

## POWER AND PHOTOGRAPHY: SIGNS OF INFORMATION IN PUBLIC AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

### O PODER E A FOTOGRAFIA: OS SIGNOS DE INFORMAÇÃO NA COMUNICAÇÃO PÚBLICA E POLÍTICA

### EL PODER Y LA FOTOGRAFÍA: LOS SIGNOS DE INFORMACIÓN EN LA COMUNICACIÓN PÚBLICA Y POLÍTICA



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#### ABSTRACT

This research aims to understand how photography is constituted as a sign of information on the Instagram account of the Federal Government of Brazil. To achieve this, we will conduct a study of discursivity at a non-verbal level, analyzing a set of 15 photographs published on this social network during the week of March 30, 2024, in carousel format. Considering the role of language in society and of discourse in the organization of reality, this general objective unfolds into other specific objectives, selected according to the Principle of Pertinence (Barthes, 2001). Among them is the reflection on the relationships between information and power, as well as between public communication, oriented toward citizenship, and political communication, oriented toward ideological propaganda. Anchored in Barthesian semiology, the following analytical categories were adopted: discourse (sub-category: photography) and power according to Barthes (1978), information according to Capurro (2007), and the reflection by Brandão (2009) on public and political communication. Finally, we observe that the fabric of discourse indicates the subjection of the signs of information to the meanings of Lula's Power, converting public communication into political communication.

**Keywords:** Public Communication. Political Communication. Photography. Information. Discourse.

#### RESUMO

Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo compreender de que forma a fotografia se constitui como signo de informação no Instagram do Governo Federal do Brasil. Para isso, realizaremos um estudo da discursividade em nível não verbal, de um conjunto de 15 fotografias publicadas nesta rede social, na semana do dia 30 de março de 2024, em formato carrossel. Considerando o papel da linguagem na sociedade, e do discurso na organização da realidade, esse objetivo geral se desdobra em outros, específicos, eleitos pelo Princípio da Pertinência (Barthes, 2001). Entre eles está a reflexão sobre as relações entre informação e poder, assim como entre a comunicação pública, orientada para a cidadania, e a comunicação política, orientada para a propaganda ideológica. Ancoradas na semiologia Barthesiana, pautamos as seguintes categorias de análise: discurso (sub-categoria, fotografia) e poder para Barthes (1978), informação para Capurro (2007), e na reflexão de

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Brandão (2009) sobre comunicação pública e política. Por fim, observamos que a trama do discurso indicia o assujeitamento dos signos da informação aos sentidos do Poder de Lula, convertendo a comunicação pública em uma comunicação política.

**Palavras-chave:** Comunicação Pública. Comunicação Política. Fotografia. Informação. Discurso.

## RESUMEN

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo comprender de qué manera la fotografía se constituye como signo de información en el Instagram del Gobierno Federal de Brasil. Para ello, se realizará un estudio de la discursividad a nivel no verbal, a partir del análisis de un conjunto de 15 fotografías publicadas en esta red social durante la semana del 30 de marzo de 2024, en formato carrusel. Considerando el papel del lenguaje en la sociedad y del discurso en la organización de la realidad, este objetivo general se desdobra en otros objetivos específicos, seleccionados según el Principio de Pertinencia (Barthes, 2001). Entre ellos se encuentra la reflexión sobre las relaciones entre información y poder, así como entre la comunicación pública, orientada a la ciudadanía, y la comunicación política, orientada a la propaganda ideológica. Ancladas en la semiología barthesiana, se adoptaron las siguientes categorías de análisis: discurso (subcategoría: fotografía) y poder para Barthes (1978), información para Capurro (2007), y la reflexión de Brandão (2009) sobre comunicación pública y política. Finalmente, observamos que la trama del discurso evidencia la sujeción de los signos de la información a los sentidos del Poder de Lula, convirtiendo la comunicación pública en una comunicación política.

**Palabras clave:** Comunicación Pública. Comunicación Política. Fotografía. Información. Discurso.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Language, as a system of signs, and the discourses we produce through it, are forms of man's intervention in the world, which constitute a dialectical game through which the subject realizes himself, relates to the other (or others), and understands and explains the world around him. There is no subject outside language, just as there is no non-discourse (Barthes, 1981).

Media discourses, in turn, occupy a privileged place in society, since they are produced and distributed quickly and comprehensively: they are everywhere, all the time. Constituted by a diversity of languages, they manifest themselves in different ways, in multiple supports, and are intermediaries of social daily life. Therefore, such discourses can be opinion makers, consensus, reproduction or transformation of ways of being in the world.

It is these media discourses, for example, that express the places of power in the social structure, and offer lenses through which we can read this world. Therefore, the media space is also a public space (Habermas apud Correia, 1998). In addition to being constituted by the discourses of private life, consumption and leisure, they should be a place for the circulation of discourses about collective life, what we need to share as a society. In this sense, it deserves a close look at the very notion of what is public, and of public communication.

