**ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE**　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**OPEN ACCESS**

# MARIELLE FRANCO AND THE MEDIA'S RACISM

### [1,][*]Renata Almeida Danin and [2]José Gracildo de Carvalho Júnior

[1]Master's in Public Security at the Institute of Philosophy and Human Sciences - IFCH/UFPA
[2]Professor of the Post-Graduation Program in Public Security at the Institute of Philosophy and Human Sciences - IFCH/UFPA

## ABSTRACT

In this article we analyze the discursive forms present in the mediatic discourse of an international periodical about the coverage of the murder of Councilwoman Marielle Franco and the relations between police violence and racism, impregnated in the debate about the coverage of the event. The objective is to explore the current scenario using the qualitative methodology of discourse analysis by the Dutch sociologist Van Dijk and how this discussion portrays the black man and the police, through the analysis of an exclusive report of the online version of the Washington Post, March 23, 2018, with the title: After Marielle Franco's murder, I'm not hopeful for black Brazilians. The results obtained in this study indicate that the negative discourse directed at black individuals was a priority in the journalistic coverage evaluated and corroborates for the conception of potentially segregating ideas. Characterizing itself as a new modality of racism.

## INTRODUCTION

The media discourse has a prominent role in mass communication, because, through it, information, knowledge and form opinion. In summary, mass communication today acts as one of the main means of transmission and construction of ideology, and as Van Dijk (2008) alert is not any conception that is transmitted, but that of the symbolic elites or dominant elites: manufacturers knowledge, moral standards, beliefs, attitudes, norms, ideologies and public values. Van Dijk (2000) broadens the notion of racism and defines it as a social practice of ethnic-racial inequality, of gender, exposing inequities based on social classes. The formulation of this concept is linked to another central concept in the theoretical contribution, that of the "symbolic elites". The political, educational, educational and media elite control access to most public discourses respected by society. Due to this power, they have a specific role in the reproduction of concepts and values, that is, in the transmission of the dimension of the symbolic that surrounds the social fabric, being responsible for the influence of discursive forms of racism. These forms that Van Dijk (2008) conceptualizes as the "new racism", subtle and symbolic, are expressed, legitimized and confirmed by texts and conversations, including TV shows and news.

*\*Corresponding author:* **Renata Almeida Danin,**
Master's in Public Security at the Institute of Philosophy and Human Sciences - IFCH/UFPA.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study has a qualitative approach, we will analyze the discursive forms present in the mediatic discourse of an international periodical about the coverage of the murder of councilwoman Marielle Franco and the relations between power and racism, impregnated in the debate of the coverage of the event. The objective is to explore the current scenario using the qualitative methodology of the discourse analysis proposed by the Dutch sociologist Van Dijk and how this discussion comes to portray the discursive racism, through the narrative analysis of a report of the online version of the American newspaper The Washington Post, of March 23, 2018, in the column Global Opinions, titled: After Marielle Franco's murder, I'm not hopeful for black Brazilians. The choice of working the methodology of the Dutch researcher Teun Van Dijk is justified by the importance of his work on racism, immigration and the media in Europe and Latin America, being the main theoretician to deal with the subject of racism within the methodological field of Discourse Analysis. In addition to triangulate the study using the NVIVO 10 software as an auxiliary tool in Content Analysis of the report, using the word cloud, the light of the theoretical reference. We will use in our analysis and discussion of results, comparative tables from the Corpus of Research, composed of The New York Times, The Guardian and The

Washington Post. The purpose of this corpus in our analysis is only comparative and exemplary. Giving the reader the opportunity to perceive the differences and similarities in the speeches and especially to the main clipping of our research. The choice of the newspapers present in the corpus is due to the recognized reliability in the journalistic environment and the scope, since these are newspapers with worldwide reach.

