

PALMENSE'S POLITICAL-MEDIA DISCURSE: An analysis of statements in the newspaper Opção Tocantins about the beginning of Eduardo Siqueira Campos' administration


DISCURSO POLÍTICO-MIDIÁTICO PALMENSE: uma análise de dizeres do Jornal Opção Tocantins sobre o início da gestão de Eduardo Siqueira Campos

DISCURSO POLÍTICO-MEDIAL EN PALMENES: un análisis de declaraciones del Jornal Opção Tocantins sobre el inicio del gobierno de Eduardo Siqueira Campos

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to investigate the knowledge-power relations that exist in the article "Between the streets and the offices: the contrast between Eduardo Siqueira Campos and Cinthia Ribeiro" (Milhomem, 2025), published on the *Jornal Opção* virtual portal. In order to achieve the proposal outlined for this study, the instrumental framework of Archaeogenalogical Discourse Analysis was used, through the use of its operational concepts, discourse unit, objectification and governmentality, which are applied in the process of investigating the dynamics of knowledge-power present in the object of analysis of this study. As a result, it was possible to identify the populist and bureaucratic discourse units and, in addition, when objectification was realised, the participation of governmentality was found, not on the part of a government body, but by a communication agency.

KEYWORDS: Political discourse; Media discourse; Archaeogenealogy of discourse.

Initial considerations

The media acts, in all its guises, as an extension of politics in order to represent it to the population. Through its public and private practices, politics appeals to the consent of voters, even if this is not always clear. The media and politics, integral players in the contemporary social circuit, play integrative roles in relation to the activities carried out both in the countryside and in the city, although, in short, one is supposed to inform people and the other is supposed to manage and supervise the use of taxpayers' resources, both have repercussions in a feedback process.

From a more idealistic and unreflective key to understanding social phenomena, as Charaudeau (2017) precisely puts it, "It is political action that ideally determines social life by organising it with a view to achieving the common good. At the same time, it

allows a community to make collective decisions" (Charaudeau, 2017, p. 17). Now, if it were as the author expresses it, political action would precede collective action, politics would need to exist before society in order to configure it, but it is precisely the other way round. The media, on the other hand, mobilises its network of meaning production to allow the population to learn about politics. However, Charaudeau (2015) says of how the media works and how it affects society: "The problem of the world cut out by the media arises differently if we consider it at its origin, when searching for and selecting events, or at its end, once the selection has been completed" (Charaudeau, 2015, p. 142).

As one of the organisations responsible for communicating between politics and the population, the media, in its various guises, plays a significant role in shaping the citizenry's perception of political action. In an abstract way, Charaudeau (2015) says: "The structuring of the social space depends on the body that provides information, which is obliged to construct its purpose by managing the public visibility of the events it deals with (Charaudeau, 2015, p. 143). In qualified opposition to the media discrimination explained by Charaudeau (2015), there is often a play of political interests, even partisan, in the promotion of communication in the collective circuit carried out by numerous news outlets.

With this horizon outlined about the connection between the media and politics, this article aims to investigate the knowledge-power relations that exist in the article "Between the streets and the offices: the contrast between Eduardo Siqueira Campos and Cinthia Ribeiro" (Milhomem, 2025), published on the virtual portal *Jornal Opção Tocantins*, on 15 January 2025. In order to achieve the proposition outlined for this study, we used the well-established tool of archaeogenological discourse analysis. Thus, in order to make the argumentative-methodological structure developed here clearer to the reader, the following sections are presented in bold, accompanied by a summary of their respective contents.

Theoretical-methodological apparatus: analytical definitions, in which interpretative operators, discourse units, objectification and governmentality are inventoried. **Relations of knowledge-power: an analysis of political-media discourse**, in this stage, the previously detailed instruments are applied in the process of investigating the dynamics of knowledge-power present in the object of analysis of this study, also understood here as enunciation. Finally, in **Final considerations**, we find the essential notes and observations related to the path travelled in this research, with the aim of offering reflective comments on the results achieved.

