

IMMIGRATION AS A RISK FACTOR TO HEALTH: ANALYSING *FOLHA DE S. PAULO'S* REPRESENTATION OF AN AFRICAN IMMIGRANT DURING THE ÉBOLA OUTBREAK

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Abstract

This article analyses the construction of stereotypes about African immigrants in the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* through its coverage of the Ebola outbreak in Africa in 2014. Special attention is given to the way the newspaper reported the suspected infection of the Guinean immigrant Soulyname Bah. It is observed that, through the logic of fear, there was a labeling process of opposition between “us” and “them”. Revulsion was promoted with regard to differences, via the re-signification of African ethnicity characteristics, which started to be seen as indicators of health risk factors. Within the risk society, media coverage of Ebola, as well as of other pandemics, reveals an important and paradoxical truth: we might be living in an era known as the apogee of human scientific advancements but this has not necessarily mitigated our fears and panics about potential dangers (Lerner & Sacramento, 2015). In this context, migration turns out to be a question of security related to a plurality of threats (terrorism, crime, disease, and unemployment, for instance). As we conclude in this article, the securitization of migration might be, therefore, described as a process that substitutes concerns about social and structural problems by institutional, technological and discursive practices that end up allowing the identification and the ascription of responsibility to specific groups.

Keywords

Migration; risk; stereotype; Ebola; journalism

INTRODUCTION

The year of 2014 recorded the largest outbreak of Ebola contamination since the discovery of the virus, in 1976. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 6,583 deaths were registered up to December 2014, from a total of 18, 188 cases identified in West Africa. That outbreak began in December last year, in Guinea, and advanced, on the subsequent months, to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Senegal. Afterwards, a concern about the possibility of a pandemic of Ebola was intensified. This fact can be demonstrated by the observation of the activities of several media outlets and international health organizations in that time period (WHO, 2014). As the disease spread, the “problem” established between migration and Ebola became present in public debate. Jean-Marie Le Pen, founder of the a French extreme right wing party (National Front - FN), ended up saying that Ebola outbreak could solve both the world “population explosion” problem and the immigration into Europe issue (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, May 22th, p. 2). Indeed, some of the more conservative sectors of the western world have been associating migration with increased risks affecting economy, politics, employment, residence, health

and safety of residents. Immigration is often defined as “a fundamental problem, and never as a challenge, and even less as a benefit. For the country, it is often associated with a financial burden” (Van Dijk, 2010, p.146). However, the press commonly veils the racial debate behind topics related to urban violence, terrorism, health problems, unemployment, drug trafficking and consumption (Silva & Rosenberg, 2014). *Folha de S. Paulo's* pieces concerning Le Pen's positioning never addressed the racial question, which stays subsumed into the safety/risk binomial.

The objective of this article is to analyze how Brazilian newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* covered Ebola outbreak and framed the African immigration as a “risk factor” to health. To understand this articulation, we divided the text into three parts: in the first part we present synthetically the contemporary links between stereotype, immigration and risk in global society; the second is a classification of *Folha de S. Paulo's* coverage on Ebola outbreak in 2014, considering the changes in the narratives by which the disease was seen as a possible threat to Brazil; at last we analyze the role of journalistic discourse in the construction of Guinean immigrant Soulyname Bah as the Other. We demonstrate the links established between the stereotypical representation and the definition of risk factors to health.

Although risk theory is traditionally focused on technology and environmental issues (Beck, 2010; Giddens, 2001), other studies have used it to analyze media representation about immigration and immigrants (Bradimore & Bauder, 2011). Based on the semiology of discourse, we will show how different discursive strategies have taken place as well as what meaning-related effects have produced the separation between “us” (healthy/threatened) and “them” (sickly/threatening) as well as their relationship with a stereotyping process targeting the Other. The role of discourse analysis within this context is not to identify whether there is a risk in statistical terms, but to underline how certain enunciation objects become particularly interpreted as “risky” and how this risk classification becomes significant and shared within a society. To sum up, we would like to know: what are the symbolic actions that took place to build the immigration as a risk factor? What conditions have allowed certain individuals to become understood as “risk factors” and, as such, to be feared, controlled, managed, and even excluded from society?

We chose to work with *Folha de S. Paulo* because it is one of the newspapers with the largest circulation in Brazil, as well as one of the most well reputed media outlets in the country. According to the National Association of Newspapers (ANJ), in 2013 (the last year available on the Association's website, at the time of this research) this newspaper ranked in second place in the Association's list of largest newspapers of the country (in terms of circulation), with an average circulation of 294 811¹ issues. The second reason that has lead us to analyze this particular paper was the fact that it is regarded as one of the periodicals of great importance by public and specialists, and it also has the

¹ According to the ANJ between 2002 and 2009, *Folha de S. Paulo* has held the top spot in the rankings. This position was achieved in 2012, as well. During the years 2010, 2011 and 2013, that newspaper lost the top spot for the popular newspaper *Super Notícia*. Information retrieved from: <http://www.anj.org.br/maiores-jornais-do-brasil>.

ability to shape public opinion in Brazil. And, finally, because it is one of the newspapers monitored by the Media and Health Observatory, to which we belong as researchers.²

STEREOTYPE AND IMMIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF RISK GLOBALIZATION

In order to reflect on the process of construing immigration as a risk factor to health in the *Folha de S. Paulo* coverage on Ebola outbreak in Africa, it is important to question the very notion of risk in contemporary world (Sacramento & Lerner, 2015).

Beck (2010) signaled that risk is a key feature of late modernity. According to the author, in the “risk society”, neither science nor politicians in power, media, companies, law or even the military are able to rationally define risk controls. As well noted by Beck (2010), the widespread uncertainty coexists with “defining disputes” about the extension, degree and urgency of risks within the symbolic struggle happening between media, science, business, and government. After all, the modern world increases the difference between the language of calculable risks about which we think and act and the world of the non-calculable uncertainty and of the imponderable, which we have created at the same speed of its technological developments. With the latest decisions on nuclear energy, the use of gene technology, nanotechnology, computer science and so on, we came across a set of unpredictable, uncontrollable and incommunicable consequences that may even endanger life on Earth. We live, thus, in a context marked by paradoxes and contradictions that delimit the simultaneous resurgence of responsibility and irresponsibility, knowledge and ignorance, autonomy and dependency, security and risk (Matheus, 2010, pp. 136-137).

