

Political values of the journalists of the National Congress

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Abstract

The media has become so important to politics and parliament that the Brazilian Legislative Branch has created its own communication system and has recruited over 300 professionals in recent years, who serve as public servants, but with the task of do political journalism from the perspective of the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Senate. So what is the political value of these journalists? Do these values interfere with your activity? It is based on these issues that the article aims to analyze these values from the perception of the journalists themselves. For that, a survey was carried out with 52% of professionals from the Chamber and the Senate in 2017, in order to draw a profile of these journalists based on their political and professional values. The main conclusions indicate convergences in the political values of the two professional segments, but asymmetries in the evaluation of professional values. The political context and the media management model are the main factors that explain this asymmetry.

Keywords: Journalism and politics. Parliament. Political values. Professional values. National Congress.

Introduction

The proximity between the media and politics, especially in the case of parliament is not new, but there is a new phenomenon in this imbricated relationship that is the hiring of journalists to act as professionals in the service of the Brazilian National Congress. This happened after the Brazilian Legislative Branch created its own communication system, in the late 1990s, with several vehicles, such as radio, TV and digital media. Currently 318 journalists¹ are recruited through a public tender.

Unlike conventional media journalists, who are agents outside parliament, with controlled access and limited to institutions, “legislative journalists” (GONÇALVES, 2010) are part of the institution, they are insider agents. In addition, they are assigned to do a “differentiated journalism” whose content is questioned by their former colleagues in the professional world outsider. If outside journalists are hunting for situations, cases and events

1 Data from the end of June 2017.

that fit into the logic of scandals and deviations from ethics and parliamentary decorum, as entrepreneurs of “policy moralization”, the insider professionals are there with the mission of acting as entrepreneurs the good reputation of legislative houses.

This mission involves specific political and professional values, which still require examination. This is, therefore, the main justification for this study, with the purpose of seeking explanatory elements to illuminate this object of study still obscure and ignored by researchers in the field of Communication and Politics and media and parliament. Values are essential in democracy and journalism, as both are part of systems anchored in action models that guide political and professional conduct. Values are understood as guides for individual and collective behaviors (CANTRIL; ALLPORT, 1993). This means that there is a social dimension to be considered, that is, values are socially produced and reproduced according to context, time and culture. Political values are the basis of democratic systems, such as popular sovereignty, independence of political powers, pluralism, freedom, equality, respect, tolerance, reciprocity, civilized coexistence, among others (SALAZAR; WOLDENBERG, 1997).

To carry out the research, the methodological strategy was to resort directly to these professionals, through an electronic questionnaire applied in May 2017. The dissemination of the questionnaire counted on the collaboration of servers of the Chamber and the Senate, contacted by e-mail, social networks and telephone. The questions deal with the evaluation of the current stage of democracy, perceptions about political corruption, the role of political parties, egalitarian policies, social participation, compulsory voting and the ideological spectrum of the informants. Before the data collection, a pre-test was carried out with five servers from each institution, which did not participate in the final research.

Before analyzing the data we present a brief approach on how the media system of the Chamber and the Senate was created, as the category of “legislative journalist” emerged.

The emergence of the media system of the National Congress

According to Barros, Bernardes and Macedo (2015, p.211 – Our translation), “as in the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch began its communication project through the radio”, for the dissemination of information in Voice of Brazil. To this end, the Chamber and the Senate created nuclei of radiojournalism. With the National Constituent Assembly (1986-87), the communication activities of the Legislative Branch gained new impetus, resulting in the expansion of teams and routines of information production. However, it was in the late 1990s that the communication system of these institutions acquired the features of the current “legislative media”, with the creation of TV Senado, TV Câmara and other vehicles. Currently each of the houses counts radio broadcaster, TV channel, online news agency, press office and digital media teams².

² For a detailed history of the legislative media, see Barros et al (2007).

When analyzing the political aspects of the founding discourse of the legislative media Barros, Bernardes and Rodrigues (2014) identify three aspects: (1) justification based on the constitutional principle of publicity; (2) opposition to the negative agenda of the private media over the Legislative Branch; (3) institutional defense of legislative vehicles, especially editorial policy and dissemination strategies.

