

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FIELD: SOCIAL TRAJECTORIES UNDER ANALYSIS¹



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ABSTRACT

This work presents part of an analysis of the relations between the fields of media and politics, which has been built from an anthropological look at the discursive practices of agents who, as voters and consumers of the symbolic goods produced by the devices of the national media field, confer materiality to the relations between these fields. The central objective here is to establish a reflection on the possible agencies, which can be expressed by these discourses on politics, in a movement that aims to understand whether or not the political practices of profane voters, those who do not master the rules of operation of the national political field, would escape the political agendas presented by the devices of the media field. The present investigation is justified by the large number of studies that, when reflecting on the contemporary relations between media and politics, uniformly face the possible effects of media discourses on their consumers, thus failing to look at the point proposed here: the production of meaning expressed by the voter's political discourse. For now, we present the initial moment of this study that has been developed with the electorate of the municipality of Américo Brasiliense, a city located between three important economic and political centers in the interior of São Paulo: Araraquara, São Carlos and Ribeirão Preto.

Keywords: Trajectory. Speech. Politics. Media. Voters.

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INTRODUCTION

This work presents part of an analysis of the relations between the fields of the media and the field of politics that aims to establish a reflection that aims to understand whether or not the political practices of profane voters, those who do not master the rules of operation of the national political field, would escape the political agendas presented by the devices (Agamben, 2005) of the media field. The study presented here has been constructed from an ethnographic look at the discursive practices of agents, who as voters and consumers of the symbolic goods produced by the devices of the national media field, confer materiality to the relations between these fields.

In this sense, the present research seeks a theoretical distance from works that, when reflecting on the contemporary relations between media and politics, uniformly face the possible effects of media discourses on their consumers, thus failing to look at the point proposed here: the production of meaning expressed by the voter's political discourse (Santos, 2019). For now, we present the initial moment of this study that has been developed with the electorate of the municipality of Américo Brasiliense, a city located between three important economic and political centers in the interior of São Paulo: Araraquara, São Carlos and Ribeirão Preto.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FIELD

By taking an anthropological look at our theoretical object, we initially face the question: how to theoretically work our empirical universe, that is, how to look ethnographically at the diversity of possible belongings within the immense group of agents who do not know the legitimate rules that structure the national political field, but who, as voters, can participate in the disputes that, Theoretically, do they guide the paths of this field? The way we found to equate this empirical question was the construction of a cut theoretically made possible by the theory of social fields (Bourdieu, 2002).

From this perspective, to think of society as a set of social fields is to understand it as a set of spaces that are in constant contact with each other, presenting a similar functioning logic with regard to power disputes and that, empirically, each space tends to reproduce the symbolic disputes that structure and characterize the social field to which it belongs, without this leading them to a mischaracterization as to their particularities.

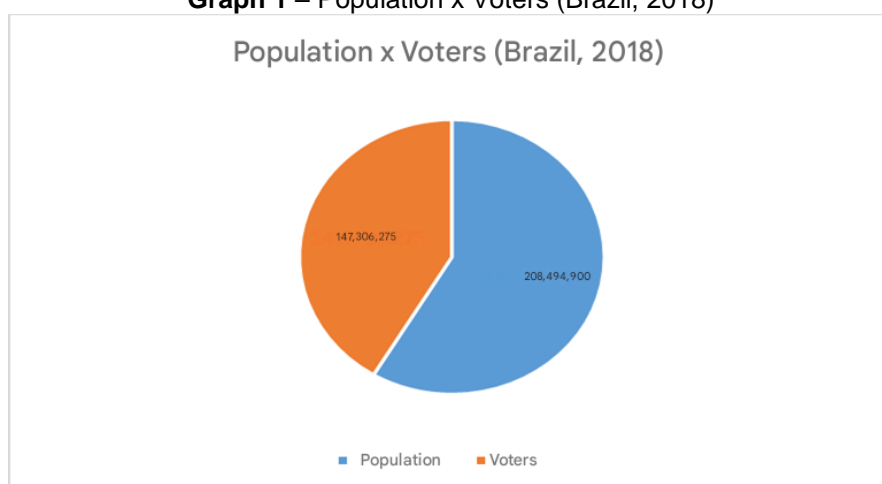
Thus, faced with the impossibility of working with the immense group of voters who can be understood as profane in the national political field, to the extent that they have no

party affiliation (130,503,186), ⁵we chose to develop our research with voters in the municipality of Américo Brasiliense, a city in the interior of São Paulo with an estimated population of 39,862⁶ people. of which 27,502⁷ are voters. Thinking about the relevance of the electorate of this municipality in relation to the national electorate at first sounds like something incoherent, but when facing this relationship from the theory of social fields, we find a favorable framework for the construction of our research.

