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## Political Cartoons as communicative weapons – the hypothesis of the “Double Standard Thesis” in three Portuguese cartoons

Samuel Mateus

Madeira University / Labcom.IFP / CIC.Digital

E-mail: samuelmateus@uma.pt

### ABSTRACT

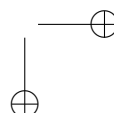
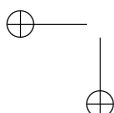
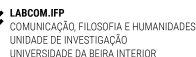
Political cartoons are a powerful communicative weapon. They can distract, joke but they can also provide social commentaries on key aspects of reality. Although not always acknowledged, cartoons are a key element on political communication. In this paper, we investigate editorial cartoons potential to political communication and take them as communicative artifacts capable of enhancing political comprehension and reconceptualization of events, through specific frames of understanding. By looking into the double standard thesis, by which cartoonists tend to contrast the posturing, destructive, wastage of politics with the purposive, constructive efficiency of busi-

ness (Morris, 1992: 254), we try to assess if that same tendency to frame politics and business befalls as well in Portuguese political cartoons. Based on a non-representative sample, we proceed to a rhetorical analysis of three contemporary Portuguese political cartoons in which business tends to be associated with purpose and efficiency, while politics is portrayed as a wasteful, vain, otiose activity. By representing politics and business in such a dissimilar way, these cartoons tend to validate in Portugal the double standard thesis, and raises the possibility it can actually be applied to trans-national contexts.

**Keywords:** political cartoons; double standard thesis; visual rhetoric; framing; political communication.

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## RESUMO

Os *cartoons* políticos são uma arma poderosa e comunicativa. Estes podem entreter, gracejar, mas também podem fornecer comentários sociais sobre aspetos importantes da realidade. Embora nem sempre reconhecidos como tal, os *cartoons* são um elemento-chave na comunicação política. Neste trabalho, investigamos os *cartoons* editoriais com potencial para a comunicação política e tomamos-os como artefactos comunicativos capazes de melhorar a compreensão política e a reconceptualização de eventos, por meio de estruturas específicas de entendimento. Através da análise da tese de dois pesos e duas medidas, pela qual os cartunistas tendem a contrastar o desperdício maneirista e destrutivo da política com a eficiência intencional e constru-

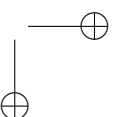
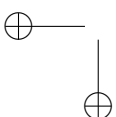
tiva das empresas (Morris, 1992:254), é nosso intuito avaliar se essa mesma tendência para a censura política e empresarial também recai sobre os *cartoons* políticos portugueses. Com base numa amostra não-representativa, procedemos a uma análise retórica de três *cartoons* políticos contemporâneos portugueses, em que as empresas tendem a ser associadas à ideia de objetivo e eficiência, enquanto que a política é retratada como uma atividade esbanjadora, fútil e desnecessária. Representando a política e as empresas de forma tão dissimilar, estes *cartoons* tendem a validar em Portugal a tese de dois pesos e duas medidas e levantam a possibilidade de que na verdade esta pode ser aplicada a contextos transnacionais.

Palavras-chave: *cartoons* políticos; tese de dois pesos e duas medidas; retórica visual; censura; comunicação política.

## INTRODUCTION

As members of modern societies we are familiar with cartoons. From comics and graphic illustrations to the editorial cartoons found in most newspapers around the world, cartoons can amuse, make us laugh but also to provide social observations on key aspects of reality.

The first known political cartoon dates from 1360 BC in which Ikhnaton, the father in law of Tutankhamon, is lampooned. Rudimentary forms of political cartoons have also been found on Ancient Greek pottery depictions that ridicularized political leaders and lauded Olympian gods (Danjoux, 2007: 245). We also found scattered throughout the Roman Empire (for example, in Pompeii) many graphical inscriptions on walls mocking incompetent military



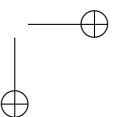
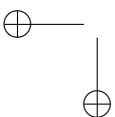


commanders or public officials. The invention of the printing press marked a keystone on political cartoons since it led, in Renaissance Europe, to the emergence of the broadsheet (Danjoux, 2003: 245). Broadsheets were editorial loose-pages designed for a wide circulation. By offering readers a brief and simple account on current events, they were designed for mass consumption.

With the gradual incorporation of broadsheets in the 19th century American and European newspapers (Danjoux, 2003: 245), cartoonists were offered a solid professional life, a steady flow of income and a wide-ranging distribution, while accepting editorial scrutiny and production deadlines. As consequence, creativity was, by then, restricted to the serial production of graphical representations as artistic freedom fell under the influence of larger newspapers editors (Press, 1981: 44). Thus, as cartoonists conquered its own profession they became intellectual workers who were expected to consistently produce social satire.

Political cartoons are symbolic artistic illustrations making a witty or humorous point containing comments on social issues, events or personalities, typically (but not always) combining satire and hyperbole to question authority and social mores. A good definition is given by Edwards & Winkler (1987): a “graphic presentation typically designed in a one-panel, non-continuing format to make an independent statement or observation on political events or social policy”. In other words, the political cartoon can be defined as a satirical comment (using humor and caricature) about a political person, institution or event reflecting the cartoonist’s own values and opinions on that issue. It is, hence, a subjective observation on a political matter.

Even if some authors distinguish between social comment cartoons and proper political cartoons within the editorial cartoon (Ashfaq & Bin Hussein, 2013: 266), we will use “editorial cartoon” meaning both a social commentary visual representation and a strict political visual representation. We can distinguish two different types of editorial or political cartoon (we will use the terms interchangeably): the traditional visual-metaphor based cartoon; and a more recent text-heavy style cartoon. The types may overlap and are just useful if we see them as pedagogical and classificatory tools to an idealized form of cartoons. In our analysis we will deal specifically with the first type: a topical single-panel, single-column drawing, sometimes also referred as “pocket cartoons”. In these cases, the political cartoon will usually have a subtitle



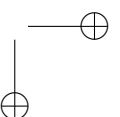
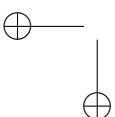


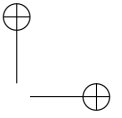
and may comprehend some text. But its main effect comes from the visual representation. The text has in those cases an anchoring function providing a linguistic context to the drawing.