The concept of "public" indicates a wide range of meanings and contexts, from the public realm of information and resources, to the public space where social and political interactions take place. Public communication, on the other hand, ranges from government and institutional communication to mass media and social networks on the internet, where individuals can express themselves and interact on a global scale. The task of guaranteeing communication of this nature is everyone's, but above all, of the institutions that work for citizenship, and that, therefore, are also crossed by political institutions, of active participation in the construction of society through the propagation of certain ideas of the world, which want to be dominant.

Added to this scenario is the diversity of languages, formats and supports through which media discourses, and therefore political audiences, materialize. According to Kossoy (2000), we live in the civilization of the image, a cultural and social phenomenon in which discursive forms do not materialize solely, nor primarily, in verbal form, but overflow into imagetic languages, with the production of videos, photographs, illustrations and a myriad of other manifestations and developments, which circulate beyond the traditional means of communication, also in cyberspace.

Photography, as a particular reference of these manifestations, is a preponderant form of visual communication and as a discourse, it is multifaceted. It can be used in different ways

to communicate, inspire, provoke reflections and point to various perspectives of reality, contributing to the construction of an idea of the world and the formation of identities. As a means of capturing and "freezing" moments, events, and lived realities, photography carries information, produces meaning, and offers a tangible, and often emotionally impactful, visual interpretation of the world around us.

These are the assumptions that motivated us to combine: discourse, communication (public and political), information, photographic image and power, translating them into the following research problem: how photography constitutes itself as a sign of information on the Instagram of the Federal Government of Brazil. This general objective unfolds into other specific ones, chosen by the Principle of Belonging (Barthes, 2001), such as the reflection on the relations between information and power, as well as between public communication, oriented towards citizenship, and political communication, oriented towards ideological propaganda.

To answer this question, we chose to carry out a study of discursivity at a non-verbal level, from a set of 15 photographs published on *Instagram* (a social network on the internet), in the week of March 30, 2024, in carousel format by the profile *@govbr*. Anchored in Barthesian semiology, as the theoretical foundation of the research and method of approaching the object, we guided the following categories of analysis: discourse (sub-category, photography) and power, both for Barthes (1978), information, for Capurro (2007), and public communication, for Brandão (2009).

## 2 SEMIOLOGY: A THEORY AND A METHOD

Semiology is the science that studies signs and the processes of meaning production. According to Roland Barthes (1978), semiology is a discipline that examines how signs function in systems of signification. He says that signs are the fundamental units of meaning that make up complex semiotic systems. The semiologist, when speaking of the construction of the sign, distinguished the "signifier", which is the physical form of the sign (for example, a written word or a gesture), from the "signified", which is the concept or idea associated with the signifier. The simultaneous association of both generates what we call a sign. A set of signs organized in a system, in turn, constitutes Language.

Barthes (1978) states that society uses language to structure reality, organize signs and weave a discourse to "understand" the world around it. When we analyze the ways in which this discursivity manifests itself, we will perceive expressed in these manifestations, the ideas (or ideologies) that certain subjects or groups have of reality. In this way, we affirm that Power is always present in the discourse.

Above all, because of the old tenacity of a Barthesian certainty: what makes language suffer is ideology. Our Western languages are tired of making sense, in vicious and vicious semantic circles. We have arrived at a kind of engorgement, of semantic bottling, in which the meanings fight and self-annul, in a historical-discursive situation that Barthes characterized. (BARTHES, 1978, p.44)

Semiology is a theory and it is a methodology. As an investigation procedure, it is constituted through the Principle of Relevance (Barthes, 2001), which presupposes the explanation of facts, linked to a point of view, taking advantage of certain traits and discarding others. It is the pertinence between the object and its problematization that is materialized in a set of categories of analysis, responsible for intermediating the translinguistic (social reality) and the discourse. The author says that anchored by these categories we can question the discourses about the relations of meaning they produce among themselves and with the translinguistic (that which, strictly speaking, is outside a certain discourse, but crosses it).

These categories are also markers that point to structural elements of this reality, observable in the use of figures of speech, their conflicts, their subversions and their achievements. In this study, the *a priori categories* are: discourse (sub-category photography), power, information and public communication.

Guided by these questions, we cut out our corpus of analysis: a post made by the Federal Government of Brazil, on the social network Instagram, on March 30, 2024. There are 10 photographs in the form of a carousel (which brings together 15 images), compiled in a single post. To make such a cut, we established a set of criteria that, in a coherent way, preserves the photographic image as the only narrative. Thus, we exclude cards, videos and photographs with graphic intervention.

As part of the methodology, the conceptualization of the analytical categories will provide us with the theoretical assumptions to study their discursive marks in the structure of the text, in the use of figures of speech, and in the game between the signs constituted by the chosen images.

