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**The car wash scandal in Brazil and abroad: analyzing the international media's  
framings and political discourses**

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2021

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Dissertação apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Relações Internacionais do Instituto de Relações Internacionais da Universidade de São Paulo, para a obtenção do título de Mestre em Ciências.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Feliciano de Sá Guimarães.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation intends to analyze how the international media covered a scandal that impacted the public opinion in Brazil and Latin America: The Car Wash case. Our main hypothesis is that the international media - when covering the referred scandal and its developments - had a political speech towards it, doing a coverage according to their political perspectives. In order to analyze these assumptions, we created a data base containing articles and editorials from six newspapers: The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, from the United States; El Comercio and La República, from Peru; Página 12 and La Nación, from Argentina. These newspapers are analyzed through two cross sections: the first one goes from 2014 until 2018 and the second one from 2019 until 2020. By using qualitative methodologies and text as data techniques, we demonstrate how the media in the United States and Argentina were polarized, a situation that did not occur in the Peruvian case, a country whose media was defending the investigations. Moreover, our results appoint a framing process of the news according to the ideological perspective the referred newspapers might have, resulting in manifestations of support or disagreement against the investigations. We hope to demonstrate how the empirical findings from our data base might dialogue with the theoretical framework presented in this dissertation, pointing out the political discourse that the media might have towards international relations subjects and the possible confronts of narratives that might appear from the coverage made by them. Such theoretical framework not only brings important concepts to analyze an impacting scandal from Latin America, but also is an opportunity to rearrange theories to the reality of a matter that concerns this region.

Key-words: Media. International Communication. Public Opinion. Car Wash Scandal.

## RESUMO

Esta dissertação pretende analisar como a mídia internacional fez a cobertura de um escândalo que impactou a opinião pública no Brasil e na América Latina: o caso Lava Jato. Nossa principal hipótese é a de que a mídia internacional – durante a cobertura desse caso e de seus desdobramentos – teve um discurso político, cobrindo o caso de acordo com suas perspectivas ideológicas. Visando analisar tais premissas, criamos uma base de dados contendo artigos e editoriais de seis jornais: The New York Times e The Wall Street Journal, dos Estados Unidos; El Comercio e La República, do Peru; Página 12 e La Nación, da Argentina. Os jornais foram analisados em dois cortes temporais diferentes: o primeiro entre 2014 e 2018, o segundo entre 2019 e 2020. Através de metodologias qualitativas e aplicação de técnicas de textos como dados (text as data), demonstramos como a mídia em países como Estados Unidos e Argentina estiveram polarizadas diante desse caso, o que não ocorreu no Peru, país cuja mídia esteve mobilizada em defender as investigações. Mais do que isso, nossos resultados apontam para um processo de enquadramento das notícias de acordo com a perspectiva ideológica desses jornais, que defenderam ou criticaram tais investigações. Esperamos demonstrar como esses resultados empíricos de nossa base de dados podem dialogar com o aparato teórico apresentado nessa dissertação, apontando o discurso político que a mídia pode ter em torno de temas de relações internacionais, bem como os confrontos de narrativas que podem surgir a partir da cobertura feita pelos referidos atores. Tal aparato teórico pode não apenas trazer conceitos importantes para analisar um escândalo impactante ocorrido na América Latina, como também tais teorias podem ser reajustadas à luz da realidade de um assunto relevante para esta região.

Palavras-chave: Mídia. Comunicação Internacional. Opinião Pública. Escândalo Lava Jato.

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## INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a phenomenon constantly present in the reality of many Latin American states, including Brazil itself. It is a highly attractive case to the media, especially when a certain scandal has such magnitude that involves important politicians, businessmen and other agents recognized within a national or even international scope. In many of these occasions, the public opinion will become familiar with the scandals through the lens of the newspapers, television broadcasting companies and more recently, social media such as Facebook or Twitter.

This dissertation intends to analyze the role of the traditional media when reporting corruption scandals, focusing on the behavior of the international press towards such matters. In our case, we analyze reports made by traditional media vehicles towards the Operation Car Wash (*Operação Lava Jato*, in Portuguese), an anti-corruption task force that had its outbreak in 2014, when the first series of arrest warrants were executed against agents who were already in the radar of Brazil's law-enforcement authorities for their allegedly misconducts. They were accused to be part of a complex bribery web, involving public companies such as Petroleo Brasileiro (Petrobras), engineering companies, high-level public officials, executives, politicians and money-launderers.

It did not take longer to discover this scandal had a magnitude beyond Brazilian borders, affecting countries in Africa, Europe and Americas. Lava Jato scandal acquired such international magnitude, that the reports made about it also became more frequent within the international media, including in countries where important politicians and businessmen were accused to be involved in the scams originated in Brazilian lands. For this reason, Operation Car Wash became a matter that could be analyzed using the literature studying the relation between public opinion and subjects related with foreign policy and international relations.

Following these events that started in 2014, a new scandal would also warn the Brazilian and international media in 2019, in counter-reaction movement against the Lava Jato scandal. A series of dialogues made in messaging apps were leaked by an important investigative newspaper, *The Intercept*, showing the close relation that members of the Brazilian judiciary have with prosecutors responsible for investigating and denouncing those accused to be involved in the Car Wash case. The new scandal reinforced the disputes of narrative behind the meaning of Operation Car Wash in Latin America, in a moment where the anti-corruption task force already had lost its unanimous credibility among the press and the public opinion.

Considering the aspects mentioned above, the main question investigated in this research is the following one: how the international media framed both the Lava Jato scandal and the scandal of the leaked messages (originally named in Portuguese as *Vaza Jato*), considering two different cross sections, 2014-2018 and 2019-2020? We have reasons to believe that the press should not be considered only a passive agent when transmitting information about political scandals. In this context, secondary questions were raised in this dissertation: is it possible to identify a political position of the international media when reporting Lava Jato? Considering they were not neutral actors toward this scandal, is it possible to identify changes in their perspectives about the case, insofar the anti-corruptions investigations acquired new characteristics during these years? What were the differences and similarities between these two moments? By international media, we are referring specifically to relevant newspapers in the Anglo-Saxon world, along with the South American media, excluding Brazil itself.

The fact that relevant changes occurred in the Brazilian version of the investigation is one important reason why it was chosen two separated time frames to better compare these moments. In the first one, the law-enforcement authorities were focusing in the involvement of high-level public servants, agents responsible for crimes related with money laundering and executives accused to rig public tenders involving state-owned companies. However, the investigation developments resulted in the arrests of important politicians in Brazil, a logic that was also followed in the chapters of the scandal simultaneously happening in other countries.

Especially after 2018, these arrests would raise more criticism from the media and public opinion about the procedures used by the legal authorities responsible for these measures, which created challenges to the then prevailing perspectives stating that the anti-corruption task force was bringing justice and ending impunity in the country. When in 2019 outbreaks the second scandal involving these authorities, such skepticism against the operation acquires more intensity, considering that the documents released by the media indicate a collusion process between the agents responsible for investigating the crimes and those responsible for judging it. This new scandal reinforces the alternative narrative that the investigation had a biased character that intentionally affected the agenda of political groups in the Latin American region.

When Lava Jato in Brazil and abroad acquired these new characteristics, there were strong indications the international media would had different reactions to the *modus operandi* behind the anti-corruption task force. Divergent approaches appeared to explain the actions made by the judges, prosecutors and police investigators working on the case. Such movement

was intensified in the second time frame analyzed in this research, since this is the moment when the new scandal involving members of the judiciary and public ministry in Brazil outbreaks, bringing a new wave of questions and challenges against the official perspectives of these elites.

Considering this panorama, the first chapter of this dissertation is dedicated to demonstrate how the media could be a relevant political actor in this scenario. First, we approach how the studies on public opinion and foreign affairs contemplate traditional perspectives such as the Almond-Lippmann consensus, that was skeptical about the capacity of the public opinion in comprehending themes of international relations. On the other hand, this realm of study would also develop a more liberal perspective that questioned such consensus, especially after the involvement of the United States (US) in the Indochina confronts, which brought criticism and activism from the media and public opinion from that country.

Although both literatures tend to agree with the fact that the public is inattentive to these types of topics, the liberal perspective understands this is not justified by an irrationality. This lack of attention could be surmounted with the help of important variables that has the capacity to trigger the public's attention. In this scenario, the media appears as one of them, especially after the Vietnam War (1955-1975), when it is clear for this side of the literature that newspapers and broadcasting companies were essential in transmitting to the American public what was happening in the battlefield, influencing the public opinion to have a negative position regarding the war.

It is very important to emphasize that although it is brought a panorama from both perspectives present in the public opinion-foreign policy literature, this dissertation could be placed within the group of researchers presented in the last paragraph. Since the Vietnam War, what could be considered a liberal perspective has been demonstrating that elites can influence the public in decision-making processes related with foreign affairs, but they could also be constrained by the public. In this scenario, the media plays a relevant role, since this actor is one of the main responsible in transmitting information from the elites in foreign policy to the public opinion. Such responsibility is not trivial and places the media in a position of equal player in comparison to the public and the elites influencing in the referred topics.

Hence, this dissertation develops a research that places itself in the recent debate that is more connected with the idea that the public could rationalize matters of international relations. The debate goes further to better analyze the variables that might influence in this dynamic.

For this reason, we advance in the perspectives that try to better understand the role of the press within this scenario. An important aspect presented here is the fact that the press walks

a fine line when acting among the public and the elites. The latter wants to keep the narratives created by them untouched, pressuring the media to not change a certain narrative already made by these elites. Although it might exist risks when the media challenges the elites' frames, sometimes the press also needs to provide to the public different approaches from the "official" one. During this chapter, we demonstrate how the media react under these pressures and how the public might become "active" in order to demand different frames from those made by the elites.

In the paragraphs above, we mentioned how the two cross sections in our research indicate different moments, where in the first scenario Lava Jato task force is more regarded through a positive perspective than a negative one. In the transition from this first cross section to the second one, the wave of skepticism against the task force gains more intensity, making easier to regard the disputes over the framings behind Lava Jato. To better understand how framing processes and the cognitive aspects behind it works, we also dedicate chapter one to explain these important concepts that will be present throughout the chapters of this dissertation. In this sense, not only we explain the meaning of framing, but also it is analyzed important concepts such as the meaning of schemas and other cognitive aspects behind the discussion.

With these conceptual tools in mind, it is possible to better explain how these framings might enter in a competition against each other, based on ideologies and other cognitive elements that could be materialized in the media's coverage. In our case, we analyze such materialization in the coverage behind the Car Wash and leaked messages scandal, investigating possible framing competitions based on political ideologies that international newspapers might have.

Once we have demonstrated all these aspects in the first chapter, it is given a little more attention to the characteristics of the Car Wash scandal during the second chapter. In this chapter, we intend to explain who were the institutions in Brazil responsible for investigating, prosecuting and judging those involved in the corruption misconducts present in the scandal. Along the developments of the Car Wash scandal, it was also raised debates in the country about whether Lava Jato task force was trespassing important constitutional limits in the country and even abroad.

We also bring to the second chapter an overview of the international versions of the scandal, through a brief indication about the status the chapters of the scandal happening in the countries mentioned by the US authorities. In fact, it is possible to affirm that in many cases Lava Jato abroad tried to follow the same *modus operandi* used by the authorities in Brazil,

including the mediatization strategies to attract the support of the public opinion. Brazilian authorities also developed cooperative efforts to export their knowledge about the case to their peers abroad.

Considering the international media is our dependent variable, the narratives made by the press about the case would also be used not only to explain the facts through their lens, but also to compare the choice of words made by them. While some newspapers would report the arrests related with the case as the end of an impunity culture in the country, other media companies would raise concerns about how the investigations were conducted, especially after important politicians were arrested through the usage of impacting police operations in Brazil.

With the objective to investigate such features, after presenting the theoretical framework that sustains the debate in the dissertation and explaining important characteristics behind Operation Car Wash, chapters three and four are dedicated to develop the empirical parts of the dissertation. In such chapters, we used quantitative content analysis with the objective to establish a dialogue between the theoretical framework presented in the first chapter and the data base we created. Specifically, we used text as data techniques with the assistance of software traditionally used for these purposes. Such methodologies are getting more popular among social sciences researches, especially because allow us to analyze the patterns of a considerable number of writing content through algorithms created with this objective, as we intend to explain in chapter three.

In this context, we analyze the following international newspapers: *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* from the United States; *El Comercio* and *La República* from Peru; *Página 12* and *La Nación* from Argentina. The justifications for why we opted for these newspapers relies on the fact they represent countries that in a certain degree had actors involved in the international segment of the scandal – as it is the case of United States and Peru.

Argentina is a country that still has a dearth of official information about the possible agents involved in this corruption scandal, with the country watching closely what is happening in Brazil, not only because of their historical ties, but also because the local public opinion is looking for possible Argentinian politicians and businessmen investigated in the Operation Car Wash. In the Peruvian case, it is noticeable the Lava Jato impacts in its domestic policy, considering that all presidents in Peru from the 2000s were accused of been involved in this scandal.

Therefore, this analysis would be relevant as evidences the press was not a passive actor in this scenario. For this reason, the data base created with the objective to develop this empirical work will be used to test what the most recent literature in this realm have been saying

about the role of the press, regarding the public opinion and the elites in matters of foreign policy. As already mentioned, ideologies and political perspectives could be materialized in the press coverage through the usage of a vocabulary that might represent a way these media vehicles framed a certain topic when approaching it. It is interesting to notice that the political behavior of the press might be such an inherent feature of these actors, that even political scandals distant from their local reality might acquire a coverage that also has a political tone.

In this sense, the development of this research is justified as a possibility to create a debate between the theoretical literature presented in chapter one with the empirical findings from chapter three and four, based on a topic whose origins are better explained in chapter two. The findings from chapter three and four indicate that indeed the international press had a political tone when covering this case. It was possible to capture levels of polarization among the press, with newspapers from different ideological backgrounds framing the case with divergent words. Nevertheless, in countries such as Peru, these differences were not noticeable, since the local media was unanimously providing support to the investigations. On the other hand, the Argentinian press demonstrated expressive divisions and polarizations among the press, with the United States coming in second place.

In the second cross section, the media develops a more critical approach when covering the case, an aspect that is more noticeable in the United States, considering the behavior of the left-wing press in this country.

Such empirical findings became an opportunity to develop a theory test of a literature that is still very attached to the reality of politics and society from the United States. In our case, we are bringing data from an object that is related with the Latin American region to dialogue with those theories, testing whether the latter are also capable to explain the behavior of the media towards an international matter as Operation Car Wash. In general, the theoretical apparatus presented in chapter one was capable to pass in the test, demonstrating a good capacity to create a dialogue that goes beyond the international topics related only with Anglo-Saxon countries.

The international press indeed demonstrated a political tone when covering both the Lava Jato and Vaza Jato scandals, selecting words to frame the cases according to their political perspectives. The differences among these actors might result in framing disputes, with a newspaper trying to impose their narratives about the case.

In this sense, we hope to demonstrate not only the explanatory capacity of this set of theories to the empirical question we brought in this dissertation, but we also expect to show how both theory and empirical model can adjust each other considering the reality of the facts

and how such dialogue could contribute to think about the role of the media in international matters related with the Latin American challenges.

Finally, throughout the next pages, we also intend to demonstrate how the media could be an active player in the referred matters, with the capacity to influence its consumers and be influenced by their pressures. Considering that Lava Jato became a matter of international magnitude, we hope to show how relevant it is the opportunity to analyze the reports made by these actors.

## **CHAPTER 1 – MEDIA, PUBLIC OPINION AND FOREIGN POLICY: THEORETICAL DEBATES**

In this chapter, we bring an overview from relevant theoretical debates about the relation between decision makers in foreign policy, the media and the public opinion. These are three important actors analyzed in this research, which justifies the importance in understanding how the relation among them have been theorized in the literature.

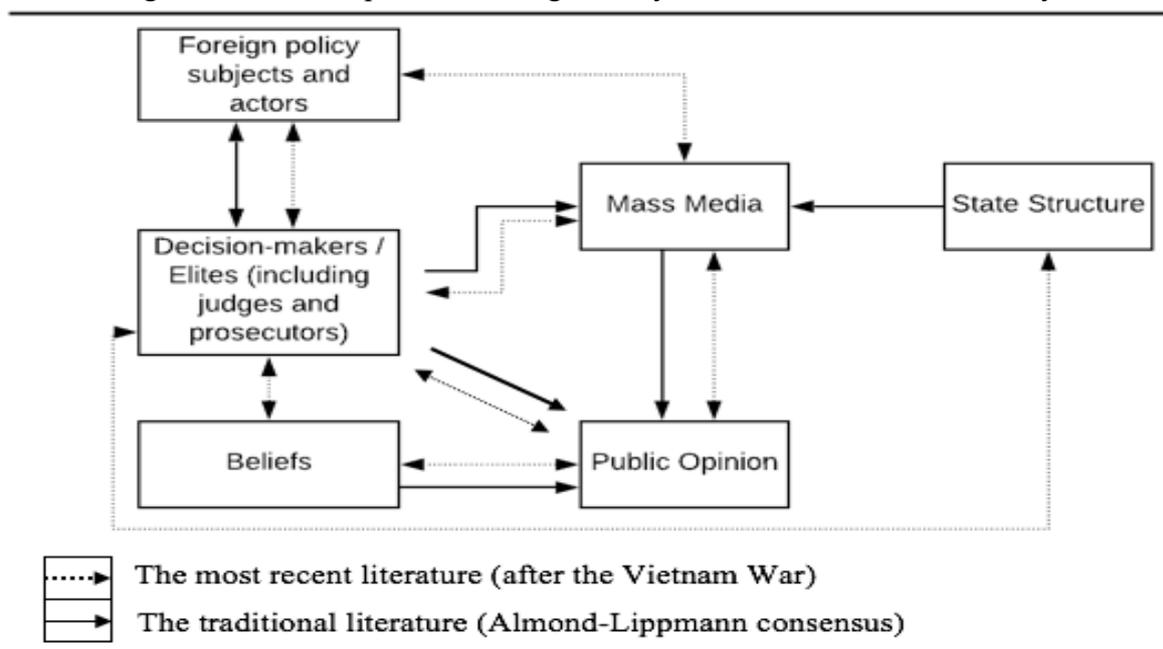
We first approach the traditional perspectives, which is characterized by an elevated skepticism towards the public opinion capacity in comprehending foreign affairs subjects. Although such perspectives remain influential nowadays, we demonstrate how the classic ideas from the Almond-Lippmann consensus faced important challenges that weakened their premises, especially after new waves of research indicating the rationality but inattentive features of the public in foreign policy matters.

Among these three actors analyzed, the media has special importance in this research. For this reason, we approach with more attention important discussions related with the media as a political actor, that uses mechanisms to activate the public's attention towards subjects related with foreign affairs. Moreover, we also analyze what the literature have been saying about how the narratives behind the news are constructed and the disputes for imposing a certain narrative towards the facts.

Along this chapter, it is possible to notice this is a literature mostly based on the United States' media and society, with constants analogies between the media behavior and how a market is expected to operate. We intend to bring and adapt these theories to a debate more located in a Latin American matter. In this sense, this chapter offers an important theoretical debate that lays the ground for the empirical analysis in the last chapters of this dissertation.

### **1.2. Public Opinion and Foreign Policy theories: Traditional and new approaches**

In this segment, we intend to give an overview of the main discussion points in the public opinion-foreign policy studies since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when appeared many perspectives about the concept of public opinion, as we will demonstrate in the following pages. Figure 1 below summarizes the divisions in this literature that we could identify, especially the difference of perspectives before and after the Vietnam War.

Figure 1 - Public Opinion – Foreign Policy debates since the 20<sup>th</sup> century

Source: author, based on Baum and Potter, 2008, p. 41.

What we labeled in figure 1 as the “traditional literature” is related with the work of two influential authors that had a very skeptical perspective towards the capacity of the public opinion in comprehending themes related with foreign policy.

The first author is Walter Lippmann, who in 1922 published his book *Public Opinion*, which impacted for many decades the perspectives about the relation between the public opinion, the press and the elites who are responsible for the decision-making processes in matters of foreign policy. For Lippmann (1998[1922]), even when well-informed, the public opinion would not be able to comprehend such matters. This behavior was justified by the fact that since the public does not have an experience with these subjects, they rely on the mental images they might have about it, which could result not only in serious misperceptions, but also in a mental image that is instable and could be frequently modified.

In fact, this notion of images is an important element in defining the meaning of public opinion in this author’s perspective. For Lippmann (1998 [1922], p. 29), Public Opinion could be labeled as “those pictures which are acted upon by groups of people, or by individuals acting in the name of groups”. Lippmann’s depiction is that the ordinary citizen is a “self-centered man” that when confronted with a topic unusual to his daily life, would use such personal mental pictures to answer these topics, restricting his answers about it.