Theoretical-methodological apparatus: analytical definitions

In this section, we will go through the web of meanings that the operational concepts selected for this investigation bring, so that an architectural set of notions, units of discourse, objectification and governmentality can be used to organically shape this endeavour, the aim of which is to examine the relations of knowledge and power that exist in the article "Between the streets and the offices: the contrast between Eduardo Siqueira Campos and Cinthia Ribeiro" (Milhomem, 2025), here understood, under the same matrix as the other concepts, as an utterance. Having made the necessary notes about what will be discussed here, we begin by outlining what discourse is, since the proposition outlined for this article, in addition to the very analytical framework chosen to demand such a definition, is, in the first instance, a discursive scrutiny of certain relationships in a given object.

According to Foucault (2009), discourse is nothing more than the reverberation of a truth being born before your very eyes" (Foucault, 2009, p. 49). From this point of view, discourse is an effect of the set of sayings that purport to represent a reality; discourse is a social practice derived from the very production of meanings. In this respect, Foucault (2009) states: "Discourse can be said about anything, because all things, having manifested and exchanged their meaning, can return to the silent interiority of self-consciousness" (Foucault, 2009, p. 49). Thus, discourse is constructed from the confection of meanings, the limiting object of which is its form, even if this is not capable of exhausting its sayings.

If discourse emerges with its production of meanings, this, due to its heterogeneous nature, translates, as Foucault (2009) explains, "as discontinuous practices, which sometimes intersect, but also ignore or exclude each other" (Foucault, 2009, pp. 52-53). In the same vein, Foucault (2012) warns: "Manifest discourse would, after all, be nothing more than the repressive presence of what it says; and this unsaid would be a void undermining, from within, everything that is said" (Foucault, 2012, pp. 30-31). As a result of this warning, Foucault (2012) states: "It is not necessary to refer discourse to the distant presence of its origin; it is necessary to treat it in the game of its instance" (Foucault, 2012, p. 31). Thus, the interpretation of discourse, as a method of investigating meanings, as advocated by Foucault (2012), "Thus, the project of a description of discursive events appears as a horizon for the search for the units that are formed there" (Foucault, 2012, p. 32).

The procedure of discourse tracking involves discourse units. According to Soares (2019), discourse units as reflexive expedients, "Because they are conceived as not linear

but dispersed, not given a priori, (...) they have enough plasticity to be investigated according to criteria not only of similarities and affinities" (Soares, 2019, p. 270), are in line with this archaeogenological proposal for studying discourse. Therefore, the units of discourse are found within an epistemological matrix according to which discourse plays its role in accordance with social functioning itself, being situated in the sphere from which power emanates throughout the constitutive circuit of society and, "(...) therefore poses, from its very existence (and not simply in its 'practical applications'), the question of power; a good which is, by nature, the object of a struggle, and a political struggle" (Foucault, 2012, p. 148, author's quotes).

In line with what was said above about power linked to knowledge, according to Foucault (2014), "(...) power and knowledge are directly implicated; that there is no power relationship without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor knowledge that does not at the same time suppose and constitute power relations" (Foucault, 2014, p. 31). Thus, the use of the notional composition power-knowledge, used here, as well as knowledge-power, refers precisely to this direct implication between one and the other. As Soares and Boucher (2024) explain, knowledge-power "lacks an understanding of its rarefied potential to disperse meanings based on a deflection of the power-knowledge relations existing in the social body" (Soares; Boucher, 2024, p. 66). In a relatively similar way to the one presented above, Han (2020) categorises a significant part of knowledge-power as follows: "Power is precisely where it is not highlighted. The greater the power, the more silently it acts. It takes place without having to point noisily at itself" (Han, 2020, p. 25).

