The Representation of Urban Violence in Brazilian Newspapers

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Ana Cristina Pelosi
Purpose

• Employ **corpus linguistics** methods to conduct a systematic analysis of the ways **urban violence** is talked about and how it is linguistically represented

• Explore the **interaction** between media representations and **official statistics** on urban violence in Brazil
Research Questions

• What types of violence receive more prominence?

• How different types of violence are represented?
Corpus

Time period: 2014
01/Jan to 31/Dec

- Folha de São Paulo
- O Estado de São Paulo
- Pioneiro
- Zero Hora

www.ibge.gov.br
Search Terms

- violência urbana
- índice(s) de violência
- criminalidade
- segurança pública
- segurança urbana

English Translation

- urban violence
- violence rates
- criminality
- public security
- urban security
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Terms</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Homicíd*</td>
<td>✓ Homicide(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Assassin*</td>
<td>✓ Murder(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Furt*</td>
<td>✓ Theft/mugging/steal*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Roub*</td>
<td>✓ Robbery/rob*/mugging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Assalt*</td>
<td>✓ Assault (intention to rob/steal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Latrocíni*</td>
<td>✓ Robbery/theft + death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Sequestr*</td>
<td>✓ Kidnap*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Estupr*</td>
<td>✓ Rap*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Noise

• Violence and crimes in somewhere other than Brazil: *murders* in *Iraq*, *kidnapping* in *Nigeria*, *homicides* in Palestine

• Corruption, internet crimes and labour issues

• Cinema (especially thrillers) and crime fiction

• Metaphors:
  – *roubar* a cena (*steal the scene*),
  – *furtar*-se a fazer alguma coisa (*avoid doing something*), etc.

http://cass.lancs.ac.uk
5.127 texts (1.8 million words)
Methodology

✓ **Keywords**
  - Reference Corpus of Brazilian Newspapers
  - Focus: top 100 keywords

✓ **Collocational analysis**
  - Minimum Frequency: 10
  - 5E – 5D
  - MI >= 6

✓ **Closer reading of concordance lines**

http://cass.lancs.ac.uk
Results
What types of violence receive more prominence in Brazilian newspapers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Crime</th>
<th>Raw Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robbery(s)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicídio(s)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assassinato(s)</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furto(s)</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estupro(s)</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrocínio(s)</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Robbery(s)  Homicide(s)  Murder(s)  Theft(s)  Rape(s)  Robbery with death
Roubo(s) – robbery/theft with violence
Roubo(s) – robbery/theft with violence

attempt
Roubo(s) – robbery/theft with violence
Roubo(s) – robbery/theft with violence

- residence
- pedestrians
- shop or bank
Roubo(s) – robbery/theft with violence

- Rate
- Occurrences
- Grew
- Growth
- Number
- Reports
- Increase
- High
- Fall
- Growth
- Reported
Roubo(s) – robbery/theft with violence

- Drug trade
- Robberies + death
- Qualified narcotics
- Death
- Followed
- Theft
- Extortion
- Kidnapping
- Die
Official statistics on urban violence in Brazil
Official Statistics

Rate per 100,000 inhabitants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>RS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robbery(s)</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft(s)</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery with death</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide(s)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape(s)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Ministry of Justice (Department of Public Security) and Public Security Councils of São Paulo (SP) and Rio Grande do Sul (RS)
Official Statistics: Car theft

Sources: Ministry of Justice (Department of Public Security) and Public Security Councils of São Paulo (SP) and Rio Grande do Sul (RS)
Official Statistics: homicide

Sources: Ministry of Justice (Department of Public Security) and Public Security Councils of São Paulo (SP) and Rio Grande do Sul (RS)
Urban violence by newspaper
What types of violence receive more prominence in each newspaper?

- Robbery(s)
- Homicide(s)
- Assault(s)
- Theft(s)
- Murder(S)
- Rape(s)
- Robbery with death

Frequency per 100,000 words
By newspaper
Final Remarks

✓ **Urban violence** receives considerable attention in the news media

✓ **Homicides** and **robbery/theft** are the types most debated

✓ Interesting differences between states
Obrigada!

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