PATHOLOGIES AND DYSFUNCTIONS OF DEMOCRACY IN THE MEDIA CONTEXT

THE RETURN OF THE PROPAGANDA MODEL: EMOTIONS, POPULISM, AND POLARIZATION

JOÃO CARLOS CORREIA
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Contents

Introduction   The 3rd Conference on Pathologies and Dysfunctions of Democracy in the Media Context was held at the University of Beira Interior from November 23rd to 25th, 2022. The conference centred around the theme "The Return of the Propaganda Model: Emotions, Populism, and Polarization."

This edition of the conference aimed to explore three significant communicative phenomena that played a pivotal role in shaping the conference's guiding principles. Firstly, there has been a resurgence of a communication style characterized by simplicity, speed, functionality, and an alleged anti-elitist approach. In this paradigm, message consumption is driven by emotional interactions and closely aligns with group consensus, resembling a particular propaganda model.

Secondly, a notable communicative phenomenon emerged, where the acceptance of messages relies on the gratification and pleasure they provide to recipients, rather than their adherence to established truths. This phenomenon, commonly known as misinformation, challenges conventional notions of truth and its role in communication.

Lastly, the conference addressed a third communicative phenomenon wherein the celebration of one's own identity is achieved through the discursive annihilation of opponents. This manifestation occurs through various means such as stereotyping, stigmatization, objectification, and the dehumanization of those perceived as the "Other" outside of one's own "Inner-Group." This form of symbolic annihilation, commonly referred to as hate speech, serves as a mechanism to assert and reinforce one's own identity while marginalizing and silencing opposing viewpoints.

By exploring these communicative phenomena, the conference aimed to shed light on the intricate interplay between propaganda, misinformation, and hate speech, and their impact on democratic processes within the media context. The discussions sought to understand how these phenomena reflect internal group dynamics, promote group ideologies and beliefs, while simultaneously demonizing external entities. Thus, the term "propaganda" was employed within the context of strategic actions aimed at achieving specific objectives by influencing the actions and behaviors of individuals.

Within this context, a range of characteristics and behaviors can be identified that interconnect propaganda, misinformation, and hate speech within the framework of populist domination. These include:

a) Presenting a personalized agenda centered around a charismatic leader who is perceived as essential for the strength and mobilization of the faction. b) Simulating a sense of human interest and establishing a close, warm relationship with the targeted audience. c) Exhibiting a deeply anti-intellectual content that promotes simplistic ideas in opposition to the repertoire of technocrats or professional politicians associated with the elite and establishment. d) Advocating for a return to fundamental and uncomplicated values while accusing the elites of neglecting the rights of the people. e) Demonizing adversaries by emphasizing the perceived dichotomy between ordinary citizens and a corrupt system. f) Simplifying the message and rejecting logical and argumentative discourse. g) Symbolically assuming a substitute and vicarious role on behalf of its consumers/recipients, expressing sentiments and taking actions that resonate with their desires and wishes, which they may be unable or unwilling to express themselves. h) Idealizing communities and institutions, whether they are political parties or nation-states, as exemplars of virtue and superiority in contrast to the alleged degradation or inferiority of their opponents.

These characteristics and behaviours, among other underlying pathologies, contribute to the complex dynamics of propaganda, misinformation, and hate speech within populist contexts. By understanding and analyzing these

elements, researchers can gain insights into the multifaceted nature of these phenomena and their impact on democratic processes and public discourse.

Participants were called with engaging in reflective discourse focused on the primary scope of propaganda, understood as a predominantly strategic action aimed at achieving success by influencing the actions of others, as individuals pursue their own objectives and purposes.

Morelock, Narita Michelotti, and LY, in the article "The Russo-Ukrainian War in the Society of the Selfie" identify and explicate three key patterns observed in the Russo-Ukrainian War. These patterns encompass the profound immersion of the war within the realm of media imagery, the utilization of social media platforms for the dissemination of authoritarian propaganda, and the fostering of biased, dichotomous, and tribalistic modes of thinking.

Naide Muller's work, "Literacy for citizenship and democracy: Framing propaganda within the scope of organized persuasive communication," underscores the significance of citizens critically evaluating the distinctions between consensual forms of persuasion and non-consensual, manipulative, and propagandistic forms of persuasion. This critical evaluation empowers individuals to make informed and autonomous choices within the realm of feminist activist communication.

In his critical analysis titled "Seven key pathologies of contemporary democracy that make emotional appeal a successful formula for the communication model of extremist populism in Portugal: Propaganda Model," Martim Ramos Vasco identifies characteristics present in the communication of extremist populist parties in Portugal. Through an analysis of the discourse employed by the Chega party during the 2021 Presidential Elections campaign, Vasco highlights features such as the aestheticization of communication, the utilization of fabricated content, and the manipulation of emotions within their discourse.

Edson Capoano, Vítor de Sousa, and Vinícius Prates, in their work "Populism, presentism, emotions and spin doctoring on social networks: Jair Bolsonaro's digital communication," perform an examination of

the populist digital communication strategy employed by President Jair Bolsonaro. They explore how emotions are used and managed in response to various moments of public evaluation on social networks.

Sheglan Zhou, in the article "Friends and Enemies of the People: Representations of Historical Figures in Textbooks for the Chinese Post--80s and Post-90s Generations," employs a critical discourse analysis of textbooks to illuminate the intricate relationship between propaganda and education within the People's Republic of China (PRC). Zhou explores how these concepts are interchangeably intertwined and their consequential role in shaping collective memory through the portrayal of "friends" and "enemies" of the Chinese people as constructed by the Chinese Communist Party.

In a comparative analysis, in the article "Incredible India Shining: The Idea of India in Political and Touristic Propaganda Posters of the XXI Century", João Oliveira examines the phenomenon of stereotyping the Nation-State in political campaigns targeting domestic audiences and tourist campaigns aimed at international audiences. Through this analysis, Oliveira seeks to discern and elucidate the similarities and differences in the portrayal of the Nation-State across these distinct contexts.

Lastly, Costa, Capoano and Balbé in the article "How propaganda could influence social media: the case of climate change debate on Twitter" analyzed 21,338 tweets over a period of six months, collected automatically based on the keywords "climate change" and "environment" in tweets from Brazil and Portugal. They concluded that Brazilians and Portuguese differ in their relationship with the topic and the underlying principles associated with it, as well as the personalities invoked and responsibilities attributed. The principles invoked in the tweets from Portugal generate engagement with a European perspective on the issue. On the other hand, the principles invoked in the tweets from Brazil generate a type of engagement that is dualistic and based on national political propaganda

João Carlos Correia

"THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR IN THE SOCIETY OF THE SELFIE"

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This article is informed by ideas from a recently published volume edited by Felipe Ziotti Narita and Jeremiah Morelock, called "The Return of History: The Russo-Ukrainian War and the Global Spectacle." In particular, we are bringing together some issues discussed in the introduction to the book, with ideas from the two opening chapters, by Andressa Michelotti and Uyen Hoang Minh Ly. The book is an extension of "The Society of the Selfie: Social Media and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy," which Narita and Morelock co-authored. The basic argument in the "Society of the Selfie" is that social media has spread across the globe as part of a process of neoliberal globalization and that various sociocultural trends that surround social media play into the current global crisis of liberal democracy and the rise of authoritarian populism. In part, this can be explained by the globalization of neofascism as a movement – through expanding and intensifying globalization processes, the separate regions of the globe are increasingly united by a 'geoculture' strengthened

by the global reach of the internet. The social tendencies that the internet dovetails with and amplifies also spread very effectively due to the nature of contemporary information technologies as the instantaneous connector of otherwise far-flung peoples and places.

This article bridges "The Society of the Selfie: Social Media and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy" with the opening sections of the work "The Return of History: The Russo-Ukrainian War and the Global Spectacle" with a focus on elaborating on a few key concepts in the former book, and pointing toward their application to the Russo-Ukrainian context, as it is treated in the latter book. Here we aim to briefly survey a few concepts starting with our notion of "the society of the selfie," in relation to Debord's theory of the spectacle, moving on then to our concept of "the spectacular self," Douglas Kellner's concept of "media spectacle," and the sociological application of the notion of "splitting" taken from object relations theory. In short, we contend that social media culture dovetails with and amplifies certain neoliberal tendencies with a global reach. Out of this digital and neoliberal liquidation and transformation of the social world, at least three key patterns can be found expressed in the Russo-Ukrainian War – namely, the immersion of the war so thoroughly in the realm of media images, the use of social media to spread propaganda that carries strongman tropes of world leaders, and the promotion of tendentious, black-and-white, tribalistic thinking.

The Society of the Selfie

There is no better sign than *the selfie* of the contemporary love affair between self-obsession and social media. In current times, the 'selfie' plays a relevant role in social life. Despite irony, criticism and celebration, the selfie is an element of self-expression. In a sense, the photographer becomes the artist and the subject of their own art. In a way, the tangible component of production – the media image – the picture is *of* the self [*alone*]. In post-modernity, the photograph – as well as other media images – is quickly shared online, so the invisible audience has the opportunity of seeing the

lives of the others. The admiration or criticism of other people's lives does not come solely with the visual observation of the audience. It comes with technical and algorithmic emotions. Emojis, thumbs up, hearts and other electronic forms of expression are the response from the audience to the other self. To the photographer – the self – there is an expectation that the audience becomes engaged by the materialization of the photo and the life exposed through digital technologies.

In "The Society of the Selfie: Social Media and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy", Felipe Ziotti Narita and Jeremiah Morelock refer to the geo-culture tied to global neoliberal information capitalism as the 'society of the selfie.' We draw this term from Guy Debord's famous 1967 work, *The Society of the Spectacle.* By 'spectacle,' Debord was not only considering whether a media image could excite people or not. Instead, in Debord's views, the spectacle brought by various forms of media image is central to the society's structure and, as a result, it results in the dehumanization of society itself. Such dehumanization happens with the overload and saturation of media images. Eventually, media images allow new forms of understanding of reality. In other words, along with the desire and aversion triggered by the images, there is a partial explanation of what is real and what is not. In Debord's exploration, such dehumanization comes with the commodification and separation of the final product – the image – and those who produced it.

Historically, the Industrial Revolution has played a relevant role in the evolution and expansion of media. In this sense, monopolies, industrial machinery, and innovation influenced the boom of new forms of media. In the same way that industrial technologies and the transportation revolution spread across countries to integrate different geographic and cultural borders, there was also the integration of the capitalist culture that was embedded with material expansion. In a way, the globalization of industrial technologies has also allowed cultural globalization. In Wallerstein's (1991) terms, this phenomenon has brought the development of the 'geocul-

ture.' Fast-forward to the digital age, the spread of information technologies has also caused a similar development of a new form of 'geoculture.' The explosion of the digital has brought an indispensable need for new technologies – such as smartphones – that became necessary tools for the mediatization of the geoculture. With such mediatization, life becomes inseparable from what situationist theorist Guy Debord referred to as 'the spectacle.'

Debord's notion of the spectacle is analogous to Marx's notion of the fetishism of commodities which is expressed in the first volume of *Capital* (Marx 1962 [1867]). For Marx, commodities spring from social relations, which are mediated by the economy. Under capitalism, empirical objects, and quantities overshadow social relations. In particular, the labor that goes into the production of a commodity, and the class relations within it disappear. In other words, the consumer is unable to see the relations behind the final product. In some sense, with Marx's commodity fetishism – the unseen economic and social relations of production – there is an imaginary commodity lifeworld that hides real labor and oppression. Attracted by commodities, consumers interact with them directly in the marketplace rather than with the workers behind the production. While the consumer can interact with the unseen social relationship with the workers who produced the commodity, these relationships are invisible to the consumer. Eventually, the relationship to the commodity is the only experience embedded in the final product.

In the media age, Marx commodity fetishism is translated to the mystification and mediation of the social. In Debord's views, there is a significant concern about how the mystification of social reality turns into the bombardment of media images. To Debord, "the spectacle" – being "not [just] a collection of images [but] a social relation between people that is mediated by images" (DEBORD, [1967] 1983, p.7) – is the *mediation* between the producer and the consumer. In a way, the spectacle promises cultural unification – since different people can have standardized experiences – but it deliv-

ers social segregation (FAUCHER 2018) similar to commodity fetishism. In other words, people do not meet those who produce what they consume, neither they think about the producers of their purchased commodities. Consumers instead acquire the final product. Similarly, while consumers are exposed to media images and commodities, they do not have exposure to the people or processes behind the production. Therefore, media images then become commodified.