It is important here to point out that knowledge-power, drawn from the archaeogenetic framework, is the delineator of the meanings present in the statement under examination, through the articulation between the unit of discourse, objectification and governmentality. Since power-knowledge is the competition for managing the relationships that exist in the collective circuit, its interpretative mobilisation in this study makes the precise seam between the aforementioned operators. For this reason, we find the path of affinity between discourse and subject, that is, virtualisation and concreteness with subjectivity. Subjectivity, as the interiority of the self, is not included in the scope of this research, but it opens the way for its discursive counterpart, investigated here: objectification. Foucault (2004), in demonstrating the separation between subjectivation and objectivation, says: "You don't have the same kind of relations with yourself when you constitute yourself as a political subject who goes to

vote or takes the floor in an assembly, or when you seek to fulfil your desire in a sexual relationship" (Foucault, 2004, p. 275).

According to Foucault (2004), there are two different types of processes, but they are interconnected by a set of knowledge-power relations: processes of subjectivation¹ and processes of objectivation. The expedient of objectifying the subject in a field of knowledge-power, of normative behaviour, and the resource of subjectifying these objective fields promoted by normalising institutions, with practices disciplinary, confessional, among others. In a more didactic way, the processes of objectification, in turn, concern the way in which the subject can become an object for knowledge, in other words, how the subject is produced by the mechanisms of discourse dispersion, such as the unit of discourse. In this sense, the analysis of objectification takes into account how individuals are transformed into subjects through discourse.

Objectification, as an operational notion, comprises the representation of the subject in power-knowledge discursivised by information agency practices, whose institutionalisation is capable of generating normalisations or categorisations for subjects; objectification, by producing divisions that explain, measure and classify individuals, turns human beings into objects of investigation. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1995), with regard to objectivisation, state that "power does not apply its knowledge, its investigations, its techniques to the universal, but to the individual as the object and effect of an intertwining of power and knowledge" (Dreyfus, Rabinow, 1995, p. 176). Since, for this article, objectification is linked to the relations of knowledge-power arising from the unity of discourse and governmentality, we will focus on the latter. In the context of governmentality, objectification occurs when individuals are transformed into objects of management and control by government practices.

With regard to governmentality, Foucault (1995) states that: "we could say that power relations have been progressively governmentalised, i.e. elaborated, rationalised and centralised in the form or under the caution of state institutions" (Foucault, 1995, p. 247). Governmentality can rely on Foucault's own characterisation (2008): "what I have proposed to call governmentality, that is, the way in which the conduct of men is conducted, is no more than a proposed grid for analysing these relations of power" (Foucault, 2008, p. 258). From this vantage point, it can be said that governmentality, as an interpretative operator, describes the ways in which modern power organises itself to govern human conduct (*conduire des conduites*) in a rationalised and technical way,

¹ The processes of subjectivation, as Foucault (2004) describes them, refer to the way in which man understands himself as the legitimate subject of a certain type of knowledge-power.

since "the exercise of power consists of conducting conduct and ordering probability" (Foucault, 1995, p. 244). From a more historical-comparative perspective, governmentality shifts the focus from centralised (sovereign) power to power distributed in social practices, showing how populations become the target and main resource of knowledge-power relations.

According to the last meaning presented, governmentality, in the macro dynamic sense of power relations, acts as an organisational mechanism that guides subjects and determines behaviour in various spheres of life. This orientation is configured as a normative matrix from which it is difficult to escape without compromising the social order, as it is intrinsically linked to the constitutive structure of the social contract and the organisation of relations between individuals and institutions. Therefore, for this investigation of the knowledge-power relations invested in the news item "Between the streets and the offices: the contrast between Eduardo Siqueira Campos and Cinthia Ribeiro" (Milhomem, 2025), governmentality stands out as a centralising sense of discourse, which refers to the virtual character of its mesh of associative and dispersed elements in the collective circuit, so that the cadence between the interpretative description of the unity of discourse and objectification is capable of erecting the necessary steps to achieve its functioning. So, after duly systematising the concepts that will be operationalised later, we move on to the next section.

