

MYTH AND DISCOURSE IN PORTUGUESE PRESS ON 500TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIONS

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Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Jornalismo

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ABSTRACT

The kind of colonization that the fifteenth-century Portuguese State applied in Brazil, colonization based on exploitation, certainly had some influence on the construction of “Brazilian-ness” in relation to Portugal and “Portuguese-ness” in relation to Brazil. The 500th Anniversary of the Discovery, much celebrated both in the European finisterrae and in the terra brasilis, is undoubtedly a unique opportunity to recreate and revise concepts, prejudices and representations of the relations built over the past five centuries. This paper presents some of the findings of the research of issues of the Portuguese daily newspapers Público, Diário de Notícias and Jornal de Notícias published between January and June 2000, regarding the commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of Cabral’s casual “visit” to Brazil. The purpose is to provide a description of the news discourses.

KEY-WORDS Brazil, Portugal, Discovery, 500th anniversary, Portuguese press

“Mas ca onde mais fe alarga, ali tereis
Parte tambem co pao vermelho nota,
De Santa Cruz o nome lhe poreis,
DeJcobrila ha a primeira voffa frota.
(Os *Lusíadas*, Canto X, stanza 140)

1 ■ INTRODUCTION

To understand the present, a scrutinising analysis of history is absolutely necessary, especially the history of the “Modern World”. With the announced end of the Mediaeval Age¹, a society already in transformation dived into a frenetic process of technological innovations in an extensive range of fields of knowledge. Renaissance art, new scientists and sciences, Guttenberg’s discovery... in essence, the awakening of Man in relation to himself and his own potentials brought along a new society in constant

and infinite transformation and evolution, and allowed him to reach the horizons of a world that seemed limited... and come back again.

During the *quattrocento*, European expansion trespasses the Mediterranean, breaking through the Atlantic "*nec plvs ultra*". Portugal's discovery of the Madeira and Azores Islands - uninhabited until then -, the constant quest for exotic products and riches, along with the perpetual "fight against infidels", propelled the ships further and further to distant territories with strange new cultures. It happened in Northern, Western and Eastern Africa, in Asia and the Indian Ocean, and in America, crowning achievement of the quest initiated by the most Atlantic of European nations (Ribeiro, 1998).

Contact between cultures, and the way in which it was handled and established, remained as a sediment deeply reflected in the conception of post-medieval societies, thus shaping new mentalities and cultures that today have a life and character of their own.

Within the infinity of relatively recent cultures that germinated in Vespuccio's *Novus Mundus*, Brazil stands out, not only because of the gigantic proportions of its territory, but also as a prime example of a cultural melting-pot, with migrants and peoples from almost everywhere in the globe, even though it still maintains its Portuguese heritage, as reflected, among other aspects, in the official language of the country.

The somewhat troubled colonization process of Brazil, following the procedures of colonization based on exploitation, inculcated many prejudices because of the supremacy of commercial intentions, slavery and near-annihilation of the native population, generating a deficient relation between the Brazilians and the Portuguese. It is impossible to deny the existence, at least in the Brazilian side, of some degree of bitterness regarding the colonial past. An illustrating example can be found in the much appreciated and widely known jokes about the Portuguese, but in the same way, examples showing Portuguese prejudices against Brazilians are not at all rare².

The first Portuguese reference about the inhabitants of the "Vera Cruz Island", as considered at the time, was produced in 1500 in the form of Pero Vaz de Caminha's *Letter*, Brazil's "birth certificate" according to some, in the making at the moment of the discovery, or at least of the official arrival of the Portuguese to Vera Cruz. Even though he appeared to be somewhat frightened with the peoples they encountered³, the official scribe of Cabral's armada described a land full of magic and colours, with "kind and humble" inhabitants (Castro, 1985 p. 106).

It could be said that both in Caminha's *Letter* and in the news pieces under analysis, the discovery of the Other's civilization, according to the words of Ana Maria de Azevedo, is "an immense field of obstacles" (Azevedo, 2003, p. 240). Writing about the 500-year-old document, this author describes the Portuguese as "Martians of themselves" whose "enthusiastic descriptions speak about fertile lands, with majestic trees, a climate of eternal spring, and birds of astonishing colour and unheard-of sounds" (op. cit.). In the end, things have not changed much since⁴.

Transition from discovery to colonization was short. Initially, as commanded by the king, commerce was sought with the indigenous tribes, but they soon resumed due to their little knowledge of these types of practice. Later on, with clearer economic intentions, a more violent wave of exploitation was launched, which triggered conflicts with native inhabitants⁵. When production in Portugal's Asian and African colonies ceased and the country became vulnerable to the British threat, the harmonious and idyllic scenery was soon replete with warfare, which was nevertheless common then. These memories were to remain and impregnate Brazil's history and subsequently the foundational process leading to brazilian-ness was launched. As Castro (1985, p. 108) says: "(...) With the political process of land usage and suffocation of non-white human elements the distinction between the Portuguese and Brazilian cultures begins".

Such notion of brazilian-ness was established and maintained through a prejudiced and stereotyped "discovery discourse" (in the sense of conquest and expropriation) as Orlandi (1990 p. 19) describes it⁶. Discovery discourse, as found in a wide range of media and in multiple forms, is essentially shaped by ideologies (in the sense of false consciousness) that show and stand for stereotyped notions and partially manipulated realities. These ideologies, as part of the wider unformed reality, materialize through discourse representation, thus making a scrutinising analysis possible.

