

NATIONAL CONGRESS SILENCED: MEDIA COVERAGE OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS' PARTICIPATION IN REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces a discourse analysis of texts published by *Correio Braziliense*, where main article is the political opinion editorial of this newspaper and plenary speeches of Federal Deputies regarding Proposed Constitutional Amendment (PCA) 438/2001, foreseeing expropriation of rural and urban properties where it has been proved existence of employees in conditions analog to slaves. These properties will be assigned to agricultural land reform and low-cost housing programs. The analysis considers ideological training transcending the texts from the ideological concept of discourse analysis and anticipates that main media press vehicles will not cover social movements' participation at the National Congress, especially when issues mobilizing these movements are related to the economic order.

Key-words: silence, speech, slave labor.

Introduction

Brazil *abolished* slavery in 1888; however workers in conditions analog to slaves still exist, mainly in rural areas. Between 1995 and 2006, more than 40,000 workers, among them children, have been rescued from this situation. The *International Labor Organization* (ILO) in Brazil explains one of contemporary forms of slave labor:

[...]when workers hear that a farm is hiring people, they go to these places, most of time distant from their homes. Usually workers are hired by a recruiter, known as "cat", a labor middle-men working for the farmer. Then, the recruiter "lends" money to workers to pay transport fees to the farm. Working material, such as boots and sickle are bought at a grocery shopping, owned by the recruiter or

1 . National Confederation of Agricultural Workers.

the farm owner. "Food, medicine, batteries or cigarette expenses are noted in a small notebook and prices charged for each product will rarely be the real one"²

When payday arrives, worker's debt is higher than total wage to be collected. Therefore, since he is a debtor, he has to stay to pay debts; to keep him at place they threat him psychologically and physically. And a free man becomes a slave; this is the well known case of debt-bondage.

In spite of complaints and research work done regarding rescue of workers in conditions analog to slaves made by ILO, Pastoral Land Commission (PLC), National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG) and inspectors of the Ministry of Labor and Employment, this fact is not recognized by Brazilian society; the National Congress, in turn, postpones a project towards eradication of work in conditions analog to slavery and press does not contribute to end that practice in our country.

The collective imaginary of Brazilian society associates slave work to African Black people chained at slave quarters (*senzala*) and the idea that currently this does not exist anymore in Brazilian racial democracy, since it is granted by working rights laws. Therefore it is crucial for social movements developing ways to make society acknowledge and understand contemporary forms of exploitation of workers rural and urban workers to eradicate work in conditions analog to slaves in Brazil.

This paper analyzes speeches that mobilized parliamentarian and social movements at the Chamber of Deputies, from a coverage especially made by newspaper Correio Braziliense in May 2012 for voting Proposed Constitutional Amendment 438/2001, known as slave work Proposal, foreseeing expropriation of rural and urban properties where it has been proved existence of employees in conditions analog to slaves, and its assignment to agricultural land reform and low-cost housing programs. This based in the political opinion editorial column. The analysis considers ideological training transcending the texts from the ideological concept of discourse analysis, or in other words, "producing evidences, putting the man in an imaginary relationship with its material conditions of existence." Ideology as a "structuring mechanism of the signification process"³

From use of "Discourse analysis methodology: Six ways of interpretative reading as a puff pastry"⁴(translator's note: since puff pastry has several layers, this could be compared to the idea of "lifting the veils") this paper anticipates⁵ that main media press vehicles will not cover social movements' participation at the National Congress, especially when issues mobilizing these movements

2. ILO, 2006, p. 42.

3. Orlandi (2010, p. 46 and 96).

4. Porto (2010, p. 84).

5. "Anticipation", word used by Georg Gadamer in an ontological existential epistemology, from Martin Heidegger. This would be the equivalent to a 'hypothesis'. Gadamer (1998, p. 57-71).

are related to the capitalist order, fact that may be explained by the engagement newspapers have with economic and political power. Miguel states:

[...] all large media publications share same vision of the world, especially including its commitment with capitalist order...To conclude, most of media corporations depend from other capitalist corporations, its advertisers.⁶

In 1991, PCL, CONTAG, the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB), the Attorneys General Office and Labor Inspection Secretary of the Ministry of Work and Employment created the National Permanent Forum against Violence in Rural Areas⁷. It was this group which elaborated project of Law 3734/1993, presented by Deputy Carlos Kaiat, in charge of deciding about expropriation of rural properties where it has been proved existence of Slave work. This proposal originated Slave work PCA, approved in May 2012, at the Chamber of Deputies, after years of pressure made by social movements.

