

Journalism and ideology of culture: The conflicts between indigenous people and rural producers in Mato Grosso do Sul^a

Jornalismo e ideologia da cultura: Os conflitos entre indígenas e ruralistas em Mato Grosso do Sul

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ABSTRACT

The article intends to understand fact-framing about conflicts between indigenous ethnic groups and rural producers in *Correio do Estado*, the main Mato Grosso do Sul state newspaper, adopting as a reference point the murder of the indigenous leader Semião Vilhalva, from the Guarani and Kaiowá ethnic groups, in August 2015. From the theoretical perspective of framing analysis, five editorials and five opinion articles published from August to October 2015 are studied as an empirical basis, identifying, in the newspaper's contemporary rhetoric, symbolic and cultural elements related to the "ideology of the Mato Grosso do Sul culture", a concept forged by regional elites since the 1930s.

Keywords: Journalistic framing, Mato Grosso do Sul, *Correio do Estado*, conflicts between indigenous people and rural producers

RESUMO

O artigo busca compreender a construção do enquadramento dos fatos que envolvem conflitos entre etnias indígenas e produtores rurais no principal jornal impresso de Mato Grosso do Sul, o *Correio do Estado*, adotando-se como ponto de referência o assassinato do líder indígena Semião Vilhalva, das etnias Guarani e Kaiowá, em agosto de 2015. A partir do referencial teórico da *framing analysis*, volta-se a um recorte empírico de cinco editoriais e de cinco artigos de opinião veiculados entre agosto e outubro de 2015, identificando-se na retórica contemporânea do veículo elementos simbólicos e culturais afeitos à "ideologia da cultura sul-mato-grossense", concepção forjada pelas elites regionais desde a década de 1930.

Palavra-chave: Enquadramento jornalístico, Mato Grosso do Sul, *Correio do Estado*, conflitos entre indígenas e produtores rurais

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¹ Conflicts between farmers and indigenous peoples have been dragging on for decades in Mato Grosso do Sul.

On a more recent level, for purposes of contextualization, a confrontation between indigenous people and police in 2013 during the repossession of an occupied farm in Sidrolândia, 70 kilometers from Campo Grande, left a Terena indigenous person dead and several others injured. As a result, with the intensification of moods in the region, there was a federal mobilization to create attempts at mediation between farmers and the indigenous movement in the state, reinforcing the conflict of versions. In the political arena, two Parliamentary Commissions of Inquiry in the Legislative Assembly of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul reflected the dispute of positions in 2016: one on the Indigenous Missionary Council (Cimi), an entity linked to the Catholic Church, and another on the indigenous genocide. At the national level, the Funai-Incra Parliamentary Inquiry Commission (CPI), dominated by parliamentarians from the ruralist caucus, generated a report of 3,385 pages, presented in June 2017, where they suggest the indictment of directors of entities that defend the indigenous cause, anthropologists and members of the Federal Public Ministry, in addition to others called "fake indigenous people". In the legal field, a Proposed Amendment to the Constitution (PEC 71) is being processed, which allows the indemnification of holders of titles related to lands declared as indigenous issued until October 5, 1988. In addition, until the end of 2018, PEC 215, which would transfer to Congress the power of land demarcations of the National Foundation of the Indian (Funai). However,

INTRODUCTION

THE DISPUTES THAT occur between different social groups for defining and interpreting reality overflow to the various manifestations of the public space and demand social legitimation. Since the nineteenth century, newspapers have taken on the responsibility of conveying and disseminating daily narratives, consequently becoming the stage for debates in which public opinion is built, shaped and nurtured (Gomes, 2009). In order to achieve their objectives, the most different social groups began to engage in the formation and approval of this *opinion* – or, in other words, in the dispute for cultural, political, economic and social hegemony.

With regard to the context of this study, between the years 1985 and 2014, 947 homicides of indigenous people were recorded in Brazil, 420 of which in Mato Grosso do Sul. At least one in every two cases of murders of indigenous people registered in the country between 2003 and 2014 happened in the state, which indicates that the territory of Mato Grosso do Sul concentrated 54.8% of the deaths of Brazilian indigenous people in the period (Conselho Indigenista Missionário [Cimi], 2016). On August 29, 2015, another significant case increased the statistics: Semião Fernandes Vilhalva, 24, a member of the Guarani and Kaiowá ethnic groups, was murdered in the municipality of Antônio João, located 283 kilometers south of the capital, Campo Grande. The death occurred after rural producers in the region met at the rural union headquarters and decided to retake, using their own means, a farm occupied by indigenous people, resulting in a situation of conflict that is representative for regional parameters – something that was expressed through “journalistic accounts” (Sodré, 2009).

The reported episode can be treated as an *event* in the sociological sense of the concept. According to Martins (2010), the event is “a problematic densification” (p. 137) of socio-cultural and historical contradictions. It also constitutes a “methodological repair point” (p. 138) from which the keen researcher can understand the dynamics of society. Furthermore, if murders can be understood as events in the sociological sense, from a communicational point of view it is also – in the case at hand – a journalistic event (Gomes, 2009; Sodré, 2009) that took over the pages of media vehicles.

In the contextual level, conflicts between rural producers and indigenous ethnic groups in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul have had a number of social, political and legal repercussions in the last decades. Several groups have mobilized around the definition and understanding of the nature, causes and subjects involved, as well as proposing solutions to the dispute¹. This dispute of positions also reveals a symbolic conflict for the achievement of social legitimacy². Part of these manifestations occurs in the media, not only through the news, but

also based on the *opinion published* through articles signed by members of civil society and editorials that explain the vehicles' opinions.

Based on the understanding of the concept of event as a manifestation of contradictions immanent to social structures, it is understood that modes of expression instituted by journalism in the immediate of daily life and of historical experience are not immune to the various representations of the world in dispute, as well as – and therefore – to the decision not only about *what* will be part of the story, but *how* and *who* will be its protagonists in the narration of facts. In this scenario, this study intends to investigate the relationship between cultural and ideological elements and the opinion content published in the main printed newspaper of Mato Grosso do Sul, *Correio do Estado*³, which, in the period referring to the empirical basis of the research, presented an emphatic journalistic treatment focused on conflicts between indigenous ethnic groups and rural producers. The research's critical point is anchored in the context according to which the opinion content conveyed in the newspaper triggers symbolic and cultural references related to the “ideology of the Mato Grosso do Sul culture” (Banducci, 2009, p. 107), a conception historically forged in manifestations that refer to the 1930s, dozens of years before the official process of dismemberment and creation of the state.

METHOD AND EMPIRICAL BASIS

The research proposes to investigate manifestations that define the framework of representations, values, ambiguities, contradictions and trends, as well as the characters present in the narratives of an opinion nature, regarding what was conventionally called *conflicts between indigenous people and rural producers* in the journalistic context. Because of the type of investigation, we chose the sampling technique understood as the selection of data of representative dimension and composition according to the research object – the “non-probabilistic systematic sampling of social representativeness” (Lopes, 2005, p. 145), which culminates in the selection of news content during August, September and October 2015 from the mentioned theme.