Journalistic activities maintain two parallel levels of action. The first level contains its referential or informative function, but simultaneously generates a series of value systems (linked to the paper's position as a subject of enunciation) that configure the resulting narrative (Rebelo, 2000, p. 41).

At the first level, it is necessary to know "what is being said" and, at the second level, "how" and "why". When the two levels are combined the paper's dual capacity to represent reality (built as a form of present "history") and to satisfy the reader's daily informational needs is deployed.

The paper's power derives from its capacity to construct an illusion of reality (op. cit., p. 109).

The primordial aim of this research is to identify and understand the image of Brazil and its peoples created by the "coloniser" through its widely distributed daily press⁷. In the mean time, this article constitutes only a partial study in which the first findings related to some matters (mainly about the object and subject of commemorations) are explained. Soon enough a wider and deeper study will be completed.

2 ■ METHODOLOGY

2.1 ■ Initial question

News pieces, primarily because of its pluralism and propagation, are undoubtedly a medium to (in)form opinions and ideas. The image of Brazilians could be analysed in multiple ways (also considering the important migrant communities around the globe, and especially in Portugal, usually comprised of impoverished classes that seek, sometimes illegally, economic development), but an event as the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the official arrival of the Portuguese in Brazil seemed an appropriate occasion to analyse the (de)construction of the Brazilian identity, possibly influenced somehow by the discourse transmitted. The aim of this research is to identify how Brazil and Brazilians, in this case based on a widely reported event such as the 500th Anniversary commemorations, are represented in the news discourse of the Portuguese printed media.

2.2 ■ Content analysis

After setting the subject of the research, it was necessary to establish the procedures for information analysis. Content analysis seemed the appropriate method, as it is based on a series of methodological tools applicable to extremely diverse discourses with a common controlled hermeneutics that flows from deduction: inferences. As a means of interpretation, content analysis ranges from rigorous objectivity to fecund subjectivity.

It is simply an analysis of messages with two levels of reading, where the second level overrides the plain reading level. Content analysis is used as a diagnosis instrument to obtain specific inferences or casual interpretations of a certain aspect of discourse, in this case the news

discourse. Inference is the crucial element of content analysis, to be reached logically through deduction procedures and indicators that make it possible to move from description to interpretation.

Methodologically, an option between quantitative and qualitative analysis existed. In the first case, information is based on the frequency of certain aspects of content. For qualitative or theme analysis, information is deduced from the presence or absence of one or more content aspects. Quantification is a strategy full of richness, as Jorge Vala (1999 p. 103) maintains, but denial of the success of qualitative orientated researches cannot be justified: "Precision is not exclusive of quantification, as quantification in itself does not guarantee the desired accuracy and validity".

In spite of that, quantitative procedures seemed more appropriate for findings to be made, and the results of the research discussed in this article are a prime example. The qualitative analysis was chosen due to the nature of the materials. This procedure has particular characteristics that make it especially appropriate for the attainment of specific deductions. Nevertheless, the qualitative analysis does not exclude forms of quantification, with the only particularity that indexes are not ranked simply on a frequency basis.

2.3 ■ Research materials gathering method

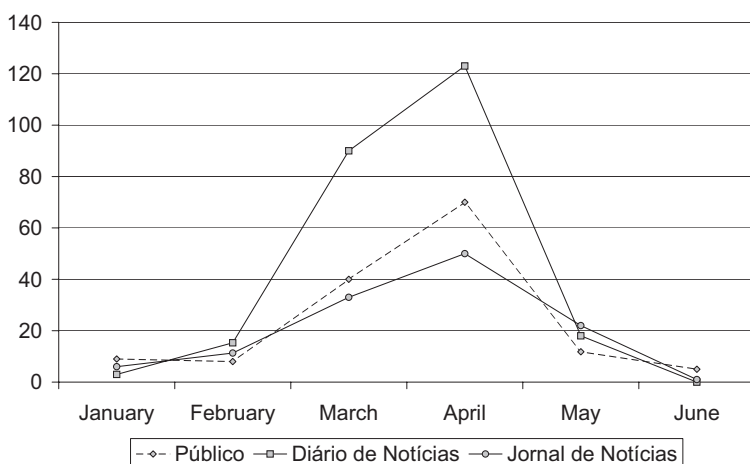
To collect material for analysis (news pieces that directly or indirectly refer to the 500th Anniversary commemorations) the research focused on a sample that comprehended the daily editions of three widely distributed Portuguese newspapers - *Público*⁸, *Diário de Notícias*⁹ and *Jornal de Notícias*¹⁰ - between January and June 2000, in a total of 543 issues.

Even though the three papers are the most widely distributed across the so-called "quality" model¹¹, some distinctions should be established. *Público*, the youngest of the three papers analysed, was conceived as an innovative proposal with the objective of refining and diversifying Portugal's journalistic environment. As it appeared in 1989, it reinforced its intention, as a product of the late years of the 20th Century, to be framed within next millennium's forecasts of deep mutation, projecting expressing its rejection of sensationalist and "show-journalism", opposed to a new space: "*o de uma imprensa que associa criativamente padrões clássicos de profissionalismo com uma disponibilidade permanente para a inovação*"¹². In contrast, *Diário de Notícias* and *Jornal de Notícias* are two hundred-year-old newspapers that entail conflicting features of a

press submerged in a constant transformation process.

To select the “appropriate” mastheads, the “reference” or “quality” newspaper model was sought, based on the assumption that the processing of news about the commemorations in these publications would be more reliable and representative of the predominant discourse.

