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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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ESSAY FOR BUILDING DEMOCRACY THROUGH COMMUNICATION IN TIMOR-LESTE

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ABSTRACT

This essay aims to observe the particularities of communication and politics, as well as to explain its concepts from a modern perspective of mediatisation and democracy, based on renowned authors in their areas of study, such as Aristotle, Kant, Lasswell, Habermas, Sartori, De Fleur & Ball-Rockeach, Gomes, McQuail, Rogers, among others. Studies that will open new horizons for principles will help Timor-Leste to understand and establish guidelines for the inclusion of their communities and culture, with the aim of inclusive democratization of the Timorese people in their new Nation-State. Building democracy in a new country is not an easy task and the exact foundations for this constitution are not always available. For this reason, studying these concepts and understanding the problematization that involve them will open horizons for the structural conduct of policies that can be implemented in the country, taking into account the communication technologies that can be used in this endeavor.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication continues to be a major concern for scholars in all areas, but especially in the area of politics, due to the influence of the masses. This discussion and studies of the media go back to the classics of both Political Science and Philosophy, such as Aristotle, Kant, Lasswell, Habermas, Sartori, just to name a few. Thinkers who already in their circles and societies discussed the effects and influence of mass communication on a society, but in a broad way, mainly in the formation processes, in the construction of political leaderships or in the manipulation of public opinion. At the beginning of the technological era, the period between world wars, the communion of Communication and Politics became more active and evident. The use of communication as a way of convincing life, political changes, mobilizations in the face of confrontations, economic crises, solidarity and community campaigns, offered the power of the word, whether written or spoken, for a systematization of the masses.

In this way, a question arises. How to build a society using the available means of communication, without altering the sovereignty of a people?

This is hard and long work and denotes innumerable cares regarding its conduction. Using communication as an instrument of change in a society needs discernment so that the conduct happens with the awareness of the potentialization of the instrument used, as well as in the construction and modifications of the institutional and democratic

processes that result from this use. Through communication technologies and in their relationship with adopted or desired policies, practices of political authorities and cultural growth in a country will be established. In smaller countries, such as Timor-Leste, where this structure is still in its infancy, the emphasis of communications, especially those centered on world events, guides the conventions of that society. It presents new directions and decisions to be taken and, not only emphasizing that the local culture must be respected, preserved and improved, the new communication and mediation technologies must be incorporated into the daily life of each citizen, in each community, in a mild and non-invasive way, safeguarding the proportions of technological innovations, both in cultural direction, in breaking paradigms, and in political construction. Several times, world politics influences the policies of countries where democracy is still being instituted, as is the case of a presidential election in the United States. But what is important in this context? This is a worldwide event, especially for western peoples, as it can change political decisions and agreements. The nature and importance of this event brings the need for a worldwide audience, in order to maintain the picture of political supremacy. In these events, its notoriety requires the use of broad communication technologies, such as newspapers, radio, cell phones, internet, television, becoming these means of communication, indispensable for the desired message to be transmitted. Professor Arraes, in his article "United States: will and popular sovereignty" (Revista Mundorama, 2015), promotes a reflection on the frequency in the history of international politics, of the performance of an empire regarding the dominance of minor powers.

In this work, Arraes recalls that the strongest countries of the European Union, together with the United States, use communication mechanisms, through discourses of neoliberalism and globalization, to come to the defense of totalitarian states and as a just maintenance of an imperialist attitude towards smaller countries, evidencing scarce possibilities regarding the free manifestation of the population's claim regarding their countries, especially regarding economic policies (ARRAES, Mundorama Magazine, 2015). Also as evidence of these manifestations of political sovereignty, these activities are incorporated, the activities of Personal and Political Marketing, which transmit a specific message and that when they are elaborated, the public person, their actions and pretensions are taken into account, as well as the determination of the character that one wants to pass, with the use of the language appropriate to the target audience that will be interacted with.