The set of graphs that we will present below, elaborated through data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), aims to illustrate and substantiate the empirical cut of this work. The dynamics for this presentation will bring the framework of the national context, as a structured political field, followed by the framework of the municipality in question, as a social space within this field.

By starting our analysis with a simple association between the total population and the total number of voters, it was already possible to glimpse the similarities between the Brazilian political field and the various social spaces that configure it.

Graph 1 – Population x Voters (Brazil, 2018)



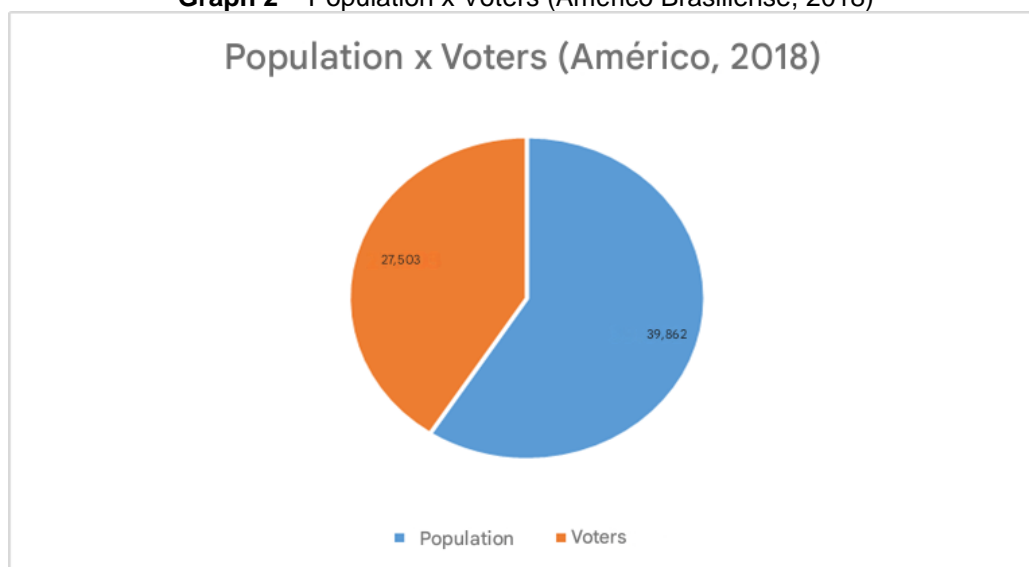
Source: Author's data, 2019.

⁵ Available at: <http://www.tse.jus.br/eleitor/estatisticas-de-eleitorado/filiados>

⁶ Available at: <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/sp/americo-brasiliense/panorama>

⁷ Available at: <http://www.tse.jus.br/eleitor/estatisticas-de-eleitorado/estatistica-do-eleitorado-por-sexo-e-faixa-etaria>

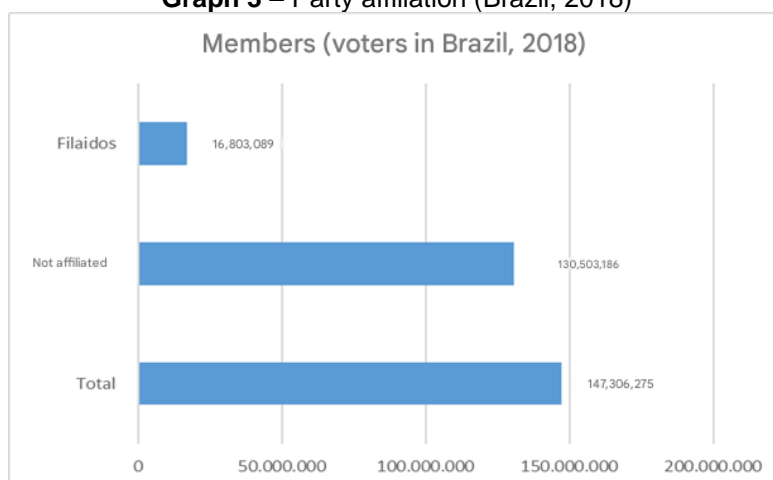
Graph 2 – Population x Voters (Américo Brasiliense, 2018)



Source: Author's data, 2019.