Authors such as Holsti (1992) demonstrate how close Lippmann's perspective was to the Realist school of thought within the International Relations field. According to the former, Realists such as Hans Morgenthau were influenced by Lippmann's perspectives. The latter created a tradition in this literature that was maintained along the decades, influencing authors such as Gabriel Almond.

Almond, in his book, *The American People and Foreign Policy*, was concerned with the mental state of the public after the war, in this case, World War II (1939-1945). For him, "policy-making with regard to the use of atomic weapons calls for a degree of dispassionate rationality of which relatively few men are capable" (Almond, 1950, p. 15). After the war, the menaces to the United States were supposedly enhanced and the risks involving the foreign policy decisions were also increased, requiring experienced men to deal with these types of subjects.

The complementary perspectives between Gabriel Almond and Walter Lippmann resulted in the so-called Almond-Lippmann consensus, which highlights the shared beliefs that both scholars had about this topic. Holsti (1992) summarizes the most important features of this consensus: a) the public opinion is volatile and with small capacity to provide strong foundations for a reasonable foreign policy; b) their behavior lack structure and coherence; c) the public opinion would have a very limited capacity to influence the elites in their decision-making process towards foreign affairs.

As we intended to indicate with figure 1 above, such authors had a top-down perspective. In their model of analysis, there would have a hierarchical relation where the elites responsible for the decision-making related with foreign affairs subjects would feed the media with information properly chosen by those elites. In their turn, the media would transmit such information to the public opinion, whose interest and capacity to understand these topics would be limited.

This allegedly ignorance of the public opinion depicted by the traditional literature is the reason why a bottom-up relation could not be possible among the public opinion, the media and the elites. At the same time, variables such as beliefs and the state structure would not be relevant to the discussion.

It did not take much longer to the Almond-Lippmann consensus be questioned by the empirical literature developed after the 1950s. Authors such as Lazarsfeld were influenced by the wave of political science researches involving statistical models demonstrating the lack of capacity the classical notion has to solve factual problems, since this perspective was concerned with an abstract debate about images the people might have about public affairs. Influenced by

the statistical approach behind the discussion, Lazarsfeld (1957, p. 43) proposed a different concept of public opinion, which could be labeled as the “statistical utterances expressed by various segments of the population, and these segments can and should be classified by the degree of their competence”.

Such concept of public opinion represented the appearance of a more statistical approach to the theme, adapted to the empirical literature and the usage of surveys to analyze the public opinion behavior in a series of subjects.

Moreover, the 1950s represented the beginning of the effective US involvement in the Indochina conflicts, which resulted in important reflections about the public opinion features towards international relations topics. What we labeled in figure 1 as “the most recent literature” is a reference to these discussions after the Vietnam War that had a two-way perspective towards the relation between public opinion – media – elites. For this literature, these actors can actually influence and pressure each other, as the dotted arrows demonstrated in our scheme.

When analyzing this relation of the media with the elites and the public opinion, Entman (1990) affirmed that these actors have an interdependence among them. In this sense, the interaction between the news received by the public and how they rationalize it, creates what the author labels as the “interdependence model”, which represents an alternative to the traditional “autonomous model”. The latter is rooted on the idea that the media would only transmit messages related with the interests of the public. Thus, the media would not be capable to influence the public opinion in acquiring new interests and attitudes, being reduced to a passive actor.

Cognitive processes are the explanations behind why the interdependence model has more capacity to analyze the relation between media and public opinion. Entman (1990, p. 77) brings to the discussion the concept of “schemas”, which are cognitive structures responsible for organizing our way of thinking. Such schemas store beliefs, values, attitudes and preferences. One important feature to Entman’s analysis is his affirmation these cognitive structures are not completely rigid; it is possible that people who receive stimulus might initiate a process of change. This is especially true for political thoughts, considering that in this case, the cognitive structures are drive to external elements. In this point, the media coverage would be important to trigger to this process.

As noticed, authors such as Entman brought to the discussion variables such as the beliefs, an element ignored by the traditional literature in the name of the rationality of their model. While Entman focused on the cognitive processes of the public opinion, Foyle (1997),

in his turn, calls the attention to the relevance of personal beliefs that a leader might have. Policy choices could be executed depending on how such beliefs are structured and whether is desirable or necessary to receive inputs and supports from the public opinion in matters of foreign policy. In this context, it is possible to have leaders with personal traits that would try to avoid any participation of the public in such matters, while others would frequently rely in the public opinion reactions when making their decisions. Thus, the discussion was moved to a field in which the beliefs could be a mediating variable influencing these decisions.

In his turn, Risse-Kappen (1991) analyzes the effects of the state structures in this debate, another example of a variable more present in the analysis from the post-Vietnam literature. The author brought a structural approach to the analysis by indicating that one of the reasons why the American public opinion can influence the decision-making process in foreign policy relates to the characteristics of the US democracy. The author inserted in the debate a new notion by defending that “the openness of the political system provides the society with comparatively easy access to the decision-making process” (Risse-Kappen, 1991, p. 32). Democracies such as the United States, with a decentralized political system, would allow its citizens to have more influence in the decision-making process – as it happened with the Vietnam affair - in comparison with countries such as France, where the executive branch of government would completely control the agenda in foreign policy affairs.

As we notice, these variables brought by the post-Vietnam literature should not be ignored, since they can influence in the dynamic of the debate, an aspect not considered by the traditional literature. In this sense, we turn now our attention to the media, the most important variable for this discussion.

### **1.3. Media and Framing**

Authors such as Caspary (1970) and Aldrich, Sullivan and Borgida (1988) challenged the Almond-Lippmann consensus by defending that the public opinion was rational and coherent when it comes to international affairs, but also demonstrated how a third player - the media - is an important instrument in the relation between the public opinion and the elites. The authors demonstrate how the Vietnam War not only caught the attention of the population, but also impacted in the elections that occurred when the conflict was going on. Changes in the public’s perception about the war were evident, especially the gradual unpopularity the conflict would acquire, an aspect symbolized by the protests against the war, indicating the interest and rationality of the public towards the matter (Page and Shapiro, 1988, 1992).

Within this perspective, the media acquired a more prominent role in comparison with the traditional perspectives. Although the public is considered a rational actor by the most recent literature, the latter agrees that the public is misinformed and not attentive towards international relations questions. In this sense, the media would be essential in providing inputs to the public opinion about these subjects.

Soroka (2003) affirms the mass media has the essential task to provide information for the public. Moreover, this actor is also responsible in determining the levels of attention the public might have regarding these matters. Albeit Soroka accepts the idea that the persons are not experienced with foreign affairs subjects, since these matters are not part of the everyday lives of the citizens, he also argues that the media could assist the public in acquiring the necessary knowledge about the theme. Powlick and Katz (1998) has a complementary perspective, by stating that journalists could enhance the public interest and knowledge about international relations when these professionals consistently report them.

This research agrees with such perspective stating that the press is more than a simple agent that transmits the information from the elites to the public. In this sense, the media should be regarded as a political actor, having their own interests, objectives and concerns with the types of information broadcasted.

Baum and Potter (2008, p. 40) explain that most of the traditional studies used to reduce the media to a “conveyor belt that passively transports elite views” to the public opinion. The media, however, is capable to influence the relation between the public and their leaders in these matters.

The authors proposed an analysis that depicts the media as a type of information trader. Within the information market, there are supplies and demands, producers and consumers, as it happens in any other marketplace. In this analogy, the media acquires this product (information) from the supply side – the leaders – and delivers it to his clients – the public, located in the demand side. When this product is provided to the consumers, in general it comes with a frame made by the leaders themselves with no changes by the media. However, in other occasions, the media could have more autonomy when there is a public dissonance among the elites about a foreign affairs topic, resulting in different frames from the official narrative.

These characteristics of the press bring us the necessity to better explore what do we mean by framing processes made by the media. Entman (2010, p. 391) explains that framing “involves selecting a few aspects of a perceived reality and connecting them together in a narrative that promotes a particular interpretation”. Although the concept of frames has no

consensus, acquiring different approaches, such as the one promoted by Goffmann<sup>1</sup>, we remain here with Entman's perspective, especially because it is focused on the role of the media and foreign affairs.

Entman (2004, 2010), in the same manner made by Baum and Potter, also used the market as an analogy to examine the behavior of the media. The former author brings the concept of a "marketplace of ideas" with frames being used as a "transmission belt", where elites send their ideas to the public, with the possibility to occur the inverse flux. The most important difference with the analogies made by Baum and Potter, relies on the fact that Entman is concerned with the hurdles behind this approach. For this author, it is difficult to depict a "free market" of information considering that newspapers are restricted both by the elites and the public opinion. The press relies on the raw material informed by the elites, which might be limited, at the same time the public might also have a limited interest in the news, focusing on some specific points when informing themselves.

Nevertheless, both approaches have important common features. The fact that the public opinion and the leaders might have different expectations about the role and attitude of the press demonstrate the tense relations and the gaps that could occur among them.

Page and Barabas (2000) and Page, Bouton and Jacobs (2006) have been trying to better understand the "gaps" or "disconnections" occurring in the relation among the public and the elites. The solely fact that there are disagreements between these actors demonstrates that the public opinion would be interested in making changes in the way their leaders are conducting the decisions in foreign affairs. In this sense, Page and Barabas defend the necessity of the leaders in better comprehending the perspectives of the public.

This aspect reinforces what Baum and Potter (2015) labeled as the principal-agent dilemma<sup>2</sup>, in which the first tries to make the second accountable for their actions, including in matters of foreign policy<sup>3</sup>. However, the informational gap might be a hurdle to this task, since, as Baum and Potter (2008) already explained, in many occasions the press would maintain the frames made by the leaders and would not challenge the newspapers' main source of information. For this reason, the gap existing between principal and agents could be enhanced when the press acts as a lapdog, reverberating what the leaders say.

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<sup>1</sup> For Goffman (1986, p. 10), frames are related with "basic frameworks" that are used to make sense out of the events in our reality.

<sup>2</sup> The authors are considering the traditional meaning of principal and agents, where the former is represented by the citizens and the latter agents such as politicians and officials, whose incomes are payed with the citizen's taxes.

<sup>3</sup> With the popularization of social media during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these authors have been discussing the impacts of this new variable in the debate. For more, see Baum and Potter, 2019.

These authors state the media is always walking a fine line, since the press has to manage pressures from both sides of this relation. The elites are a valuable supplier of information and the media would always be cautious about not delivering such commodity in a package already made by the leaders themselves.

Puglisi and Snyder (2011, p. 931) reinforces Baum and Potter perspectives about a media with a political agenda by affirming that “partisan biases exhibited on the editorial pages of newspapers are strongly correlated with partisan biases in the coverage of scandals”. In this sense, the former authors are indicating the political characteristics of the media and demonstrating that this actor does not have a neutral/passive position, as traditionally stated. Considering this scenario, it is expected that newspapers with a right-wing tendency give more coverage to political scandals involving politicians from the left-wing and vice-versa.

The discussions relating framing processes as a strategy applied by the media could already be noticed in the work of Powlick and Katz (1998). These authors are concerned in explaining how the public opinion could be “activated” in order to make such pressures that might change the decision-making process related with foreign policy. For the authors, the public can indeed influence their leaders in these matters, however, their lack of attention requires that the elites themselves activate their interests towards the theme. In this sense, the public attention is enhanced when there are public deliberations and divergences among politicians about a question involving international politics, for instance. The mass media would be essential in this scenario, since this actor is responsible for transmitting these deliberations to the public. Without a proper way to make public such debates, they became a private discussion among elites with no capacity to trigger the public’s attention.

However, the authors argued that this process is more complex than simply reporting a misunderstanding among elites. The press reports need to be adequately framed to activate the public’s interest. This framing process consists in making the debate less abstract by providing “conceptual tools” in which the public opinion could not only better comprehend (and judge) the subject, but also analyze the case by a specific emphasis.

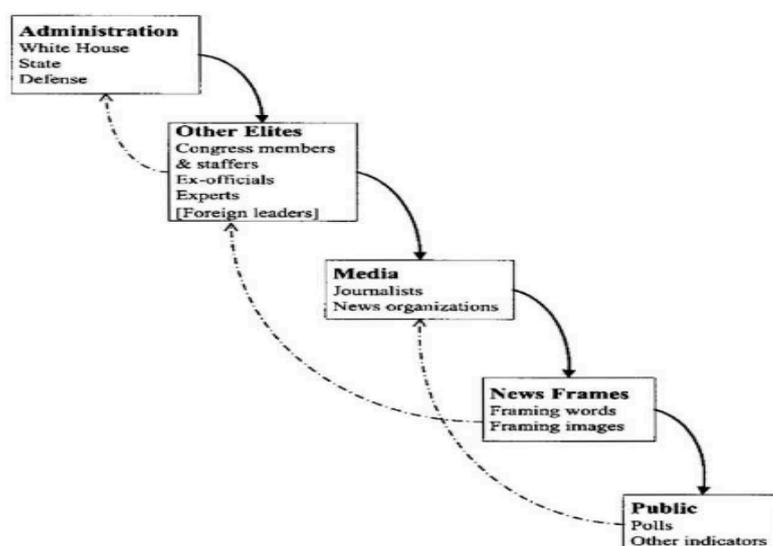
Entman (2004) agrees with Powlick and Katz’s perspectives. The former mentions the existence of two classes of framings: procedural and substantive. When a certain issue, actor or political event occurs, substantive framings might be applied. They would be used with the following objectives: defining effects or conditions as problematic; identifying causes behind the events; conveying a moral objective; endorsing remedies or improvement toward what happened. Thus, when the press uses framing strategies targeting one of the objectives above, such framing processes might be classified as a substantive one.

On the other hand, procedural framings work trying to validate the legitimacy of a certain political actor based on aspects such as success and representativeness. Procedural frames are frequently used in the media, however, it is not capable to “activate” the public in the same manner as substantive framings. When the press wants to increase these levels of attention, culturally resonant terms might be the appropriate strategy, especially by using images and words that could trigger emotions and remain in the audience’s memory.

Considering that these debates are mostly centered in the reality of the US society, Entman (2010) exemplifies his perspectives by mentioning how showing a picture of Osama Bin Laden, for instance, could trigger negative feelings among the public, activating their attention to a certain topic debated by the press. Moreover, this picture might bring a series of thoughts (“schemas”)<sup>4</sup> to the public: first they might remember a negative experience related with terrorism; then, the public might remember the action of those authorities that acted as “heroes” trying to contain the damages of a terrorist attack and search for justice against their people.

These series of schemas are not a trivial aspect of the framing process, being labeled as the “spreading activation” process, represented by a cascade model, which is demonstrated here through figure 2 below.

Figure 2 - Entman’s cascade model



Source: Entman, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> The author differentiates frames from schemas. The latter is represented by the mental images and thoughts about a subject, while frames are represented by the materialization of these cognitive processes, such as the pictures and texts chosen by a newspaper or a political leader. Thus, before became a reality, a frame is always depicted first by a cognitive procedure made by an influential actor.

Figure 2 has a similar characteristic with image 1 when it comes to the recent literature that works with the relation between public opinion, media and foreign policy. But in this case, Entman demonstrates how the framing processes works within the cascade model. Schemas that results in frames might be conceived by the elites, creating a cascading flow that influences a series of important actors, including the media and the public. Although the process is not necessarily top-down, the levels indicate how the political elites are strong forces capable to promote their frames to the other levels.

Here, such theoretical approach dialogues with the public opinion – foreign policy literatures presented before. The first point is the fact that the public might also react and influence in the framing procedures, establishing a bottom-up flow. Leaders and media would frame information with this aspect in mind, since they would try to create friendly “packages” – in the sense brought by Baum and Potter (2008, 2015) – to the public, in order to not have these frames questioned by them.

Considering that the actor in each level tends to be a “cognitive miser”, there is a tendency the information gets filtrated into narrower friendly packages every time it enters a new level, weakening the complexity and reality of the facts transmitted into these packages.

This distance from the “real situation” was labeled by Baum and Potter (2008, p. 43) as the “elasticity of reality” defined as “the range within which events can be spun, or framed, without inducing a significant backlash from the public”. In this sense, while the frame made by the elites about the subject is kept intact, the public is not well-informed to question these matters. It is only through different frames that such elasticity is reduced, which requires that the media challenges the perspective made by their source of information. Thus, it is not an easy task to avoid the elasticity of reality, since the public needs to be able to gather information enough – and from different perspectives - to question the official frames.

Such task is especially difficult when there is a dominant frame within a certain society. In general, when frames created by the political elites are congruent with predominant cultural features or has similar motivations with those of the press, there is a tendency these frames would become dominant. Terrorist attacks or threats – for instance – are situations that might mobilize the whole country into one narrative, making difficult for the press and political elites to question such narratives (Entman, 2004).

In this sense, the production of news is not a simple outcome from what is happening in the society, but a construction based on social features. Before published, an information passes through a series of rationalizations, bringing to the public opinion a narrative about the fact (Charaudeau, 2006). Depending on the formats the news acquire, the press might have a strong

political position when transmitting a certain argument to their audience. This is especially the case of editorials articles, which is a format more interested in bringing explanations and arguments about the facts, than simply reporting them (Lima, 2018).

Along the debates over the United States' media in foreign policy matters, there have been discussions about a possible ideological frame that would prevail among the country's newspapers and public opinion. Drezner (2008), for instance, explored what he understood as the common-sense that in the US media prevails a more liberal ideology about foreign policy. The author argues that it is necessary to deconstruct the engrained notion that along the decades the "realist tradition" was not regarded with positive lens by the public, resulting in a supposedly dominance of a liberal perspective towards this matter.

Drezner points out that the Realist school mistakenly accused the American political culture to have a hostile behavior towards them. The author tries to demonstrate the opposite, by using surveys indicating that the US population has restrictions in trusting other countries and international organizations. Their most important concerns would be more related with the security agenda (terrorism, control of weapons, drug trafficking) than those related with the improvement of democratic values and promotion of human rights across the world. In Drezner's perspective, the surveys demonstrated that the US public have more tendencies to defend what could be considered a realist foreign policy.

Drezner's arguments are, in fact, the reflection of how the US academia has been trying to understand whether prevails in the US media a certain political position when covering all types of matters, including those related with international relations. Entman (1990) admits the existence of possible misperceptions when analyzing the press. The author explains that misperceptions might occur because of exaggerated perspectives by the press or the audience. In the Reagan administration (1981-1989), for instance, the media in general understood that Reagan's conservatism had an increased support from the population, when surveys actually were indicating the opposite.

In this sense, the referred author does not necessarily deny what Drezner affirmed, however, Entman calls the attention for not trying to depict the media environment only by the continuous predominance of one ideology, independently if it is a liberal or conservative one. Changes might frequently happen in this environment and misperceptions between the actors could also occur.

These features are explained by the fact that this is an environment with elevated levels of competition. When the framing literature recognizes the capacity of mutual influence among actors, along with the political characteristics behind the construction of news, it also indicates

that narratives can compete against themselves with the objective to impose a certain framing about these facts, reflecting the relation between media and power.

Even though the political elites have more capacity to impose a narrative, the literature have been demonstrating contestation processes against the official frames. For Baum and Potter (2008, 2015), this contestation might occur when the public recognizes that their leaders are going too far in manipulating the facts, which might result in demands for the “truth” about what is going on. Powlick and Katz (1998), as demonstrated before, also highlighted that public divergences among the elites might not only activate the public’s attention, but also make them diverge from the elites.

In summary, when the congruence is lost, in the sense described by Entman (2004), the public might look for different narratives. Considering the levels of interdependence between public opinion and media, confronts of framings might increase, since this moment would be an opportunity for the media to bring alternative perspectives about a certain subject. Some of these perspectives were already there, waiting for a chance to become an alternative rationalization about the facts.

The framing confronts that tries to influence in the schemas of the audience members are also useful to demonstrate that these framings have different ideological positions, otherwise, we would not have any sort of rivalry. Entman (1990, 2004, 2010) brings two important concepts when explaining the media’s political attitudes: bias and slant. Slant is when a newspaper emphasizes one specific political position about a certain subject during the framing competition. Such newspaper treats a certain topic ignoring the perspective from the other side of the political spectrum or even derogating it. Slant framing could also intentionally omit certain elements to favor their narrative. Although slanted news is a good example, slant framings are frequently part of any communication involving political power, including speeches, negotiations, etc. Politicians, for instance, use slant speeches as an opportunity to acquire more supporters to their political agenda.