One of the most appealing factors on political cartoons lies in its seemingly innocent – sometimes subtle and refined – humor whose message can be easily assimilated. Because many times it is built under an entertainment aura, the cartoon can be embraced without much reflection or critical resistance (Walker, 2003: 16). And since its point can be (although not exclusively) visually apprehended and quickly transmitted, cartoons have a distinct persuasive dimension contributing to the emergence and development of political themes or cultural topics. It is this instantaneous message delivery as well as a sophisticated but fierce criticism that makes the political cartoon such a powerful communicative weapon. Nevertheless, cartoons' role is not always acknowledged as important. Since they are linked with humor, entertaining, comical effect, they tend to be an overlooked means of political communication. Contrariwise, they perform a prominent role on political communication (Walker, 2003: 16) and public opinion formation. Even if they apparently do not constitute a vehicle for political participation, the way it deconstructs social issues can have a vital effect on the public understanding of a political candidate or topic (cf. Rosa, 2012).

Political cartoons may generally be seen as source of distraction rather than information. Its “dissimulated” message that softens the impact force of the satire may, as well, hinder cartoon's effectiveness and does not guarantee the message's endorsement. However, cartoons may be an incredible source to access the political climate and instigate public opinion. Editorial cartoons gain momentum due to its optimal ambivalence. They are visual inscriptions of a particular time and ephemeral political situation that can surpass texts. This symbolic freedom can be of and incomparable advantage while putting the cartoons virtually into a meaning-spiral. Cartoons should, then, figure as graphic editorials, much more than mere illustrations to tickle public opinion.

In this paper, we investigate editorial cartoons potential to political communication and take them as communicative artifacts capable of enhancing political comprehension and recontextualization of events. Particularly, we survey the amplitude of editorial cartoons taken as a medium to political communication. In what sense, may we refer to them as elements of political





communication? What is the nature of its ferocious denunciation and lampooning?

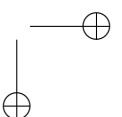
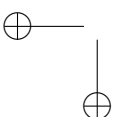
In order to start answering these complex and lengthy questions, we will concentrate in a common perspective advocated by some authors: the double standard thesis. Departing from the claim that editorial cartoons usually (Morris, 1992) depict positively business leaders as seriousness persons, while government officials are usually depicted negatively as foolish, we will look upon three different Portuguese political cartoons authored by three distinct cartoonists. Our focus will be to confirm, or not, this double standard thesis.

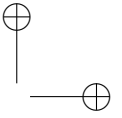
The main question is, thus, to determine if there are, in political cartoons, two separate frames to consider politicians and business persons (chairmans, CEO, business managers, bank leaders). More specifically, we want to know if the double standard thesis is easy to observe on trans-national European contexts or if it is an anglo-american feature of political cartoons. In that case, the double standard thesis could be seen not just as a possible frame to represent politics but the leading one.

Starting with a concise discussion about political cartoons’ functions, this paper will address the double standard thesis before proceed to the analysis of three Portuguese political cartoons. The scrutiny will be rhetorical-informed and it will have a special focus on the role of humor in political cartoons.

### **POLITICAL CARTOONS’ FRAMING FUNCTIONS’**

One of the most comprehensive suggestions on the roles political cartoons may comprise is given by the classical paper of Medhurst and DeSousa (1982). They identify four main basic functions in social life dealing with entertainment, aggression-reduction, agenda-setting and framing. Political cartoons have generally speaking the ability to amuse and joke about personalities. At the same time, Medurst and DeSousa (1982) claim that political cartoons provide readers with a special kind of catharsis and mental purging that reduces social frustration and prevents the escalation of conflict. It is as if the symbolic discharge taking place in political cartoons could replace negative (emotional or physical) releases. In third place, political cartoons contribute to set the pace to agenda-setting. By satirically highlighting certain facts, events or personalities, they give substantial relevance that may follow or influence the public agenda. Political cartoons, in this case, would be key



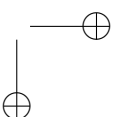
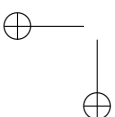


aspects of political communication because they help to create public awareness and concern of salient issues many times filtering and shaping them in ways that constitute the basis to public opinion formation. By emphasizing how political cartoons may shape reality, we are already insinuating the fourth function identified by Medhurst and Desousa (1982): framing. It is this feature we will be more attentive in the analysis of Portuguese editorial cartoons.

Political cartoons provide specific frames about certain issues in a specific time or place. The “frame” denotes how something is presented to and impacts the choices people make about how to process that information. Framing is related to the agenda-setting theory but expands the research by focusing on the essence of the issues rather than on a particular topic. In this sense, it is a second-level agenda-setting. In other words, political cartoons put events within a field of meaning. We call “frames” to those cognitive structures that work to organize or structure message meaning that lead the public in a certain direction. Frames guide our perception towards a specific interpretation. Political cartoons offer frameworks under which readers can examine, approach and evaluate the political life of a society. By portraying selected aspects of a perceived political reality, they promote particular problem definitions, causal interpretation and moral evaluation (Entman, 1993).

Political cartoons’ framing has to do with mediation, that is, how media connect with society and are able to produce meaningful discourse about common reality. In fact, media may be said to mediate between public policy and social discourse by feeding public opinion information that may incorporate anticipated needs or motives of diverse social (public and private) institutions. “Cartoons «frame» phenomena by situating the «problem» in question within the context of everyday life and, in this way, exploit «universal values» as means of persuading readers to identify with an image and its intended message” (Greenberg, 2002: 182). Indeed, political cartoons’ framing works when they offer condensed claims about putative problems or disorders that draw upon or reinforce taken-for granted meanings.

This means that by working upon taken-for granted meaning, political cartoons will be more persuasive with people sharing the same social, historical, political or economic circumstances (Greenberg, 2002: 183). Moreover, since they operate as frames for the organization of social knowledge, they are





particularly subject to ideological appropriation for what renders political life intelligible.