The cited case of the murder of the indigenous Semião Fernandes Vilhalva, of the Guarani and Kaiowá peoples, in Antônio João on August 29, 2015 was adopted as a central observation point for publications. From the methodological point of view, the event is the objectification of a repair point in which the culmination of the social contradictions that reveal themselves as a communicational problem manifests itself, since it leads to the production of a variety of media expressions: news, editorials, comments, cartoons and opinion articles. From the point of

the first Provisional Measure (MP) 870/2019 edited by Jair Bolsonaro after assuming the federal government on January 1, 2019 passed to the Ministry of Agriculture the attribution of identifying, delimiting and demarcating indigenous and *quilombola* lands.

²It is worth mentioning that, in the midst of symbolic disputes for social legitimacy, the rural sector has been articulating politically and economically since the last decade, at the regional and national level, to formulate and disseminate a rhetoric to promote the so-called *Agro Culture*, which includes the purchase of advertising space and the creation of their own television and internet channels, among other strategies.

³The newspaper *Correio do Estado* was founded in February 1954 with the political intention of defending and electing candidate Fernando Corrêa da Costa (National Democratic Union – UDN) as the governor of Mato Grosso, who was founder of the party politically opposed to Filinto Müller, of the Social Democratic Party (PSD). The vehicle was born, therefore, with a strong political orientation linked to the UDN, an association of conservative emphasis. Even with the change of ownership of the newspaper, which later came to be managed by José Barbosa Rodrigues, the political agenda never left the horizon of the periodical. At the national level, for example, the vehicle was favorable to the presence of the military in power after April 1964, an event reported as “The moralizing revolution that saved this country”. Years later, the *Correio do Estado* militated in favor of the division of Mato Grosso and the creation of Mato Grosso do Sul (Dal Moro, 2012). Active since its



foundation, the newspaper is one of the three oldest still in circulation in Mato Grosso do Sul. Currently belonging to businessman Antonio João Hugo Rodrigues, with active political activity in the state (he was a candidate for state deputy for the Christian Labor Party [PTC], in 2018, and senator for PSD, in 2014), the newspaper integrates the group *Correio do Estado de Comunicação*, which also includes TV Campo Grande (currently called SBT-MS, affiliated to the Brazilian Television System), Mega 94 FM radio, the *Correio do Estado* news site, and the Barbosa Rodrigues Foundation.

The printed newspaper is structured in fixed editorials, such as Politics, Economy, Cities, Sports, Brazil, World and *Correio B*, and sporadic editorials, which appear only in some editions. According to the Circulation Verification Institute (IVC), the vehicle has an average circulation of 12 thousand copies and reaches all regions of the state.

⁴For the purposes of this study, considering the intrinsic space limitations of the article and the recurrence of arguments present in the texts, which guarantees exhaustiveness as validation of the sample, we, for methodological ends, opted for the adoption of an equitable empirical selection across editorials and columns.

repair, the published copies were retrospectively read in order to identify the beginning of the journalistic coverage of the series of events that led to the tragic outcome of August 29, 2015 – that is, in a retroactive sequence, we identified when the theme started to receive the attention of the vehicle's journalistic coverage, which reveals the assimilation of tension in the south of the state by the news agenda, arriving on July 19, 2015. Then, the publications made were followed after the central point until when the correlated facts and events ceased to appear in the analyzed newspaper, which occurred on October 15, 2015.

Of the 76 copies of *Correio do Estado* that circulated in the period (considering that the vehicle does not circulate on Sundays), 35 (or 47%) contain information items (news, notes and reports) related to indigenous themes, land conflicts and regional identity; and twenty contain opinion items – or published opinions (Gomes, 2009) –, which amounts to recurrence of 27% for research purposes. This means that, approximately, for every two copies that carried information items in the period, one carried at least one opinion item. For the purposes of this article, however, the corpus of qualitative analysis is composed of ten opinion items identified in the newspaper *Correio do Estado* in the period under scrutiny; namely: five editorials (all published in the period) and the first five opinion articles published in the frame (which comprises a twenty-day time interval between August 28, 2015 – the eve of the murder of the indigenous Semião Vilhalva – and September 16, 2015)⁴. As a criterion for identifying and selecting research material, although we recognize the epistemic artificiality of the division between information and opinion (Chaparro, 2008), the classification of genres and journalistic formats developed by Melo and Assis (2010) was adopted for methodological purposes. Among the opinion formats, we analyzed editorials, articles and columns. These last two are treated together because they both constitute authored opinion texts by members of civil society, and which, for formal purposes, do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the newspaper.

On the other hand, the methodological approach is supported by the conception of journalistic *framing*, according to the perspectives of Entman (1991, 1993), Gitlin (2003) and Kuypers (2009) from the original concept of Goffman (2012). According to Entman (1993), the journalistic framing takes place in at least four points in the communication process: in the communicator, in the text, in the receiver and in the culture. Here it focuses on aspects of the text, on the absence and presence of keywords, sentences, stereotyped images and information sources, and on their relationship with culture, as an instance in which the stock of triggered primary frames is found (Carvalho, 2009; Goffman, 2012). It is understood that the primary referents have their origin, meaning and resignification in symbolic articulations that dispute the meanings of the

world and are expressions of differences and inequalities of the socio-cultural reality, such as the question of the ideology of Mato Grosso do Sul culture, addressed in this study.

In relation to the operationalization of the concept of framing, Entman (1993) proposes a definition that essentially involves actions of selection and salience. Framing, for the author, “is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text” (p. 52), in order to offer four functions “to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). The sociologist continues:

Frames, then, define problems – determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; diagnose causes – identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgments – evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies – offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects. (p. 52)

A single sentence of a given text can perform more than one of these four functions, but many sentences may not perform any, so it is not necessary, therefore, that the framework necessarily include all of them. Based on this perspective, from an operational point of view, the publications that make up the empirical part of this study seek attention to the four key elements of the construction of arguments mentioned by Entman (1993), that is: a) definition of the problem; b) diagnosis of causes; c) moral judgments, and d) propositions of solutions. In practice, throughout the analysis of editorials and columns of *Correio do Estado*, the framing functions proposed by the American sociologist will be retrieved and identified through their respective letters (a, b, c, d) and systematized in boxes as a way of unveiling the mobilized argumentative resources. The approach therefore comes close to Kuypers’ perception (2009), according to which “framing analysis can be used to better understand any rhetorical artifact” (p. 182) of media communication. We now begin to describe the historical context that illuminates the situation to be analyzed.