Bias should be divided in two types: content bias and decision-making bias. The former is a continuous slant identified in the communication of a political actor promoting a certain ideology. In this case, it is important to prove the existence of a slant pattern, the authors affirm that in general such patterns need to exist for years to be classified as a bias. In its turn, decision-making bias is related with the beliefs of journalists when producing their materials. Considering they would have their own political perspectives towards what they are writing, they cannot completely isolate their ideological position.

Entman (2010, p. 394) affirms that in the United States “framing is normally subject to competition between two major political parties, and it is this competitive struggle to dominate media framing that provides the context for most political discourse”. In this sense, Entman’s perspective is important to our research because we intend to analyze these framing competitions in the press, by trying to observe ideological positions, with slightly adaptations to the reality of Latin America features in its political system and media companies.

When studying the media behavior towards corruption scandals, Mancini (2019) demonstrate how these cases are an opportunity to study the media and political systems together, considering how intertwined are these two subjects. By analyzing specifically corruption scandals, he demonstrates there could be three types of media frames behind them: 1) the market-driven coverage: such cases tend to have a more economic framing, with a focus in exploring the case to gather better economic profits to the media company. Tabloids are more recognized for this practice and the topics here tend to emphasize sexual aspects of scandals, although the elite press might try to profit with these cases too. When it comes to 2) “Custodians of conscience” coverage, we are referring to the notion about a journalist work that intends to enhance the conduct of public affairs. The economic aspect is relevant, but journalists need to go beyond the focus in simply selling newspapers and keep a commitment with the society, investigating misconducts in the public arena to improve democratic values.

Finally, the 3) politically oriented corruption scandals coverage is a type that is more related with environments where the liberal media is not present. Mancini explains that such type of coverage does not necessarily fits the idea of an anti-corruption watchdog, since the media is actually controlled by a certain group that uses information to undermine their political opponents, creating confusion and intentional misperceptions among its audience. As the author himself lets clear, such types of media coverage towards corruption cases are only ideal types and could be intertwined among them.

When analyzing the role of the media towards corruption in democratic environments, Berti (2018) demonstrates that there are different ways of framing a scandal even when the type of coverage might be considered the so-called “Custodians of conscience” media scandal. The author exemplifies this aspect through a comparative analysis between New Zealand and Italy, countries that have opposite situations when it comes to corruption problems. While the first country is relatively well-placed in the international rankings measuring corruption perceptions, Italy is a developed country with one of the highest levels of corruption perception among segments of the business elites and public opinion.

The author indicates that considering this aspect, the media's role was different in both nations when framing corruption cases in these countries. In New Zealand, prevailed a frame focusing in the individual actions. In this sense, corrupt misconducts by one individual would be considered a risk to the whole political system, hence this person should be punished to contain possible spill-over effects within this system. On the other hand, the prevailing frames in Italy stated that the political system as a whole was tainted by corruption, which resulted in a more fatalistic and generalized framings toward corruption scandals. In this sense, Berti (2018, p. 15) highlights that "journalists do not simply report about cases of corruption, but that through their reporting they also engage in framing processes that give salience to particular aspects of corruption".

Such view about the press also reinforces our objective in this research which is to confirm whether there is a tendency in these newspapers in defending a certain political position towards Lava Jato scandal and its anti-corruption task force. When developing such analysis taking into consideration these theoretical framework, there is an important aspect that should be mentioned: the fact that these theories are considering a scenario where the media of a certain country is framing foreign policy news related to that country itself.

When the studies that challenged the Almond-Lippmann consensus came into light, along with the international communication literature presented above, they were focused on the relation between the US public opinion and the news related with foreign affairs concerning their own country foreign policy.

In our case, we are using these set of theories to analyze the media's behavior to a matter of international relations not directly involved with their own country. In fact, the media in this case is covering an international matter that does not impact their domestic policy. This is especially true in the United States and Argentinian case. Even though these countries somehow were involved in the corruption case analyzed here, their domestic policy does not seem to be impacted by these scandals. In our data base, Peru is the exception, considering how affected was the domestic policy of this country.

Thus, we have in our analysis two situations: the first one – the Peruvian case – fits the traditional models brought by these set of theories, considering that the media is reporting a matter of international relations concerning the domestic policy from that country, while the other two countries have a different aspect, since they are much more international observers than countries whose domestic policies were affected by this scandal.

With those specificities in mind, we intend to demonstrate, not only how the international press covered such scandal along the years, but also how these theoretical

frameworks might be valid to demonstrate the political behavior of the international media, even in countries that were much more observers about what was happening than countries with a domestic policy affected by this international affair.

### **Chapter's remarks**

Along this chapter, we demonstrated how changes occurred in the perspectives about the public opinion and its understanding of international relations matters. The traditional theories that defended the public was incapable to comprehend such matters lost their predominance to the most recent debate, which have been demonstrating the public ability to rationalize and not only be influenced by, but also pressure their leaders and the media in these matters.

The debates about framing processes and political disputes indicate the importance of the vocabulary applied by the media and how the same events might acquire different interpretations, depending on the political affiliations a certain company might have.

Although these discussions are based on the US media and its relations with the local public opinion, we intend to bring this debate to the Latin-American press, by analyzing how the regional along with the US media, behave towards the Operation Car Wash and its developments. In the next chapter, we give a better explanation about the corruption case in Brazil and abroad, the functioning of the anti-corruption task force and the media's behavior towards it.

## CHAPTER 2 - THE OPERATION CAR WASH IN BRAZIL AND ABROAD: THE ACTORS AND DEBATES BEHIND THE SCANDAL

In this chapter, we bring a panorama of the Lava Jato scandal, explaining some important points about how the corruption scheme worked, along with the *modus operandi* of the authorities behind the investigations. We will first explain the scandal and the anti-corruption task force based on the documents published by the Brazilian authorities.

After this first moment, we present the outcomes from the scandal on other Latin American countries, giving a glimpse of how the local authorities are conducting the investigations. It is also presented important persons and companies accused to be involved in the case, along with the consequences the Car Wash scandal brought to other nations. We hope not only to briefly pinpoint the impacts of the scandal outside Brazil, but indicate the reasons why we considered Lava Jato a matter of international relations, an important feature to theorize the case using the literature presented in chapter one.

The theorizations applied to Lava Jato will also appear in the final segment of this chapter. We bring some important points of discussion that were raised after Lava Jato's outbreak, including debates about the corruption problems in the political system in Brazil and Latin America. At the same time, some reflection about the relation between the authorities investigating and judging the case with the media will also be brought.

Finally, we present how these elements could dialogue with the theories about media, public opinion and international relations. Considering that the literature presented in chapter one has a strong focus in the reality of the United States and its foreign policy, we present possible adaptations to these theories, in order to better apply them in the reality of our research.

### 2.2. Operation Car Wash in Brazil explained through the official lens

In 2014, the Brazilian Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (*Ministério Público Federal*, MPF, 2014a) made public the first series of denunciations regarding what would be called the Operation Car Wash. The first investigations had as target a group of professional money launderers, called *doleiros*. The *doleiros* would have as client important executives and high-level public officials connected to the case.

According to the complaints made by the federal prosecutors (MPF, 2014a, 2014b), the *doleiros* involved in the scheme were the responsible for laundering the money received by

Brazilian private firms in overpriced contracts established with Brazilian public companies. The most notorious case involved the oil company Petrobras. The corruption web also implicated other public companies, including Eletronuclear, a firm responsible for building and managing nuclear power plants in Brazil (MPF, 2015a).

The money from the contracts was responsible for irrigating a complex corruption network, which involved grafts to the directors and managers of these Brazilian national companies. The private companies were the bribing agents who also rigged public biddings organized by the state-owned companies. This network involved Brazilian politicians and parties that were the responsible for indicating the directors and managers of these national companies.

In its denunciations, MPF (2014c, 2014d, 2014e, 2015b) affirmed that private companies such as Camargo Correa, OAS Group, Queiroz Galvão Group and Construtora Norberto Odebrecht (CNO) rigged the public biddings with the objective to acquire advantageous contracts at the expenses of the Brazilian government. In this sense, the MPF made separated denounces to each of these private companies and the executives that were operating the scheme.

The frauds started already during the public tender competitions. A cartel of companies, also called “the club” by the MPF (2014c), would always win the bids by grafting the employees from the public firms, eliminating the chances of other competitors in the race. The club created a system where the companies could choose which bids they wanted to have. The contracts signed between the bid winner and the government were overpriced and the bribes received by the public officials were between 1% and 5% of the total amount of money involved in the concessions acquired by the companies.

The corruption scheme behind Lava Jato involved various tasks and agents working in tandem to operate this bribery scheme. Considering the amount of money involved in the scandal, the role of the black-market money dealers was paramount. The majority of the *doleiros* involved were experienced money launderers, investigated or already convicted by the Brazilian justice for past illegal activities. They also had their own clients and independent work, although they used to help each other regularly.

Using as evidences leniency deals, articles published by Brazilian newspapers, contracts, acquisitions, money transfer and other proofs, the prosecutors understood these elements indicated the involvement of politicians in the case. Author such as Praça and Lopez (2019, p. 359) affirmed that in the Brazilian political system “presidents and ministers can choose experts for their political appointment slots, taking advantage of a complex network of

professional bureaucrats”. For the MPF, this appointment slots were useful to achieve the objectives behind the criminal web, which have involved influential politicians and businessmen.

In the perspective of the prosecutors behind the anticorruption task force, Lava Jato scandal was rooted in the coalitional system existent in the Brazilian politics, which would require illegal mechanisms to guarantee the governability within a National Congress that has different parties and demands. These authorities defended that the usage of political appointment slots was a valuable resource to guarantee the executive branch would have the necessary number of congressmen and senators to approve the bills proposed by the president in office (MPF, 2016a).

Thus, it is possible to perceive how the Brazilian authorities were expressing their own perspectives about the local political system when formalizing the complaints that were eventually sent to the federal justice. It is noticeable how these elite members are already framing the scandal with a narrative that defends the judicial measures proposed by them. Considering the cascade model from Entman (2004, 2010) presented in the previous chapter, we defend here that these elites were capable to set a framing process that tried to influence the media and subsequently the Brazilian public opinion<sup>1</sup> towards what the anti-corruption task force represented. It would not take longer for these framings reverberate through the international media, either to support the elites’ narrative or to create counter-frames against the dominant perspectives.

### **2.3. Car Wash scandal in Latin America**

In 2016, the Department of Justice (DOJ) from the United States and the lawyers from Odebrecht along with one of its subsidiaries, Braskem, reached a plea agreement that resulted in a penalty valued in more than US\$ 3.5 billion, the biggest penalty ever paid in a case of international corruption (Fellet, 2016).

In that year, the DOJ (2016, p. 7) accused the company to have paid “approximately \$788 million in bribes in association with more than 100 projects in twelve countries”. According to the authorities, Odebrecht employees developed some of their illegal activities in the United States territory. For instance, the offshore companies used as shell firms in the

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<sup>1</sup> In 2018, IPSOS Group released a survey showing that 86% of the Brazilians interviewed agreed that Lava Jato investigations should be concluded “whatever it takes”. The mentioned year represents the lowest levels of approvals the investigations have since the beginning of this questionnaire.

scheme were managed from the United States. Furthermore, Odebrecht was also accused of plaining the activities from the Division of Structured Operations in this country. Such division within Odebrecht bureaucracy became widely famous in the media, under the accusations that the department was entirely dedicated for operating bribery schemes.

According to the DOJ (2016), Odebrecht between 2001 and 2016 bribed public authorities in the following Latin-American countries: Argentina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Venezuela. Lava Jato scandal affected these countries in different intensities, at the same time the judicial system in each country have different speeds towards the investigations.

The MPF affirms that since 2014, Brazil already made more than 600 judicial cooperation agreements with 40 countries. Amid them, Peru is the country with more requests, approximately 40% from all the cooperation agreements made with the Brazilian authorities. Swiss came after, representing 36% of these requests (MPF, 2020).

In countries such as Argentina and Venezuela, there is a dearth of information about the case, creating tensions among the press about whether influential politicians or businessmen were involved in it. Until 2017, Gustavo Arribas was the only politician in Argentina to be publicly accused for having received bribes from Odebrecht to intermediate contracts in the country. Arribas is a politician closely connected with the former Argentinian president Mauricio Macri (2015-2019). Nevertheless, the local justice did not prove any connection of Macri's ally with a bribery scheme. In the plea agreement made with the DOJ (2016), Odebrecht representatives declared the misconducts in Argentina occurred from 2007 until 2014, involving a sum of bribes higher than US\$ 35 million.

Considering the Venezuelan case, Roht-Arriaza and Martinez (2019) explain that the authorities capable of following the corruption tracks from Lava Jato in the country lost their autonomy during the ongoing crisis Venezuela is engulfed in. The evidence used by the authors is the dismissal of the Attorney General Luisa Ortega by the Venezuelan Supreme Court, an unconstitutional maneuver, according to the authors.

For the referred authors, another point that makes hard to investigate the case in Venezuela, is the justice system itself, composed mostly by 'provisional judges' that can be dismissed from their post at any time. Rotberg (2019) mentions that Odebrecht's Chief Executive Office (CEO) affirmed in his testimonies that the company payed more than US\$ 30 million in bribes to the current president Nicolás Maduro (2013- ).

Countries such as Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Peru, had better data not only from the press, but also from the local public ministry, anti-corruption watchdogs and

academia. For these reasons, they have more reliable information about the stage of each investigation happening in these countries. It is possible to briefly present some of these investigations and the results already achieved.

According to Salcedo-Álbaran and Garay-Salamanca (2019), since 2016 the Colombian prosecutor's office are investigating possible involvements of Brazilian companies in bid-riggings in Colombia, which also resulted in more than 30 requests of cooperation made by the local authorities to the Brazilian federal prosecutor's office.

Among the cases investigated, there is the Ruta del Sol highway, which is an important infrastructure project intending to connect Bogotá, Colombian capital, to the Pacific coast, through a modern highway system, creating what would be an important economic corridor. The public tender behind this project became one of the targets of the local investigation, resulting in the arrests of relevant political leaders, among them, Otto Nicolás Bula, former Colombian senator and Bernardo Elías Vidal, also an ex-senator in the country (El Tiempo, 2019). The Colombian prosecutor's office (*Fiscal General de la Nación*, FGN) stated that more than US\$ 6 million were used as payments to the politicians and public officials involved in case (FGN, 2017).

In Dominican Republic, the investigations accused the former president Danilo Medina (2012-2020) for having used bribes from Brazilian companies to finance his electoral campaign during the 2016 elections (Girón, 2017). Moreover, the former president was also accused by Participacion Ciudadana (2018), the national chapter of Transparency International, to have received bribes from Odebrecht in the construction of the coal-fired power plant Punta Catalina.

Following a similar pattern to Dominican Republic, Ecuador has been investigating high-level politicians, including former presidents. In fact, the infrastructure projects related with the construction of dams were always a focus of tensions between this country, Brazilian engineering companies and Brasília itself.

The investigative work made by the local prosecutors resulted in impacting outcomes. Jorge Glas, former Ecuadorian vice-president (2013-2017), was arrested by the local authorities and condemned for receiving bribes from a variety of companies, among them, Brazilian firms (Meléndez and Moncagatta, 2017).

The prosecutors' investigations eventually arrived in the name of former president Rafael Correa (2007-2017), however, his case has only a partial relation with the Brazilian scandal. The ex-president was sentenced to eight years in jail for being considered the leader of a criminal organization that has similar patterns to the Car Wash case. This specific case received the name of "Bribes 2012-2016" (España, 2020).

Peru, is probably the place outside Brazil that has more advanced investigations about the case, which resulted in enormous political impacts in the country. The close ties between Odebrecht and the Peruvian elites was the focus of the operation Car Wash in the country, that was initiated in the end of 2016. Arce and Incio (2018) affirm that in 2017 the local prosecutor's office was already demanding the arrests of former presidents and high ranking public officials supposedly involved in the scandal. Durand (2019a) explains that such fast developments of the investigations were possible because the Peruvian authorities followed similar collaboration mechanisms applied in Brazil, since the local prosecutors used the testimonies from the defendants as incriminatory proofs.

The series of arrests resulted from the investigations were an additional element of destabilization in the already fragile government of Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (2016-2018). Former president Ollanta Humala (2011-2016) and his wife were the first prisons that received substantial media coverage in 2017. Although Alejandro Toledo (2001-2006) was the first former president to have received an arrest warrant, the Peruvian public ministry had to request his extradition from the United States, country where he was living. In the same year of 2017, Kuczynski himself was mentioned in the scandal accused of having received payments from Odebrecht, in exchange for contracts when he was Toledo's minister, which resulted in pressures from the opposition parties for his impeachment.

Among the infrastructure projects under investigation, Durand (2019b) demonstrates two cases where the Brazilian company was accused of having coordinated bid-rigging schemes, along with the payments of bribes to politicians in the country: the Lima subway and the Interoceanica roadway.

Finally, León and Ayala (2019) also state that politicians and businessmen were not the only agents involved in the Peruvian Car Wash scandal. Investigations accused local judges for having negotiated lighter sentences and political favors during the Car Wash case, which brought a discussion in the country about the way the judiciary members are nominated to their posts. Simultaneously, Arce and Incio (2018) affirmed the intense mediatization behind the scandal turned public the names of prosecutors and judges responsible for the investigations and arrests, in a similar manner to what happened in Brazil, which also paved the way to akin reactions of support and criticism to the role of these institutions amid Peruvian politics and society.

#### **2.4. Beyond the official narratives: academic debates about the case**

According to Meneguello and Arquer (2018), Lava Jato scandal in Brazil was an additional element to increase the discontentment of Brazilian public opinion towards democratic institutions in the country, with a continuous polarization in the political system. Ideological polarizations brought by the Car Wash case, along with other elements already present in the ongoing economic and political crisis could have affected the legitimation of the referred institutions in the country.

Such lack of confidence from the public in these institutions were already captured by Meneguello (2011) based on the Brazilian political scenario from the 2000s, which revealed how the public opinion from the country indeed had a negative perspective towards the corruption that occurred in the country during that referred decade, taking the issue seriously. In this sense, we could notice how Lava Jato's outbreak in 2014 represented one more element to undermine the confidence of Brazilian voters in their democratic institutions, continuing a pattern of negative perspectives experienced since the outbreak of corruption scandals during the 2000s.

This scenario was suitable for the appearance of new narratives and actors that could use their own frames about such institutions as a solution to the challenges Brazil was facing. This is exactly what happened behind Public Ministry denounces presented in the previous segment and the judiciary in Brazil and Latin America.

Considering the similarities among the challenges faced in those countries, many of them would try similar answers to it. Based on the investigations happening in the mentioned countries, it is possible to state that each Car Wash investigation followed its own paths and speeds. Some of them already have a wider understanding of how the misconducts were developed in their respective country. In some occasions, collaboration would occur with the Brazilian authorities. For instance, Prosecutors from Ecuador constantly resorted to collaboration agreements that had similar characteristics to those applied in Brazil. The indictment of former Ecuadorian vice-president, Jorge Glas, was related with the confessions made by José dos Santos, Odebrecht executive in Ecuador. Nevertheless, some of the cooperation were merely formal. Tensions among foreign authorities and the Brazilian federal prosecutors could be noticed at least in the case of Argentina and Mexico<sup>2</sup>, where the sides did not trust in each other.

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<sup>2</sup> About Lava Jato in Mexico, see Olmos (2018).

Even with these tensions and uncoordinated movements occurring among the regional authorities responsible for the case, Tourinho (2018) defended Lava Jato efforts as an evidence of how strong is becoming what the author denominates the “global anticorruption regime”. According to him, cooperation among law enforcement authorities were facilitated through international norms, such as the 1988 Vienna Convention and even the US Federal Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), which allowed countries to have faster mechanisms to exchange information. Instead of relying in instruments such as letters rogatory, these authorities could create simplified mechanisms of collaboration. Countries such as Brazil would be influenced by the transformations occurring within this international regime, at the same time, the country would also be able to impact its peers in this process. Therefore, the Operation Car Wash in Latin America would represent the evolvement of an international agenda to fight corruption through an exchange of experiences.

This is, however, a polarized debate when it comes to the consequences of these investigations promoted by the legal authorities across Latin America. On the other side of the debate, it is possible to mention Sanchez-Badin and Sanchez-Badin (2019, p. 329), which considered the usage of legal procedures, such as the collaboration agreements in Brazil as “vitiated” mechanisms that did not guarantee legal certainty for the companies who accept to cooperate. Consequently, these companies were penalized more than once in Brazil, considering that every governmental authority in the country were conducting their own investigations. The indiscriminate usage of the collaboration agreements in other countries, could result in the same problems.