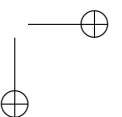
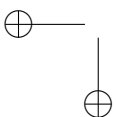
At this point we should bring to the discussion the double standard thesis since it constitutes a singular frame to apprehend a multitude of aspects related to political life. If we accept political cartoons’ framing function may supply fundamental clues to the preferred meanings in a society, we must envisage the double standard thesis as a specific frame to apprehend two different sets of social actors: politicians and business managers. Without considering its framing operations, the double standard thesis would not last as a self-sufficient and solid interpretative hypothesis to explain political representation of editorial cartoons. The linking political cartoons’ framing with the double standard thesis may have important consequences since they function as mental frameworks. The double standard thesis, seen at this light, could impact the way cartoons historicize the present and build the social imagination (cf. Edwards & Winkler, 1997: 8). By dividing political life in a dual (positive-negative) perspective, the double standard thesis could possibly impair public understanding and hinder the complexities involved in political life. This would mean public opinion would be exposed to a deeply simplified view of political problems and a stereotypical description of personalities. This is even more significant given that cartoons can promote the symbols of national consensus while conveying values, attitudes and beliefs (Cahn, 1984).

If we accept the framing may elicit a culture-creating or culture-maintaining process, the confirmation of the double standard thesis would have a tremendous effect on those small steps of creation, reproduction and mediation of a political public culture. These claims would be illustrative of whether a specific society would see itself as a homogeneous collective of different social actors or a fractured, dispersed and splintered collection of different social groups battling each other.

### THE DOUBLE STANDARD THESIS

Aesop once wrote a fable named “The Ass and the Lapdog” (Jacob’s translation, 1894):

«A Farmer one day came to the stables to see to his beasts of burden: among them was his favourite Ass, that was always well fed and often carried his master. With the Farmer came his Lapdog,





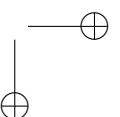
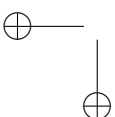
who danced about and licked his hand and frisked about as happy as could be. The Farmer felt in his pocket, gave the Lapdog some dainty food, and sat down while he gave his orders to his servants. The Lapdog jumped into his master's lap, and lay there blinking while the Farmer stroked his ears. The Ass, seeing this, broke loose from his halter and commenced prancing about in imitation of the Lapdog. The Farmer could not hold his sides with laughter, so the Ass went up to him, and putting his feet upon the Farmer's shoulder attempted to climb into his lap. The Farmer's servants rushed up with sticks and pitchforks and soon taught the Ass that *Clumsy jesting is no joke.*»

This latin fable contains a moral dictum: it is foolish one to be something that he is not. But, at the same time, this allegory entails also a double standard since the farmer did not treat two domestic animals in the same way. Because the Ass saw himself as having the same rights as the lapdog, he could not figure that the farmer would rush him up with sticks at the moment he tried to imitate the lapdog. However, given the farmer's double standard to farm animals it was just that that occurred. In this case, two similar beings (two four-legged farm animals) in the same situation were dealt in a distinct manner.

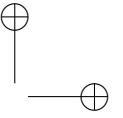
A double standard is the application of diverse sets of principles for two or more similar situations. It can be described as a biased or morally unfair view of the principle that all are equal. In some respects, it describes an imperfect assessment of a phenomenon by dealing differently with the same kind of occurrences. Double standards violate the impartiality principle in which the same standard should be exactly applied to all people without regard to prejudice or favoritism based on social class, rank, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientations, age, etc.

The double standard resembles the classic locus: "*Quod licet Iovi, non licet bovi*" (literally "What is permissible for Jove is not permissible for an ox"). It indicates the existence of a double standard (will it be defensible or nor) that ultimately means: "what is acceptable to one person or group is not permitted to everyone".

The application of the double standard thesis to the political cartoons studies was put forth by Raymond Morris in a book called *Behind the jester's*



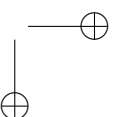
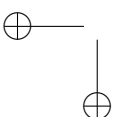




*mask* (1989) to describe the dissimilar modes Canadian cartoonists contrasted the posturing, destructive, wastage of politics with the purposive, constructive efficiency of business (Morris, 1992: 254). He concluded that cartooning misrepresented politics and business as well-balanced rivals (Morris, 1989: 167-169) simplifying the interchange between them, their mutual dependency and masking the nature of their activities. Morris claimed that both politics and business were mocked in very divergent ways masking possible overlaps between them. In accordance with Morris, Walker (2003: 16) advocated that “political cartoons are a resource of the dominant, not the minority, and serve to reinforce the opinions of the media ownership and the dominant in society”. Although she does not deepen how is that obtained, nor works upon the framing theory, she confirms in her own research that the only exceptions she has found to the double standard thesis in political cartoons were cases of extreme corporate greed or scandal (ex: Enron) (Walker, 2003: 18).

These two Canadian authors stress that business is not normally shown as deviant unlike politics who are traditionally object of great lampooning. This may be related to the economic ties of newspapers to major business companies buying their advertising space. One possible explanation has to do the dependence of editorial cartoons to editorial pressure and the need newspapers have to attract revenues from the business industry. This means that Canadian contemporary newspapers developed a double, yet very different, activity towards differences social groups: by one hand, the newspapers continue their historical role as critics of public policies and politic personalities; on the other hand, the newspaper tend to adopt a reverential attitude to business stressing the role of economy on the country’s development. In the first case, they tend to satirize negatively politics, while in the second case, they tend to adopt a more conservative, a-critical, prudent approach to business.

This double attitude towards politics and business has a great importance and should be investigated given that cartoonists are expected, since the 19th century, to publicly criticize politics. One could expect this role – comparable to the role of journalists as watchdogs asking accountability from the politicians – would be extended to other domains associated with political life such as business and the lobby effect it has on public policies. Maybe one of the reasons this is not occurring in Canadian political cartoons has to do with the commodification of the news and the press discourse which pushes them





not to confront, criticize or conflict business corporations (that are in today's economic role of newspapers, the major patron).

In the section following the methodological considerations, we question the nature of the double standard thesis on political cartoons.

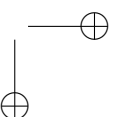
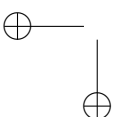
### **METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

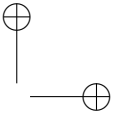
The following analysis will be taken, not as a textuality approach of the political cartoon discourse, but mainly as a visual discourse approach. This means we will not offer grounded views on reader's response to them or speculate what such responses would be. We do not undertake an audience reception study but an exam of the visual discourse contained in the political cartoon. So, we will be offering some possible interpretations to the political meaning of the cartoons but they are only possible ones. Then, we look to these three examples from a double standard standpoint.