The similarity between these graphs allows us to theoretically justify our empirical approach, since the municipality of Américo Brasiliense – which is among the other 4,904 municipalities whose population does not reach more than 50,000 inhabitants, a condition that characterizes 70% of the cities in the country⁸ – can, by similarity and proportionality, be taken in our study as representative of the relationship between the national political field and its voters. Above all, when looking at the relationship between voters who know the rules of the political field, those with party affiliation, and voters profane to the functioning of this field, those without party affiliation, we find the following reality:

Graph 3 – Party affiliation (Brazil, 2018)

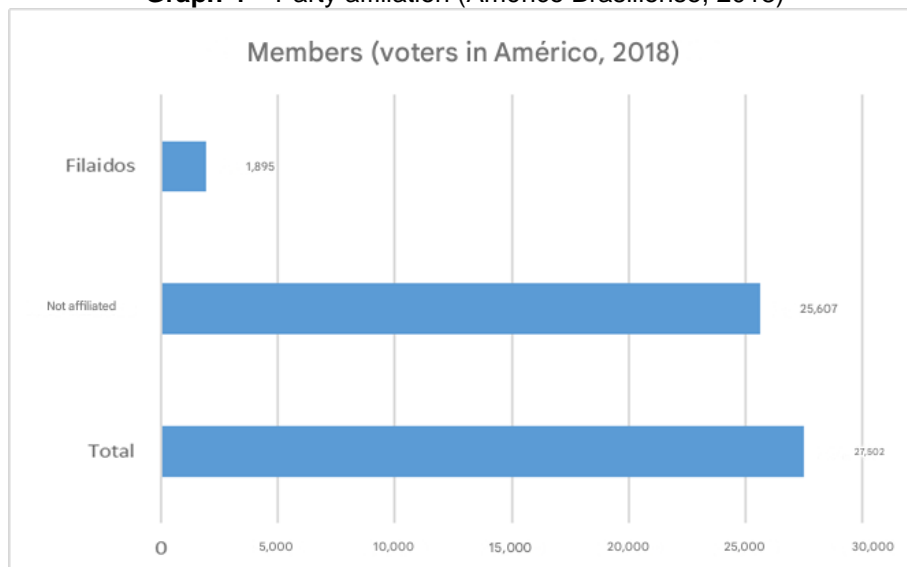


Source: TSE, 2019⁹

⁸ Data available in <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/>

⁹ Available at: <http://www.tse.jus.br/eleitor/estatisticas-de-eleitorado/filaios>

Graph 4 – Party affiliation (Américo Brasiliense, 2018)

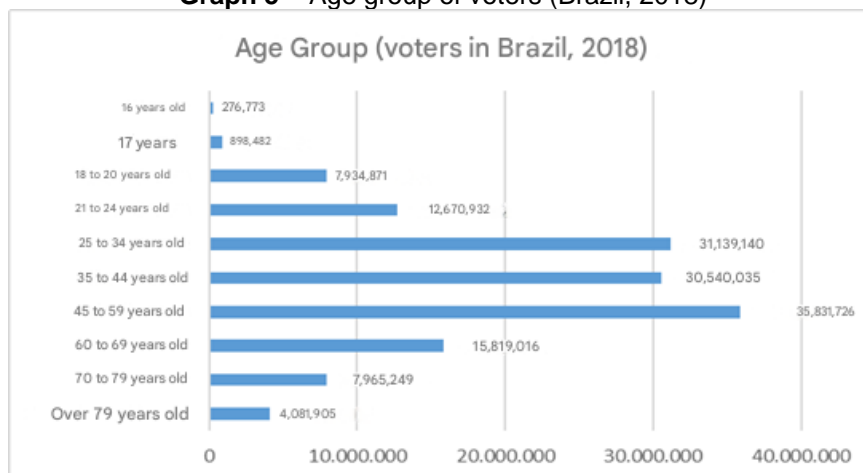


Source: TSE, 2019¹⁰

Since our study is constructed from an anthropological perspective, it is necessary to understand the set of this group of voters in its diversity, that is, it is necessary to think about who these people named as voters are, seeking to understand the meanings that encompass the category of voter.