Transparency and publicity are the two key arguments that can be highlighted from the quotation above. Both are considered inherent to politics, as Thompson (1995) argues. The period of dictatorial rule (1964-1985) is pointed out by Diniz (2000) as a historical moment in which the Brazilian State developed a “culture of secrecy”, generating a deficit in terms of transparency and publicity of governmental and institutional acts. With the redemocratization and the entry into force of the 1988 Constitution, a process of opening of Brazilian public institutions, including the Legislative Branch, began.

As for the second aspect, the creation of information vehicles by the Legislative Power “is also based on the fact that it is the duty of the institution to complement the commercial press in publicizing parliamentary activities, in order to compensate for what has been characterized as private media deficiencies” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014, p.16 – Our translation). According to the authors, “the initiative was based on the negative diagnosis of the image of legislative institutions, the role of commercial media vehicles in this picture and the possibility of altering it” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014, p.16 – Our translation). Therefore, “the possible negative effect of media coverage on the image of Parliament is another important component of the founding discourse” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014, p.16 – Our translation).

In the evaluation of the institutional actors of the two legislative houses, “the practices and routines of commercial media contribute to an episodic and fragmented treatment of issues that could favor the exercise of citizenship and democracy” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014, p.16 – Our translation). Despite the authors’ diagnosis, “this aspect of the founding discourse of the legislative media is centered on a negative evaluation of private media and on an underlying criticism of the model of conventional journalism” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014, p.16 – Our translation), it is observed that the bureaucratic apparatus of communication of the Legislative Power has as reference the private standards, even by the origin of the professionals who work in the system.

As for the third component of the founding discourse of the legislative media, the authors point out that there is an internal assessment that it is the duty of the Legislative Power to “increase the options of information concerning Parliament for the citizen” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014, p.21 – Our translation). One of the foundations of this discourse is the defense of the public interest, understood by institutional actors as a compass to guide public communication practices and institutional disclosure, in order to foster transparency in the activities of the two legislative houses. The information system of the Chamber and the Senate are understood internally as public systems because they act in harmony with the transparency and the democratic character that governs them. In short,

they would be public because they assume “the responsibility of issuing, transmitting and receiving messages from Brazilian society, always with the sense of social responsibility” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014, p.20 – Our translation).

In general terms, “the founding discourse is centered on the diffusion of journalistic information, that is, the model that prevails in the private sector” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014, p.22 – Our translation). These media, therefore, “act mainly as bureaucratic centers distributing content, whose differential is the news framework and the selection of information under a prism favorable to the Legislative Branch” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014, p.22 – Our translation). With this, the “aim is to change the institutional reputation, increase the visibility of positive approaches and give publicity to aspects neglected by commercial media” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014, p.22 – Our translation).

Thus, in the authors’ evaluation, the communication system of the National Congress is “as a counterpoint to private media coverage, as if the provision of information with institutional angulation was enough to produce decisive effects on public opinion, to legitimize the performance of this system before society and to change the scenario political” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014, p.22 – Our translation). Currently, “this system also complies with the transparency guidelines of the Chamber and the Senate, especially after the entry into force of the Access to Information Act, at the end of the first half of 2012” (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, p.22 – Our translation).

The mediatization of parliament and the emergence of the “legislative journalist”

The intensification of the process of mediatization of politics (ESSER, 2013) led to the mediatization of the Brazilian parliament (FREITAS, 2008), with the institutionalization of its own media system, which received the name of media sources (SANT’ANNA, 2006, 2009) or legislative media (BARROS; BERNARDES; RODRIGUES, 2014). What characterizes this new information system is the fact that it is maintained by institutions previously considered only as sources of information for journalists in the private sector.

There are studies that question this new mode of political communication, its nature and its functions (QUEIROZ, 2009; BERNARDES, 2011; BARROS; BERNARDES, 2015). However, there is still no consensus on the nature and specificities of these media, which are also called *hybrid communication systems*, since they use various strategies of institutional disclosure, with some techniques of journalism, political communication and institutional disclosure.

Bernardes’s (2011) research with the Chamber’s professionals reveals that the group unanimously prefers that its activities receive the name of journalism, on the grounds that they are all professional journalists, recruited through a contest that required the diploma of journalism. In addition, all institutional denominations of functions and activities are given

the nomenclature of the area. In the case of the Senate, the discussion resulted in the label of “legislative journalism”, as an attempt to specify or qualify a new modality or professional branch (FREITAS, 2008; GONÇALVES, 2010).