In today's world, security is associated with trust: it is necessary to rely on devices, institutions and people in order to consider them “safe places”, areas of security, in a world dominated by uncertainties, insecurities, risks and distrust. To Giddens (2001, p.16), late modernity is concomitant with the rise of far greater opportunities for human beings to better enjoy a “safe and rewarding existence” than any other pre-modern system. But it has also a “dark side”, full of dangers and threats to life, such as conflicts, wars, terrorist attacks, nuclear accidents, environmental crises, epidemics and pandemics (Giddens, 2001, p.17). In this sense, contemporaneity is characterized by ambiguity in which we observe, on the one hand, a context of insecurity generated by the permanence of threat, and, on the other, the existence of narratives and institutions promising ways to protect the public, as, for example, the scientific discourse through its different scientific areas. In regard to institutions, we notice the resurgence of practices and security services at different levels, from the surveillance over space until biomedical procedures (surveillance cameras, biometric identification, monitoring and data collection on the

² Created in 2008, the main objective of the Health and Media Observatory - project located in the Research Laboratory of Communication and Health (Laces), the Institute of Communication and Information Science and Technology in Health (ICICT), the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) consists analysing the ways in which mass media produce meanings about the Unified Health System (SUS) - which is the Brazilian public health system – contributing to the struggle for democratization communication in society in general and health, in particular. The Observatory provides daily monitoring about some print newspapers of wide circulation in the country: in Rio de Janeiro: *O Globo*, *O Dia*; Sao Paulo: *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo*; Brasília: *Correio Braziliense*; Recife: *Jornal do Commercio* and *Folha de Pernambuco*.

Internet, social network privacy policy, genome mapping, diseases detection and vaccine production). At the narrative level there is the proliferation of the use of risk rhetoric when reporting events and experiences involving epidemics, crimes, disasters and accidents. Particularly in journalism, the narrative of fear suggests an ethical and political important feature of contemporary Western cultures: the trend is to just “accept the sacrifice in the present, the moment when the negative consequences associated with non-sacrifice are being built” (Vaz et al. 2012, p.27). In general, journalistic narratives tend to strongly encourage the audience “to conceived themselves in the same condition of that who suffers, which shifts the responsibility for the suffering to the Other character” (Vaz et al., 2012, p.29). That is why it becomes possible to produce a nexus of responsibility between who suffers and who provokes suffering.

The key question in many areas of everyday life is not only the concrete experience of uncontrollability, but above all, the loss of credibility and trust that disintegrates the guiding ideal of modern rationality and control (Beck, 2010). After all, the risk has acquired in Western contemporary societies an ontological status, becoming an “autonomous entity, objectionable, regardless of the complex socio-cultural contexts” (Castiel et al., 2010, p.25). The definition of what is dangerous as well as of the existing types of protective and preventive measures goes beyond the control of scientific rationality, even if they are still referred to as objective, accurate and interference-free data. As noted by Beck (2010), there are interests and viewpoints of competing groups, actors and institutions involved in risks definition. In this sense, the ultimate goal of science concerning the ability to objectively determinate risk factors puts itself in cause permanently. For instance, it is increasingly frequent for certain types of food or medicine to be regarded as both beneficial and harmful to health. Within this social dynamics, studies as well as scientific evidence depend even more heavily on social expectations and social evaluations when discussing risks. The contradictory plurality of definitions, with different institutional origins (media, business, industrial, scientific institutions, government agencies, non-governmental organizations), shows how much the social validity needs to be associated with various argumentative skills (Gonçalves, 2004).

Such alteration, which concerns the practical experience of scientific definitions of risk, leads to representations and narratives about diseases within the global public's realm under the logic of risk: threatening but crucial to establish morality in contemporary world (Lerner & Sacramento, 2012; Vaz et al., 2007). In this sense, the mediated experience of disasters, epidemics and current and potential wars has become a fundamental dimension, where the interdependence between the threats to human existence and the possibility of a precarious future focus on everyday life. Thus, in normative terms, there is the common constitution of the Other, of “them,” of the stranger who threatens and hinders the continuity of order.

Within the context of the society of risk, human mobility around the globe is frequently interpreted under the suspicion paradigm. After all, while globalization is largely theorized in terms of cross-border flows of people, technology, finance, information, cultures and ideologies (Appadurai, 1996; Castels & Miller, 1998; Castells, 1999; Massey,

1993), we must consider that there are also systemic processes of segregation and containment (Shamir, 2005). There are, thus, social pressures, disciplinary structures and legal devices that seek to delimit global mobility (Turner, 2007). It is possible to highlight even more frequent practices of “generalized suspicion” which join, for example, the perceived threats of crime, unemployment, diseases, immigration and terrorism with migratory flows. Therefore, this constitutes a normative model for organizing the global strategies of risk management (Shamir, 2005). The mobility scheme that characterizes global societies coexists with widespread suspicion, thus triggering control practices, such as increased borders control, proliferation of gated communities, surveillance of data and individuals, espionage and construction of biosocial profiles. Speaking about a paradigm of suspicion, Shamir (2005, p.201) notes that the primary principle used to determine the “license to move”, whether at inter border level or in public spaces within borders, has to do with the level through which mobility agents are socially considered suspected of representing threat of undesired immigration, of crimes, of terrorism or of disease proliferation.

That is why securitization is a major feature of contemporary societies (Muller, 2004; Shamir, 2005; Turner, 2007). As we had already commented, this process involves the proliferation of protocols and security devices across various institutions and areas of social life, involving practices as control in prisons, use of badges and the need for identification when circulating in commercial and public buildings, inspection at the airports, exacerbation of border controls, increasing requirements for permanent visas or naturalization of immigrants, greater rigidity in interviews for migration, and so on.

In this process of generalized suspicion, securitization in modern societies produces significant forms of immobility. At the level of daily life practices, there are many examples. Sometimes they are even perceived as benign: railway carriages only for women, or private rooms in public hospitals. The causes for the raise of a “cloistered society” are numerous: globalization of crime and disease, “the return of the state”, securitization, illegal migration, political paranoia, technical innovations and so on (Turner, 2007). Basically, the growing perception in contemporary liberal democracies is that citizenship, or the question of who is and who is not able of being a member of a particular political community, has become, in fact, a matter of security. This awareness has gone in pair with what is called “interior securitization”, that is the perception of immigrants, refugees and foreigners as social threats to the political and social order of the national citizenship (Muller, 2004).