The sparse selection of the Portuguese political cartoons does not configure a representative sample, so we cannot extrapolate that every Portuguese political cartoons present these same tendency, to work upon or reject, the double standard. It is clear that three examples do not exhaust all the diversity of political cartoon in Portugal. Nonetheless, each cartoon gives us important orientations to assess the social-political climate and offer crucial clues to the framing of politics and business.

Moreover, the political cartoons were not randomly selected. Instead, they correspond to the following criteria: political cartoons are authored by Portuguese cartoonists; they exemplify the artistic and graphical satire style of each of the cartoonists; its main theme is politics and business; they were published as editorial cartoons either in press, either in online Portuguese portals. They do not figure only in the personal gallery of the cartoonist but were indeed object of publication by major Portuguese newspapers (written and online).

The analysis will be informed by two methodological lines. By one hand, a pragmatism approach to the cartoon given that to literally understand a cartoon is very different of "getting it". One can apprehend the graphic forms, give them a meaning, and even so, one could not be able to situate it in the appropriate socio-political context. Without the ability to make correct inferences on the sense of the cartoon, readers could feel confused in how to give meaning to that representation. For example, one can identify a blue flag



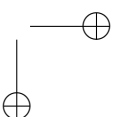
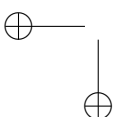


containing a circle of dozens of yellow stars and a woman pushing it. But without the awareness of a social context, political situation, and personalities involved, the cartoon may just be a funny drawing. To emerge as a political cartoon, the reader should relate the drawing to concepts and apply a correct pragmatic framework in order to infer the meaning intended by the cartoonist.

On the other hand, we will also undertake a rhetorical approach to the political cartoons analysis. There are two main reasons for this.

First, cartoons assist in defining the significant issues that in each time are object of public scrutiny and debate. They have an intrinsic rhetorical nature because they can be seen as argumentative artifacts visually (and many times textually) dealing with discussion of the current political events or personalities. In fact, most authors agree that the rhetoric of political cartoons contain elements of both visuocentric (visually based) or logocentric (language-based) rhetoric (Matthews, 2011: 12). In this paper, we take a visual rhetoric perspective assuming both logocentric and visuocentric methods and dealing with visual metaphors, symbols and other rhetorical elements. We also adopt the methodological approach of Morris (1993: 199-202) concentrating in four rhetorical devices that affect the contents, intended and negotiated meanings of political cartoons. First, *condensation* denoting a juxtaposition of disconnected (sometimes) unrelated events to a common singular frame (Football’s European Cup and the Migrants, for example). Second, *combination* denotes the organizations of various elements of different domains with different and perhaps conflicting meanings (ex: a student giving a less to the teacher). Third, *opposition* involves the reduction of a complex issue to a binary struggle between two parties (ex: ideological conflict between political party’s reduced to the combat between its leaders). Finally, *domestication* occurs when events remote to everyday life of the reader are translated into concrete happenings that can be experienced as close and familiar (ex: the political leader preaching in the market as a visual metaphor to the need he has to “sell” his ideas).

Although we will not be specifically detailing Morris’ four rhetorical devices, they will be present in the current analysis of the double standard thesis in Portuguese political cartoons.



### ANALYSIS OF HUMOROUS POLITICAL CARTOONS

Humor may be considered a journalistic tool comparable to the editorial column (Rosa, 2012: 736) by which opinion are expressed and judgments are stated that not strictly obey to the objectivity standard governing journalism.

The political cartoons examined all encompass a humoristic frame to seize the political and economic events they represent. Hence, these cartoons are valuable resources to study how, in Portugal, the Financial and Economic Crisis (known as “*A Crise*” or “*The Crisis*”) was evaluated and how political and business personalities, above all, bank leaders, were represented. The humor is, in these cases, a vehicle to frame political and financial events.

By treating serious issues with an apparent levity and indiscretion, the humoristic political cartoons we scrutinize exemplify how political communication can be operated multi-dimensionally. But, probably what is most prominent is that humor may give represent cultural attitudes and shared beliefs in a vernacular, direct and unpretentious way. One of its central characteristics has to do with its capacity to attract readers that are not able to participate in political debate on the sophisticated level taken by hard-news. In fact, political cartoons only entail a “minimum cognitive strain” (Giarelli, 2006: 74) by being summarized in mini-narratives and idealizations, implement rhetorical devices that simplify the presentation of points of view and delivering its content in a matter of seconds (in contrast with the reading of a lengthy newspaper article).

#### *BPN – New Season* BY ANTÓNIO JORGE GONÇALVES

This political cartoon was published in April, 7th 2014 in *Inimigo Público* (a weekly humor supplement in *Público* newspaper). It shows the President of the Portuguese Republic, Dr. Anibal Cavaco Silva, the President of Portugal National Bank, Dr. Vitor Constâncio and the President of the European Commission, Dr. Durão Barroso, at the time, wearing fashionable clothes and in feminine poses in a way we can associate with poster of television fiction series. In the upper left side, we read “*That’s life*” in a clear allusion to the television broadcaster “*Fox Life*” (same lettering). In the title figures: “*BPN – New season*”, the second literal reference to a television show. It must be said the P stand out in italic perhaps pointing to the first letter of “Portugal”.

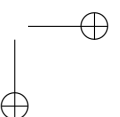
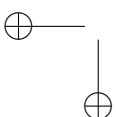


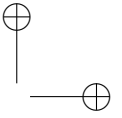
To understand this cartoon, one has to contextualize it in the proper political-economical setting since “to decode the cartoon, one must be somewhat familiar with the literary and cultural source to which it refers” (Medhurst and DeSousa, 1981: 201).

At the time, public agenda was marked by the collapse of BPN (*Banco Português de Negócios*), a private bank who was nationalized following the criminal investigation that brought allegations of corruption, money laundry and influence peddling. Every media was insistently covering this case and helped to give it a great impact on Portuguese society. The discussion revolved around the adequacy of public intervention (and money) on a private bank.