**Discursive Racism**

Starting with the title of the report published in the online version of the Washington Post, March 23, 2018, column Global Opinions, which will be the cut of this work. The scenario of black population's hopelessness is revealed through the depiction of the murder of Marielle Franco in a scenario of potential confrontation of Brazilian racism. These and other symbols and meanings will be explored in the course of this work. The importance of the Discourse Analysis for the study of racism in the media is mainly due to three reasons: a) the nature of racism in today's Western societies, where there is legal equality, but there is persistent social discrimination; b) the reach of the major media and its fundamental role in the reproduction of racism, its status as a space for power disputes, and often the lack of alternative sources of information accessible to the majority of the population; and (c) the existence of more or less subtle expressions of racism and positive group building strategies, which requires a careful analysis of the language mechanisms used. Van Dijk stands out for establishing a link between textual elements and social structures for the theme of racism, facilitating the identification of mechanisms often implicit in the text, with the aid of sociocognition.



**Figure 1. Headline from *The Washington Post,*March 23,2018.**

In the first excerpt, here titled, E1, the headline reads: "After the murder of Marielle Franco, there is no hope for Brazilian blacks." According to Van Dijk (1991) in empirical studies on the media in Amsterdam, in most ethnic minority news the resolution category was absent, implying that there is no solution to the problem presented.

**Table 1.Comparative analysis of the periodicals word cloudsusing NVIVO 10**

| Killing of Rio de Janeiro Councilwoman Critical of Police Rattles Brazil. World Column *The New York Times,*March 15, 2018. | Marielle Franco: Brazil's favelas mourn the death of a Champion. World Column *The Guardian,*March18, 2018. |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| A black female politician was gunned down in Rio. Now she's a global symbol. World Column *The Washington Post,*March19, 2018. | After Marielle Franco's murder, I'm not hopeful for black Brazilians. Opinions Column *The Washington Post*, March23, 2018. |
|  |  |

**Table 2. Periodicals Headlines from *the New York Times*, *The Guardian* e *The Washington Post*, March 2018**

| | |
|---|---|
| Killing of Rio de Janeiro Councilwoman Critical of Police Rattles Brazil.<br>World Column<br>Frontpage<br>***The New York Times***,March, 15/ 2018. | Marielle Franco: Brazil's favelas mourn the death of a Champion.<br>World Column<br>Frontpage<br>***The Guardian***,March, 18/ 2018. |
| A <u>black female</u> politician was gunned down in Rio. Now she's a global symbol.<br>World Column<br>Frontpage<br>***The Washington Post***,March 19/ 2018. | After Marielle Franco's murder, I'm not hopeful for <u>black Brazilians.</u><br>Global Opinions Column<br>***The Washington Post***,March 23/ 2018. |

Van Dijk's analysis of discourse also adds fundamental considerations to our analysis:

The headlines on ethnic minorities are often restricted to events such as social problems, cultural characterization, complications and negative characterizations, threats, crimes, and violence. The negative points of "we" are rarely emphasized in the formation of headlines, especially when it comes to "our" racism, which is a great taboo (VAN DIJK, 2008).

Topics of crime and violence, for example, are not simply presented as such, but as black crime and black violence. Many topics that could be covered as they are for whites are irrelevantly culturalized, attributing to them special dimensions that receive different treatment from the media. This means that racist ideological implications can occur not only because little is said, as in the case of implicit presuppositions, but also because so many irrelevant things are being said (VAN DIJK, 1991).

## DISCUSSION

The relationship between race and police throughout the narrative used in the report of The Washington Post is supported by a cloud of words, which expresses the essence of the report. From the cloud of words, we can infer that there is evidence of racism according to the vision of Teun Van Dijk. Racism spread by the symbolic elites, and the hypothetical manifestation of Institutional Racism represented in the image by police and the direct association with skin color (black). On a secondary level we have relations between poverty (poor) in the favela with killings and violence (brutality). It is inferred from the comparative analysis of the clouds of words that the Washington Post presents in its journalistic discourse ideologies that relate race and police and this information is disseminated in its newspaper. It is important to emphasize that these are remarkably similar clouds, but of different notebooks, the first cloud is from the World column and the second from the Opinion Column. When compared to the other papers present in the Corpus (upper part of Table 1), considering that everyone approaches the same subject (murder of council woman Marielle Franco), there is no direct correlation between race in the New York Times and police. The New York Times has the word killings as the most cited and the word black comes only in the background, the word police appears in the background, along with violence, rights, women and statement intervention.

