

# From 'suicide' to 'barbarian terror': media and exclusion in Brazilian foreign policy September 11 according to *O Globo* and *Folha de S. Paulo*

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## RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é, a partir de uma perspectiva pós-estruturalista, examinar a cobertura dos atentados de 11 de setembro de 2001 pelos jornais *O Globo* e *Folha de S. Paulo*, os jornais impressos de maior circulação no Brasil, no dia seguinte aos ataques. O argumento central que procuramos desenvolver é o de que a atuação de tais meios de comunicação foi fundamental na definição de práticas de exclusão no nível internacional. Ao situarem o Brasil como um insider a partir da maior aproximação a valores internalizados no contexto de transbordamento global do espaço político norte-americano após o fim da Guerra Fria, desenvolvem uma “política externa” em que sociedades e grupos não-adaptados a tal padrão são classificados como “disfuncionais” e “anômalos” numa ordem de atores “civilizados”. Consolida-se,

## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this article is to examine, from a post-structuralist perspective, the coverage of the attacks of September 11, 2001 by *O Globo* and *Folha de S. Paulo*, the newspapers with the largest circulation in Brazil, on the day after the attacks. The central argument is that the performance of such papers has been fundamental in the definition of exclusionary practices at the international level, because, when they locate Brazil as an insider due to its approximation to the US and Western values after the end of the Cold War, they develop a “foreign policy” in which societies and groups that are not adapted to this standard are classified as “dysfunctional” and “anomalous” in an order of “civilized” actors. Thus, the understanding of difference - in this case, terrorist organizations and their sponsors - as otherness is consoli-

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assim, o entendimento da diferença – no caso, as organizações terroristas e seus patrocinadores – como alteridade e se naturalizam hierarquias entre identidade e diferença.

Palavras-chave: Mídia; Política Externa Brasileira; terrorismo; pós-estruturalismo.

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Keywords: Media; Brazilian Foreign Policy; terrorism; post-structuralism.

In the globalized world a broad discussion about the role of media in domestic and international political processes has been going on, especially because of the larger reach of communication and their ample integration in the present stage of technological development. A multiplicity of political representations is built up *in* and *by* the media, and media centrality occurs in several spheres, such as the economic, bearing in mind that the media is one of the top sectors that grows more in the world; the cultural, promoting long-term cognitive effects, and the political. Lima<sup>2</sup> believes that, in relation to this last sphere, the media has had great importance in defining the agenda of relevant themes of discussion in the public sphere, and in generating and transmitting information. In a very similar position to Orozco's,<sup>3</sup> the author rejects the idea that the means of communication would be "windows to the world" or "reality mirrors", for he considers that there are certain social actors' interests in transmitting contents, inasmuch as the media also produces and not only reproduces reality, because it is not outside reality to simply reflect it neutrally.

The support of established powers and the construction of symbolic practices that write and reproduce frontiers between identity and difference characterize the coverage of *O Globo* and *Folha de S. Paulo* about the September 11, 2001 attacks on the day following them. As Der Derian<sup>4</sup> points out, the "war against terror" can be characterized as a mimetic war, in which a battle of representation is processed and the relationship between "Us" and "Them" is conducted within a wide spectrum of familiarity and sympathy, indifference and tolerance, strangeness and hostility. Such a war encompasses the way individuals see, perceive, and imagine difference, that is, how they construct the "Other" and the likeness among their peers by means of representations. When one recognizes the importance of symbolic and discursive practices in the "war against terror", it can be seen that the media creates discourses that legitimate the fight against this "threat" and constructs signs with the goal of

guaranteeing the seduction and manipulation of individuals in the context of a “virtuous war”.

The aim of this paper is, from a post-structuralist perspective, to examine the coverage of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon by the newspapers *O Globo* and *A Folha de S. Paulo*, the two printed newspapers of largest circulation in Brazil in 2001, on the day following the attacks. The central argument we seek to develop is that the performance of these means of communication was crucial for the definition of exclusion practices on an international level. When they situate Brazil as an insider due to its greater proximity to internalized values in the context of the global overflowing of the North-American political space after the Cold War, they nurture a “foreign policy” in which groups and societies not adapted to such pattern are classified as “dysfunctional” and “anomalous” in a “civilized” actors order. Thus, the understanding of difference – in this case, terrorist organizations and their sponsors – as otherness is consolidated and hierarchies between identity and difference are naturalized. In what follows, we will present the post-structuralist perspectives and the production of borders between identity and difference in the Brazilian case, particularly in relation to terrorism. Then, we will consider the role of the media in strengthening the established powers and reifying the borders between identity and difference. Before pursuing the final remarks, we will examine the coverage of the September 11 attacks by *O Globo* and *Folha*, based on a post-structuralist perspective.