In this sense, the authors’ concerns were related to the fact that these companies were heavily penalized for the same facts more than once and at multiple countries, resulting in the incapacity to compensate the damages caused by the corruption scheme, since these companies have a limited payment capacity. The Dominican Republic could be considered a good example of this difficulty. Odebrecht already delayed its payments to the referred country in 2019, a situation that tends to be repeated in other places.

Considering a wider context, Bertran (2020) have already demonstrated that the application of FCPA tend to follow a pattern, where US prosecutors strategically choose the companies that would face the most severe financial sanctions through this law, which was the case for Odebrecht and Petrobras. Such companies were targets of the US law especially because were influential organizations in Latin America, representing Brazilian interests in it. By targeting these companies, the US prosecutors not only could undermine the economic influence of Brazilian initiatives, decreasing their capacity of competition in the international

market, but also influenced in the decision of many countries to establish their own financial sanctions to these companies, making more difficult the payment of all those sanctions.

Moreover, the leniency collaboration programs applied by the prosecutors in other Latin American countries generated the same tensions that were raised in Brazil, amid the branches of government, especially because these testimonies, in most of the occasions, accused well-known politicians and their respective parties of having received illegal financing during election campaigns. When accepted by the magistrates as legit proofs, these collaboration agreements were discredited by part of the politicians belonging to the executive and legislative branches of government. These tensions could better be regarded through the concept of “inter-branch crisis”, defined by Helmke (2017, p. 20) as “an episode in which one branch of government challenges the composition of another branch of government”.

Such confrontations occurred between the executive and legislative against the judiciary branch, as it seems to be happening in Argentina, Guatemala and Venezuela, where there are complains that the judicial system could be suffering threats from the politicians involved in the case, especially when magistrates could easily be replaced from their office. On the other hand, accusations that the judiciary authorities were trespassing their constitutional competences were also raised by members of the political elites. This was the case in Brazil, especially in the way that Sergio Moro conducted the case. However, these tensions also occurred among the legislative and executive, as the Peruvian case demonstrates. Although Kuczynski had renounced, he was already pressured to leave the office, since the Peruvian Congress was preparing a second impeachment request against him.

These tensions among the government branches were an evidence that the authorities behind the investigations would not necessarily being successful in implementing their official narratives about the scandal. With public confronts happening, counter-frames could appear with the objective to question the official perspectives of those behind the investigations and trials. We demonstrated in the first chapter that authors such as Powlick and Katz (1998) and Baum and Potter (2008) explain that public divergences within the elites are essential to break the predominance of a specific frame about the case and bring different ones to the audience.

From the conflicts amid the government branches, new perspectives were raised by the “whistleblowers” who questioned the set of ideas contained in the documents we presented in the previous segment of this chapter. Those documents were essential in constructing the official and initially prevailing perspective that would try to impose the meaning of Operation Car Wash in Latin America. In summary, this official framing tried to establish the idea that

such investigations were necessary to the process of “cleaning” from Brazil’s political system dishonored politicians and public servants.

Analyzing specifically the tensions in the Lava Jato starting point, Brazil is a country where polarizations of all types were raised following the outbreak of the investigations. We would like to briefly pinpoint three local debates that were trying to better understand the causes and consequences of Lava Jato in Brazil, but at the same time are becoming a trend in other countries affected by the scandal and the investigations. They are the following ones: A) The discussions about the functioning of the political system in Brazil and Latin America as one of the causes (or not) that bribery schemes became a recurrent corruption misconduct; b) the reflections about the role of the public ministry towards the investigation; c) the criticisms behind the way Lava Jato judicial procedures were conducted in Brazil and abroad under a strategy based on conquering the support of the public opinion.

In the first discussion, political systems such as the multiparty presidentialism, which characterizes the Brazilian politics since its redemocratization, are at stakes after Lava Jato’s outbreak. For Mello and Spektor (2018), the system in which relies the Brazilian politics could not be regarded through very optimistic lens, considering the necessity the executive branch has to acquire support from a variety of parties, in order to control the legislative agenda. In this sense, corruption became one of the costs of this system, since porks were not sufficient to guarantee such control. Therefore, the usage of appointment slots within important state-owned companies, illegal electoral financing and grafts became valuable resources to guarantee the executive could have capacity to approve its bills.

The multiparty presidentialism system would not essentially be the reason to the corruption, however, the relations between the executive and legislative in Brazil could facilitate the prevailing of private interests. According to the mentioned authors, these fragilities existent in Brazil’s political system could also be noticed in other countries affected by Lava Jato, such as Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador, where grafts were a recurrent tool to finance political negotiations, as we already demonstrated in this paper.

In this sense, the notion of “state capture” in Latin America made by Durand (2019c) has a similar perspective found in Mello and Spektor (2018), especially when demonstrating how private companies could control and pressure members of the Congress to attend their demands in countries such as Peru and Brazil. Although using different terminologies, both studies reach similar conclusions about the causes and consequences behind the scandal, which demonstrates the capacity of this discussion to be frequently used to analyze Lava Jato in the region.

While the discussion a) above was more concerned with the executive-legislative relation, discussions b) and c) are more focused in the role of the judiciary and the institutions that orbit this government branch, such as the public ministry. Kerche (2018a, 2018b), for instance, demonstrated how this Brazilian institution was formulated with similar characteristics to the Italian prosecutor's office, especially because both institutions have high-levels of autonomy, although the Brazilian office is not subordinated to the judiciary branch as it happens in Italy.

The autonomy granted to the public ministry in Brazil was considered an important resource to investigate the names of those involved in Lava Jato. The levels of independence that prosecutors had in Brazil were high enough to allow them be part of the investigative actions before they present the case into the judiciary system. In this sense, Lava Jato became a task-force where the Federal Police and the federal prosecutors cooperate to build a case against those allegedly involved in the scandal. Such autonomy became a goal to many public ministries around Latin America, considering that their work faced restrictions and threats. However, this independence could also be a concern when there are no accountability mechanisms to make the prosecutors responsible for their choices, as it occurs in Brazil.

In a certain way, the criticism raised over the Brazilian public ministry is extended to the actions of the judiciary, especially because agents from both institutions used the media as an instrument to expose an idea that Brazil for the first time was seriously fighting corruption and changing the political environment of the country. Under this justification, situations of abuses of power occurred during the investigations and trials, including the intentional release to the press of private conversations among politicians.

Almeida (2018) regards the narrative made by the judiciary as a "moralization of politics" process. For the author, this became one of the objectives behind Lava Jato, including when the case was judged by the federal justice. According to the author, the judiciary has been responsible for criminalizing the political assignments a president should naturally have. Andrade (2018) agrees with this position and defends that the Brazilian justice system lost its neutrality when judging the case and decided to act as a political actor. This allegedly behavior, that could be defined as "lawfare", became a recurrent tool to criticize Lava Jato in the country and has being transformed into a political debate in Latin America, considering the number of important politicians engulfed in the case.

Koerner (2013) indicates that from the 2000s until the current decade, a speech affirming the judiciary could use its force to change the Brazilian reality – a reference to the corruption cases in the country – became a strong framing among the authorities from this

government branch. The concept of morality – that is also a principle established in the Brazilian constitution – is an element in which these discourses were based on, emphasizing the necessity of a more ethical environment in the political system. An interesting evidence of how the idea – and the principle – of morality became a powerful perspective among judges and prosecutors is the fact that many members of the Brazilian Supreme Court applied the morality principle to validate the Clean Record Act (*Lei da Ficha Limpa*), a law establishing that politicians already convicted in a series of crimes – including corruption – are not allowed to run for a public office during eight years.

Therefore, the mentioned author affirms such gestures demonstrate a new position of the Brazilian judiciary. This branch of government would be engaged in a crusade to moralize Brazil's political system, a perspective that could have influenced the public opinion through the reports of the media, as we already indicated.

The judicial procedures applied in the Latin-American countries had features very similar to the Brazilian case. In countries such as Peru, for instance, the mediatization process of the scandal indicated how both countries followed similar patterns when framing the scandal.

In 2020, a series of testimonies gave to the Peruvian public ministry by persons investigated for possible involvements in bribery scandals were used to accuse the then president Martín Vizcarra (2018-2020) for supposedly have received bribes from engineering companies, when he was governor of the Moquegua region. The names of those agents who collaborated with the local public ministry were kept in secret and even after the impeachment procedures were started in the Peruvian legislative, the prosecutors did not confirm the validity of the testimonies. The local National Congress impeached Vizcarra affirming the president was not “morally capable” to remain in the presidency, considering the mediatization of the leaked messages.

Even though the justification based on moral principles is established in the Peruvian constitution<sup>3</sup>, the usage of these testimonies as proofs of such moral incapacity raised criticism among segments of the Peruvian society for the spurious facts used to impeach Vizcarra. The fact that this type of proofs were used as a recurrent procedure by the Brazilian authorities and Peruvian public ministry during the Car Wash investigations, questioned the *modus operandi* applied by these prosecutors. In this sense, a discussion that is already established about the Brazilian chapter of Lava Jato is a reality in the Peruvian case too, especially because the

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<sup>3</sup> Paffarini (2020) had already demonstrated how this “moral” principal present in the Peruvian constitution has a dubious meaning, being used to trespass legal boundaries against presidents of the country.

investigations about Vizcarra were conducted by the prosecutorial team responsible for the Lava Jato investigations in the referred country.

When comparing the judicial procedures behind Lava Jato in countries such as Brazil, Ecuador and Peru, Paffarini (2020) demonstrates a pattern of constitutional rights being violated with the usage of dubious interpretations of the law, especially against the members of executive in these countries, which were all affected in a certain degree by the maneuvers made by prosecutors and judges in these countries.

For these reasons, we would like to include the judiciary and public ministry elites previously mentioned as influential actors in these matters, at least in the Lava Jato case, considering the impact that those judiciary elites were capable to create in Latin American, although the literature presented in the previous chapter mentioned the elites such as diplomats, presidents and congressmen as those responsible for the decision-making processes in foreign affairs.

We believe that members of the judiciary elites and the public ministry worked as influential political elites in the sense brought by authors such as Baum and Potter (2008, 2015) and Entman (1990, 2004). This is justified because we treat Lava Jato case and its consequences as an international affairs subject, considering its impacts in many other countries, as we demonstrated in the previous segments of this chapter. In this sense, it is fair to consider these elites as influential leaders. They were in the top of the cascading model proposed by Entman and acted as political actors, trying to validate their frames toward the media and the public opinion.

They were feeding the Brazilian and international media with impacting information about a corruption scandal that had great magnitude. In many occasions, they released privileged information not easily accessible to the media and public opinion, with the objective to sustain their points. In this sense, their information was wrapped in a framing structure that had very negative perspectives against the Brazilian political system, at the same time their narrative had a strong idea that Brazil's rule of law was prevailing for the first time in history because of the work done by their task force.

Sergio Moro himself, one of the most important symbols of the anti-corruption narrative within Lava Jato, had already emphasized the relevancy of a judiciary with political power. Writing years before the beginning of this specific Brazilian scandal, Moro (2004) analyzed the reasons why the Operation Clean Hands (*Mani pulite*, in Italian) was successful in Italy during the 1990s. The author defends that an independent judiciary is a paramount requisite to fight corruption, nevertheless, "public opinion, as the Italian case demonstrates, it is also an essential

condition for a successful judicial work”<sup>4</sup> (Moro, 2004, p. 57). At the same time, Moro explains that the magistrates should not be an “impotent political power” in the fight against corruption. The Mani pulite scandal was the greatest example of how the judges should respond to these types of criminal organizations, in the author’s perspectives.

The usage of such framing structures occurred under a strategy where, for those behind the law-enforcement institution, the support of the Brazilian public opinion was paramount to shield their work, in the same manner as it happened in Italy during the Mani pulite investigations. For this reason, the leakage of judicial information could be used as a valuable tool to conquer the public attention, along with a proactive political behavior that should be adopted by the magistrates, which is an aspect that could be extended to the prosecutors too. Thus, to have the public opinion on their side was essential to a well succeed combat against corruption in Brazil (Moro, 2004). In a certain way, these actors indeed were successful in Brazil, with strong indications this strategy was also applied in countries such as Peru.

In the same manner as explained by Baum and Potter (2008), the content of these information had a frame already made by the supply side. For the judges and prosecutors behind the case, it was essential that the newspapers kept the frame made by themselves intact, since the press were exposing the perspectives of the judges and investigators with the objective to influence the public opinion.

Simultaneously, when the US Department of Justice – here also represented as a judicial elite from a foreign country - released the documents behind the plea bargain agreements with Odebrecht, exposing a list of countries where the graft scheme supposedly occurred, it created or enhanced domestic political crisis in Latin America.

Since the US authorities only made a statement affirming that corruption misconducts happened in these places, with no clear information about who and how the corruption acts had taken place, the local law enforcement authorities found themselves pressured to find appropriate answers. These chapters of the Operation Car Wash had varied characteristics and resulted in tensions among state institutions.

Considering all these aspects, these elites have all the elements to create congruent framings that could prevail among the media and the public opinion, consequently. However, the independent role of the press should not be ignored in this scenario, especially considering that we are talking about political actors with their own interests, in the same manner as those elites referred above.

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<sup>4</sup> Original: “a opinião pública, como ilustra o exemplo Italiano, é também essencial para o êxito da ação judicial”.

When the official investigative work did not appear to have advanced in many countries affected by the scandal, the press was essential in gathering information about the possible misconducts occurred, informing the allegedly persons and companies involved in the case. IDL Reporteros, for instance, is a group of investigative journalists responsible for a plethora of journalistic dossiers about how the bribery scheme occurred in every Latin American country where it was operated. Global initiatives such as the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) was also looking into the case. In Brazil, JOTA, a newspaper specialized in covering news about the judiciary universe, has been releasing reports in partnership with the Transparency International about the regional developments of the case.

This brings us to one important point of our research, which is analyzing how the work made by the international media framed the task force and the scandal behind the Car Wash case along the cross sections analyzed in this dissertation. Considering this scenario, a confront of framings would be one expected outcome, with each side of the ideological spectrum having their political perspectives, framing their vocabulary and content based on such confront.

All these elements appear in a moment of fragility in the public beliefs about democratic institutions, within the pattern already mentioned by Meneguello and Arquer (2018). Although the impacts of such negative perceptions about corruption on the electoral processes in Brazil and Latin America might be more difficult to measure, we speculate there are indications that Lava Jato judicial procedures – with the Constitutional violations demonstrated by Paffarini (2020) – were essential to pave the way for a conservative movement in South America during the middle of the 2010 decade.

In Brazil, for instance, such movement would also impact its diplomacy, considering that according to Guimarães and Silva (2021) even though far-right ideologies had existed along the history of Brazilian politics, for the first time the foreign policy of the country was heavily influenced by such ultra-conservative perspectives. This aspect is reflected on the coverage of the Latin American newspapers, that reacted with skepticism with Bolsonaro's victory in the 2018 elections, an aspect we intend to briefly demonstrate in the next chapters.

Such narratives and new foreign policy behavior could also be used to increase the distance from the Brazilian public opinion towards supporting a foreign policy more active in its regional environment. Guimarães, Fernandes and Maldonado (2019) had already demonstrated how fragile is the support of domestic voters to a more active engagement of Brazilian diplomacy in the region. Such support, however, could be enhanced when the public perceives the economic gains that might come from those regional initiatives. Since some of the economic initiatives present in the area were somehow associated with corruption scandals

related with the companies investigated by the Car Wash case, the anti-corruption narratives that prevailed along the years could be one more element to enhance the behavior of the public against a more intense leadership of the Brazilian presidents in the regional environment.

For all these reasons, we investigate in the next chapters the existence of ideological divergences among the international press towards the anti-corruption task force. Six newspapers were analyzed in a time frame that goes from 2014 until 2018 – chapter three – and from 2019 until 2020 – chapter four. The difference here is important, because we are comparing two relevant events: the outbreak of the corruption scandal and its developments in the first time frame; in the second time frame the outbreak of a new scandal: the leaked messages between Brazilian prosecutors and judges – especially the Brazilian prosecutor Deltan Dallagnol and the judge Sergio Moro, indicating a collusion among the judiciary branch and the public ministry in the Lava Jato case.

We will create an ideological scale Anti-Pro Operation Car Wash that allow us to establish a dialogue between the theoretical perspectives approached in the first chapter and the empirical elements presented in the other chapters of the dissertation.

This is especially relevant considering that we are using US based theories in an empirical work mostly based in the Latin-American context, which is also one of the reasons that justifies the adaptations that we are giving to these theories when applying them in our research. Even though judges and prosecutors were not the focus of the authors who studied the relation between power, foreign policy, media and public opinion in the United States, we believe that under the circumstances presented by the Lava Jato case, the adaptations would be valuable for our discussion and to bring such debate to the Latin American environment.

Moreover, while these US theories are strongly based on empirical observations related with war scenarios such as Vietnam, War on Terror and many other confronts where the United States are important actors, we believe that a corruption case with the magnitude of Lava Jato would be a good opportunity to establish a dialogue between these theories and empirical analysis focused on the reality of Latin America.

Considering these points, we analyzed the following newspapers: *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* from the United States; *El Comercio* and *La República* from Peru; *Página 12* and *La Nación* from Argentina. These newspapers in each country have tendencies to adopt opposite ideological positions, an essential feature to our objectives, since we will analyze ideological differences among the press, within the Anti-Pro Lava Jato scale, as it will be explained in the next chapter.

The choice of these newspapers could be explained by the following reasons: the aforementioned media companies from the United States could be considered an elite press, not only in their country, but also in the whole world, as stated by authors such as Chomsky (2004). According to the latter, *The New York Times* is an example of a newspaper that is part of the “elite media”, considering the financial resources that such company has, along with the capacity to set a certain framework that would be followed by other media companies. One example of how influential are these sorts of newspapers relies on the fact that smaller media vehicles would follow the stories brought by this elite media, under the assumption that if *The News York Times* is covering the matter, then this is an important issue.

Although Chomsky (2004) does not nominally mentions *The Wall Street Journal*, we believe this is a newspaper that fits the patterns established by the author, since it shares similar resources comparing with *The New York Times*.

In this context, this segment of the press have an enormous capacity to set an influence in the theme they are reporting. In the case of the South American press, Argentina’s newspapers were chosen because this country has close ties with Brazil. They shared similar political movements along the decades and have strong economic relations. Moreover, the Argentinian society have been watching the case closely with the objective to know whether there are politicians from their country involved in the bribery schemes. Finally, the Peruvian press is also analyzed based on the impacts the scandal have in this country. As previously demonstrated, Peru had all its presidents after the Fujimori’s regime (1990-2000) involved in the Car Wash scandal.

Considering the aspects mentioned above, it is also possible to justify these choices based on how such countries were attached to the object of our research, since they had a close connection with the origins and outcomes of the Car Wash case. The United States was related to the case through the local authorities investigating and punishing Brazilian companies involved in the scandal. On their turn, Argentina e Peru were the targets of the anti-corruption task forces happening in Latin American, although they occurred in different intensities.

Results might be very different depending on the country the newspapers come from, especially when considering whether this specific country was affected or not by the scandals. As it will be demonstrated, in the Latin American case there were important differences in the outcomes from the Peruvian press – a country extremely affected by the scandal – and Argentina – a country where there are only speculations about it.

## Chapter's remarks

The complaint presented by the federal prosecutors in Brazil had a political tone that should not be ignored in any academic analysis about Lava Jato. The same thing must be said about the developments of the case in the countries we presented above. We defended that the authorities investigating the scandal also used framing processes, applying a certain narrative when publishing the characteristics of the case.

This does not mean the public opinion and media completely accepted these narratives, but one cannot ignore the potential of influence behind the official speeches. At the same time, it is not possible to ignore how politicians were benefited or harmed by the scandal, they also had their influential frames being sent to the media and public opinion. Nevertheless, this is an expected behavior from politicians. We emphasized the political behavior of the investigative and judicial authorities (judges, prosecutors, police investigators) because this is considered an uncommon perspective, however, their role was essential in framing the Lava Jato case.

In this scenario, the press had an important role by presenting to the public how the bribery scheme worked by doing their own investigative research or by reverberating what the official investigations were stating. The media either reinforced the framings from politicians and judicial authorities or created counter-frames to question the official narrative. In some occasions, it was possible to observe new framings after the involvement of relevant politicians, parties and institutes in the case, aspects that we will observe in the next chapters.

For these reasons, it is important to try to understand the political positions of the international media within this debate, how they framed it and the possible confronts of narratives that happened among our time frames. For this reason, we bring a more empirical approach to the dissertation in the next chapters.

### **CHAPTER 3 – THE OPERATION CAR WASH THROUGH THE LENS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS AND ITS IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES (2014-2018)**

This chapter presents the analysis of the international media's behavior towards the investigations and trials behind the Car Wash scandal, considering a cross-section that goes from 2014 until 2018. The international media is represented here by six newspapers from three different countries: United States, Peru and Argentina.