Certainly, the relationship of the object is not pure – it is mediated by media representations. When a person engages with media – such as by watching Coke commercials – or when they consume commodities – such as drinking Coke in real life– , the relationship to the final finished object is mediated by the representation of images. Images that are visually consumed. In Debord's words,

> It is the principle of the fetishism of the commodity – the domination of society by supersensible [*suprasensibles*] as well as sensuous [*sensible*] things" – that attains its ultimate fulfillment [*s'accomplit*] in the spectacle, in which the real world is replaced by a selection of images that exist above it and at the same time succeed in making themselves regarded as the sensible *par excellence* (DEBORD [1967] 1983).

As "life" and "art" are intertwined, the distinction between image and reality is analytically meaningful; however, when thinking about the actual lived experience, such experience declines. What a person thinks about an object is directly involved in their own perception, interpretation, and experience of such object. Yet, even if dialectically related, one does not entirely vanish from the other.

Social Media and the Spectacular Self

The widespread of social media platforms no longer justifies claiming that they are solely a digital representation of our own persons and our relationships. Instead, they became part of life. In this regard, if a person's social

media avatar displays them as their best self, a certain level of engagement is expected whenever such representation is diffused online. Eventually, their online social identity is wed to that ideal image. Yet, the spectacle is both alienated and real (unto itself and in its establishment of representation as reality). The spectacular self (the elaboration of our subjective skills in digital media) and the organic self (our corporeal constitution) are in a dialectical relationship: each one informs and inhabits the other. Along with the need to be 'authentic' comes the desire to measure up one's online identity. Turkle (2017, 185) elucidates this by explaining that "Social media ask us to represent ourselves in simplified ways. And then, faced with an audience, we feel pressure to conform to these simplifications". Therefore, the spectacular self is both an alienated, digital rendition of the organic self, and a logical extension of neoliberal rationality. Neoliberalism, in this sense, is explained by the colonization of governments, cultures, and personalities by the ways of the market. In the society of the selfie, people increasingly run their lives in a neoliberal manner. *People act like they are their own enterprises, as if they are entrepreneurs of themselves.* As Tom Peters (1997) put it,

> Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You. It's that simple — and that hard. And that inescapable.

While people sell themselves – metaphorically mostly, but close to literally in many cases – on social media, the currency is not easily calculated. Currency comes in the form of payoffs curated by an 'online presence.' Users primarily sell themselves to others in exchange for attention and reinforcement. Images are contoured for favorability. Representation and self-presentation are doctored through filtration, alteration, and selective emphasis directed toward the display of personal assets and abilities and diffused to others online.

Media Spectacle

When it comes to the concept of the "spectacle," in early 2000s, Douglas Kellner introduced his own term, "media spectacle," which is described as the following:

> Media spectacles are those phenomena of media culture that embody contemporary society's basic values, serve to initiate individuals into its way of life, and dramatize its controversies and struggles, as well as its modes of conflict resolution. They include media extravaganzas, sporting events, political happenings, and those attention-grabbing occurrences that we call news – a phenomenon that itself has been subjected to the logic of spectacle and tabloidization in the era of the media sensationalism, political scandal and contestation, seemingly unending cultural war, and the new phenomenon of Terror War (KELLNER, 2003, p.2).

To Kellner, media is dominated by the spectacle. Post-modern society is characterized by the global conquest of the media spectacle. Pop knowledge, attitudes and information about current events are mediated and cultivated by spectacular logic. Media spectacle is the foundation of politics, society, and culture. From politics to war, entertainment and music, the spectacle is a ruling principle of world order. Moreover, propaganda, on its political form, becomes how the media spectacle is engineered and exploited. In a way, events such as the uprisings in Iran in 2022 and the war Russian-Ukrainian in 2022 are presented to the world by the logic of the spectacle. Eventually, war and politics also become part of the media spectacle framed with propagandistic purposes and effects.

Historically, war has always been an object of media interest. In the 1850s and 1860s, with the photographs of the Crimean war, the American civil war, or the war in Paraguay (GORDON, 2017; NARITA, 2020), mechanical images reshaped the way people perceive disruptive events. In the early 20th century, the rise of cinema and live motion composed the world spectacle

of images. From the news on the remote fronts in Europe or Asia Pacific during World War II to the shock in public opinion with the war in Vietnam in the 1960s, the spread of images has gone hand in hand with the constitution of mass culture. Media coverage has changed how we perceive war and global events (KITTLER, 2017), especially by expanding the spectacle to a worldwide audience. In the 1990s, TV devices broadcasted the American war live in Iraq while mobilising international anger over the massacres in Rwanda, Bosnia, Serbia, and Congo.

The rise of social media in the 2000s also changed our relationship with images and politics. Images became digital, viral and widespread. With a technology that has never been seen before – especially with the spread of smartphones – everyone became a part and producer of the spectacle. The current war in Ukraine may be the first multimedia war *immersed* in the society of the selfie (MORELOCK; NARITA, 2021). Certainly, the mainstream media (TV news or newspapers) is still responsible for running the news; however, for the first time, people can follow them in real-time. Alternative media outlets and individual profiles on social media offer an "on- the-ground" experience. Yet, digital platforms remain a place of disinformation, misinformation and hate speech campaigns circulated through a diffuse public – an audience much more fragmented and polarized than in the days of the so-called traditional media.

Certainly, the relationship between media and war is not a new phenomenon. In the 2000s, with United States president Bush's 'War on Terror,' a military engagement became globally relevant to the media. However, at that time, news media consumption was not yet so intertwined with the digital environment. Today, the circulation of news media is greatly facilitated by the easy access of the diffusion of new technologies and online sources while largely influenced by social media users' patterns of engagement, cross-platform sharing and attention economy. Moreover, easy access to information is also intertwined with news coverage intensification through multiple media sources. In this regard, the tendency toward

more frequent live coverages, numerous daily updates, and the ability for independent sources to blog and report events with smartphones has also allowed the creation of a multitude of unofficial, independent news sources.

In this landscape of rampant rapid-fire, play-by-play, and live coverages exponentially increases the number of news outlets and their accessibility, which results in the saturation of the media landscape with official and unofficial sources of information. Additionally, there is an element of not just skewed news that is ideologically shaded to the point of propaganda but also outright fabrication to generate clicks, fomenting unrest and polarizing society. In fact, two elements – number clicks and unrest – are often found together and not by coincidence. Sensationalist headlines and alarmist news stories are likely to do both things simultaneously. In this case, an opportunistically designed article might generate more clicks intentionally while generating unrest unintentionally or perhaps a-intentionally. In the attention economy, in a sea of hard-hitting images and headlines, there may be scarce strategies available to the journalist or news outlet looking to compete for views, clicks, likes, and shares on social media.

Online success is central to general success. This is not only true for news outlets, but also for those looking to gain the status and the opportunities offered by "Success 2.0." In this way, social media metrics become the new form of human capital, which users strive for reasons ranging from career advancement to vanity. Operating as an entrepreneur of oneself (FOUCAULT, 2004), or treating oneself as a brand to be marketed (PETERS, 1997), become not merely narcissistic individual predispositions. In the society of the selfie, these features have risen to the point of normality. Commonly diffused, generally expected, explicitly coached, and even socially and professionally required. Failing to engage and improve oneself through this neoliberal impression management becomes a kind of moral failing, according to the sort of instrumental normativity and amoral morality of neoliberalism (MORELOCK; LISTIK; KALIA, 2021).

Certainly, the written and unwritten rules of neoliberal impression management apply to organizations such as news outlets and also individuals. The need for metrics and attention is a reality. And in this need, an overwhelming tendency is toward stoking the flames of unrest that easily functions as political agitation (GOUNARI, 2018), wittingly or unwittingly, in a heated and polarized political context.

The Case of Russia and Ukraine

Responses to the Russo-Ukrainian war vary across and within different regions, yet regardless, people do not publicly claim the many different positions. Public reactions to the war reliably involve articulating two morally weighted groups: 'the bad guy' and 'the good guy.' Since the days of Stalin that Russia has gone to war with other countries. Such duality is not a novelty. In 1956, the USSR suppressed the Hungarian uprising, and in 1968 it similarly suppressed an uprising in Turkey. In the 1970s, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, giving the justification of security violation. In 2022, using the same rationale, Putin invaded Ukraine (MUSTO, 2022).

According to Petr Gulenko, already in 2014 the present war between Russia and Ukraine was foreshadowed by the media as an inevitability (GULENKO, 2020, p.6). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia, Ukraine, and countries in the West overwhelmingly focused media attention on the spread and consequences of the illness, focusing moralistically on individual behaviors and responsibilities in a neoliberal discourse that fits the type some have described as 'responsibilization' (BROWN 2016; MORELOCK, LISTIK AND KALIA 2021). Such a trend has focused away geopolitical issues. In 2022, with the COVID-19 crisis waning and [hopefully] withering away, reports of tensions between Russia and Ukraine emerged in newspapers and media networks. The war broke out with tensions already punctuated in the spectacle and an eventual war framed as a certainty. On one side, the Western press and the United Nations simultaneously dissected and criticized Russia as a criminal country (TONDO, 2022) responsible for causing

wars and responsible for so many deaths of innocent people. Meanwhile, the Zelensky administration – supported by the United States and European countries in their fight against Russia – was often portrayed as a small heroic country defending against an unscrupulous empire. (KLUTH, 2022).

In Russia, a news poll shows that more than 45 – 50% of Russian people have supported the war because the United States has long supported Ukraine, while 28 – 30% of Russians oppose the war (KOLESNIKOV & VOLKOV, 2022, p.3). While Russia often presents itself to its citizens and other supporters as an empire of justice resistant to Western hegemony and aggression, Russia aims to prove its innocence and justify waging war. Its best tool is the use of talk shows to disseminate propaganda (GULENKO, 2020). In the society of the selfie, the Russo-Ukrainian War becomes a media spectacle that is fodder for social splitting. In this sense, either Ukraine or Russia is good, and the opposite side must be evil. Eventually, the distinction between an informed public and a titillated audience fade as audience members pick and rally behind their favorite heroic team, lambasting the other side as a bastion of villainy.

Ian Garner, who studies how social media users have responded to the Russian-Ukrainian war, has spoken about Russian government television's claim that Ukraine was "poisoning the existence of Slavic nations" and must be "erased" (GARNER, 2022, p.6). Garner has also analyzed user comments and messages on Telegram. When negative assessments about Russia were mentioned on the platform– e.g., that during World War II, under the Soviet Union, many soldiers were sent to be killed, and many soldiers committed rape crimes –Telegram users argued that such claims were propaganda from the West and Ukraine. Similarly, users responded to the problem in Bucha, Ukraine – where Ukrainians were murdered in the Russian-Ukrainian war – as fake news. Garner reports: "They continue to Zelensky, sharing more racist statements, more racist imagery, and using dehumanizing language – all while praising Russia, Russia's troops, and Russian actions in religious terms."

Media reactions from countries in Southeast Asia are no exception. In Vietnam – where the government has good relations with Ukraine and Russia – the government has abstained from morally evaluating this war (NGUYEN, 2022). There was, however, a sharp divide in public opinion between the anti-war and pro-Russian factions. According to Minh Son (2022) – specialist in Vietnamese geopolitical issues – "On Facebook, Vietnam's most popular social media network, there is support for Putin's actions, which blames Ukraine for poking the hornet's nest, as much as criticisms on humanitarian grounds and comparisons to Vietnam's relationship with China" (TO, 2022). In Vietnam, social media users have also openly attacked Ukraine and supported Russia because Ukraine posted social media content insulting the former prime minister and president, Ho Chi Minh, calling him a dictator. On March 21, 2022, Nataliya Zhynkina, a representative for the Embassy of Ukraine in Vietnam, informed that this was a product of Russian propaganda (DROR, 2022, p.4 – 6). Meanwhile, on other popular media outlets in Vietnam, such as Vnexpress and Vietnamnet, most reports about the war are about the economic impact caused by the war in Vietnam. Eventually, most news is consumer-oriented and about the economic anxiety caused by the war in the country.