The selection of the units of analysis was carried out through a original comprehensive reading of the whole sample, excluding special and regular supplements, op-eds, letters to the editor and similar sections. The outcome was more than half a thousand units that were individually analysed for the extraction of the inferences on which the research is based.



Graphic 1. News Volume

3 ■ RESULTS

3.1 ■ What is to be commemorated?

Great commemorations, which are more and more frequent in mass media, are part of a technique through which past is re-presented and updated. These events (or pseudo-events) follow, according to Marialva Barbosa (2000 p. 72), a market-based logic that consists of revisiting great profitable events of the past: “*grandes datas, lugares de uma memória que não mais existe, são produtos de venda em um mercado ávido por*

lucratividade em escala planetária”.

The media does not describe reality, but constructs it. Events go way beyond the time-space reference, stretching the limited significance of the description of public sphere. Events are the result of strategies designed and engineered by groups of social actors particularly interested in their construction. The way in which the building process is presented is a crucial part of the event, even though the symbolic construction cannot be reduced to mere media devices, as the fabrication metaphor must be confronted with other factors, such as epistemological and ontological principles (*op. cit.*, p. 76).

In the commemorations analysed in this article, the “presentification of past” journalistic rhetoric established a complex industry of commemoration, through which it materializes memory in the form of show and information. Not only the present, but also the past, are constantly updated through new events revolving around that fundamental occasion constructed along the past 500 years, and somehow regardless of the arrival of Pedro Álvares Cabral.

Media established a *continuum* between the past (“discovery” of Brazil) and the present (500 years latter), with the primordial function, as Marialva Barbosa explains, of presentifying the past. The promoters of the vast number of shows, parades, games, masses and other events comprising the “great show”, reaffirm themselves symbolically as successors and guardians of the discovery. Obviously, the rediscovery became an international media event, consolidating its meaning and significance through their discourse.

3.2 ■ The object of commemoration

The news media analysed do not have a single criterion to establish the object of commemorations. A range of words, with particular semantic value, is evidence of different conceptions of the symbolic significance of the discovery.

Nevertheless, an extensive use of terms already consolidated by historians and “common sense” is noted, and this in some way restricts the emergence of new and distinct phrases and meanings together with innovative discourse images, thus perpetuating not only traditional concepts but also arguments and discussions that were brought up every time the matter was approached or came to mind.

All the phrases applied have a variety of shades of meaning, nuances and connotations that have grown to currently become clearly

predominant, strongly consolidated or constructed upon common history, in attempts to revise this history or even on the image formed in present day Brazil and official documents of the time.

In the forthcoming items, the phrases most widely used by journalists are analysed with a view to establishing nuance patterns across phrases, subsequent differential significations together with their influence in the construction or maintenance of an image of “brazilian-ness” in Portugal. How perceived by the responsible editors, giving them preference, made them the favourite phrases in the construction of news pieces.

3.2.1 ■ Os 500 anos (The five-hundred years)

This is the second most frequently used phrase in Público, with 30 hits, just behind descoberta - “*descoberta*”, with 49 hits. Diário de Notícias comes next regarding this option, with 21 hits (and forth position), being descobrimento - “*descobrimento*” the first choice, with 31 hits. Jornal de Notícias uses these phrases less frequently, with only 11 hits, focusing on other phrases such as descoberta - “*descoberta*” (32 hits), descobrimento - “*descobrimento*” (29 hits), achamento - “*achamento*” (22 hits), and chegada (18 hits). Yet, in the final quantification it is ranked fourth due to the extensive use by *Público*.

Naming the object of commemoration as “500 anos” seems to indicate a mere mathematical sum: In 1500 Pedro Álvares Cabral sailed into unknown shores. Therefore, exactly 500 years had elapsed until the year 2000: consequently, these constitute the object of commemoration. It seems the easiest way to reach “political correctness”, simply suppressing any other reference that could be potentially problematic. The use of this vocabulary might reflect the hindering of innovative debates on this matter, thus prevailing in news pieces as simple, plain information regarding the commemorations.

With the somehow mathematical selection of this phrase, it is assumed (or intended to be assumed) that readers know what they are talking about, and any expressions susceptible of “negative”, “politically incorrect” or “damaging” interpretations are suppressed since they could be harmful to the credibility of a discourse that intends to be objective, or at least neutral.

Going back to the brief quantitative analysis of this phrase, its extensive use seems more understandable considering the impartiality expected from journalistic discourse. Besides this, regarding the assumptions established in the Style Book, or simply the standard style, it seems easier to comprehend *Publico's* common use of “500 anos”.

Another important factor is related to the reflex usage of this denomination. Other phrases, particularly “*descoberta*”, “*achamento*” and “*descobrimento*”, and settled parameters in historical discourse are the most widely used. “500 anos” appears in the fourth position of the “ranking”, but it must be taken in consideration that this is a new term, especially if contrasted with the petrification of the above-mentioned phrases. It also has an expiry date: only during year 2000 it is/was possible to talk about the five hundred years.

In spite of this, this designation, partially due to massification and intense dissemination, became part of everyday life and also of recent history of Brazilians and Portuguese in such a way, now that facts are unwrapped and impressions formed, meanings become intrinsic and latent in the construction of discourses on that matter.