In the next segment, we explain our methodology to analyze these newspapers using text as data techniques. Such methodological approach is part of the quantitative content analysis realm and is getting more popular in social sciences in the last years, including as an opportunity to identify possible ideological speeches from important political actors. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the international press is considered here an influential political actor and the Lava Jato scandal is regarded as a topic of international politics, considering the magnitude of the corruption scandal and investigations behind it.

After we had approached the methodology, we developed the analysis itself, starting with the United States press and then the South American media. We hope to demonstrate how the international media had a political tone towards the Lava Jato case, which resulted, in some occasions, in polarizations among these actors.

We would like to analyze how the empirical findings of our research might have a dialogue with the theoretical perspectives approaches we already brought in the first chapter of the dissertation, especially the media as a political actor capable to dispute with other companies which narrative behind the facts might prevail when reporting these events. The differences between slant and biased news are also relevant in this sense. Theory and empirical findings will be discussed in an intertwined way, considering the adaptations we already proposed to the Lava Jato context.

In this sense, theory and practice could dialogue and test each other, resulting in a chance to review theoretical perspectives, especially considering that the literature used along this dissertation is still influenced by the features from the United States press, its political system and the international war confronts this country was engulfed in.

### **3.2. *Wordfish*: text as data and the quantitative content analysis realm**

Content analysis in social science was regularly related with qualitative methodologies, especially those where all types of documents (newspapers, books, scientific papers) were manually coded by trained researchers. Although computational tools were used in these procedures, after the popularization of software specifically created for this purpose, the manually coding practice was essential to analyze the objectives of these researches.

Authors such as Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2013) would expand the perspective existing in the content analysis to the quantitative realm, bringing the following definition of quantitative content analysis:

The systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, to describe the communication, draw inference about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption. (Riffe, Lacy and Fico, 2013, p.19)

The definition brought by these authors are important not only because we apply in this research methodologies associated with the definition of quantitative content analysis gave by them, but because such definition is focused on research objects related with mass communication studies. For the mentioned authors, this type of quantitative analysis might be useful to descriptive studies, but in general they are connected with a theoretical context, which might be an important guide in the process of gathering data. In our case, the communication studies presented along this dissertation represent such theoretical base, requiring the usage of methodologies to examine these symbols of communication.

In this scenario, appears the text as data methodologies, which are becoming a recurrent tool of analysis within social sciences, considering that along the decades the usage of computation became more accessible for qualitative and quantitative studies.

Izumi and Moreira (2018) explain that quantitative methodologies using text as data does not replace the importance of a careful qualitative investigation. However, automatized content procedures could be an academic opportunity for the following reasons: the possibility to apply a specific research technique with documents that have different languages; in theory, it is also possible to reduce bias the researcher might have when exploring such documents; and finally, reduce cost and enhance effectivity when working with a considerable number of documents.

In our case, we are using text as data techniques to investigate the coverage about the Car Wash scandal made by the six newspapers already mentioned in chapter two. We justified

the reasons why we opted for these newspapers based on some criteria. First, it is important to have access to such documents in their websites by using adequate research tools. In other cases, searching websites and web scrapping techniques were also applied to better explore the documents from these newspapers. Terms such as “Brazil”, “Corruption”, “Lava Jato”, “Car Wash”, “Petrobras”, “Odebrecht” were used to find pages in the newspapers’ websites that were approaching the Brazilian scandal and their consequences abroad.

Following Grimmer and Stewart’s (2013, p. 272) recommendations, every news articles and editorials used in this research are our more basic unit of analysis, forming a *corpus* which is “the population of texts to be analyzed”. In this sense, a *corpora* should be considered a collection of *corpus*, its plural.

These documents were treated following Izumi and Moreira (2018) and Grimmer and Stewart (2013) recommendations when explaining how the *corpora* should be pre-processed before applying any text as data technique. We did the following treatment: the same encoding for the documents’ characters were used (in our case, 8-bit Unicode Transformation Format – UTF-8); words and content unnecessary for the analysis were removed such as stop words, punctuation and numbers; we applied the stemming process by reducing the words dimensionality to their root base. For instance, words such as family, families and families’ might all be reduced in one root: famili; finally, a Term Document Matrix (TDM) - a matrix containing the frequency of each word in every document composing each *corpus* - was created with the objective to apply the text as data techniques in these documents.

In our specific case, the documents from the data base were analyzed using an algorithm called *Wordfish*, created by Slapin and Proksch (2008). Within the text as data methods, Grimmer and Stewart (2013) would call this specific method as an unsupervised ideological scaling technique. The idea about creating ideological scales is based on the possibility of locating political actors in a certain ideological space. Such techniques, as the one applied in this research, rely on the assumption that the speech from a political actor – the media in our case – might acquire a strong ideological content.

*Wordfish* can be considered an unsupervised scaling model because it does not require reference texts to create the ideological scales. In theory, such method *discovers* words that distinguish certain perspectives within a political spectrum.

In this context, the algorithm does not rely on the necessity to use previous reference documents to calibrate a dictionary of words, that is the reason why this method is considered unsupervised. However, the method does require the appointment of two documents used as parameters to create its political scale. They are used for “identification purposes” and do not

necessarily become a base dictionary to create the ideological scale. Slapin and Proksch (2008) explain that when choosing these two documents, the algorithm constrains the first parameter to have a negative value in comparison to the second one. For this reason, it is recommended to choose those documents that better express the opposite ideological sides investigated.

For instance, in our analysis along this chapter, the considered liberal press would always remain on the negative/left side of the plots, for a simple choice of the researcher. The left side, in this case, represent the anti-Car Wash perspective. *Wordfish* was originally conceived to estimate party positions, but became a useful tool to also extract political positions from texts made by the press, as Sagarzazu and Mouron (2017) demonstrate by analyzing the polarization in the Argentinian media using this methodology.

In this sense, such scaling method positions the data gathered from the newspapers on a continuum scale according to the similarity of the words with each other. The co-occurrences of words in each text would generate a classification, creating a sort of rank. The latter is constructed in accordance to how different are the words used. For instance, frequent words such as conjunctions and prepositions do not tend to discriminate political positions, considering they have common usage. For this reason, they would have bigger fixed effects – in *Wordfish* they are labeled as psi ( $\psi$ ) – associated with word weights close to zero – labelled as beta ( $\beta$ ).

On the other hand, words that were mentioned less frequently tend to be part of an important political language. In our model, these words would have a small fixed effect, associated with elevated “political” weights, which validates their importance. Such weights could be positive or negative. In our research, the words in the left side of the ideological spectrum are expected to represent the speech from the liberal newspaper, while the words more located in the right side should represent the conservative press (Sagarzazu and Mouron, 2017; Slapin and Proksch, 2008).

Moreover, Grimer and Stewart (2013) explain that such method uses statistical models based on the Poisson distribution and item response theory (IRT), considering that *Wordfish* works with the idea that a certain political position affects the rate of the words used in the documents. The method assumes the following statistical model:

$$\lambda_{ij} = \exp(\alpha_i + \psi_j + \beta_j \times \theta_i)$$

In this model,  $\lambda_{ij}$  indicates the count of words  $j$  in each document  $i$  from the newspapers analyzed here. As already stated, *Wordfish* assumes that  $\lambda_{ij}$  is drawn from a Poisson distribution.



president. In the X axis, we can see the word weights ( $\beta$ ) placed on a continuum scale Anti-Pro Chavez, while the Y axis is indicating the fixed-effects ( $\psi$ ) of these words.

*Wordfish* is a sort of word cloud in the sense that bring us all the values of the words presented in the *corpus* analyzed with the algorithm. Considering that there are thousands of words overlapping each other on the graph, it would be impossible to distinguish all of them, with a few exceptions of the outlier words, on the extremity of the graph. For this reason, we could make the proper adjustments assisted by R language to intentionally highlight some of the words that would be important in indicating the validity of the ideological scale created.

In the figure 3, Mouron and Sagarzazu (2017) highlighted words such as “inflation”, “debt” and “bribe” to indicate that their negative values represented how the anti-Chavez press were framing this Venezuelan president. On the opposite hand, the pro-Chavez press would depict Hugo Chavez as a “brother” and “humble” leader. In the center of the image close to the value 2 of the Y axis, it is located the words with a high fixed effect, which means they have small capacity to distinguish political positions from these newspapers. This is where many of the conjunctions and other very frequent words are placed in.

In the specific analysis of these researchers, it was expected that on the negative side the words would come from documents made by the right-wing newspaper, *La Nación*, while the more positive words would have its origins from *Página 12*, a media company recognized for giving support to the leftist movements in Latin America.

Once the researchers have indicated by the figure 3 above how the mentioned Argentinian newspapers framed the debate about the Chavez administration, it is important to validate their assumption. Among the robustness tests made by them, a very important one is to investigate the language applied by these media companies when writing about the mentioned topic, which requires read samples of the *corpus*. If the language applied in these samples are compatible with the ideological scale created, *Wordfish* method has more chances to have its outcomes as a valid tool of analysis. Quantitative tests are also made, which we will demonstrate later on our own results.

One important element within the concept of quantitative content analysis made by Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2013) is the replicable feature such methods have. This is exactly what this chapter is doing, by replicating the methodology presented in figure 3 above, although considering some proper adaptations to our case. The difference is that we analyzed a pair of newspapers from three countries with the objective to capture possible ideological scales towards the Lava Jato scandal. Our main objective is to understand whether the press is

confronting frames towards these matters and what is the language used when approaching this case.

We are looking for answers to questions such as: What was the political speech from the international media? Is it possible to identify political conflicts among the pair of newspapers examined in each country? What were the words used to frame the coverage about Lava Jato? How did they reacted to the confronts among the elites affected by the scandal and investigations? Our methodology might be useful to give clues about these questions.

With these elements in mind, we will create an Anti-Pro Car Wash ideological scale, with the assumption that left-wing newspapers will give a more negative frame to the investigation occurring in Brazil and Latin America, while the right-wing would see the investigation with a more positive perspective.

Before we move on to the next segment, table 1 below summarizes the newspapers used in our analysis along with the number of documents analyzed in each of them.

Table 1 - Data base: 2014-2018 cross section

<b>Country</b>	<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Ideological identification</b>	<b>Sample</b>
<b>United States</b>	<i>The New York Times</i>	Left-wing	97
<b>United States</b>	<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	Right-wing	88
<b>Peru</b>	<i>La República</i>	Left-wing	99
<b>Peru</b>	<i>El Comercio</i>	Right-wing	160
<b>Argentina</b>	<i>Página 12</i>	Left-wing	85
<b>Argentina</b>	<i>La Nación</i>	Right-wing	96

Source: author.

Along our analysis, we have the hypothesis that the frames gave by the press from both ideological sides were only slightly divergent when approaching the initial years of the investigations behind the Lava Jato scandal in Brazil and abroad. There are indications that from 2014 until 2018, levels of support to the Lava Jato investigations were high within the international media, an aspect that would start to change only in the last year of the time frame analyzed in this chapter.

### 3.3. United States

The first reports by *The New York Times* (NYT) about the Brazilian scandal were made in 2014, when this newspaper emphasized the involvement of Petrobras and top executives from Brazilian private companies in a bribery scheme. The newspaper associated Petrobras' management with the then Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) and mentioned polls indicating that voters were blaming Rousseff for the misconducts within Petrobras (Romero, 2014a, 2014b).

We brought word clouds in appendix A indicating the most frequent words used when covering the Brazilian scandal and the anti-corruption task force investigating the misconducts in Brazil and Latin America<sup>1</sup>.

There are little differences in the frequency of words when analyzing the whole *corpus* from the NYT with only the editorial. The most important difference is the fact that prevails in the editorials and opinion pages' words related with corruption, at the same time that the name of former Brazilian presidents accused to be involved in the scandal such as Lula da Silva (2003-2010), Dilma Rousseff and Michel Temer (2016-2018) lose some relevance in the coverage of the newspaper about the investigation.

In general, both word clouds indicate that the NYT choice of words to frame the coverage relied on the corruption misconducts behind the investigations.

On the other hand, *The Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) is a newspaper with a tendency to give more emphasis to business aspects, considering its characteristics. During the scandal's outbreak in 2014, WSJ exposed its concern with the management problems that Petrobras was facing, including the delays in releasing financial reports of the company. The fact that executives of the oil company and other Brazilian partner engineering firms were under arrest also called the attention of this newspaper. Along 2014, WSJ always highlighted the budget deficits that both Petrobras and the Brazilian government were facing (Jelmayer and Connors, 2014).

Between 2015 and 2016, the newspaper continued to cover the case considering the economic aspects behind the Brazilian companies and the federal government. However, political aspects also appear during this coverage, especially because many allegations of possible involvements of Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff were raised by the press. In a similar

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<sup>1</sup> All the word clouds from this dissertation can be found in the appendix page.

way to the NYT coverage, the right-wing newspaper celebrated what they considered a solid work made by the prosecutors and judiciary system in the country.

It calls the attention the opinion article released in 2016 with the title “How Brazil’s Lula conned the world” by O’Grady (2016). The article states that Lula da Silva allegedly had left a heritage of poor public management in Brazil. The lack of government institutions with good governance capacity would be the reason why the country was immersed in a political and economic crisis. Such narrative was the beginning of a very harsh coverage made by the WSJ against the Workers’ Party leaders along the years, as we intend to demonstrate in the following pages.

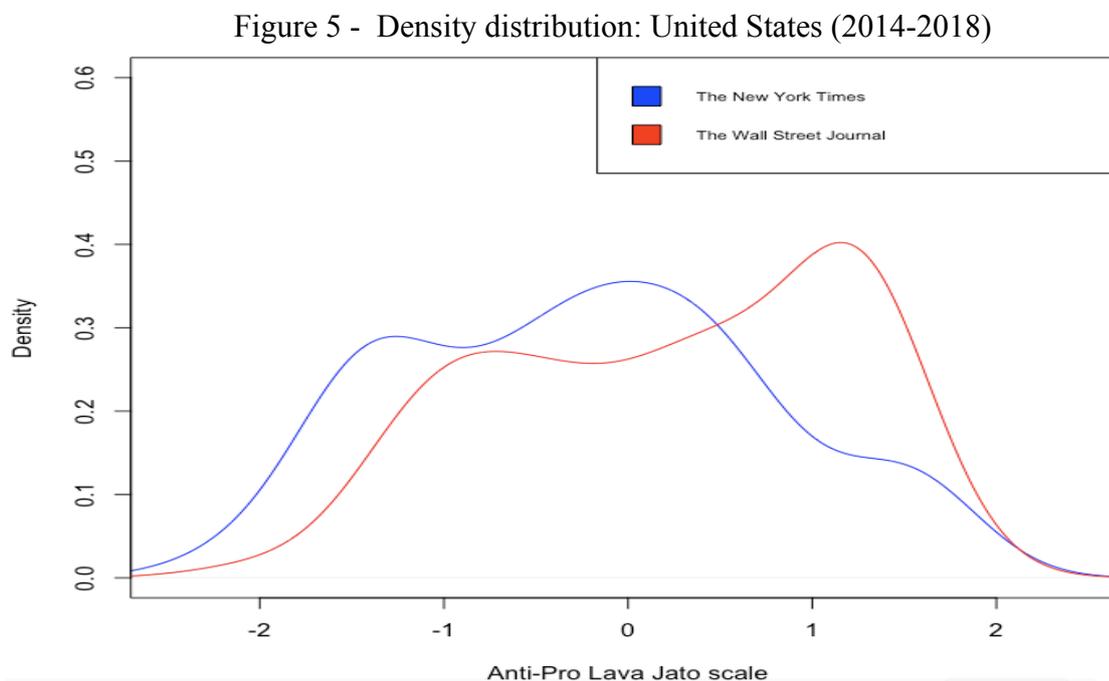
In the word clouds from appendix B, the names of the companies involved in the scandal are more frequently used in comparison to the NYT’s coverage about the case. At the same time, there is also an opposite movement in the *Wall Street Journal* in comparison to the first newspaper. Here, the opinion articles released in the WSJ give more emphasis to the names of the political actors mentioned in the story, especially former president Lula da Silva, whose arrest was considered by one of WSJ’s opinion article as a “victory” of the Brazilian democratic institutions.

From the simple usage of frequency words, it is already possible to notice some changes in the framing gave by both media actors from the United States about the scandal and the investigations.

Although the word frequency is an interesting resource to check which words were used to frame the information, such tool does not indicate in which way these words were used by the press. We apply the *Wordfish* technique, in order to create the Anti-Pro scale towards the Car Wash investigations. In this sense, the figure 4 below first analyzes the entire *corpora* from the United States newspapers, with the object to comprehend the possible words used to frame the coverage about the case.



The following figure 5 intends to capture possible levels of polarization among the US press towards the case. In order to do such analysis, we created a graph in which it is possible to see the statistical distribution of the documents from the *corpora* according to the political weights they received in the ideological scale. We divided the documents according to each newspaper, using the document weights ( $\theta$ ) from the entire *corpora* also analyzed in image 4 above.



Source: author.

The graph shows that some levels of polarization could be noticed in the coverage of the scandal. At the same time, this density plot is a tool to validate the ideological scale presented in graph 4, considering that the concentration of the political weights from the documents within the *corpora* matches with the distribution of words from the referred graph. For instance, in order to affirm that in the negative side of the political spectrum presented in figure 4 prevails words from the NYT's articles and editorials, it is expected that these documents are concentrated in the left side of the density plot presented in graph 5. As we could notice, both newspapers have their documents concentrated in their expected side.

This level of polarization should not be exaggerated though. The last image is important to indicate that indeed there are ideological divisions in the coverage process of the scandal with different frames given to the case, according to the ideological perspectives about Lava Jato. Nevertheless, when qualitatively analyzing samples from these documents, even during

the most impacting development in the investigation – the trial and arrest of former president Lula da Silva – newspapers such as *The New York Times* kept a dubious perspective about Lava Jato.

In the beginning of 2018, the newspapers released an opinion-editorial (op-ed) page concerned with the aspects behind the investigations against Lula da Silva, considering that “the evidence against Mr. da Silva is far below the standards that would be taken seriously in, for example, the United States’ judicial system”. For the op-ed’s author, those investigating and judging the former Brazilian president were not impartial, including the then federal judge Sergio Moro, which for the author “has demonstrated his own partisanship on numerous occasions” (Weisbrot, 2018).

Nevertheless, days after Lula’s arrest in April 2018, the NYT released an opinion article asking whether the crusade against corruption in Brazil and Latin America was transforming itself into an abusive usage of law institutions against politicians. The answer gave by the author was that such investigations “will strengthen civil society, representative democracy, the rule of law and economic progress. They do not weaken institutions; they help to transform them and make them function” (Weisbrot, 2018).

Although in the NTY’s narrative prevails a more critical view about the investigations’ developments, along with the concerns toward Lula da Silva’s arrest and subsequently prohibition to run in the presidential elections in 2018, it remained a certain degree of support to Operation Car Wash.

When it comes to the coverage made by the WSJ, such dubiety is almost eliminated by the opinion articles released along the years, especially during the months where Lula’s arrest was the most important topic about the case. Not only some of these opinion articles considered his prison as a “victory” to Brazilian institutions, but also some of them celebrated when the Brazilian justice system denied a *habeas corpus* that could have allowed the former president run for the 2018 elections. According to the article’s author, the denial was a symbol of the “evolving rule of law in the country”. Moreover, “the attempt to get Mr. da Silva released was a classic banana-republic maneuver. His trial was transparent and the accusations against him corroborated with testimony and a paper trail” (O’Grady, 2018).

Therefore, it is important to realize that the WSJ kept a very supportive position in favor of the prosecutors and judges investigating the case, while the NYT hesitated several times into supporting the investigation or bringing some critics to it.

Nevertheless, while what we consider the more liberal newspaper always emphasized the institutional aspects behind Lava Jato scandal – either to criticize a democracy that had

many problems with corruption or to state that the Brazilian institutions were getting stronger – the other side of our ideological scale also had such speech, but here the personal aspects of the case were intensely highlighted by the coverage. The framing process of the scandal focused in the leftist leaders from Latin-America. Terms such as “Lula’s Brazil” indicated a country that achieved impressive economic gains during the 2000s, but had poor governance capability, feeding what the WSJ understood as a political system rooted in corruption misconducts, a similar perspective to those presented by the Brazilian prosecutors in their complaint against the former president himself.

The framing disputes among these US newspapers indeed happened, both tried to impose their narrative about the origins, consequences and possible answers to this corruption scandal. However, none of them challenged the prevailing frames in the beginning of the scandal’s investigation which stated that the judicial actors were the Brazilian heroes responsible for ending what was considered a culture of impunity in corruption misconducts.