Knowledge-power relations: an analysis of political-media discourse

In this section, the methodological framework explained above is applied to the object of analysis of knowledge-power relations. In order to achieve the proposition designed for this research without too many mishaps, it is worth explaining a deliberately manufactured gap, namely the absence of the device as an archaeogenetic operator, precisely because it has already been extensively examined in other research studies. However, we can't shy away from making some observations about this virtual media device, since its predominant direction influences its communicational production. In this direction, it is important to point out that the vehicle in which the statement "Between the streets and the offices: the contrast between Eduardo Siqueira Campos and Cinthia Ribeiro" (Milhomem, 2025), published on 15 January 2025, *Jornal Opção Tocantins*, has a left-wing, more collectivist political orientation. Having made the necessary proviso, below is the text of the article, with the title highlighted in bold.

Between the streets and the offices: the contrast between Eduardo Siqueira Campos and Cinthia Ribeiro

Eduardo Siqueira's administration begins with a focus on connecting directly with the people of Palm Beach

In just a fortnight in office, Mayor Eduardo Siqueira Campos (Podemos) has already made it clear that his style of governing will be very different from that adopted by his predecessor, Cinthia Ribeiro (PSDB). The former mayor was marked by her distance from the population, a leader who governed from her office, surrounded by a team that appeared to be loyal but rarely dared to disagree with her ideas. This form of management seemed to shield her from popular criticism, but it also distanced her from the day-to-day running of the city and the real needs of the people of Palma.

Eduardo, on the other hand, is bringing to the capital a management model that recovers the hand-to-hand contact with the population, a movement reminiscent of the early years of the Carlos Amastha (PSB) government. In the few days since he took over the administration of the capital, he has already been seen eating in popular restaurants, visiting homes, going to the Emergency Care Unit (UPA), helping to asphalt streets, cleaning squares and going to markets. These actions may, to some, seem like a marketing ploy or even demagoguery, but it is undeniable that direct contact with the people creates a perception that there is finally someone behind the municipality's decisions, acting more closely and attentively to everyday demands (Milhomem, 2025).

A careful reading of the text above reveals the two discourses, or rather, the fields to which the statement belongs, the media and the political. It can be said, according to the argumentativity present in the article, that the political sphere is the one that is perceived first, since the news is about the performance of the new mayor of Palmas, TO, in his first fortnight in office, in a positive relation to his predecessor. Far from the idealism about the role of the media and the function of politics, both disseminated by Charaudeau (2015, 2017), the statement in question shows the media proposition of political defence and criticism, in other words, the mutual propositional relationship between these social spheres of meaning production, which here is called political-media discourse. The implications of this intertwining can be better understood by describing the interpretative operators.

Within the political-media discourse expressed by the article in question, two contrasting units of discourse are established, one populist and the other bureaucratic, by virtue of describing two political behaviours: that of Eduardo Siqueira Campos, the

current mayor of Palmas, as close to the people, and that of Cinthia Ribeiro, the former mayor of the capital of Tocantins, as administratively distant from the population. In other words, the discrimination between these personalities, in terms of their actions in municipal management, encloses them in distinct discursive poles, whose discourse units are precisely the populist for Eduardo and the bureaucratic for Cinthia. Although these discourse units can be traced back to the progressive discourse, in the case of the populist discourse unit, and to the conservative discourse, in the case of the bureaucratic discourse unit, this naming expedient does not reach conservative populism, nor does it encompass bureaucratic progressivism.

For the reasons indicated above, it is justified to maintain the syntagmatic particularity of the discourse units found, populist and bureaucratic, as such, due to both the macro-dimensional geopolitical conjuncture and the dynamics of the knowledge-power relations engendered in the statement under analysis. In this way, the criticism made by the media outlet, *Jornal Opção Tocantins*, is read as favourable to Eduardo Siqueira Campos and unfavourable to his predecessor and, by extension, the demarcation of the positive value given to populism, at the same time as the negative value offered to the bureaucratic. It's worth noting that the new mayor of Palmas, when the article was published, had only been in office for a fortnight, whereas the former mayor had been in office for approximately seven years. This is a somewhat hasty comparison, but it shows, along with the populist and bureaucratic discourse units, processes of objectification of the subject.