## 2.1 SPEECH

Barthes (1978) explains discourse as the possibility of saying something about something to someone. It is a dialectical game, based on the structure and mobility of signs, which combined give the receiver the opportunity to construct meanings about what is being said. Barthes (1981) believes that all the discourses we produce, but also those to which we connect, are constituted by who we are, the time in which we are living, by the relationships we create with the subjects who make up the scenarios with us, and by the way we install meanings in the text fabric.

As a category of analysis, to think about discourse is to think about its form, the resources we use to construct our narratives, the organization we propose to signs and the plasticity we give it, especially because the grammar of languages, in some way, crystallizes certain structures, and they are tensioning of the senses, which often force us to say.

It is not only phonemes, words and syntactic articulations that are subject to a parole regime, since we cannot combine them in any way; it is the entire sheet of discourse that is fixed by a network of rules, constraints, oppressions, repressions, massive or tenuous at the rhetorical level, subtle and acute at the grammatical level [...]. (Barthes, 1978, p. 14).

In the case of this investigation, the language of discourse is visual, and its form is photography, so to think about its grammar, or its foundations, is to think about the objective principles that can affect semiosis, and its polysemy. Therefore, photography is a sub-category of analysis.

### **2.1.1 Photography**

When we look at the theme in Barthes (1984), we find an association between photography and death, like a death certificate. Historically, it is marked by the action of reproducing to infinity something or some moment that happened only once, but that through this materiality can be revisited by the reader. For Barthes (1984), every photograph represents a referent, present in the image through an aesthetic trait that reproduces it, but which after the registration, as a referent, no longer exists in our space of time, outside the photographic image.

However, it is the photographer who makes a choice, when he finds the referent, in the act of registration. According to Flusser (2002), this gesture is characterized as a leap, or a series of leaps, through which the photographer overcomes the barriers that separate time and space. From his lens, he looks, limits and puts into perspective what he wants to resonate with the image. On the other hand, in this act, he also delimits and excludes what he does not want to capture, what he wants to leave on the sidelines, allowing us to think about what the photograph does not show, but which may have been there at that moment.

Barthes (1981) says that these choices are guided by the photographer's ideology, and his subjective perception of the captured object and the world. Therefore, when we propose to analyze a photographic record, it is necessary to rescue certain contexts from which the subject speaks, so that we can recognize the meanings produced not only by what we see, but also from what is absent in the image. For the author, photography communicates different meanings for each reader, and for the photographer. Seeking to objectify these

distinctions, he associates these meanings to the feelings provided by the photographic image in the subjects.

There is a *studium* and a *punctum* in the photographs for each reader. "The *Punctum* of a photo is the chance that stings me in it" (Barthes, 1984, p. 28), that which particularly touches me, and may even indicate a feeling of loss or pain. The *Studium* is that which, in the image, carries a historical or social relevance, reflecting the intentions of the person who is photographing, and which can be perceived as a function of the culture of the person who reads it. In other words, after all, what makes us want to record a scene? They are "the same vague, uniform, irresponsible interests that we have for people, spectacles, books, which we consider distinct" (Barthes, 1984, p. 27). To observe these two elements is to signify the photographic image.

## 2.2 POWER

The manifestation of power is present in the most varied social actions, whether formal or informal, passing through the fraternal and family relationship, and moving to business organizations and political institutions. Power, for Barthes (1978), however, is not a matter of polarization (where some have it and others do not), but it is one of the means of ideological expression present in human relations and that is not reserved to the spaces of the State or institutionalized hierarchies (Barthes, 1978). It invariably accompanies our history, but it varies over time and contexts, and also exists as a potency, a libido that gives pleasure to the world.

We then guess that power is present in the finest mechanisms of social exchange: not only in the State, in classes, in groups, but also in fashions, in current opinions, in spectacles, in games, in sports, in information, in family and private relationships, and even in the liberating impulses that try to contest it [...] (Barthes, 1978, p.6).

In turn, language appears here as an alternative expression for these relations, and discourse can behave as excluding or inclusive, depending on the way in which power manifests itself, and in the face of it, it can mean its maintenance or subversion.

## 2.3 INFORMATION

According to Capurro (2007), two contexts in which the term information is used must be taken into account : the act of communicating knowledge and the act of shaping the mind. In the sense of communicated knowledge, it plays an important role in contemporary society, since it refers to the set of knowledge gathered on a given subject that can be transmitted or shared. In the second context, that of shaping the mind, it refers to the consequence of data

processing, in such a way that it represents a modification in the knowledge of the human or non-human system, which receives it.

Information can be presented in written form (printed or numerical), oral, sound or audio and visual, and its intense and fast circulation is one of the main characteristics of our society, called the information society.