“Legislative journalism” is still different from institutional journalism because the latter would be a form of institutional communication, usually aimed at the internal public of an institution. According to this perspective, the “vehicles of legislative communication, where legislative journalism is practiced, are therefore mass media aimed at a heterogeneous and diffuse public, that is, society” (KUROVSKI, 2008, p.21 – Our translation). Freitas (2008, p.38) points out that with “legislative journalism,” the public “has access to issues and facts that, according to the marketing criteria of newsworthiness, would not be news in commercial vehicles and interested in other powers”. In short, the author argues that “legislative journalism” differs “not only as a source of information but, above all, by offering the citizen as broadly as possible what happens within Parliament without the media’s editorial cut traditional” (FREITAS, 2008, p.34 – Our translation).

As a result of the founding of the *legislative media*, a specific professional category arises in the area of journalism, that is, a type of public servant in the functional structure of the Legislative Branch, with the specific attribution of journalist, since the contests hitherto carried out require as a requirement compulsory for the exercise of the position. The first public tender was held to meet the two legislative houses in 1995. In 2003, another competition was held in the same way and later the institutions held competitions separately. Currently, the functional staff of journalists is 186 in the Senate and 132 in the Chamber of Deputies, totaling 318 professionals.

According to Gonçalves (2010, p.12-13 – Our translation), “legislative journalists” are actors with “double-membership or double-identity” relationships, because “they move in spaces of coexistence and interaction between the press, the political environment and the public administration”. They are, therefore, “essentially journalists-public servants”. As such, it is a category still little studied, but of relevance for the Brazilian context. This is, therefore, one of the main reasons for the study, whose data are presented in the sequence.

Data Analysis

The researched universe is identified in Table 1, with a higher concentration of professionals in the areas of print media, digital media, audiovisual and TV. Radio and press services are the areas with the least amount of journalists in both institutions.

Table 1 – Journalists - Chamber and Senate

Areas	Senate	Chamber	Total
Press medias	35	23	58
Digital medias	36	29	65

Areas	Senate	Chamber	Total
Audio-visual	14	12	26
TV	58	34	92
Radio	26	16	42
Press office services	6	9	15
Other	11	9	20
Total	186	132	318

Source: elaboration of the author.

The group of respondents from each institution corresponds to 52.7% of the total journalist in the Senate and 52.2% of the Chamber, as shown in Table 2. Both groups are statistically representative, accounting for more than half of the journalists of the two institutions.

Table 2 – Proportion of respondents

Institution	Journalists	Respondents	%
Senate	186	98	52,7
Chamber	132	72	52,2
Total	318	170	-

Source: elaboration of the author.

Some information on the respondents' profile (Table 3), such as the predominance of men in both institutions, a mature age group, whose main segment is in the age group 41 to 51 years, with up to 15 years of age service in the institution, acting mainly in digital media and TV, in the functions of reporter and editor. Professionals recruited from the private sector predominate.

Table 3 – Respondents profile (n = 170)

Sex	Senate (%)	Chamber (%)
Female	56,1	56,9
Male	43,9	43,1
Age range		
Under 30 years old	3,1	2,8
31 a 40	27,6	18,3
41 a 50	42,9	47,9
51 a 60	25,5	31,0
Up 60	1,0	0,0

Service time at the institution		
Under 5 years	9,3	8,3
6 a 10 years	30,9	27,8
11 a 15 years	41,2	47,2
16 a 20 years	15,5	15,3
Up 20 years	3,1	1,4
Occupation area		
Press medias	10,2	6,9
Digital medias	26,5	31,9
TV	27,6	34,7
Radio	21,4	18,1
Press office services	12,2	4,2
Other	2,1	4,2
Current function		
Journalist	32,7	38,9
Editor	31,6	30,6
Press schedule	8,2	5,6
Head of section	13,3	13,9
Director	3,1	2,8
Other	11,2	8,3
Previous work sector		
Private sector	65,3	72,2
Public sector	28,6	15,3
Third sector	8,2	12,5

Source: elaboration of the author.

When asked about the situation of Brazilian democracy in the last decades, the opinion of the two groups presents more similarities than divergences. The main similarity is related to the higher percentages in the item “little advanced” (36.7% and 45.8%, respectively), followed by the “advanced a lot” alternative (23.5% and 26.1%), as shown by Table 4. The third convergence is in the “go back a lot” alternative (6.1% and 6.9%, respectively). The only divergence refers to the item “go back a little” (11.2% in the Senate and only 2.8% in the Chamber).