According to Patrick Ziegenhain, who has researched the Indonesian response on social media, Indonesia's president, Jokowi, has tweeted his opposition to the war in Ukraine. Nevertheless Ziegenhain has also identified comments indicating that Indonesia should keep a balanced view concerning Russia and Ukraine. Similar to the Vietnamese government, these posts suggest Indonesia has also abstained from moral engagement when it comes to the Russian-Ukraininan war. On social media networks, the response has also been polarized. Those supporting the pro-Russia faction opposing NATO and the US that are pro-Ukraine and opposing Russia, and those supporting Russia and oppose NATO and US influence in Ukraine, such as North Korea.

In Southeast Asia, religion plays a role in the Russian-Ukrainian war. In this regard, in Indonesia – the largest Muslim country in the world – pro-Ukrainian

factions oppose Russia for discriminating Muslins (ZIEGENHAIN, 2022, p.30 – 31). Attitudes are also polarized. Yet, politics has also became a crucial element in the dualistic views of the war. In the Philippines, anti-partisan candidates have opposed to the war and in favor of peace. Such manifestation of peace is done through the support of Ukraine. Nevertheless, there is one more 'neutral' group, supporting to avoid further issues (ENVERGA III, 2022, p.53 – 55), reflecting the reality of Southeast Asia's foreign policy.

In East Asia, the US military and media have an influence on people's opinion of the war. The Japanese government has condemned the war on social media and television, followed by a public demonstration against the war and the country's reception of Ukrainian refugees (MALITZ, 2022, p.9-13). Similarly, conservative NGOs in South Korea have protested in front of the Russian embassy by calling Russia a terrorist country. Public opinion in South Korea was divided in two sides, reflecting the two political parties and their presidential candidates.

> The candidate from the conservative camp, Yoon Suk-yeol, who was elected president, argued that Ukraine was helpless against the attack of Russia not only because they did not have sufficient military capacity to defend themselves including nuclear weapons, but also because they had not joined NATO...The candidate from the liberal camp, Lee Jae-myung, on the other hand, while also strongly condemning the Russian attack on Ukraine's sovereignty and territory argued that the Ukrainian leadership decided to pursue membership in NATO too hastily. (CHANG, 2022, p.20-21)

Meanwhile, in North Korea – as expected – attitudes are homogenous: support the war, support Russia, and oppose NATO and US influence in Ukraine. (MALITZ & SRIYAI, 2022, p.5-7). In Myanmar, where the military government supports Russia, social media commentators are pro-Ukraine because "Myanmar netizens see both themselves and the people of Ukraine as fighting for freedom from aggressive authoritarian regimes (KHEMANITTHATHAI, 2022, p.45 – 50). Similarly, the Thai government

has ambiguously supported Russia. Nevertheless netizens on social media have clearly expressed support for Ukraine, and a few young citizens have also expressed the desire to join the Ukrainian army (SRIYAI, 2022, p.58 – 60).

> Several pro-democracy movements in Thailand, for example FreeYouth, have posted about the war to show support for Ukraine, openly condemning Russia for violating the sovereignty of another country. Those posts have garnered thousands of likes and retweets, which show that many Thai netizens sympathize with the plight of the Ukrainians. (SRIYAI, 2022, p.58).

Overall, the tendency is – in the language of object relations theory – *splitting*. In this sense, the spectacle has the role of removing from one's own awareness any muddiness or murkiness in evaluating of the other. In this case, the splitting involves placing the figures of the war (the political figures and the nations they represent) in a dual mode where they are either good or bad. This splitting is further solidified by the tendency for public attitudes to *split* into binarily opposed factions, into tribalist frames of 'us' and 'them,' where 'we' are good and know and speak the truth, and 'they' are bad, and do some combination of believing lies and spreading lies.

The tendency toward binary or polarized thinking and tribal alignment is in no way a novel development particular to the digital age. Still, the social and information dynamics that surround Web 2.0 feed into this splitting. While it is true that some news is factual and some news are fake, and some media sources are more objective than others, the saturation of social media platforms with barrages of information and opinions further dull people's ability to sort fact from fiction. Information overload, lack of quality and critical thinking in social media is part of the game. Algorithmic elements play a role in the process. Filter bubbles, artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithmically contoured repetition to align with individual users' viewing and clicking habits. In this landscape, there is no legitimate Archimedia – no universally trusted source of objective reporting that stands

outside the fray of biases, only a cacophony of voices claiming their own salient access to true beliefs and correct methods of determining the truth (Morelock and Narita 2021, 2022). The current epistemic crisis lends filter bubbles the power to fuel the splitting, and communities of like-minded persons cluster together online as if hypnotically pulled together by their own echo chamber effects, causing black-and-white thinking to be bolstered by filter bubbles and echo chamber effects. Divergent groups of like-minded persons separate from one another into homophilic assemblages in a fragmented data scape that houses the contemporary analogue to a bourgeois public sphere. But buffered from contact with one another, these various assemblages 'meet' not in coffeehouses or public squares but in virtual spaces. Not occupying physical space in the same way as a geographical location, these 'spaces' are invisible to those who are not part of them. They overlap in space and time, cohabiting the same broad reality space but without necessarily 'touching'; composing separate zones of deterritorialized existence, with separate declarations and presuppositions about what is true or false and what is good or bad.

The Authoritarian Agitator and the Spectacular Strongman

Even if it were only an issue of echo chamber effects, filter bubbles, and epistemic crisis – a constellation of algorithmic, epistemic, and tribalistic tendencies – the splitting is eventually a problematic outcome of such algorithmic elements. Ultimately, technology serves authoritarian agitators to fan the flames of unrest that exploit the duality of good and evil. By exploiting heated and binary narrativesm these figures influence reality. The simplification of complexity was seen in the Russo-Ukrainian case, when a variety of authoritarian figures used the war as a media spectacle (KELLNER 2003) to generate attention toward their 'spectacular selves' (MORELOCK; NARITA, 2021, p 30). In the spectacle of war, the spectacular authoritarian selves used the Russian-Ukrainian war to spread their own strongman narratives to fuel their own domestic political agendas. In this sense, the sociocultural influences of social media became the manifestation and

expression of somewhat differently among different peoples, just like the rise of the digital the rise of authoritarian populism in a simultaneous manner, such as the rise of political actors like Donald Trump, Jair Bolsonaro, Marine Le Pen, Narendra Modi, and so on.

With the rise of a global neoliberal 'geoculture' in Wallerstein's (1991) terms also comes the rise of the worldwide pre-eminence of information technologies. Modern geoculture is a sociocultural condition connected to the integration of world regions through capital. In other words, capitalism paved the way to unify a world market at the same time as it depended on communication technologies that allowed the flux of information and commodities. In this sense, the contemporary global rise of authoritarian populism should be understood as a reaction against and facilitated by the 'society of the selfie.' Thus, the homogeneous quality of propagandistic manifestations, as seen during the Russian-Ukrainian war, can be understood as following a cultural homogeneity generated by the same communication systems by which the propaganda is diffused. Eventually, the spectacular selves that authoritarian populists project can be considered homogeneous and with similar properties. In a way, they might be regarded as variations on an archetype who, in the Russian-Ukrainian war, project images of themselves as heroes out to save the world from catastrophe. While authoritarian political actors are far apart culturally, geographically, and socio-politically, they demonstrate similar patterns of self-presentation.

Ultimately, the war becomes a media spectacle, providing the backdrop for the 'heroic strongman.' Such dynamic is seen in the major players in the conflict (e.g., Putin and Zelensky), and in tangential actors who use hijacking and feeding off the media spectacle of the war to promote themselves. We could think of Putin's famous image of bare-chested Putin on a horse (REUTERS 2011). It should not be surprising that Putin became Duterte's favorite hero (Walker 2017). Meanwhile, in India, Narendra Modi, who is far from donning a macho image and distancing himself from Putin (REUTERS 2022), presents himself as a *modern saint*.' In Brazil, the patterns are no different. The local press described the brotherhood relationship between

Bolsonaro and Putin at the outset of Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a way to *'exalt toxic masculinity'* (ALENCASTRO 2022). What we see by these examples is that among authoritarian populists, is that war becomes an essential tool of propaganda. Through rhetoric and imagery, the spectacular strongman may vary. Nevertheless, consistency across different contexts is part of the spectacular stylings of the strongman who is still homogeneously projected in the first war immersed in the society of the selfie.

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LITERACY FOR CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY: FRAMING PROPAGANDA WITHIN THE SCOPE OF ORGANIZED PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

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Abstract: The global threat to democratic ideals and fundamental rights and freedoms requires that citizens critically assess the differences between consensual forms of persuasion and non-consensual, manipulative, and propagandistic forms of persuasion in order to make free and informed choices. Based on an ethnographic work with a Portuguese women's rights organization during six months (January-June 2021), this paper analyses the intersection of activist public relations and organized persuasive communication within feminist campaigns. Propaganda appears as a multi-layered sociological phenomenon and the communication campaigns analyzed in this study indicate that, in principle, feminist activist communication can operate within the realm of strategic consensual persuasion and not on propaganda. Findings also illustrate the possible contributions of public relations for social mobilization, civic participation, and democratic adhesion. Observations showed that not all types of persuasion are harmful or false, and that propaganda does not only serve to change opinions but often intends to maintain dominant trends and the status quo.

Keywords: Propaganda; Persuasion; public relations; feminism; activism

Introduction

In June 2022 the United States Supreme Court decided to end the constitutional right to abortion paving the way for individual states to ban the procedure. This controversial decision immediately unleashed much more than the fury and anguish of those who defend the right to abortion as a fundamental and inalienable right of American women conquered in 1973. It has accentuated political divisions in a highly fragmented and polarized nation, taking thousands of activists to the streets. The tensions arising from this decision were seen as another sign of the weakening of the democratic values and as a civilizational setback. Professor Mary Ziegler (2022, p.1) even stated that the decision came to show that "no one should get used to their rights" because "rights can vanish".

The decline of democracies in recent years has generated several violations of human rights and setbacks in terms of basic freedoms. The advance of authoritarian regimes and ideologies that seek to corrupt the institutions and democratic values distort reality to promote hatred, violence, and uncontrolled power. For example, during the 2020 protests against fraudulent elections in Belarus, the Kremlin sent Russian propagandists to replace the Belarusian journalists who were on strike. US television celebrity Tucker Carlson spent a week in Hungary in 2021, enthusiastically presenting his millions of American audiences to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's xenophobic propaganda, disrespect for democratic principles, and denial of international human rights standards (Repucci & Slipowitz, 2022).

This paper's main objective is to contribute for citizenship and democracy literacy illustrating, through the analysis of a case study, the differences between consensual forms of persuasion and non-consensual, manipulative, and propagandistic forms of persuasion.

Aristotle's *Rhetoric I* and *II* presents his technical or artistic (technê) approach to persuasion. The persuasion triad or the means of persuasion, are

technical in the sense that they are based on the rhetorical method and are provided by the speech. And speech can produce persuasion either through the character (êthos) of the speaker, the emotional state (pathos) of the listener, or the argument (logos) itself (Rapp, 2012, 2022). In this sense the 'good persuasion' is the one that is provided by the *technê* and, if "properly understood is a matter of argument and proof". But the proof of argument is not enough to convince an audience. For Aristotle the proper account of persuasion implies dialectic, to the degree that as to do with arguments, and implies moral psychology since it does not rely exclusively on arguments (Rapp, 2012, pp. 591-594). Not everyone forms their judgments according to the rationality of the persuasive process proposed by the philosopher. Thus, êthos and pathos can be used in ways that influence the audience's judgment process even in circumstances that do not provide evidence of arguments (Rapp, 2012).

In Plato's *Gorgias*, the idea that persuasion without knowledge affects the reach of truth is also present. In the Phaedrus Plato also relates dialectic and rhetoric, arguing that the way to achieve genuine knowledge depends both on the subject matter of a speech and of the soul of the audience (Rapp, 2022).

We live in paradoxical times when there has never been so much information available and yet we are increasingly vulnerable to incorrect or false information. In his philosophical treatise, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard (1991) discussed the relationship between reality, symbols, and society. While in the *simulation* we can still perceive that we are, in some way, being deceived, or that we are experiencing something that is supposedly not real, in the *simulacrum*, we completely lose this notion and assume as presumptive truth a concept that does not allow us to discern if it is a distortion or a simulation.