The Brazilian government also adhered to this campaign and defined as National priority the eradication of Slave work. In 2002 was created the National Commission of eradication of Slave work (CONATRAE)⁸, coordinated by National Secretary of Human Rights; and in 2003 the National Plan of Eradication of Slave work⁹; and the "black list"¹⁰. All these efforts were recognized on ILO Global Report of 2005: "A global alliance against forced labor", highlighting Brazil as leader in search of solutions for this issue.

The context that allowed Proposed Constitutional Amendment be back in debate

At the beginning of 2012 some social movements plus CONATRAE and a small group of parliamentarian coordinated by Deputy Domingos Dutra, at the time president of the Commission of Human Rights and Minorities at the Chamber of Deputies, boosted a strong lobby to obtain from party leaders and the president of the Chamber of Deputies, the inclusion of Slave work PCA be in Plenary Session for voting. In March 2012, Marco Maia, president of the Chamber of Deputies informed that he would place PCA for voting on May 8,¹¹ 2012.

At that time, National Congress was living in troubled times; Senators and Deputies from ruling party and the opposition were fighting due to the setting

6. Miguel (2002, p. 165).

7. http://www.gptec.cfch.ufrrj.br/pdfs/trabalhoescravo_genese_out2007.pdf.

8. Conatrae is tripartite and equal; in this body are represented the Workers Commission, employers and Government..

9. The National Plan to Eradicate Slave Labor may be accessed at http://carep.mte.gov.br/trab_escravo/erradicacao_trab_escravo.asp.

10. Registry of Ministry of Labor and Employment records employers found exploring workers in condition analog to slavery.

11. Marco Maia, president of the Chamber of Deputies, informed on March 19, 2012, during an open session with rural workers Union leaders that He would place the PCA for voting, "but I can't grant its approval, this will depend on your work here" he declared.

up or not of a Mixed Parliamentary Inquiry Commission (MPIC) to investigate complaints of offences made by Carlos Augusto Ramos, an entrepreneur known as “Carlinhos Cachoeira”, and public and private agents, revealed by Federal Police in operations “Vegas” and “Monte Carlo”. MPIC began in May 2012 under the media spotlights, when complaints already attained Parliament members.

Due to a eroded image, caused by successive confrontations and complaints released by the press involving political parties and government members to the “Cachoeira” group, this may have contributed to make political leaders find answers to the society about his work, through voting and the approval of suggestions to solve social problems. According to Patrick Charaudeau:

[...] newspapers, radio and TV stations are eager to see this kind of news; it doesn't go a full week where, under certain circumstances –we will be subject to hear information regarding actions related to the level of popularity of politicians. And politicians, in turn, they need drama to achieve social imaginaries.¹²

Discursive events

The *Correio Braziliense* published in **Between the lines**, its opinion column signed by Denise Rothenburg, under the title of *Holy Parliamentary Inquiry Commission* that:

Thanks to Cachoeira's PIC, the Chamber of Deputies decided to put on the agenda projects going deep into *taxpayers' pockets*. And all this to show how Chamber is worried with the “do good list”.

Brazil would be another country if every six months a PIC such as one now starting at the National Congress would be opened. This because to show they are not worried or that world is more than this issue, parliamentarians listed several projects of social interest and impact. For instance if it would not be the PIC currently investigating Carlos Cachoeira businesses that are tainting the Parliament, the PIC expecting to severely punish Slave work would hardly be in debate at the Chamber of Deputies.

Since last week when PIC got off the ground, Chamber's list of proposals got a more social approach [...] this week it was time to the Slave work PIC. Its objective is expropriation of lands or urban properties where Slave work has been detected, without any form of compensation for the property; it has been under discussion since 1995. Currently the fine for having a worker in regime analog to slavery goes from R\$ 400 to R\$ 4.000.

According to Deputy Cláudio Puty (PT-PA) president of the Slave work PIC, still exist unscrupulous people making calculations: if profit is higher than fine, then

we may take the risk of keeping workers in this situation, be in farms or in cities. This because such verification is precarious, due to shortage of staff.