A first look at this diversity also allows us to visualize another aspect of the similarities of the spaces that make up the Brazilian political field. When looking at the ages of these voters, we have that:

Graph 5 – Age group of voters (Brazil, 2018)

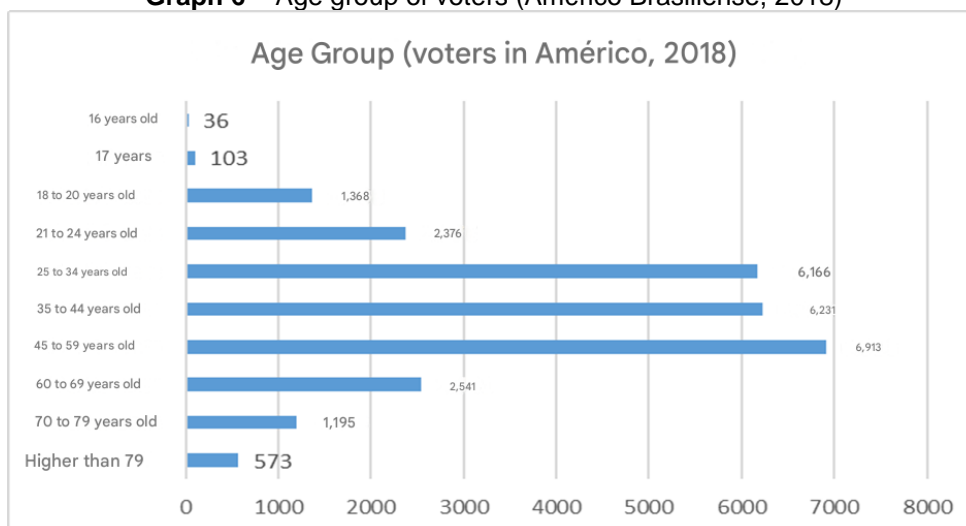


Source: TSE, 2019¹¹

¹⁰ Available at: <http://www.tse.jus.br/eleitor/estatisticas-de-eleitorado/filaios>

¹¹ Available at: <http://www.tse.jus.br/eleitor/estatisticas-de-eleitorado/estatistica-do-eleitorado-por-sexo-e-faixa-etaria>

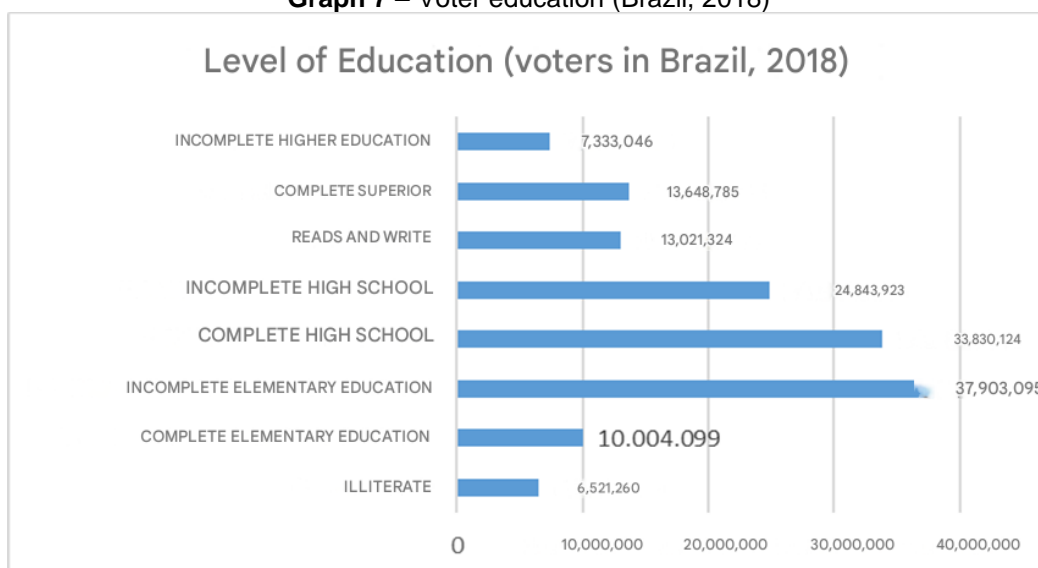
Graph 6 – Age group of voters (Américo Brasiliense, 2018)



Source: TSE, 2019¹²

When we look even more at the voter category, looking, for example, at its different levels of education, it becomes possible to perceive all the diversity of belongings and particularities veiled by the use of this category, and allows us to point out another similar aspect between the space and the social field that encompasses it:

Graph 7 – Voter education (Brazil, 2018)