THE IDEOLOGY OF SOUTH MATO-GROSSO CULTURE

On October 11, 1977, the then President of the Republic, General Ernesto Geisel, signed the decree that created the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. Rather than meaning the culmination of the trajectory of the wishes of inhabitants of the southern portion of the great state of Mato Grosso, the secession was a



consequence of exogenous political pragmatism, yet another strategy aimed at maintaining the military in central power in Brasilia (Amarilha, 2006). Until 1979, the tangible elements of definition of the new state of the federation were placed: territory, administrative headquarters, and Legislative, Judiciary and Executive powers. However, the symbolic elements around which the population could identify themselves were yet to be defined. Creating a hymn, a coat of arms and a flag were relatively simpler tasks, but something essential was still missing: a historical-cultural identity that could make Mato Grosso do Sul unique among the other states of the federation.

Thus, *men of letters* entered the scene. In the consolidation of the new federative unit, the project to systematize, select and disseminate a *history* of Mato Grosso do Sul of its own was promoted. In this scenario, the members of the Academy of Letters and History of Campo Grande (ALH-CG, founded in 1972), invested with their symbolic powers, founded, in 1978, the Historical and Geographic Institute of Mato Grosso do Sul (IHG-MS) and the Academia Sul-Mato-Grossense de Letras (ASL), sister entities. A series of efforts were made in these associations to build “a history that contemplates and contains the State of Mato Grosso do Sul as a whole” (Amarilha, 2006, p. 177) and a Mato Grosso do Sul identity that justified the existence of a *being* from the south, sufficiently different from the peoples of the *north*. All this work, according to Banducci (2009), “aimed at finding genuine references and building a nucleus of meanings that would give symbolic consistency to the new cultural context that started to take shape from that moment but nevertheless would remain linked to the old content” (pp. 107-108).

From the perspective of cultural anthropology, Banducci (2009) argues that the symbolic construction that followed the secession of Mato Grosso was based on a revision or historical selection of singularizing elements of the trajectory of the southern portion of the great state of Mato Grosso. Added to this is a new identity discourse, built in the years that followed the creation of Mato Grosso do Sul, linked to the environmental theme, the revaluation of Pantanal and Pantanal characters. Amarilla (2006) and Queiroz (2006), in turn, follow in detail the trail of what Banducci (2009) calls “old content” of the development of a south Mato Grosso identity. Systematic formulations of intellectuals linked or coming from the political and economic elite of the south of old Mato Grosso were constituted, mainly from the so-called “1930 generation”.

For the purposes of this study, we do not intend to problematize the discussion on the identity of the state of Mato Grosso itself⁵, but make use of its scope for further reflection on the relation of opinions published in the main regional newspaper and their possible links with such identity discourses, establishing

⁵This work does not have the main intention of making a specific approach to identity constructions, offering a discursive and critical counterpoint, but only presenting them as hypothetical primary landmarks that feed the media constructions, observing the theoretical methodological steps adopted.

frameworks on conflicts between indigenous people and rural producers. To this end, we share with Banducci (2009) the assumption that “the construction of the identity of a people is not only a dynamic and segmented process, but a contradictory and ideological one, insofar as it constitutes an effort to justify, rationalize and legitimize internal differences” (p. 108).

The so-called *old content* is well exemplified in the constructions of divisive groups in the 1930s. Only in that period did a systematic and militant thought emerge that clearly defended the division of Mato Grosso (Bittar, 2009). The first systematizations about a Southern Mato Grosso identity were established in opposition to the discourse of Cuiaban intellectuals who projected, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, a positive redesign of the representations of the Mato Grosso people. According to Queiroz (2006), one can divide the historical elements of the constitution of the identity discourse into two blocks of representations: the first, formed by an internal redistribution of the stigmas attributed to the people of Mato Grosso, which means to attribute the old negative representations to the peoples of the center and north of the state; and the second, which consists of appropriations and transformations of the formulated Mato Grosso identity, mainly within the scope of the Historical and Geographic Institute of Mato Grosso, from 1919. With these operations of displacement and rhetorical reframing, the formulations engendered by intellectuals from the south of the state established a contrasting identity that aimed to draw boundaries between *us* and *them*, here meaning, respectively, southern Mato Grosso and central and northern Mato Grosso.

From the economic rise of southern Mato Grosso in the first decades of the twentieth century, the most striking separatist demands of the local elites emerged. During the 1920s and 1930s, the so-called “1930s generation” (Bittar, 2009) began to be created, which presented the first systematizations of Mato Grosso’s secession claims in the documents produced by the Liga Sul-Mato-Grossense, founded by young people who studied in Rio de Janeiro, children of the elites in the south of the state. The foundations of a contrasting identity were thus erected, which sought to know *what we are* from the denial of what belongs to the other. Concerning the first block of representations, what is revealed is a true iconoclastic campaign against everything that referred to Cuiabá and the peoples of the north and center of the state. The *backward* and *decaying* flaws become *northerners’s* attributes. From cattle breeding techniques to lack of industrial impetus, including the disqualification of the city of Cuiabá, the inferior elements attributed to the north in relation to the south are constituted. One of the Liga Sul-Mato Grosso documents from the 1930s even *ridicule* the then General Rondon for believing that, according to the separatists,



To truly love the State is to consider Cuiabá the best city in the world, the Cuiabá River a paradise, to be amazed by the grandeur of northern forests, to take delight in Nhambiquaras' innocent dances and Bororós' valiant hunts, to enjoy stories of mountains of gold and diamonds. (A divisão de Mato Grosso..., 1934, cited by Queiroz, 2006, p. 62)

The depreciating reference of indigenous cultural matrices and practices stands out from this excerpt, emphatically marking the dichotomy between a supposedly inferior native culture and, as will become clear later, the modernized and civilized overlapping culture. At the same time, they establish, therefore, an otherness in which the indigenous element defines what the people of Mato Grosso do not constitute. On the other hand, an attempt is also made to detach the *southern civilization* from any influence from Cuiabá and to emphasize the presence of a population contingent from other states of the federation. The south would have been occupied by population groups from Minas Gerais, São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul, in addition to foreign immigrants, whether Paraguayan or from other continents. This origin is associated with marked differences, such as the disposition to work and the atavistic association with modernization.

After establishing a contrast with the peoples of central and northern Mato Grosso from the denial of what *they* symbolize, in the second block of representations, the constitutive characteristics of the *peoples of the south* are explained. It can be seen that “the denial of the role of the indigenous people in the historical formation of the region is immediately noticeable” (Queiroz, 2006, p. 163). In fact, besides not appearing explicitly in the discourse of the *1930s generation*, the indigenous peoples of the region are deliberately excluded from the historical imaginary: in the documents of the 1930s what is read is that “the current descendants of the first invaders occupied virgin lands, which the Spaniards abandoned before the São Paulo beat, two centuries earlier” (Queiroz, 2006, p. 163). In addition, there is the claim that migrants from Minas Gerais founded the city of Santana do Paranaíba *in the desert*. This type of interpretation finds resonance in the so-called “abyssal thinking” (Santos, 2007), which underlies both the symbolic movement for the exclusion of indigenous people from the historical imaginary and the alleged legal right of the so-called *pioneers* on property:

The colonial zone is, *par excellence*, the universe of incomprehensible beliefs and behaviors that in no way can be considered knowledge, being, therefore, beyond true and false.... Based on their refined conceptions of humanity and human

dignity, the humanists of the 15th and 16th centuries came to the conclusion that the savages were subhuman. The question was: do the Indians have a soul? When Pope Paul III answered affirmatively in the bull *Sublimis Deus*, of 1537, he did so by conceiving the souls of wild peoples as an empty receptacle, an *anima nullius*, very similar to the *nullius land*, the concept of legal void that justified the invasion and occupation of indigenous territories. Based on these abyssal conceptions of epistemology and legality, the universality of the tension between regulation and emancipation, applied on this side of the line, does not contradict the tension between appropriation and violence applied on the other side of the line. (Santos, 2007, pp. 8-9)

Therefore, in the line of *abyssal* reasoning built by the *1930s generation*, if the lands were empty, the expected logical consequence is the valorization of the *pioneering spirit*. The pioneering and protective spirit of national borders is re-signified as a constituent element of the peoples of the south. The pioneer is ideologically valued as one who found a vast desert in southern lands and transformed them into an opulent expression of modernity, civilization and development. They are even ascribed with the way of making politics by arms as a *civic duty*. In this sense, the pioneering spirit is joined by politics through weapons as command criteria in the arguments of the 1930s divisionalists.

Therefore, in tune with the modernist ideas that swarmed among Brazilian intellectuals (Ortiz, 1988; Schwarcz, 1993), they come to express themselves, often in a racist bias; “The *eugenic youth* of the south is even mentioned with pride” (Queiroz, 2006, p. 165). Furthermore,

With regard to this appropriation of elements of the identity already built, what stands out most are the efforts of southerners to reject any piece of *barbarism* and assert themselves as *civilized, modern* and economically *developed*. (Queiroz, 2006, p. 164)

This is clear in the game of oppositions in which the south is placed as dynamic and civilized and the center/north as statist and decadent. It is, therefore, from these representations coined by Liga Sul-mato-grossense since the 1930s that we infer the historical nucleus of the representations that the *men of letters* from Mato Grosso do Sul will bring to the fore in the conformation of the Mato Grosso do Sul identity after the creation of the state. As a consequence, the views of an indigenous person as an anachronistic reminiscence averse to civilization spread in the discourses, finding bridges with contemporary rhetoric. Furthermore, natives are historically seen as



enemies of the *Mato Grosso do Sul men*, who, in truth, were “subject to constant harassment by the Indians and to attacks by bandits” – one of the cores of what Banducci (2009, p. 107) characterizes as the ideology of the Mato Grosso do Sul culture.

On the other hand, the indigenous people are raised as symbols of the people of Mato Grosso do Sul⁶. It may seem like a contradiction, but a closer analysis shows that the indigenous people are ideally reconsidered and relegated to an idyllic past, not existing as citizens – that is, stripped of their rights – in contemporary times (Banducci, 2009). In this context, the assumption is recovered that the opinion content conveyed in the Mato Grosso do Sul press, especially in its main periodical, *Correio do Estado*, triggers as a primary frame of reference the symbolic and cultural references related to the ideology of the Mato Grosso do Sul culture (Banducci, 2009) when the so-called *indigenous conflicts* are on the agenda.

⁶The main state park and tourist spot in Campo Grande, founded in 1993, for example, is called *Parque das Nações Indígenas* and displays an imposing statue of a Guaicuru warrior.

WHAT IS SAID IN THE NEWSPAPERS ABOUT THE CONFLICTS: FROM EDITORIALS

The editorials published in the period that make up the empirical frame of this investigation follow the course of coverage of the facts presented in the information items – that is, in the news and factual reports of the conflict that broke out at the end of August 2015 in the southern portion of Mato Grosso do Sul. At the beginning, on August 28, the eve of the murder of the indigenous Semião Vilhalva, an editorial was identified – “No light at the end of the tunnel” (2015) – whose main intention is to prevent a possible catastrophic consequence. The title shows a fatalistic and alarming tone, suggesting that there is no solution for the conflict between farmers and indigenous people. In this first moment, the editorial position assumes the voices of rural owners explicitly as a truthful source of information, sufficient for the characterization of the facts.

In the most recent conflict, which began last weekend, in the municipality of Antônio João, 282 kilometers from the capital, on the border with Paraguay, five farms were invaded by Indians of the Guarani Kaiowa ethnic group. Altogether, according to the owners, there are approximately 10,000 hectares of occupied and claimed areas. (“Sem Luz”, 2015, p. 2)

Further on, the voice of rural producers is again evoked in the characterization and moral judgment (c) of the characters involved.

“Interested third parties” in the conflict, as is the case, for example, of the Indigenous Missionary Council (Cimi), linked to the Catholic Church, instead of putting out the fire that has lasted for decades, pour even more gas into the flames. Antônio João’s rural producers, according to information published in yesterday’s edition of *Correio do Estado*, are categorical in affirming that the Catholic group acts directly in the invasions, creating conditions for them to occur. The very church, which in other centuries came to be remembered precisely for the exploitation of indigenous peoples. (“Sem Luz”, 2015, p. 2)

At no time, any voice other than that of rural producers is triggered in order to offer a contradictory view or to put positions in perspective. Therefore, in this first text, the vehicle’s editorial policy reflects the opinion policy of rural producers, systematized mainly by entities that represent them, such as the Federation of Agriculture and Livestock of Mato Grosso do Sul (Famasul). It can also be said that the first editorial stands out for introducing the characters and the framing functions that will persist and conform to the other texts. The indigenous people, the landowners, the federal government and *interested third parties* (Cimi and the Catholic Church) are the characters in the narrative. The terms that (de)qualify them are, respectively, “invaders”, “invaded”, “incompetent and absent” and “throw gas into the flame” (encouragement of invasions). The problem (a) presented in the text is the conflicts between farmers and indigenous people, caused (b) by land invasions carried out by indigenous people and fomented by interested third parties. Another problem (a) is the federal government’s non-intervention in the conflict, which would be responsible for the fatalistic and hopeless tone of the editorial’s title.