The New York Times addressed the event more fairly. To enrich our comparative analysis, we bring the British newspaper The Guardian, which includes the word police, the favela of the tide and Rio, as the most cited word in its cloud. However, there is no mention or association with race or color of the skin. Strengthening the evidence that the Washington Post carries in its editorial line the dissemination of ideologies of the symbolic elites. We will now analyze the headlines and cover images of the articles in our research corpus. The analysis of the corpus raises important practical questions for our work and helps us to understand comparatively how it occurs to the dissemination of the message that carries an ideology behind everyday news. Revealing the control exercised by Symbolic Elites. This control can be carried out in a communicative situation in the media, through the speech acts, when using discursive structures in the elaboration of news. It is interesting to note that in building a story, editors decide which are the most relevant topics to be approached according to their ideology. In this way, the way the news is elaborated can misinform rather than inform the prioritized, only, the negative aspects of the social actors (VAN DIJK, 2008). The New York Times and The Guardian, in addition to bringing the character Marielle Franco stamped in their cover photos, do not make direct mention of race in their main headlines. Unlike the Washington Post, which in addition to not bringing Marielle to the covers, emphasizes the racial tone in the headlines. But these manifestations do not happen by chance. According to Van Dijk (2008), discursive structures can influence the mental models of society, modifying their ideology through manipulation. This happens through the repetition of the discourse on similar events when representing negatively the social actors. These powerful groups simultaneously control the context and situation model of society, which affects personal and social cognition, influencing their attitudes, ideology and knowledge. It emphasizes that personal and social cognition, thus influenced, can control social actions that are consistent with the interests of powerful groups in general and symbolic elites. And, thus, building or influencing the mental models of events, generalizing stereotypes (VAN DIJK, 2008). According to Van Dijk (2008) the leaders of the dominant groups, those who determine the ideological direction, establish the editorial line in the media, develop curricula for textbooks and education, and formulate the priorities of academic research or judicial investigation. A more in-depth analysis of domination, defined as abuse of power, requires exclusive access or control over scarce social resources. One such resource is preferential access to mass media and public discourse, a resource shared by members of "symbolic" elites such as politicians, journalists, academics, writers, teachers and so on (Van Dijk, 1991). Obviously, to manipulate many others through text and speech, it is necessary to have access to some form of public discourse, such as parliamentary debates, news, opinion articles, textbooks, scientific articles, novels, TV programs, internet etc. Thus, Van Dijk (2008) introduced a contextual criterion that the recipients of manipulation, as a form of abuse of power, can be defined as victims, and this means that somehow, they must be defined as lacking crucial resources to resist, detect or avoid manipulation. Necessarily, this may involve:

- Lack of relevant knowledge, so that no counter-argument can be formulated against false, incomplete or biased statements;
- Norms, values and fundamental ideologies that cannot be denied or ignored;
- Strong emotions, traumas, etc. that make people vulnerable;
- Social positions, professions, status, etc., which induce people to tend to accept speeches, arguments, etc. people, groups or organizations.

