ARTICLE

POLITICAL JOURNALISM BETWEEN NEWS AND OPINION:

a comparative study of the 2018 Brazilian presidential elections

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ABSTRACT – This article compares editorial and news agendas considering *O Estado de S. Paulo, Folha de S. Paulo,* and *O Globo* newspapers during the second round of the 2018 Brazilian presidential election. We study to what extent the convergence between both agendas discloses some of the political interests sponsored by news organizations. By using content analysis, we examined the thematic convergence between 144 editorials and news. The hypotheses are: H1) The news and opinion sections within each newspaper converge thematically, indicating a political instrumentalization of the journalistic practices; H2) Newspapers differ from each other when considering the topics covered in their editorials, which is not the case when their main cover stories are at stake. The results indicate that the newspapers do not present a strong convergence within their intern sections. However, there is similarity among the newspapers' opinionated agendas, which doesn't happen regarding the news coverage.
Key words: Political journalism. News. Editorials. Elections. Public opinion.

O JORNALISMO POLÍTICO ENTRE A NOTÍCIA E A OPINIÃO:
um estudo comparativo sobre as eleições presidenciais brasileiras de 2018

RESUMO – O objetivo deste trabalho é comparar as agendas editorial e noticiosa dos jornais *O Estado de S. Paulo, Folha de S.Paulo e O Globo* durante o segundo turno da eleição presidencial de 2018. Pretende-se, especificamente, compreender em que medida as semelhanças entre as referidas agendas podem revelar, pelo menos em parte, os interesses políticos das publicações. A análise de conteúdo de 144 textos permitiu observar o nível de sintonia temática entre as peças jornalísticas. As hipóteses são: H1) As seções noticiosa e opinativa internas a cada jornal convergem tematicamente, indicando instrumentalização político-eleitoral da atividade jornalística; H2) Os jornais divergem entre si quando são diretamente comparados os temas abordados em seus editoriais, o que não ocorre em suas principais matérias de capa. Descobriu-se que os periódicos não apresentam convergências expressivas em suas seções internas. Todavia, há convergência entre as agendas opinativas dos jornais, diferentemente do que acontece em suas notícias.
Palavras-chave: Jornalismo político. Notícias. Editoriais. Eleições. Opinião pública.

PERIODISMO POLÍTICO ENTRE LA NOTICIA Y LA OPINIÓN:
un estudio comparativo sobre las elecciones presidenciales brasileñas de 2018

RESUMEN – Este artículo compara las agendas editoriales y de noticias de *O Estado de S. Paulo, Folha de S.Paulo* y *O Globo* durante la segunda vuelta de las elecciones presidenciales brasileñas de 2018, buscando identificar si hay similitudes entre ellas. El análisis de contenido de 144 editoriales y noticias nos permitió observar la armonía temática entre los textos. Las hipótesis son: H1) Las secciones de noticias y opinión dentro de cada periódico convergen temáticamente, lo que indica la instrumentalización político-electoral de la actividad periodística; H2) Los periódicos difieren entre sí cuando los temas de sus editoriales se comparan directamente, lo cual no es el caso en sus principales portadas. Se encontró que no hay convergencias temáticas expresivas en las secciones de cada publicación. Sin embargo, los resultados indican cierta convergencia entre las agendas de opinión de los periódicos, lo que no se percibe con la misma intensidad en las noticias.
Palabras clave: Periodismo político. Noticias. Editoriales. Elecciones. Opinión pública.

1 Introduction

Recent studies have focused on the actions of journalistic institutions as parties interested in the political game (Azevedo, 2017; Thesen, 2017; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2017). Initially associated with or sponsored by political groups, the press has undergone, especially since the nineteenth century, a transformation that culminated in an emphasis on the commercial side of this line of work (Rutenbeck, 1994). One of the results of this process was the separation of opinion and news (Schudson & Anderson, 2009; Hanitzsch, 2007). Whereas the former is characterized as taking a stance on themes in

the public sphere – e.g., in editorials (Eilders, 1999; Firmstone, 2008) –, the latter seeks to provide factual information gathered within parameters such as objectivity and impartiality (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016; Hanitzsch & Vos, 2017) – although different authors have put the metaphor of separating news and opinion in check (Barnhurst & Nerone 2008; Tandoc & Vos, 2016; Artemas et al., 2018).

Reporting the news gives journalism the prerogative of making topics of public interest visible (McCombs, 2005). Meanwhile, editorials are spaces in which companies can influence their audience and take a stand (Espinosa, 2003; Alves Filho, 2006; Guerreiro Neto, 2016; Nava & Marques, 2019), which makes the political aspect of newspapers more explicit (Cook, 2006; Firmstone, 2008, 2019). In other words, editorials do not necessarily employ the same grammar as the news, which gives them more freedom to adopt guidelines that meet criteria other than those of newsworthiness (Marques & Mont'Alverne, 2019).

Although this separation between sections – existing at least at the normative level (Barnhurst & Nerone, 2008; Tandoc & Vos, 2016) – has been recognized for decades, few studies have focused on understanding the eventual relationships between them. For instance, empirical data are still lacking regarding the degrees of interaction or mutual influence that exist between news and editorials. Therefore, it is necessary to examine to what extent the relationship between news and opinion sustains the claim that journalistic companies keep opinions and coverage of the facts firmly apart. After all, even though it is well known that factual coverage is not fully capable of achieving impartiality, there are journalistic production techniques that can minimize subjectivity. Addressing this issue is even more important when it comes to elections, which often compel journalistic institutions to adopt a position (Firmstone, 2019; Meltzer, 2007).