In the following three editorials, from August 30, September 4 and September 20, 2015, the intention is to reinforce the understanding that the federal government is largely responsible for the conflicts: “The absence felt in this conflict is precisely about who else could act for it to cease: the Federal Government” (“Silêncio Ensurdecedor”, 2015, p. 2); “In the meantime, so far, there is no indication that the Federal Government has fulfilled its promise to resolve the impasse on land occupation by indigenous people in Mato Grosso do Sul” (“Tudo na mesma”, 2015, p. 2). Thus, the arguments seek to narrow the causal relationship (b) between land conflict and administrative incompetence of the federal government:

The Indian, patronized by the Union, and the landowners, who use the right to property as their main argument in the dispute, are abandoned by their



main mediator. This conflict in the interior of Mato Grosso do Sul is another example of the disorganization of the Federal Government, which deals with the demands of its citizens on the border in the same disastrous way as it operates in the economy: amplifying a crisis instead of acting to mitigate it. (“Silêncio Ensurdecedor”, 2015, p. 2)

In the previous excerpt, as in other passages of the texts, there is an expansion of definitions and the establishment of relationships between characters. The indigenous person is now also patronized by the Union and, therefore, maintains a relationship with the federal government, which, in turn, is also made concrete in the discourse by Fundação Nacional do Índio (Funai), suggesting complicity between these two characters. Cimi and Famasul are established as legitimate representatives of the two sides involved in the conflict. Consequently, the editorial position departs, on the rhetorical level, from the opinion policy of Famasul. The close harmony between the editorial policy and rural landowners’ opinion policy, evident in the first editorial, now is not overt, but it is still implicitly present: by establishing the poles of the dispute, on the one hand, Famasul and the rural landowners, with the right to property, and, on the other hand, the indigenous people, the federal government and Cimi; then, by assigning responsibility for conflicts to the federal government. The editorial position, therefore, indicates the first side as a victim, a passive subject of the action of the second block of characters, who would be responsible for the disputes and the lack of solution.

In these three editorials, there is also an expansion of the framing functions. The proposition of solutions (d) appears clearly: the solution is federal intervention through “more energetic and resolute attitudes” (“Expectativa Frustrada”, 2015, p. 2), the fulfillment of repossession and the “approval of PEC 71, which sets out compensation to landowners that were demarcated as indigenous reserves as of October 5, 2013” (“Tudo na Mesma”, 2015, p. 2). To the definition of the problem (a) are added key terms that make up the framework: “battles of a war that has lasted for decades” and “bomb that is about to explode”; as well as to the causes (b):

Much of the agrarian conflict between Indians and producers was born out of federal government policy, at the time personalized by the Indian Protection Service (SPI), with demarcation of indigenous lands, true agrarian colonies, which delimited the space of the communities. On the other hand, many areas were sold to producers in good faith, passing on to other generations who now face the problem created decades ago. (“Expectativa Frustrada”, 2015, p. 2)

On October 14, 2015, the editorial “Duas CPIs, Pouca Ação” is published, whose central intention is to criticize the creation of two parliamentary commissions of inquiry (CPI) in the Legislative Assembly of Mato Grosso do Sul. Such publication is an attempt to defend a key point of the framework presented by *Correio do Estado*, which, at that time, faced a factual counter-argument. Since the beginning of the news coverage, the editorials have stood up insisting that the central cause of the conflict is the federal government, due to incompetence, inertia or breach of promises. However, the creation of a CPI to investigate the involvement of Cimi – an initiative by deputies representing rural landowners – and another to determine the responsibility of the state government in the genocide of indigenous people between 2000 and 2015 – the latter a result of the mobilization of deputies linked to indigenous causes – reaches the central point of the framework proposed by the editorials until then. The creation of CPIs shifts the responsibility for conflicts from federal to state level. In other words, what up to this point of coverage was ascribed to the federal government – the intensification of the conflict between farmers and indigenous people – becomes the responsibility of the interested third parties and the state government. In rhetorical terms, the creation of CPIs in the Assembly is constructed as a kind of *confession of guilt* by the groups directly involved in the conflict. The intention of the editorial, given this circumstance, is to disqualify both CPIs, insisting that they would be diverting their efforts and generating innocuous actions; and, consequently, try to preserve the core of its causal interpretation.

Table 1 systematizes the framing functions (Entman, 1991, 1993) identified in the editorials of the newspaper *Correio do Estado* during the period adopted as an empirical frame of the research.

The framework displayed in the editorials offers a basic narrative in which the position of the journalistic company is evident in the very first text. The characters involved and the judgments that characterize them, the definition of the problem and the signaling of the causal explanations are presented. In the other published texts there is a refinement of the characterization of characters (often oscillating judgments) and causal explanations, in addition to the proposition of solutions. In general, as shown in Table 1, the framework proposes that the conflict is established between rural producers – always characterized by neutral, positive or victimizing terms – and the other characters – qualified, at least once, negatively. As demonstrated, a relationship of complicity between the federal government, Cimi and indigenous people is implicitly established. However, the latter are always placed in an inferior position, as they are supposedly manipulated, patronized and induced to act.



Table 1

Framing functions present in the editorials of Correio do Estado

Framing functions	
a) problem	Conflict between indigenous and rural landowners; non-intervention by the federal government.
b) cause	Incompetence of the federal government; inciting conflict by interested third parties; SPI's policy of creating reserves and distributing land in the state.
c) moral judgment	Indigenous people: invaders, protected by the Union, manipulated, abandoned by the federal government;
	Rural landowners: invaded, producers in good faith, abandoned by the federal government;
	Federal government, Funai, Dilma government: incompetent, disorganized;
	Cimi, Catholic Church: interested third parties, provocateurs, explorers of the past who defend the exploited, representatives of the indigenous people.
d) proposition of solution	Energetic and resolute intervention by the federal government; repossession; PEC 71 approval.

Note. Prepared by the authors.

In pointing out the causes of the conflict, there is a shift in the responsibility of the characters directly involved to a distant entity, in this case, the federal government. Such a movement deflates the discussion about the actions of farmers and indigenous people. In a rhetorical vertex, the murder of Semião Vilhalva is only a datum, a logical consequence. The meeting and deliberation of farmers, who decide to use their own means to retake a farm, are seen as a natural and expected action. This point of view is constantly reinforced by the enumeration of previous conflicts, asserting, through repetition, the naturalization of violent acts. For contextualization purposes, in mid-2015, the federal government was facing a pronounced economic and political crisis. President Dilma Rousseff was the target of a series of criticisms about the conduct of the economy, in addition to a blunt opposition in parliament, fueled mainly by the unfolding of corruption scandals disseminated in the media throughout Brazil. In Mato Grosso do Sul, the newspaper *Correio do Estado* took the same tone of criticism of the federal government. This context provides the main elements that constitute the framework built to understand the conflicts that erupt in the distant municipality of Antônio João, on the southern border with Paraguay.

In the construction of the central argument of the framework proposed by the editorials, there is, therefore, a rhetorical strategy that aims to restrict the

causal and explanatory possibilities. The text starts from an assertion that could be valid, at least conjuncturally, in another context, to make acceptable a causal explanation that would not have explanatory force without the acceptance of the first assertion. The valid statement: “the Federal Government is incompetent in managing the country’s economy”; the restrictive assertion: “the Federal Government is incompetent to resolve the conflict between indigenous people and rural landowners”. The repetition of this association in the various editorials published in the period completes the construction of a game of forces, considering that it works based on forgetting that what has been said has not been explained: the reasons for the conflicts⁷. That is, from a rhetorical point of view, the link between economic incompetence and incompetence in solving land conflicts ends the discussion in a shared frame of reference: management/administration. Any and every problem in the economy is posed as a matter of efficient and effective equalization through the rationalization of the agents’ actions, aware of the means available and the desired ends. Likewise, conflicts between farmers and indigenous people are supposed to be resolved by managing the interests at stake. The constructed framework neglects factors of the symbolic dispute that find their foundations in the field of values and traditions, for whose solution purely administrative management measures contribute nothing, or very little.