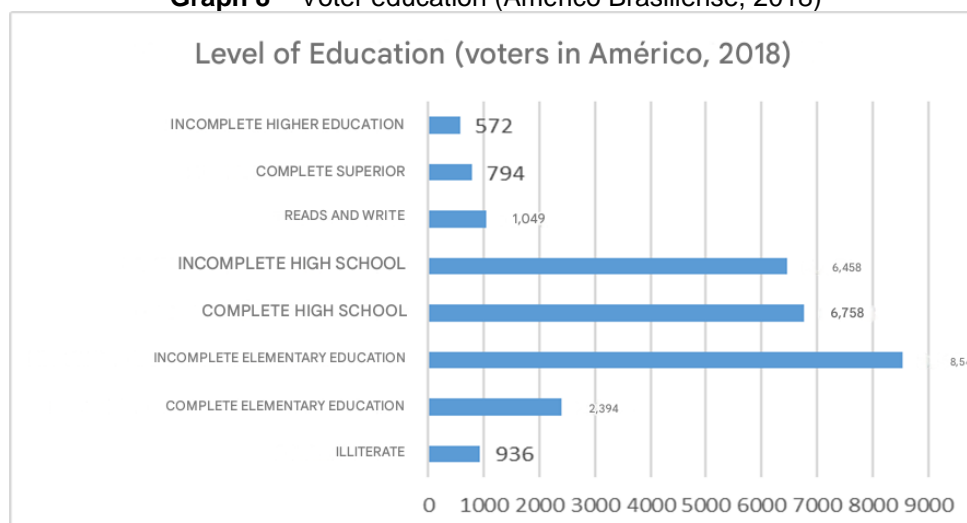


Source: TSE, 2019¹³

¹² Available at: <http://www.tse.jus.br/eleitor/estatisticas-de-eleitorado/consulta-por-municipio-zona>

¹³ Available at: <http://www.tse.jus.br/eleitor/estatisticas-de-eleitorado/estatistica-do-eleitorado-por-sexo-e-grau-de-instrucao>

Graph 8 – Voter education (Américo Brasiliense, 2018)



Source: TSE, 2019¹⁴

Our empirical approach also reflects a methodological option, since we assume the idea that:

[...] Social proximity and familiarity effectively ensure two of the main conditions of "non-violent" communication. On the one hand, when the interrogator is socially very close to the one he interrogates, he gives him, by his interchangeability with him, guarantees against the threat of seeing his subjective reasons reduced to objective causes; their choices lived as free, reduced to the objective determinisms revealed by analysis. On the other hand, in this case there is also an immediate and continuously confirmed agreement on the presuppositions concerning the contents and forms of communication: this agreement is affirmed in the appropriate emission, which is always difficult to produce consciously and intentionally, of all non-verbal signals, coordinated with verbal signals, which indicate either as such which utterance is to be interpreted, or how it was interpreted by the interlocutor. (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 697).

SOCIAL TRAJECTORIES UNDER ANALYSIS

Once the interviews of this first field moment have been conducted (15) and transcribed (13), we present below as an example of our field seven of our interlocutors, as well as the aspects of their trajectories, established in a situation of active and methodical listening (Bourdieu, 1997), allow for greater reflection with our object of study. This presentation was constructed in a textual way, following the order of the interviews, which were carried out from March 2018 onwards.

¹⁴ Available at: <http://www.tse.jus.br/eleitor/estatisticas-de-eleitorado/estatistica-do-eleitorado-por-sexo-e-grau-de-instrucao>

The first of this series of seven conversations, lasting 1h00, took place at the home of our 30-year-old interlocutor Ailton¹⁵. Born in the northern region of the country, son of a civil servant (complete high school) and a housewife (attending elementary school).

Ailton is single and has lived in Américo for over 20 years. He attended elementary and high school in public schools in the city. He currently has two technical courses and a higher education in the area in which he works. A great admirer of football, Ailton maintains a relationship with television and radio to follow this sport. Ailton points to the internet as a source of information in his daily life, a relationship that was evident when we talk about newspapers:

Look, I see a lot, can we talk about electronic newspapers on the internet? [...] When I want to see some information or something like that, if it's true, if it's not, if I've heard it, I confirm everything, I do a search on the internet usually or to understand something like that, if there's going on, I don't know some war or some political discussion between countries, I look on the internet as the first way to know the information. (Ailton, 30 years old).

Ailton demonstrated that he does not have a great confidence in informative sites, which is why he always searches on Google when he wants to have access to some information or some more specific subject:

I, the first thing, I play on G1, then I look for another, other sources to see if they cross, to see what they say. [...]. I try to see if it's there, because usually the news is very similar, but there's always something I don't know, I always question, why did he say that, I want to see if other places say the same thing. (Ailton, 30 years old).

Our second interview, lasting 50 minutes, took place at the home of our interlocutor Beatriz, 35 years old. Born in Américo Brasiliense, daughter of a welder (incomplete elementary school) and a plastic artist (incomplete elementary school). He completed elementary and high school in the public system and has a professional training in Welding.