3.2.2 ■ *Achamento* (Finding)

Once more *Público*, searching perhaps for a more “neutral” and less controversial stand, is the paper that more widely uses this phrase, with 24 hits, 10 of them in inverted commas (quotation marks). *Jornal de Notícias* also uses this phrase extensively, being the third most frequently used item, with 22 hits. Notably, more than half of these (12) appear in inverted commas.

On the other hand, *Diário de Notícias* relegates it to the fifth position, with 17 hits (seven of them in inverted commas). In the final quantification, it is the third most frequently used term, with 63 hits, 29 of which in inverted commas. This can be considered, as Maingueneau (2000) affirms, as a defining mark of a phrase/word extracted from a text, or as an instrument to brighten up its original meaning, and these descriptions are indeed arguable.

Considering that inverted commas open a whole range of discourse gaps, whose coating is the entire responsibility of the reader (taking into consideration perception capacities and criticism), an analysis of the presence of this graphic signal seems complicated, let alone unforeseeable.

Two points of view seem appropriate to comprehend this usage:

the first of them, politically correct, uses inverted commas as a mere quotation mark, an autonimic usage (Maingueneau, 2000, p. 156). In this case, it would refer to the well-known Pero Vaz de Caminha's letter to King D. Manuel, informing him of the "*achamento*" (finding) of new lands, from now on known as "Ilha de Vera Cruz". This point of view is more or less exempt from historical-ideological meanings, and it is understood as an attempt at approximating journalistic discourse to the well documented and consolidated historical truth, also confirming what is now said through what has been said by history (nuances of an insecure discourse).

A second possibility regarding the use of inverted commas is the autonimic modalization¹³ (Maingueneau, 2000, p. 158), in other words, not as an element of separation between discourses but as an element capable of suggesting new discourses and conclusions. In this case, to emphasize Caminha's letter, the term withdraws the idea of quotation by introducing a series of questions on the significance of the word in relation to its context and enclosing reality.

In this specific case, truthfulness of the episode of Brazil's discovery is questioned, considering a range of studies that suggest the intentional nature of the voyage, previous discoveries, the Portuguese official secrecy policy and, especially, the idea that since it had previously been inhabited by Amerindians, considering Brazil as new land is simply nonsense.

Furthermore, the actual meaning of this word in 1500 is frequently questioned. Some studies affirm that Caminha used the term to refer to the discovery, to the finding of something new and untouched (at least by Europeans). Some disagree. If today's meaning is applicable (*achamento* = *achar*; finding = to find), it should not be considered as entailing an idea of domination or revelation, more clearly implicated in the term "discovery" ("*descoberta*"), but simply as casually "running into" a new territory, already inhabited, and whose existence was already being studied and debated when the Alcáçovas-Toledo and Tordesillas treaties¹⁴, between the Castilian and Portuguese Crowns were established.

Undoubtedly, the discursive usage of this term has its origin in Caminha's document. Also indisputably, as a semantic variation of "*descoberta*" and "*descobrimento*", now rooted and commonly used in Portuguese and Brazilian cultures, it constitutes a much vindicated phrase, in the same way as the phrase "*500 anos*". It is obviously much more imprecise, usually falling into the realm of "political correctness" and "historically documented" reality. It bestows a less sensationalist character to the event, and smoothes its consequences since historical

facts are explainable and even forgivable when considered in their specific context (especially when this context is 500 years away), mainly because it is precisely this phrase that History postulates.

3.2.3 ■ *Descoberta* or *Descobrimento* (Discovery)

Both “*descobrimento*” and “*descoberta*” are terms that have been controversial for long, and still are the most frequently used as shown by this research. While *Jornal de Notícias* and *Diário de Notícias* make random usage of both phrases (actually four if the use of inverted commas is to be considered) with 32 and 29 hits respectively in *Jornal de Notícias* (using inverted commas on five occasions), and 24 and 31 hits in *Diário de Notícias* (four in inverted commas), *Público* clearly prefers “*descoberta*” (49 hits, 3 being in inverted commas) while “*descobrimento*” is used only 13 times. In the final quantification, “*descoberta*” prevails with 105 hits, which is partially due to *Público*’s preference, and “*descobrimento*” follows, with 73.

The main arguments for the debate on the usage of these phrases focus on Cabral’s arrival during his voyage to the Indies (after Vasco da Gama’s first epic voyage magnificently captured by Luiz de Camoens), diverted by Atlantic coastal winds, to *an already inhabited land*, contrary to what happened in the Azores and Madeira Islands, where native populations did not exist.

The fact that this land was *discovered* is questioned, since civilization already existed, differently indeed from those lands Europeans had previously found, but nevertheless a well constructed civilization: with its own language(s), customs, traditions, social organization and hierarchy, as well as agricultural and stockbreeding techniques. The matter is hence more complex than it seems.

First of all, it is necessary to distinguish “*descoberta*” from “*descobrimento*”. “*Descoberta*” is usually considered as a single event: an event at its essence, taking place in the precise moment they caught sight of the land and Cabral’s flotilla anchored in the bay of what today is Porto Seguro, establishing the first contact with native inhabitants, praying at the first mass, and leaving some of the crew behind to learn the language, the culture, habits, and the way this new environment functioned.

On the other hand, “*descobrimento*” is usually considered as a process (morphologically evident because of the *-mento* suffix); not only the moment the ships arrived and the mass was celebrated, but

also the appropriation process of the “Island of Vera Cruz”, which was later named “Land of Santa Cruz” and finally Brazil, and its native inhabitants, essentially carried out by the *bandeirantes* and the Jesuit missionaries; but also until the formation of Brazil, from the adoption of that denomination circa 1508, until completion of the process leading to brazilian-ness, constructed through the deconstruction and reconstruction of portugueseness, with a greater colonizing and stereotyped character.