Considering the theoretical framework from Baum and Potter (2008, 2015), the official perspective from the elites – based on our adaptation that includes in this concept members of the judiciary and public ministry – was only slightly questioned by the US media. It is possible to state that the positive perspective about Lava Jato outcomes prevailed at least until 2017, being a congruent framing, based on the concepts of Entman (2004).

President Bolsonaro (2019-) phenomenon in Brazilian politics might have guided the NYT’s coverage to a harsher perspective against the populist outcomes that emerged in the Brazilian politics after Lava Jato. In August 2018, the newspaper gave space for an opinion article wrote by Lula da Silva (2018) himself, where accusations against the investigations were made by the former president who also stated that he did not “believe that most Brazilians approved that elitist agenda”. At the same time, the NYT (2018) published an opinion article from its editorial board days before the elections in Brazil affirming that Bolsonaro was someone with “repulsive views” and lamenting his imminent victory.

The gain of relevance of Bolsonaro in the Brazilian politics, the arrest of former president Lula, along with all the impacts of Lava Jato in the country might have altered the dynamic of the coverage made by this US newspaper.

After we had carefully analyzed the behavior of the US media towards the Car Wash investigations, the Latin American media will be our next focus, starting with the Peruvian case.

### 3.4. Peru

When the first reports in Peru were made about Lava Jato in 2014, they were outlooks about the initial steps of the anti-corruption task force occurring in Brazil. The interest of the Peruvian press would increase in the following year, when the Brazilian public ministry and federal police revealed a possible corruption web involving important Peruvian politicians.

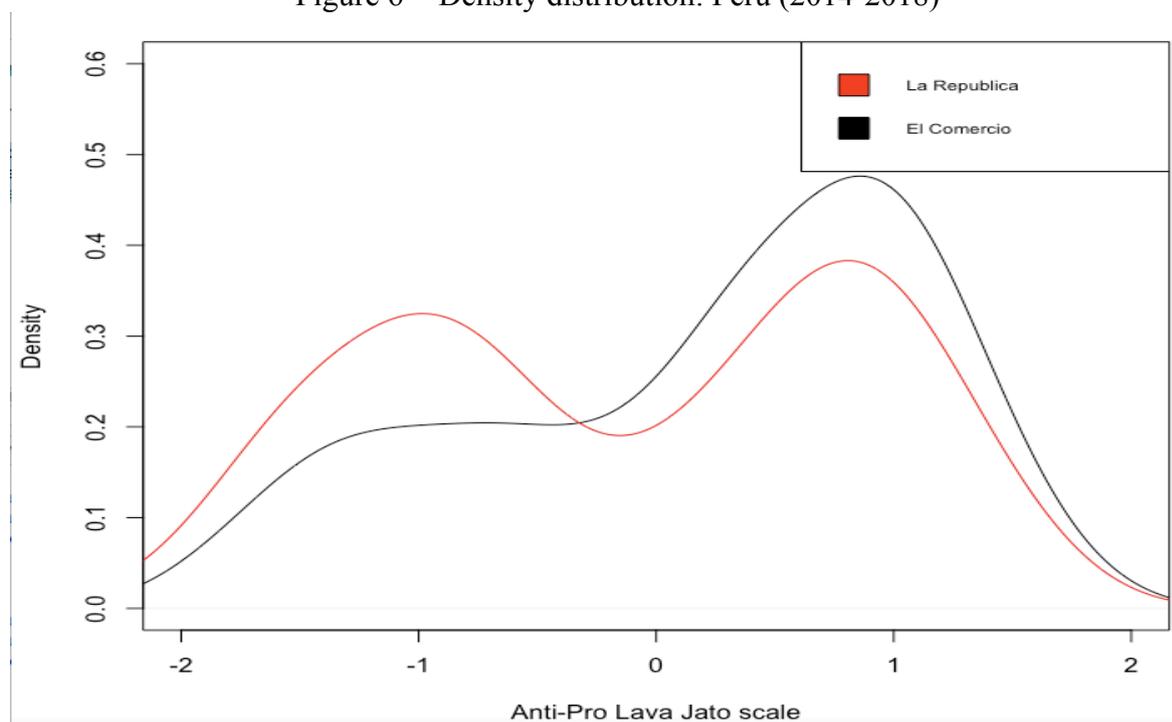
*El Comercio* (EC) reported these first possible connections with Peru by publishing articles affirming that a Brazilian businesswoman with close connections to high-level Peruvian politicians had several meetings with former president Alan Garcia (1985-1990, 2006-2011) to allegedly negotiate contracts for Brazilian engineering firms in exchange for bribes to Garcia himself and to finance campaigns for his party. Such meetings would have happened months before Garcia had returned to the presidential office during the 2000s and while he was holding his mandate (Martinez, 2015).

*La República* (LR, 2015) would also intensify its attention to the case after 2015, when it reported how a Brazilian executive was traveling to several South American countries after having encountered important money-dealers responsible for operating the corruption scheme. *La República's* coverage also presented reports indicating that many agents were hired by Brazilian engineering companies to pay bribes across South America. In appendix C and D, we demonstrated that both newspapers had used the same vocabulary with similar frequency when covering the scandal, which is already a strong indicative that the behavior of the press did not present significant levels of ideological differences when covering the case.

In this sense, the *Wordfish* outcomes are an important tool to check whether our ideological scale could be applied in the media actors analyzed in this country, for this reason we present figure 6 below.



Figure 6 - Density distribution: Peru (2014-2018)



Source: author.

The density plot presented above indicates the reason why the algorithm was not capable to identify levels of ideological difference among the two newspapers analyzed here. Figure 6 indicates that both newspapers presented a concentration of documents almost in the same side of the ideological spectrum, indicating no prevalence of differences in their perspectives about Lava Jato when covering the investigations and the scandal. By using only the algorithm, it is actually difficult to state which side (anti or pro Lava Jato) prevails, considering the process of choosing the ideological spectrum is a basic task manually made by the researcher.

In this sense, we kept both densities concentrated on the right side to transmit the idea that a positive framing prevailed in the press coverage of this country. In case we inverted the parameters from the last plot, the only difference would be that both newspapers would have their statistical distributions concentrated together in the left side, instead of the right.

The algorithm's incapacity to detect ideological differences in the Peruvian case is a demonstrative of its good functioning. When qualitatively analyzing samples from both newspapers, it is difficult to find a clearly anti-Lava Jato perspective towards the investigation. Although in the US case the levels of ideological differences were not elevated, it was clear

that the newspapers from the referred country applied different framing process to the Lava Jato investigations and scandal.

The Peruvian case is different because the local media demonstrated enormous support to the investigations happening in Brazil and at their own country. Even when Lula da Silva was arrested, newspapers such as *La República* did not offered a contrary perspective to the debate, as it happened with the NYT, in the US case. The former newspaper published an opinion article days after Lula da Silva's arrest, where the author asked: "since when the left has normalized so much corruption misconducts in the name of political realism?"<sup>2</sup> The rhetorical questions was followed by a critic to what the author considered the incapacity of the South American left-wing movement in recognizing what the author defined as the "unacceptable" illicit behavior from the Workers' party politicians (Tanaka, 2018).

The same newspaper, in another opinion article, emphasized the idea that Brazil had "exported corruption" to Peru, but at least it also had offered a solution: the investigations behind the Car Wash scandal. In the author's perspectives, Brazil was also becoming recognized for its anti-corruption models, which could be considered a reference to other Latin-American countries. This idea dialogues with another article where it is indicated that Brazil could be a "mirror" to Peru and the region itself (Rodrich, 2018).

*El Comercio* shares many of the perspectives presented in the articles published by *La República*. Among them, the former also highlights the fact that Brazil had exported corruption to South American countries and criticizes leftist movements for allegedly not recognizing their role in the corruption scandals, an aspect of the narrative used to attack the then Peruvian president Ollanta Humala (2011-2015) and his involvement with these leaders (Rospigliosi, 2015).

The idea of a country that "exports" corruption is also clearly stated in another article, where it is affirmed that Petrobras was used to internationalize misconducts by bribing leaders across the Latin America (Vásquez, 2016). In this context, similarly to the other newspaper, Lava Jato investigations are considered a good answer to this regional problem. *El Comercio's* articles affirmed that there is no credibility in the allegations affirming the investigations and trials in Brazil trespassed the legal boundaries considering that "the investigations and legal procedures against him [Lula da Silva] followed the due process of law and the Brazilian constitution"<sup>3</sup> (Vásquez, 2018).

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<sup>2</sup> Original: "¿Desde cuanto la izquierda normalizo tanto la corrupcion y la justifico en nombre del realismo politico?".

<sup>3</sup> Original: "las investigaciones y procesos judiciales se han hecho siguiendo el debido proceso y la Constitucion".

All these elements are evidences of why *Wordfish* algorithm could not place these newspapers in different sides of our ideological scale, considering they had a very similar approach about Lula's arrest and Lava Jato both in Peru and in Brazil. By a qualitative analysis, we can affirm that the investigations and its outcomes were highly supported by the mainstream press in this country.

One last point important to be developed about the Peruvian press is the reaction from the local newspapers when Bolsonaro appears as the favorite to win the Brazilian presidential race in 2018. The words identified by *Wordfish* and highlighted in the figure 5, such as ultra-conservative (“ultraconservador”), antidemocratic and fascism were vocabularies present in the coverage made by the right-wing newspaper, *El Comercio*.

While the right-wing newspaper from the United States showed an implicit support for Bolsonaro, the Peruvian representative of this ideological side had a completely different perspective about the conservative leader, where criticism and skepticism toward the Brazilian politician and its foreign policy to Latin America prevailed. Bolsonaro is placed by *El Comercio*'s (2018) editorial page as a threat to the democratic values in the region. In an opinion article, the far-right leader is depicted as the face of a Brazilian fascism that was hiding itself along the decade (Virginia, 2018).

Considering all these elements, we could argue that prevailed a framing in the Peruvian mainstream press that was critical against Brazil's political system, not only towards the past Workers' Party administration, but also towards the current president of the country, Jair Bolsonaro. It also prevails in this cross section a narrative that Lava Jato investigations represented a sign that Latin America was facing corruption misconducts more seriously. Considering this last perspective, it became difficult for our model of analysis to identify ideological differences among the documents and newspapers analyzed in this country.

### **3.5. Argentina**

The Argentinian press was monitoring the events happening in Brazil. In the same manner of the other countries, the initial reports were focused in the corruption misconducts identified within Petrobras and the Brazilian engineering companies.

*La Nación* (2016) explored how the Brazilian justice system was working to arrest and judge influential politicians from the country. Moreover, the right-wing newspaper highlighted the protests happening in Brazil against corruption and in favor of Lava Jato. On the other hand,

*Página 12* defined the case as an “endless crisis”, affirming the Workers’ Party was facing the consequences in having negotiated along the years with “extortionist” parties, as it was characterized political movements such as the Brazilian Democratic Movement (*Movimento Democrático Brasileiro*, MDB) (Goldstein, 2015).

In these initial years, the Argentinian press was digging into the Brazilian events with attention, not only because of the proximity between the two neighbor countries, but also because there was a huge expectation for a possible involvement of Argentinian politicians and executives in the scandal. Expectations increased with the accusations faced by relevant political actors in countries such as Peru and Ecuador.

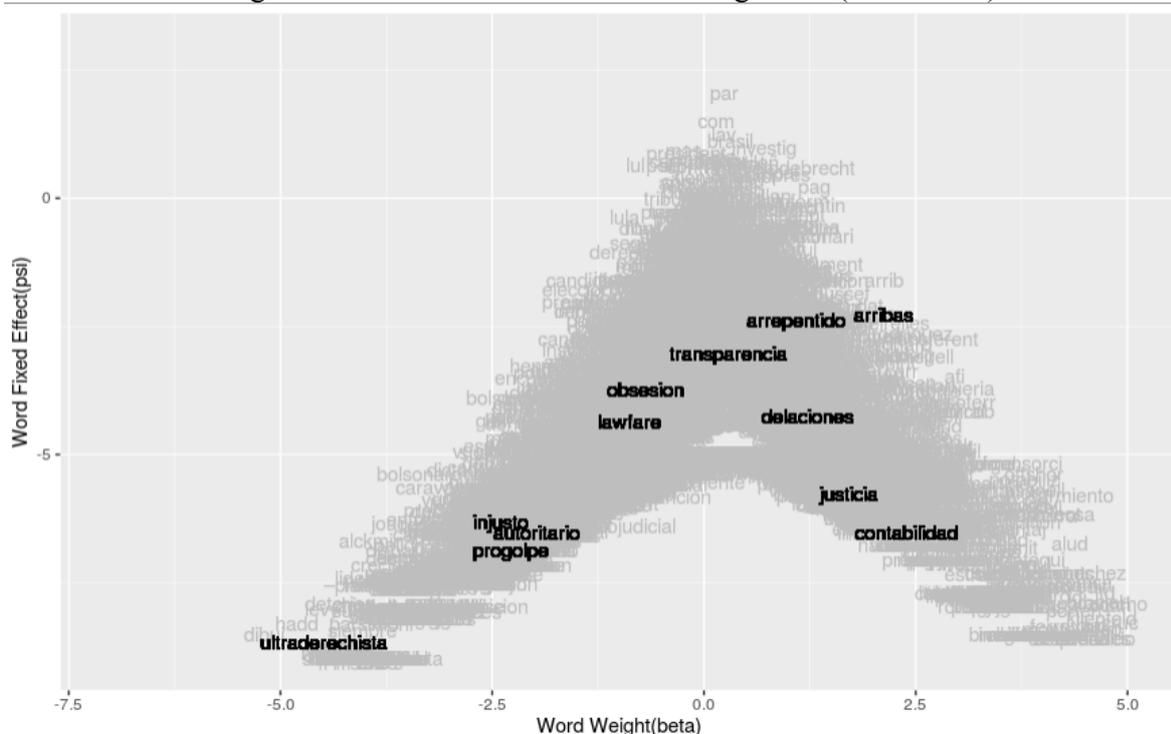
Gustavo Arribas is perhaps the most important focus of the Argentinian press in this sense. A politician that has close ties with former president Mauricio Macri (2015-2019) and was Director-General of the Federal Intelligence Agency (*Agencia Federal de Inteligencia*, AFI) during Macri’s administration, Arribas was denounced by *La Nación* (2017) in an article that impacted Argentina’s domestic politics. The mentioned newspaper had access to documents from the Brazilian authorities, which accused Arribas to have received grafts to intermediate contracts for Odebrecht in Argentina. Along the years, the scandal in Brazil would be followed in tandem with the investigations happening in Argentina involving Macri’s ally.

In the word cloud from appendix E, there are elevated mentions to the Brazilian left-wing leader, Lula da Silva in the documents from P12. Other relevant actors from the scandal and investigations are also frequently used. Comparing word clouds a) and b), there are small differences in the frequency of the vocabulary applied by the newspaper. However, when focusing in the editorial and opinion articles, words such as “lawfare” and “golpe” (reference to coup d’état) gain some relevance in these documents, already revealing possible directions of these newspapers.

By looking to appendixes E and F, it is possible to notice some differences between the most used words in the two newspapers analyzed here. LN gives more emphasis to Odebrecht, the company more implicated in the scandal across South America.

Comparing the frequency of the words used by the two newspapers already gave us some indications of their framing process when approaching the subject. Now, we will apply *Wordfish* algorithm in order to see whether we could identify ideological differences using the scale applied along this chapter.

Figure 7 - Anti-Pro Lava Jato scale: Argentina (2014-2018)



Source: author.

In opposite to what happened with our previous analysis of the Peruvian press, the positions of words in figure 7 makes sense considering our Anti-Pro Lava Jato ideological scale. In the left side – the anti-Lava Jato perspective – it is possible to identify a vocabulary that criticizes the investigations and its outcomes. Words such as “lawfare”, “obsesion” (obsession), “injusto” (unjust) are present in this side of the scale.

They are in fact recurrent words used in the coverage made by *Página 12* to criticize the Car Wash investigations, especially when Lula da Silva became the most important political figure investigated in the case. For this newspaper, Lula’s arrest was an obsession of the prosecutors and Sergio Moro, who did not have any concrete proof of Lula’s involvement in a corruption scheme (Nepomuceno, 2017). In the referred opinion article, it is affirmed that there was a “fundamentalist obsession from the federal judge [a reference to Moro] against the most popular former president since the middle of the century in Brazil”<sup>4</sup>.

*Página 12* coverage also used in its vocabulary words such as “lawfare” to explain what was happening with Lula da Silva in Brazil. In an opinion article published during the 2018 elections, lawfare was defined as a mechanism that uses “judges as a tool for political persecution”, especially by using the mediatization of the cases investigated to impact the

<sup>4</sup> Original: “obsesión fundamentalista del juez de provincias contra el ex presidente más popular del último medio siglo en Brasil”.

public opinion. For the author, not only left-wing leaders in South America were victims of this process, but also conservative leaders. The Peruvian events would be a good example in the eyes of the article's author. Here, it is important to mention how the newspaper in a certain manner associates the popularity of Jair Bolsonaro as an outcome of the Operation Car Wash (Natanson, 2018).

The pro-Lava Jato side in figure 7 also appears to fit what would be expected from a vocabulary appointing positive aspects behind the investigations. Words such as “contabilidad” (accountability) and “justicia” (justice) is part of the side defending the investigations and trials. “Arribas” is also a word present in this side, reflecting the concerns with the accusations faced by the important ally of the then Argentinian president, Mauricio Macri.

It is important to give some attention to what words such as “delaciones” (leniencies) and “arrepentido” (those who accepted to give testimonies to the local justice) mean in this side of the ideological scale. They are references to the cooperation procedures where the accused side and the authorities bargained information about the case, in exchange for lighter punishment. They are important here because LN's support to Lava Jato was based on the defense of such procedures as a tool to fight corruption and increase efficiency in the local judiciary.

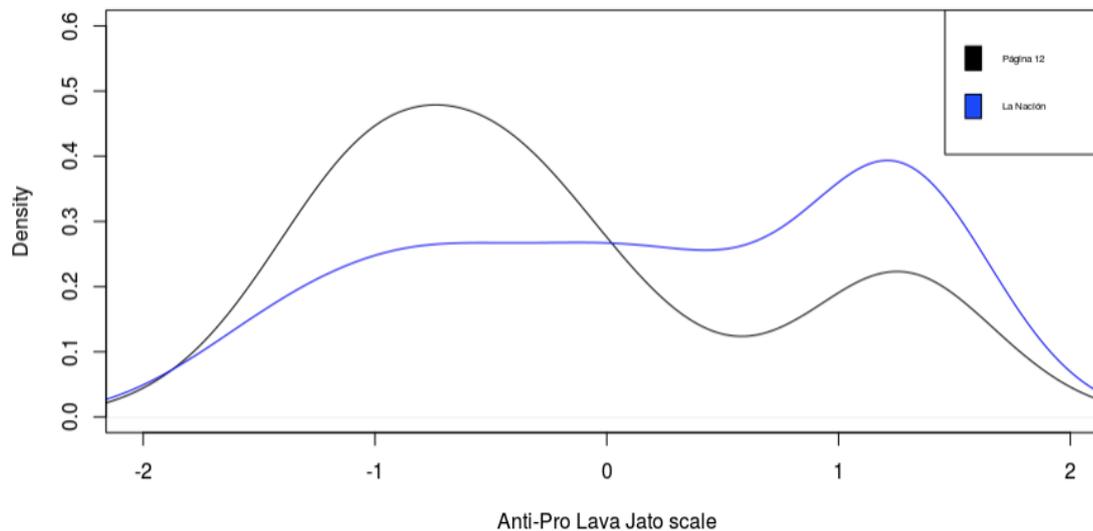
In this sense, Lava Jato was depicted as a model that should be followed by the Argentinian justice. According to one LN's (2017) publication “the leniency agreements and the effective arrest of those involved were essential to produce a series of *arrepentidos*; the effort of the judges was also essential”<sup>5</sup>. LN criticizes the lack of efficiency of the Argentinian justice by stating that the local authorities would never be capable in conducting a huge investigation such as the one happening in Brazil.

One last aspect to be analyzed about the Argentinian press behavior towards Lava Jato is whether there are levels of polarizations between the two newspapers here analyzed. As in the other cases, we also used the statistical distribution based on the “political” values each document from the *corpora* received.

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<sup>5</sup> Original: “resultaron esenciales la delación premiada y la prisión efectiva, que produjeron arrepentidos y lenguaraces en serie, pero también la voluntad de los jueces”.

Figure 8 - Density distribution from Argentinian newspapers within the Anti-Pro Lava Jato ideological scale



Source: author.