Reinforcing the meaning of Capurro (2007), Hohlfeldt (2001) says that information is a set of organized and processed data, which can produce meaning or knowledge. It has the potential to be stored, transmitted by various means of communication, and interpreted. "In its etymological sense, 'inform' means 'to give shape to'. But what exactly is being 'formatted'? On the one hand, matter, very certainly, because it is a matter of elaborating material traces", on the other, a potential communication that enables the sharing of meanings between consciousnesses (Hohlfeldt 2001, p.17). Thus, information is a communication that can be activated and understood by the subjects of the discourse.

## 2.4 PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

The main concept of public communication concerns the practice of communication carried out by government organizations and public institutions to inform, engage and interact with citizens, legitimate ways for a government to bring information to the attention of all. This field encompasses a variety of activities and strategies aimed at promoting civic participation and building trust in so-called public institutions.

According to the author Brandão (2009), to the extent that public communication is oriented towards accountability, engaging the population in the programs adopted, recognizing the actions that are promoted in the political, economic and social areas, promoting a public debate, can also be recognized as an instrument for building the public agenda.

The communication promoted by the governments (federal, state and municipal) can be concerned with awakening civic sentiment (examples of recent advertising campaigns are: "the best of Brazil is the Brazilian" and "good example"); (elections, recently the referendum on the sale of firearms and ammunition); protect and promote citizenship (vaccination campaigns, traffic accidents, etc.), or call on citizens to fulfill their duties (the "Lion" of the Federal Revenue, military enlistment). (BRANDÃO 2009, p.5)

The Federal Constitution of Brazil recognizes and guarantees the right to information as a fundamental right of citizens, establishing the obligation of public bodies to provide information of public interest. In this sense, the author observes a gradual change in the scenario of public communication from the first decade of the twenty-first century. For her,

this change is linked both to the growing demands for transparency and accountability, and to the transformations in the field of communication, especially with the popularization of social media.

Brandão (2009) recalls that the concept of public communication must take into account the different agents involved in the communication process and recognize their interdependence. Under this assumption, an effective approach would involve the collaboration and active participation of all these actors, aiming to promote dialogue, inclusion and accountability in the public sphere. However, even with the advances of the last decades, it is noticeable that there are still setbacks in the development and implementation of public communication projects in Brazil.

According to Duarte (2009), one of the main challenges in this sector is to make this issue a priority within organizations, by allowing the population to know about the actions developed for the dissemination of information. Still, it is possible to highlight another "difficulty", which the author mentions: the difficulty of detaching public communication from the image of politicians. Neto (2004, p. 101) corroborates this orientation: "government propaganda should primarily inform what is being done and not who is doing it", so that the constitutional principle of impersonality is respected (BRASIL, 1988, art. 37, caput).

Based on these assumptions, a secondary question of this research is related to information and public communication: what are the profile photos of the Brazilian Federal Government informing? From these categories, we move on to the analysis.

### **3 ANALYSIS: A CAROUSEL OF INFORMATION ON POWER**

The present work analyzed the discursivity in a publication made on March 31, 2024, on the official instagram of the Federal Government of Brazil. The post refers to the agenda experienced by the federal government that week. Among the events is the visit of the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, who was in Brazil to strengthen the partnership between the nations, learn about the riches of Brazil and make agreements.

The photographs reveal themselves to the reader in the form of a carousel<sup>3</sup>. These are 15 images, presented in a linear sequence of 10 clicks. In some of these images there is more than one photograph, usually two, pasted horizontally on the same interface. Below are the 10 figures corresponding to these images, presented in the order of scrolling of the carousel, as they are published on the Federal Government's Instagram profile:

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<sup>3</sup> Carousel is a publishing format offered by the digital social networking platform, *Instagram*. This format consists of the publication of a set of images, in a pre-defined sequence, which can be accessed by the reader user by passing his finger over the initial image, in a lateral direction.

Figure 1



Source: Federal Government Instagram Profile – @govbr

Figure 2



Source: Federal Government Instagram Profile – @govbr

The sequence of images refers to the most important events of the week for the federal government, as they are endorsed by the set of featured photographs. Figures 1 to 7 illustrate the visit of the President of France, Emmanuel Macron to sign military cooperation agreements, launch of the 3rd Brazilian submarine, the result of this partnership, and a visit to the Amazon rainforest, the focus of interest and collaboration of numerous foreign countries under the justification of environmental preservation. Finally, the last 3 images (figures 8, 9 and 10) show the "Pé de Meia" program, which is configured as a financial incentive from the government to high school students who are in the public network.

That said, we move on to the first category of analysis, that is, the **Discourse category**. As we have already mentioned, this category focuses on the form of the discourse, or rather the material substance that a given discourse appropriates to pronounce itself. In this case, this substance is mainly the photographic image. However, in this case, it is also the form that the structure of the social network imprints on the non-verbal text, based on the resources it makes available by housing the compilation of images.

