Carta Capital* from the day Pixuleco was launched, August 3, 2015, to the day of Rousseff's impeachment, August 31, 2016, this research aimed to discuss in what ways and to what extent the use of the pictures and balloons reinforced the spectacle of the impeachment.

Paulo Gusmão, member of *Movimento Brasil* and creator of Pixuleco, said in an interview to *Piauí* magazine that, the intention of the balloon was to take out the focus from the number of participants of the demonstrations, and it did. However, more than that, Pixuleco and all the other balloons, depicting real people or animals, were transformed into symbols of a movement against the government. For example, in the case of a game where a balloon dressed as the former president should steal as much money as possible, running away from knives and stabs, it is more than entertainment, it is message being spread. The idea that the topic is so ridiculous that no discussion is necessary, one can only laugh. It is harmful for the country.

Kellner states that, it is a motivation of corporations “to be more entertaining in their commercials, their business environment, their commercial spaces, and their websites” (Kellner 2003, 3). Going in the same line, one can argue demonstrations can also seek to be more entertaining to have more attention from audience. And, it could be the case when a social movement deploys a puppet balloon to talk about corruption and political scandals. For Debord, it is a symptom of capitalism - the imposition of alienation in all levels. For workers it is difficult to understand their own impoverishment and alienation (Debord 2013, 48).

The narrow space in media for serious debates should be a concern. If, in the news coverage, magazines select their content in a biased way, society will lose. For João Feres Júnior and Luna de Oliveira Sassara the enhance in democratic institutions goes through the development of plural and diverse media (Feres Júnior and Sassara 2018, 233). It is true in all regions and countries. However, in a country like Brazil, where five families control more than half of media outlets, it is not possible to believe in balance of information. For them, “quality information and access to multiple opinions are the sustenance of democratic life. Without it, there is no actual democracy, be it in Brazil or elsewhere in the world” (Feres Júnior and Sassara 2018, 233).

Goldstein claims that,

“With its engagement in an instrumental moralization campaign in the context of the crisis of Dilma’s second term, the liberal-conservative press tended to provoke an imbalance in the sustainability of Brazilian democracy. Reproducing, under new conditions, the elitist pattern that subordinated the public agenda to moralistic issues and excluding inequality, the liberal-conservative press returned to a position that had already been a cause of great instability during the period of “populist democracy (1951–1964)” (Goldstein 2016, 10).

Feres Júnior and Sassara, in their study about the media coverage in the most important newspapers of the country, state that, even though the impeachment process was result of a series of factors, as politicized and biased judicial system, without the support of the media it would not occur (Feres Júnior and Sassara 2018, 233). For the authors, more than the biased coverage, the media encourage population to take part in demonstrations. Moreover, it created an idol around the figure of Sergio Moro. Moro was responsible to judge the processes of *Lava Jato* (Feres Júnior and Sassara 2018, 233).

After the end of impeachment, *Veja* sustained its pattern of using the image of Pixuleco, a prisoner, attached to stories related to Lula. The main topic of the media after the deposition of the president was the process against the former president for corruption involving an apartment and a ceiling, part of *Lava Jato* investigation. Moro convicted Lula in 2017, and the former president was jailed in 2018.

In 2018, the most polarized election took place in Brazil. Fourteen candidates ran to office, where polls pre-election suggested Lula would beat Bolsonaro, his major rival in the run, in all scenarios. As a member of congress, Bolsonaro voted for Rousseff’s impeachment in the name of general Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, former participant of the military dictatorship and responsible for torture sections on political prisoners (Barrucho 2016). With Lula’s detention, Bolsonaro, a far-right politician, was elected president in October. The further invite of the winner and subsequent acceptance of Moro as minister of justice for the future government put in question the political position of *Lava Jato* investigation (Phillips 2018).

With a discourse against minorities, including women, LGBT community and black Brazilians (Phillips and Phillips 2018), activism and pro-environment movements (Thaador 2018), no respect for human rights (Human Rights Watch 2018), and a clear agenda anti-corruption (Boadle and Stargardter 2018), Bolsonaro is a symptom of the demonstrations which took part in 2015 and 2016. Even though, he was not the leader of the movement and was antagonized when try to make a speech during a demonstration in Rio de Janeiro.

Bolsonaro's election is the result of several months of unstable political situation. The population had been questioning the political power since 2013, when the first mass demonstrations started. The political moment that caused Dilma Rousseff to be impeached and all traditional politicians questioned, made Bolsonaro a possible solution. With a campaign constructed under the concept of him being an outsider, without links with corruption, he transformed himself as the opposition to the "old politics". In fact, he is a politician with 30 years of public life, elected seven times as a congressional representative.

Nevertheless, in the 2018 election, Bolsonaro ran the second round against a PT candidate. Fernando Haddad became the candidate when the Judiciary determined Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva could not run for office. Many of Bolsonaro votes came from conservative supporters, but some are votes against the corruption and the party they saw as the most corrupted one. When analyzing terrorism, Debord argues the State is responsible for writing the terrorism story. This is because the audience does not know everything about the fact, but "must always know enough to convince them that, compared with terrorism, everything else must be acceptable, or in any case more rational and democratic" (Debord 1990, 24).

In this case, the narrow political coverage, based on a spectacle where there were only two positions – for and against the impeachment or the party – helped to simplify a subject that is complex and has a long history in Brazil. The narrative of recent corruption actions being the country's enemy set the tone for the development of anti-democratic discourses. In the pro-impeachment demonstrations, parts of the population demanded a military intervention (Nascimento and Luz 2015). In 2018 the majority of voters elected a president with a long history of opposition to human rights and the democratic agenda.

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