As public relations are one of the most specialized persuasive communication areas in discursive logic and symbolic representations, this paper

discusses the intersection of activist public relations and organized persuasive communication within feminist campaigns. Based on an ethnographic work with a Portuguese women's rights organization during six months, between January and June 2021, the new conceptual framework of Organized Persuasive Communication (OPC), by Bakir, et al. (2019, p.319) was applied to examine a case study in the context of activist public relations.

Propaganda appears a multi-layered sociological phenomenon and the communication campaigns analyzed in this study indicate that, in principle, feminist activist communication can operate within the realm of strategic consensual persuasion and not on propaganda. Findings also illustrate the possible contributions of public relations for social mobilization, civic participation, and democratic adhesion. Observations showed that not all types of persuasion are harmful or false, and that propaganda does not only serve to change opinions but often intends to maintain dominant trends and the status quo. As in Aristotle's conception of the persuasive process, persuasion in this study not only involves the use of logical rhetoric (logos). It was also observable the dialectic tension between the subject matter of a speech and the soul of the audience, through êthos and pathos.

Public relations and feminist activism

Public relations and activism have a complex relationship, since historically, organizational investment in public relations services, which gave rise to the areas of issue and crisis management, emerged as a strategy to protect conservative corporatism against the criticism of radical social movements and the student protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s. This historical legacy led to the formation of quite rigid identities based on binary and simplistic oppositions, within the discipline, with regard to the interpretation of social dynamics involving pressure groups, activists, and public relations professionals (L'Etang, 2016; Thompson, 2016). When we talk about activism, it is important to bear in mind that this is not a homogeneous social category, nor necessarily a positive one, since activists are involved

in power struggles that vary widely across the ideological spectrum, often opposing each other in a competitive manner, to achieve the best results for their organizations (L'Etang, 2016).

In the last decade, however, activism has received more attention in public relations research within critical and sociocultural theoretical traditions (Edwards & Hodges, 2011; Coombs & Holladay, 2012a, 2012b; Holtzhausen, 2012; Demetrious, 2013; L'Etang, 2016; Ciszek, 2017, Müller, 2022).

Demetrious, (2011, p.1) defined *activist public relations* as:

> "A focused view of communication activity by politicized third sector groups such as social collectives, community action groups, and NGOs to foster their public legitimacy as voices for social change. (...) This voice consists of activists employing strategies, tactics, and especially worldviews to challenge dominant positions."

Activist public relations feature both spontaneous activities (protests) and long-term, planned ones (dissent) addressing multiple stakeholders (Adi, 2020) and activists are producers of strategic communication for social change (Ciszek, 2017, Ciszek & Logan, 2018; Müller, 2021).

There is some disagreement within the field of public relations about what strategy is. The power of *influence*, *attraction* or *commitment* of public relations is accomplished as a result of symbolic communicative and discursive logics (Verčič, 2008; Servaes, 2012). Power is thus deployed in the public arena through structures of meaning (Heath, Motion & Leitch, 2009). Public relations instruments aim to induce intentional representations of reality and are premeditated expressions used to influence others. *Intentional positioning* in public relations is described as the "strategic attempt to demarcate and occupy a place of intentional representation in the contested space where meanings are constructed, questioned and reconstructed" (James, 2011:98).

In this sense, "all public relations activity is strategic" (James, 2009, p.111), since strategic planning is not always about projecting the future, but also maintaining a strategic presence in everyday choices. *Emergent* strategy focuses on strategic flexible learning considering complex interactions and uncertainties. The *deliberate* strategy is more occupied with the notions of direction and control and the efforts on how to operationalize a static strategic plan (Heath, Johansen & James, 2018).

Moreover, Moloney (2006, p. 168) suggests that all actors (corporate or activist) employing strategic communication are doing "propaganda", that is, the communication of one of the parties (individuals or groups of social actors) that has an inevitable selective and manipulative dimension because it is based "in the pluralist, self-advantaging promotional culture[1] associated with liberal democracy". Nevertheless, in the updated version on public relations, propaganda, and democracy the power of public relations is conceptualized in its crucial rhetorical dimension including the capacity for persuasion and the social value produced by advocacy and counter-advocacy (Moloney & McGrath, 2020).

"Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert" (Arendt, 1969, p.44). To that extent, the power of communication corresponds to the ability to develop and disseminate collective perspectives and calls to action. But the social actors who want to win the hearts and minds of the publics to advance social change do not operate in a field of equality with equivalent access capacity to mass media, communication technologies and networks of influence. Some social actors face increased challenges in relation to others as it is easier to reinforce mainstream points of view (dominant and easily accepted by the majorities), than it is, for example, to criticize these points of view and introduce alternative or

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1. Although the literature on promotional cultures has focused more on marketing, advertising, and branding, promotion, that is, the use of certain techniques by companies, governments, and other organizations to sell things, ideas, and ways of life has become an institutionalized form of action for organizations in all sectors, and it is constantly present in debates on global problems (Bakir, et al., 2019, p. 318).

opposing perspectives (Ryan & Jeffreys, 2019). And it is in this field that feminist struggles operated and still operate.

When activists develop and implement social change communication strategies (improve leadership, create, and distribute messages, build working relationships with allies), they must also pay attention to building sustainable communication power. These practices are considered strategic "because they unite social groups with compatible interests to shift power relations to effect desired changes" (Ryan & Jeffreys, 2019, p. 53).

In the logic of activist public relations feminist collective self-affirmation represents an intentional symbolic positioning as a 'strategic actor' in social power struggles (Nothhaft, Werder, Verčič & Zerfass, 2021). Feminist movements resort to "public communication tactics of a public relations nature to put their message across, by providing counterarguments, information, and polemic in an effort to galvanize and mobilize both publics and policymakers, but also to impact public debate" (Gudkova & Sarikakis, 2020, pp. 87).

The feminist movement is a vast field of study in sociology, political science, and gender studies, but has not received attention in the area of public relations. However, feminists employ numerous "public relations techniques in the ideological war against patriarchal values" (Bıçakçı & Hürmeriç, 2020, p. 66). Feminism intends to obtain social changes towards a more equitable treatment of women, to question the status quo and to protest about injustices and structural imbalances of power. It continues to this day to put matters on the public agenda that might otherwise not receive attention (Gudkova & Sarikakis, 2020).

Regardless of its diverse pluralities and inner contradictions, feminism is concerned with the fifth objective of the United Nations 2030 agenda "to achieve gender equality by ending all forms of discrimination, violence and any harmful practices against women and girls in the public and private spheres. It also calls for the full participation of women and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of political and economic decision-making"

(The Global Goals[2]). There are different methods and perspectives on feminist activism, but in general it intends to change perceptions about the cultural values that keep women – and other minorities – locked in a system of power inferiority (Gudkova & Sarikakis, 2020).

Placing propaganda within organized persuasive communication

Jacques Ellul (1973: v) view propaganda as a sociological phenomenon – more evident in technological societies – instead of something made by certain people with specific purposes. We are all more susceptible to propaganda precisely because we believe that what is true cannot be propaganda. But modern propaganda, argues the author, is substantially different from the "ridiculous lies of the past" and operates with different dimensions and layers of truth. Another basic misconception that makes people susceptible to propaganda is the belief that it serves only to change opinion. That is one of its goals, although a limited and subordinated one. More significantly, propaganda seeks to strengthen existing trends, to sharpen and focus them, and, most of all to lead people to action or inaction through terror and discouragement if the intended purpose is to keep people from interfering with certain decisions.

The author distinguishes various forms of propaganda – not all necessarily negative within the various layers of persuasion – and argues that the creation of pseudo-needs and the offer of pseudo-satisfactions for those needs is pernicious and manipulative. But also assert that the nature of propaganda can only be truly understood in a specific applied context considering its effects and effectiveness.

Bakir, et al. (2019) claim that there is a terminological confusion in the fields of persuasion and propaganda. The areas of persuasive communication activities such as strategic communication, public relations, and promotional culture concentrate on what they think to be non-manipulative

2. https://www.globalgoals.org/

forms of Organized Persuasive Communication (OPC) happening in contemporary liberal democracies. While researchers of propaganda emphasis on its manipulative practices and in historical situations in the context of non-democratic societies. As a result, there is a gap in knowledge development regarding manipulative forms of OPC concerning deception, incentivization and coercion within liberal democracies. The authors developed a new conceptual framework (Figure 1) based on interdisciplinary contributions that theorizes about manipulative forms of OPC and demarcates what counts as nonmanipulative or what we call consensual, forms of persuasion.
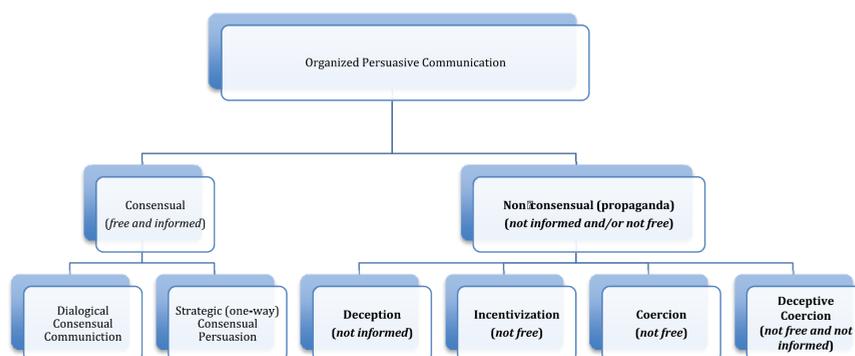
Figure 1 - Organized Persuasive Communication (OPC), by Bakir, et al. (2019, p.319)

Consensual Organized Persuasive Communication or non-manipulative persuasion

The idea of consent is at the base of the authors' conceptualization. Consent is defined "as informed and freely given agreement with something, be it a view or an action by that person or someone else" (Bakir, et al., 2019, p.319). Consent is not given voluntarily if a person is persuaded using false moral or legal arguments, encouraged through the promise of benefits, or coerced through threats, or the costs of his choices (including the withdrawal of benefits). In order for it to be considered consensual OPC, the communicative approach must fully inform and fulfill two requirements: "first, absence of

deception; and second, absence of incentivization and coercion, therefore, consent is given freely" (Bakir, et al., 2019, p.320).

The two subcategories within the scope of consensual persuasive communication are:

Dialogical Consensual Communication – the authors rely on Habermas's (1984) concept of 'communicative action' that involves two-way dialogical communication oriented towards consensus. In this subcategory the actors are effectively seeking to coordinate their actions to obtain an agreement and/or mutual understanding according to four basic 'ideal speech' conditions: 1) all those who can make a significant contribution are included; 2) equal voice for all participants, 3) freedom to express their opinion without deception or self-deception, and 4) no coercion is present. This perspective "does not involve one-way persuading others of one's own views", nor resort to unbalanced power relations, since the purpose is persuasive reciprocity in order to cooperate to achieve common goals (Bakir, et al., 2019, p.320).

Strategic (One-Way) Consensual Persuasion – The authors explain that ideal discourse conditions required for dialogical consensual communication are difficult to achieve and that strategic one way attempts to persuade are apparently unavoidable in contemporary mass democracies. However, this subcategory has sufficient consensual elements to be considered consensual (free and informed). Examples are provided regarding strategic consensual persuasion such as anti- smoking campaigns. They involve rational and emotional arguments about the risks of smoking and are not misleading because smoking is bad for health. Likewise, if a country faces real threats, OPC to mobilize the population for war to defend it can also be considered consensual. If democracy is to be realized in an electoral campaign OPC should be non-deceptive, non-coercive and avoid incentivization (Bakir, et al., 2019, p.320-321).

Non-Consensual Organized Persuasive Communication (Propaganda)

The new conceptual framework organized non-consensual OPC (propaganda) into the categories of deception, incentivization, coercion and deceptive coercion assuming that these practices can occur across democratic and non-democratic states.