## POST-STRUCTURALISM AND BRAZIL'S “FOREIGN POLICY” FOR TERRORISM

According to Smith (1996),<sup>5</sup> post-structuralist perspectives seek to reveal the ultimate absence of foundations (suppositions about subject/object, fact/value, I/Other) for thought and destabilize the notions of essence and presence. Campbell<sup>6</sup> stresses that the borders defined in modernity have defined identities by means of excluding those who are not within them. Thus, the preservation of sovereign integrity was possible due to the establishment of hierarchies in specific spatiotemporal circumstances, in which the modern subject places himself as sovereign interpretative center, a “bigger and privileged reality” or a “non-problematized presence”, and the “Other”,

conceived in relation to such center, is understood as a negation of that identity and objectified in a production process from the outside by the subject.<sup>7</sup>

In this perspective, the communities we are inserted in are fruits of the modern thought – such as the sovereign State, for example – and have served as mechanisms of exclusion and promotion of a totalistic logic. By converting socially produced circumstances into almost natural conditions, the modern perspectives of immutability of the political order have contributed to the formation of subjects that yield to the belief that the relations among independent political communities must remain as they are. In this sense, the reproduction of borders is a political discourse, which has determined what we can speak, think, and be. Through the establishment of abstract and arbitrary borders, it has imposed obstacles between identity and difference, fixing referents in an artificial way and creating different political spaces by recurring to the ontology that separates the I from the Other. Such border disciplines subjectivity and demarcates the identity threatened by anarchy. This Cartesian perspective is reproduced by a series of mechanisms, such as containment and regulation of subjectivity.<sup>8</sup>

As there is no “natural” sovereign State precisely because there is no “natural” foundation of sovereignty, sovereignty is not a stable concept, for it does not have a pre-established ontological meaning. Thus, the State is an intersubjective construction, an effect of discursive and symbolical practices. Its authority appears in terms of interpretation and performance, in such a way that it “acts” aiming at the preservation of its practical and ontological status. The economic and coercive aspects of control have been complemented by the management of dispositions and meanings of the citizens’ bodies with the goal of making the cultural and territorial borders compatible (Shapiro, 2004).<sup>9</sup> In this sense, “foreign policy” comes to be understood as a political performance that produces borders which, instead of being directed to a concern with the state interaction that occurs along a-historical and frozen borders, is directed to a concern with the establishment of borders that constitute, at the same time, the State and the international system. “Foreign policy” comes to be seen as a political practice that makes certain events and actors “foreign”, not only situated in opposition to a social entity which is seen as pre-given, but also constructed by practices that constitute the domestic as well (Campbell, 1997). The conception of “Modern International” allows the fixation and reproduction of differentiated spaces within itself and also specifies what such “civilized society” can speak, think, and be.<sup>10</sup>

In the case examined in this paper, a post-structuralist axis allows us to

verify that, with the reestablishment of the limits of modern political life and the gradual destabilization of the segmentation between national and international spheres in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the political space where North-American sovereign authority is exerted expands beyond the State, and such artificial borders, even if they do not remain where they were, still demarcate antagonisms (Walker, 2005, p.1). The “globalized politics” continues to operate in a metaphysics in which notions of progress and “good governance” – present in the concept of “civilization” and defended by liberal democracies – are spread out in contrast with the philosophies of radical groups and non-liberal regimes understood as “rogues” which need to be subjected to “domestication” within the modern structures of authority, with the goal of preserving the stability of the international system in which powers such as the US exert their strength.<sup>11</sup>

Terrorism functions as an expression of rejection of North-American authority and has a demoralizing effect on Western liberal governments, by revealing their incapacity to protect their citizens. The concern over such threat falls not only on the corrosion of the sociopolitical tissue, but also on the fact that the exclusion of private agents from the use of armed force articulates a constitutive dimension of the contemporary international system: even if the borders of modernity are more and more redefined, the State is still the formal holder of the legal monopoly of the use of organized violence, which not only guarantees its survival, but assures the continuity of the international order. When they employ sociopolitical violence, the terrorist organizations are criminalized and classified in the “evil” category,<sup>12</sup> and so are “rogue-States” which finance and protect such organizations, because they support groups that destabilize such order of “civilized” actors.