There is, within this context, the emergence of a new kind of xenophobia. As explained by Turner (2007, pp.299-300), with the development of movements of diaspora, the stranger may be both close and distant because he/she is involved in a global network of communities that span throughout the world. In national territory, cultural differences become institutionalized and produce socially excluded groups living in ghettos and peripheries, marked by underemployment and low life opportunities.

The constitution of stereotypes has been one of the main discursive strategies related to the conception of immigrants as threats by associating ethnic differences with

mechanisms of rejection, exclusion and disqualification. Media is certainly a privileged symbolic space for construing representation in contemporary societies. As part of everyday representation, culture products provided by media can contribute through their images and other signs, among other activities, to build confidence in security institutions as well as practices and perceptions of the difference to the Other as being close or distant, familiar or exotic, according to certain socio-cultural contexts (Silverstone, 2002). The close intertwinement between youth gangs, slums, school failure and colonial hierarchies and imaginary has been frequent when analyzing immigrants and immigration portraits in the European media (Cabecinhas, 2007). Particularly in news coverage there is a strong presence of immigrants seen through the bias of the stereotype (Ferin, 2009).

The objective of stereotypes is to interpret the Other as a population marked by degenerate types drawn on an essentialist rhetoric that justifies the superiority and establishes systems of administration, education and exclusion (Bhabha, 1998). Essentialization is the great avenue for demonization. Now, one can finally understand what the underlying function of demonization is: it serves “to assign blame to others, serving also as a basis for projecting on the others what makes us insecure and anxious” (Young, 1971, p.210). The effects of demonization take place through a specific mechanism that produces a dehumanization of individuals and groups (poor people, immigrants, drug addicts). After all, stereotypes naturalize, by associating certain characteristics to individuals and groups, attributes, generalizing what is particular, and particularizing what is general (Ferin, 2009, p.199). Media has the function to “synthesize and simplify information, facilitating the identification of referents and allowing the public to recognize insiders and outsiders situations and social types” (Ferin, 2009, p.199).

In this sense, stereotypes are like an effect of power – a discursive strategy that tries to mark certain positions of social actors as fixed and that, in many cases, degenerates types as a way to legitimize hierarchies and social inequalities (Hall, 1997, p.238). In other words, it is through the meanings produced by representations that a person gives significance to experience, to what he/she is and to what he/she can become. After all, as Woodward ratifies (2000, pp.17-18), “utterances and representation systems build the places from which individuals can position themselves and from which they can speak”. It is like a process that, in the case of media representation of migrants, promotes the differentiation between what is known (taken as a familiar, adequate, good, right, “us”) and what is unknown (considered exotic, strange, bad, wrong, “not us”, “them”). In this construction of the otherness, “they” are the ones who always threaten “us”.

Stereotypes use a split strategy, turning into excluded those who do not fit into the norms of society and inserting the unfit into a set of individuals considered unacceptable – the Other (Hall, 1997). Stereotyping is a complex process which allows us to categorize people in a meaningful way on the basis of previous experiences that allows us to identify similar characteristics. This is commonly done and it is not, by definition, negative. For example, we assign certain characteristics to roles as “father”, “businessman”, “pensioner”, and so on. While classifying persons in a similar way, however, we reduce them to simplified and exaggerated features; stereotyping normally does not admit any possibility

for change, bringing about the idea that such features are natural. After all, in essence, stereotypes declare, “this is what you are, and that is all you are” (Hall, 1997, p.259).

Within the tension between mobility and security, which characterizes globalization, as we have already mentioned, the stereotyping of immigrants has been frequent. After September 11th there was a strengthening of the representation about Muslims and Islam as the Other of Western societies, through which their depiction as fundamentalists, terrorists, sexist, militant, anti-democratic, violent, suicide bombers, kidnappers, orthodox and fanatics (Dunn, 2001) was intensified. The dominant stereotypes portray men as terrorists or foreign extremists (and more recently, local), while women are constructed as being repressed and as the ones that need to be freed from patriarchal oppression and violence (Alsultany, 2012).

Other ethnic minorities that constitute themselves as immigrants in economically developed countries (Latin, African, Asian – especially Chinese) often get media treatments that classify them as a threat to social order, being associated with unemployment, crime, poverty and violence (Cogo, 2002). Thus, the Media presents immigrants from a perspective of fear and apprehension. After all, “stereotyping is associated with power and hegemony and although circumstantially reaching the more powerful people, it focuses primarily on the weaker and the more disadvantaged ones” (Ferin, 2012, p. 109). Stereotypes deny the chances of any meaningful discourse about them or with them, ensuring a continuous exclusion. This proves to be even more effective when power inequalities enable dominant groups to use representational strategies without facing a fair discursive competition (Hall, 1997).

We assume that representation is the space, *par excellence*, where construction and establishment of collective and individual identities take place, rather than simply being a space where already formed social identities are reflected in. According to Hall (1997), representation is an essential part of the process by which meanings are produced and shared in a given socio-cultural context. To represent means, in short, to give meaning to the world through language, enabling a correlation between concepts and objects, people and events as well as the metamorphosis of thoughts into words, gestures, images and sounds.

Taking into account the literature review exposed above, we analyze *Folha de S. Paulo's* coverage on the Ebola outbreak. Our work is based on the aforementioned theoretical discussion, as well as on the methodological procedures that we will detail in the next section.

METHODOLOGY

The analysis we are presenting on this article was based on the social discourses semiology. As theorized by Pinto (2002), this discourse analysis practice favors the understanding of the context as a structuring axis. As it recognizes utterance as a set of articulated texts in a discursive practice, this method assumes that speech is both a process of communication and a social practice. The analysis focus on processes of

meaning production as contextualized social practices (Pinto, 2002). This perspective considers the whole production of meanings as a historical act: not the signification of a static reality of a sole subject, but an active discursive intervention, conditioned by precise social and historical circumstances. In this sense, the analysis is about “what is implicit and unspoken”, of what is not in the speech (Bakhtin, 2003).

Pinto (2002) considers there are three modes of enunciation: demonstration, interaction and seduction. Demonstration is related to the referent construction, the universe of the discourse of the world, of the speech object. Interaction concerns the establishment of socio-cultural interaction bonds needed to address the interlocutor. Seduction, finally, corresponds to the process of distribution of affections acknowledged by the one who speaks.