Deception – deceptive information management is defined as "persuasion via lying, distortion, omission, or misdirection" and it is non-consensual due to the violation of the requirement of informed consent. The persuasion target is not able to make a free and informed decision because the information is not adequate. On *deception through lying*, even propagandists know that this kind of persuasion should be a last resort. Because if a statement is proven or suspected to be false and the person/organization making it intended to deceive, their reputation and credibility are negatively affected. For this reason, more subtle forms of persuasion are used. *Deception through omission*, implies hiding part of the information, because it is known that if the interlocutors have all the information, they will be less permeable to persuasion. This also involves disguising the identity of the sender of the information. *Deception through distortion*, "involves presenting a statement in a deliberately misleading way to support a viewpoint. One form of distortion is exaggeration, but it can also involve de-emphasizing information (Bakir, et al., 2019, p.322). *Deception through misdirection*, implies the production and dissemination of truthful information with the aim of diverting attention from other problematic issues. It involves the construction of events or "pseudo-events" (Boorstin, 1961) to draw attention away from other important events.

Incentivization – Is defined by the authors "as a process of persuasion that involves promising or providing benefits. Broadly, this involves creating a benefit (an extrinsic motivation) aimed at overcoming an individual's actual desire/belief (their intrinsic motivation)" (Bakir, et al., 2019, p.323). Not all forms of persuasion through incentives are non-consensual, for example,

incentives to ride more bicycles are consensual because extrinsic motiva-
tion (taking cars out of cities or encouraging sports habits) is compatible
with the will of individuals (intrinsic motivation) to do it. "Incentivization
becomes manipulative when the extrinsic motivation conflicts with an
individual's intrinsic motivation" (Bakir, et al., 2019, p.323). For example,
the promise of tax cuts in an election campaign to get people to vote for
a candidate (extrinsic motivation) who without that promise would not be
particularly inclined to vote for that candidate (intrinsic motivation) is a
form of non-consensual persuasion because the person is convinced to do
something he or she would not otherwise want to do.

Coercion – The relationship between coercion and persuasion has been
little studied. Coercion operates in a number of different circumstances
and implies the exploitation and the threat of inflicting costs such as eco-
nomic sanctions, the use of physical force or the withdrawal of benefits.
Communicative threats become more powerful depending on physical,
social, and economic contexts. The authors define coercion as "an act of
persuasion that compels an individual to act against their will through the
threat or infliction of costs including, but not limited to, physical force"
(Bakir, et al., 2019, p.324).

Deceptive Coercion – Coercion can be interrelated with deception through
manipulation of fear, it is "persuasion through deceptive manipulation of
fear of costs" (Bakir, et al., 2019, p.324). Here people are deceived by the
manipulation of their perceptions of a threat or a danger. "For example, if
a government warns of a non-existent threat, people may be scared into
supporting its abuses of civil liberties: people are literally deceived into
thinking that their lives are in danger and that supporting their government
is essential" (Bakir, et al., 2019, p.324).

Through this framework the authors sought to fill the gaps in knowledge
about the various forms of organized persuasion communication that
were separated between scholars of PR (and related areas) who generally

understand their object of study as non-manipulative, scholars of propaganda that tend to focus only with manipulative persuasion, and researchers of promotional culture who examine OPC through the lens of commercial advertising and 'salesmanship'. These divisions make the conceptual and empirical study involving deception, incentivization and coercion in democratic contexts very limited.

Methodology

This research used an ethnographic work with a Portuguese women's rights organization UMAR - Alternative and Answer Women's Union in Portuguese (União de Mulheres Alternativa e Resposta) during six months.

UMAR is a nonprofit NGO based in Portugal and founded in 1976 after the Carnation Revolution of 1974, that made Portugal transition from an authoritarian regime to become a democracy. UMAR is today an association dedicated to awakening feminist consciousness in Portuguese society. UMAR's fieldwork includes involving itself with women in their major concerns and social struggles, but also as a way to build feminist daily lives and cultures, valuing the diversity of women's ways of understanding life and the world. In this way, the construction of the feminist agency is articulated with cultural activity, organizing events of a public nature including pressure, denunciation, proposals, contests, protests, and tributes, as well as parties, gatherings, concerts, poetry sessions, etc (UMAR 2021).

Ethnography is a qualitative method for data collection based on "participant observation (experiencing), interviewing (enquiring) and studying materials prepared by others (examining)" (Wolcott, 2008, pp. 48-49). The purpose is to "describe what the people in some particular place or status ordinarily do and the meanings they ascribe to the doing" and that description will focus on the consistencies involving cultural process (Wolcott, 2008, pp. 73). The origins of ethnography lie in anthropological studies and uses a cultural lens to the study of people's lives within their communities (Hammersley &

Atkinson, 2019). The sociocultural lens in public relations refers to ethnography as a methodology with innovative potential for the advancement of research and practice (Vujinovic & Kruckeberg, 2010; Everett and Johnston 2012; L'Etang et al. 2012; Xifra 2012). In public relations research, ethnography will examine how individuals and groups understands, experiences, and adapts to their environment (Winthrop, 1991; Pieczka, 1997; Sutton & Anderson, 2004).

This study intends to answer the following *research questions*:

1. How do UMAR's communication campaigns in the period under analysis fit into the conceptual framework of organized persuasive communication (OPC)?

2. What public relations tools did UMAR use during the observation period?

The data were collected between January 1 and June 30, 2021. In addition to participant observation, documents produced by UMAR were also analyzed and nine semi-structured interviews were carried out (online and offline). As can be seen in table 1, in total about 848 hours were spent with participant observation at this organization, during which 30 events and visits were monitored. The organization's activity on social media was also observed, in a total of 62 posts on Facebook and 13 on Instagram. The fieldwork observation data were documented in the field diary (196 pages), and all recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher as they were undertaken (Baszanger & Dodier 2004). Ethical issues were considered making the role of the researcher and the research objectives clear and transparent and an informed consent form to participate in the study was signed by the directors of UMAR.

Observation period UMAR[3] - between 01.01.2021 and 06.30.2021 - 185 days Field diary: 196 pages				
Total Hours[4]	Events[5]	Interviews	*Posts*	Documents analyzed
848	30 ‖ (approximately 53 hours and 45 minutes)	1. Manuela Tavares (MT) 2. Joana Sales (JS) 3. Beatriz Santana (BS) 4. Beatriz Pires (BP) 5. Tatiana Mendes (TM) 6. Sara Anselmo (SA) 7. Olímpia Pereira (OP) 8. Janica Ndela (JN) 9. Anabela Gomes (AG)	Facebook – 62 ‖ Instagram – 13	- Press releases (7) - Contents (graphics and written) at UMAR website - Association Statutes - Annual activity plan 2021 - Feminist Manifesto - UMAR manifesto for the 8th of March - Contents (graphics and written) of the Feminist Strike 2021 Website - Open Letters (4) - Manifesto of the 22nd Lisbon LGBTI+ Pride March - Petition for the conversion of the crime of rape into a public crime

Table 1 - Systematization of data sampling and sources

A very high quantity of data was obtained through ethnographic immersion and interviews, and that required a careful selection process of meaning units. Converting data through description, analysis, and interpretation is not a linear process in ethnographic approaches (Wolcott, 2008). To select the information relevant to answer the research questions of this study, *two main selection criteria* were used:

a. Type of OPC in UMAR campaigns during the observation period
b. The use of public relations tools

3. UMAR Site - http://www.umarfeminismos.org/
4. Average of 4 hours a day (including weekends and holidays)
5. Lectures, conferences, reading groups, training, book presentations, thematic forums, and demonstrations (online and offline) summarized and partially transcribed for the field diary

Findings

a. Type of OPC in UMAR campaigns during the observation period

UMAR launched the following campaigns in the observation period:

1. "We are still here for you" campaign[6]. It warns that isolation can increase the risk of domestic violence and reminds women that they can ask for help. Likewise, it promotes a Service Center that offers, confidentially and free of charge, psychological, social, and legal assistance to any woman victim of violence. *Main message*: "Violence against WOMEN is a crime! Talk to us, we can support you in building your new life project!". *Type of OPC*: *Strategic (One-Way) Consensual Persuasion* – strategic attempt to persuade women victims of domestic violence to ask for help and change their lives. Involve rational (legal assistance free of charge) and emotional (psychological support to build a new life free of violence) arguments.

2. Campaign "It's not your fault. The complaint belongs to everyone!"[7] – Within the scope of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. An online campaign through which they appeal to women (cis and trans) survivors of gender violence, in its most varied forms, to "share their testimonies, experiences and resistance against the sexist and patriarchal brutality" that affects them daily. *Main message*: "This initiative aims to stimulate sharing and communication between women, to demonstrate that episodes of sexist violence are not isolated cases and that we are not alone". *Type of OPC*: *Strategic (One-Way) Consensual Persuasion* – A successful OPC campaign needs to be concise but still provide all relevant information that allows for rational and informed decision making (Bakir, et al., 2019). The longer texts presented in this campaign provide all the information and contacts for participants to choose to share their experiences in a consensual and informed way.

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6. "Continuamos aqui p'ra ti" https://www.facebook.com/umar.prati/
7. "A culpa não é tua. A denúncia é de todas!" https://www.facebook.com/events/2834017353509007/

3. Dating without violence campaign (#NamorarSemViolência[8]) – with the aim of alerting and raising awareness among young people to better identify and reject violent behaviors in dating relationships, including those that are exercised through social media. *Main messages*: "The one who loves you, does not attack you!" and "Dating with Fair Play and Mutual Respect". *Type of OPC: Strategic (One-Way) Consensual Persuasion* – It is assumed that the campaign is carried out in partnership with the Portuguese government due to information/scientific data about the increase in dating violence among young people.

Campaign #feministstrike2021[9] (March 8). UMAR Manifesto for the international feminist strike 2021 affirms that "we cannot leave anyone behind with their multiple demands (...) against the sexist, and misogynist mentality, which is at the base of violence against girls and women in intimacy, harassment, and sexual violence". *Main message*: "Let's come together to share our struggles! Let's come together to override our voices to those that try to silence us!". *Type of OPC: Strategic (One-Way) Consensual Persuasion* – Despite having a markedly emotional/fighting tone there is no intrinsic reason why this kind of persuasion approaches "should be understood as necessarily deceptive, coercive or, with respect to emotions, irrational" (Bakir, et al., 2019, p.321). The benefit created for participating in the strike – strength of the collective struggle for women's rights – (extrinsic motivation) is compatible with the will of individuals – women who want to participate in the protest and advocate for social changes – (intrinsic motivation).

4. *Stand by Her* campaign[10] – anti-harassment campaign to prevent and denounce sexual violence with a strong connection to the international #MeToo movement. *Main message*: "No is No! If you can look, see. If you can see, act! *Type of OPC: Strategic (One-Way) Consensual Persuasion*

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8. #NamorarSemViolência – https://www.cig.gov.pt/2021/02/campanha-de-prevencao-e-combate-a--violencia-no-namoro-namorarsemviolencia/
9. Greve Feminista Internacional 2021 - https://www.facebook.com/grevefeministapt/
10. Stand by Her - https://www.facebook.com/standbyher.umar/

– Another example of consensual persuasion intent with the provision of detailed data available (rational arguments) and personal storytelling (emotional) with the aim of convincing the public to denounce situations of harassment.

b. *The use of public relations tools*

1. *Celebrity endorsement* – Several Portuguese artists publicly support UMAR's campaigns and work. This is one of the widely used public relations tactics, whether in a commercial and corporate context, or in the context of public interest campaigns.

2. *Public affairs management* – Such as an appeal to vote in the 2021 Presidential Elections; support for the approval in parliament of the medically assisted death law; taking advantage of the Portuguese presidency of the Council of the European Union to claim gender quotas on the boards of directors of companies, among other issues.

3. *Strategic use of symbolic celebrations* – The organization uses symbolic dates as a way of obtaining attention and publicly legitimize its messages. The #NamorarSemViolência and Stand by Her campaigns are examples of this, the first was launched on the last working day before Valentine's Day (February 14) and the second on the symbolic date of Freedom Day in Portugal (April 25).

4. *Win win partnerships* – UMAR establishes partnerships with various stakeholders relevant to its activity, as with other collectives and associations, Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, several universities, cafes, libraries and other cultural spaces and City Councils (local authorities).

5. *Political Advocacy* – The organization adopts a vigilant role in denouncing human rights abuses and defending the rights of civil society, positioning itself on various issues as a contentious social actor that rejects the "dictatorships of thought, politics and patriarchy", being neither outside nor completely inside of politics.