The frame of reference has its origin, meaning and symbolic articulation (Carvalho, 2009; Goffman, 2012) accustomed to a broader political-administrative plan and find their legitimacy in a political-party polarization that is not directly related to conflicts between indigenous peoples and rural landowners. In this plan, the interests, beliefs and worldview of one of the conflicting sides, in this case rural landowners, finds greater resonance in the position taken by the studied newspaper. The framework constructed from the primary frame of reference based on the political-administrative dichotomy allows for an agreement between the media subject – the journalistic company *Correio do Estado* – and the extramedia actors – predominantly rural landowners – in the establishment of a plausible plot (Sodré, 2009). It is called a restrictive framework because it overshadows the complexities involved in conflicts between farmers and indigenous people in Mato Grosso do Sul. However, the argument does not resist the imperative of the facts. When two regional CPIs are instituted to investigate the responsibilities of local characters, the weakness of the framework manifests itself and a contradiction is established. Verisimilitude vanishes in partiality, in insufficiency and in the restriction on the positioning of one of the parties involved in the conflict.

Concerning the context that illuminates the analysis, the conformation of media framings related to what Banducci (2009) characterizes as ideology of

⁷ Ethnographically speaking, it is necessary to note that the intensification of the conflict stems from concrete experiences lived in Mato Grosso do Sul in the last thirty years.



the culture of Mato Grosso do Sul, the construction presented in the editorials of the newspaper *Correio do Estado* does not form from a contrasting identity where the legitimacy of *us* versus *them* is based on diacritical elements that define the Mato Grosso do Sul *being*. The semantic plane in which the framework is inserted relates, rather, to the political-administrative-party dichotomy represented, roughly, by the situation-federal government/opposition-state government polarization, in which *us* is located in the second pole and *them* in the first. However, against the 1988 Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, which recognized the original rights of indigenous people, such as the right to traditionally occupied lands⁸, the concealment of citizenship by indigenous ethnicities, a mark based on the identity forged since the *1930s generation*, finds once again an outlet in the silencing of the studied opinion policy.

⁸ Article 231 of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution and its successive paragraphs expresses the recognition of indigenous peoples' social organization, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions, and the original rights over the lands they traditionally occupy, with the Union being responsible for demarcating them, as well as protecting and enforcing all their assets. In turn, Article 67 of the same Constitution highlights that "the Union will complete the demarcation of indigenous lands within five years from the promulgation of the Constitution" (Brazil, 1988).

WHAT IS SAID IN THE NEWSPAPERS ABOUT THE CONFLICTS: FROM COLUMNS

Among columns, the empirical frame of the research considers articles by invited members of civil society or spontaneously sent to the newspaper whose theme revolves, directly or transversely, around the problems concerning conflicts between rural landowners and indigenous people. In theory, these articles have a fundamental role in promoting debate and expanding knowledge on a given topic when there is a real reception of polyphonic and polysemic ideas, positions, arguments and points of view, in which real public debate is promoted or not. In *Correio do Estado*, columns occupy a prominent position, located on page 2, next to editorials. For the purposes of this article, five articles signed by representatives of civil society in Mato Grosso do Sul were selected.

In the meantime, two columns by the psychoanalyst Valfrido Chaves are of significant relevance in demonstrating the arguments about the relationship between journalistic frameworks and the ideology of the Mato Grosso do Sul culture. The text "Colonização à Brasileira", dated August 28, 2015, is curiously a republication⁹ that precedes the assassination of Semião Vilhalva and, thus, together with the editorial of the same day, closes the general framework from which it is intended to define the journalistic event "conflict between indigenous people and rural producers". The second text, "Conflito Indígena, o Judiciário e o 'Carai'" complements the first, expanding the framing functions.

The title "Colonização à Brasileira" refers to a semantic plane anchored in the history of territory occupation and in the supposed submission to the

⁹ According to information from the newspaper itself, the text was originally published a decade earlier.

will of the introduced element. The adjectival phrase *à brasileira* (meaning in the Brazilian fashion) expresses an idiosyncrasy, a singularity, of the form of colonization carried out in Brazil – as it is said of a culinary recipe, a way of preparing typical of the Brazilian people. In this way, it provides an ironic tone that unfolds in the course of the text from the introduction of the characters, the established polarization and the definition of the framing functions. The same polarization seen in the editorials is accentuated and refined with the introduction of adornments, making a carved, sculpted frame, through the refinement of an incisive and effective language to define the triggered reference frames. As the characters that emerge in the discourse are characterized, the moral sense of the established polarization is explained.

On the positive side are rural producers. They are the “pioneers”, “ex-combatants (of the Paraguayan War)”, tenacious people with moral fiber who lived through “an arduous, often violent history, in which loneliness and lack of resources were sovereign” (Chaves, 2015a, p. 2). Later came the “southerners”, “new blood, with a vocation for hard work with the land and agricultural production”. The producer is the “scapegoat”, they are the “worthy Brazilians who live for work and their families”, expelled from “legitimate” lands. On the negative pole are the State agents. This character of the narrative is rendered in the figure of sectarian federal prosecutors, “militants”, representatives of “a project of power in which the class struggle must give way to the promotion of ethnic and racial conflict between Brazilians”. Under the influence of the negative pole are the indigenous people, understood as backward peoples, on the margins of “progress” and “development”; “indigent”, “alcoholics”, “terrorists”, “without perspective”, subjected to “slave labor”, caught up in “prostitution”, “rapes and impunity”. Also, there are, in the author’s words, “landowner Indians”. But the indigenous people are also victimized, since “dark forces” act “by promoting political-ideological manipulations”.

The problem (a) presented in the text is the expulsion of pioneers from their legitimate properties and, in turn, the interpretation of the Constitution itself. This expulsion is seen as a collective crime, perpetrated by Indians, influenced by excuse forces and with the connivance of the state. The cause (b) of the problem would be a

Conflict and invasion industry that wants to sow definitive hatred between Indians and pioneers, under the conniving gaze of the state apparatus, when federal prosecutors “defend Indians” but, in a sectarian way, forget that the Constitution is a whole in which ethnicity does not determine privileges or innate guilt. (Chaves, 2015a, p. 2)



By using key terms such as “pioneers”, “vocation” and “work” (“with a vocation for work”), “tenacity” and “fiber”, the author defines the psychosocial and behavioral traits of those who would be the legitimate colonizers, always in opposition to the “patronized”, “indigents” and “terrorists” that, in fact, under the protection of the “militants” of the state sphere, would be occupying the land. A structuring opposition is established, therefore, between, on the one hand, colonization as free enterprise, entrepreneurship and, on the other, colonization under the protection of the State “in Brazilian fashion”.