It will be a hard task manage making worth this proposition, since powerful Rural caucus— that already defeated the Forestry Code supported by government — is against it; the reason why is that they consider surveyor abusing when defining situations analog to slavery. They complain that even mattress thickness is a reason to impose fines.

Slave work PIC doesn't have a tenth of the flashing spotlights than Carlos Cachoeira PIC has on illegal betting businesses. Even so, its profile will be lower than Cachoeira's PIC, currently Congress pushing game and of the 'do good list'.¹³

When Rothenburg states that PCA Slave work is part of the *"do good list"* and will be voted thanks to *"holy"* Cachoeira's PIC, she wants to say through a paraphrasis that Brazilian Parliament only pays attention to the demands of society when it is involved in complaints of corruption or perks paid by taxpayers. Orlandi also explains that *"the unsaid is subsidiary to what was said [...]* in saying there is always a required unsaid"¹⁴. Does the fact of having a *"do good list"* mean the journal recognizes the existence of a do bad list in the National Congress? Among parliamentarian activities making part of the do bad list is Cachoeira's PIC which became *"Holy"*. Behind evil there is good, that evil and good well *crystallized* in our collective memory, especially through religion's speeches.

The PIC that was starting due to complaints and political disputes became a *"Holy"* one because allowed projects being part of the *"do good list"* surfaced with the objective of hiding mess, acts of corruption and give the idea that the Parliament is engaged with social causes. In this case, we are talking of a Holy PIC because made a miracle when placing into vote the Slave work PIC. Nevertheless, during these periods other lists, supposedly of the *"good"*, did not receive press coverage, as was the case of a project of law regulating land purchases by foreigners. Although social movement's lobbies efforts to grant limitations in land purchases by foreigners, the proposal was defeated due to a strong lobby of large transnational companies, mainly interested in Amazonian lands.

In this controversial discursive game—a speech *"where polysemy is controlled, the referring is disputed by interlocutors [...], in a tense relationship of dispute by the senses"*¹⁵—between the press and the Parliament regarding who *"does good"*, when the Correio Braziliense questioned Marco Maia, president of the Chamber, about when would be voted the project proposing end of 14° and 15° parliamentarian wages, the president said: *"it is strange than journalists may be more interested in this issue than in others, such as Slave work PCA. We*

13. Correio Braziliense, 09/05/2012, p. 4.

14. Orlandi (2010, p. 82).

15. Orlandi (2010, p. 86).

are voting important matters [...] and I have not seen that information in the news of main media vehicles”¹⁶. Arthur Lira, leader of the Partido Progressista (PP) at the Chamber, also states that issue of 14^o and 15^o parliamentary wages was not debated by the caucus since there were other priorities, such as Slave work PIC.¹⁷

In speeches, both two political leaderships refer to themselves as victims of a press that does not recognize parliamentary work regarding social issues. For them press is only interested in evil matters diminishing Parliament image. And the newspaper in turn stresses that “*do good list*” is related to evil. However it must be mentioned that parliamentarians had not yet discussed end of wage perks since were worried in voting “*do good list*” propositions.

This good and evil policy idea hark us back to Miguel & Biroli study about the spiral of cynicism hypothesis between media and declining political trust: “it is the media that drive a cynical position of readers making them begin to believe that politicians are basically incapable of thinking in the common good”¹⁸. And there we have another paraphrasian speech, stating that every each time politics faces an image crisis, usual approach within the political environment is to make media responsible for negative Parliament image.

In fact, it is recurring in image crisis situations that Parliament works on approval of social interest propositions or even choose a “scapegoat”: for instance if a parliamentarian is caught breaking ethics he will be judged, so others will be forgiven from their errors and other judgments. In 2004 Slave work PIC was voted in first round; this was a reply to society very indignant because of the death of three working inspectors and a driver, all of them civil servants at the Ministry of Labor and Employment killed in an ambush in Unaí, state of Minas Gerais, when going to an inspection at the farm of Noberto Mânica, city mayor’s brother.

Due to high coverage of media vehicles, the ruralist caucus - represented by the Agricultural Parliamentarian Front, changed its vote and approved a proposition with an amendment applying same rules to urban employers. After national fear caused by the “Unaí slaughter” PCA was filed away in a bottom drawer in the absence of agreement and sent to vote in second round. Up to now media has not informed how judgment developed is, an issue involving politics, latifundium and slave work.