The purpose of this article is to compare the editorials and news coverage of three Brazilian newspapers, *O Estado de S. Paulo* (OESP), *Folha de S.Paulo* (FSP) and *O Globo* (OG), in texts that mentioned the candidates Fernando Haddad (PT) and/or Jair Bolsonaro (then a member of the PSL) throughout the runoff of the 2018 presidential election. The research question is: how similar were the editorial and news agendas of these newspapers during the runoff of the 2018 presidential election? The work thus helps to reveal how the thematic proximity between information and opinion expresses one of the modes of political activity of journalistic companies. Although this article does not neglect the political performance of the newspapers

with regard to framing, it should be noted that the analysis basically focuses on the first stage of the phenomenon, concerning the topics that are addressed.

Through content analysis, we investigate the level of thematic consistency between the editorials and cover stories of the three newspapers, since the headlines are responsible for presenting the main topic of each daily edition (Fontcuberta, 1993). The *corpus* consists of 80 editorials and 64 cover stories, published between October 8 (first day of the runoff) and October 31, 2018 (third day after the polls closed).

It should be emphasized that the 2018 presidential election was marked by controversies, such as the dropped candidature of former president Lula (PT)[1] and the attempted assassination of Bolsonaro[2]. The polarization remained even after the PT put Haddad at the top of the ticket. In the first round of voting, Bolsonaro had 46% of the valid votes, against Haddad's 29%.

The runoff was an even bitterer dispute. Themes such as the complaint that supporters of Bolsonaro had hired message-blasting services[3] were given widespread coverage in newspapers such as FSP. Furthermore, the climate of hostility between Bolsonaro and some journalistic companies continued throughout the campaign[4]. Despite the conflicts, on 28 October 2018, Bolsonaro was elected with approximately 55% of the valid votes[5].

To achieve the proposed goal, the next section briefly reviews the literature on the political actions of journalistic companies, followed by details of the methodological strategies. The results are then presented, along with a discussion of the discoveries in light of the pertinent literature.

2 The political action of journalistic companies through news and editorials

The consolidation of journalistic production routines from the late nineteenth century onwards (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016; Mont'Alverne & Marques, 2019) is one of the characteristics listed in the literature as a justification for including this branch of media activity in the neo-institutionalist paradigm. Peters (1999) presents the main characteristics of an institution: 1) presence of structures that transcend individuals and shape interaction among them; 2) stability over time; 3) influence

on individual behavior with constraints on personal preferences; and 4) sense of unity, with shared values and meanings.

With this in mind, several authors have applied neo-institutionalism to the analysis of journalistic phenomena (Kaplan, 2006; Allern & Blach-Ørsten, 2011; Hanitzsch & Vos, 2017). Sparrow (2006), for instance, highlights the tendency towards homogeneity in news production, i.e., the adoption of standardized routines is evidence of the institutional nature of journalism. The existence of shared values, however, does not imply that every publication does not take action to further its own interests. Even if there is a consensus regarding what constitutes news and how information should be collected and coded, the media system is made up of interest groups (Cook, 2006) that may prove to be allied with the purposes of other political actors, in a perspective identified as "political parallelism" (Albuquerque, 2012).

In this scenario, it is pertinent to discuss the convergence between the informative dimension and the opinionated section in which newspapers can freely manifest their opinions, namely, editorials (mainly considering the distinct characteristics and functions of each journalistic genre) (Melo & Assis, 2016; Seixas, 2013).

In their editorials, newspapers share their opinions on topics that are debated in the public sphere, and at the same time, they may touch on subjects that have not yet been addressed by the news or the public (Alves Filho, 2006; Eilders, 1999; Firmstone, 2019). Editorials are more than a way of voicing an opinion. They are part of a newspaper's identity, as they allow companies to participate in important events in history and put pressure on political leaders (Nava & Marques, 2019; Day & Golan, 2005; Druckman & Parkin, 2005). It is the tension between news and opinion that has led the most recent research in journalism to recognize that obeying the rules established by the profession does not guarantee that news content will not be instrumentalized to defend private or ideologically oriented viewpoints (Page, 1996).

Indeed, since the 1970s, studies in the field have addressed the myth of impartiality, questioning the hegemony that has conventionally come to be known as the "regime of objectivity" (Maras, 2013; Ward, 2019). Some authors have even suggested that objectivity and impartiality are forms of censorship and silencing (Charles, 2019). Other researchers argue that in the environment of digital communication, values such as impartiality have become less important with the rise of "hybrid" journalism (Mast et al., 2016).

Possible bias in news production, however, is not easy to gauge[6]. This is because such a "deviation" can be manifested in different ways, such as the framing of news (De Vreese, 2005; Pozobon & Schaefer, 2015) or choice of agenda (Hopmann et al., 2011). Thus, although several authors have investigated how journalism can be instrumentalized, there are still few works that analyze this operationalization by comparing the news and opinionated agendas[7] (Eilders, 1999; Marques et al., 2019). Moreover, Page (1996), in keeping with other researchers (Eilders, 1999; Thesen, 2017), highlights that through the content they publish, newspapers can indirectly influence the political sphere. Therefore, it is argued that an analysis of the agendas of institutions can be used as an empirical indicator of the political actions of companies, even if it is not the only one.

Since it is precisely during electoral periods that the interests of different segments of society become more intense, it could be said that newspaper companies feel a greater temptation to defend a given candidacy, using direct devices, such as an editorial endorsement (Ansolabehere et al., 2006; Kahn & Kenney, 2002), or indirect ones (closer links between editorial positions and the news agenda). Thus, the first hypothesis of the article is:

H1) The internal news and editorial sections of each newspaper converge thematically, indicating the existence of a possible political-electoral instrumentalization of journalistic activity.