Paying attention to this element is as important as looking at the very linguistic materiality that the discourse appropriates, since photographs published on Instagram configure the discourse from different connections and under different aspects: the post itself, the post as part of so many other posts in the same feed, and this feed as a discourse among many others, officially produced by the Federal Government, by the press, and by the conversation of people in circulation on the network.

Thus, we can say that each photographic image of this carousel means by itself, but it also means from the relationship it establishes with all the other images that compose it, and along the sequence to which it belongs. But, in addition, each image, and the images in sequence, also signify in relation to the translinguistic, that is, to all other contextual texts and discourse that tension the production of a narrative, this *feed* or other *feeds*, this network or other networks, in the digital space or outside it. Meanings are produced through intersubjectivity (the punctual dialogue between these images and the subjects), but also through intertextuality, that is, between this imagetic text and all the other texts (and the discourses in them), in different languages, around them.

There is, for example, a weave between the images of Lula and Macron, in the carousel, and the numerous memes that circulated on the internet, and on social networks themselves, throughout the same period of this post. They are speeches that draw the relationships of meaning between presidents, countries, these people, these men. In this case, the memes were created from photographs of the two presidents visiting the Amazon, suggesting an intimate relationship between them, with hands intertwined, as in the pre-wedding photo shoots, which take place before wedding ceremonies. By making this allusion, indicating the idea of a 'honeymoon' between the presidents, the memes tension multiple meanings, from the connotation of Brazil's good international relations, to the institution of a lascivious character to the relationship between Lula and Macron. This tension is not deflated by the official photographs (very similar to those used in memes) published by the official profile of the federal government, on the same platform where the comic discourse circulates.

To understand this dialectical game of meanings, constituted by the crossing of both discursiveness, requires recognizing the role of the translingual, that is, of that which is outside the discourse, but is dragged into it (Barthes, 1978). This happens through understanding the context of the creation of the meme, for example, but also to the extent that we recognize its appropriation and circulation in the public space.

This intertextuality, and the very hipertextual form of cyberculture, often allow a certain discourse, in this case, that of the meme and, by contiguity, that of our carousel, to resignify itself dialogically. When a discourse falls on the net and is appropriated by public conversation, it gains in longevity and overflows the original meanings (of the meme, in the initial intention of its creation, and of the carousel, as an official government document).

Considering this, we could say that the meanings of Macron's visit, materialized by this set of images in *@gov.br*, can also mean the response to an ideological dispute, guided by the political polarization that marks the current scenario of the country. In a recent episode,

in 2019, Macron was in conflict with the Brazilian federal government, at the time, represented by Jair Messias Bolsonaro. On that occasion, the French president expressed his dislike for Bolsonaro, mainly because the Brazilian has never shown commitment to environmental agendas. Also, they had a disagreement in an internet post where Bolsonaro mocked the appearance of the French first lady, Brigitte Macron.

Thus, from the perspective of their discursiveness, alone the images used in the meme can take on a jocular tone, but in the carousel, these photographs take on an official tone. But what meanings would they have when they dialogue? We believe that in the conversation between them, and in view of their association with the translinguistic context, they can take on an official, answering tone, an inside joke, and fine irony. This impression seems to be reinforced when Macron reproduces such mimetic images in his personal profile, endorsing their meaning as a response to a past event, and pointing to the resumption of good relations between the two countries, only achieved in the face of Lula's victory in the presidential elections. It is not possible, in the conjuncture that involves nations, to read these photographs disregarding the dialogue between these discourses.

In time, still on the Discourse category, there are primordial elements of this format (instagram carousel), which are tensioners of meaning. An example is the requirement of a certain linearity of reading in front of the 15 images. Even though it is a publication on a digital platform, which means the predominance of hypertextuality, reading this set of images in particular is an essentially linear practice: they can only be accessed one after the other, in a pre-established order. This condition, in itself, establishes a hierarchy of relevance between the images and the narrative.

Established as signs, the photographs, in the order in which they are placed, tell us a story, which we can call *storytelling*. Without having to read the caption of the post, we interpreted the photographs and it could mean that Lula was with Macron signing agreements, visiting the Amazon, the indigenous people.

In fact, after 10 images of Macron, when referring to the program "Pé de meia", we feel his absence: a sign whose disappearance means. Observing the sequence and we have the impression that it is a remnant of information, which bothers us, which does not seem to be part of the narrative. Curiously, or not so much, it is precisely in these last five images that the women are, in a more expressive way. And, almost as an apology, Vice President Geraldo Alckmin appears for the first time (so that he is not forgotten).

From the point of view of the information format, a carousel composed of 10 images is configured as a long text, especially in the logic of the network and the fast-updating feeds. The farther the images are from the first photograph, the less relevant they become. After 7

passes, the last 3 images (which hold these 5 photos) draw little or no attention. To speak of this organization of the narrative, and of the arrangement of the signs, is to speak of a structural form of discourse, which is not fixed, and which, according to Barthes (1988), exerts a kind of authority over the signs, articulating them. This structure involves more than the grammar of a plane of expression, it is what creates marks to indicate a certain reading path or even limit it.