Even if the press could identify this recurrent political maneuver in a time of image crisis and make a “*mea culpa*” regarding lack of media coverage about Slave work PIC, the Correio Braziliense and other newspapers, such as Folha de São Paulo and O Globo, neither covered several actions made by social movements to put pressure in the Parliament to vote the PCA being part of the “*do good list*”. Both the Correio Braziliense and Folha de São Paulo published opin-

16. Correio Braziliense, 23/05/2012, p. 6.

17. Correio Braziliense, 21/05/2012, p. 2-3.

18. Miguel and Biroli (2006).

ions from citizens, and not from organized social movements, at the *Opinion/Mr. Editor*, space where they publish e-mails from readers. Rodrigues states that this method used by media is not a space where readers can speak up and that this strengthens unilateralist speech of media:

However these procedures do not cancel, [...] unilateralism of enunciative relationship of media speech. In first place, because they are not in itself processes where the audience, the listener or the reader, but strategies of condescension of the speaker, and therefore subordinated to a selection made by the own media institution. In second place, because they are not dialogue procedures, but only simulations, more or less sophisticated artificial procedures.¹⁹

A strong and persuasive action was held at the Chamber the 19th of March; the visit of some political leaders participating at the First National Mobilization National of Rural Employed Women and Men asking all party leaders to vote the Slave work PCA. Large print newspapers did not cover this issue; a possible explanation for this press silence could be reader's preference for drama. As Porto explains "if good news do not attract newspapers readers, this is a sign that concept of goodness is a pre-existing idea lacking in novelty"²⁰ We can also quote Orlandi to understand why press deprives social movements of having a space in its environment: "silence is not absence of words. By imposing silence, you will not shut the door on dialogue. You will prevent the counterpart from having other speech".²¹

Rothenburg introduces justifications of ruralist caucus to oppose the Slave work PCA and reinforces that its power may impede the vote. This idea that ruralist caucus holds power at the National Congress also appears in other articles of the newspaper. But they do not explain what is this power, and it could be linked in first place to the controversial celebrated increase of Brazilian commodities exports participation; in second place, as argued by ruralists and followers in the gallery of the Plenary: "agribusiness accounts for food production in this country and generates more than 20% of Brazilian GDP". Both two arguments are questionable; the first can be defeated by economical analysis and the second one by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics. However press does not talk about other side of a development model concentrating land and primary monoculture, with a production not supplying foods for the domestic market.

The ruralist caucus power is strengthened by newspapers, through the publication of its speeches: "They lost once and may lose again", stated Deputy Luiz Carlos Heinze (PP-RS), one coordinator of the Agricultural Parliamentarian

19. Rodrigues (2002, p. 229).

20. Porto (2010, p. 35).

21. Orlandi (1992, p. 105).

Front. "Ruralist pressure was high, making the government to go back and let PCA's voting for today".²² In spite of social movement actions, including mobilization of celebrities to champion the cause, printed newspapers remained silent regarding these movements. This is the "foam language" (língua-de-espuma²³) that "from one side, they don't commit with any 'reality', and on the other, they prevent many senses going to this same 'reality'".²⁴

If we mention other controversial PCAs causing social transformations, such as PCA 215/2000 foreseeing the National Congress having exclusive competence for the approval of demarcation of land occupied by indigenous and ratify demarcation already homologated, large print media such as Folha de São Paulo and Correio Braziliense, strengthened agribusiness and its parliamentary representation, the ruralist caucus. According to social movements, what is at stake in this PCA has not been mentioned by newspapers: large stretch of land occupied by indigenous and rich in natural resources, where big corporations want to explore mainly minerals and expand its properties. "During a negotiation of ruralist caucus to call into question indigenous land conservation units, these areas are seen as obstacles to agribusiness expansion".²⁵

During May 2012 rural and urban social movement's representatives made a strong lobby and manifestations to put pressure on Federal Deputies and obtain approval of the proposition. A small group of parliamentarians contributed to the process occupying seats in the plenary of the Chamber of Deputies, making speeches at the Speaker's platform and inviting artists to defend the cause. These strategies had no repercussion at the Correio Braziliense, Folha de São Paulo and O Globo. Miguel explains that "in representative democracy political exclusion is represented by silence, and silence is not only the absence of a representative in the Parliament. It is the absence of a voice in the dispute for social world representations, and it is fought in media publications."²⁶