In our analysis, we will concentrate on the relationship between discourse and utterance, between text and background, concerning the process by which the referent is constructed. We will analyze how the texts highlight the representation process carried out by *Folha de S. Paulo* about African immigration and, particularly, about the Guinean immigrant Soulyname Bah, during the context of Ebola coverage, in 2014. We will identify the type of characterization, the choice of words and the use of metaphors to define illness, immigration and the immigrant in question. We will do that through marks of enunciation, that is, clues left at the surface of the text that will allow us to understand the social processes behind meaning production and, thus, to position them at different levels of the context (situational, institutional and socio-cultural). Our goal is not only to show “how discourses are what they are”, but also, to explain “why they are what they are”. After all, discourses not only report the objects of which they talk about, but speaking of them in a specific way, they build up them up as objects (Foucault, 2006). This is another principle that orients our analysis: the fact that the capacity to build realities is the discourse’s innermost nature.

In order to make a discourse analysis, we considered specifically the texts published about the Guinean Soulyname Bah and about the suspicions that he was contaminated with Ebola. We are going to work with a total of seven articles: one published on October 10th, three on October 11th, two on October 13th and one on October 14th. The second stage of our analysis was more focused on the study about the relation between text and context of enunciation, starting from language marks (verbal and nonverbal). Finally, in addition to showing how the newspaper has dealt with the event, we were able to explain, in the light of theoretical reflections about the relationship between media, risk and human mobility in the current context of globalization, the motives behind the representation of the immigrant as a risk to the health of Brazilians.

THE COVERAGE OF *FOLHA DE S. PAULO* ON THE EBOLA OUTBREAK IN 2014

We mapped the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* during the period between 1st January and 31st December 2014 and have identified a volume of 188 texts referring to the “Ebola” topic (see Table 1). We have noticed, within this *corpus*, that this topic was predominantly

located in the international section of the periodic³, known as “World,” as well as in the section called “New York Times”, which is also focused on international matters. This reveals that the gazette had approached Ebola as an international issue, instead of a matter of national interest.

| MONTH | NUMBER OF TEXTS ON EBOLA |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| January | - |
| February | - |
| March | - |
| April | 1 |
| May | 1 |
| June | - |
| July | 8 |
| August | 53 |
| September | 25 |
| October | 72 |
| November | 15 |
| December | 13 |
| TOTAL | 188 |

Table 1- Number of texts about e published in 2014, by month.

We noticed some alterations on the coverage of this newspaper, concerning the sections in which the articles about Ebola were located. Said articles were, occasionally, placed in sections dedicated to national and local affairs – such as “Everyday Life” and “Power”. This shift only occurs on pieces published in dates close to the episode related to the suspected case of the disease in Brazil. Hence, a subject that had been treated mostly as a risk for the “others” was now portrayed as a threat to “us”. The possibility of the virus having arrived in Brazil moves all sense of fear into our country, and this is expressed in that shift between sections. Still in that month it was possible to notice in the coverage the spread of fear, since the disease was not just in Africa anymore. USA, Spain, France and Cuba were some of the countries that occupied the newspaper’s pages and that were concerned with the fight against Ebola. On October we identify the largest number of texts about this issue over the year 2014.

THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE GUINEAN IMMIGRANT AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OTHER

Our analysis has focused on texts about Ebola and on the suspicion of the existence of a case of the disease in Brazil. We analyzed the contents published in *Folha de S. Paulo* about that possible case in Brazil between 10/10/2014 – the date when the first

³ The sections represent the spaces in the newspaper in which texts are located. They, however, vary according to the editorial line of the newspaper and may receive different assignments and group themes with particular arrangements. *Folha de S. Paulo* tends to deal with international issues in the section “World”, in the special section called “New York Times” and in “The Best of the Russian Gazette”. Occasionally an international theme can occupy other sections of the newspaper.

suspected case of Ebola in Brazil was published: “Brazil registers the first suspected case of Ebola” (*Folha S. Paulo*, 2014, October 10th, p. C1) – and 14/10/2014 – the date when the newspaper reports the results of the second examination of the patient suspected of having Ebola, who was not diagnosed with the disease: “A new test rules out case of Ebola in Brazil” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 14th, p. A9).

THE FIRST SUSPECTED CASE OF EBOLA IN BRAZIL

On October 10th the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* brings on its cover a small headline on Ebola: “The city of Paraná isolates African suspected of being infected with Ebola”. The text is not accompanied by any image. It mentions that “an African, from Guinea” had been isolated by a health care facility (Thursday, September 9th) because there were suspicions of him being contaminated by the Ebola virus. There is also information from the Ministry of Health about the symptoms the patient presented, as well information about his transference to Rio de Janeiro. The text of this headline increases the drama around the patient’s dangerousness:

An **African from Guinea**, 47, suspected of having Ebola “has arrived in Brazil on September 1st, had fever during the last two days, but did not present bleeding or vomiting. (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 10th, p. A1)

The articulation of the following lexicons (isolates African suspect, Ebola) shows the naturalization metaphors used by medical discourse and, particularly, the way journalism deals with medical issues. Isolation derives from Latin *insula*. Amongst its meanings, there is “island”. From then on, the word has been associated with the idea of staying without communication, not having contact with other persons and staying away. Isolation as a medical practice is, in that sense, metaphorical. Being medically isolated, the patient continues to maintain contact with certain healthcare providers for treatment and may possibly receive visits from relatives. The point is that there is a change of semantic orientation: “insula” is a noun, whereas “isolated” is an adjective. That is, one concerns the own structural feature of a being or of an entity (an island is far from the Continent), while the other refers to a later assignment of meaning, to a quality or characteristic (the isolated patient). In this text isolation is both a practice and a characteristic ascribed to Africans, insofar as these “may be” contaminated by Ebola. Suspicion brings about the need to separate “them” from “us”. Or, even more, security is achieved through the isolation of what is understood as a threat to order and health.

As we know, quarantine refers to multiple forms of restriction and imprisonment. To quarantine is to identify and remove people with contagious and serious diseases from social life, followed by the submission of these subjects to certain protocols of treatment. Foucault (1979) theorized the development of modern governance in relation to various forms of quarantine. Quarantine, thus involves isolation. The newspaper labeled this procedure as appropriate:

Immediately after the announcement of the suspicion a team of specialists from the ministry was sent on a plane of FAB to coordinate the medical treatment and identify people who may have had contact with the patient. (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 10th, p. A1)

It should also be noted that meanings constructed about Ebola, or about any other issue, only succeed because they emerge from within a specific communicative context, interacting at all times with other texts also being displayed. The selection of topics that will fill newspapers covers is in itself already a construct about the reality as it implies selection, classification, prioritization and targeting, with a view to build an understanding of the events happening both in the country and around the world. Concerning the newspaper's cover of October 10th, and despite the possible presence of the Ebola virus in Brazil – a virus that can be lethal and that was already killing many people, especially in Africa – this issue was not considered by the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* as the big topic of the day. The political and electoral issues gained greater evidence.