At a symbolically level, António Jorge Gonçalves chose to portrait the feminine version of Dr. Durão Barroso with a dress with the pattern of European Union flag. Even if the cartoon’s reader in order to apprehend it, had to recognize the other two major figures of political life, he had not to know the President of European Commission since the dress symbolically refers to it. The tone is obviously a satirical one. But, in this case, the political satire does not imply any depreciation of these particular political persons. The cartoon is, on the contrary, oriented to the BPN case and the impact it had on Public Opinion. Dressing men in women’s clothes seems to have the purpose to build an allusion television fiction series’ glamour and drama. It puts political and Economic actors as Fiction actors. They are represented as the main characters of this “season”. The cartoon, hence, uses the humor to establish a parallel between the development of BPN case and the development of a television series as if one could follow the evolution of the events as a plot segmented in several episodes. The point of the cartoon seems to be exactly that: asserting the way the BPN was being conducted as a kind of soap-opera or drama in which the citizen/spectator could not envisage its end. We can extend the analogy and say that António Jorge Gonçalves is exploring the BPN case as having a similar nature of many television series with bizarre characters, intrigues, tragedy and twists. The “New Season” mention in the title only corroborates the temporal line it wants to stress: indeed, the BPN collapse had many surprises and unforeseen happenings as the hearings in the Commission of the National Assembly were taken place.

The main rhetorical device used to deliver its point is condensation. In fact, this cartoons differentiates itself by the juxtaposition of two separate universes: the political one and the fictional one. By putting political persons on

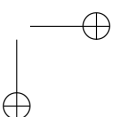
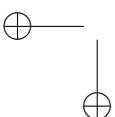




the realm of a television show it merges the non-factual world with the factual one. The objective may be to imply that BPN collapse was being dealt in such a way that it was not far from many fictional stories we encounter in television series. This coincides exactly with the description Morris (1993: 199-202) gave of condensation: a combination of detached elements within a common singular frame. In this particular case, the frame used points to the entertainment industry and puts humorously the seriousness of political life in the frame of a comedy-drama series (*Desperate Housewives*' style – ABC, 2004). A particular use of condensation lies in the intertextuality of the political cartoons (cf. Werner, 2004). *BPN-new season* borrows from prior visual texts and the reader has to interpret the cartoon as this light (in this case, through not against). The political cartoon mirrors the poses of many fashion models (looking the other way, raised foot, hands in hips) as well as the spatial organization of modern television series. The television show gives the cartoon its cultural background and situate the politicians according to the stereotype of comedy-drama characters and events.

The rhetorical condensation here present has a major feature: it incorporates political culture into popular culture facilitating the connection of disinterested citizens with politics. They do not expect to see politics tied to particular television shows but the unexpectedness may get their attention (Conners, 2007: 262). This may be accidental to António Jorge Gonçalves but creates a familiarity that enables an instant connection to the audience while cuts with the conventional dry discourse on politics. The cartoonist could state his opinion using distinguishing words. But by using visual rhetorical to transmit his message he is able to more easily make an allusion to popular mass culture. He uses images that linger because they resonate familiar and well-known ideas. Withdrawing from heavy verbiage, the image of the cartoons is organized following the television image. Condensation is, then, a rhetorical tool to reach readers in political cartoons. More exactly, the condensation forms a special kind of allusion to popular culture and fictional characters. The effect it to pass a message that is simple and visually based.

The prime value to frame politics according to popular culture is helping readers relating to the issues at debate on a given time. And that's why we have so much examples of this intersection between political culture and popular culture.





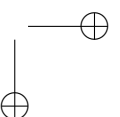
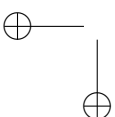
Additionally, we can observe *BPN-New Season* trying to answer the question: do we have here an example of the double standard thesis?

A short reply could be: no and yes. Given the rhetorical effect of condensation and the intersection with popular culture, the particular politicians here represented are not depreciated, mocked or scorned. What, above all, seem to be ridicularized is the political process itself and the way it develops in Portuguese society. It is politics (the political process) that is lampooned. Since the main focus of the political cartoons is the BPN collapse, the analogy to television series is between politics and entertainment, not between these particular personalities and entertainment. Given the allusion to popular culture, this political cartoon is not arguing these persons are in fault or were incapable of something. Instead, it makes a general comparison between two different domains of experience and, in doing so, it begins to bring close citizens and politics. In some sense, this cartoons performs, via rhetorics, a kind of translation of Portuguese political life.

Even if we take Dr. Vitor Constâncio as representing bankers (and by extension business men), we cannot establish that politics and business is being treated separately. In fact, political persons (Dr. Cavaco Silva and Dr. Durão Barroso) and Economy persons (Dr. Vitor Constâncio) are represented exactly in the same way. They are part of a condensation strategy mixing political culture and popular culture. They are in this together. There is no discrimination in the representations cartoonist does about politicians and business men.

By other hand, some might object that Dr. Cavaco Silva, Dr. Vitor Constâncio e Dr. Durão Barroso are key participants in the whole case of BPN’s nationalization and the political process. In this case, if we abstract from politics and personalize those political characters, we can say that these particular politicians are being mocked through a comparison to women television stars. According to this interpretation, we are here facing an example of the double standard thesis where politicians are mocked (including Dr. Vitor Constâncio, that as president of National Portuguese Bank has a mixed role between Economy and Politics).

In sum, the double standard thesis, in this case, can be determined if we concentrate the analysis on the personal traits of these personalities. Politics is being compared to popular culture in a depreciation way. To some, this is the proof of negative despising representation of politicians. But for others,



including us, this is just an efficient display of rhetorical condensations that, in itself, is not a bad thing.

So, the double standard thesis has, in this case, a double nature: if take the focus of the political cartoon to be the fusion of politics and popular culture we do not encounter it. But if we focus the analysis in these particular political persons, then, we must conclude that politicians are portrayed in a not-dignified, negative, adverse way. In so doing, the political cartoon confirms the concept of the double standard thesis.

### ***FMI prepares Portugal for a Meal* BY RODRIGO DE MATOS**

Published in January, 11th 2011 in the weekly national newspaper “Expresso”, *FMI*<sup>1</sup> *prepares Portugal for a Meal* political cartoon shows a glutton person, at a table, ready to starting eating a plate of salad, potatoes and a Portuguese man (“*campino*”). The knife and forks are at the plate’s side. Attending to the symbols, we can apprehend that the gourmand represents the International Monetary Fund (IMF) putting some spice (money) in this appetizing meal that represents Portugal. By a series of visual metaphors, the cartoonist Rodrigo de Matos transmits the message that not just IMF is eager to eat, it starving (consider the tongue out of the mouth), but that will “eat” Portugal. This metaphor of eating is not without importance since the act implies a process of integration in one own body. This idea of integration or processing is key to understand the cartoon and may be read as an allusion to the dependency of Portugal to the IMF as if the International Monetary Fund absorbed the whole country.