Figure 8 indicates that from all the countries analyzed in this chapter, Argentina is the place where the levels of polarization towards Lava Jato were more elevated, an aspect expected considering the vocabulary used by the media actors. Different from the other countries, here one of the sizes – P12, represented in the black line - did not accepted the investigations as something positive since its beginning. In the Peruvian press, the opposite occurred, considering that both newspapers gave more support than critics to the investigations, while in the United States press, *The New York Times* oscillated between criticizing it and giving support to Lava Jato and its political consequences.

In this sense, we could affirm that the confronts of narratives were more intense in Argentina too, with each side trying to demonstrate whether Operation Car Wash was a partial procedure that was persecuting leaders in South America without no concrete proofs or an example of anti-corruption efforts that should be followed throughout the entire region.

Nevertheless, image 8 indicates some considerable number of documents from *La Nación* in the left side of the political scale. Among the reasons, we speculate that many of the reports about the impeachment process that happened in Brazil against former president Dilma Rousseff in 2016 might be placed in the referred side. Although LN is considered a right-wing newspaper, such media actor had a very harsh perspective against the impeachment process and in some occasions also considered it a coup d'état in the same manner as *Página 12*'s reports did (Leite, 2016). Considering the proximity of the subjects – Lava Jato and the political crisis the country was facing – some documents covering the corruption scandal were also making

reports about the Brazilian ongoing political crisis, which included the critics to the impeachment against former president Rousseff.

### 3.6. Robustness tests

Although we had compared the outcomes from *Wordfish* algorithm with the writing content from the samples of our *corpora* to verify whether the quantitative analysis was compatible with the qualitative findings, some basic quantitative robustness checks are still necessary to validate the models presented here when using *Wordfish*.

According to Grimmer and Stewart (2013), along with Izumi and Moreira (2018), when applying unsupervised techniques, it is expected that the differences in the vocabulary are justified by ideological divisions existing among the actors analyzed – in our case, the newspapers. In this sense, it is important to check whether the time series of our data is not affecting the vocabulary identified along the analysis. In a case, for instance, where the articles' writers in a certain newspaper were replaced for new ones with different writing styles, such difference might affect the vocabulary used to frame the debate. Therefore, this might be an interference in the results achieved. At the same time, if we concentrate our data analysis in a very restricted period within our cross-section, the data will get badly distributed, creating a bias, since only a small portion of the cross-section would be used to validate the findings from the entire cross section.

Based on the experience from Sagarzazu and Mouron (2017), we regressed the documents' "political weights" ( $\theta$ ) from each newspaper as a dependent variable, in order to analyze whether the time series of the documents published could be able to statically influence in the latter variable. We did not find any time series with significant capacity to interfere in such values.

A final experiment based on the referred authors is to confirm whether the populations from the pair of newspapers used in each country are statistically different from each other. For this reason, we performed three two-sample t test for independent groups, which denied the hypothesis that each pair of newspapers have the same population among them. The results could be analyzed in table 2 below.

Table 2 - Two-sample t test for independent groups (equal variances)

<i>Newspapers</i>	<i>Obs</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Err.</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Std. Dev. [99% Conf. Interval]</i>
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<i>Argentina</i>						
<i>La Nación</i>	96	48.5	2.84312	27.85678	41.02664	55.97336
<i>Página 12</i>	85	139	2.677063	24.6813	131.9442	146.0558
<i>combined</i>	181	91	3.89444	52.39434	80.86114	101.1389
<i>diff</i>		-90.5	3.933974		-100.7424	-80.25761
<i>United States</i>						
<i>The New York Times</i>	97	137	2.857738	28.14546	129.4898	144.5102
<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	88	44.5	2.723356	25.54734	37.32797	51.67203
<i>combined</i>	185	93	3.937004	53.54904	82.75272	103.2473
<i>diff</i>		92.5	3.96626		82.17598	102.824
<i>Peru</i>						
<i>El Comercio</i>	160	80.5	3.662877	46.33213	70.9505	90.0495
<i>La República</i>	99	210	2.886751	28.72281	202.4167	217.5833
<i>combined</i>	259	130	4.654747	74.91106	117.9208	142.0792
<i>diff</i>		-129.5	5.182621		-142.9494	-116.0506

Source: author.

### 3.7. Framing processes: between disputes and convergences

The results presented in the previous segments, revealed the existence of certain levels of polarization when the international media was approaching the scandals and investigations behind Lava Jato. However, as we affirmed in the first pages of this chapter, levels of support to the investigation were high among the international media, including within the left-wing side. The Argentinian case was the only exception.

The media in countries such as Argentina and United States clearly indicated the existence of different frames when dealing with the case, especially in the Argentinian media where the confront of narratives were stronger than in the other countries here analyzed. The Peruvian case, however, was the exception within our time frame. A country engulfed in a series of scandals related with the Car Wash investigations, Peru had a mainstream media mobilized in defending Lava Jato – both in Brazil and at their own country – with reduced discussions about possible negative effects that the operation might had brought to South American politics.

We return then to the perspective of authors such as Entman (2007, 2004) and the differences between slant and bias news. Considering the meaning this author gave to each concept, as demonstrated in the first chapter, one could affirm that the newspapers analyzed here published slant news about the case. This means that each newspaper emphasized their political positions within a framing competition about the subject. This was the case of the

United States and Argentina. Although the Peruvian case also shows the existence of slant news, there is no competition of frames here, considering the pro-Lava Jato narrative is a congruent frame that dominates the debates about the scandal and investigations in this country, at least within the cross section investigated in this chapter.

The slant news did not necessarily become a pattern that could place the coverage of the media as a biased one in the Car Wash case, considering the concepts from the mentioned author. A bias would mean a long pattern of slant news, while the media companies towards Lava Jato oscillated in their perspective, especially in the United States. The Argentinian press is the only closer to have developed a biased perspective about this case.

In the case of the last country, Lava Jato since its beginning was an impacting event that enhanced disputes among the media. This case fits much more the models proposed by authors such as Baum and Potter along with Entman, because there is a domestic agenda in dispute here: the usage or not by the Argentinians authorities of the same *modus operandi* applied in the Lava Jato investigations and trials happening in Brazil. While the left-wing side of the Argentinian media was criticizing the legal procedures occurring in Brazil, the right-wing was defending that such procedures should be applied by the Argentinian justice system itself, since Operation Car Wash was regarded as a paragon for this political side of the debate.

Considering the US scenario – where the NYT only starts to more explicitly criticize these procedures after Lula's trial and prison – we did not notice a possible domestic agenda that could be related with this international case, reducing the levels of disputes among the press, but not eliminating it.

In the Peruvian case, Lava Jato's support was exactly part of a domestic agenda, with the Brazilian investigation as an inspiration, although the local press had tried to dissociate the task force from Bolsonaro's ascension in Brazil. Even considering that the algorithm applied in this research did not identified disputes in this sense, the convergence of the Peruvian press towards the investigation is itself a political choice made by the local media.

As we mentioned in chapters one and two, author such as Powlick and Katz (1998), Entman (2004) and Baum and Potter (2008) explained that is from the intra-elite confronts that appears the active role of the media. In the Lava Jato case, the international media is also reacting to the confronts of narratives occurring in Brazil, especially among the traditional politicians represented by the legislative/executive against the judiciary/public ministry. When Lula da Silva is arrested, this intra-elite confront is intensified, which also results in a more engaged behavior of the media, as the reactions from the Argentinian and US liberal press demonstrate.

The newspapers itself also get more polarized, reflecting the political tensions happening in Brazil as demonstrated by Meneguello and Arquer (2018), considering how the left movements such as the Workers' Party were affected by the Lava Jato case, along with the impeachment process that Dilma Rousseff suffered in 2016.

In this scenario, each side would defend their perspectives and create slant news, which might result in a dispute between official and counter-frames, where the latter tends to contest the legal procedures behind the Operation Car Wash. However, it is not possible to affirm that members of the executive and legislative only challenged the official perspectives behind Lava Jato. In fact, many Brazilian politicians became more popular by abiding to the positive framings about Lava Jato and reinforcing such narratives in their political speech. The international media, in many situations, demonstrated support to such political movements, considering they both shared the same ideological perspectives about Lava Jato.

### **Chapter's remarks**

In this chapter, we presented the behavior of the international press towards Operation Car Wash between 2014 and 2018. Along the pages, we demonstrated how the media had a political tone when it, either to criticize the investigations or to give support to it.

In the United States and specially in Argentina, the framing disputes behind the subject could be in fact noticed, with each side using a specific vocabulary to develop their respective narratives about the case.

Peru is possibly the most important case where the anti-Car Wash perspective did not find a space, considering that even the left-wing press defended the task-force behind the investigations in Brazil when one of the most representative leftist leaders in South America was under arrest because of the investigation.

While in these initial years prevailed a more positive perspective about the case, there are indications that between 2019-2020 the questioning process that was initiated in 2018 against Lava Jato was intensified. In June of 2019, the release of leaked messages exchanged between Sergio Moro and the prosecutors responsible for the task-force behind Lava Jato, represented the outbreak of a new scandal, triggering criticism against the Brazilian justice and public ministry, especially because such messages indicated that both sides were collaborating with each other.

The next chapter focus our analysis in the repercussion of these events in the media. We intend to know whether this new scandal was a point of definitive changes in the behavior of the press towards the investigations occurring in Latin America.

## **CHAPTER 4 – COUNTER-FRAMES AGAINST OFFICIAL NARRATIVES: OPERATION CAR WASH IN THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA AFTER THE 2019 SCANDAL**

In this chapter, we would like to present a new set of analyzes related with the media coverage on the Lava Jato case, considering a cross section from 2019 until 2020. Our objective is to capture possible changes in the framing processes related with the case and the anti-corruption task force behind it, after a new scandal related with Operation Car Wash was brought by the media.

The new scandal came to the public with the release of private dialogues exchanged through the usage of messaging apps between some of the most important persons behind the investigations and trials of the Car Wash case. The new scandal immediately received coverage from the international press, especially because the contents of these conversations indicated that Brazilian prosecutors and judges cooperated among each other during the legal procedures of politicians and businessmen under trial in the Brazilian justice, including in the case of former president Lula da Silva.

Considering these impacting new elements that were uncovered in Brazil, we apply in this chapter the same text as data methodologies with the objective to verify how the coverage of the newspapers analyzed in chapter three reacted toward this new scandal. As it was demonstrated in the previous pages, segments of the international media were starting a process of counter-frame against Lava Jato's official narratives in the last year of the 2014-2018 cross section. We intend to verify whether this process was intensified after the scandal of the leaked messages.

In the same manner as chapter three, we will present the quantitative outcomes dialoguing with the qualitative elements of the media coverage. It is intended to demonstrate how the framings made by the elites supporting Lava Jato task force were more fragile and questioned after 2019.

### **4.2. Consolidating counter-frames against the official narratives (2019-2020)**

Chapter 3 indicated the international press had a political tone towards the Car Wash investigations and the scandal behind it. While levels of polarization could be found in the case

of Argentina and United States, Peru had a press with a positive consensus about the investigations.

However, the critics against the role and boundaries of the judicial actors behind Operation Car Wash were enhanced after 2019, when in June the investigative newspaper *The Intercept* released in Brazil a series of leaked messages from the messaging app Telegram, showing Sergio Moro, Deltan Dallagnol and other relevant prominent agents having a continuous dialogue about the procedures that had to be made in the Car Wash case. This close connection between the accusation side and the expected neutral side, judge Moro, brought the discussion about a possible bias in the judicial procedures occurring during the trials along the years, especially because in many occasions both sides seemed to articulate their actions during the judicial procedures.

In some of the messages, Moro and Dallagnol discussed how feasible would be the acceptance of the denounces against persons investigated by the public ministry. The judge himself in many occasions would advance whether he could accept or not the denounces and what were the requirements for an acceptance (Martins, Santi, Greenwald, 2019). The conversation demonstrated how Moro acted giving advices to the accusatory side of the case.

The “Vaza Jato” scandal, received coverage from the Brazilian press, being also reported in different degrees by the media companies already analyzed in chapter three. Since Lula’s arrest, there were evidences that the framing processes of these companies were changing, especially in the United States case, were *The New York Times* started to question whether the investigations and trials were trespassing the limits of the Brazilian law. For these reasons, we will apply here the same methodology from chapter three, with the objective to identify changes in the framing processes gave by these companies during the 2019-2020 cross section, a moment when Bolsonaro arrives at the Brazilian presidency and the Vaza Jato scandal raises discussion about the role of the judiciary and public ministry in the anti-corruption task force established in Brazil.

We have a very reduced number of articles and editorials compared to the previous chapter. Table 3 below presents a summary of our data base within the referred 2019-2020 cross section.

Table 3 - Data base: 2019-2020 cross section

Country	Newspaper	Ideological identification	Sample
United States	<i>The New York Times</i>	Left-wing	13
United States	<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	Right-wing	11
Peru	<i>La República</i>	Left-wing	19
Peru	<i>El Comercio</i>	Right-wing	11
Argentina	<i>Página 12</i>	Left-wing	34
Argentina	<i>La Nación</i>	Right-wing	60

Source: author.

Summarizing the press behavior, the United States media since 2018 was showing an inclination to present a more negative perspective about the Car Wash task force, questioning the *modus operandi* behind it. In this sense, it is important to analyze whether these changes were consolidated in our current time frame. In the Peruvian case, both sides of the ideological scale had such a positive perspective about the investigations and the judiciary behavior, that our algorithm was not capable to capture differences in the discourses among the media.

Finally, the Argentinian case demonstrate a tendency of increasing the critical perspectives against the investigations in Brazil after the outbreak of the new scandal, with the left-wing newspaper enhancing its anti-Car Wash positions.

#### 4.3. United States

Both the left-wing and the right-wing newspapers from the United States immediately reported the new scandal. *The New York Times* mentioned that Moro acted as an advisor to the federal prosecutors working on the investigations (Londoño, Casado, 2019), while WSJ highlighted expert opinions who affirmed the messages could jeopardize Operation Car Wash and Moro's impartiality, in case they were true (Pearson, Lewis, 2019a).

The following figure brings the *Wordfish* outcomes from this country, considering the ideological scale we already presented in chapter 3.



During the 2018 campaign, this newspaper avoided making such inferences, although some critical perspectives were already arising in its coverage. After 2019, the NYT seems to have a less dubious position in comparison to chapter three.

A last example of these new features in this newspaper was an opinion article where the author indicated that Moro's conduct was "highly immoral – if not downright illegal" (Barbara, 2019). Moro is depicted in this opinion article as a "consigliere" for the federal prosecutors working on the case. It is also an opportunity to reinforce the new narrative we highlighted above: the author connects Bolsonaro's victory to the trials and arrest of Lula da Silva, placed as a "convenient" detention that would also result in Sergio Moro becoming Justice Minister during the beginning of Bolsonaro's administration. NYT brought some different approaches to counter-balance this harsher narrative, however, the criticism against Lava Jato seems to be the prevailing position in this new moment of their coverage, consolidating the changes of the newspaper in their framing process towards the case.

On the other hand, the WSJ reacted with less intensity to the messages in comparison to the NYT coverage. The frames given by the former seemed to have lost the strong pro-Lava Jato perspective identified in chapter three.

WSJ would affirm that Sergio Moro was tarnished by the case. The newspaper quoted experts on the Brazilian political and judicial systems to affirm that the messages could undermine the anti-corruption task force (Pearson, Magalhães, 2019). The scandal was also reported as one more test to the conservative agenda of president Bolsonaro, especially after Moro had resigned his position in March of 2020. In a second article, this media company reinforced the "tests" that Bolsonaro was facing, including the pressures made by the Brazilian Supreme Court, emphasizing that judges in Brazil had become "active political players" (Pearson, Lewis, 2019b).

The conservative newspaper reinforced the importance of the US legal mechanisms against transnational crimes related with grafts and money laundering, especially the international unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), based on such legal apparatus (Sun, 2020).

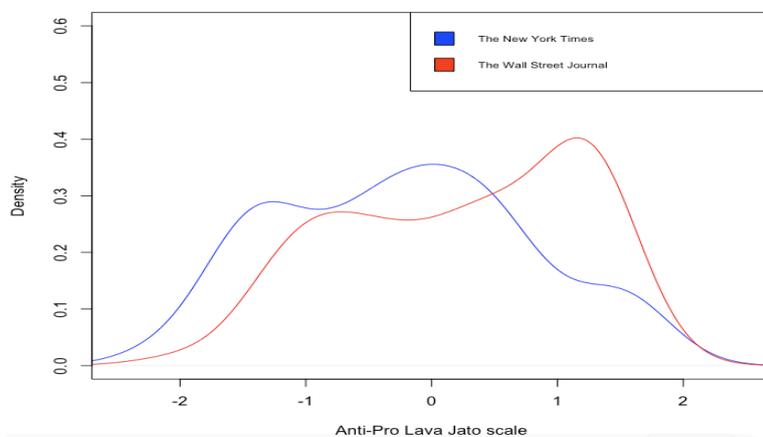
In general, WSJ did not report the case in the same frequency made by the left-wing newspaper, giving more attention to other aspects of the Brazilian politics. They emphasized what it was understood as a good economic project conducted by the Brazilian president, maintaining the criticism against the former administrations that managed the country (O'Grady, 2019). In terms of opinions and editorials related with the message scandal, WSJ remained in silence during this time frame.

Such omission was already explained by Entman (2004) as also a framing strategy, considering that the newspaper already had a narrative about the Lava Jato and bringing a thoroughly coverage about the leaked messages scandal could undermine WSJ's narrative about the achievements of the anti-corruption task forces in Brazil and other countries. Nevertheless, even newspapers such as the WSJ would decrease the intensity in their tones when defending Lava Jato, bringing some doubts about the case considering the new scandal recently discovered.

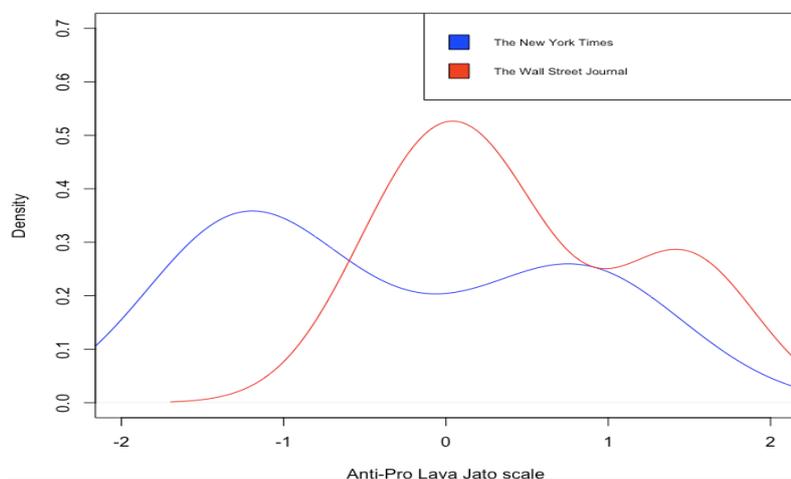
To better perceive possible changes in the political position of these newspapers, it is important to analyze the density distribution of the corpora, as we did previously in chapter three. In this sense, figure 10 below compares the density from both time frames, 2014-2018 and 2019-2020.

Figure 10 - Density distribution: United States (2014-2018 and 2019-2020)

a) 2014-2018



b) 2019-2020



Source: author.

When we compare the density plots, it is possible to notice how our qualitative perspective is complemented by the quantitative approach indicated by the plot above. We can still notice there are levels of polarization among the US press. However, it is also possible to perceive that the NYT had a more negative perception about Lava Jato in b) than in a), which could be explained by the scandal of the leaked messages, as we analyzed in the previous paragraphs. When comparing the political position of the WSJ in the different time frames, it is possible to notice how their narrative lost the intensity in favoring Lava Jato, considering that in plot b) this newspaper has a more neutral position in comparison with plot a), when their speech had an intense pro-Lava Jato approach.

In fact, WSJ acquired a more “neutral” position much because this newspaper decided to not position itself about the meaning of the disclosed connections between the judicial actors involved in the Car Wash case. No editorials or opinion articles were released about the topic. The WSJ avoided the subject and kept a coverage about Brazil focused on the changes and challenges that Bolsonaro’s agenda had in the country, as we emphasized earlier.

#### **4.4. Peru**

When we analyzed the Peruvian case in chapter three, *Wordfish* was not capable to capture political differences within our ideological scale. We concluded that this fact was explained by the support that both sides of the local press gave to the investigations happening in Brazil and Peru.