Single and mother of two children, a girl (attending high school) and a boy (attending elementary school). Currently a hairdresser, Beatriz is a big fan of soap operas and series, but she doesn't like newspapers: *No. I don't like newspapers very much. [...]. Because lately it only shows tragedy. I choose not to know much, I'm not very into tragedy, I don't know I prefer something lighter, there isn't... I don't give much importance to the newspaper.* (Beatriz, 35 years old).

¹⁵ All names of interlocutors are fictitious.

After these two interviews, it was possible to identify some points of distance between the languages, interviewee and interviewer, which is why some adjustments were necessary, especially in the way of using the script to guide the conversations.

Thus, with a more assertive language, following more closely the idea of non-violent communication (Bourdieu, 1997), we conducted our third interview, lasting 1h00, which took place at the home of our interlocutor Carlos, 34 years old. Born in the city of Matão, he has lived in Américo for 15 years. The son of farmers (incomplete elementary school), Carlos attended elementary and high school in public schools. He has technical training in mechanics and professional training in locksmithing.

Carlos claims to have no profession. Currently single, he works as a motorcycle taxi driver. An admirer of Rock, Rap and classical music, Carlos is also a fan of newspapers and has subscribed to the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*. About his relationship with newspapers, he says that:

I watched a lot, today I was a little discouraged by the amount of corruption you see, but usually I follow a lot of newspapers. [...]. I just didn't follow three broadcasters, Record, Globo and SBT. [Didn't you see these stations?] No, the newspaper of these stations, in fact neither the programming nor the newspapers of this station. [So which newspaper did you see?] From TV Cultura, that Record News I found very interesting, very differentiated, I even had a subscription to Vivo television at the time, but I subscribed more because of the newspaper packages I had access to. [There you had access to what?] Then there are the closed journalism channels, right, there was that one, now I won't remember the name, but there were eight closed journalism channels, I followed them a lot. (Carlos, 34 years old).

Carlos does not have a relationship other than that of the work environment, since he works 12 hours a night all day, which is why his friendships are limited to colleagues in the work environment. When talking about what he and his friends do in this daily life, he said that:

The situation depends on it, it varies a lot. Sometimes the guy asks for help in his daily life, you know, sometimes the guy arrives... There's an example, a few days ago a guy arrived there, the guy was devastated, depressed with a problem there... Then the guys come and talk, try to help in some way, try to see if they can do something for the person. [So you talk a lot?] A lot, that in the service, a lot, you understand [...]. On all subjects. [Which are the most talked about?] The only one that hasn't come out to date, which they debate very little, is politics unfortunately. [Don't you talk about politics?] Most don't like it, about work, about family. [Politics, isn't it?] Politics very little, I even try to talk, but... [Have you got no one to talk to?] They don't, they don't, or most don't have information or don't have the will, they don't have interest. (Carlos, 34 years old).

Carlos made clear his interest in political matters and when asked where he finds information on this subject he said that:

In the media generally, I told you when I had television I watched a lot of TV Câmara, TV Senado, today I follow G1, I access G1 to see how the situation is in Congress, I have this habit of always looking [So you look for political information on the internet?] This on the internet, on the radio at Uniara, I like to follow the city council, I think every Wednesday. [Do you listen to the sessions of the chamber?] I listen to the sessions of the chamber, as far as possible [Is this a practice that comes from before?] I have this habit for a long time, this annoying habit of listening to these things, they say I'm crazy but.. [Do you think that your work staff lacks this, they don't seek information?] Look from the time I've been working until today, I'll tell you, if you put the ten fingers of your hand together to talk about someone who cared or had some knowledge, there's still a finger left. (Carlos, 34 years old).

The fourth interview, 45 minutes, was conducted in a commercial establishment of choice of our interlocutor Daniela, 19 years old, born in Américo Brasiliense. Single. Daughter of a welder (incomplete elementary school) and a general services assistant (complete high school/technical education in R.H.), she attended elementary and high school in public schools. He has a technical background and is currently studying higher education at a private institution.