Mentions to manifestation of social mobilizations were made jokingly or pointing out that social pressure action in the Parliament is one form of embarrassment:

Among the artists that yesterday went to the Chamber in a demonstration in favor of Slave work PCA, and the less happy with agreement signed among leaders was actor Marcos Winter. When hearing Deputy Chico Alencar (PSol-RJ) that it was good to put pressure on the president of the Senate, José Sarney (PMDB-AP), Winter said a very low voice: "I can even kiss Sarney if that would be

22. Correio Braziliense, 09/05/2012, p. 6.

23. "Foam language" was – for instance – used by military during the regime started in 1964 in Brazil. But due to its characteristics, we may expand this notion covering every totalitarian expression in so called ". (ORLANDI, 1992, p. 102).

24. Orlandi (1992, p. 102).

25. Folha de São Paulo (11/11/2011).

26. Miguel (2002, p. 09).

the case". If it would be actress Leticia Sabatella, also present, the president of the Senate could even give in."

[...] Marco Maia's last card was authorizing a group of artists to go into the leaders meeting, in his cabinet, to compel parliamentarians opposing the proposal.²⁷

Two pictures published in front page and page 6 of edition of May 9, 2012 of the *Correio Braziliense* allowed demonstrators highlighting the significance of contemporary Slave work in Brazil. The one linked to misery, illiteracy, prejudice, social inequality, land concentration and unequal income distribution. These pictures brought to readers an image associated to the collective memory, restoring Brazilian society's hurts of the past, as Halbwachs explains:

To make our memory take profit from other's memory, it is not enough having their statements [...] it is not enough reconstruct piece by piece the image of a past event to get memories back. This reconstruction must work from data or a common notion remaining in our and also other's spirit... and this will only be possible if they made part and still continue to make part of the same society, of the same group.²⁸

In page 6, a Black woman arranges huge chains attached around her neck and in front page, mostly Black demonstrators with chained hands up to signify a cry freedom, while some white men to the bottom - all in suits and ties, see the protest. The title reinforces the idea of a protest: *"A cry against exploitation"*. Social movements have learned to plan tactics for calling the attention of journalists, especially through the use of images and, sometimes, of violence. "Nobody gets into the communicative journalistic relationship in a naïve way"²⁹ says Motta.

Berger also justifies use of this resource:

[...] this is why we see production of events with a specific objective of becoming news, or in other words, to reproduce spectacular actions to appear in media, and not to tell stories. The "media culture" produced an intuitive knowledge informing groups (cultural and political) that they must overcome the media to obtain statute of existence.³⁰

Motta defends the idea that journalistic text is the result of negotiation among the newspaper, the journalists and sources, and that every one of these three narrators interferes the negotiation with different weights and sizes. "Ne-

27. *Correio Braziliense*, 09/05/2012, p. 6.

28. Halbwachs (2006, p. 39).

29. Motta (2012).

30. Berger (2002, p. 281).

gotiations are heated because they imply with power of holding the voice and control the hegemonic version in each story becoming public.”³¹

If there is not hegemony, then the social actor with reduced political capital will remain in dispute to introduce its point of view. When sources are social movements and parliamentary minority – third story teller as Motta states in “Narrative voices and Power Games” - not defending the hegemonic model of the National Congress, being social actors with reduced political capital, dispute for publishing its point of view is unequal.

Ruralist caucus justification to fight against PCA was that “definition of Slave work is not clear in Brazilian law and it would be necessary to also separately regulate rules for expropriation of land where irregularities were noted.”³² This would mean they are unprotected and subject to work inspectors abusive controls. According to an article signed by the ruralist caucus president at the time, Deputy Homero Pereira, “the definition of Slave work is so generic and degrading, inconsistent and arbitrary, that any employer, be it urban or rural, can get a fine or be punished or have his propriety or industry expropriated if so decide work inspectors”³³. To explain what he considers arbitrariness, Homero Pereira compares Slave work PCA to Institutional Act5 (AI-5). Rural entrepreneurs’ representatives define themselves as victims persecuted by an invention, the Slave work, made by church and social and international organizations:

[...]it could be called the trap PCA, or even PCA of hypocrisy, since it is a sword ready to fall on the head of farmers [...] the agribusiness has been chosen as punch bag, target of International Left movement, Pastoral land commission, remaining of CEBs, Landless movement, certain NGOs and influent ILO sectors –as main obstacle to be defeated to reach its socialist and equalitarian objective.³⁴