In a second text published by the same author, on September 29, 2015, therefore one month after the first article, we note the reaffirmation of the main points. However, while in the first the intention was to present an initial and broad framework to enunciate the basic forms for the definition of the problem, causes and moral judgments, in the second the core is the exhortation to Judiciary neutrality as a proposition of solution (d) for dissent (Chaves, 2015b, p. 2).

The rhetorical strategy adopted is to compare the Judiciary’s action with the role of *Caraí* among indigenous peoples. According to the author, the people who inhabited the Brazilian territory when the Portuguese arrived lived in different groups and villages, one moment allies, the next enemies. The relations between these different groups obeyed a series of rules. Disobedience to these rules of coexistence could lead to conflicts. In this “warrior universe”, *Caraí* was the individual who did not belong to any warrior lineage and therefore circulated among the various groups, acting as a guide for the “Land without evil” and as a promoter of peace. It would be up to the Judiciary to assume its “*Caraí* function” and reestablish the rule of law and democracy that, in the columnist’s opinion, was broken by the belligerent condition established between indigenous people and rural landowners. This would happen because the “naïve” indigenous people would be manipulated by ideological and physiological interests of agents from outside and within the state apparatus.

In the first text, the indigenous people were positioned close to the negative pole, along with the manipulative agents. The suggested framework placed them as strangers, different from the pioneers, explorers, tenacious and vocational people of Mato Grosso do Sul: the rural landowners. In the second text, the strategy is to reposition the indigenous people. Now they are “Brazilians who could be side by side”, historically wronged by European colonizers, as long as they are not obnubilated by exogenous ideologies (the negative pole is identified as the “radical left”).

In the sequence, the text entitled “Cuidado com a fronteira!” (Mendes, 2015), signed by the president of the Local Commission for Agrarian Affairs and Agribusiness of the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB-MS), of September 2, 2015,

draws attention to a problem (a) derived from the conflict between farmers and indigenous people: border security. According to the author, the cause (b) of his concern would be the participation of “Paraguayan factions” in the conflict in Antônio João. In view of the fact, he proposes (d) the intervention of the Brazilian Armed Forces, claiming that the accusation of crime of responsibility would fall on the constituted authorities if they did not determine immediate military intervention. In his argument, riddled with citations of laws, he evokes the patriotism of Lieutenant Antônio João (who, interestingly, lends his name to the municipality where the conflicts were taking place at that time) in the Paraguayan War in resisting, even though aware of his imminent defeat, the attacks by Solano Lopes’s army. After affirming that rural owners are guaranteed the right to “retake”, once again relying on a reading of fragments of the Constitution and ordinary laws, he ends by saying that “gates open to foreigners” are weakening national sovereignty.

Concerning the analytical category *characters*, what is verified is the entry on the scene, now explicitly, of “Paraguayan factions” as inciting conflicts. The federal government still appears in the discourse as largely responsible and inert. Rural landowners remain victims who have the right to “retake” their land. There is a search for legitimization of the framework through the activation of frames of reference that are built on a basic dichotomy between national/foreign. The use of key terms and expressions such as “border defense”, “foreigner”, “national security” and “national sovereignty”, connoting, next, that the right of “retaking” by rural owners would be similar to the patriotic guarantee of the national territory, which would be with “gates open to foreigners”, just as the gates of the farms were invaded by indigenous people. An amalgamation of conflicts between indigenous people and rural producers and border disputes between Brazilians and Paraguayans is offered. In this way, the association of rural landowners with “national” owners, with *us*, is implicit, with the right to retake the land from foreign factions, which for being “factions” and “foreigners” can and should be repelled with the use of force. The intention is to justify the disproportionate use of force by rural landowners in the actions of August 29, 2015, which culminated in the death of the indigenous Semião Vilhalva.

In the texts of September 3 and 16, 2015, there is an explicit approach to the rhetorical artifice of framing conflicts. The journalist and lawyer Ruy Sant’Anna criticizes the government of President Dilma Rousseff and her party, the Workers’ Party (PT), in the texts entitled “Bankers’ Profit and the Question: Where to Get Money?” and “Misaligned Life, Indigenous Invasions and the *Pro-Jaca* Project”. He emphasizes that economic measures that increase taxes generate unemployment, inflation and an increase in bank income. They also



contribute to distrust in the government, which, according to the author, should cut spending and not increase tax collection. In this characterization, the federal government is associated with actions and predicates such as “incompetent”, “should not be forgiven”, “liar”, “impudence”, “Brazilian *luminaries*” (here, accentuating the ironic tone), “expand the irrational greed”, author (the federal government) of “budget shortfalls and irregularities” (Sant’Anna, 2015a) and “electoral fraud” (Sant’Anna, 2015b). He states that the government would be launching the “jackfruit project”, “a huge fruit, with a strong smell and difficult to digest” (Sant’Anna, 2015b).

After this vehement criticism, he introduces the other character: the landowners. These are characterized as “those who carry the country on their backs and the nation on their shoulders”, “brave and honest” and “what the producers suffer is humiliating and unfair”:

These have always been and continue to be treated unfairly, even with an agribusiness representative in Dilma’s ministerial bosom. From year to year, indigenous invasions in rural areas acquired in good faith and titled by the Government increase. Producers are not invaders; they are owners. If there is any legal issue that is unfavorable to ruralists, they have to have their land acquired by the Government and paid fairly, over all the assets added on the land that were bare and, today, produce. (Sant’Anna, 2015a, p. 2)

The excerpt not only exposes the moral judgment (c) of the characters and their positions in conflicts, but suggests a solution (d) to the problem: the “fair compensation” to the owners. One infers that the frame of reference set in the definition of the framing of the facts gets close to the effort undertaken by the published editorials. It seeks to link the eventual incompetence of the federal government in political-economic management with an inability to mediate and resolve conflicts between indigenous people and rural landowners in Mato Grosso do Sul. Such an interpretation exempts the parties involved from responsibility for their acts and, at the same time, shifts the explanatory force from an assertion previously shared and accepted to an assertion whose intention is to close the framing of the facts.

The general framework accentuates the polarization presented in the editorials, mainly linking moral attributes to the characters involved. A line between *good* and *evil*, *right* and *wrong* is clear. However, the composition of the antagonistic poles varies. There is an ambiguity in the characterization and positioning of the indigenous people, which goes from the most striking moral disqualification to commiseration and indulgence. In one moment the indigenous people are

positioned with the federal government, the “terrorist factions”, the “militants”, the “strikers”, the “landless”; the next moment they are displaced to the camp of the innocent ones, victimized by the actions of the “bad” guys. For the purposes of systematization, Table 2 presents the framing functions (Entman, 1991, 1993) identified in the analyzed columns of the newspaper *Correio do Estado*.