6. *Media Relations* – Several proactive attempts to influence the media agenda and proximity to some journalists who follow certain topics.

7. *Citizen Lobby* – That is the reasoned presentation of a legitimate interest to political power. For example, contribution to the discussion in the Parliament of the petition that provides for the status of victim for children exposed to contexts of domestic violence.

8. *Intentional discursive positioning in public relations* – In public affairs in which UMAR is involved, the organization positions itself, sometimes in opposition, sometimes as a supporter, resorting to the intentional positioning or discursive repositioning of others. Attentive care is observable with the type of narratives and interpretations they want to stimulate in each issue and context.

Discussion

This paper discusses the intersection of activist public relations and organized persuasive communication within feminist campaigns. Feminist struggles have had a propagandistic ideological historical framework (Barbakadze, 2020), and although several recent events have brought new attention to feminism – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 2017 TED talk "We should all be feminists" has been viewed more than 6 million times – many people who defend gender equality do not identify themselves with the term "feminist" (Scharff, 2019). This must be related to several factors that go beyond the focus of this work, however, the propagandistic association with radical social movements for women's rights should have some influence on the discomfort that the term still triggers.

The findings illustrate well Jacques Ellul (1973) perspective that not all types of persuasion are harmful or false, and that propaganda does not only serve to change opinions but often intends to maintain dominant opinions and the status quo. As in Aristotle's conception of the persuasive process, persuasion does not only involve the use of logical rhetoric (logos). Persuasion also implies the dialectic between the subject matter of a speech and the

soul of the audience, through the character (êthos) of the speaker and the emotional state (pathos) of the listener. According to the findings of current research this process may involve one-way consensual persuasion. Within the scope of this study, feminist campaigns intend to challenge what they consider to be the vision of the dominant values of patriarchy that still persist in societies.

Although the moral aversion of the term propaganda has contaminated persuasive communication, it would be naive not to admit that modern cultures are permeated by persuasive content and messages of all kinds (Fawkes, 2007). For this reason, "it cannot be seriously maintained that all persuasion is bad or undesirable" (Jaksa & Pritchard, 1994, p. 128) and it is necessary to understand the differences between the numerous attempts at persuasion as a way of increasing citizens media and digital literacy. Based on the new conceptual framework by Bakir, et al. (2019), this research analyzed the content of the communication campaigns of a feminist organization to better understand what distinguishes manipulative forms of OPC and nonmanipulative or consensual forms of persuasion.

All UMAR's communication campaigns in the period analyzed fit into the category of *Strategic (One-Way) Consensual Persuasion.* Activist persuasion communication strategies can be more or less rational, gentle, or aggressive depending on the identity, the experience, the methods of activism and the symbolic positioning of these groups in the public space. But the campaigns analyzed indicates that, in principle, they can operate within the realm of strategic consensual persuasion and not on propaganda or non-consensual organized persuasive communication. The analyzed campaigns meet the two requirements for consent to be considered voluntary, free, and informed: 1) No deception was detected (deliberate or not) and 2) Although public interest campaigns to prevent violence seek to persuade by highlighting the (social and personal) benefits of violence-free relationships, no evidence of incentivization or coercion, as defined by Bakir, et al. (2019), was detected.

Looking at the second research question of this study, it was possible to confirm that during the observation period UMAR used several public relations tools such as 1) Celebrity endorsement; 2) Public affairs management; 3) Strategic use of symbolic celebrations; 4) Win win partnerships; 5) Political Advocacy; 6)   Media Relations; 7) Citizen Lobby and 8) Intentional discursive positioning. The study fits the description of activist public relations as it features both spontaneous activities (protests) and long-term, planned ones (dissent) addressing multiple stakeholders (Adi, 2020).

Conclusion

Recent political transformations with the election of populist and authoritarian rulers, the formation of antidemocratic governments and the dissemination of hate speech, mainly on online social networks (Ortega--Sánchez et al., 2021) highlight the need for citizens to understand and critically assess the multiple contexts, nuances and intentions underlying the messages that circulate quickly, whether in conventional media or in virtual environments.

As Bakir, et al. (2019, p.325) stated "a society where citizens are routinely incentivized, deceived and coerced by powerful actors is not one that approximates to democratic ideals". This approach to the democratic ideals that are being threatened and that we have taken for granted in recent decades requires that citizens critically assess the differences between consensual forms of persuasion and non-consensual, manipulative, and propagandistic forms of persuasion in order to make free and informed choices.

Although the authors of the new conceptual framework on Organized Persuasive Communication have asked for more research on manipulative OPC in democratic contexts (Bakir, et al., 2019), this analysis about the strategic consensual persuasion campaigns of a feminist organization helped to clear up some confusion about the so-called and broad term of "feminist propaganda".

Situating strategic consensual persuasion in activist public relations also illustrates the contributions of the field for civic participation dynamics that is fundamental to strengthen democracies and opens the way for future research that explores the different possibilities of activist persuasion strategies oriented towards social change in the defense of democratic values and human rights advocacy.

This study illustrated, in a context of applied communication – that it is not intended to be representative of the diversity of feminist messages and campaigns – the symbolic dimension of the power struggles implicit to social movements, framing public relations activities within the scope of perceptions management oriented to intentionally interfere in the attribution of meanings about the social reality.

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SEVEN KEY PATHOLOGIES OF CONTEMPORARY DEMOCRACY THAT MAKE EMOTIONAL APPEAL A SUCCESSFUL FORMULA OF THE COMMUNICATION MODEL OF EXTREMIST POPULISM IN PORTUGAL: PROPAGANDA MODEL

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Abstract: A critical analysis is made, based on a bibliographic review to seven key pathologies of contemporary democracy in a scenario of media ubiquity. From this analysis emerge seven characteristics of communication based on the Propaganda model in the extremist populist parties discourse in Portugal, confirmed by the analysis of the discourse of the Chega political party in the candidacy for the 2021 Presidential Elections: 1 – growing importance of the aesthetic-expressive cultural vector / formal aestheticization of communication; 2 – Presence of Fake / resource to Non-truth; 3 – functionality of the platforms / Anonymity, or semi-anonymity; 4 – low information accuracy and lack of truth legitimation structures / Quantity instead of quality; 5 – anti-rule as a contemporary cultural code / Anti-rule discourse, antagonist; 6 – discursive antagonism and appetite for legitimizing the opinion of equals, based on hatred / Logical and ethical emptying of discourse; and, 7 – Conjunction of the six previous pathologies / Discourse based on emotion.

Keywords: Aesthetization; anti-speech; emotion; Inter-subjectivity; paradigm.

Introduction

The advent of industrialization society was involved in a functionalist spirit in which engineers, designers, scientists and creators sought to respond to the arising needs through the creation and production of various products and services, with the increasingly accelerated advances of technological areas, concerns related to the areas of aesthetics were developing, coupling it to the much-edeated technology.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Steve Jobs, CEO of Aplle, in the development of the Iphone, had in mind, as he confessed, that he would want for this new phone, *such beautiful buttons, that people would want to lick them* (Kahney, 2010). The aesthetic dimension was thus, at this time, one of the very important premises for products and services, as it would be for all new gadgets that appeared on the market. Advertising, in its dual role as a producer and reflector of culture (Pinto, 1997), was also attesting to this development, linked with the aesthetics and pleasure of the consumer. If at its beginning focused its attention on the best and most innovative characteristics of products and services, after this initial phase it evolves, turning to promote the aesthetics of products and the well-being of consumers, endeaded (Marketing 2.0)[1]. Advertising was then turning the expectations of individuals to themselves, to their own well-being and has been celebrating emotions, rebellious spirit and comfort as mottos for a cultural being, 'selling' personality formulas and ways of being in society. It has thus become a producer and cultural reflector and guide of attitudes towards the social being, now ubiquitous, for the ubiquity of communication, enhanced by the mobile media. Thus, several *technocultures* (Kerkhove, 1997) emerged and established in contemporaneity, among which we diagnosed the proliferation and cult of the image. With the expansion of the mediatization beyond the canvases, the *aesthetic-expressive cultural vector* (Habermas, [1981]2013)[2] becomes a prominent vector in contemporary times.

1. Advertising then stopped 'selling' a longer vacuum cleaner tube or a faster machine, to focus on the well-being that the new vacuum cleaner brings to the housewife's life, or the emotion of driving a car that is for sale (Kotler, 2016).
2. Habermas refers to the rise of *the aesthetic-expressive cultural vector*, in the social field, for the mod-

Seven key pathologies of contemporary democracy that make emotional appeal a successful formula of the communication model of extremist [...]

On the other hand, with the exponential ease of sharing personal opinion in everyday life, about everything and everyone, emerges a social scenario based on the use, enjoyment and expression of emotions, hyperbolically celebrating an all-powerful hedonism (Lipovetsky & Charles, 2014) as a model personality of the contemporary individual[3] .

Given the amount of information to which the contemporary individual is exposed nowadays, institutions are also obliged to follow models of presentation of content based on the perspectives of Marketing and Advertising – the need to draw attention through the appeal of image and emotions is imposed.

Society thus finds itself ensnareded in the hyper processing of data, shared and reshared in open access and easily accessible[4], stimulating the experience of emotion to an emotional mode of existence. In this way, entities are obliged to comply with certain requirements linked to the consumption appetites in these congested environments. Through the demands of the selective consumer, increasingly the forum of aesthetic experience and emotion – Thus avenges the Propaganda model, in the generality of the communication of the mediasystem.

The solution found thus involves the formal aestheticization of the contents, and becomes the basis of the Propaganda Model, in the contemporary media environment. The consumption of the contents then obeys the A.I.D.A. Process (Attention / Interest / Desire and Action).

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ernist individual, in detriment of the *ethical-practical* and *logical-instrumental vectors*, which would refer to the spheres of validity, *justice* and *science*, and which formed the basis of the spirit of understanding the times gone by the age of lights

3. This way of understanding the contemporary Western individual is largely consolidated in the theories of current social sciences, being the foundation, for example, of Baudrillard's Simulacrum Society theories (1991), of Lipovetsky & Charles theories of Hyper-modernism (2014), or Baumman's Liquid Modernity ([2000]2021).

4. Illustrating the immensity of information traffic to which the common subject is exposed, it should be noted that Scmhidt & Cohen (2013) state that in 2050 the entire world population will have access to all the information contained in internet networks, free of charge and instantaneously.

Thus, we find much of the explanation of the validity of contemporary contents in the theories of heuristic persuasion, which arise in this framework of hyper-exposure to information.

Several studies devoted to the perception of stimuli also allow us to highlight seven key variables that can trigger (or reinforce) attention – the first point of the process necessary for the consumption of information as well: The dimension, color, intensity, movement, contrast, placement and insolitus (Dubois, 1998).

In an economy of attention, the appeal to emotion by the aestheticization of information then became customary and observable in the various environments, imposing the Propaganda model in general communication (for people, brands, services, parties, etc.).

If communication from society to society, or self-communication of masses (Castells, 2009), is a phenomenon that emerged with the advances of digitization, it is appropriate to reaffirm, along with the inevitability of the uses of emotion also in the field of studies in the areas of communication, another growing concern: the legitimation of the *verb*, now used, reused and constantly shared by the millions of internet users who constitute these digital networks of interaction.

If society is a space for the unfolding of interactions and struggles for legitimation (Bourdieu, [2011] 2018), the legitimation of the *verb* now also passes through this digitized channel, open access, which are the networks. We thus analyze the *legitimacy of the discourse* of extremist populist parties, taking into account the scenario of the evolution of *convergence* theories (Jenkins, 2006a), which seems to catapult a set of new phenomena, framing a new theoretical field – *post-convergence* (Ramirez, 2020) – in which the media are no longer only a place of unwinding of accessible information, but an interconnected source and an included part of social environments and spaces, taking into account the unfolding of interactions as a whole[5].

5. In this context, Ramirez (2020: 18) also understands that: "The analysis of digital media is not only concerned with knowing how the digital interacts with life, it also assumes that the digital has become

Thus, through a critical analysis based on a bibliographic review, we analyze the communicational reality which is open to this symbiosis (in embryonic phase, but somehow already present) with the media, and which supports new *technocultures* (Kerckhove, 1997), revealed in seven key *pathologies of democracy* that we identify as fundamental to *seven discursive pathologies* of extremist populist parties in Portugal.