At that time, the two great themes highlighted on the cover were: a) the electoral race for presidency (“The country is divided between Aécio, 51%, and Dilma, 49 %”); and b) “The treasurer received a bribe for the PT, say whistle-blowers”. In this period of time Brazil was experiencing a context of fierce electoral battle for the presidency. It is interesting to note that 2014 was the year in which the largest numbers of Brazilians voted. It is also relevant to say that the notion of context should be emphasized with regard to the production, circulation and appropriation of meanings produced by the media. In that case, we must keep in mind that issues that were being discussed in the media may help us to understand what the analyzed newspaper produces, where and how these issues circulate and how the newspaper suggests meanings to its public. As we are demonstrating, the manner in which *Folha de S. Paulo* approached Ebola was associated with the electoral context. There was a huge distrust about the federal government, considering the allegations of corruption during the presence of the PT (Labor Party) in power. Nevertheless, the newspaper recognized a certain ability of the Ministry of Health and other government agencies in the management of disease control in Brazil.

Issues related to elections were very constantly on the agenda of the Brazilian media in 2014 and these texts disputed space on the pages of newspapers with other topics, including health issues. It is relevant to remember that on October 5th 2014 the first round of elections for president, Senators, Deputies (state and federal) and State Governors took place. It is worth noting that, in this scenario, news unrelated to electoral matters were expected to receive less attention from the papers.

When examining the page where the article about Ebola was published, in the “Cotidiano” section (Everyday, in Portuguese) (p.C1), on October 10th, we realized that the aforementioned article occupies almost 50% of the newspaper's page, sharing space with an ad of a design and décor shop. The topic “Ebola” is built using a text dealing with the issue of the first suspicion of Ebola in Brazil and two more notes giving account of Ebola outside Brazil. To develop the report about the possible case of Ebola in Brazil, the paper made use not only of a text, but also of pictures (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 10th, p. C1).

The title of the illustration is “Suspected Ebola contamination in Brazil – learn how the transmission of the disease occurs, and about the symptoms”. Below that title there is an infographic explaining how the transmission of the virus happens as well as a list of the symptoms. In addition, there is a small map where we can see a plane moving from Guinea to Brazil. The first meaning to be apprehended is that planes coming from Guinea/Africa will bring the Ebola virus to Brazil. Thus, it is proposed to the reader’s imagination the feeling that all those who come from Guinea bring with them the virus of the disease, what reinforces the idea that the disease of the “other” will come to contaminate “us” in Brazil. It is also possible to understand in the very construction of this news piece a certain blaming of the African individual, simply because he is from Africa – as if being African was enough to represent a threat to “our” health –, as we can observe in the content of the subtitle of the article: “In Cascavel (PR), a man coming from Guinea, in Africa, was isolated in a health unit, which had to be emptied”. Also, in that issue of *Folha de São Paulo*, the patient’s name was not revealed. He was presented as:

African, 47, who arrived in Brazil on 19th September, **from Africa**, and went through Guinea, his country of origin (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 10th, p. C1 [emphasis added by the authors]).

We can also highlight the use of redundancy as a discursive strategy to strengthen individual dangerousness, by the generalization of an epidemic event to the entire African continent, as well as by representing the immigrant as being contaminated by Ebola, (just) for coming from Guinea.

The aforementioned passage illustrates how the stereotype – “the essence virus” (Barthes, 2003, p.71) - reduces the variety of characteristics of a population, ethnicity, gender, social class or group, to some attributes taken as essential (personality, clothing, behavior, commitment, verbal and body language, propensity to diseases etc.), allegedly set by genetics. Thus, knowledge about the Other is mostly intuitive, what reinforces the discursive organization of common sense (Freire, 2004). It is through this general perception that the news reinforce the suspicion and panic already present in the title: “Brazil registers 1st suspected case of Ebola” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 10th, p. C1).

That formulation is apparently paradoxical. Registration is, in general, done on something that has effectively occurred. Fundamental in the notion of risk is that once something is identified as a threat it may be managed, and the possibility of management reduces uncertainty. By understanding the lines of causality of a problem, one can act rationally in order to avoid it. In the field of public health, uncertainty management is performed by the “quantification of risk through population studies that calculate the probability of occurrence of a phenomenon” (Lupton, 1995, p. 78).

In the journalistic discourse, the stipulation of responsibility in face of the suffering depends on the respect and, at least partially, on the construction of the cause being carried out by scientific knowledge (Vaz et al., 2007). Indeed, in journalism, the role of the expert is that of an authority with knowledge, experience and ability to control what appears to be out of control.

The important point is that in a risk society, uncertainty is associated with the dangerous, the threatening, with what must be controlled and avoided. For the management of uncertainty, the expert becomes essential because he/she can build up a sense of control over the risks. In the matter we now discuss, the expert voice is that of the Ministry of Health, that justifies the isolation in the following way: “According to the protocol of the Ministry of Health, the site was emptied and other patients were transferred” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 10th, p. C1).

PATIENT'S IDENTITY IS REVEALED IN THE JOURNAL COVER

On the next day, October 11th, the topic continues to gain space on the front page, appearing with more emphasis than the day before, and having the following title: “Patient gets better and the chance of 1st case of Ebola decreases”. A photo that is highlighted on the journal cover accompanies the text. The image brings this legend: “In Cascavel (PR), the Guinean Souleymane Bah is transferred to Rio de Janeiro”. The photo shows a person lying down on a stretcher inside an ambulance with three other people around him, helping with the patient's transportation. This image shows the strong isolation of all the people who compose it: all of them (including the patient) are wearing special clothing, masks and gloves that do not allow any direct contact with the Other's body that is, thus, secluded. This image translates the coldness on the care of the patient in isolation.