Table 2

Framework functions in the opinion columns of Correio do Estado

Framing functions	
a) problem	Conflict between indigenous people and rural landowners; non-intervention by the federal government; foreign invasion; social instability; national security; invasion of private property.
b) cause	Incompetence and weakness of the federal government; incitement to conflict by “communist-Leninist terrorists” and Paraguayan factions; defense of private property.
c) moral judgment	<p>Indigenous people: invaders, savage destroyers, backward, indigents, alcoholics, protected by the Union, by communists and terrorists, act as strikers and landless, caboclos, landowners; on the other hand, they are manipulated, abandoned by the federal government;</p> <p>Rural landowners: invaded, producers in good faith, abandoned by the federal government, carry Brazil on their backs, courageous, explorers of the inhospitable backcountry, bold, intrepid, humiliated, wronged, scapegoats, pioneers, dignified people, workers, ex-combatants of the Paraguayan war, a tenacious people with moral fiber;</p> <p>Federal government (Funai, Dilma government, PT): incompetent, corrupt, weak, communist, liar, pseudo-intellectual;</p> <p>Judiciary power: mediator, peacemaker.</p>
d) proposition of solution	Energetic and resolute intervention; repossession; expropriation with fair compensation of farmers.

Note. Prepared by the authors.

On the negative pole, what can be observed is the expansion of the triggered frames of reference. In the editorials a political-administrative framework was revealed, from which adjectives such as “incompetent”, “disorganized” and “inoperative” derive. In the articles, as the systematization of Table 2 demonstrates, the political-ideological element is accentuated by labeling the federal government



as “communist”, “Leninist” and “Marxist”; and when presenting public agents, in this case members of the Federal Public Ministry, as “militants”. Furthermore, there is vague mention of “terrorists” as a simple lever capable of closing the proposed frame of reference. The eloquence of qualifications is pronounced, in the cases analyzed, as an emotional appeal to the readers in order to mobilize them to accept a proposition that, in fact, does not explain the facts.

On the positive pole, the myriad of keywords lead to a frame of reference close to the ideology of the Mato Grosso do Sul culture. It is in the characterization of rural landowners that the same abyssal attributes emerge (Santos, 2007) that define the identity of Mato Grosso do Sul forged since the 1930s. The diacritical elements that allow us to say who makes up *being* from Mato Grosso do Sul are raised to condition of moral qualities that legitimize the landowners’ point of view in defining the facts. To say that they are pioneers, bold, hardworking, explorers of the inhospitable hinterland and ex-combatants confers authenticity, justifies the right of command and the ideology of the rural landowners class in the historical discourse that, when resumed, at the time of social contradictions thickening, reveals, on the other hand, the fragility and artificiality of that same discourse. The need to reiterate attributes at each conflict that emerges reveals the crisis of the traditional form of domination, which, in the dominators’ eyes, is still sufficient to justify the submission and modesty of the indigenous population of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. In spite of the disbelief of the dominated ones, the framework that takes as reference elements of an ideology of culture lends itself to convince the dominators themselves of the *right* to exercise dominion and thereby justify the disproportionate use of force in conflicts.

A framework has been constituted that triggers several frames of reference or compositional levels. That is, a present or immediate level: incompetence in the management of the political-economic crisis, which is built on the articulation of conflicts between indigenous people and rural landowners with themes that are contemporary and mobilize public opinion and, for this very reason, are treated concomitantly by the various means of communication. And a peripheral level: political-ideological polarizations that trigger reference to the delimitation between *friends* and *foes*, *nationals* and *foreigners*, a *us* and a *them*. The ideology of culture presents itself as a latent frame of reference – of a historical matrix – that is used to give legitimacy to the rhetorical construction.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study highlights the need for reflection on the meaning of the frameworks proposed in the texts in their dynamics of articulation of public

opinion with published opinions and opinion policies (Gomes, 2009) in dispute when the theme circumscribes indigenous peoples and their conflicts with rural landowners in Mato Grosso do Sul. In the newspaper *Correio do Estado*, the main printed vehicle of the state, it has been observed since the beginning of the coverage of the facts, in 2015, following the murder of the Semião Vilhalva indigenous leadership, a rhetorical alignment of the editorial policy with the opinion policy defended, mainly, by groups that represent the interests of rural producers.

The first editorial presented in this analysis is explicit in taking a position by *affiliating*, uncritically, to the rural landowners' perceptions and opinions. Of these, it takes representations about the characters involved, mainly indigenous people and organized social movements. This political and ideological affinity is evident in the definition of the opinion columns published in the newspaper. Most of the texts are close to the opinion policy of rural landowners' representatives. The presented frameworks seek to legitimize arguments using historically constructed and ideologically based stereotypes and prejudices in an identity discourse, riddled with moral judgments, about genuine Mato Grosso do Sul people. Along with rational arguments about property rights, constitutional principles and the rule of law, among others, a series of substantial qualifications are projected that function as markers of belonging to different social statutes. In rhetorical terms, in line with an "abyssal thinking" (Santos, 2007), rural landowners would be, *ad infinitum*, hierarchically superior to indigenous peoples because they share the moral and constitutive attributes that define truly *being* from Mato Grosso do Sul.

The proposed framework establishes a bridge between published opinion and common sense, stabilizing the social reality (Sodré, 2009) insofar as it triggers elements related to an ideology of the Mato Grosso do Sul culture, in this case appearing as a primary frame of reference shared not only by the interest group, but most of all (for this reason the importance) spread among the community of meaning (Gomes, 2009) to which the newspaper's writers address. This primary frame of reference, which penetrates and shapes the discourses broadcast in the newspaper, selects, silences and exacerbates characteristics of social reality and, above all, indicates the meaning and the way in which reality must be decoded, because it is shared and mobilized to structure the experience of the subjects involved in the action (Goffman, 2012). It is, therefore, to the extent that the ideology of the Mato Grosso do Sul culture structures the experience of everyday life in Mato Grosso do Sul that the local media discourse is efficiently conformed.

The newspaper *Correio do Estado* not only has its headquarters and most of its readers approximately 300 kilometers away from the conflict region, but



also shows an even greater symbolic distance from the reality experienced by indigenous people in the south of the state. Consequently, the framing of the facts crossed by the studied mediations is partly different from those hypothetically triggered in the local contexts. In this way, the role of the ideology of the Mato Grosso do Sul culture becomes evident in the positioning of the newspaper: it is a cultural matrix that functions as the primary frame of reference for a community of meaning that establishes a symbolic distinction between indigenous people and rural landowners intended to be enough to justify who is the legitimate owner of the land in Mato Grosso do Sul. It is a simple overflow of the identity discourse that defines, at the same time, who are the *true people* of Mato Grosso and who has the right to command the region, for a context of disputes over the right to land, whose terms in dispute refer to the constitutional precepts established in the 1988 Charter.

In this sense, the rhetorical constructions published in the newspaper *Correio do Estado* do not favor the debate, the clarification and the defense of positions, but, rather, the imposition of an opinion previously taken as true and certain, whose intention is only to attract supporters appealing to an identity feeling concerned with defining who is the *friend* and the *enemy*, the *us* and the *other*, thus distorting the terms of the debate; that is, it overflows in a space surrounded and dominated by one of the disputing sides, articulating its position from stereotypes and prejudices, shared mainly by the traditional and rural elite in the state. ■

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