In this context, Brazil knows that positioning itself as an insider is part of its search for more international recognition and for the increase of its relevance in the solution of the main political and socioeconomic global issues. Its position stems from its greater proximity to internalized values in the context of the global overflowing of the North-American political space after the Cold War. Although allowing controlled spaces in which its authority is questioned and the relative exercise of autonomy by peripheral actors, the US seeks the defense of integrity when exerting its authority over the global space as opposed to political actors holding values and principles incompatible with its. Taking this into consideration, Brazil has been adopting along the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries universal values such as defense of human rights, criticism against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, reinforcement of the

condemnation of terrorism, protection of democratic principles, and free trade consolidation. Thus, a “foreign policy” in which groups and societies not adapted to such pattern are classified as “dysfunctional” and “anomalous” in a “civilized” actors order is nurtured. Adoption by Brazil of a diplomatic vocabulary understood by the majority of dominant actors in the system and valorization of permanent communication channels are inserted in this context of clear frontier demarcation, which translate difference into otherness and reinforce the cohesion and integrity of the liberal society led by the US. The effects of this exclusory procedure are the development of a linear interpretation of history – which accommodates “non-civilized” or “less civilized” communities in a time different from that of the “civilized” ones – and the position of diversity in a space outside the frontiers of “civilization”.

Media exerts a crucial role in this process of creation of a “foreign policy” in relation to terrorism at a moment in which, by managing the dispositions and meanings of the social world, it produces discursive and symbolic practices that reinforce the practical and ontological status of the State. This also destabilizes the idea that the media would play a marginal role in the process of formulating Brazilian “foreign policy”. Such idea was created on the basis of the reduced participation of Brazilian social groups in issues of foreign policy, in view of Itamaraty’s bureaucratic insulation. Although the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Brazil has been trying to increase the dialogue channels with civil society lately, specialists like Pinheiro<sup>13</sup> believe that the objective of the initiative seems to be only the use of its interlocutors – that is, their use as “mass of manoeuvre” – with the aim of obtaining more legitimacy in international negotiations. As Pinheiro (2001, p.7) stresses, with the dissemination of democratic values around the planet, international negotiations seem to become more effective the more representative of the multiple social groups affected by or interested in them they are or seem to be. By acting so, Itamaraty seeks to guarantee the continuity and coherence of Brazilian foreign policy while keeping it away from the influence and interference of society, so that the instability of the political competition present in the internal political arena does not affect the credibility needed for Brazil’s foreign performance.<sup>14</sup>

If we keep on understanding “foreign policy” only as a policy based on the State in the way it is conventionally understood, we cannot perceive that the expression can point to a wider concept: to a political practice that makes certain events and actors “foreign”, which “foreign policy” understood in traditional terms only reproduces in the constitution of identity and the

containment of challenges to identity (Campbell, 1997). In this sense, the understanding proposed in this paper destabilizes not only the idea of a marginal participation of the media in the formulation of Brazilian foreign policy, but the concept of "foreign policy" itself. Starting from the wider conception suggested here, the performance of the media is crucial in the definition of Brazilian "foreign policy", for it not only generates and transmits political information to the population, but participates in the construction of the citizens' conceptions about the impact of international events on their lives and, thus, defines and consolidates the way these citizens understand difference as otherness and naturalizes hierarchies between identity and difference. Transcending Habermas' idea<sup>15</sup> that the big means of communication configure themselves as a private apparatus of hegemony that also constitutes the political, moral, and cultural direction of civil society, it can be seen, based on a post-structuralist perspective, that, more than a simple instrument or an additional member of a block of power, the media participates in the construction of symbolic practices that write and reproduce the State in view of its lack of ultimate foundation of sovereignty.

## MEDIA AND THE STRENGTHENING OF ESTABLISHED POWERS

When he made us question the epistemological and ontological suppositions of modern discourse, Foucault broke with the discourses of nature and truth, showing the devices that define, in the area of culture and history, the social and political identities. Thus, modernity came to be seen as a regime of mobile knowledge practices that is put into circulation to discipline, determine the domains of freedom, constitute modern subjects, and bring about the self-evident truths of experience. Because of that, the regime of modernity would be an economy of power. In this sense, there would be no boundaries between theory and practice, discourse and extradiscourse, thought and reality, knowledge and power. To theorize about practice, to think about reality, to study forms of power, all that is to practice, to exert a form of power. This practice, in its turn, is influenced by a theory, a thought, a knowledge. It is not the case of an opposition between the world of ideas and empiricism, but of a relationship of constitution.