Another relevant point is the freedom that editorials confer upon institutions to take a stance and highlight specific subjects (Eilders, 1999; Firmstone, 2008, 2019; Marques & Mont'Alverne, 2019). However, this characteristic is not always presented in news sections in the same way (Firmstone, 2019), given the need, at least from a normative viewpoint, for publications to comply with the rules that define commercial journalism, such as the newsworthiness criteria (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016). In other words, the ethos of journalism, in principle, impedes certain subjects from being ignored in the news, whereas in editorials, the agenda is more flexible. Therefore, the second hypothesis may be stated:

H2) Newspapers diverge from each other when the themes they address in their editorials are directly compared, which is not the case with their front-page stories.

Before moving on to the next topic, it is essential to underscore that the literature in the field of Communication and Politics in Brazil has highlighted the influence of journalism on public opinion during elections (Rubim, 2001; Aldé et al., 2007; Biroli & Miguel, 2013). Some of the studies on this specialty focus on the different formats and products adopted in the coverage of elections in the country: interviews with candidates or their chief advisors, the organization of electoral debates, coverage of campaign agendas and the visibility of candidates' awareness of the demands of ordinary voters (Marques et al., 2009; Gomes, 2012).

Albuquerque (2013), when exploring the role of journalists as political agents, calls attention to professional principles and norms, on the one hand, and the practices that are effectively revealed during election coverage, on the other. The author illustrates the existence of different patterns of action in Brazilian journalism by examining the case of interviews with presidential candidates during the elections of 2010.

In this context, it can be argued that conducting further studies on the thematic consistency between the editorials and front-page stories of the three newspapers in question can contribute to studies in the field of Communication and Politics in Brazil, showing, for instance, to what extent these newspapers play a role as institutions interested in the political and electoral game.

3 Materials and methods

The texts under analysis were collected manually, using the search mechanisms on the newspapers' websites[8]. The period chosen for examination ranged from 08 October (beginning of the runoff) to 31 October (third day after the runoff). We decided to include the three days after polling in the *corpus* due to the possibility of investigating the initial repercussions of the result.

In total, OESP, FSP, and OG published 162 editorials and 72 front-page stories during the period in question (234 pieces). Only the texts that mentioned at least one of the two presidential candidates in the runoff were selected, either in the headlines or in the editorials. This resulted in 80 editorials and 64 front-page reports (144 texts) (Table 1).

In the case of the news, we considered stories that mentioned the candidates in the headline or the summary following it. Regarding the editorials, these were selected if they mentioned the candidates in the title or the entire content of the piece. This option was chosen due to the characteristics of opinionated texts: unlike the headlines, editorials have more concise titles that do not necessarily include the candidates' names (even if they are the subject of the text). It should be mentioned that the inclusion of the candidates' names in the headlines was used as a criterion for selecting the corpus, but the content analysis (CA) was conducted considering the complete text of the piece in question.

Table 1 – Number of pieces analyzed per newspaper and per section.

Newspaper	Editorials		Front-page reports	
	Total	Mentioning the candidates (%)	Total	Mentioning the candidates (%)
O Estado de S. Paulo[9]	72	19 (26.38%)	24	20 (83.3%)
Folha de S.Paulo	46	32 (69.95%)	24	22 (91.6%)
O Globo[10]	44	29 (65.9%)	24	22 (91.6%)

Source: the authors (2020).

One argues that, in this case, CA is the best technique that allows inferences to be made by using qualitative and quantitative analyses (Bauer, 2002). In the first stage of the present study, Iramuteq[11], a lexical analysis software, was used. With the Descending Hierarchical Classification tool, the main themes addressed in pieces under examination were mapped. A first codebook was then compiled, refined after a reading of the entire corpus. With the definitive book available (Chart 1), a reliability test was conducted with three previously trained researchers who were familiar with research in the field of Journalism, achieving a Krippendorff's Alpha of 0.777, a value that is considered acceptable (Field, 2005).

Chart 1 – Codebook.

Predominant theme	Description
Campaign strategies and difficulties	Texts that emphasize the strategic planning of campaigns, formation and search for alliances, tone of discourse, evaluation of retreats on proposals, and suggestions for campaigns.
Agents/legislative institutions	Pieces on subjects such as election results, political forecasts, and/or particular features of congressional elections.
Political and institutional measures	Texts on candidates' proposals that will mean changes in the political system, constitutional rules, or concerning the implementation of policies.
Economic measures	Texts that present proposals regarding economic policies.
Welfare reform	Pieces that address welfare reform and candidates' proposals on this issue.
Polls	Texts with information and/or positions expressed as a result of opinion polls on how people intend to vote or exit polls.
Composition of the new government	Pieces that discuss the possible composition of the new government.
Conflicts and controversial statements	Texts on direct criticisms that the candidates made of each other, mainly in traditional media and social media, or statements by the candidates and/or their supporters that caused a reaction.
Campaign irregularities	Texts that address possible irregularities in the candidates' campaigns.
State elections	Pieces that analyze the results of state government elections.
Others	Pieces that discuss subjects not included in the previous categories, addressing marginal themes regarding the campaigns, such as the repercussion of the results in other countries.

Source: the authors (2020).

The CA used in this work was developed with the aid of SPSS software to provide additional statistical tests, strengthening the evaluation of possible thematic convergences and divergences between the institutions and journalistic genres. The test in question addresses the correspondence analysis and allows a geometric verification between pairs of categories. Its dimensions are significant if the coefficient of inertia is higher than 0.20 (Field, 2005).

The newspapers were chosen because they are considered benchmarks and have a nationwide circulation[12]. Their primary readers are members of the country's political and economic elite

and have participated in important events in Brazil's political history (Azevedo, 2017).