In spite of this, other factors must be considered when passing judgements, especially when analysing the relationship between a former metropolis and a former colony; or, even clearer, mainly when the relationship between a “continent-sized state” such as Brazil, with vast human and natural resources and a world-famous culture (or range of cultures) (even though greatly stereotyped), and Portugal, an old fifth century power responsible for incalculable nautical, cartographic and geographic achievements, holder of colonies in three continents until the seventies, but with a constant history of political and economic decadence.

For many years, school and even history books referred to Brazil's discovery as an indisputable fact (in the same way as Brazil's 1822 Independence) that was historically explainable and replete with an aura of transcendence and patriotism. In other words, the establishment of a common usage status for these phrases, “*descoberta*” (discovery as an event) and “*descobrimento*” (discovery as a process), in the journalistic, academic and everyday spheres, indicates a whole process of historical construction that is apparently irreversible, but clearly reflected in the ever deficient relationship between a colonizer and its colonized subjects, petrified and established in such a way that it hackneyed meanings, intrinsic in the past, but still loyal keepers of latent discourses and identity makers are sustained.

3.2.3 ■ Other phrases

In the previous sections, only four of the most frequent variations used to designate the celebrated event were analysed, even though many others were used in the newspapers for this purpose. Amongst this group, “*chegada*” (arrival), holding the fifth position, with 60 hits, but just behind other terms (“*500 anos*”, with 62, and “*achamento*”, with 63). *Diário de Notícias* uses it more frequently, with 24 hits (as its “politically correct” favourite phrase), thus on a par with “*descoberta*”. *Público* and *Jornal de Notícias*, giving preference to other phrases, have 18 hits each.

A reflection about this term does not elicit negative ideological connotations. “Political correctness” is a possibility but, on the other hand, a rather complex historical (and even political) quarrel might be triggered, considering the fact that this verb indicates that a destination has been reached, a certain goal has been achieved.

Considering the circumstances conducting the Portuguese encountering the land known today as Brazil, in other words, having some knowledge on the quarrels regarding the casual (or non-casual) character of the contact, use of the term “arrival” entails the well known and respected idea that, in reality, even though secondary, Brazil was indeed a destination of Cabral’s voyage.

However, based on a study that seeks to unfold the conception of Brazil and Brazilians in the Portuguese press from the perspective of the 500th Anniversary commemorations, one must not forget that in the journalistic discourse (as in many others) a term or expression variation can be more a way of avoiding unstylish repetitions of the much used and reused phrases in the innumerable articles referring to this historical episode than an editorial bias.

The next term, certainly far away from the previous ones, is “*viagem*” (journey, voyage). It is relatively free from controversies, and totalled 18 hits in the final quantification (9 in *Público* and 4 and 5 in *Jornal de Notícias* and *Diário de Notícias*, respectively). The use of this phrase, whether wittingly and purposefully, denotes a certain distance from the commemorative focal point(s).

The main commemorations sought to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the “beginning” of Brazil, but this term shifts the importance towards Cabral’s deed, towards his voyage, and the fifth-century Portuguese nautical developments and skills.

Withal marginal, not exceeding four hits in the final quantification, other phrases as “*fundação*” (foundation) and “*invenção*” (invention) - more controversial phrases -, and “*feito*” or “*feito de Cabral*” (deed, Cabral’s deed), “*ancoragem*” (anchoring), “*desembarque*” (grounding), “*avistamento*” (a noun referring to the act of catching sight) and “*encontro*” (encounter), somehow intending to omit controversies or to reconcile positions, are used.

Implying that this event is the foundation or invention of the country definitely challenges the development of Brazil and Brazilian-ness over the course of these 500 years, positioning it exactly in the moment Portuguese vessels reached land. The use of these expressions denotes a certain feeling of superiority by the Portuguese in relation to

Brazil, precisely because they created it. Consequently, it is because of the Portuguese that Brazilians exist since they were a product of their “invention”.

Being Brazil and Brazilians an indefinable melting-pot without a clear predictable result (considering levels of immigration and emigration), and considering the 1500 event as its foundations, is the same as considering that the country was “made” by Portugal only and in that moment only, underestimating as much as possible the remaining cultural influences on formation of brazilian-ness.

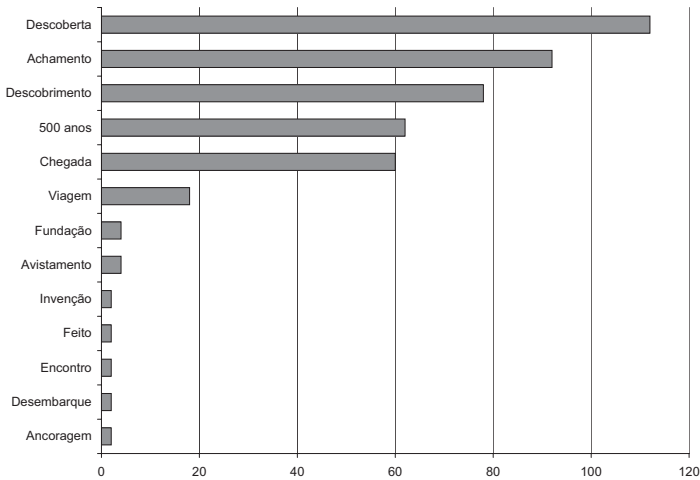
Likewise, considering 1500 as the year Brazil was invented is equivalent to believing in the supremacy of the Portuguese influence, to scorning indigenous cultures that existed already in the land and the subsequent cultures and peoples (Africans, Germans, Italians, Muslims, Galicians and many others) that have met and coexisted in Brazil.