Table 4 – In relation to Brazilian democracy in the last decades, do you think³:

Answers	Senate (%)	Chamber (%)
Advanced a lot	23,5	36,1
Little advance	36,7	45,8
Stagnated	22,4	8,3
Go back a little	11,2	2,8
Go back a lot	6,1	6,9
Total	100,0	100,0

Source: elaboration of the author.

The similarity is repeated in the issue that evaluates control and the fight against political corruption, as shown in Table 5. It is important to emphasize that both perceptions about the current state of democracy and about corruption are pertinent to the analytical scope of the informants' political values, given that both issues are related to beliefs and values about the political regime and a subject that is currently considered fundamental to the quality of democracy: the fight against corruption. Thus, the opinions of both groups reveal high expectations of respondents regarding the progress of democracy and the desire to fight corruption in the country.

Table 5 – In relation to the control and combat of political corruption in Brazil in the last decades, do you think that:

Answers	Senado (%)	Câmara (%)
Advanced a lot	27,6	36,1
Little advance	37,8	45,8
Stagnated	26,5	8,3
Go back a little	7,1	2,8
Go back a lot	1,0	6,9
Total	100,0	100,0

Source: elaboration of the author.

Another relevant question from the point of view of political values is the evaluation of the informants about the vote of the Brazilian citizens as a whole. This is because in countries with democratic elections the vote is egalitarian, with no differentiated weights as in the time of census voting. It is a formal principle of political equality, eliminating, in theory, the interference of economic and social hierarchies. This hierarchical and valued view of the vote, however, still appears in the perception of the two consulted groups, as shown

³ The questionnaire was based on Moisés (2008); Almeida and Kerbaux (2014); Perissinotto and Braunert (2006); and Lima and Cheibub (1996), with adaptations.

in Table 6. In both groups, the elitist view predominates that the majority of Brazilian voters “vote once in a conscious way” or even the opinion that people “do not know how to vote”.

In this type of evaluation there is a tendency to value their own political capacity and ability to vote, while the capacity of others is questioned or even disqualified. Literature calls this phenomenon a *third person effect*. According to this perspective, we tend to think that we are responsible and conscious voters, but “others” do not take their vote seriously, because they are politically ignorant or inattentive (DAVISON, 1983).

Table 6 – In your opinion, the majority of Brazilians:

Answers	Senate (%)	Chamber (%)
Always vote consciously	3,1	4,2
Vote once in a conscious way	55,7	48,6
Do not know how to vote	41,2	47,6
Total	100,0	100,0

Source: elaboration of the author.

Table 7 presents a very favorable scenario of opinion to the role of political parties in Brazilian democracy, which is certainly explained by the fact that the informants are servers of the National Congress, disregarding the general opinion of the population. Working in an institution where the parties perform functions of extreme relevance certainly makes this segment different from the Brazilian population as a whole. The work routine itself contributes to the fact that the servants understand the functions of the parties. In addition, it is opportune to clarify that the question asked in the *websurvey* is limited to the necessity of the party associations in the representative democracy, without questioning about their performance or the confidence of the informants in the parties. Examining the social perception of party organizations is also a way of making inferences about political values, since it is a kind of measure of political reputation.

Table 7 – Regarding the role of political parties in democracy, what is your opinion?

Answers	Senate (%)	Chamber (%)
They are absolutely necessary	73,5	84,7
They are little needed	24,5	15,3
They are totally unnecessary	2,0	0,0
Total	100,0	100,0

Source: elaboration of the author.

Regarding the opinion of the two groups on egalitarian policies, as shown in Table 8, there is a consensus among the informants in favor of these policies, with approval of all

items listed in the questionnaire higher than 90%. The apparent dispersion of responses may indicate a problem in the design of the questionnaire and no disagreement among respondents about the set of rights listed in Table 7.

From the point of view of egalitarian policies, it should be pointed out that the consulted journalists see equality as one of the fundamental values of democracy. The relationship between democracy equality is pointed out in the literature as one of the central aspects of current sociopolitical analysis, a kind of “new consensus of Brazilian society” (BALBACHEVSKY; HOLZHACKER, 2011 – Our translation). The perspective of egalitarian democracy emphasizes that “political rights and formal civil liberties are insufficient for political equality” (COPPEDGE; GERRING; LINDBERG, 2012, p.100 – Our translation). Thus, political systems anchored in electoral democracy are considered necessary, but insufficient to reduce inequalities.