Established in 1875 and still controlled by its founders (the Mesquita family), OESP stood out during the first half of the twentieth century because of its association with the candidacy of Getúlio Vargas (in 1930) against the candidate of the São Paulo Republican Party (PRP), Júlio Prestes. Despite its support for Vargas, the newspaper would take a stand as one of his main opponents, endorsing, for example, the Constitutionalist Revolution of 1932. Later, the newspaper supported the 1964 military coup d'état. Years later, it joined the list of institutions that defended the return of democracy to the country (Abreu, 2005; Azevedo, 2017). More recently, OESP was politically active, supporting the presidential candidates José Serra, in 2010, and Aécio Neves, in 2014 – both candidates fielded by the PSDB[13].

The FSP, originally founded in the 1920s, underwent a significant modernization process in 1960 after being acquired by businessmen Carlos Filho and Octávio Frias (the Frias family still controls the newspaper). The company was one of the first newspapers in the country to standardize its production routine by creating a manual of style and usage. Although it supported the 1964 coup d'état, FSP became renowned in later years for providing broad coverage of the *Diretas Já* (Direct Elections Now) movement, which demanded presidential elections in 1984 (Abreu, 2005; Azevedo, 2017). In recent times, the journal has stood out for its confrontations with the president elected in 2018, Jair Bolsonaro, and his supporters (Dias, 2019).

OG, a newspaper founded in Rio de Janeiro in 1925, is part of one of the largest media conglomerates in the country. The document that lays down the group's editorial principles argues that its companies act independently from political groups: "The Globo Group is non-partisan, and its media vehicles should make every effort to be perceived as such... [...] Globo Group journalists may not engage in political campaigns in any way"[14]. However, the company's trajectory cannot be dissociated from practical political actions at decisive moments in Brazilian political life. Roberto Marinho (1904–2003), the journalist and businessman who headed OG for several decades, declared in a statement to Alan Riding of *The New York Times*, his intention to guide the country to help it find "the right paths" and fix "everything that does not work in Brazil."[15] The Brazilian literature in the field of Communication and Politics

has already explored how the Globo Group acted politically, either through its nucleus of journalism (Miguel, 2003; Porto, 2012) (the editing of the debate in the 1989 election became an emblematic case, so much so that the company admitted it had made a mistake[16]) or through the production of entertainment, namely *telenovelas*, or a Latin American version of soap operas, as pointed out by Weber (1990) and Abreu (2005).

These three newspapers provided widespread coverage of the 2018 elections. It should also be noted that the hot disputes that characterized that electoral period may be evaluated as the result of the prolonged political and economic crisis that had engulfed the country. The economic slump that began in 2015 – coupled with the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff (PT), in 2016, and the frequent corruption scandals involving the PT governments and interim administration of Michel Temer (MDB) – created an environment of instability that heightened the hostile climate between the 2018 presidential candidates and their supporters. It is in this context that this work seeks to analyze to what extent the similarities between the editorial and news agendas might reveal the political interests of the companies under study.

4 Results

Figure 1 shows the number of front-page stories that mentioned the candidates in the headlines. The stories were distributed over the three weeks of the runoff: Week 1 (08 to 14 October); Week 2 (15 to 21 October); and Week 3 (22 to 28 October). All three newspapers frequently mentioned the candidates in their publications. In the first week, OESP cited at least one of the candidates in its headlines every day, which did not occur in the following two weeks (18, 20, 23, and 25 October). In the case of FSP, only on the thirteenth of October (in the first week) and the twenty-seventh (in the second week), no headlines mentioned at least one of the candidates. OG did not mention them in its headlines on the eighteenth (Week 2) and twenty-seventh (Week 3) of October. On the three days following polling day (29, 30, and 31 October), the companies mentioned at least one of the candidates every day. The results confirm the pertinence of the notion of newsworthiness (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016), given that presidential elections are considered as hierarchically more important themes in the leading Brazilian

newspapers. In other words, the professional community does indeed share the criteria established by the field of journalism.

Figure 1 – Distribution of front-page news mentioning the candidates.
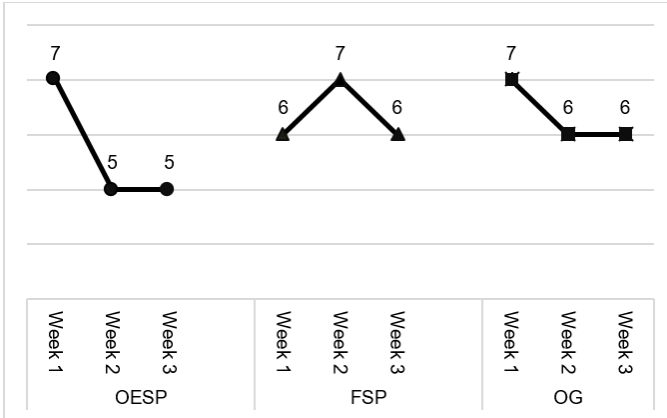
Source: the authors (2020).

Table 2 shows the distribution of themes in the news. In its front-page headlines, OESP prioritized issues related to the composition of the new government to be elected and opinion polls on the candidates' performance (20% of the stories for both categories). Subjects related to economic measures and welfare reform were also highlighted (15% each). However, only OESP (due to its traditional interest in economic issues) dedicated more space to this subject. OG, for instance, printed no stories regarding pension reform.

The newspaper FSP, in turn, gave priority to stories that addressed economic measures and opinion polls. However, this newspaper gave the same degree of visibility to issues associated with campaign irregularities (18.18% for all three categories), a subject neglected in the informative section of OESP.

Meanwhile, the front-page stories of OG prioritized the electoral performance of the candidates in opinion polls (around 31% of the cases). Furthermore, matters linked to election strategies and difficulties in the presidential campaigns were also highlighted (22.72% each), followed by the category of conflicts and campaign irregularities (18.18%).