Though less prejudiced, the phrase “*feito*” (or “*feito de Cabral*”), besides its reminiscence of historical designations, can be found in 15th century literature and documents on the Portuguese expansion. Importance is granted not to the first steps of a country, the 5th biggest country in the world today, but to the development and size of the Portuguese Empire and its commercial and navigational skills.

Also less controversial, but still with a certain negative ideological burden on the view of Brazil and Brazilians, are terms as “*ancoragem*” (anchoring) and “*desembarque*” (grounding), which clearly shift the focus towards the Portuguese action and excludes any possible debates on social and human relations.

Both terms are part of nautical vocabulary but entail other connotations. “*Ancoragem*”, for example, may be considered a “politically correct” expression, as it can refer plainly to its nautical meaning, but, having this in mind, it inevitably holds an idea of domination, firmness, attachment, settlement of new ways and a new culture in a land already dominated.

Finally, terms like “*avistamento*” (a noun referring to the act of catching sight) - which lack potential controversies inherent to others, but also reduce the Portuguese protagonist and the importance of his deed -, and “*encontro*” (encounter) - considered the phrase with the lowest ideological weight, as “*encontrar*” (to find) -, mean “to come across” and also “to collide”, understood as a collision between cultures, in which the foundation or invention of a nation is not delegated to anyone.



Graphic 2. Object of commemoration¹⁵

3.3 ■ The object of Discovery

After going through the question regarding the object of commemoration, another subject with a variety of possibilities is the object of discovery, although the majority option is rather clear. In other words, what has been “found”, “Invented”, “discovered”, “encountered”, etc? In cases such as the following the discourse is extremely “diplomatic”: *“a descoberta de um trecho da costa do atual Brasil pela armada de Pedro Álvares Cabral”*¹⁶ (*Público*, 09/03/2000). Still, others are not.

As the graphic shows, the most frequently used option is “*Brasil*”, with 205 hits, being the current name of the country and its preferential option, though not exempt of controversies, considering the situation in which the fact occurred and the formation and development of the country.

Supremacy of the term “*Brasil*” as the object of discovery is undoubtedly absolutely acceptable, but looked at from new angles its use in certain situations seems rather incongruous, considering the fact that Brazil was not discovered (or found, or spotted); rather this was a new and (officially) unknown (by Europeans) land, whose name was given then and there. The use of this term contributes towards the reduction of the complexities attached to the formation process of a country whose

routes were modified and subverted by a colonization and “finding” process.

Moreover, regarding the fact that the object of commemoration is *Brazil's* Anniversary, the conclusion and attitude that Brazil was established in the precise moment in which Cabral's ships tied up in Porto Seguro Bay is adopted: Brazil of today, the Brazil being celebrated. This stand does not consider a variety of historical factors, some even unleashed by Portugal, responsible for the formation and current Brazilian reality, reducing Portuguese responsibility to the single moments of the encounter between its civilization and the Amerindian, for long established in the land.

Far from “*Brasil*”, but also from the remaining options (that at most reach half a dozen hits) is “*Terra(s) de Vera Cruz*” (Land[s] of Vera Cruz). It is not clear whether one or more is concerned, with 31 hits, which is curious in some phrases considering the unclear nature of the term because of the changes in the country's name.

In the back of the first page of Pero Vaz de Caminha's letter, it is stated that Pedro Álvares Cabral gave the name “*Pascoal*” to the mountain of which he caught sight and “*Terra de Vera Cruz*” to the land, thus justifying its use by journalists; however, in this same document, the name is modified to “*Ilha de Vera Cruz*”, as referred in the final lines of the letter. It is also known that King D. Manuel, as soon as he learned of the “finding”, changed the name to “*Terra de Santa Cruz*”, which did not remain for long either, as in 1508 records with “Brazil” already exist.

It is peculiar that the Portuguese press adopted a phrase that was official for such a short period of time, being its presence rare even in the document where it was first used: Caminha's letter. Moreover, it is even more peculiar that the Manueline term “*Terra de Santa Cruz*” appears only once in all the analysed news pieces.

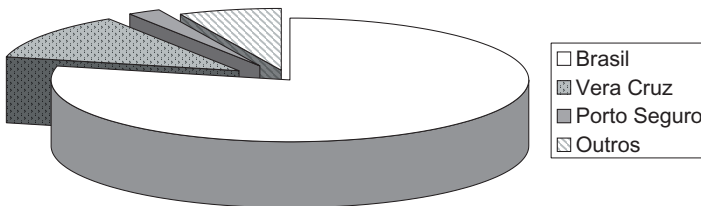
Nevertheless, the use of “*Terras de Vera Cruz*” not only refers to the discovery's historical past, but is also based on historical documents, entailing a certain connotation that confirms what has already been said: and historically defined term. It also functions (as most occasions seem to indicate) as a “synonymic” variation for Brazil, frequently appearing when the country's name has been repeated too many times in the same text.