We take as basis the analysis of the campaign for the Presidential Elections of 2121, of the Chega party led by André Ventura[6].

Aesthetic-expressive cultural vector: Formal aestheticization of communication

The idea of dependence on an economy of attention (Caliman, 2012), in a scenario of low acuity, due to the immensity of information to which the common individual is exposed, leads us to observe that the contents in general depend greatly on their form in this scenario of *symbiosis* between the physical and the virtual world.

Therefor, the feeling of the media provides a primacy of aesthetics, in a society that lives in, and of, spectacle (Lipovetsky & Charles, 2014), catapulting the society of the spectacle of Debord ([1967] 2012), and thus founds the *aesthetic-expressive* cultural vector (Habermas,[1981] 2013) as an important factor in the understanding of social reality.

This role of aesthetics, which founds a lived world of images, carries a serious importance to *photogenicity* of facts and events, going beyond an Aristotelian *ethics* of being (Aristotle, [350 BC] 2012). As Martins (2017) sees it, we live in a society much *more aesthetic than ethics* and mediated

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a fundamental aspect of it. It proposes that the interaction phase corresponds to convergence, just as symbiosis corresponds to post-convergence". (free translation by the author).
6. Presidenciais 2021 - Debates de 08 Jan 2021 - RTP Play - RTP (Ana Gomes / André Ventura) ; Presidenciais 2021 - Debates de 04 Jan 2021 - RTP Play - RTP (André Ventura / Vitorino Silva); Presidenciais 2021 - Debates de 07 Jan 2021 - RTP Play - RTP (Marisa Matias / André Ventura); Presidenciais 2021 - Debates de 06 Jan 2021 - RTP Play - RTP Marcelo R. de Souza / André Ventura); Presidenciais 2021 - Debates de 02 Jan 2021 - RTP Play - RTP (João Ferreira / André Ventura); Presidenciais 2021 - Debates de 05 Jan 2021 - RTP Play - RTP (Tiago Mayan / André Ventura).

discourse, if we analyze it based on Aristotelian rhetoric, it loses its *ethical* and *logical* essence and thus is based on the *pathos* dimension. The cultural and communicational environment seems to be founded, then, and increasingly, in the image and *spectacle*, and in the sphere of discourses the recurrence of emotions seems a daily evidence, either in sales, journalism, politics or in the experience of facts and events, thus imploding this need for *photogenicity* of the real.

We can often see in the newscast, in the sense of this formal evolution, the use of background music, aesthetizing the informative content or a personal and personalizing comment of the pivot, in the same sense of appeal to emotion. Likewise, creative offices 'adorn' journalistic content with graphics and interactivity, in the hope of achieving a better capture of the message in the contents' reception.[7] And, in the same sense of this *photogenic reality*, in the political sphere, the candidate's conduct now turns to the idea of 'doing well in photography', in an interconnected media environment as a guide of political action[8]. This interconnected and ubiquitous media environment, tending to a Post-convergence, promotes the emergence of the constant spectacle of the image and *Pathos* seems to have taken over the discourses. In political rhetoric this spectacle is enhanced by the appeal to emotions (anger, laughter, laughter, humor, amazement, etc.), subjugating the interlocutor to the joke, enjoyment and insolitus – A. Ventura is skilled at using this form of discursive persuasion based on *Pathos*, as seen in the televised debates of the 2021 Presidential. We can see there, on a recurring basis, M. Ventura laughing with mockery and joke towards the interlocutor. Emotional discourse, not focusing on the ethical or logical spheres of

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7. Such is a reality, for example, of BBC News among others with this concern.
8. For example, in the weekly commentary by Marques Mendes, on SIC – Sociedade Independente de Comunicação, we can repeatedly hear the expression "it doesn't look good in the photograph" or "it gives a bad image" or, for example, "it looks like …". This is a clear symptom of this need for photogenicity in contemporary reality. In the same sense, political commentators in general, in addition to commenting on content and matters, analyze in depth, for example, the sign language, way of being, clothing, tone of voice, posture or hairstyle of political actors. This whole panoply of interests unfolds around the photogenics of the real, placed in the media spectrum, which is now deified, making the appearance, sometimes, present itself with a greater degree of importance than the being, in the spectacle of media reality.

discourse, will add little to the programmatic discussion, but tends to create empathy in the spectator, and to prove to be a factor of success in the media debate.

This form of the discourse which delegates the consideration of the discussion of the issues and matters to a lower plane, giving primacy to an emotional discourse voted to the spectacle, is now the way of making politics of the generality of political parties in the media spectacle. Given the implosion of this media show, we then see the primacy of the *aesthetic-expressive cultural vector*, which does not contemplate the areas of validation of *science* and *morals* (Habermas, [1981] 2013), relying instead on the formal *aestheticization of the contents*, addressing emotion.

The contemporary conjuncture, supported by a *photogenicity* of facts and events, is associated with a mediatized society. And the aesthetic experience, supported by the image and propitiating the frivolous and banal spectacle (Lipovetsky & Charles, 2014), inciting the exploration of emotion in informational daily life, makes itself feel ubiquitous. Such phenomena inherent to the generality of the spheres of communication (and as such preponderant, in the society of the spectacle, in the communication of any entity) are, in their major emphasis, adheringly incorporated into the discourses of populist parties. In this sense, in favor of *pathos-based rhetoric*, the spheres of *Ethos* and *Logos* (Aristotelian rhetoric) are inconsidered. The validity granted by the supporters is achieved in the *intersubjectivity* (Schutz, 1971) of the emotional system, elevated as a formal factor of discourse, the basic element of the *discoursive paradigm* of these parties.

Public communication sphere: not truth and anonymity

The individual internet user, reader or viewer can be had, in today's society, also as a consumer of information, since we live in a Consumer Society (Baudrillard, 2010). Consumer theories, on the other hand, have been noting that the contemporary individual is no longer just a passive consumer.

It now positions itself as *prossumer*[9]. Thus, in the scenario *of mass self--communication* (Castells, 2007), the accessible information is produced by the common consumer, bringing with it phenomena such as the lack of scientificity (production by non-specialists) along with the presence of the emotional and the popular.

The disappearance of the old gatekeepers that this new network model brings to the media scene, promotes an opening of the range of the available information, and this is often not produced by experts[10]. A kind of *a-literate literacy*[11] promotes the opening of the media space to the scope of the emotional. We can understand that the ethical rationality of the construction of common contents seems to be left aside, for the experience of the emotional, where the rational foundation erected on the 'truth' seems to become an elitist segment and not sought by the generality of individuals[12].

This phenomenon, which has been growing in the media environment, from which disinformation emerges, enhances the increase of fake[13] market segments. In addition to fraudulent systems of information resharing and false profiles, which are intended to create *false truths*, it is still notorious that large communities of internet users are enrused in *empty discussions* with lack of scientificity[14], expressing themselves emotionally in opinionated rhetoric, based on hatred of the 'other' and to the 'opinion of the other'.

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9. That participates in the production and dissemination of information, beyond a passive attitude of consumption.
10. In studies of Communication Sciences, several theories have focused on the validity of the gatekeeper system, and on the phenomena of agenda setting, or the manipulation of contents and the validity of the information disseminated in the face of the economic and political powers involved in this system. Not aiming to deepen this scope, however, we understand, for this work, gatekeepers as diffusers of a given "truth", which are legitimized by the characteristics of the communication systems in which they are inserted. Given their disappearance, due to the differentiated characteristics of the networks, these "truths" that were presented as hegemonic, transversal and legitimized by the systems were attenuated, so that now, with the networks, consumers come to have "many truths", which are all called into question. In this system, the 'reason' is not necessarily held by the specialists, since their opinion is called into question, in the same way as that of all other Internet users, in these networks, and there are, in general, no forms of validating the legitimacy of each opinion
11. Consumo, uso e domínio de informação criada por não-especialistas.
Consumption, use and domain of information created by non-experts.
12. See the 2021 Gulbenkian study on the culture of the Portuguese, which reveals low levels of demand for books (culture considered to be of quality), as well as low levels of demand for other cultural sectors.
13. Groups of Internet users who are frequently exposed to erroneous information.
14. The Tweeter network, or certain Facebook posts are explicit examples.

Not being a unique phenomenon in networks, nor solely affection for populism, it is at least a popular phenomenon, which is used by populism as a legitimate discourse and legitimizing political position. This phenomenon is used and reverberated, serving purposes of virality and aggregation, supported by the sharing of doubt, and scandal, based on the insolitus, of a disinformationist nature. The way of sharing and consumption of information, at your fingertips, at any time, in which the opinion of each subject is projected to thousands of interconnected people, seems to show a fluidity of content, not necessarily reliable, but rather the opinion of the 'equals', important for the formation of the opinion of the common individual[15] .

Thus, the constant debate in the networks requires that the current information spectrum is full of comments of opinion, often of an emotional and argumentative nature, without solid bases of support in the 'truth' of the facts, thus functioning the media structure as a record of active presence of all, a place of discontent with the daily life and propitiator of discussion. This discussion is presented in an environment of semi-anonymity, or sometimes in total anonymity, and anonymity accentuates the lack of commitment to truth in shared content, making certain media platforms, anarchic platforms in their content, because there are no forms of validation of the truth in their use, thus flooding with Fake content.

The populist communication model, regarding this *pathology of democracy* imbued with virtual exchanges of unproven information, now also requires the admission of this type of content, based on the insolitus. For example, in these debates, A. Ventura, as well as the commentators of Chega party, in the various programs dedicated, in a cunning way, were helped, several times, by newspapers printed with viral titles of news that raise the insolitus, to discredit their direct opponents. Although they have often mentioned unproven information, this way of communicating promotes great commitment to discourse, not by the subjects themselves but, mostly, by

15. As emerges from a study cited by Kotler (2013) , the opinion of 'equals' is more important in shaping the opinion of the common consumer than the opinion of specialists.

the commitment to the emotion they arouse (the *intersubjectivity of emotion*) in discrediting the adversary – an important factor in the contemporary propaganda model.

Speech legitimation: Quantity instead of quality

If Bourdieu ([2011] 2018) understands that the communicator man uses language in enunciation, as an act of demonstration of power, in the scenario of struggles for legitimation that is the social environment, we cannot fail to observe that, in the society of communication, the ability to enunciate the *verb* has become increasingly easy, making each internet user exposed to an unlimited number of information in an informative *palimpsest*[16] . In this context, the legitimation of the *verb* is no longer a given, and *reason* now requires new intricacies of institutionalization.

If gatekeepers, in one-way communication, tended to be understood as valid instances of legitimate truth[17] projection, networks promote multi-directional enunciation, and multi-participation, which, confronting an unlimited and multifaceted number of opinions provides a greater 'doubt' about everything.

The idea of experts is also, in this scenario, discredited, thus being preferred as a reliable source the opinion of the 'equals', who are subject to the same conditions of opinion formation and who participate in the same climate of distrust towards institutions and people in general.

In this way, the information contained about everything is called into question by all, and subject to the scrutiny of all, by the power to opine, share and reshare information. In this inemergence become public discussions that tend to spaces of *schizophrenia*[18], because they are not built according to the premises of truth.

16. For the constant opinions projected on the networks, moment after moment, subject after subject
17. Although it can be said that they were merely legitimized by the characteristics of the systems in which they were inserted (such as radio or television)
18. This characteristic of contemporary schizophrenia is given to us by Reis (----) - entry of the virtual into the everyday life of the common individual, through exposure to schematic and palimpsest

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appeal a successful formula of the communication model of extremist [...]

Thus, freedom of opinion and expression, celebrated in this media environment of networks, seem to formalize a constant ambiguity, since there are no formulas for recourse to reliable sources, in the resolution of the constant debates, which flood the social scenario – The legitimation of the *verb*, in this environment now passes, thus, not by *quality* (foundation in *truth*) but by *quantity* (of sharing and resharing).