In general, it can be said that the recurring "horse-race" type of election coverage, as defined by Hallin (1992), was highlighted in the three newspapers' reporting on the election.

Table 2 – Distribution of subjects in the news.

	OESP	FSP	OG
Campaign strategies and difficulties	2 (10%)	1 (4.54%)	5 (22.72%)
Agents/legislative institutions	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.54%)
Political and institutional measures	0 (0%)	1 (4.54%)	1 (4.54%)
Economic measures	3 (15%)	4 (18.18%)	2 (9.09%)
Welfare reform	3 (15%)	1 (4.54%)	0 (0%)
Polls	4 (20%)	4 (18.18%)	7 (31.81%)
Composition of the new government	4 (20%)	2 (9.09%)	1 (4.54%)
Conflicts and controversial statements	1 (5%)	2 (9.09%)	4 (18.18%)
Campaign irregularities	0 (0%)	4 (18.18%)	1 (4.54%)
State elections	0 (0%)	1 (4.54%)	0 (0%)
Others	2 (10%)	2 (9.09%)	0 (0%)
Total	20 (100%)	22 (100%)	22 (100%)

Source: the authors (2020).

An evaluation of the temporal distribution of editorials published in the newspapers (Figure 2) shows that the candidates were repeatedly mentioned in these texts. OESP published the fewest number of editorials on Bolsonaro or Haddad, failing to address the presidential candidates on six days (10, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 26). Throughout Weeks 1 and 2, OESP published six editorials mentioning one of the candidates. In Week 3, only five of such texts were published. Meanwhile, FSP continued to mention at least one of the candidates on every day of the election. OG did not mention the candidates in its editorials only on the twenty-first (Week 2) and twenty-second of October (Week 3). On the three days following the election, OESP and FSP only failed to mention the candidates on the thirty-first, while OG mentioned the candidates on all three days.

Figure 2 – Distribution of editorials mentioning the candidates.
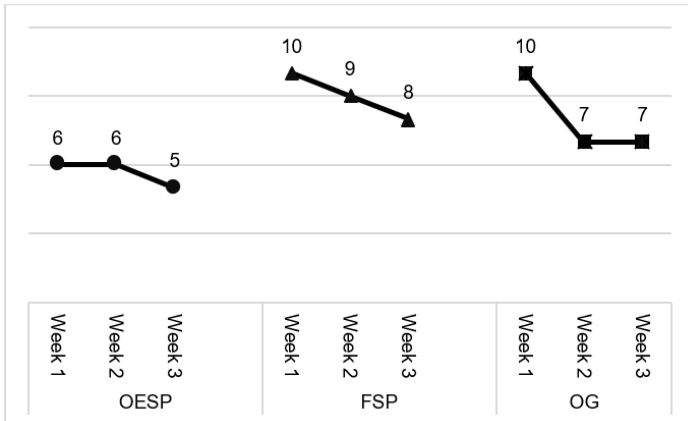
Source: the authors (2020).

Regarding the topics addressed in the editorials, Table 3 shows that, in the case of OESP, most of the pieces were on subjects related to campaign strategies and difficulties (63.15%). The other mentions of the candidates throughout the period were mostly related to legislative agents/institutions and economic measures, both with just over 10% of the cases.

The FSP also gave more editorial coverage to campaign difficulties and strategies (18.75% of the texts) but placed greater emphasis on issues such as proposed economic measures and state elections (12.5% each).

Finally, in keeping with the other journalistic companies, OG highlighted campaign difficulties and strategies. However, this newspaper also repeatedly addressed conflicts and controversial statements (24% of the cases).

Regarding the editorials, it is essential to emphasize that the "Others" category contained a significant number of cases in all three newspapers. This is because the journalistic institutions dedicated some of their editorials to highly specific topics that were not necessarily related to the items listed in the codebook. This is the case of an editorial published on 11 October 2018 by FSP titled "Bolsonaro and his neighbors," which was included in the "Others" category because of the text's emphasis on the new geopolitics in South America after the elections.

Table 3 – Distribution of topics in the editorials.

	OESP	FSP	OG
Campaign strategies and difficulties	12 (63.15%)	6 (18.75%)	7 (24.13%)
Agents/legislative institutions	2 (10.52%)	2 (6.25%)	1 (3.44%)
Political and institutional measures	0 (0%)	3 (9.37%)	3 (10.34%)
Economic measures	2 (10.52%)	4 (12.5%)	3 (10.34%)
Welfare reform	0 (0%)	1 (3.12%)	1 (3.44%)
Polls	0 (0%)	2 (6.25%)	0 (0%)
Composition of the new government	0 (0%)	1 (3.12%)	0 (0%)
Conflicts and controversial statements	0 (0%)	3 (9.37%)	7 (24.13%)
Campaign irregularities	0 (0%)	1 (3.12%)	1 (3.44%)
State elections	0 (0%)	4 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
Others	3 (15.78%)	5 (15.62%)	6 (20.68%)
Total	19 (100%)	32 (100%)	29 (100%)

Source: the authors (2020).

In addition to gauging how often the candidates were mentioned jointly, it is also possible to observe how often each candidate was mentioned separately in the newspapers. Table 4 shows the distribution of mentions in each journal and kind of content (editorials or news reports). Regarding the percentage of citations, all three publications referred more to Bolsonaro in both types of text. The FSP mentioned the candidate in all of its pieces. The lowest percentage of references to Haddad was in the news of FSP (59%). In nominal values, the PT candidate was least mentioned by OESP in its news reports (12 mentions). However, it should be mentioned that a simple mention does not mean that a particular candidate will benefit from it. A point in question is the editorial published in OESP on 24 October titled "The debauchery of the representative". The text only mentions Haddad, but it was intended to criticize the PT candidate.