In the same manner of the US case, the Peruvian press immediately reacted to the release of the conversations between Sergio Moro and the Brazilian federal prosecutors. *La República* (LR, 2019a) emphasized that Moro’s reputation was at stakes after the dialogues were revealed by the Brazilian press, while *El Comercio* (EC, 2019a) reported that those involved in the scandal were trying to contain the damages the case could result to Operation Car Wash in Brazil.

With the objective to analyze the vocabulary in the 2019-2020 period, figure 11 brings the *Wordfish* outcomes from this country.

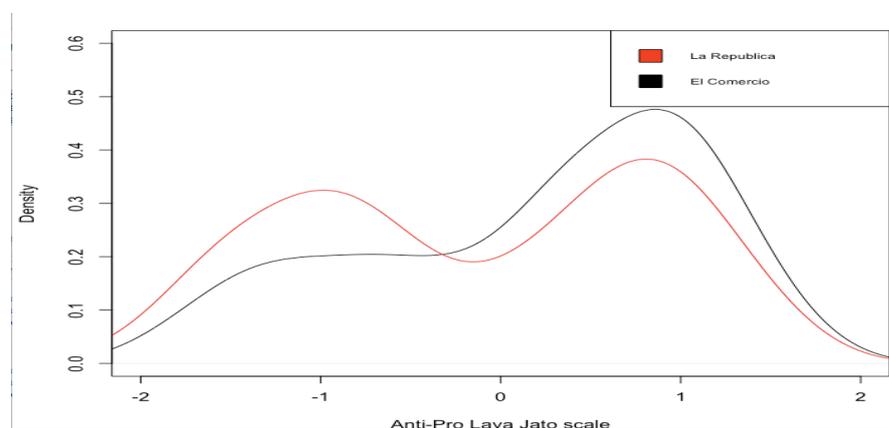


to the scandal of the leaked messages, since the operation still represented the fight against corruption in Latin America. EC stated the reports made by *The Intercept* did not invalidate the trials against Lula da Silva, at the same time that they criticized the left-wing movement from Brazil for trying to “destabilize the [Brazilian] government and the judicial authority, and in this way, ask for the release of the former Brazilian president [Lula]”<sup>1</sup>. For the article’s author, Operation Car Wash would be strong enough to resist to such pressures, but the Brazilian authorities should continue to protect it too (Novoa, 2019).

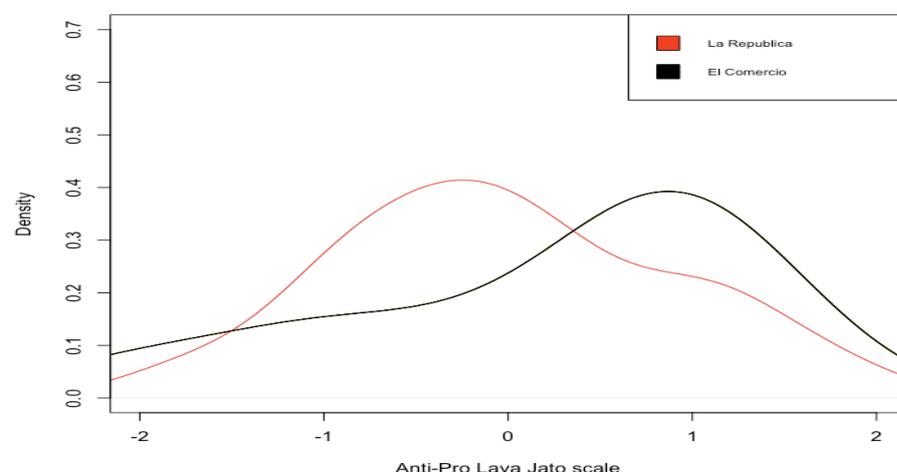
We should now compare the density distributions from both moments: 2014-2018 and 2019-2020. As we indicated in chapter three, the first cross section demonstrated that *Wordfish* algorithm was not able to capture political divisions in this country.

Figure 12 - Density distribution: Peru (2014-2018 and 2019-2020)

a) 2014-2018



b) 2019-2020



Source: author.

<sup>1</sup> Original: “la izquierda aprovecha la coyuntura para desestabilizar al Gobierno y a las instancias judiciales, y de esa forma pedir la liberación del ex presidente brasileño”.

By comparing both plots a) and b), the first important point to notice is the fact that in b) the algorithm was capable to detect a certain difference in the “political positions” of the articles released by these two media companies. Based on the plots from figure 12, we can affirm the Peruvian press developed a certain polarization level towards Lava Jato, after 2019. The plots are compatible with the content analyzed in the pages above, considering that *La República* developed a more critical perspective against the investigations. While *El Comercio* also raised some doubts about the actors involved in the message scandal, trying to maintain the support to the investigations as an institutional force capable to overcome those hurdles.

Nevertheless, the Brazilian chapter of Lava Jato is not the only reason why the divisions appeared between plot a) and b). The Peruvian press and local public opinion are getting divided with the procedures of their own chapter of the investigations and this is a strong explanation for why those polarization processes happened within the local media.

The tensions arose specially after the then Peruvian president Martin Vizcarra were formally denounced by the local public ministry for being allegedly involved in a graft scandal when he was governor of the Moquegua department between 2011 and 2014. This case is part of the so-called Construction Club scandal, a case similar with Lava Jato in Peru, since a group of national and international companies were accused of bribing politicians in the country. As we indicated in chapter two, Vizcarra was one of the names investigated in a procedure that was heavily based on leniency agreements with executives under arrest, including Brazilian businessmen.

When Vizcarra was impeached by the National Congress in the end of 2020 under these allegations, newspapers such as *La República* (2020a) considered the process a coup d'état, calling Lava Jato prosecutors and the leader of the congress, Manuel Merino as *golpistas* (those responsible for orchestrating the antidemocratic procedures) for not allowing Vizcarra to remain in the presidency while defending himself from the accusations. Moreover, the newspaper affirmed that in order to “save” Lava Jato in Peru, it was necessary to remove from the task-force the prosecutors who allegedly promoted the “coup” based on what the newspaper understood as spurious proofs (LR, 2020b).

Although *El Comercio* (2020) also supported the idea of maintaining Vizcarra in power while being investigated, this newspaper kept a more supportive position towards Lava Jato. EC did not frame the case as a coup d'état, in fact, the newspaper stated that such thesis was an overreaction, almost similar to a conspiracy theory. EC's coverage opted in believing that the prosecutors were acting within the legal boundaries and working with efficient leniency deals.

Therefore, the important changes that allowed our algorithm to capture divergences in the frames gave by the Peruvian press in 2019-2020 were based on the Brazilian chapter of the investigations, but only as a secondary aspect. The tensions in the local chapter were the most important fact that triggered divisions among the local press. Considering the importance of these events happening in Peru and the similarity of the procedures applied by the Brazilian and Peruvian authorities, we decided to intentionally insert some of these important publications about the local developments of Lava Jato in our analysis, especially because the reactions of the media and public opinion from both countries are also very similar.

#### **4.5. Argentina**

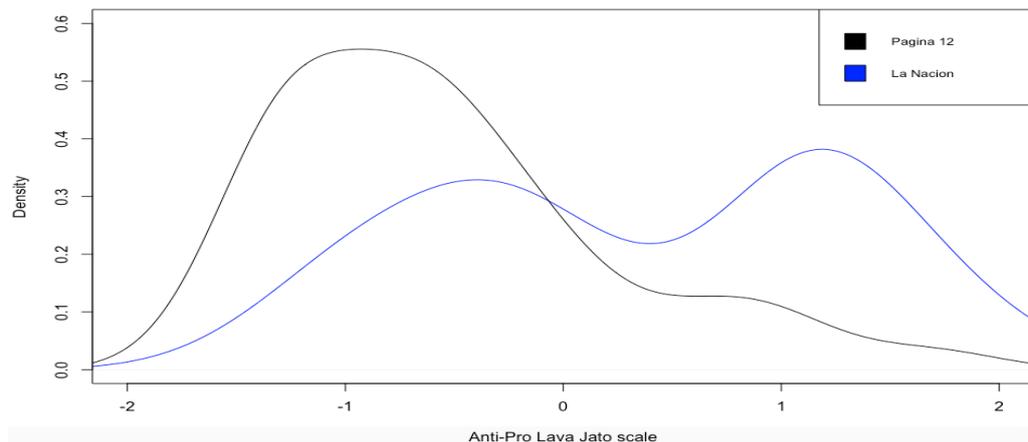
Now analyzing the case of Argentina, the local press also dedicated a relevant amount of time in its international segment to approach the case. The levels of interest from both segments of our ideological scale were elevated, considering the new developments of the case after 2019, when *The Intercept* leaked the conversations involving the Brazilian authorities.

*Página 12*'s coverage kept its position, using harsh words to frame the investigations and trials occurring in Brazil. In an article from August 2019, the newspaper considered that the scandal of the leaked conversations had “devastating” effects to the anti-corruption task force. Moreover, the newspaper continues to use the concept of “lawfare” to summarize the objectives behind the Operation Car Wash, affirming that the real face of the investigations was unveiled (Sader, 2019).

On the other hand, *La Nación* made references to the scandal involving the Brazilian prosecutors and judges, mentioning how the case was raising questions about the credibility of the anti-corruption task force. Nevertheless, the scandal unveiled by *The Intercept* was also considered an example of the challenges the fight against corruption might face in Latin America, especially when such efforts acquire populist consequences (Armendáriz, 2019). Figure 13 below summarizes the behavior of the Argentinian press using the wordfish outputs.



## b) 2019-2020



Source: author.

The density plots presented above indicate that the anti-Car Wash perspective acquired even more intensity after 2019 among the Argentinian media, especially because *Página 12* itself enhanced its negative framing against the case. The coverage made by *La Nación* also demonstrate similarities with the vocabulary applied by the left-wing newspaper when reporting the scandal.

Nevertheless, this newspaper maintained a certain level of support to the investigations, although it tried to keep a distance from the authorities also investigated for possible collusion among them. In an editorial article published in August 2019, the newspaper criticized the support that segments of Argentinian society gave to releasing from prison former president Lula da Silva. *La Nación* (2019) argued that Lula was not victim of a political persecution in Brazil, since he faced a fair trial (due process of law).

In this sense, the right-wing newspaper considered the support gave to Lula by Argentinian politicians as a reckless act against the “good health” of democratic institutions from Argentina.

#### 4.6. Robustness tests

In this segment, we intend to repeat the same robustness tests we made in the previous chapter. We performed similar regressions considering the “political weights” ( $\theta$ ) from the documents analyzed here as the dependent variables and the cross section of the publications as our independent variable. Although we had more concentrated documents released in a close

period of time, the regressions indicated that the time series was not capable to influence in the political weights of the documents in the newspapers of each country.

We also performed the two-sample t test with the objective to confirm whether the populations from each pair of newspapers were different among each other. The table 4 below indicates that they were different with 99% of confidence level.

Table 4 - Two-sample t test for independent groups (equal variances)

<i>Newspapers</i>	<i>Obs</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Err.</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>[99% Conf. Interval]</i>
<i>United States</i>						
<i>The New York Times</i>	13	7	1.080123	3.89444	3.70072	10.29928
<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	11	19	1	3.316625	15.83073	22.16927
<i>combined</i>	24	12.5	3.937004	7.071068	8.44796	16.55204
<i>diff</i>		-12	1.492512		-16.20703	-7.792974
<i>Peru</i>						
<i>El Comercio</i>	11	25	1	3.316625	21.83073	28.16927
<i>La República</i>	19	10	1.290994	5.627314	6.283949	13.71605
<i>combined</i>	30	15.5	1.607275	8.803408	11.06973	19.93027
<i>diff</i>		15	1.86708		9.840768	20.15923
<i>Argentina</i>						
<i>La Nación</i>	60	30.5	2.254625	17.46425	24.49873	36.50127
<i>Página 12</i>	34	77.5	1.707825	9.958246	72.83204	82.16796
<i>combined</i>	94	47.5	2.813657	27.27942	40.10084	54.89916
<i>diff</i>		-47	3.263772		-55.58466	-38.41534

Source: author.

## Chapter's remarks

From what was analyzed in this chapter, it is possible to conclude that the leaked messages impacted on the perspectives about Lava Jato, including the perspectives of those agents that symbolized the fight against corruption in Brazil, such as Moro and Dallagnol.

The new scandal that came to light in 2019 by the series of publications coordinated by *The Intercept*, symbolizes the political power the media has, especially because this scandal was a moment where prevailing framings about the anti-corruption task force behind Lava Jato was facing a serious challenge. Operation Car Wash became more questioned because of the procedures applied on it along the years. Lula da Silva arrest was the beginning of a more intense questioning process, but the leaked messages, indicating a collusion among the

prosecution and the judiciary, increased the capacity to contest the initial narratives about Lava Jato.

The changes demonstrated in this chapter, in comparison with chapter three, indicate that the narrative pro-Lava Jato still exists, but lost power after the publications made by *The Intercept*. In the United States, such changes of perspectives were clear, with *The New York Times* demonstrating a less dubious position when criticizing Lava Jato and *The Wall Street Journal* maintaining a silent position.

In the Peruvian case, differently from the previous chapter, it is possible to notice ideological divergences in the speeches from the newspapers analyzed. However, such divergences are the result of the internal polarizations occurring in the Lava Jato's local chapter. In this sense, it is important to notice how similar were the construction of narratives between the Brazilian and the Peruvian case: in the first moment, it seemed to prevail a framing pro-Lava Jato in the media from both countries, but during the developments of the case, especially after the polemic procedures conducted by the public ministry and the judiciary branch, those framings were more questioned by the media.

Finally, the Argentinian case demonstrate elevated levels of polarization among the newspapers analyzed in our cross section. While *Página 12* used the scandal of leaked messages to reinforce their framings, *La Nación* had a more silent position towards the matter, only reverberating what was already being published in the international media about the case. It calls the attention, however, how this newspaper had an open position against the support that the Brazilian former president Lula da Silva was receiving from Argentinian leftist leaders, treating it as a relevant matter of domestic politics, especially because 2019 was a year of presidential elections in Argentina.

## FINAL REMARKS

In the first chapter of this dissertation, we started with the theoretical background that would guide our work, demonstrating concepts from a literature that covers subjects related with public opinion, international relations and the media's role in this context. Such theories would be brought to analyze subjects that has its origins in South America: two political scandals involving high-level members from the branches of government in Brazil, along with the public ministry.

The protagonist position from authorities behind the Car Wash investigations made us adapt the theoretical frameworks presented in the first chapter with the objective to consider these authorities as elites with the capacity to influence in the power dynamics between the media and foreign affairs subjects, in the similar manner as traditional politicians can do when dealing with these affairs.

We demonstrated the importance of such adaptation in chapter two, after explaining how the legal documents used by Brazilian prosecutors to denounce those investigated had an important political perspective that could be found replicated in many of the publications from the newspapers analyzed in our data base. The impacts from these official documents as a source of information for the Brazilian and international media could not be ignored, especially when we consider the strategies to acquire the support from the public opinion towards the anti-corruption measures. In this sense, this adaptation allowed us to bring the elites of the judiciary branch and public ministry to the debate as types of groups capable to impose framings in this specific international matter.

In a certain way, it is possible to affirm that these groups were well-succeeded in imposing their narrative to the national and international media about the meaning of Operation Car Wash in Brazil, or at least segments of the media and these elite groups shared a congruent idea about the anti-corruption operation being a chance for Brazil to develop a more sophisticated and effective mechanism to fight corruption in the public environment. The empirical results presented in chapter three indicated that United States and Peru had a mainstream press giving a significant support to the legal procedures happening in Brazil, mentioning them as a paragon to be followed by the whole region.

Nevertheless, the enhanced exposition of these prosecutors, judges, police investigators along with the ideas they promoted, also brought intra-elite confronts, an aspect we demonstrated since chapter two until the empirical work presented in chapters three and four.

Many politicians in Brazil and other countries affected by the scandal decided to question the *modus operandi* behind the investigations and trials, increasing framings disputes among these elites, that could also be noticed within the media.

Even if the international press in the first years after the outbreak of Operation Car Wash had more accepted than rejected the narratives from the influential elites behind the investigations, it was possible to notice in chapter three and four how counter-frames emerge to contest the official narratives. Considering our data base, Argentina is perhaps the only country where there is a clear division, with one side of the ideological scale contesting the official narratives since Lava Jato's outbreak, which also is an important point to explain the elevated levels of polarization towards the subject in this country, as demonstrated in chapter three.

Such process of contestation does not mean that suddenly Lava Jato's answers to corruption problems in South America became regarded in a completely negative perspective. The framing disputes noticed among the international press relies exactly on the fact that one side of the ideological spectrum kept its defense of the work made by the authorities in the region, while the other side searched for a more alternative framing. This was the case of *The New York Times* in the United States, which developed a harsher perspective about the consequences of the Lava Jato case along the cross sections analyzed in the two last chapters.

In general, our models were capable to identify such behavior of the press, which was also important to create a dialogue between the empirical findings and the theories presented in the first chapter, demonstrating the relevance of methodologies such as text as data techniques to analyze our data base. Those methodologies were also important to promote this debate between theories mostly based on the reality of the United States to the political context from South America. Such theorizations demonstrate how the international media could adopt a political discourse in subjects related with the international politics from Latin America, presenting a similar behavior to those already observed in the mainstream media from Anglo-Saxon countries.

As mentioned in chapter one, the theoretical frameworks presented in this dissertation were originally based on the behavior of the press towards a matter of international affairs related with the interests and domestic policy from the own country where such media companies were located. While our empirical findings did not work solely with this assumption – especially in the Argentinian and US cases, considering that their domestic policy were not affected by these scandals in the same way as Peru – even when the media was observing something happening in a different country, it kept a political discourse to frame the case. In

fact, the Argentinian and the US media had the highest levels of polarization along the cross section analyzed in this dissertation, in comparison to Peru.

Such characteristics of the international media, demonstrate how the press might have a political discourse about a foreign affairs topic even when the domestic policy and public opinion from the country where the newspaper originally comes from might not be intensely affected by the case.

Considering the origins of these scandals, we speculate that through congruent frames, the Brazilian judiciary elites transmitted a positive image about what was happening in Brazil, in the sense that finally the country was fighting corruption. However, since 2018, this image of Operation Car Wash started to be more questioned, especially because of the following factors: the arrest of Lula da Silva and the subsequent prohibition to run in the 2018 elections; the gain of popularity of Bolsonaro's rhetoric in the country; the subsequent nomination of Sergio Moro as Minister of Justice after Bolsonaro had arrived in the presidency; finally, this process is completed with the publication of the leaked conversations exchanged between Moro and the Brazilian federal prosecutors.

It is still difficult to measure the reaction of the Brazilian public opinion in this process. Using the cascading model proposed by Entman, we speculate the local public opinion was heavily influenced by the congruent frames that prevailed in favor of Lava Jato among the national and international media, especially when we analyze the popularity that the investigations had among Brazilian society along the years. In other countries, such as Peru, the same could have happened, especially considering that both sides of the mainstream media in this country gave full support to the Peruvian chapter of the investigations.

By the same token, we also speculate that the anti-Lava Jato reaction might also represent the role of an active public opinion in Brazil, considering that the creation of counter-frames it's a bottom-up procedure, in which the public opinion evaluates a certain subject under new circumstances and might pressure for different points of views about it.

We hope our dissertation had demonstrated the political discourses of the international media when covering a matter connected with the reality of Latin America, such as corruption without borders. Moreover, we also expect to have contributed with a new set of empirical observations that was capable to dialogue and readjust theories about media, elites and foreign policy that remains more focused in countries such as the United States.

Such empirical findings demonstrate that indeed theorizations brought by Baum and Potter, along with the writings from Entman and many other authors quoted in chapter one are also applicable to the reality of Latin America, with proper adaptations. The question is that

these theories not only are focused on the reality of Anglo-Saxon countries, but also were based on empirical evidences related with security matters, especially the relation of the United States' public opinion with the wars enrolled by this country, including the fight against terrorism.

Our findings indicate that such literature when tested in a different scenario from those mentioned above, had indeed concepts and rationalizations capable to be applied in our object of analysis. Slants news prevailed in the coverage of the international newspapers about the Lava Jato case, although the Argentinian example was closer to present a bias pattern, in comparison with the other countries. The differences in the speech and vocabulary from the newspapers analyzed, not only reveals they could cover a matter based on their political affiliations, but also indicate that framing disputes might occur in this process.

A last point our findings bring to the theoretical framework presented in the first chapter is the necessity itself to develop not only theory tests based on such debates, but also a theory building procedure based on the relation between public, media and international affairs in regions such as Latin America, taking into consideration the topics of foreign affairs more connected to the reality of the South.

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APPENDIX D - *El Comercio*'s word cloud (2014-2018)

## a) EC's corpus



## b) EC's editorials and opinion articles