The practices of objectifying the subject, according to Foucault (2004), include procedures that range from disciplinary, to confessional, to standardising, such as the construction of subjects who prefer populist to bureaucratic management. Now, the argumentative orientation of the statement in question is aimed precisely at developing a perception according to which its subject, the one who reads, debates and comments on the subject of the news, is structured by the interpretative project present there. This practice, which extends to a countless number of other forms of objectification, finds fertile ground in a collective circuit in which there is a lack of serious and impartial criteria capable of filtering out the objectification of the subject derived from the populist discourse unit and, consequently, the objectification of the subject derived from the bureaucratic discourse unit is done by negating the previous one.

What we effectively have in this fabrication of subjects, through the valuations of the discourse units present in "Between the streets and the offices: the contrast between Eduardo Siqueira Campos and Cinthia Ribeiro" (Milhomem, 2025), is, on the one hand,

the composition of an idealistic and naïve subject towards the politician, in this case, the mayor, who should appear to be closer to his managed population, even if this is just a staging at the beginning of a parliamentary term. On the other hand, the objectification of the subject who disbelieves in traditional public administration, with a certain detachment, engenders within the subject the belief, also naïve, that if their mayor, councillor, by extension, congressman, senator and president, when they are not seen doing something for the people, there is no good management. Neither process of objectification, even if they are the same coin with two sides, is productive, but rather seems to numb the social body with simplifications without the necessary self-criticism.

As power-knowledge relations lack the application of analytical procedures, such as those used here, in order to gain visibility, as Han (2020) elucidates, understanding the processes of objectification, a significant part of such relations and, above all, their effects, is practically imperceptible without the aid of this investigative expedient. It is important to highlight, within this context of objectification derived from populist and bureaucratic discourse units, the absence of the instructive effect of formal education, since its presence in the collective circuit would, *mutatis mutandis*, be enough to incite a broader debate, with consequent and less biased arguments, on responsible governance in the municipality of Palmas, TO.

To the extent that objectification, derived from the dialectical relationship between two units of discourse, populist and bureaucratic, underpins the idealised representation of one political character and criticises another, a form of governmentality develops. Relatively different from that conceptualised by Foucault (1995, 2008), which focuses on the government of behaviour by state mechanisms, the governmentality that we see here is based on the informational disposition intended by the argumentativeness of a given media device, *Jornal Opção Tocantins*, based on the statement "Between the streets and the offices: the contrast between Eduardo Siqueira Campos and Cinthia Ribeiro" (Milhomem, 2025), whose compositional value of the objectification of subjects is based on the theatricality of the visible and immediate. This is how the article, according to the governmentality it establishes, not only splits the understanding of public management between the populist and the bureaucratic, but also leads to a preference for one and rejection of the other.

Given the direction of governmentality present in the news in question, the relationship between the populist and bureaucratic discourse units originating from the objectification of readers and, consequently, the orientation given to their preferences, is the way to drive behaviour, to drive wills, to drive the government itself through the

destination of public opinion. Therefore, this governmentality serves both the population, since it shapes their perception of good public management, and the government, since governmentality plays on what is seen as good and bad about the way it governs, generating good or bad representation. In view of this, the knowledge-power relations that shape the social space narrativised by the statement under analysis not only synthesise it, but also entangle public opinion, through the objectification of subjects who believe in theatrical populism and subjects who disbelieve in distant administration, to the point that they guide an important part of governmentality, guiding it towards a certain political-media goal.

Final considerations

In order to investigate the knowledge-power relations that exist in the article "Between the streets and the offices: the contrast between Eduardo Siqueira Campos and Cinthia Ribeiro" (Milhomem, 2025), published on the virtual portal *Jornal Opção Tocantins*, we mobilised the theoretical-methodological apparatus of archaeological discourse analysis, using the interpretative notions of discourse unit, objectification and governmentality. Thus, after the process of heuristic description of the statement mentioned by its title, it is concluded that the proposition outlined for this article was achieved, since it was possible to extract which units of discourse, populist and bureaucratic, which expedient promotes the objectification of the interlocutor of the news and, finally, how these two elements previously mentioned make up governmentality or at least how they shape it.