Other expressions, in spite of having been used few times, appear occasionally in the journalistic texts analysed. Some, as “Porto Seguro”, “Baía”, “*Costa do Brasil*” (Brazil's coast), “*outro lado do Atlântico*” (other side of the Atlantic), “*Foz do rio Cahy*” (Cahy river estuary) imply a more

“geographical” way of approaching the object of discovery; others bring historical conceptualisations as “continente perdido” (lost continent), “*Terra Brasilis*” or “nova(s) terra(s)” (new land[s]).

Most curious periphrastic expressions can be found, as the incomprehensible “*terras brasileiras de Vera Cruz*” (Vera Cruz Brazilian lands) and the stereotypical (aroused with Caminha’s letter, but very much expanded due to the portrayed image of Brazil) “*uma terra fértil e coberta de densa vegetação verde*” (a fertile land densely covered with green vegetation), both with only one hit in the total quantification, denoting the probable shortage of terms to refer to what today is known as Brazil.

Finally, the most “politically correct” phrases are found: “terra(s) brasileiras(s)” (Brazilian land[s]), “*terra que viria a chamar-se Brasil*” (land that would come to be called Brazil), “*um trecho da atual costa do Brasil*” (part of current Brazil’s coast). Even though they do not entail negative connotations, they clearly evidence the separation between what Brazil is/was and what Portugal is/was, together with the relation of possession between them.



Graphic 3. Object of “discovery”

4 ■ CONCLUSIONS

Although all of the phrases and expressions analysed may reflect a certain meaning while inserted in journalistic discourse (in addition to a mere chance or style), the true importance lies analysed in the use as a whole and the influence this whole may have.

Meanwhile, the analysis of the objects of commemoration and discovery are helpful when trying to comprehend the leading principles

in journalistic practice when approaching this event and, subsequently, allow a better comprehension of the formation/consolidation of the postcolonial¹⁷ image of Brazil and Brazilians in the 500th Anniversary commemorations.

With the analysis of this information, a certain standardization in Portugal's journalistic discourse is perceived; even though differences between each newspaper do exist. Discourse revisits historically defined terms by copying old references in an attempt to prove and confirm what is and has been said, proving some level of discourse uncertainty. Allusions to Pero Vaz de Caminha's letter and other documents, Portuguese and Brazilian literary references are great assistants in the construction of the analysed journalistic macro text.

This attitude, however, is not an obstacle to displaying ideological values that dominate journalistic text creation. The selection of certain phrases, such as "*Ilha de Vera Cruz*" or "*Terra de Santa/Vera Cruz*", always ends up indicating and bringing about a colonial past, transferring, to some extent, an feeling of inferiority to Brazilians (and Brazil incidentally) in comparison with the Portuguese.

In the same way, the selection of a range of terms to designate the object of commemoration, as the most controversial - "*Invenção*" and "*Fundação*" -, or the most widely used - "*Descobrimento*" -, which is a source of debates for quite some time now, reflects the static character the discourse still maintains, as it does not subvert or intends to subvert the establishment, simply reproducing what has been said until then, including the same controversies and "historical solutions".

By analysing news pieces from a less specific point of view, bringing forward some of the aspects that will be dissected in the full study, in general, Brazil's image is perceived as that stereotyped view of a country from the tropics, especially in those texts written prior to the 22nd of April reporting the beauties and culture - usually identified as samba, soap operas, gorgeous women and football - from the tropical paradise.

The idea of a country with social problems, "a country that mistreats its indigenous peoples", appears eminently after the 23rd of April 2000, due the great controversy that the "Indian question" generated on the day of commemorations. The day after, this episode made headlines in all of the papers, containing a discourse describing the revolt and the existing contrasts and contradictions within the "país-irmão" (brother-country) at the moment of the commemorations. Not that these disputes and arguments had not been tackled before, but the discourse shift from

the moment of the confused and even disastrous commemorative experience is clear.

News pieces now approached Brazil's "refusal" of the indigenous presence at the celebrations as a warning of the country's immense social difficulties. They also debated the reasons for which many Brazilians refused to celebrate the 500th Anniversary commemorations: agreeing in some occasions, opposing in others, the attitudes of the country's inhabitants.

The aggressive discourse that some pieces brought along (without taking into consideration op-eds or other editorial pieces, mostly critical with Brazilians and the events) were constructed upon the idea of "deconstructing" Brazil. The image of the Brazilian was that of someone who criticized exploitation, colonization, blamed for the country's troubles, something Portuguese rarely accepted in the analysed pieces, arguing that the country had been independent for nearly 200 years.

By ruminating on the construction of Brazil's and Brazilian's image on the occasion of the 500th Anniversary of the official arrival of the first Portuguese to what is today that country, and observing the static character of the controversies and their discourse, roots of colonial discourse, discovery discourse, as Orlandi (1990) established, can be comprehended. But another comprehension, understood through the concept of dialogism¹⁸ projected by Bakhtin (1992 [1929]): that of the negative image that Brazilians and Brazil have of themselves, as the impression that the Portuguese press conveys is that Portugal constructed Brazil, being Brazilians responsible for its deconstruction. Simply because of the fact they are such.

NOTES

- 1 It is commonly suggested that the end of the Middle Ages comes with the fall of Constantinople and the rise of the Ottoman Empire in 1453. But as a social transformation, we must consider that beyond this conventional date, these societies essentially continued to have a Medieval character, remaining as such for a long period of time.
- 2 Portuguese references exist arguing that similar humorous discourses focus only on the Alentejanos (a regional group) and not on Brazilians, something indeed difficult to prove or deny. Humorous texts on Brazilians actually do exist, but are mainly focused on present Brazilian migrants,

particularly on their cultural knowledge and literacy. In addition to the humorous side, it is possible, when searching for the image Brazil has in Portugal, to find in well known sites as the *Projecto Vercial* prejudiced discourses: "(...) No. Portuguese are not discourse. The Portuguese do not discriminate against Brazilians. Brazilians are our brothers. But we prefer them on TV. And in Brazil" (Almeida, 2003).