The context is the 2011 financial intervention of the European Troika in Portugal. It pointed to the weight of the IMF in the country while it foretold what would be announced later in April. The European troika is the designation of the triumvirate representing the European Union (EU), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In April, 6th 2011, the Prime-Minister of Portugal, Dr. José Sócrates, announced the country would be object of a financial rescue by Troika after many years of structural deficit and successive increases in the interest rate of the loans to the market. The Troika, led by the International Monetary Fund, lent 78 billions

1. FMI stands for “*Fundo Monetário Internacional*”, the portuguese initials to the IMF (International Monetary Fund).

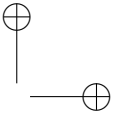


Euros to Portugal. Media newspapers covered the event with close attention and the whole new political-economical-financial context was name as “the Crisis”.

The political cartoon was created in this time of “Crisis”: unemployment rose, the salaries had decreased, PIB and exportations had retreated, and citizens did not know what to expect. Their trust in a prosper future had become just a hope. The public opinion climate was of apprehension and doubt, and it is this sentiment of incertitude that the cartoonist alludes to. The political cartoon’s message reflects this attitude of vulnerability to the IMF and the idea Portugal was a country heavily dependent on the Troika’s will. Since Portugal was condemned to follow the recommendations of IMF in order to keep receiving money to sustain the Portuguese State, public opinion at the time felt as entrapped or at the mercy of the whims of IMF. *FMI prepares Portugal for a Meal* exactly translates these worries to a graphic satire emphasizing the discomfort of Portugal and the satisfaction of the IMF with this situation (we must not forget the interest rates involved in the Troika’s loan).

The symbols used are manifold and help to transmit the intended message. Hence, the cartoon present the dollar sign to indicate currency is involved in this process. It is the money over Portugal that, ultimately, will season the meal and satisfy the eager IMF. Another symbol present in the representation of Portugal is the “*campino*”, the Portuguese peasant wearing the traditional green and red barrette [“barrete, in Portuguese]. The plate where the “*campino*” lies has also the inscription “Portugal” just to strengthen the association to the country. The IMF is represented by a large man in a dark suit with tie and top hat containing the initials IMF. The top hat and tie also indicates a relation to Business and Management since business men tend to be represented in that way. So, in this political cartoon are not the politicians that are framed but especially the bankers and financial organizations such as IMF.

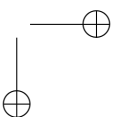
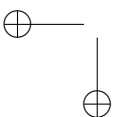
The thesis of the political cartoons has to do with the public sentiment of impotency and vulnerability Portuguese public opinion felt about Troika and IMF. It may be stated as: “Portugal is vulnerable to IMF and will be totally incorporated in IMF ‘s will”. It reinforces the negativity and embarrassment Portuguese citizen felt towards Troika’s intervention and the power IMF had in the orientations of public policies. Public opinion somewhat felt overwhelmed by the influence of IMF in political decisions as well as surprised by the effect of financial organizations had in the political organization of Portugal.



The tone is clearly satirical and comic. In fact, humor is a central aspect of this cartoon and it reiterates the common perception of the IMF intervention in Portugal as nefarious. Humor's tendency is to reinforce and strengthen already extant attitudes rather than change those attitudes (Gruner *apud* Anderson, 2007: 33). This capacity to support a public sentiment and to visually depict it is paramount in the effort to build a community sense. The political cartoon emphasizes unity by putting external organization as a threat to Portugal. Instead of contributing to ego-development, it sharpens Portuguese collective conscience to the effects of IMF may have in everyday life. It is as if there was an outside world and a foreign agenda that must be perceived in order to Portugal not become a victim and get eaten. The humor turns the political cartoons more persuasive in its message (Anderson, 2007: 28). It "shows" something that can be subtle and difficult to establish at first sight: the potential costs of the financial dependency to IMF.

The main rhetorical device here is, thus, domestication: the translation of distant events to concrete happenings of everyday experience. Hence, the political cartoon authored by Rodrigo de Matos frames the financial rescue of Portugal and its possible consequences in familiar terms. It represents them as meal where Portugal is the main-course. The country is not the main guest but the food that IMF will savor. It puts a complex political-economical-financial operation in a simpler frame: that of everyday meals. A frequent, tangible and acquainted action becomes visually the conceptual basis to think a very intricate process of financial rescue. The multiple consequences in the citizen's life (inflation, loss of revenues, etc) are, thus, synthetized in the act of eating someone.

In what respect can we attribute the double standard thesis in this case? If we take IMF as a symbol of Finances and Business (represented with suit, tie and top hat just as traditionally business man are portrayed) we can be in the presence of the confirmation of this double standard. There are no politicians involved in the cartoon but the IMF is nor ridiculed or mocked. Contrariwise, he is in the top of the situation, dominating the activity, being the one who benefits from it. It is represented as successful (look into the round, fat figure) perhaps because it is used to "eat" (intervene in) whole countries. So, if we take IMF as a distant insinuation to business men we see that the political cartoon does not represent business and financial organizations as vicious but as prosperous. It has a positive attitude towards it. In this sense, the double



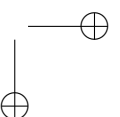
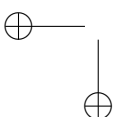


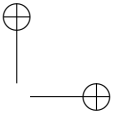
standard is confirmed by putting a financial institution on the upper-hand. This is in accordance with the first analyzed political cartoon where politicians are denigrated. So, once more, and despite being a political cartoon authored by a different person, it seems the double standard remains embedded in the way cartoonists see political reality.

**MR. MILLIONAIRE, WOULD YOU GET ME SOME COINS TO FACE THE CRISIS? BY HENRIQUE MONTEIRO**

Henrique Monteiro's *The Richest* first appeared in *Sapo Notícias*, a news web portal in August, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and is since then available in the personal website of the cartoonist. It depicts a gigantic man wearing a suit and top hat while he smokes an also gigantic cigar. The huge man has a hand in his pocket and the other in his ear. He is bent over himself trying to hear a very small and tiny man that is looking upwards. Portuguese readers are able to relate this small man symbolically with the Portuguese people because it resembles *Zé Povinho*: the Portuguese everyman created in 1875 by Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro. He became first a symbol of the Portuguese working-class people, and eventually an unofficial personification of Portugal. The political cartoon has a subtitle explaining what the giant is saying: “*what? I cannot hear anything from here*”. It is clear we are facing the representation of miscommunication event, or at least, an act of difficult comprehension due to the great disproportion between those figures.