Daniela has been working for three years as a young apprentice and due to lack of time does not have a strong relationship with the media. Specifically about newspapers she says: *I've heard newspaper huh. [And today?] Not today. [Which one did you listen to or watch?] The newspaper Nacional. [Often?] Yes, because my parents left it there, right, and the one from Record. [Don't you see it today?]element. It's due to lack of time.*

It was in the fifth interview that the media appeared in a more significant way. This interview, 1h10 minutes long, was conducted at the home of a friend of the interlocutor Elias, 44 years old. Born in Américo Brasiliense. Tire repairer by profession and son of a tractor driver (not schooled) and a housewife (not schooled). He has completed high school (EJA) attended in a public school. Married and father of three children, a girl (complete high school) and two boys (attending elementary school). Elias says he really likes to watch television, as can be seen:

I don't have a favorite program, because Brazilian television today, I'm going to say something here but I'm not even going to talk about it (laughs) things are complicated... Very much... so when I was a kid I liked to watch the magic balloon, right, Xuxa, there was no news, but today television 'came' which is a free channel that the gang watches, open channel, it's Faustão and Silvio Santos, if you go there it's an alert city, that family program is... but boy the thing is complicated... it's another movie is... as sometimes... at home I have internet, I look at Google some article, but it's... YouTube, and you get it then... Open channel today is football,

watching a game, of course you don't like it, right, but there's not that thing of saying I'm a soap opera fan, a fan of that, no [...]. When I can usually watch it, when I'm at home, Madalena, radio, the national newspaper... I watch a lot, fantastic, that when I'm at home I'm watching, Good Morning Brazil, Good Morning São Paulo, Jornal da Tarde, Globo Esporte. (Elias, 44 years old).

The sixth interview, 40 minutes long, was held at the home of our interlocutor Fernando, 54 years old. Born in Américo Brasiliense, son of a maintenance mechanic (not schooled) and a cook (incomplete elementary school). A mechanic by profession, he completed his elementary education in a public school and high school in a private school. He has technical training in the area in which he works. He started a higher education course (he studied for two years) at a public institution and also studied parapsychology for two years. Married and father of three daughters (One is in higher education, one has completed high school and one is in elementary school).

Fernando says that currently his relationship with the media is almost nil, despite having already subscribed to a printed newspaper, stating that today he has no contact with any newspaper, as can be seen:

[Do you read, watch or listen to any newspaper?] No, none. [Why?] Because I can't stand it (laughs) I can't read anymore, you know, because it's all the same thing, you read a... let's suppose, there was an accident there in São Paulo, you play in one you're talking about the accident, you play in the other you're talking about the accident, you play in the other you're talking about the accident, but damn everything in the accident why doesn't it change? Is there nothing else to see? And it's the whole day, you know. (Fernando, 54 years old).

In our seventh interview, 40 minutes long, we can perceive a direct relationship between the agent's social trajectory and his daily practices. The interview took place at the home of our interlocutor Gabriela, 51 years old. Teacher by profession and housewife for over 12 years. Born in another state in the southeast region of the country, he has lived in Américo Brasiliense for 15 years. Daughter of a housewife (incomplete elementary school) and a teacher who had previously been a military policeman.

Married and mother of two children, a boy (attending higher education) and a girl (attending elementary school). Gabriela says she is no longer interested in political issues as she used to and that this is a reflection of the change in her situation, which used to be a homeschooler. Here we find the political subject linked to a media device and directly mediated by his trajectory:

[Do you read, watch or listen to any newspaper?] Newspaper... I watch not so much, every time I turn on the newspaper there is only bad news, a lot of politics... me like this... I'm very relaxed in this part, you know... It's funny... before, as I taught, we had to read more and see what was happening... When you become a housewife you relax, I relaxed... I lost contact, I don't like to talk about politics... I don't like to know what's going on... No... sincerely... (Gabriela, 51 years old).

About her relationship with the media in general, Gabriela says that:

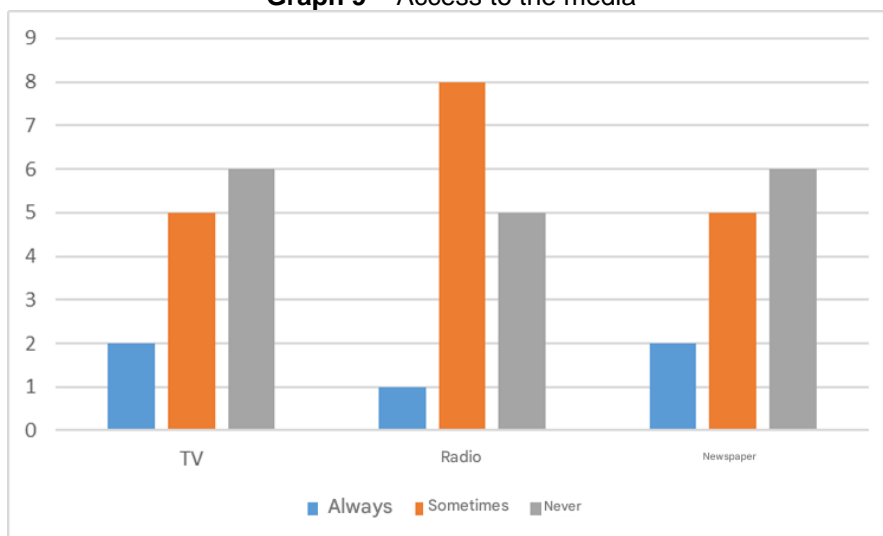
The radio for me... to tell you... I don't know how I'm going to answer that... The radio is good for me! It makes you go back there... Facebook is more for relaxing... And the newspaper that I liked when I had the tribune, now it doesn't have it anymore, I don't buy newspapers... It's been a while, it's been years since I read a newspaper... that I pick up a newspaper and read... So just like what I told you the national news that I sometimes watch... When you watch there are only bad things, it's one killed the other, stole I don't know what... This theft of politics... Then I get discouraged, you know. (Gabriela, 51 years old).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By thinking about our object, the relationship between the media discourse on politics and the political discourse of profane agents in the national political field, based on the individual trajectories of our interlocutors, it was possible to identify important aspects such as, for example, their relationship with the means of communication to which they have access.

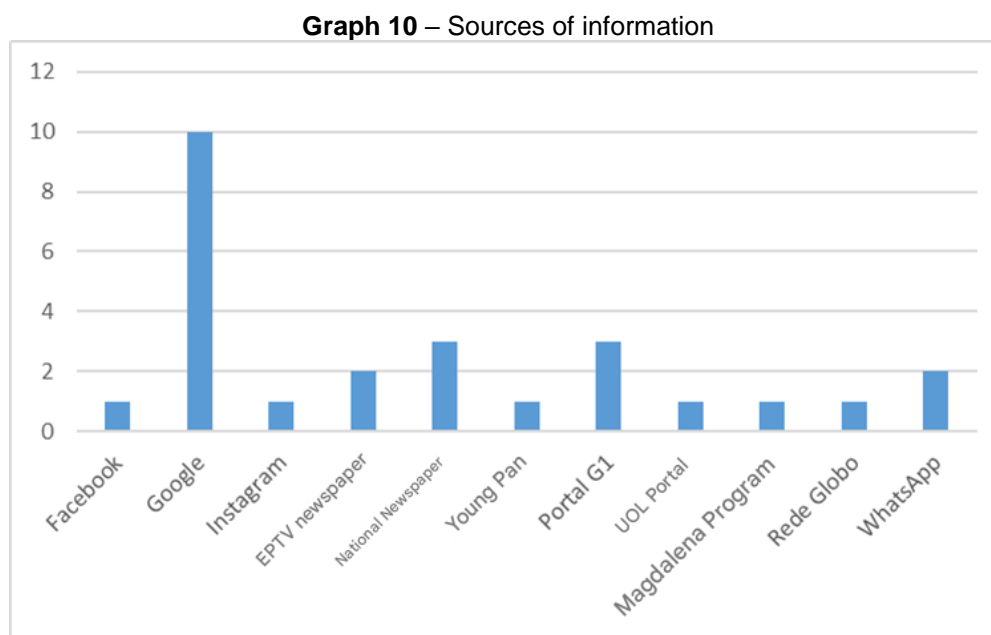
In view of these data, we can see that traditional media devices no longer occupy a significant place in the daily lives of our interlocutors, as can be seen:

Graph 9 – Access to the media



Source: Author's data, 2019.

This first observation leads us to question the way in which these agents relate to information, or rather, thinking of information as a symbolic good (Santos, 2015) how does the consumption of these goods occur in the daily lives of our interlocutors? About this symbolic consumption, or about this search for information, we have the following media devices in the routine of our interlocutors:



Source: Author's data, 2019.

For now, we point out the relevance of the concept of trajectory in our study, insofar as it allows us to look relationally at a notion of thought practice as a dialectical relationship between the social place and the dispositions of the *habitus* of each agent, remembering that "one of the functions of the notion of *habitus* is to account for the unity of style that binds the practices and goods of a singular agent or a class of agents [...]" (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 21). A look that has as its presupposition, what Bourdieu calls the "problem of politics" (Bourdieu, 2007, p. 429), that is, the transformation of the experiences lived and propitiated by each individual or class trajectory in practice, into a political discourse about the things of politics.

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