Luismar Ribeiro Pinto, Contag lawyer and advisor, explains that criteria adopted by work inspectors to verify if rural workers are in analog conditions as slaves are stated in Regulatory norms elaborated by a tripartite and joint advisory commission, consisting of federal government members, Contag, National Confederation of Agriculture, “the rest is compliance of the Law”. Antonio Lucas Filho, at the time Director of Rural Employees Secretariat at Contag, and member of Conatrae, explains that article 149 of Penal Code clearly states what a condition analog to slavery is, and that before a rural employer may have its property expropriated “Justice will make a process.” Also, the leader states that “since it is very difficult to collect indemnities, what could I say about money

31. Motta (2012, p. 11).

32. Correio Braziliense, 09/05/2012, p. 6.

33. Article published in the newspaper Folha de São Paulo in July 4, 2012.

34. Deputy Lael Varella – 09/05/2012 – Plenary Speech.

coming from expropriation of a property". As an example, he mentioned the case of a Senator, accused of exploiting workers in a farm in Pará state. "Gilmar Mendes, minister of the Federal Supreme Court (STF) filed away the process in a bottom drawer for a long time" and voted against the complaint since "precariousness of conditions to what rural workers were submitted is common to most of Brazilian workers and therefore should not be criminalized".³⁵

In 2011, ILO published the "Profile of main actors involved on Brazilian Slave work". It was a series of interviews with people participating in this story: rural workers rescued and rural farmers being sued, all involved in this relationship of power. Rescued workers disclosed some definitions of what is Slave work for them:

I think that [Slave work] is the suffering a person lives in his/her work, being humiliated and attacked;[...] somebody working in a farm for the entire life getting paid nearly nothing; [...] That [work] you start at daybreak and finish at night; [...] to be threatened: if you want to leave, the guy tells you he will kill you;[...] it is the laborer [that] cannot go away because he owes money to the contractor.³⁶

Regarding employers, the few that accepted interviews, said the following:

This is a serious problem. And it is real; however this "privilege" doesn't happen only in agricultural business. You have Slave work when – and without prejudice – a nine years old child in the northeast region stops going to school and stays at home preparing meals. It is also a matter of Slave work when somebody – a Korean or a Bolivian sewing worker – remains confined at the garment workshop, isn't it? And due to the unlawfulness complaint threat, he/she keeps working;[...] [Slave work] does not exist. [...] what we see is the usual work. This story of Slave work must end. Mine became a Slave work industry [...] There are not recruited people coming here to work that will not be allowed to leave. They may leave at any time, whenever they decide it.³⁷

When analyzing Plenary Chamber speeches regarding arguments opposed to PCA, it may be seen ruralists are in great concern. They do not want to establish precedents allowing right to property be questioned through expropriation, in other words seizing properties without indemnity, since Federal Constitution foresees expropriation based in social interest, for the agrarian reform, rural properties not fulfilling a social role. The ruralist caucus says in the plenary that they prefer this matter be treated as a heinous crime, "this is a poli-

35. <http://congressoemfoco.ao.br/noticias> (24/02/2012).

36. OIT (2011 p. 32-34).

37. OIT (2011 p. 36).

ce problem, the landowner must be penalized, even heinous crime is acceptable; not seizing”, argued federal Deputy Nelson Marquezelli. “By foreseeing expropriation, without any indemnity of land where took place mentioned Slave work, that PCA is another attack to private property”.³⁸

Debate on Slave work PCA at the Chamber of Deputies was approved, but this fact does not mean end of discussion. Currently proposition is being analyzed by Federal Senate and it is there where the ruralist caucus will continue old speech to prevent its approval. As president of ruralist caucus at the time, Federal Deputy Homero Said in an article published at Folha de São Paulo, “Agricultural Parliamentary Front, made up by more than 200 Deputies and Senators, decided to question PCA 438, acceding to calls not only of rural production sector but also from industry and trade”.³⁹

This is an old speech because corporative defense of right to property was also done from 1987, during National Constituent Assembly debates, when the “Big center group⁴⁰” could influence in the result of vote regarding agrarian matters. Orlandi explains that paraphrasic speech processes “produce different formulations of same sedimented saying.”⁴¹ And written press transcribed the position of these social actors in the same way had covered current debate on Slave work.