Throughout the report, many reports are made simultaneously, one speaks about the author himself who declares himself black and a victim of prejudice and although it has a tone of denunciation and indignation, it is written using various discursive techniques that propagate the new racism, racism subtle and sometimes unintentional approach proposed by Van Dijk. It is important to emphasize that since it is an American newspaper, the issue of racism and police violence directed at blacks does not cause them any astonishment (the US is responsible for the higher rates of incarceration, police violence and indices that put blacks and Latinos as constant social victims) The session is the Global Opinions, which brings together journalists from around the world to bring contributions on issues of strong international impact. But the public of this newspaper is mostly white, residing in developed countries. So, in a position of power hierarchy, they are part of a socially superior position. And the media follow their role of informing but manipulating between the lines and directing their action for the maintenance of privileges or those privileged by the system (men, white and of good social standing). It brings the information, without much reflection on the possibility of change or on the importance of the reader's role in changing this scenario (existing worldwide, especially in countries such as USA, France, England and South Africa, contradicting the first paragraph of the report). The headline itself brings the news of the murder and the reflection that there is no solution, that there is no hope (accept racism, accept police violence, accept the corrupt state). This kind of mediatic discourse, in innocent tone and of denunciation, can be very harmful to society.

## Conclusion

From the critical analysis carried out in this article, we have seen some elements that characterize the reproduction of a new racism in the article titled "After Marielle Franco's murder, I'm not hopeful for Brazilians black" published in the US newspaper The Washington Post. So, when the media conveys black matter, they are often restricted to social problems, negative aspects, crime and violence, always emphasizing the negative points and directing the focus of the reader to the problem and not to the cause or cause, revealing a position on the issue. The media, by delivering a primarily negative discourse from the black's point of view, may be contributing to the reinforcement of generalist actions conceived by the state. However, the position that there will be a worsening or that there is nothing to be done about it is very clear in this report, strengthening the exclusionary measures and silencing potential forms of change, which is quite characteristic of the new racism, since it is worth of actions that relate to racism that is expressed in other ways. By analyzing the speeches of the symbolic elites and focusing on a report from an online newspaper, we do not want to blame them or detract from the effort made in the treatment of this topic. It is only intended to alert that certain forms of exposing the racial question, without considering it as a historical and social phenomenon, collaborates with the maintenance of the wrong look on the subject. Thus, to present the murder of a black woman and councilwoman, without giving a glance on the relations of gender, race and power, reinforces practices and relations of domination. Discourse analysis is one of the possibilities of resistance to discriminatory and unjust practices.

The idea is to contribute to the construction of new looks and discourses about race, especially the Brazilian black. In addition to broadening the discourses before the subject and include the speech of the people to whom the actions are directed. It is important not only to dominate the knowledge of the symbolic elites. This is just one of the ways in the fight against the new racism.

## REFERENCES

ARAUJO, F. 2018. "After Marielle Franco's murder, I'm not hopeful for black Brazilians" https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2018/03/23/after-marielle-francos-murder-im-not-hopeful-for-black-brazilians/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.898cfae7093d.

FAIOLA, A., LOPES, M. 2018. "A black female politician was gunned down in Rio. Now she's a global symbol." https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/a-black-female-politician-was-gunned-down-in-rio-now-shes-a-global-symbol/2018/03/19/98483cba-291f-11e8-a227-fd2b009466bc_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.2cfa0c0c8720.

LONDOÑO, E. 2018. "Killing of Rio de Janeiro Councilwoman Critical of Police Rattles Brazil." https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/15/world/americas/killing-of-rio-de-janeiro-councilwoman-critical-of-police-rattles-brazil.html.

PHILIPS, D. (2018) "Marielle Franco: Brazil's favelas mourn the death of a Champion", https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/18/marielle-franco-brazil-favelas-mourn-death-champion.

VAN DIJK, T. A. A. Racism and the press. London: Routledge, 1991.

VAN DIJK, T.A. New(s) racism: a discourse analytical approach. In: COTTLE, S. Ethnic minorities and the media: changing cultural boundaries. Philadelphia: Open University Press, p. 33-49, 2000.

VAN DIJK, T.A. Discurso e poder. São Paulo: Contexto, 2008.

WACQUANT, L. Punishing the poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

*******