Symbolically we trace the cartoon to a face-off between the people (alluded by a figure closely associated with *Zé Povinho*) and the business/economical elite, this is, rich men (alluded by the man in a top hat and cigar). What we see is the imbalance between citizens and business men heights that may be symbolically represent the inequality between rich and poor. There's clearly a gap between them and the millionaire seem to be not in the mood to help. The utterance sounds as an excuse not to help. Or it can be just an honest answer since the difference of the way they both feel the “*crisis*” time. Given the context of external financial intervention of the European Troika, this political cartoon can be said to satirize the whole different perspective on the crisis felt by the business elite and the common, everyday people. It is as if business people were so distant of the economic difficulties of the people that almost could not sense it. This is symbolically given by the struggle to ear





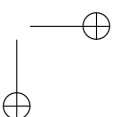
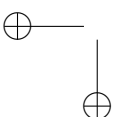
the demand of the Portuguese people. So, this is a political cartoon that can better be apprehended by Portuguese readers, especially those that have lived in those trouble political-economic times and that are able to identify with it.

The main focus of Henrique Monteiro's seems to draw attention to disparity between rich and poor and how European Troika had different effects on the business men and on the laymen. The frame is given by the dissimilarity between rich and poor, more exactly, how the same political-economical context was experienced in very dissimilar ways: business and bank elite had not trouble in it continuing to dispose of money to pursue their objectives, while the layperson was facing serious distresses to keep the life he had before of the so called "crises" and the external intervention of IFM and other institutions in Portugal.

The thesis or main point of this political cartoon lies precisely in here: the discrepancy of the consequences experienced between the business men and the common layperson: the rich man is represented as a tall person, untouchable by the crisis, having difficulties to empathize with the common, tiny people. So, there is a fierce critique in this cartoon concerning not just the different experience of the "Crisis", but also the attitude of millionaires regarding the neediest. Note that the millionaire is apparently depicted as continuing with his life as always, smoking the customary cigar. More, it seems the cartoons criticizes the business men attitude given that the tall, gigantic figure keeps his hand deep in his pocket. If it is to retain his money or nor to share it with the people, we do not know. All we see is that hands are kept on pockets. In the case of the *Zé Povinho* related figure he is also with his hand inside the pockets. But in this case we may argue contrariwise: it is because he has not job, nothing to do, nor any money left with him that he has his hands put away.

The rhetorical device in here is opposition. Henrique Monteiro's reduces the social complexity involved in the disparity between rich and poor to a conflicting occurrence where one does not seem to be understood by the other. We face, thus, a binary hostility between the Portuguese people's will to survive this special period of "crisis", and the rich men almost indifference to that struggle. All the inequalities between those two socio-economical statuses are here reduced to an economical or financial one.

Can we identify in this political cartoon the double standard thesis? Regarding how it depicts business men by being not affected by the crisis in the





same way it affected the Portuguese people, we see that the double standard is validated. In this case, business and bank men are portrayed as being in a good, comfortable position. They still wear the suit and smoke the cigar. Nonetheless, morally they are highly satirized since the tall business figure respond with triviality to the people’s demands. They are represented on the pedestal – confirming the double standard thesis – but in this case stand higher than the rest may mean a difficult to help those in need. There is, thus, a critique to the egoistical attitude: by being distant from the “crisis” business rich men do not relate to the common person and his struggle.

So, once again it can be said we are in the presence of the double standard thesis: in this case, politicians are not negatively portrait but the business elite is depicted as being in control of the situation, on top, and having the upper hand.

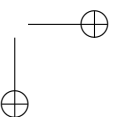
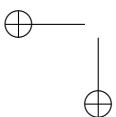
It is not a straight confirmation of the double standard but we can see how rich men (visually associated with business men) are portrayed as dominant. Just like Morris advocated, it seems that both politics and business are represented in opposing ways.

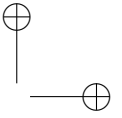
## CONCLUSION

The three examples of Portuguese political cartoons examined represent politic life and business life in heterogeneous terms. Even if each one works upon a specific rhetorical device (either condensation, domestication or opposition), the three have all in common the different treatment given to politicians and business, financial men despite the different frames they apply.

In the first cartoon authored by António Jorge Gonçalves, politicians are derided and compared to a television diva: as famous and successful women who are very attractive and fashionable. So, it confirms the wastage of politics and the wasteful use of something valuable: political power. It, thus, relates politics to something not just futile but also as vain. Each politician is described in vanity terms, interested in his appearance, not so much in BPN case. So, political activity is mocked as fruitless or unavailing.

In the IMF political cartoon authored by Rodrigo de Matos, we testify to the clear representation of the constructive efficiency of business (Morris, 1992: 2549). It is that proficiency that puts Portugal in a bad situation or in metaphorically terms, as a tempting meal. Business here refers to committed



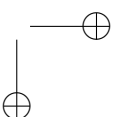
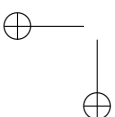


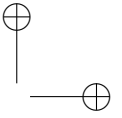
functioning of IMF and how money and finances may threaten a country's way of life. So, taking the IMF as a symbol of business endeavors we conclude that this second Portuguese political cartoon tends to reiterate the double standard thesis by highlighting the purposive effectiveness of business. In this case, it is represented as ruthless and focused, fulfilling a conscious objective. In the cartoon authored by Henrique Monteiro, we also confirm this tendency to depict business in hard-hearted and merciless terms as if business life was too distant from everyday life and could not listen or care for the common person. Deepening the analysis, we said that business is, in this case, shown as arrogant and incapable (or at least having much difficulty) of attending to the fragile situation the Portuguese people experienced. In the last two political cartoons we see how business is associated with purpose and efficiency, while in the first cartoon, politics is obviously given as an ineffective, otiose activity. Taking the three examples together we may say that it seems there is, at least, a tendency in Portuguese cartoons, to reiterate the double standard thesis.

As a whole, these three random examples present divergent ways to frame politics and business. This is very interesting since what was observed in a Canadian context, seems to be also plausible in the European, Portuguese context. But most importantly, the analysis seems to indicate that the double standard thesis can be actually applied to trans-national contexts. This means that the framing of politics and business may not be limited to one country but may reflect a political world-view occurring in contemporary societies. From the double standard standpoint, there are no fundamental differences in the way Canadian political cartoonists and Portuguese political cartoons assess politics and business life.