Alysson Paulinelli (PFL-MG) Deputy and former minister of Agriculture, stated yesterday that Senator Severo Gomes report (PMDBSP) makes rural owners to feel in an unstable and unease situation in view of his agrarian reform proposals [...]he intends mobilizing constituents “having same worries”[...]“In case there is not a clear specification, we may even have municipalities civil servants making expropriations”, he said. (Folha de **São Paulo**, 09/06/1987, p.A4)⁴².

Orlandi explains that different speeches, originated in different history periods and social places, may be the reason to say what has been said, but with new clothes. It is to say a re-meaning of the subject face to what has been said; a paraphrasis of what was said, having other senses.

In spite of polarization in debate on agrarian reform at the Constituent with participation of social movements, winners were rural oligarchy parliamentarians, and press repeated same speech than today. “And the position denied in name of principle of liberal journalism – impartiality – confirms the function that history has reserved for the press. It is the press that ultimately

38. Deputy Lael Varella (09/05/2012 – Plenary Speech) <http://www2.camara.gov.br/atividade-legislativa/plenario/discursos>.

39. Folha de São Paulo, 04/07/2012.

40. Majoritarian parliament group at the Constituent, supported by the Executive and representatives of most conservative trends in society, including the Ruralist Democratic Union.

41. Orlandi (2010, p. 36).

42. <http://www2.senado.gov.br/bdsf/item/id/130021>.

must organize the world through the speech, as it is worth to who dominates it.”⁴³ The editorial page of *Folha de São Paulo* expressed its opinion on agrarian reform at the Constituent Assembly as follows:

Far from being a revolutionary or insidious idea, nor a panacea for all Brazilian land problems, the agrarian reform is simply ineffective for what she intends to do. There is no need of backing somebody up with a conservative hysteria to see the imperative urgency of a rural restructuring, in the manner of land distribution, but this is nothing more than a myth [...] Brazilian agrarian problem is not about distribution, but basically about production. And to be solved idle land must be taxed in a rigorous and progressive scale —only kept as reserve value — as part of an agricultural policy stimulating land use maximization and not an unsteady furious expropriating walk.⁴⁴

When talking about contemporary Slave work, reference is not non-compliance of labor law. We are talking of men, women and children with hold during long periods, sometimes years, due to three main reasons: “they believe they have to pay a debt illegally attributed to them, they are far away from nearest road thus making impossible any escape, or are constantly threatened by guards that at the limit, shoot them in an escape attempt”.⁴⁵ The article 149 of the Penal Code defines as follows contemporary Slave work:

To reduce somebody to a condition analog to slave, be it through forced labor or exhaustive workdays, or by submitting to degrading working conditions, or restricting by any means, its locomotion due to undertaken debt with the employer or the agent.

Ruralist caucus parliamentarian representatives –there were no parliamentarian representatives of urban entrepreneurs at the plenary of the Chamber of Deputies to protest against the PCA–said they were vulnerable to work fiscal’s interpretations, who could expropriate properties due to mattress thickness out of regulated sizes. However, as previously stated, speeches at the plenary questioned the right to property as an inviolable principle; even if inside a property human beings are subject to slavery. There are no records of any rural owner being jailed or having lost his property for unfulfilling any regulating norm in the Tripartite Commission, such as a mattress thickness out of regulated sizes.

43. Berger (2002, p. 279).

44. *Folha de São Paulo*, 10/08/1987, p. A2. <http://www2.senado.gov.br/bdsf/item/id/128298>.

45. OIT (2006, p.17).

Conclusion

In the specific Slave work PCA case, but that may be related to other social guidelines present at the National Congress, balance of power among narrators - newspaper, journalists, social movements and slave workers—will always be complex considering that journalists and newspaper are not independent, because they are intrinsically involved by political and economic influences, also involving other narrators: the politicians and entrepreneurs. The hegemonic way of thinking of a majority in the Parliament regarding this matter and the economic lobby's power of big companies strangles social lobby. Defense of inviolability of property and of a developmental model not considering social policies will be the reason of permanent conflicts among these narrators. Social movement actors must understand that ideological training of political game subjects, and then understand meaning of these relationships of acting power in social classes and invest in media resources, mainly alternatives eventually making possible confer visibility to its causes and particularly create a conflict between what has already been done and what can be instituted to produce a new thing.

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