Despite of the title giving account of the apparent improvement, the image contradicts said statement, as it presents a scenario of caution and isolation and the persistence of medical procedures. According to the newspaper (cover) the technical department of the Ministry of Health says it is “unlikely” that the patient is infected with Ebola. This information is visually countered by the evident use of medical apparatus (reinforced jumpsuits, mask, glasses, two pairs of gloves and cover for shoes) that clearly serve the purpose of avoiding contact of the team with the patient, thus preventing future contaminations (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 11th). As we can observe, two doctors are using those uniforms in order to put the patient, also dressed the same way, in an ambulance. With all this attire, the image on the paper's cover reveals a moment of insecurity. The logic of risk is predominant. The cover also says “The 64 people who had contact with the Guinean in Cascavel were identified. Residents are torn **between apprehension and tranquility**” (emphasis made by the authors). Even the suspect's isolation due to possible contamination was not enough to ensure safety: this had to be certificated by medical examinations. The newspaper seeks to show that population is divided regarding the patient and it looks like it is inviting the reader to decide whether the patient is contaminated or not, if he offers or not risk to public health. That way the text produces more uncertainties and insecurities than confidence, regarding the ways health authorities of the country are leading the problem. Therefore, it seems that what was written in the editorial of October 4th 2014 was now confirmed: Ebola could be a much greater sanitary crisis than authorities had predicted. *Folha de S. Paulo*, on the contrary, was correct in maintaining a climate of distrust and fear in face of the situation. On that same

day, distrust regarding Brazilian state institutions, especially on a federal level, took the newspaper pages. The headline of the day was: “Dilma says opposition uses Petrobras to throw a ‘coup’”. Other highlights of the cover, for example, are: “Former director of Petrobras worked for PT political campaign in Rio”; “PT shuts journalist’s questions, and *Folha* gives up on the debate”; “True to himself, Suplicy was victim of PT’s treachery” (referring to the article by Demetrio Magnoli). Thus, a communicative scenario is produced. It is possible to put into question the authority of federal government and of its institutions.

It is important to highlight that on October 11th the gazette’s cover has revealed the patient’s name: Souleymane Bah. The text of the headline not only reveals the immigrant’s name, but also characterizes him as being “the first case of suspected Ebola in Brazil.” Besides violating anonymity rights, the newspaper makes it seem that the possible arrival of the Ebola virus in Brazil is Souleymane Bah’s responsibility. There is a causal relationship: an individual threatens the collective, that is, “he” puts “us” at risk. Thus, the stereotype is built, and the meaning is formed. The newspaper devoted three pages in the section “Everyday Life” to the discussion of this case. It presented illustrations and infographics explaining, step by step, the measures taken by the Brazilian government to attend to the patient possibly contaminated with Ebola – providing information about the day, time and place in which medical tests would occur – but there is also a table showing how the transmission and the progression of the ailment happens. The most shocking thing is that the patient’s identity is revealed in two photographs. In one, the patient is portrayed on a stretcher, being assisted by health professionals, while not being hidden within a protective suit, having, thus, a part of his face exposed. The other image is the cover photo, similar to a passport photograph. Being Ebola such a severe illness that inevitably translates into feelings of panic and risk, the use of the patient’s image – whose diagnose had not yet been confirmed – helped to trigger the resurgence of prejudice against Africans. The disclosure of the patient’s image linked to texts that reinforce the level of mortality from Ebola and contamination risks in the country contributed to making Souleymane Bah the embodiment of the threat to health that the epidemic of Ebola represents. Hence, for not having taken into account the medical confidentiality as well as the patient’s right of not having his identity revealed, the newspaper contributed to the association between African continent, ethnicity and the spread of the disease. Thus, it disregarded the relevance of structural causes for biological events and marginalized entire populations ⁴ (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 11th, pp. C1, C2 and C4).

As a strategy to set the boundaries between “us” and “them”, the issue of October 11th reported the tensions between the information given by Artur Chioro, Minister of Health, who had not discarded the potential contamination by Ebola, and that provided

⁴ On April 17, 2014, a report linked by the Agency Brazil, the Brazil Communications Company S/A, reported that federal prosecutors in the Federal District (MPF/DF) had recommended to the Federal Police and the Ministry of Health the maintenance of secrecy regarding the personal data of possible suspects of infection by the Ebola virus in Brazil. The press, however, had already released the patient’s name and classified him as suspected of infection on 11th. The disclosure of the Guinean patient’s identity provoked racist and xenophobic demonstrations against him, especially on social networks. More information can be found on the following website: <http://www.ebc.com.br/noticias/brasil/2014/10/ministerio-publico-federal-recomenda-sigilo-de-dados-de-suspeitos-de-ebola>. Accessed 03/30/2015.

by the responsible for the technical area of the Ministry, who considered that infection “unlikely” to have happened. In this scenario of uncertainty, the newspaper reinforced the stereotype: “it’s still unclear the route taken by the patient, **which identifies himself as a political refugee**, to reach the interior of Paraná” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, November 10th, p. C1 [emphasis added by the authors]). Without presenting any statement from the patient or any evidence to refute such claim, the paper demonstrates distrust regarding the fact that he is a political refugee, implicitly accusing him of being an illegal immigrant: “Bah landed in Guarulhos (SP) on September 19th, coming from Guinea (**one of the most affected countries**) in a flight that made a stopover in Morocco, according to official records collected by the government” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, November 10th, p. C1 [emphasis added by the authors]).

In this way, the newspaper combines the Ebola outbreak with immigration, crime and race, reinforcing a xenophobic attitude. The newspaper even recreates Souleymane Bah’s trajectory, by making an infographic that mentions the 64 people who had contact with the patient and that should be quarantined. His decision to come to Brazil, leaving Guinea and passing through Morocco, could trigger out an Ebola outbreak in the country. One of the sentences we exposed above (“it’s still unclear the route taken by the patient, **which identifies himself as a political refugee**, to reach the interior of Paraná”) also shows an explicit distrust concerning Bah’s country of origin. Although he has stated and shown a document proving he had been accepted as a political refugee in Brazil, the newspaper puts that information under suspicion and does not confirm it (“which identifies himself as”). Thus, there is a veiled accusation of a possible failure on the part of the authorities to secure proper control of the borders, concerning people coming from Africa.

This textual construction reinforces the stereotype that Ebola infects all Africa. As a mean of social control, stereotypes demarcate and maintain the symbolic boundaries between normal and abnormal, integrated and deviant, the healthy and the pathological, the citizen and the stranger, us and them. They give strength to self-esteem and facilitate the union of those of us “that are normal” in an “imaginary community”, while excluding, expelling, revoking to a symbolic exile everything that does not fit in, everything that is different” (Freire, 2004, p.48). In addition, this construction imputes to the individual the negative and avoidable consequences of his/her own decisions. These appear to be preventable throughout the definition of the probability of accidents and diseases, inversely to what happens in the case of natural disasters. That is, the novelty in the global risk society is the fact that “we”, through “our” decisions, can cause global consequences that bring problems and dangers (Beck, 2010).