Table 4 – Distribution of mentions of candidates in news and editorials.

O Estado de S. Paulo			
	Bolsonaro	Haddad	Total
Editorials	18 (94.7%)	14 (73.6%)	19
Front-page reports	19 (95%)	12 (60%)	20
Folha de S.Paulo			
	Bolsonaro	Haddad	Total
Editorials	32 (100%)	20 (62.5%)	32
Front-page reports	22 (100%)	13 (59%)	22
O Globo			
	Bolsonaro	Haddad	Total
Editorials	28 (96.5%)	20 (68.9%)	29
Front-page reports	22 (100%)	15 (68.1%)	22

Source: the authors (2020).

Table 5 presents the values regarding the correspondence analysis that was performed to evaluate the relationship between the sections of each newspaper and the topics listed above. The mean difference test shows that there were statistically significant differences between the two variables. Moreover, the total inertia, considering only the first two dimensions, shows that the model explains over 46% of the joint variance of the data. Nevertheless, the inertias of the two dimensions show differences, with Dimension 1 (0.304), the x-axis in the graph, more significant than Dimension 2 (0.164), the y-axis. This implies that the proximity of the points on the x-axis in Figure 3, below, is more statistically relevant to explain the relationship between the two variables than that of the y-axis.

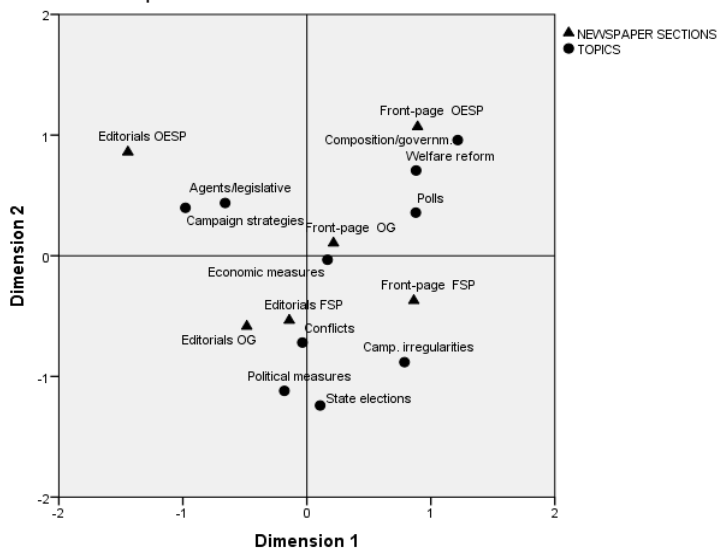**Table 5** – Summary of the correspondence analysis.

Dimension	Singular value	Inertia	Chi square	Sig.	Proportion of inertia		
					Accounted for	Cumulative	Standard Deviation
1	.552	.304			.432	.432	.062
2	.405	.164			.233	.664	.063
Total		.468	88.881	0.000*	1.000	1.000	

*45 degrees of freedom.

Source: the authors (2020).

Figure 3 highlights the correspondence analysis between news and editorials in the three newspapers and the subjects they address. The aim is to identify possible approximations of the variables (Section/Newspaper and Topic). It should be noted beforehand that the cases listed under the "Others" category were excluded to avoid bias in the analysis. There was little convergence of subjects in OESP in this case between editorials and news reports, which does not mean that the newspaper does not articulate opinion and information on other occasions – such as those in which it allies itself with the agenda of economic groups that represent the interests of the industry (Azevedo, 2017). Meanwhile, FSP and OG converged more significantly in terms of the subjects they addressed in their news sections and editorials, albeit not with very expressive indices.

Figure 3 – Correspondence analysis between newspaper sections and topics.

Source: the authors (2020).

Two elements revealed by the correspondence analysis had not been evident beforehand: the proximity of the editorials of FSP and the theme of conflicts and controversial statements (indeed, the newspaper usually reports on statements that might lead to political conflicts, such as the declarations made by Bolsonaro's son, at the time in the PSL, regarding the closure of the Supreme Court published on the front page on 22 October 2018); and the proximity of the news in OG to topics associated with economic measures (this publication has historically adopted a parallelism with political actors who stand on a liberal economic platform) (Pimentel, 2019).

Three other aspects deserve to be mentioned regarding the correspondence analysis. The first is the separation of the left and right quadrants, which show more clearly the editorials and news of the three institutions. The second is the proximity of the editorial line of OG and FSP (in this respect, there is also a certain proximity between the two companies' news). Compared with OESP, a more traditional and conservative newspaper (Guerreiro Neto, 2016), FSP and OG seem to be more similar to one another than to OESP. Azevedo (2017), for instance, demonstrates that while OESP maintained a negative stance towards the PT since the reintroduction of democracy, FSP and OG agreed to a "truce" regarding the party during the 2002 elections. Therefore, these factors provide clues that explain the proximities between FSP and OG. Finally, the relationship between FSP's news and the topic of campaign irregularities is most likely associated with the newspaper's publications that supposedly contain messages favorable to the candidacy of Bolsonaro, referred to earlier in this article.

5 Discussion and conclusions

This study aimed to compare the editorial and news agendas of *O Estado de S. Paulo, Folha de S. Paulo,* and *O Globo* during the runoff of the 2018 Presidential election. The research question was: how similar were the editorial and news agenda of the newspapers in question during the runoff of the 2018 presidential election?