- 3 Caminha is shocked and distrustful in relation to the new inhabitants, not only because of their nakedness (even though their "parts" are visible, Caminha tones down that possible "indigenous perversion" by analysing the innocence with which men and women live naked), but mainly because they believed they were cannibals, similar to those found in Africa during previous voyages.
- 4 For a monographic vision on the communicational aspects of the encounter vid. Almeida's (2003) *Comunicação e História: Voz, Elocução e Comunicação Para-Verbal na Descoberta Portuguesa das Américas*.
- 5 German chronicler Hans Staden, in his book "Duas viagens ao Brasil", describes some of the confrontations between native Indians and Portuguese settlers stating that the Europeans caused most of them. Also, in spite of the initially friendly contact, many of these confrontations were due to forced conversions as suggested by Portuguese clergy.
- 6 Orlandi (1990, pp. 19-20) states: "*Discurso das descobertas, discurso das conquistas ou discurso da dominação. Procuramos nos conhecer conhecendo como a Europa conhece o Brasil. E no discurso das descobertas não encontramos senão modos de tomar posse. (...) Europeu falando de índio produz brasilidade. Nós falando do que os europeus dizem de suas descobertas, falamos o discurso da nossa origem. Fazemos falar os outros. O brasileiro se cria pelo fato de fazer falarem os outros*".
- 7 As Jorge Pedro Sousa (2002) notes, "in spite of the interest Portuguese and Brazilians show for each other on matters related to Media Studies, as evidenced by the creation of the Lusocom society", there is a serious lack of studies on this matter. Sousa (2002) published an article, Images of Brazil in the Portuguese Press, in which the representation of matters related to Brazil appearing in the Portuguese press was quantitatively analysed, and Manuel Carlos Chaparro (1998) released a book, *Sotaques d'Aquém e d'Além Mar*, with a comparative analysis of journalistic genders used in the press of both countries.
- 8 Established in the 90's, its main offices are in Lisbon. The average print run for 2000 was about 55 thousand copies.

- 9 Hundred-year-old Lisbon-based newspaper. Its total average print run was about 60 thousand copies for that year.
- 10 Hundred-year-old newspaper based in Northern Portugal, also with offices in Lisbon. Its total average print run for 2000 was approximately 105 thousand copies.
- 11 *Jornal de Notícias* is sometimes labelled as a “popular” style newspaper. Nevertheless, in comparison with other widely distributed Portuguese newspapers (as *Correio da Manhã* or 24 horas), for this research it is considered to be closer to the “reference” model. In spite of this, and due to its nature, a greater degree of appeal values is perceived, especially in news piece construction and layout through the selection of certain phrases.
- 12 Silva (1998), in the Introduction to *Publico’s Style Book (Livro de Estilo)*.
- 13 “Modalização autonímica”, in Maingueneau’s Portuguese translation. For a wider view on this subject vid. Pauliukonis, Maria A. L.; Gavazzi, S. (2003) *Marcas discursivas do enunciador midiático: casos de modalização autonímica*. In: *Texto e discurso: mídia, literatura e ensino*. Rio de Janeiro: Lucerna, pp. 38-51.
- 14 The Alcáçovas-Toledo (1474) and Tordesillas (1494) treaties established the Portuguese and Castilian Crown’s possessions and navigational zones, considering present and future disputes of the time. The first of them effected world division following the Canary Islands Parallel: The northern part was supposed to belong to Castile and the Southern part was supposed to belong to Portugal. After Columbus arrival in the New Continent, with its subsequent troubles since the navigator was then under Castile’s mandate, but the new territories belonged to Portugal under the 1474 treaty. The new treaty re-divided the world through a meridian of 370 leagues West from Cape Verde Islands: The lands to the east were to belong to Castile, and the lands to the West were to belong to Portugal.
- 15 *Descoberta*: discovery (single event); *Achamento*: finding; *Descobrimento*: discovery (as a process); *500 anos*: 500 years; *Chegada*: arrival; *Viagem*: Voyage; *Fundação*: foundation; *Avistamento*: catch sight; *Invenção*: invention; *Feito*: deed; *Encontro*: encounter; *Desembarque*: grounding; *Ancoragem*: anchoring.

- 16 “The discovery of part of current Brazil’s coast by Pedro Álvares Cabral’s armada”.
- 17 According to Bonnici (2000, p. 9) even though a wide consensus on the definition of post colonialism does not exist, it is commonly used to describe a “culture influenced by the imperial process from the beginning of colonization to our days”. Post colonialist critics suggest an “alternative approach to comprehend imperialism and its influences, as a global phenomenon and, in a small scale, a localized phenomenon”, involving a “constant questioning of the relations between culture and empire to understand decolonization culture and politics” (p. 10).
- 18 Bakhtin generally believes that a being’s identity is constructed through the image of him/her the other constructs. Subsequently, when Brazil or Brazilians see themselves reduced or diminished, especially through a historical approach (always withholder of an untouchable and sacred discourse), he/she creates and reduces his own cultural identity, making of himself/herself what others make of him/her.

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