The modern theoretical practice produces meaning, attributes power, and fixes limits socially called objectivism, subjective and conducts. They appoint not only what can be known, but what can be said and suggested. Much more than delimitating explanatory possibilities, theory defines our ethical and

practical horizons, informing us about the possibilities of human action. Hence the need to understand that theory moulds political practices and their possibilities.<sup>16</sup> To Alves (2004), it can be thought that all practices are arbitrarinesses of power, since human relationships occur in the context of a power relationship. Power, in its turn, is neither here nor there, but everywhere. Because of that, what is real in it is, actually, a political imperative. Since the foundation cannot found itself, there is nothing in these suppositions that can be said to be natural or essential. Its legitimacy comes from the regime of truth in which it participates. Once its sources of authority stem from interpretation and performance, the notion of truth is the result of specific and changing historical circumstances, even though they present an appearance of incontestable and unquestionable truth, generating a notion of pre-original ontology.<sup>17</sup>

According to such thought, the role of the media can also be understood as a turning point in power relationships in which what is at stake is not the journalistic event itself, but relationships outside the broadcast fact which determine the bunch of relations that the discourse has to effect in order to speak of such and such objects and to approach, name, analyze, classify, and explain them.<sup>18</sup> To Moura (2003), this happens because a journalistic event, like any other type of discursive event, is invested with interdiscursiveness. This means that in every person's memory this relation of interdiscursiveness mobilizes fragments that delimitate the positions of the journalistic enunciator, indicating the sociohistorical place of enunciation and the way a text must relate to the enunciation of other discourses previously and effectively carried out, changing, repeating, omitting, and interpreting them.

Thus, the identification of the enunciative chain ends up favoring the recovery of discursive strategies or even of the rationality which configures the production of journalistic knowledge, which is the result of the strategic use of social knowledges. When they emerge from a set of discursive circumstances within a communicational space with its own complexity, then we can talk about mediatic events that go beyond the plane of mere journalistic intertextuality by producing something more than news (Moura, 2003, p.3). By quoting Foucault, Moura (2003) affirms that the description of an event always ends up by posing the question: how did a certain enunciation come about and not another in its place? Thus, it is the case of understanding the enunciation in the narrowness and singularity of its situation, of understanding why it could not be another one, how it excludes another one, how it occupies, among others and related to them, a place that no other could occupy. In fact,



to Foucault, the relevant question is “what is this specific existence that emerges from what is said and nowhere else?” (Foucault, 2002, p.32; Moura, 2003, p.7).

In view of this statement the coverage of the 9/11 attacks can also be questioned as an enunciation of a pre-determined series of signs, aiming at generating a determined context as well as a specific representative content within a far more complex discursive form. Journalism, whose narratives are woven by various source-discourses, is constituted by enunciations linked to other enunciations and still other sets of formulations which are constantly being updated. Such updates, in their turn, are within a narrative structure of journalistic reports, sharing with the main journalistic event and generator of that piece of news the same enunciative space where new enunciations can be found – news that will become the enunciator of something (Moura, 2003, p.9). Moura (2003) argues that journalism, in Foucaultian sense, does not occur in the immediacy of the relationship between observer/receptor and broadcast news. This is actually constituted by multiple circulating discourses, emerging as enunciations when the planes of expression and content cross each other. In the discourse actualization, there happens the occupation of a place of speech or discursive space that directs meaning to a specific field of signification which is associated, in its turn, with the already fixed order of discourses in society. In this sense, to identify what is enunciated in the news, it is necessary, beforehand, the recognition of the power relation games which occur inside the field of knowledge. The broadcast news cannot be seen only as an impartial or straightforward discursive position, but as an enunciative space with demarcated place and status. There is no objective, indifferent, impartial, or independent enunciation, but enunciations which are taken when already part of a series or set, playing a role beside others, leaning on them, and distinguishing itself from them so that it does not lose its specificities. Hence, we understand that what is enunciated in journalism is a reconstruction of what has already been enunciated. Without withdrawing from journalistic agents their share of responsibility, what we intend to make clear here is an interdiscursive practice capable of defining how powers, knowledges, and press relate to each other and the way in which certain discussions are addressed by the media not so as to depict reality, but so as to consolidate systems and realities previously defined. We will seek to present the reports of the Brazilian journalistic coverage of the 9/11 which, registered by the media, had their truth and impartiality supported, ending up by strengthening the positions and maintenance of established powers.