The data enable the claim that when it comes to news, the presidential candidates were mentioned frequently, as was to be expected due to the temporal cutoff. Likewise, the editorials also tended to focus on the election. Around 60% of the editorials published by FSP and OG were about Bolsonaro or Haddad. However,

greater attention was paid to Bolsonaro, who was mentioned in all the texts of FSP and in 96% of the editorials of OG, while Haddad was not mentioned more than 70% of the time by both companies (as shown in Table 4). During the campaign, Bolsonaro frequently made controversial statements or directly confronted journalistic institutions (especially FSP) (Dias, 2019). The controversy surrounding these events may have contributed to the candidate's stronger presence in the editorials of the newspapers in question.

In the case of OESP, only around 30% of the pieces were directly concerned with the candidates (again, Bolsonaro was favored in terms of the number of mentions he received in its editorials). These differences between the newspapers can be explained by the higher number of editorials published by OESP: while FSP and OG publish an average of two editorials every day, OESP publishes three every day.

In any event, it is essential to note that despite certain proximity between the news and editorials in FSP and OG, it is not possible to affirm that both companies provided the best framing for the subjects they discussed, an aspect that may be explained in future studies. Meanwhile, OESP shows a more significant discrepancy among its internal sections. This position may be associated with a specific period, such as an election, since OESP traditionally insists on making its opinions known, including by endorsing candidates, as was the case of José Serra, in 2010, and Aécio Neves, in 2014, as previously mentioned. OESP also took a dubious editorial stance regarding which candidate it would support in 2018, which was made clear by the text titled "A tough choice", published on 08 October of that year[17]. Thus, the first hypothesis of this study was partially confirmed. It argued that the news and editorial section of each newspaper converged thematically, indicating the existence of a possible instrumentalization of journalistic activity.

The second hypothesis was that the newspapers diverged from each other regarding the topics of their editorials, which was not the case in their front-page headlines. However, it can be said that there is a certain similarity between the three newspapers regarding the topics of their editorials: in their editorials, the companies favored discussing campaign strategies and difficulties.

This similarity, however, is less evident in the headlines, which favored a greater variety of subjects, despite greater proximity

of the topics addressed by the two São Paulo publications. With regard to the broader variety of topics in the front-page headlines, the publications of 15 October may be taken as an example. OESP highlighted the lack of funding to continue public works. The FSP newspapers discussed the need for constitutional changes to implement the projects proposed by the candidates, and OG debated the importance of centrist parties in the new political configuration of Congress. Thus, the second hypothesis of the study was also partially confirmed.

It is interesting to highlight the concentration of all three newspapers' editorials on topics regarding the political and electoral game. This means expecting more from the news content of the companies in detriment of more substantial or programmatic issues, especially considering the greater freedom attributed to this section (Eilders, 1999). Furthermore, the higher similarity between the news agendas of the São Paulo newspapers can be explained by the fact that they are addressing institutions from the same state.

In addition, the more significant similarity between the editorials of the institutions, compared with the informative dimension, also attracts attention. The rules that govern the two sections give more leeway to the companies' editorials, as this is the space where the institutions can pursue private interests, defining, for example, the agendas that are of greater interest to them (Firmstone, 2008, 2019). Meanwhile, the news sections of the newspapers theoretically follow similar norms, specified, for instance, by newsworthiness criteria (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016; Mont'Alverne & Marques, 2019), even if this does not guarantee neutrality in production.

The results are also in keeping with the findings of Marques et al. (2019) regarding the existence of thematic convergence between OESP's news and editorials. However, this newspaper's editorials left topics related to the Brazilian economy in the background, at least in the pieces that mentioned the candidates. This finding also diverges from other studies that evidence the importance attributed to economics by the newspaper (Guerreiro Neto, 2016). This is likely due to the fact that the most important issues directly linked to the electoral agenda were evaluated as hierarchically superior by the journalistic company, reinforcing the idea that the selection of agendas during a presidential campaign resorts to criteria other than those that mark conventional coverage. In any event, OESP redoubled the attention it pays to economic issues in its news reports.

The FSP newspaper also prioritized economic issues in its news reports. Another category of this newspaper that stood out was that it addresses campaign irregularities. This was especially due to FSP publishing a series of reports on an alleged slush fund involving Bolsonaro. Regarding its editorials, FSP, like OESP and OG, prioritized coverage of campaign strategies and difficulties.

In addition to the candidates' strategies, OG also highlighted in its informative dimensions texts that addressed conflicts and controversial statements. In its editorials, OG mostly addressed subjects similar to those that were discussed in its news reports, thus presenting greater internal consistency compared with the other two institutions. Even so, this consistency was not so evident in the correspondence analysis conducted here, showing that from a statistical viewpoint, the relationship is not so expressive. In this case, the study could be furthered in the future using a qualitative analysis.

Another relevant result involves the distribution of mentions of the two candidates. Even though the newspapers presented differences concerning how frequently the candidates were mentioned in their two sections, it was perceived that Bolsonaro was proportionally mentioned more than Haddad. In the three publications, the then-candidate was referred to in practically all the texts that mentioned only one of the two candidates.

Regarding this result, once again it can be inferred that Bolsonaro's campaign strategy was to target the journalistic institutions that would afford him the highest visibility. By frequently making controversial statements, Bolsonaro may have benefitted from this media exposure. At the same time, attracting attention does not mean that the politician in question will benefit positively from it, considering the different impacts that the coverage of media institutions can have on electoral behavior (Mundim, 2014). Nevertheless, the candidate himself can adopt controversy as a tactic to become more widely known as a result of the repercussions and attract more radical voters, a phenomenon identified in the case of Donald Trump in the USA (Azari, 2016).