To summarise, it was possible to identify the populist and bureaucratic discourse units, which, as well as simplifying the actions of two managers with very different tenures in Palmas, TO, respond to the progressive orientation of the media. Derived from the argumentative disposition of each of these discourse units, there was the constitution of a subject, whose adherence to the populist discourse is due to its theatricality, and another subject, whose adherence to the bureaucratic discourse is due to its distance from the population, with the first subject being positively valued by the compositional architecture of the objectification present in the article. Given the materialisation of objectification, the participation of governmentality was noted, not on the part of a government body or one derived from it, but by a communication agency. Thus, governmentality, like the government of behaviour, is also a way of influencing subjects' perception of reality within the collective circuit in which they live.

Finally, as a critical-formative contribution, we believe that the media, regardless of its political spectrum, needs not only ethics and responsibility for creating public opinion, but above all a commitment to the greatest possible objectivity in describing facts and to the healthy development of analytical debate on political actions. For this to be within the scope of the near horizon, it is important to say, as Barros Filho (2018) does, that "the political field is a game space played by players who make a living from it and according to rules recognised by all" (Barros Filho, 2018, p. 38). In addition to this elucidation, it must be said that, as Barros Filho (2018) explains, "we live in times of delegitimation of political work. (...) We would do well to be cautious. And only in this way will we avoid the regrettable mistake of trivialising evil and anaesthetising our indignation" (Barros Filho, 2018, p. 38).

Any hasty judgement, made on the basis of a fortnight, when there are still four more years to go, needs to be better developed, otherwise there is a risk that it is the fruit of the media idealised by Charaudeau (2015), or worse, that it has been generated by the naivety of politics also theorised by the same author (2017). Having made the necessary considerations, both specific and general, it is believed that this analysis can contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of truth-making and, at the same time, in a more pretentious way, to the expansion of a consistent repertoire about how everyday phenomena are transformed into discourse to condition information, conduct behaviour and, by extension, to manipulate the formation of opinion.

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RESUMO

Este artigo objetiva investigar as relações de saber-poder existentes na matéria “Entre as ruas e os gabinetes: o contraste entre Eduardo Siqueira Campos e Cinthia Ribeiro” (Milhomem, 2025), publicada no portal virtual Jornal Opção. Para alcançar a propositura traçada para este estudo, emprega-se o consagrado instrumental da Análise arqueogenológica do Discurso, por meio do emprego de seus conceitos operacionais, unidade de discurso, objetivação e governamentalidade, esses instrumentos são aplicados no processo de investigação das dinâmicas de saber-poder presentes no objeto de análise deste estudo. Como resultado, foi possível identificar as unidades de discurso populista e burocrático, além disso, diante da concretização da objetivação, constatou-se a participação da governamentalidade, não por parte de uma instância governamental, mas por uma agência de comunicação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Discurso político; Discurso midiático; Arqueogeneologia do discurso.

RESUMEN

Este artículo tiene como objetivo investigar las relaciones conocimiento-poder que existen en el artículo “Entre las ruas e os gabinetes: o contraste entre Eduardo Siqueira Campos e Cinthia Ribeiro” (Milhomem, 2025), publicado en el portal virtual Jornal Opção. Para lograr el propósito planteado en este estudio, se utiliza el reconocido instrumento de Análisis del Discurso arqueógeno, mediante el uso de sus conceptos operativos, unidad de discurso, objetivación y gubernamentalidad, estos instrumentos se aplican en el proceso de investigación de la dinámica conocimiento-poder. presente en el objeto de análisis de este estudio. Como resultado, fue posible identificar las unidades del discurso populista y burocrático. Además, dada la materialización de la cosificación, la participación de la gubernamentalidad fue verificada, no por un organismo gubernamental, sino por una agencia de comunicación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Discurso político; Discurso mediático; Arqueogeneología del discurso.