## SEPTEMBER 11 ACCORDING TO *O GLOBO* AND *FOLHA DE S. PAULO*

In the edition of *O Globo* on the day following the 9/11 attacks we identified the definition of a sovereign interpretative center, conceived as a “privileged reality” or a “non-problematized presence” – pointing here to the liberal Western identity, represented by the US and their allies – and the objectification of terrorism in a process of production from the outside by the subject, visible both in the characteristics of the graphic layout of the newspaper pages and in the content of the published reports. On the front page, the use of emphasized titles on the top and middle of the page in bigger than usual fonts – “Suicide terror stops the world” and “Bush speaks of thousands of people killed”, respectively – and the display of a photo sequence of great impact that captured distinct moments of the attacks – the explosion caused by the crash of the hijacked plane into the second tower of the World Trade Center, a man jumping to death from a high point of the building, people’s desperation at the moment the two towers collapsed, followed by photographs of the World Trade Center rubble and the destruction in the Pentagon – built a narrative that stressed the magnitude of the terrorist action and made the catastrophic picture resulting from that action clear. By composing the dimension of the outrage in the context on focus, *O Globo* not only constituted a discourse about the demoralizing intention of terrorism in relation to the US, incapable of protecting in that context its own population from mechanisms of asymmetric warfare. Going beyond the plane of mere journalistic textuality (Moura, 2003, p.3), the use of graphic emphasis and the exploitation of multiple angles and framing in photographs which clearly showed North-American impotence in the face of the event, individual desperation, the amplitude of the induced destruction, as well as the dark tones in the blurred images of the rubble, made up the graphic apparatus which stressed the corrosion of the sociopolitical tissue provoked by the action of terrorists, private agents not endowed with the monopoly over the legal and legitimate use of force. The State, as main keeper of such social tissue and owner of this monopoly, is placed in the position of a pre-given identity threatened by a difference, criminalized in face of the shock induced by the destructive actions of the terrorists.

The special supplement of *O Globo* about the attacks, called “US under attack” – title directly translated from the subtitles used by CNN in its live broadcast of the attacks –, opens with a report whose title was “Infamy day” – another translation from CNN subtitles. After the report of the sequence of

events classified by the newspaper as “barbarian”, the subtitle reproduces the frontiers defined between identity and difference when they show perplexity in relation to the results of the terrorist action: “Hijacked planes, World Trade Center down, Pentagon in flames: the perplexed world in face of the biggest attack ever seen by Mankind”. Other captions synthesize the dimension of the terror in short phrases such as “A city in panic” (p.3), “Terror in the sky” (p.4), and “Fear and impotence” (p.5), while infographics bring information that range from a step-by-step description of the attacks in New York and Washington to the impact of the attacks on stock exchange markets worldwide. Inside the special supplement, the images used produce an effect for the self-evident truths of experience once more: the exhibition of diverse angles of the plane crashes as well as multiple perspectives of the rubble of the World Trade Center and of the tumult in the streets of New York following the collapse – especially focusing on people covered in dust or firefighters rescuing victims – reassure the process of characterization of terrorist actions as “cruel” and “bloody”.

The display of the images in a comparative way, with the stages of destruction as the attacks developed, and the shots of the reactions and surprise of the population of New York and of State leaders stress the singularity of the attacks. The newspaper motivated the identification of the reading public with the drama of the victims and of the other people who suffered with the attacks and, along with sympathy for the individuals affected or victimized by the attacks – components of a same Western and liberal identity internalized in Brazil – and also hostility in relation to the perpetrators of the action. Furthermore, in the attempt to persuade readers to legitimate a “virtuous war” against terrorism, hostility in relation to the attacks is fed by the presentation of the Arab world and of the “suspects’ list” as barbarian and dysfunctional regarding Western values. This representation was strengthened by the exhibition of photographs of the Palestinian population celebrating and of a full shot of Osama bin Laden with threatening expression, pointed out then as the main suspect of the attacks. Such discursive and symbolic practices legitimated hatred in relation to terrorism – immediately associated with Arab values and culture – and reproduced the logic of intolerance, narrowing the comprehension of the motivations of terrorist actions.