This message, when well constructed, can come to play a favorable factor for a given candidate, and not because of his government plan, but because of his posture, clothing and speech previously prepared to convince the public (BORDIN, 2013), but on the other hand, a simpler candidate, with less resources, presents his political plan, making use of honesty and sincerity, which in the absence of powerful adequate media resources, uses the legitimacy of his speech. Through these resources, it is understood that new technologies and politics have a strong interdependence and interaction. Political circles take advantage of this interaction to present their ideas both to leaders, whether political or social, whichever suits them best, and to minorities, betting on convincing the adopted discourse. They use resources such as news, advertisements, advertisements, emails, videos, podcasts to disseminate their messages and reach the greatest number of people and institutions. It can be considered that the transformations that occurred in different segments of society itself are supported by the speed with which technological development takes place and have a fundamental participation in the delivery of the delivered speeches.

Relationship between communication and politics: A more focused look at communicational studies and the relationship of communication with politics, refers to research where social scientists, especially psychologists, sociologists and political scientists, authors focused on the phenomenon of the use of mass technologies and their popularization, such as de FLEUR & BALL-ROCKEACH, 1993; GOMES, 2004; MCQUAIL, 2013; ROGERS, 1986, point to evidence and use of these technologies at the beginning of the twentieth century, mainly in relation to the disentanglement in the period of the main world wars. The means of communication used at the time of the great wars were cinema, newspapers and printed magazines, radio and early television, and their uses provided Studies in the perception of historical and pragmatic reasons for the effects of the media (ROGERS, 1986). The author shows that political propaganda in this period was crucial for the understanding of the behavior of the masses, as well as for its conduct. As well as, it was also of fundamental importance to understand basic concepts, which were behind the messages uttered and represent the structured communicational process for each means of communication where "who, says What, in which channel, to whom and with what effect" (LASSWELL, 1972, p.84-85). The author adhered not only to the study of the means used in communication, but also the importance of content transmission, revealing the seriousness of the process from the values and hierarchy infused in a society that consumes this content (LASSWELL, 1972, p. 91).

From the 30s / 40s and with the understanding of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, which originated the idea where through clarification the objective is to instigate a more accurate perception in relation to the institution of standardized actions in order to sustain a dominant system. A theory that comes into contact with the concept of the Cultural industry, mainly as a basis for a dominant political ideology.

What is not said is that the ground on which technology gains its power over society is the power that the economically stronger

exercise over society. Technical rationality today is the rationality of domination itself. It is the compulsive character of society alienated from it self. (ADORNO, HORKHEIMER. 1985. pg. 100).

These authors describe mass as pieces of a cog, manipulated for the "rationality of one's own domination" (ADORNO, HORKHEIMER. 1985), through the production of cultural articles, films, books, and music in a standardized way, and which contribute to linking the idea that through the consumption of goods and services, happiness will be achieved. Thus, Society presents itself alienated by the Cultural industry itself, limiting the human being to what is offered to him, impelling him to consumption with almost no reflections on what is being consumed. From the 60s, the media began to occupy the central place of dissemination of content, shaping public opinion. This scenario to reach the intended audience, is also reflected in politics, with well-defined visions of the role of these technologies in the masses, exposed in the dichotomy described by Umberto Eco as apocalyptic and integrated (ECO, 2021). Strands that elevated the public above the mass media, superimposing the horizontalization of the consumer, described here as apocalyptic, or simply those who perceived the mass media and their role in society as fair in this construction, described as integrated (ECO, 2021). Strands that elevated the public above the mass media, superimposing the horizontalization of the consumer, described here as apocalyptic, or simply those who perceived the mass media and their role in society as fair in this construction, described as integrated (ECO, 2021).

The speed with which Mass Communication Technology and culture develop today, shows precisely these two subjects presented by Umberto Eco. As a complement to this idea and through other contemporary thinkers, such as BLUMLER, GUREVITCH, 1995; GOMES, 2004; SARTORI, 1997, there should be a concern with the structure of the content delivered, how it is received and perceived and how it occupies the central scenario of communication, so that the message is understood in the most authentic way possible, trying to leave little margin to individual idealisms and conventions. It is perceived that the role played in the political environment, needed to evolve at the same time as technology, but based on the principle that the media, not only deliver messages, but are also amenable to interactions of Representatives truly active in politics. These interventions are visible during electoral periods, since, particularly in television, the political functions of the media acquire visibility and importance in periods of intense political communication (BLUMLER, GUREVITCH, 1995). Thus, the so-called Information Society, part of the assumption and reality of the relationship between communication technologies and politics (BELL, 1973). This reality points to "a growing and complicated zone of interface between the universes of politics and Mass Communication" (GOMES, 2004). Starting from this hypothesis that communications are forms of appeal to the chosen and segmented public and there is a concern with their content, as discussed above, so that they are disseminated in the format and message that you want to deliver, the medium used is more than important. In a mediated society, the delivery of content needs to take into account the habits of seeking knowledge, information and news to which this society is inserted.