The strengthening form of the hierarchical logic of this structure also includes the framing (general plan, medium plan); the verticality of the image; the size; and the very fact that these photographs will be accessed primarily by cell phone, in a moving feed. Since it is an automatic update system, where every second the algorithm renews the profile of the users shown on the screen, and displays a variability of carousel images, the user may not receive the post immediately with the first image selected by the profile; you may not realize that there is a sequence of photographs; and you can also lose interest in scrolling the images on the second click. In view of this ellipse, reinforcing the same meaning in each image, that is, saying the same thing in different images, can guarantee the support of the main discursive argument drawn by the proposal of the post, in particular, or of the profile, in general.

Considering the aspects of the carousel shape on Instagram, we still need to observe the materiality of photography. Barthes (1984) points out that the system of signs of the photographic image is based on the game between a **studium** and a **punctum**. The first refers to a sensible interest that the image arouses, linked to the collective context of the event or the referent portrayed. The second refers to the signs that draw the reader's attention, often overflowing with sensible meaning and falling into the particularity of a subjectively evoked emotion.

In the case of **figures 1** and **2**, this historical and sensible interest of *the studium* seems to be directly linked to the understanding that nations are united and strengthened, since the centrality of the image is occupied by handshakes, smiles and official documents. When we refer to the *punctum*, this collection of elements can shed meanings, since the particular impression we have is that their combination produces a metonymy, not only because they are in sequence, but because their contiguity produces the effect of movement from the hands to the smile, from the nations to the men who represent it.

In **figure 3**, the *studium* points to the renewal of military forces, whose common sign is the submarine. However, *the punctum* refers us directly to the sense of crowd. It becomes more important than the submarine itself, in the background of the photograph, so that the people in the cluster draw more attention than the characters, Janja, Lula, Macron and the commander. A sense deconstructed by the studium of the following images, **figures 4**,

focused on the submarine, and which seems to point to the people who matter, and who together, can press the button to start launching the submarine into the sea: "not just anyone can press the button".

In **figures 5** and **6**, in the same way as **figures 1** and **2**, **3** and **4**, as a narrative structure that reruns itself, we have a relationship of contiguity, submitting the signs to the structuring lines of an ideology. In them, the *studium* is associated with the sensible interest in meeting Macron and Lula in an indigenous village, dialoguing intertextually with all the narratives that have previously circulated in the conversation of the networks and in the press, where France supposedly defends the preservation of the Amazon, or where Lula and Macron are close friends. There is **nothing singular in figure 5** that echoes subjectively.

However, **figure 6** wakes us up, sharpening our gaze in the face of the mid-shot framing of the indigenous leader. The *punctum* is revealed when we notice the mouth enlarger, the headdress and the paraphernalia that adorn his face, including a necklace with his name written. According to Barthes (1981) it is the names that give us existence, the ability to name, to transform the world into language is human and subjective. The word "Raoni" printed on the adornment, works here as a meta sign, considering that "Raoni" is the sign of the indigenous, of the chief; the necklace is Raoni's sign; and, finally, the name is the sign of chief.

In **figure 7**, the *studium* is marked by the presence of the tree trunk that extends from the ground to the sky, signifying not only the Amazon forest, but its extension and sumptuousness. The *punctum*, on the other hand, appears marked by the size of these two characters, which are small compared to the trunk of the tree. The Kapok is the largest tree in Brazil, and being under these men means the grandeur of nature, before which we (humans) are only a small part.

Still, in the same figure (**7**), the second photograph, the *studium* sets the place of the visit: a cocoa producer. The *punctum* marks us with the presence of Lula holding a broom and doing the work of turning over the seeds. It is not someone else who does this service, Lula is doing it, and "feeling" it in his skin, what the process is like, while Macron right behind, observes. Here, we cannot help but think of the metonymy between the colonizer and the colonized, the standard and the employee.

Figures **8**, **9** and **10** represent a rupture, the emergence of a new subject, suppressing common elements of the previous 7 figures. However, they reiterate a structural form, of images that appear side by side, and that seems to exist more to prove the strength of the referent than to signify the details of the event. The *studium* in both photographs points to the negotiations and the launch of yet another government assistance program. The *punctum*, on

the other hand, stands out in figure 10, lower image, associated with the presence of women, which even has its meaning highlighted in view of the absence in most of the previous photos.

The number of women in the image can even work as a compensation, given their fleeting presence in all the other figures on the carousel. Around the president, there are ministers, deputies and voters, who make the "L" sign with their hand, a sign of support for Lula. However, this "L" is also the indictment of the male provider, which associated with the previous figure (9), can mean "protective father", the one we need.