Concerning the language used by *O Globo*, some terms and phrases applied to the terrorists and their actions – such as “suicides aiming at stopping the world” and “barbarian and spectacular attacks” – demarcate identity in a special spatiotemporal context of exclusion and marginalization of terrorists,

consolidating and perpetuating civilizing references which strengthen Western as opposed to non-Western identity and create differentiated spaces between a society considered as “civilized” and the threats coming from another one classified as “barbarian”. The condemnation of terrorism and the description of the dimension of the damages are stirred up by the use of language techniques and figures of speech typical of literary style, such as metaphors, hyperboles, metonymies, nuances, and enumerations – “blasts, screams, cries, and sirens woke the proudest city in the world” (p.3) – which stress the position of the US as victim of terror – “a country targeted by terrorists”, “violent attacks traumatize Americans” (p.18). Also one can notice the use of free indirect speech, in which the perceptions of analysts and people who were in the US during the events seem to blend, without due reference to their authors, into the supposedly objective report by certain journalists.

Besides that, *O Globo* divided the content of the international sector of its special supplement firstly into the general presentation of the moments that characterized the attack against two of the main symbols of North-American hegemony, the economic power of the World Trade Center – from the attack to the collapse of the towers – and the military fortress of the Pentagon. Secondly, the newspaper described the reaction of the North-American political leaders and their dialogue with the public opinion as well as the consequences for the formulation of the Bush administration’s foreign policy. Thirdly, it dedicated itself to showing the peculiarities of the attacks: the presence of a “new enemy” that is organized in networks; the efficient primitivism of the attacks; the displacement of the target of the conflict, and the symbolic and mediatic warfare. In the approach of the “chaotic” situation in New York, emphasis was given to the number of people killed – among which there were firefighters and police officers – and to the city’s material damages, as well as the mobilization of the population to help the victims. The same was done in relation to the Pentagon, depicted as an apparently “impenetrable fortress”, and the description of the chaos in the capital of the country, as maximum alert was declared by the military forces, which evacuated public buildings, and the weaknesses of the North-American security system were exposed.

As Der Derian (2002) emphasizes, relations of sympathy establish themselves in face of the weaknesses of and threats against those with whom common values are shared, as well as strangeness/hostility in face of the dimension of the terrorist actions classified as “outrageous” and which have caused material losses and human suffering. The demarcation of frontiers

between identity and difference gets more obvious in the approach of the international repercussion of the attacks: at the same time *O Globo* stresses the support of European powers such as England, France, and Germany to the US, the newspaper also underlines the celebrations in parts of the Arab world in the aftermath of the attacks. When examining the suspects of the attacks, it gives emphasis to the figure of the Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden. The comparisons with the Japanese attack against Pearl Harbor were innumerable, and other attacks against American targets along history were recollected, such as the attack against the American destroyer USS Cole in Yemen in 2000 and the explosion of a van in the garage of the World Trade Center in 1993. The recollection of past events by the newspaper seeks not only to identify supposed sources of hostility against the US, but also to naturalize the opposition carried out against that country by elements from other cultures and to do away with inquiries about the supposed foundations of that division.

The engagement of the public in the “virtuous war” became more solid in the newspaper coverage with the approach of personal dramas and the panic of the population; of the quick coverage of the event by television, virtual and printed media; of the recollection of prophecies about catastrophes in the US, and the treatment given by the cinema to situations of this kind, as well as of the paralyzation of the market after record falls in stocks all over the world following the news of the attacks and the perspectives for the following days. The newspaper’s display of the human drama – stressing the suffering of the civil victims – and of the anticipation of the chaos by the cinema were essential to arouse the interest and identification of the public – since such elements are part of these people’s psychological and symbolic universe – as well as the wide dimension of the destruction of a certain impenetrable referent in this public’s imaginary, a symbol on which they used to project their aspirations and to which they credited the sign of infallibility. Directing the coverage of the attacks to the personal dimension makes the continuous expansion of the political understanding viable, since it contextualizes political life in everyday life, instead of conceiving the former as an autonomous sphere of action and thought. Individuals’ experiences are told along those of their group – in this case, those who share Western values – and, as the systems of exchange are mediated by lived experience, the external world is conceived in relation to the personal and subjective sociocultural internal world, which encompasses forms of behavior and emotions (Darby, 1998).<sup>19</sup>