Table 8 – Which of the egalitarian rights policies do you agree with?

Answers	Senate (%)	Chamber (%)
Equal rights between men and women	9,2	12,5
Equal rights among whites, blacks and indigenous people	7,1	12,5
Equal rights between heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual and transgender	5,1	11,1
Equality of rights between persons of different religions	8,2	12,5
Equal rights between domestic workers and other sectors	6,1	8,1
I agree with all	93,9	97,2
I do not agree with any	0,0	0,00

Source: elaboration of the author.

The same trend of opinion predominates when asked about the rights of families, one of the guidelines that has caused wide repercussions in public opinion, due to the proposal of the Family Statute⁴, whose purpose is to define the concept of family. As can be seen in Table 9, there is widespread adherence of the two groups of informants to the view that all types of family should be treated equally by the state. The conception of equality as a fundamental democratic value is thus confirmed. Idea compatible with the sociological analysis on the subject. As all historical and cultural construction is dynamic, the family is also affected by such dynamism, which implies updates in its formal and juridical understanding. As Manuel (1995, p.97 – Our translation) explains: “the family as a cradle, paradigm, hermeneutical key and horizon of meaning of a democracy always perfecting and developing, which task never consummated”.

⁴ It is the Law Project 6583/2013, authored by Representative Anderson Ferreira (PR / PE), which defines the concept of family as “the family entity formed from the union between a man and a woman through marriage or of a stable union, and the community formed by any of the parents and their children”.

Table 9 – Regarding the rights of families, what is your opinion?

Answers	Senate (%)	Chamber (%)
All types of family must be treated equally before the law	88,4	91,2
The family that deserves state protection is only the one formed by a man and a woman	4,2	4,4
I have no opinion formed		
Total	100,0	100,0

Source: elaboration of the author.

As shown in Tables 10 and 11, the two groups of informants are in favor of all forms of citizen participation included in the questionnaire, whether institutional or non-institutional⁵. Comparing the two tables one can see that the respondents consider political participation as a democratic value, without presenting visions that are expressively different about the type and form of participation.

Table 10 – About the forms of political and social participation in the institutional sphere, with which do you agree?

Answers	Senate (%)	Chamber (%)
Plebiscites	1,0	13,9
Referendums	1,0	11,1
Sectoral management councils (education, health, youth etc.)	1,0	13,9
Sectoral national conferences (education, health, youth etc.)	1,0	11,1
Participatory budgeting		
Online public consultations	2,0	9,7
Public hearings online	2,0	8,3
Online petitions	1,0	5,6
I support all	88,7	87,5
I do not support any	0,0	0,0
I'm indifferent	0,0	0,0

Source: elaboration of the author.

⁵ We use Borba's (2012) typology, according to which institutional participation is directly related to the state sphere, while non-institutional participation would be in the extra-state sphere.

Table 11 – In relation to non-institutional political participation, what forms do you support?

Answers	Senate (%)	Chamber (%)
Strikes	2,0	5,6
Boycotts	1,0	5,6
Protests	4,1	8,3
Subscriptions	11,2	6,9
Walks	9,2	7,9
Contact Us	9,2	6,9
Digital Activism	10,2	8,3
I support all	81,6	90,3
I do not support any	2,0	2,0

Source: elaboration of the author.

Table 12 shows the rejection of the obligation of voting by the two groups consulted, although there is an expressive percentage that is favorable. The literature records that this question remains relevant in the debate about the degree of maturity of Brazilian democracy (ELKINS, 2000, p.128). The institution of compulsory voting in 1932 was justified as a stimulus to the strengthening of the democratic system, by claiming that “compulsory voting increases the representation of several important demographic characteristics”, ensuring a more democratic representation. Thus, mandatory voting could “encourage marginalized individuals to come up with ideas, define responsive politicians, and seek to make a difference in how government works”. It was argued at the time that in the national situation “where there are unusually high levels of inequality and where the transition to democracy is not complete, such a catalyst is highly desirable” (ELKINS, 2000, p.130 – Our translation).

On the other hand, there is also criticism of the obligation to vote. The most frequent justification is abolition of this procedure by more advanced democracies. Other critics question how it is possible for a political right to be considered mandatory. Soares (2004, p.109 – Our translation) explains that the vote “means the full application of the right or freedom of expression”, thus characterizing “more as a subjective right of the citizen than a civic duty”. Thus, “in order to be full, this right must include both the possibility of voting as the conscience determines, and the freedom to abstain from voting without suffering any sanction from the State”.