When we look at these figures, guided by the category of discourse, we perceive the liabilities of the structural forms that, from the beginning, rhetorically indicate the places of **Power**. Its signs sometimes assume ordinary and regular forms, sometimes punctual forms, but in any case, they are always present. In fact, observing the progress of the analysis so far, evidently, in the set of images, we see the institutionalized power of the president, of the Federal Government, but also of Brazil.

The power of the countries is connoted by the image of the flags (**figures 1, 2 and 8**), which serve as a backdrop for the handshake (**figure 1**); in the image of the presidents, holding the book of international agreements (**figure 2**); in the dominant colors of each nation (**figures 1, 2 and 8**), and also strengthened by the colors under the blue background, formed from fireworks that explode in the sky, behind the submarine (**figure 4**). In addition, we observe the power of France, represented by the figure of Macron, especially in these formal photographs (**figures 1, 2, 4**), but also, in a less institutional and more contextual way, as a power, due to the contribution and prominent place that this nation, coming from the developed world, illustrates through images, to give to Brazil, a developing country. In this sense, we also mean the power of Brazil, as less powerful, although revealed, to receive attention and contribution from this nation.

The agglomeration of people in the hangar also becomes a sign of Power (**figure 3**), connoting the idea of crowd. To the extent that they surround Lula and Macron, the workers dissolve the image of the authorities present in the photograph. Presidents almost do not stand out in the face of the number of people. We could associate this composition with the sign of power of the people, but we understand that in the image, it is a purposely artificial meaning, used as a resource to tension semiosis.

There is also military power or the power of physical force, made tangible by the size of the submarine, with the colors of the Brazilian flag painted on the hull and marked in the sky; as well as the group of men, made up of the president, who together press the device to launch the submarine into the sea (**figure 4**). It is as if the narrative produced the meaning of "those who can" or "of the few who have the power to do so".

We also read the signs of power of the original peoples, marked by the game between the image of nature and the indigenous. The presence of the leader Raoni among the presidents, almost as equals, and then in an exclusive portrait of him (**figure 6**). We say "almost equal", because, in fact, the one who stands out in the image is the indigenous leader himself, since the supposed authorities are wearing white, but Raoni holds a headdress of vibrant colors. The combination, in sequence, of the three images: two of the authorities, among whom Raoni is, and soon after an exclusive photograph of him, reinforce the discursive strategy of protagonism of the native peoples. This perception gains tone if we observe the intertextuality with the translingual, since the narratives about this culture have intensified since the inauguration of this government, translating into public policies and visibility. The sign of power of this cultural group has been regularly circulated by official narratives.

In dialogue with the power of the indigenous people, there is the power of nature and the forest. The first is materialized in the trunk of the Kapok, which is very large compared to the human figure (**figure 7**). There is also a direct association between the images of the tree, the cocoa and the indigenous, as a form of metonymy of the Amazon. An object of discussion between Macron and Bolsonaro, the reference to Floresta is an obvious sign and raised by the translingual, while the Brazilian political-ideological dispute, through the narrative, is effected in an obtuse way, as a crossing that disturbs the meaning. According to Barthes (1990), the obtuse is characterized by the unexpected, a meaning that emerges from the complexity of semiosis and attacks the observer.

At the same time, we have agreements being signed by handshakes (**figures 1, 2 and 8**), and the striking figure of the entrepreneur (**figure 8**), as the protagonist of the "future", through which the signs of market power or economic power are revealed.

In the last 2 images (**figures 9 and 10**), which add up to three photographs, we can see the power of women, since they add up, visually, as the majority. However, this power seems to be subjugated by the set of images that constitute the carousel, predominantly starring men. Thus, it is possible to understand that this power of women exists as a power, but a power that is not realized. Furthermore, the power of young people is materialized in the last image (**figure 10**), associated with the investment in education made by the federal government. It is about the strengthening of the power of the government and, finally, the emergence of a new power, the power of the future, consensually linked to young people, and by metonymy: "to the future of the country". Barthes (apud Friderichs, 2010) reminds us that power cannot be understood in a simplistic way, where some have it and others not, but as an energy that mobilizes us, a source of disputes.

The revelation of man's power is also predominantly observed. In this sense, when we review the sequence of images established, in a linear way, by the Carousel, the uninterrupted presence of the male figure that insistently repeats itself, gradually signifying the power of man, stands out: the hands that seal an agreement between nations are men's, the presidents are men, those who "can" launch the submarine, are men, The one who has the economic power to guarantee the future is a man, the indigenous leaders are men and, even in the images where women appear, among many, there he is, a single man, "the blessed one to the fruit", "the benevolent father who embraces and smiles" (**figure 9**). It is men who occupy the center of images and places of power, constituting a sign of the patriarchal and macho culture, through which we constitute ourselves as a society and which, for now, also prevails as a dominant discourse.