Regarding this, *O Globo* also sought to develop in the special supplement the impacts and repercussions of the news in Brazil. Emphasis was given to the

repercussion the news of the attack had for President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, even publishing the letter he sent to George W. Bush, and the demonstration of support by the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Relations to the US. Again resorting to directing itself towards the personal dimension, the newspaper also focused on the reaction of people of several nationalities who had come to Brazil on the last flight to leave the US on that day, on the perceptions of political and artistic personalities about the attacks and the first measures in main Brazilian cities, which consisted of closing or reinforcing security in some embassies and schools. Based on the wide conception of “foreign policy” adopted in this paper, *O Globo* participated in the process of construction of the readers’ conception about the impact of the international events on their lives and provided elements which established and strengthened the understanding of difference as a dysfunction or anomaly. The newspaper offered non-problematized treatment to the hierarchies between identity and difference. In this process, Brazil was placed near the values defended by the US, a position reinforced by the direction towards the personal dimension with the display of the human drama caused by terrorism in Western society.

While the edition of September 12 of *O Globo* reasserts the definition of a sovereign interpretative center, the coverage of *Folha de S. Paulo* also objectified the process of the terrorist action in question, endorsing the reaffirmation of discourses of fight against terror and standing by the maintenance and support of the established modern Western powers. With the headline “US suffers biggest attack in history”, *Folha* stresses President George Bush’s speech to the nation, placing the general characterization of what it considered “the biggest terrorist attack in history” beside photographs of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in flames. Even if it is considered the ideological interpreter of the resisting Brazilian intelligentsia and of the classes dissatisfied with the neoliberal project,<sup>20</sup> *Folha* in its subtitles – “Towers of the World Trade Center and part of the Pentagon are destroyed”, “Thousands of people die in attacks by unknown authors”, and “Stock markets stop, oil prices soar, and fear of global recession increases” – and in its choice of photographs that showed people covered in the dust from the rubble shares, already on the first page, the Western idea of asymmetric warfare against terror, emphasizing the human drama of innocent civilians as well as the impotence of the most powerful nation in the world in the face of an unidentified enemy. According to what is made clear by the intertextuality of the three subtitles of the cover page, a concern can be observed with the attack

against American symbols that define constituent emblems of that country as well as of Western civilization.

Regarding the layout, *Folha* decided for longer and more uninterrupted texts than *O Globo*. In the boxes, *Folha* stresses President George W. Bush's speech, the list of the most active terrorist groups, and some personal reports and short interviews about the event. The captions are, as in *O Globo*, short, generally one or two words, underlining the topic of the main fact dealt with on the respective page, such as "Reaction" (p.A-16) and "The suspects" (p.E-21). *Folha*, however, uses plenty of infographics, many with a highly didactic tenor. One of them, which occupies two pages (p.A-10-11), brings a simulation of the attacks by reproducing an architectural model of New York. The newspaper shows, moreover, the functioning of the World Trade Center and what its complex sheltered; the history of the twin towers from its building in the 1970s to its fall; the technical file of the World Trade Center; its collapse step by step; a comparison of sizes of the tallest buildings in the world, and the chronology of the attacks. In other infographics spread in the newspaper the sequence of events can also be observed, the reconstitution of the flight routes, the indication of sieged places in the US through maps and small photographs. In fact, what we can observe along the coverage is a narrative guiding the readers' view by the layout of pictures in which we notice the creation of a "history" of the towers: from their building to their explosion, passing through the life of the city. By showing/creating the context and privileging the didacticism of the story, *Folha* endorses the exclusory Western view of the attacks, in which the broadcast news is used as a means of bringing to the surface a specific field with which such a fact of significance must affiliate itself, already within socially incorporated views.

When we analyze the photographs of the special supplement called "War in America", what can be observed is that the narrative sense of tragedy is built up namely by the option for photographs of various angles of the plane crashes, as well as images of the rubble of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and also the mobilization of the population in Washington, military and political center of the United States. Nevertheless, the greatest emphasis of the newspaper falls upon the use of photographs of human desperation, images that would "support" the journalistic impartiality and truthfulness of the periodical from São Paulo, focusing on photographs of individuals covered in dust and firefighters rescuing victims, as well as on the distress of the people leaving the towers few minutes after the plane crashes. In the construction of the drama of the population, a choice of photographs with the American flag

over the rubble can be noticed, which gives the coverage a more dramatic dimension and stresses the utmost sign of sovereignty destroyed by terror, as well as photographs of Arab people celebrating the attacks side by side images that present Osama bin Laden as the main suspect of the action. Once more we have here the reaffirmation of an interpretative center in which the human drama of North-Americans and, consequently, of the West is identified with the values expressed by the newspaper, at the same time that the non-Western world is shown as the denial of and threat to this identity.