Table 12 – Do you agree with mandatory voting?

Answers	Senate (%)	Chamber (%)
Yes	35,4	22,5
No	64,6	77,5
Total	100,0	100,0

Source: elaboration of the author.

As for the ideological profile, Table 13 shows that opinions of those who declare center-left and left-wing in both groups prevail. Although the debate about the ideological spectrum is both plastic and non-consensual in the literature, especially as regards the dichotomy between left and right and their respective derivations and gradations, this classification remains applied (TAROUCO; MADEIRA, 2013; SCHEEFFER, 2014).

It should be pointed out, however, that the questionnaire required journalists to call themselves self, that is, it is a self-perception. Studies on the subject reveal that the center is seen as an intermediate spectrum. Left and right are relational spectra, that is, one defines in relation or opposition to the other. Thus, the right is seen as an ideological axis driven by «forces favorable to the maintenance of social and political order. The right is basically concerned with preserving and not changing the system that is given» (SCHEEFFER, 2014, p.4 – Our translation). The left “represents the set of forces that struggle, essentially, for transformations that result in the establishment of an order different from the capitalist, or transformations that result in a substantial reformulation of the same” (SCHEEFFER, 2014, p.4 – Our translation).

Table 13 – In political terms you consider yourself:

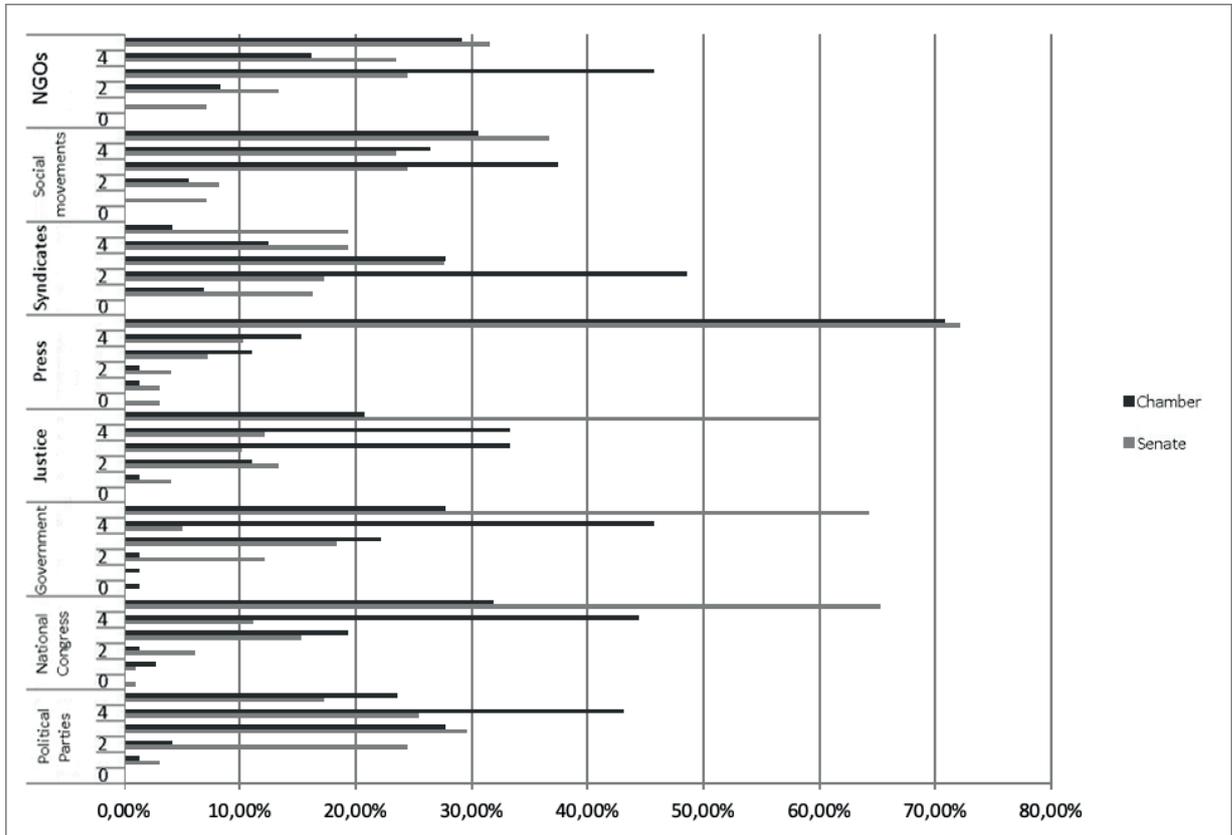
Answers	Senate (%)	Chamber (%)
Extreme right	0,0	0,0
Right	6,1	0,0
Centee-right	6,1	1,4
Center	12,2	4,2
Center-left	34,8	23,6
Left	23,5	31,9
Extreme-left	5,1	1,4
I do not fit into any	7,1	15,3
I consider myself apolitical	5,1	22,2
Total	100,0	100,0