Therefore, accessing these images, in the order in which they are, makes us feel the marked presence of men in the images, especially that of the president of the republic, which is in 13 of the 15 photographs. Therefore, we believe that, through the power of men and their centrality, we also see, in a redundant way, another power, the power of Lula.

His image, in a rhetorical way, is there, to reprise the same meaning. The actions recorded, the positions chosen, the cutouts, the choice of narrative structures and the combination of signs that reveal his power: Lula as president, Lula as a political figure, Lula as a diplomat, Lula as a businessman, Lula as a lover and defender of nature and native peoples, Lula as a friend of Macron, Lula as a father who cares, and guarantees the future: a white and hetero man, which is a criterion of acceptability in the society and context in which we are inserted.

However, this power does not appear associated with the sign of the subject Lula, but with the superhero Lula, of the character Lula, artificially forged to occupy this place. Thus, although power, as a sign and mobilizing energy of the world, according to Barthes (1978), can metamorphose into a variation of forms and places, Lula's power interdicts all of them, with its own luminance of occupying the center of the spectacle.

We also have in the images the signs of **Information**. Photographs communicate the events, where we can perceive different environments and people, and apparently provide information. We perceive their signs, in a less marginal way, in figures **2, 4, 7, 8** and **10**. This is because they point to a reference materialized in action: the closing of an agreement between two nations, the launch of a submarine, a visit to the forest, a closing of deals, the launch of a program.

It is relevant to point out here the role of the articulation between the photographs that constitute figures **4, 7, 8** and **10**, in a narrative way, as well as the side-by-side sequences of

figures 1 and 2, 4 and 5, 8, 9, and 10. In the absence of other languages, the sequence of two photos, forming a single image, or of two photos of the same scene, plays the role of constructing the representation of the fact, taking us from one sign to another, from one action to another. These photographs become a sign of information because something evidently takes shape in them, as Hohlfeldt (2001) proposes, something that needs to be informed, communicated to the public, something done by the government. When they are structured in sequence or side by side, they are transfigured into signs in dialogue, producing meaning, constituting the message that carries a set of data or knowledge.

In this set of images, we believe that the data are indicted by the characters, by the elements of scenery and objects that make up the scenes, they inform us. However, it is the actions that produce knowledge, the knowledge about what is happening, what the Government is doing. Thus, when going from one term to another, such as from characters to handshakes, we have the sign of information.

However, in the Carousel format, these images are not alone, they also mean to the extent that they come into play with the set of all the other published photographs, in a narrative sequence imposed by linearity. It is considering this discursive form that we observe a disturbance in this original informative sense, since the centrality of the power endorsed by the other 5 images, the protagonism of certain characters and the *punctum* that overflows the general interest of the photo, tension and repress by the imposition of other meanings, other than the merely informative.

Far from arousing civic feeling, as Brandão (2009) requires, the construction of trust in so-called public institutions is replaced by the construction of trust in Lula. And, even though it connotes accountability, publicizing implemented programs, it fails to motivate and/or educate the population to participate in specific moments in the life of the country, to the detriment of the protagonism of this man, benevolent and hero.

Consequently, the images, published on the official profile of the federal government of Brazil, which should offer information of public interest, disclosing the government's work on behalf of the citizen, with transparency, give up doing so. **Public communication** is subject to **political communication**, and this happens in the web of signs, where Lula's power interdicts the informative sense and converts it into a propagandistic sense, as conceptualized by Neto (2004): the sequence of images indicates more who is doing it than what is being done.

#### 4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis carried out on the carousel of photographic images posted on March 31, 2024, on the profile of the Federal Government of Brazil on Instagram, indicates the subjection of the signs of information, about the Federal Government's agenda, to the meanings of Lula's Power, which are reprised in the narrative, occupying a central place AND assuming the most varied signifiers: president, political figure, diplomat and father. Even in the face of the other posts on the feed, these photographic images have a narrative that uninterruptedly reinforces how Lula is a good, humble man, who knows how to "do" politics and is working for the reconstruction of a new Brazil.

In this way, public communication, expected in the official profile of the Federal Government, also surrenders to Lula's political communication, by revealing more who is doing it, than what is being done. Thus, we understand that the dynamics of the play of signs is essentially in the production of a narrative of the whole, that is, of the sequence of images, rather than of each one of them separately. This discursive form is materialized in the Carousel.

Throughout the process of this study, we are faced with the revelation of a new category, political communication, which is opposed to the category of public communication. Brandão (2009) briefly reflects on the approach frequently adopted by government communication in Brazil, with a propagandistic bias, which would represent a distortion of the objectives of communication for citizenship, something that we observed in this case: the images have an objective of promoting Lula's image.

Throughout the research we came across some difficulties and limitations, one of which would be the study of political communication, here little explored as *an a posteriori category*, and also the study of the discursive relations between the different posts in the *feed*.

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