Such posture cannot escape an overly striking, speculative, sentimental tone, in which the description of the rubble, the display of the urban chaos caused by the rush after the collapse of the towers and the pictures of the bodies that could be found border on cliché, as in the title “Bodies, rubble, and confusion” (p.A-9). Here once more the report of the journalistic fact uses sensational and persuasive elements directed at strengthening the view of the established powers. The tone of the news also becomes present at times, stressing the clear political bias of the newspaper. Such situation can be observed in the use of certain words or phrases which reproduce an exclusory posture regarding the event, a dimension implicit in the word “terror” often used in the titles, although the newspaper avoided using with much frequency words such as “suicide” or “barbarians” in relation to the unknown authors of the attacks, something which happens more frequently in *O Globo*. Even so, the efficiency of titles and subtitles in summing up the general aspects of the attacks calls attention, like in the subtitle “Hijacked planes destroy symbol of New York and pull part of the Pentagon down; paralyzed, country still tries to count their dead and promises to find the people responsible”, whose impact is complemented by the first sentence of the lead: “US suffers biggest terrorist attack in history, in which symbols of its economic and military hegemony were hit”.

When making the general presentation of the moments that characterized the terrorist attacks against the two main symbols of North-American hegemony, the economic power of the World Trade Center (from the attack to the collapse of the towers) and the military fortress of the Pentagon, *Folha* not only reproduces the reaction of the North-American political leaders regarding the attacks, but also shows the reactions of world leaders. It is seen then that the support of the European powers (England, France, Germany, and Russia) and of the peripheral nations (China, India, and Brazil) is emphasized, whereas, on the other hand, photographs with Palestinian celebrations are exposed. The newspaper stresses the solidification of the frontier between



identity and difference on the side of those countries that share common and “civilized” values as opposed to the reaction and posture of Arab countries and Palestinians and their celebrations against the West. Contrary to what was observed in the media coverages of the following days, *Folha* still assumed an approach which clearly reflected the posture of perplexity of the Western nations. In no moment could it be observed that there was a focus on Afghan issues, with the aim of revealing the conditions of the country, where the author of the attacks would possibly be. In the newspaper’s words, in a world dominated by a single power pole, nonconformism “fed by misery”, exclusion, and religious fanaticism tends to fragment itself into “irresponsible” groups, “without other commitment but their own apocalyptic cause”.

Lastly, the newspaper presented the impact of the attacks in Brazil, showing how Brazilian personalities who were in New York on September 11 reacted. The newspaper also dedicated a page of its supplement to talk about the reaction of the Brazilian President at the time, Fernando Henrique Cardoso. The report appeared on the left hand corner, and under it *Folha* also printed in a box the full letter that FHC sent George W. Bush. In both, the President commented not only on the attacks, but also on what they could represent economically to the world in the future. Again, it can be seen that an organ of the press, *Folha*, participates in the process of definition of Brazilian “foreign policy”, helping delineate the conception of Brazilians about the impact of international events on their lives and supplying elements that reify the hierarchies between identity and difference.

## CONCLUSION

If the definition of practices of exclusion in modernity defines the political space of the actors in the international system adapted to a pattern of “us” and “them”, these “them” being defined/conceived as a referent outside the Western center that fixes artificial political references, what we have tried to point out in this paper is the role of the media in the solidification of previously defined relations by reproducing the discourses that pre-determine how a piece of news should be perceived. As Moura (2003) stresses, it is the case of identifying in the broadcast news the position it occupies in the tangle of discourses within a certain sociohistorical context so as to reorder, situate, and redistribute it. Once its discursive affiliation is defined, what is observed is the report of a story chosen as necessary, excluding that which does not seem to

adjust to it, and dependent on discourses that are recollected or interdicted (Moura, 2003, p.11).

In this sense, what we can observe in the Brazilian newspapers' coverage of the September 11, 2001 on the day following the attacks is that Brazilian media, here represented by *Folha de S. Paulo* and by *O Globo*, more than reproducing reality, worked for the reproduction and support of frontiers and identities of the modern international political system, mirroring Brazil's position as an actor whose foreign policy endorses Western perspectives of civilization in its search for more relevance in the world scene. The condemnation of the terrorist acts by the media, thus, takes along with it the discourse also present in Brazilian foreign policy when it comes to the defense of an international order that sees as barbarians, or not civilized, those who do not share the symbolic and discursive principles that reassert the ontology of the Modern State.

## NOTES

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