On the other hand, in a society in which mediatization is not yet often present, it will be necessary to resort to the most basic and usual means for the message to achieve its objectives, without forgetting, of course, that in all societies, there are two types of content consumers, those who do not have access to technology and those who already make use of it.

We are referring here, however, to the psychological and social consequences of designs and patterns, in that they extend or accelerate existing processes. For the "message" of any medium or technology is the change in scale, cadence, or pattern that that medium or technology introduces into human things. (MCLIHAN, 1964. Q. 22)

McLuhan states that “[...] highlight the point that “the medium is the message”, because it is the medium that configures and controls the proportion and form of human actions and associations” (1964. P.23), it can be observed that even when we have a country that is consolidating itself as a productive society and in the opening of its borders in the international community, the means of disseminating information and opinions is precisely the factor that will satisfy and guide the population's need for knowledge, in the face of political and governmental activities.

History shows us that countries, as in the case of Brazil, where even when the media went through technical advances, these advances were not satisfactory to establish a democratic practice, both for politicians and the population. Even though the press transcribes speeches, minutes and other senatorial documents, the willingness to popularize this information is hampered by the lack of interest in dialogue between politicians and the population. To be taken into account in these nations, the social and cultural backwardness of the vast majority of the population, (ALMEIDA, 2007), as well as its ancestral principles, which in some communities are more difficult obstacles to be broken. Although there may be on the part of the authorities and the press, the dissemination of this information, the thought rooted in the minds of public and political men may prevail, although not in all, that communication and democracy do not always combine with the maintenance of authority (ALMEIDA, 2007), especially in countries where the building of a new society is still in the foundations, as is the case of Timor-Leste. Still, the democratic regime presents as an essential condition the formation of the manifestation of political power expressed through the media. Even in the most primordial stages of this democratic formation, the media can help to found a country, taking into account that they should not only be used as instruments of political propaganda, but also as intermediary instruments in the exchange between political representatives and the population (ALMEIDA, 2007). Understand that this is a work where the media has a fundamental role for the conception of society, translating them as intervention devices, when modulated by society, for and in the reality of that society itself.

Conceptualization of politics: The definition of politics dates back to the Greeks, 5th and 4th centuries BC, and as a basis it did not characterize politics as a science in its philosophical sense (SARTORI, 1997, p.157). To understand this Greek definition, it is necessary not to consider the peculiarity of political knowledge. The author claims that the Aristotelian view was that man was a political being by ESSENCE, that politics would be man's very nature and not an aspect of his life, a communion between being and community. Whoever was on the margin of this conformation would be a “non-being” (SARTORI, 1997, p.158), that is, this view “is more linked to the discourse of morality and ethics than the autonomy of knowledge” (SARTORI, 1997, p. 162). Sartori demonstrates that it was Machiavelli who perceived the rupture of politics connected to morality or religion and conceptualized the existence of the state (1997, p.163). As well as defined the performance of government officials, based on the rules for fulfilling their own interests, regardless of the means used, describing in their accounts amoral strategies, often adopted by politicians at different stages of their own careers.

These practices, although organized by Machiavelli, can be experienced in current rulers, such as the use of advertising and political marketing to denote their visibility as Authority; the dependence of a people, through conditions or situation created for such; political negotiations for the destruction of rivals or conquest of allies; lack of effective administrative plans for organizing actions necessary for the anticipation of crises and catastrophes; recommendation of omission and manipulation when necessary, even of lies for the achievement of objectives and maintenance of acquired power; construction of great works and their publicization, even if they do not there is a real need. Seen all this panorama with respect to contextualization about politics, we can discern that the term politics goes far beyond the border determined by Regions, agreements and positions, and is present in the day to day of any rational being. It is

common to expect that the immoral strategies applied today and listed above, are rejected and new strategies such as transparency of actions and decisions are common practice.