Despite claims from health authorities that there was improvement in the patient’s condition and that it was unlikely he was contaminated by Ebola, the newspaper strengthened the panic by demonstrating the preparation of an enormous medical apparatus (ambulance aircraft of the Brazilian Air Force, special clothing, doctors, nurses) in order to transfer him from an emergency unit in Cascavel, Paraná to the National Institute of Infectious Diseases Evandro Chagas, in Rio de Janeiro, where he would receive proper treatment. The president of the Brazilian Society of Infectious Diseases, Érico Antonio

Gomes de Arruda, considered that it was the right time to “evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 11th, p.C4). In this way, we observed that a medical authority expressed the need to strengthen the security protocols. Thus, the newspaper legitimized its own diagnosis about the proliferation of Ebola across the World. While health officials interviewed by *Folha de S. Paulo* said that the risk of Ebola spreading in Brazil was very low, the newspaper incited panic, confirming a suspicion: “the identification of the first suspected case of Ebola in Brazil” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 11th, p. C4). The ambiguity of the text is, at the same time, structural and punctual. It is structural due to the contradiction between the coverage tone and the expert’s statement. It is punctual because it does not clarify if the contamination was or not indigenous. Even if it wasn’t, the manner in which the news report “the first suspected case of Ebola in Brazil” provokes panic or, at least, helps to increase the sense of insecurity in face of a possible imminence of the illness.

Another mark of the ethnic difference appears in a statement assigned to Souleymane Bah, who had been accommodated at the Hostel André Luís, a charity institution from Cascavel, from September 21st to October 8th. When a local psychologist, Fabiane Ferreira, asked him about his colorful attire, he would have replied thusly: “They are from Africa”. The paper presents Bah as follows:

On Tuesday (7), the smiling Souleymane Bah, 47, seemed especially happy with the vibrant clothes he wore. “They are from Africa”, he said. Two days later, he was considered the first suspected case of Ebola in Brazil (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 11th, p. C2).

The article classifies the immigrant as “smiling” and “particularly happy” but, given the suspicion of him being the first case of Ebola in the country, the piece takes care to demonstrate that there has been a change in the manner with which the city’s inhabitants relate with foreigners: “I was here for about 20 days with him. What if I fall sick too?”, said the **Brazilian** Wallison Novaes Ramos, 18 (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 11th, p. C2 [emphasis added by the authors]). The president of the institution, Tereza Cristina Nepel, says that the hostel hosts many Africans and Haitians, but people were now fearful of getting sick because of the contact with Bah and other African people.

The immigrant’s happiness for being in Brazil had been converted, by Brazilians from Cascavel, in fear, due to the suspicion of contamination. Again, there is the construction of a causal relation in which the immigrant is blamed for the climate of risk and insecurity. Therefore, it is important to note that there is an opposition between “us” (Brazilians) and “those” Africans in the news article. By pointing out the interviewee’s nationality, the text ends up virtually establishing a threat, locating the Guinean as the possible cause of future sufferings. *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 11th, p. C2)

There were, in fact, xenophobic manifestations promoted by newspaper’s readers, who felt outraged, for instance, by the fact that the Brazilian government offered help to African countries: “It is absurd that the Brazilian government is sending tons of food, medicine and money to countries with an Ebola outbreak ”, said one of the readers. The

justification presented by this person, who identified himself as Hector Vianna Filho, was that the Brazilian authorities should focus their efforts on the country itself, which had “millions [of people] that still lack food and medical assistance” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 12th, p. A3). Thus, implicitly, the author of the article presents the idea that even if numerous Africans die because of the Ebola outbreak, it would still be more important for the federal government to devote more attention and resources to Brazilians. This perception holds a wide transformation of the power state holds in modern society.

In the process of globalization of the risk that takes place in contemporary Western societies, the nexus between security and health can be foreseen as a set of understandings and practices that impact on political process as well as on the political area in general. In particular, health securitization leads to the consideration of the issues as existential threats requiring exceptional measures, or as demanding technical and bureaucratic procedures, such as isolation of suspected patients. This process turns out to be important concerning the role of the state and the nature of foreign and security policies. It leads to the connection between the state and a range of public health activities, including infectious diseases control, the management of biological threats and the containment of ailments such as obesity, smoking and alcoholism (Elbe, 2010, p. 175). When assuming an epidemiological dimension, political power becomes even more governmentalized to the extent to which there is an enhancement of the tendency to manage the behavior of individuals and populations, maximizing their health and economic usefulness. This trend results in new medical interventions: surveillance policies for healthy and unhealthy populations; screening of individuals done accordingly to risk factors; containment and obliteration of risk individuals, establishment of normality and deviation standards, and the consequent stigmatizing effects. In short, within the Western states, the link between security and health is changing the ideas about sovereignty as well as transforming foreign relations and security policies in “a technology for enhancing the physical control of populations” (Elbe, 2010, p. 185).

Regarding the goals of Power, the governmentalization of the state signals a shift from exclusive concern with the protection and survival of sovereignty to the optimization of resources and capacities of individuals and populations (Foucault, 1979). Thus, government officials have come to understand that the task of governing politically involves the ensuring of the safety of individuals and populations in order to “increase their good order, security, peace, prosperity, health and happiness” (Rose 1999, p. 6). Thus, it is possible to think that the State would provide protection and safeguarding for its citizens, but not for foreigners.

Also on October 12th, *Folha de São Paulo* reported that the results of the first test made on the patient suspected of being infected by Ebola were negative. However, the newspaper itself reinforced the fact that “the man from Guinea was isolated in Rio”. The Minister of Health stressed, during an interview, that neither the patient nor the people who had had contact with him presented symptoms of Ebola, and criticized the racist manifestations occurring on social networks about the episode. Nevertheless, the newspaper informs at the end of the text that the number of people under observation had been augmented (from 64 to 163) and that the inhabitants of Cascavel “were avoiding

the place that had first given medical assistance to the African”, referring to the emergency medical entity (UPA), in Cascavel.

Not even the information about the first negative result provided by clinical examination tranquilized the population (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, December 10th, p. A7). This demonstrates that the fact that the government had reinforced medical surveillance was not enough to ensure that Brazilian citizens believed they were, in fact, safe. On the other hand, the newspaper qualifies the security procedures performed by the Brazilian government, which consisted in certifying that the infection was definitely discarded, as positive (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 12th, p. A7).