Source: elaboration of the author.

As shown in Chart 1, the informants tend to consider the contributions of the institutions of the Republic as positive, especially the National Congress, the Executive Branch and the Judiciary, with the exception that the perception of journalists in the Senate is more positive perception of professionals in the Chamber. It is worth noting the prestige attributed to the National Congress, an indicator of the influence of the insitutional culture on the political perception of the informants. Outside the scope of the Three Powers, the press is the institution that stands out for its contribution to democracy, beyond, including the Powers of the Republic, with a very similar perception index in the two consulted segments. This

bias is also explained by the professional culture of journalists, since professional culture is one of the defining elements of personal identity (TRAVANCAS, 1993).

Graph 1 – What are the contributions of the following institutions to Brazilian democracy, on a scale of zero to five?



Source: elaboration of the author.

Asked about which segments the Government and the National Congress should consider when proposing new laws or changing existing legislation, the perception of the majority of the population prevails in both groups, although the other segments listed in the questionnaire are also considered relevant (Table 14). But it calls attention to the presupposition of participation of the society in the legislative process, reiterating once again the participation as a democratic value. This certainly means a rejection of the current model of lawmaking, in which the executive branch and Congress formulate new laws and amend existing ones, including the Constitution, without consulting the people.

Table 14 – In your opinion, in making new laws or changing existing laws, the Government and the National Congress should consider:

Answers	Senate (%)	Chamber (%)
Expert opinion on the subject of the law	65,3	47,2
The opinion of the parties	50,0	9,7
The opinion of unions, associations and entities representing those who will be directly affected by the laws	71,0	69,4
The opinion of the majority of the population	84,7	66,7

Source: elaboration of the author.

Conclusions

The objective of the study was to map the political values of journalists who work in the institutional media of the two houses of the National Congress. The data show that this professional segment of the field of political journalism in the public sphere presents strong convergences in terms of political values. Such convergence can be understood as the result of a common political and professional socialization, since the analysis of the informants profile shows a predominance of professionals in the age group from 31 to 50 years.

The data show a high rate of adherence of respondents to democrat and a positive perception of the advances in the fight against corruption. Contrary to the opinion of the majority of the Brazilian population, journalists from both institutions consider that political parties are indispensable in democratic regimes. Such a view is certainly justified because these professionals deal directly with the performance of the parties within the scope of the two institutions. After all, party associations exercise a lot of power in the parliamentary sphere, as the political science literature records, as Scheeffler (2015) and Tarouco and Madeira (2013).

In addition, the informants show a high adherence to the value of equality as a pillar of democracy, including the defense of equal rights policies and the rights of new family configurations. When asked about the rights of families today, 88.4% of Senate journalists and 91.2% of the House said that all types of families should be treated equally under the law. This is an emblematic issue in the current debate on equal rights in Brazil, with extensive debate in the National Congress, as discussed earlier.

The position favoring political participation is another common aspect, whether in institutional terms or not. For informants, political participation today is a democratic form of citizen action, whether through institutional channels, such as voting and expression through the channels offered by the institutions themselves, whether in the form of protests, boycotts or demonstrations.

The political values of informants are justified by the political position they assume. In political terms, the informants self-declare mainly of center-left, left and center, with a progressive profile in terms of political values. It should be noted that there were no records of far right respondents, and only 6.1% of the right in the Senate.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the research here presents as a differential a comparative analysis of the professional segments of the two houses of the National Congress. This is relevant in a research scenario whose existing studies refer to an institution only, without the possibility of more systematic comparisons. Although they integrate a whole, represented by the National Congress, the two institutions have singularities that must be considered, both in the comparative aspect and in their particularities.

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