What this paper does, even if it alludes to it, is not to absolutely confirm the hypothesis the double standard thesis to be just one frame among possible others, or, as an alternative, if the double standard thesis is the main frame to represent an oppositional view on politics and business. Only further research can absolutely claim any of these possibilities. Our aim had not an empirical focus even if subsequent works may well fulfill this gap.

Nonetheless, by the analysis developed in this paper, we are inclined to posit that the double standard thesis is one of the main frames political cartoonists employ today. It functions as a rhetorical *topos* enabling an easy assimilation of two intricate and dynamic fields of activity. We saw how politicians, banker and business men are frequent characters in political cartoons. The way





they tend to be represented points to this very real possibility of the double standard thesis be a frame wide-applied that performs a rhetorical function of providing a stable set of social meanings to apprehend two very different activities such as politics and business.

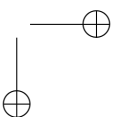
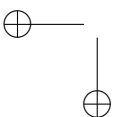
Of course, this sample is not representative of all the Portuguese production in political cartoons. Only subsequent studies on this subject would give us a full comprehension of this dialectical relation. But, by studying Portuguese political cartoons, we already put ourselves on the right tracks to evaluate this multifaceted problem.

This paper is giving us important clues to the framing operations, visual rhetorical devices and the kind of humor used in Portugal. These three aspects are crucial indications to the validation of the double standard thesis in other countries. Consequently, this paper opens the path to determine is the double standard thesis is one of the preferential framings to represent political, economic and social reality.

So, the double standard thesis dealing with an effective view of business and wasteful view of politics are a concrete possibility to consider regarding Portuguese political cartoons and may be a serious possibility to assume the place of one of the most frequent frames in political cartoons world-wide.

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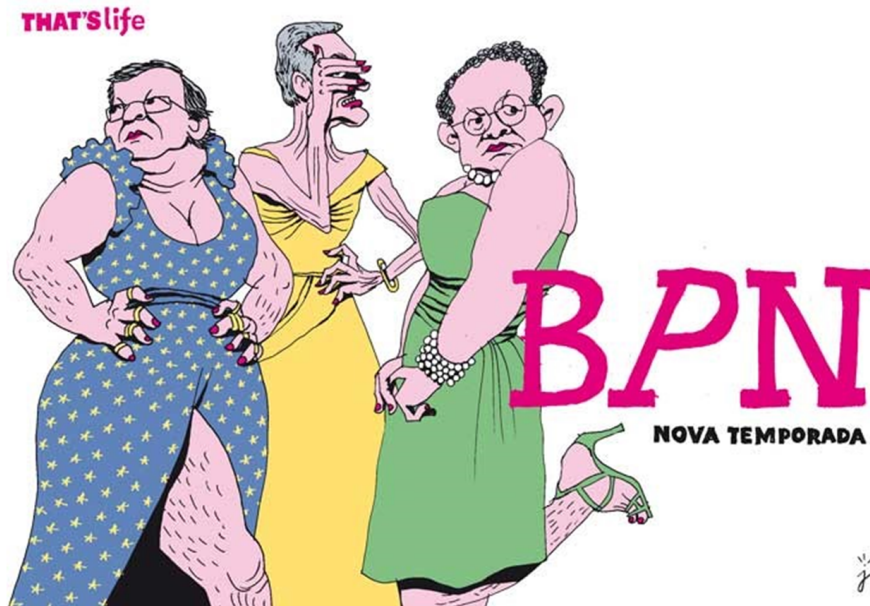
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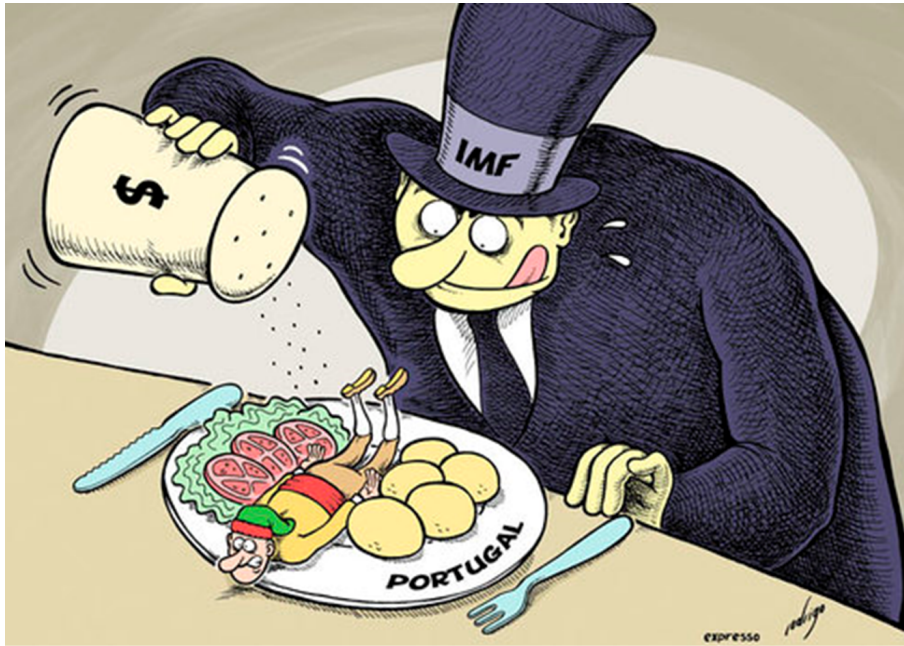
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**Annexes**



Cartoon 1. António Jorge Gonçalves, “BPN- nova temporada” (BPN-New Season),  
*Inimigo Público*, 7 de Abril de 2014;  
[www.antoniojorgegoncalves.com/archives/3594](http://www.antoniojorgegoncalves.com/archives/3594)



Cartoon 2. Rodrigo de Matos, *FMI prepares Portugal for a Meal*, Semanário Expresso, 11 de Janeiro de 2011; [www.expresso.pt](http://www.expresso.pt)



Cartoon 3. Henrique Monteiro, *Senhor Rico, arranja-me uns trocos para a crise?* (*Mr. Millionaire, would you get me some coins to face the crisis?*), *Sapo Notícias*, 25 de Agosto de 2011; <http://henricartoon.pt/389892.html>