On October 13th, the newspaper reported that the patient would be removed from isolation if the results of a second test came back negative. The article published on this date highlighted the patient's name and reminded the reader that Bah had landed in Brazil on September 19th, from Guinea. It also mentioned the fact that said country was one of the West African countries most affected by Ebola. Also on that date, the newspaper displayed a letter from a reader who was condemning the statement provided by Hector Vianna Filho, published on October 12th (see page 20). In that letter, the writer considers as “absurd” the position adopted by Mr. Vianna Filho: “I think that saying we should not send humanitarian aid to those in need is pure selfishness. Brazilians, Africans, Europeans, Asians – they are all human beings, like me and my brothers” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 13th, p.A3).

On October 14th, finally, *Folha de São Paulo* reported that further examinations performed on Souleymane Bah discarded the contamination by the Ebola virus. Then, the patient went through more medical assessment, being tested for malaria, dengue and HIV. These tests also provided negative results (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 2014, October 11th). Despite said results, the newspaper had already made sure that Bah was portrayed as “the first suspected case of Ebola in Brazil”. Even after the infection was discarded, the Guinean was the symbol of a potentially sick person, because of the suspicions that were addressed to him. That is why those who were in contact with him or in places where he had been and, even, lots of Brazilians that had accompanied the coverage, have also lived a state of almost illness, even though not necessarily in psychical terms (that is, not implying the need of medical assistance) (Vaz et al., 2007). Certainly, this general state of near-disease does not manifest itself only in situations of sanitary panic constructed by news coverage. Even the journalistic discourse is composed by the discursive formations based on the medicalization of care and safety, which are produced within the risk society, where “we” must change our lifestyle to avoid future diseases. In addition, the State is increasingly defined as responsible for ensuring our systematic protection against the risks, establishing a medical control against health threats.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout this article, we have noticed that the construction of the stereotype of the Guinean immigrant in *Folha de S. Paulo* obeyed the logic of risk, reinforcing the

generalized consideration, on one side, of Africa as a place of health risks due to the Ebola outbreak and, on the other side, of Africans as disease disseminators. Thus, Ebola turned out to be an African problem that only concerned the national community if threatening the health security of other populations. *Folha de São Paulo* reinforces the connection between African culture and Ebola. This association is more than rhetorical, and transforms the disease into an ethnic matter, as far as it constructs Africanity as a risk factor to health. In our analysis, it was possible to see that the published contents had incited panic several times, connecting Soulyname Bah's African origin with the suspicion of Ebola contamination. Even when it was proved that he had not been contaminated the virus, the newspaper continued to characterize him as "the first suspected case of Ebola in Brazil". Thus, the Guinean immigrant was represented as the incarnation of the risk to security, materializing all the suffering that until then was distant from the country's daily life. The construction of the approximation of evil also occurred, as demonstrated, when the issue left the international sections of the gazette and started to be featured in the sections directed to national issues.

The analysis of the newspaper's contents allowed us to observe the construction of the opposition between "us" (Brazilians) and "them" (Africans), emphasizing, sometimes implicitly, and other times explicitly, that the safety and the prevention within the context of globalization involves the constant surveillance of the border as a practice of protection in face of potential threats to the order. In that sense, the newspaper has worked with many stereotypes, whether taken as positive (happiness, joy, colorful clothes) or constituted as negative (from Africa, political refugee, sick, suspect). Suspicion was the central axis of the coverage. In that sense, we need to point out an important fact: when the result of the second examination came out as negative, the issue did not receive space on the first page of the newspaper. *Folha de São Paulo* considered, thus, that the subject no longer deserved to be highlighted on its cover and stopped giving notoriety to the problem. That is, the coverage of this matter just received relevance within this gazette while the suspicion had not been confirmed. That shows how much the journalistic pieces regarding this episode were produced on the basis of the logic of fear and of the promotion of social of panic.

In this way, the coverage performed by *Folha de São Paulo* revealed the ambiguous nature of Ebola, which is not only a biomedical reality, but also a social one. When investigating how *Folha de S. Paulo* framed this outbreak, we found out that the newspaper, although reporting the actions of the government and of the sanitary authorities, had as focus on the question of security in face of human mobility. After all, as we have seen, globalization has led to the concept of health as a matter of risk and national security. Media often uses a militaristic language to describe outbreaks of diseases, now seen as threats to security. In Brazil, as *Folha de S. Paulo* reported, the main focus of attention and the main threat was the presence of Africans in the country, especially those recently coming from Africa. *Folha de São Paulo* accredited the protocols used by the Brazilian government, but also reported that the suspect was probably sick and the fact that he had had contact with other Brazilians was a motive for concern.

Moreover, we highlight that *Folha de S. Paulo's* coverage about the suspicion of contamination of Soulyname Bah took place in a context of fierce presidential campaign in Brazil, which had involved a polarization between two presidential candidates: Aécio Neves (from the Brazilian Social Democratic Party) and Dilma Rousseff (candidate for re-election from the Brazilian Labor Party). Amongst scandals involving corruption at Petrobras, the same newspaper recognized the Brazilian government's ability to use security protocols (quarantine, air transfers, ambulances, special clothes, tests) that could prevent from possible contaminations, if suspicion was confirmed. The government was, therefore, evaluated positively by the newspaper, due to its ability to foresee risks, anticipate them and manage situations of crisis. The reestablishment of social order would be a competence of the State. The paper recognized the effectiveness of the health security devices used by the Brazilian government, but tacitly demonized the presence of Africans in Brazil. After all, and in general, the coverage during 2014 had constructed Ebola as a disease that was distant from the Brazilians; and in the moment when there was a unique chance of the virus entering the country, an entire state apparatus was mobilized to take care of the (probable) patient's health. That showed how much the Brazilian government was attentive to every detail and need for care in order to keep their citizens protected from the risk of becoming ill.

The type of coverage made by *Folha de S. Paulo* has produced an unbridgeable distance between "us" and "them". There is not any compassion for Soulyname Bah, but only the need to assess whether he was or not a threat to national security. Thus, protection has become a way of avoiding the empathy towards the Other. It is an excuse to deny help to the Other. Particularly in the case we have analyzed, Bah's treatment was necessary in order to ensure the protection of Brazilians from Ebola. Although health officials denied the pandemic possibility and even an Ebola outbreak in Brazil, the studied paper stressed the need of a state of vigilance. There was no space to promote compassion for the immigrant, but there was too much to promote fear as well as reinforce the need for security devices. //

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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