Democracy and communication: Democracy can be conceived as a regime in which the progressive development of competition and the participation of a people, a polyarchy, is safeguarded, according to Robert Dahl (1997), and contemplates the implementation of free and competitive elections, universal suffrage, secret voting, as well as freedom of organization and expression. It is expected in a democratic system that communication, an essential vehicle for the discussion of opinions and ideas, be adopted according to the needs and desires of the country in question and its people. Political openness establishes important and new roles between communication and politics with different functions within the democratic regime. According to Maria Helena Weber, “the concept of communication is intrinsic to democracy, even if it is not operationalized in its full sense” (WEBER, 2000, P.15). It is perceived in democracy that communication seeks positive opinions with respect to the government, and in order to achieve this feat, mechanisms are created to adopt informative and persuasive communication strategies and thus allow the maintenance of power (WEBER, 2000). The guidelines adopted by democratic governments constantly seek to be inserted in the media, preferably in a positive way, so that the mechanism of visibility and positive images in front of society is effective.

When we approach the communicational media, we perceive the new media as centralizing current preferences. The internet and mobile applications have opened up a range of new technological opportunities. Globalization has united Borders until then only territorial, ceasing to exist limits between people, governments and ideas. This digital apparatus highlighted the media as a fundamental gear in cultural and economic globalization, dynamizing and internationalizing world economies and even recent economies, such as developing countries, so that large conglomerates realize the opportunities of each sector and make new investments, helping these countries overcome their economic crises and grow and institutionalize. Although these digital transformations cannot reach the entire world population with the same speed, the implications can be felt by all people, in one way or another in their daily lives, through changes that cannot always be accompanied, either by their social class, ethnicity, age or sex, or even by their sexual orientation.

The media, by their informative but not always enlightening nature, disseminate opinions centered on regional contexts and influence on way a much larger group of individuals. It ends up turning into a stage of disputes for political power and thus interfering in the correct progress of democracy, establishing uncertainties. (LIMA, 2001, p. 175/176)

In a large audience, this dialogue requires specific means to transmit information and influence those who receive it, such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet. When we understand media visibility as a space in which various social groups and institutions compete with each other and in which ideological struggles unfold over the definition and construction of social reality, the analysis of the opportunity of access becomes fundamental. (CORREIA, 2005)

Antonio Rubim argues in addition to the idea of media visibility that:

[...] globalization, engendered by media communication, is characterized by the Daily availability of a flow of signs and meanings coming from a global extraction and not just from a contiguous place, as previously” (RUBIM, 2000, p.37).

This same author points out that the period in which we live is called the “media age”, where visibility is as important as being real, where it is necessary to share ideas for public and social existence, as well as this constant being used by current politics. The so-called media age redirects and redefines political practice in three ways: in the use of politics in electronic, digital or analog networks, telepolitics; in the

manifestation of new political elements; and in the reorientation of active regimes and in the forms of politics carried out in certain geographical environments (RUBIM, 2000, p.50/51). Maria Helena Weber emphasizes Rubim and points out that “readers, viewers and listeners witness the movements of politics, but they do not have to participate directly” (WEBER, 2001, p.20). Even so, it is perceived that ordinary citizens employ formats of informal, eventual, direct and spontaneous communication, which in many cases manifest themselves as a natural means of politicization, but which can be invariably restricted to circles or communities of participants and which do not have or achieve mediatization. On the other hand, the elites have other information and forms of political interaction, which are sometimes purposely subtracted from the public and limit this confidential information among some academic circles, politicians and journalists, without dissemination to the masses.

But it is seen that in democracy, and despite these two ways of communicating, the public space itself does not present the same rigidity, emphasizing that the surrounding opinion, the opinion referred to as common sense can have some influence on the media messages, becoming politically significant. At the same time, the policy of secrets instituted by high society, can fall into the contradictions that occur among themselves, and create discordant instances potentiated by the greed of the media and influences of public opinion. In these two contexts, faced with the conduct of democratically distributed information, we can simply have an event transformed into a significant political platform, aimed at the community, as well as a catastrophe due to the undisclosed secret. Practices that many democratic governments, are part of everyday political means, are not yet the means by which citizens wish to be governed.