It should also be emphasized that the model presented here has limitations from a statistical viewpoint. This is because other elements can undoubtedly affect the choice of agenda regarding the content of news and editorials, proving the complexity of journalism and the decisions it involves (Clayman & Reisner,

1998). The fact that the temporal cutoff of the study is the election period can be considered as an influential factor concerning the limited thematic proximity between the opinionated and news dimensions. An electoral period is a time when newspapers tend to avoid questioning their own legitimacy (favoring or pursuing a specific candidate, for instance). Another element identified in the literature is the relative autonomy of professionals in defining the agenda that will be part of their daily coverage, as demonstrated by the writers of editorials in FSP (Mont'Alverne et al., 2018). However, the results that have already been highlighted enable a reflection on the role of journalistic institutions not only as providers of content but also as agents capable of influencing the political process (Page, 1996; Graber, 2003; Cook, 2006). Taking this into account, the lack of convergence identified in the productions of the newspapers in the 2018 runoff may indicate an attempt by the journalistic companies to construct an exempt image, as if they avoided establishing a clear link between their news coverage and editorial interests.

Furthermore, the idea that editorial processes are also revealed through silence cannot be dismissed. In other words, the fact that a particular journalistic company does not take a stance in an editorial on a subject with vast repercussions is a symptom that political action also occurs in situations when the journalistic company "sits on the fence", for instance, to avoid retaliation from agents in the political field.

Three other aspects deserve attention before this article is brought to a close. Newspapers are known to adopt very different criteria in the selection of their editorial agendas (Marques & Mont'Alverne, 2019). It is also known that every newspaper has a unique structure to assemble their editorial teams. While in some companies the opinion editor or even the owner is responsible for writing the texts that will be presented as the institutional opinion, in other organizations there is a team that takes turns at this task depending on the topic (Columbia University Libraries, 1964; Mont'Alverne et al., 2018). Finally, the fact that the newspapers address similar issues does not mean framing each issue in the same way, which could be identified through a specific content analysis of the publications, which is beyond the scope of the present article.

NOTES

1   *Folha de S.Paulo*. PT registra candidatura de Lula à Presidência. Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2018/08/pt-registra-candidatura-de-lula-a-presidencia.shtml>. Access on: Mar. 19, 2020.

2   *Veja*. Bolsonaro leva facada em atentado durante campanha em Juiz de Fora. Available at: <https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/bolsonaro-leva-facada-em-atentado-durante-campanha-em-juiz-de-fora/>. Access on: Mar. 19, 2020.

3   *Folha de S.Paulo*. Empresários bancam campanha contra PT pelo WhatsApp. Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2018/10/empresarios-bancam-campanha-contra-o-pt-pelo-whatsapp.shtml>. Access on: Mar. 19, 2020.

4   *Folha de S.Paulo*. Folha é a maior fake news do Brasil, diz Bolsonaro a manifestantes. Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2018/10/folha-e-a-maior-fake-news-do-brasil-diz-bolsonaro-a-manifestantes.shtml>. Access on: Mar. 19, 2020.

5   *Portal G1*. Jair Bolsonaro é eleito presidente com 57,8 milhões de votos. Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/politica/eleicoes/2018/apuracao/presidente.ghtml>. Access on: Mar. 19, 2020.

6   According to Abeer Al-Najjar, "Bias is a perceptual or actual flaw in news media content, including coverage, reportage, and conduct. It implicates news media organizations, journalists, and the journalism profession with the failure to achieve impartiality, detachment, and an equal treatment of opposing parties and views over particular events, issues, or policies" (2019, pp.1).

7   In the Brazilian case, Marques et al. (2019) compared the consistency between the editorial and news agendas of FSP and OESP, reaching the conclusion that there are internal differences regarding each newspaper's agenda: whereas FSP showed little convergence between its news and opinion sections, OESP showed greater internal consistency between its sections.

8   OESP (https://www.estadao.com.br/); FSP (https://www.folha.uol.com.br/); OG (https://oglobo.globo.com/).

9   OESP publishes three editorials daily. FSP and OG, on the other hand, publish two opinionated texts daily.

10   Besides the editorials in the Opinion section, O Globo publishes brief notes that emphasize the newspaper's position on behalf of some facts, inserted along with news pieces. This research, though, considers only the main editorials that are positioned in the Opinion section.

11   *Iramuteq* software, anchored in R language environments (www.r-project.org), and Python (www.python.org), allows a statistical analysis of a text corpus, facilitating the identification of lexical patterns.

12   *Poder 360*. Jornais no Brasil perdem tiragem impressa e venda digital ainda é modesta. Available at: <https://www.poder360. com.br/midia/jornais-no-brasil-perdem-tiragem-impressa-e-venda-digital-ainda-e-modesta/>. Access on: Mar. 19, 2020.

13   Regarding José Serra: *O Estado de S. Paulo*. O mal a evitar. Available at: <https://www.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,editorial-o-mal-a-evitar,615255>. Access on: March 19, 2020. About Aécio Neves: *O Estado de S. Paulo*. A hora da razão. Available at: <https://opiniao.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,a-hora-da-razao-imp-,1571206>. Access on: Mar. 19, 2020.

14   *Portal G1*. Princípios editoriais do Grupo Globo. Available at: <http://g1.globo.com/principios-editoriais-do-grupo-globo. html>. Access on: Mar. 19, 2020.

15   *The New York Times*. Rio journal; one man's political views color Brazil's TV eye. Available at: <https://www.nytimes. com/1987/01/12/world/rio-journal-one-man-s-political-views-color-brazil-s-tv-eye.html>. Access on: Mar. 19, 2020.

16   *O Globo*. Debate Collor x Lula. Available at: <https://memo riaglobo.globo.com/erros/debate-collor-x-lula/>. Access on: Mar. 19, 2020.

17   *O Estado de S. Paulo*. Uma escolha muito difícil. Available at: <https://opiniao.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,uma-escolha-muito-dificil,70002538118>. Access on: Mar. 19, 2020.

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