CONCLUSION

This explanation of mediatization, communication and politics, brings the understanding that the means with which policies are worked in the states of government, are the means by which the success of the construction of a country will or reach the correct and sustainable foundations for a nation.

The processes of discussion and exchange of ideas around concrete areas of interaction could give substance to nation-building efforts and to the democratic values of participation, accountability and respect that Timor-Leste has constitutionally embraced. In this context, it is important that dominant community and traditional values are taken seriously as genuine sources of political life and villages as crucial sites of emerging governance practice and fundamental to people's experience and well-being. (BROWN, 2014)

The people and government of Timor-Leste face an arduous and laborious task in the post-colonialist construction of its foundations as a nation-state. Not only as a nation that emerges from decades of struggles and confrontations, but also in the consolidation of the bureaucratic-legal State, maintaining the values and traditions of a people with deep roots and where mediatized communication is still scarce and is done through rural communities. Despite its subsistence economy, Timor-Leste aims to be accepted as a peaceful community that denotes great value to its people and their roots, culture and communities, emphasizing that despite its humble and hardworking origin, it mobilizes to become a nation with innovative characteristics and attention to the population, through investments in the area of education, basic sanitation, culture and health. Despite all its history of domination and guerrillas, policies are being designed with bases in the molds of an internationally recognized nation, and at the same time that the difficulties of reconstruction are presented, its leaders are attentive to political institutions which primarily prevail the well-being of their own people. The emphasis on the processes of discussion and openness for the exchange of ideas in traditional communities, can provide subsidies to substantiate the efforts in this building and raise democratic values for the participation of the

population, in the most varied decision-making areas. Still, Timor-Leste faces difficulties regarding the participation and conscious inclusion of the population, different expectations of authority and legitimization that end up affecting the order and exercise of leadership, whether sectoral, here in the case of communities, or state, causing the exclusion of population sectors to drive division, insecurity, impoverishment and corruption (BROWN, 2014). The linguistic barriers and political rooting social, cultural and sectoral (of local communities), are not always favorable to the same principles of evolution and democracy as a nation, but the idea of independence already rooted in the population, can be a great ally in this construction of social balance. The basic requirements of democratic participation need to be present in this construction, in a social way, for there to be relevance (GOMES, 2005).

Gomes, points out topics that meet the bases that are being built in Timor-Leste:

- a. The structuring of basic political, structural and circumstantial knowledge, based on undistorted and relevant knowledge, educating them at appropriate levels to understand issues of real importance, with well-defined positions and arguments, in the conduct of public business and in relation to the political game;
- b. The real possibility, offered to citizens, in this case the existing communities in Timor-Leste, with access to public debates already begun and also the possibility of new conversations based on the structured policies already established, demonstrating that citizenship can and should be exercised in the opportunity to develop their own arguments and involvement in deliberative procedures can be formed from their own opinion and thus contributing to political decisions;
- c. In favor through timely means of participation in democratic institutions or pressure groups-prevailing acts such as voting, affiliation, invitations and resources for attendance at political events or national or local political activities, praising the effective participation of communities;
- d. Effective training for communication in the civil sphere, of the communities involved, through their representatives at all levels, local, national or international, explaining the opportunity to collect explanations with respect to doubts and accountability.

These may be requirements, or even others appropriate to the reality of the country, in which the bases for a democratic model representative of fact and law, or even as a liberal democracy, help in the conduct of procedures for public affairs, or in decision-making, which will sometimes be regionalized and representative as to The Binding of wills and public opinion (GOMES, 2005). Communication for a more effective democracy can lay the foundations for the evolution of the desired democracy, but it is necessary to observe the context in which Timor-Leste became institutionalized as a nation. Rethinking the political bases of the country for the inclusion of these local communities and their parental, security, political and working organizations can be a way to soften the different forms of conduct, culture and thought, as the independence achieved and through the political education of the people, respecting diversity, in order to restructure and rebuild the communities for an effective Nation-State.

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