And the democratic state seems to become an anarchic state, since power relations are diluted because reliable sources and specialized opinion have not yet found ways or formulas to constitute a source of validation of matters. On the contrary, in these spaces of debate seems to make evidence the appeal to the contradictory and to doubt about everything. On the one hand, leaving the institutional and bureaucratic discourses (by Habermas, [1981] 2013) aside, and on the other, putting in equal level of truth *specialists* and *non-specialists*, boosting the presence in the public sphere of the confrontation of countless countercurrents. The legitimation of the *verb* thus passes from the institutions, to which validity would be conferred, to a scenario of digladiation of countercurrents, often founded on hatred of hedonism (Lipovetski & Charles, 2014), by the identification as *fans* (Jenkins, 2006) of given truth, doubting everything. This doubt is hyperbolized by the ease of projection of opinion and, in this environment, *pseudo-truths* are elected through *quantity*, sharing and resharing, and by the number of supporters, with instant comments, likes or emoticons. Thus, there seems to be a total *isegoria* in the networks, because communication is simply unresnated from the hierarchical powers, which would determine what is *true*[19]. As a result of this pathology, which derives in large part from the technological functionalities of networks, the discourse of populism is constantly helped by

slogans, which do not allow structured reasoning; by Cauquelin (2010) - evolution in the contents of the disciplines of contemporary semiotics, namely with regard to the horizon of urbanity, and the representations of the real; and Joy (1999) - meaning of a world of the image, which does not allow, in the semiotic process, to link the object to reality. We raised it again based on the lack of scientificity of the numerous opinions that are present in the media spectrum, which do not allow a construction of reality (since this is built on communication) based on truth premises, thus being linked to the course of life in society a reality based on "pseudo-truths" (often erroneous).
19. The pseudo-truths that flood the media landscape are now, only and solely, deconstructed by fact checking programs, which verify some of this wide range of unproven information.

the unusual and the insolitus – contents that enhance the A.I.D.A. process, by the attention they arouse. These contents the more insolitus the more emotional impairment they arouse (Kapferer, 1988)[20] , even if not valid, and more shared and reshared, they become, ascending to the "institunalized truth" when knowledge/recognition by the other by sharing and resharing.

Anti-rule as cultural code: logical and ethical emptying of discourse

The *rule/anti-rule* dichotomy requires that the existence of the *rule* is essential to have the *anti-rule*. What is also *anti-rule*, if it competes for primacy, at the time of its success, becomes the *new rule*, although sometimes it runs out in its essence of *anti content* to have to, imprescindibly, renew proposals in order to make *Rule*.

Léo Cheer (1997) refers to the peculiar characteristic of the lack of content in the *anti discourse*, pointing out several practical examples of world politics. The emptying of discursive content at the end of a previously prevailing discourse (of the current rule) seems to be evident when the content is a mere *anti-speech* (*anti-rule* content). The discourse to which the opposition would be given the essence of discursive rationality, no longer has pre-validation matter and is emptied of content. Once the primacy has been achieved, discourse tends to have to renew proposals and develop content, new in its expression, which are no longer a foundation of opposition, but rather requiring a new appreciation or a new approach – you tend to have to create *The New Rule*, no longer based on its *anti-rule* content, but on a new content proposal. On the other hand, the *Rule* seems to be indispensable. It is something essential, since it governs and/or observes (on) the operation of the systems. It is also necessary to make, for the purposes of analysis, a distinction between the *rule* – which constitutes law and governs systems[21]

20. Kapferer (1988) analyzing the rumour, states that its strength is directly proportional to the insolitusness and the doubt it raises.
21. Defining Rule, according to the Great Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Word: "Rule: nf Principle; standard; prescription; precept; law; example; model; ruler; rule line or lined paper; status of some religious orders; moderation: economy: spend with rule; Careful; what law or usage dictates; arithmetic operation; as a rule or as a rule: generally; ordinarily; in the greatest number of cases; pl menstruum". (Chorão, 1997: 350).

– of the notion of *normal* – contained in the expressions "by default", or "as a rule", that comes from particularities of use (as in the largest number of cases) – since the *rule that* laws dictate are particularities of organization and *norm* ("by default" or "as a rule") are rather observable particularities in the systems, resulting from their use. We will use the *rule-law* expression for one and *standard-use* for another, in order to make this analysis intelligible.

According to Lipovetsky & Charles (2014), sociologically, in contemporary evolved societies, the *rule-law* is mainly postulated at the organizational level but the same does not happen in the individuality level. For the notion of *rule-law* we will also need to share the notion of ethics, since the rules-law by which organizations "must" act if they constitute "ethical conceptions"[22] – Morality is presented as the content of the study of ethical science (according to Volkov et al, 1990), and from that ethics the *rules-law* that govern the systems are born.

As for the state of ethics (and therefore of morality) in contemporary evolved societies and adjacent cultural phenomena, Lipovetsky & Charles (2014) refer to the growing imposition on institutions of the practice of ethics – of the *rule-law*[23]. In other words, the *Rule-law* has been evidencing itself as increasingly strict for organizations.

On the other hand, the authors, by the way, diagnose a dichotomic reality between what the individual is in personal or social terms and what institutions are in the face of ethics and morals (and rule-law). The author labels, in general traits, the contemporary individual as being *Hedonistic* – whom

22. Volkov et al. (1990: 4) makes the following considerations about ethics: "The terms 'ethics' and 'morals' spread throughout Europe, having acquired, in the process of cultural development, different contents. The term 'ethics' retains its initial meaning and designates a science. Morality designates the real phenomenon that this science studies.(...) In spoken language, the terms 'ethics' and 'morals' are used until today as mutually substitutable notions. For example, the common combinations of words such as 'professional ethics', scientist's ethics' and 'ethical norms' actually designate certain moral phenomena". We will use this conception of ethics in this work.
23. Noting this aspect, it should be noted the growing demand from consumers and society in general regarding the way organizations act. DECO, ERSE, and other entities in Portugal assert themselves as defenders of consumer rights and today serve as mediators, providing mediation, and even a growing imposition of the consumer towards companies and organizations (Santos, 2006)

he calls *Narcissus* and who, they state, is governed by values more linked to the *immediate and emotions*, delegating ethics and/or rule to a later plane.

It also diagnoses a desacralization of the values of reason in the face of this attitude of full complacency with the personal ego in their social relations, but also recognizes that the institutions are increasingly imputed the obligation of ethics, of the rule, emanating from this the phenomenon that he calls *painless ethics* – based on emotion.

> "Ethical concern is no longer lived as in the past according to the logic of sacrificial duty and should be thought of in the form of a painless moral, optional, which works more by emotion than by obligation or sanction and that has adapted to the new values of individualistic autonomy" (Lipovtsky & Charles, 2014: 40).

In other words, the rule governing institutions and which the consumer society has as increasingly primordial in the organization's relations with the consumer, loses practical meaning in interpersonal relationships and individuality, which would be the rule (or reason) fades to a full individuality.

The rule in the abstract seems to have also been, over the last centuries, seen as an underlying concept in leveraging various social phenomena, being given priority of development by its refusal. It seems to be possible to say that the questioning of the rule today is a growing *cultural code* and tended to be a fashion creator and that one of the general effects of Western culture, as it arrives to us to this day is, or seems to be, that of enhancing a way of regarding the rule as something to belittle – something to break[24]. It seems to have evolved into an anti-standard norm and also, to an *anti-rule rule*. The prevailing implicit model seems to be that of deconstructing the rule as a cultural model of excellence. Also the advertising industry, in the

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24. This need for innovation, to be different and to deconstruct the rules, seems to be a common element of individuals nowadays. It should be noted that Cauquelin (2010) characterizes the modernist individual as a deconstructor of rules as a characterizing and personalizing personal statement of the modernist individual. In the field of the arts, we see deconstructivism emerging at the beginning of the 20th century. XX, and in the business world it exists today, in the same sense of anti-rule spirit - mandatory constant innovation, as in several other sectors of society.

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field of personality reference models, in its dual role as reflector and producer of culture, has been promoting with insistence, an explicit hedonism anti-norm and personalizing[25], has been culturalizing the individualized personality, and in a somewhat rebellious way, as a reference of personalization for the contemporary individual. According to Lipovetsky & Charles (2014: 21):

> "It is the age of fashion defined and consummated, in which bureaucratic and democratic society is subjected to the three essential components (ephemeral, seduction, marginal differentiation) of fashion form and presents itself as a superficial and frivolous society, which no longer imposes normativity by discipline, but by choice and spectacularity."

As the authors refer to normativity by discipline, it is replaced in everyday life by choice and spectacularity. It can be said that the *eidetic truth* that according to Kant (1755) should govern a social order (rule) seems, even today, to fade in a button-off, a constant zapping of personal emotions, ungoverned of rule or reason – according to Lipovetsky and Charles (2014) the daily experience is now a *spectacle* (meaning of social reality), *emotion* (hedonistic) and *momentary* (aspect of current temporality) – sociological phenomena that are directly linked to the fashions, intrinsically present in these societies.

The question is: Is emotion the new rule? Have personal emotions now come to dictate the reason that would govern our ruled society? Are we experiencing anti-rule emotion regardless of what is meant by Reason? It seems that we are experiencing an anarchy of values and the emptying of Aristotelian ethics, in a new conception of the right, under the aegis of emotion. The anti-rule seems to come, thus, growing and establishing bases within various fields, becoming *cultural code* and *modal factor.*

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25. We found, for example, broadcast by the media, slogans such as "B diferent" – B juices!; William Lawson's – "No Rules Great Scotch"; or the same rebellious streak in Cristano Ronaldo's bold hairstyles that were used to advertise Linik shampoo

In line with the validity of this *anti-rule cultural code*, we can likewise easily identify in the discourse of populism an appeal to discursive antagony, a way of being anti, based on the propagandistic model. What is 'sold' is not so much an ethical or moral value, but rather an antagonistic, emotional, way of being (anti-rule).

This type of discourse, which is not based so much on ideological bases[26], and which is constituted in a form of discourse (anti), it is possible to find in the everyday face-the-face, or in many of the conversations of messages produced on social networks, in which everyone says badly of all, are against, and verbalize their frustrations against everything *'that goes wrong in the world'*.

If *anti-rule* seems to be a *cultural code* now based on society, practiced by individuals in various fields, the political discourse of populist extremism seems to take the anti-rules characteristic (standard-use and rule-law) for itself as a reference model.

This is a truth of the discourse of the Chega party, for example, that it rises against everything that is instituted, offering the interoperability of contradiction as a speech, as observed in the debates of the 2021 Presidential campaign.

Thus, discursive antagonia (the *anti* content) functions as an interoperative model of recognition of the other belongings, and in this course the populist discourse is not recognized both by proposals of alternative development policies, good practices or development proposals, but as representativeness of individuals who are emotionally anti-everything and anti-all, reverberating the anti-rule cultural code now settled.

This way of being popular is incorporated and given to political representativeness. Thus, the discourses of Chega can be defined as *populist* as well as *anti-speech* and *anti-system*, once they are based on the premise of the

26. Although it raises some assumptions of ideology, we nevertheless see that these seem to come from this need to be against, which underlies, in itself, certain ideological structures, founded on discursive antagonism, in a sense of anti-rule.

contradictory speech, often creating a communicational perversity because in this way the sayable is proclaimed and the tolerance is obliterated (the basic premise of democracy).

Communication paradigm: emotion as a form and anti discourse as content

These communication systems, such as those we see express themselves in networks (and face-to-face), based on the emotional and the being against, seem to provide the presence of the Fake, in which there are no legitimated structures nor legitimate structures (as specialists) that favor the 'truth' in the course of socialization. The fake relies on the insolitus, the distrust in the institutions and the antagonist discourse for the exacerbation of hedonism, pressing to the expression of opinion omnipresently in the networks. These systems of communication thus promote in the individual a super-power – the power of *REX* – that in the use of the word subjugates others and symbolically annihilates the next, for *benefit* of a competitive society, based on the anti-everything, often projected in anonymity. This *pathology of democracy* open to virtual, where the emotional form of the *hero* (Jung, [1933] 2018), who subjugates the 'other', as an affirmation of existence, by the use of the word, (explicit in networks) thus prepares the way for clippings of reality in which, as an answer, populist parties emerge, taking to themselves the role of reverberating this way of being and facing reality, representing them in the political-party spheres. These parties function as a symbolic space of unity based on the interoperability of these discursive attributes.

Thus, based on these assumptions, we observe that ideology in this context is bleached and the extremist populist politician is not, nowadays in Portugal, considered both for his ideology, but rather for his role as antagonistic action – Who speaks and acts against the other in the media spectacle[27] .

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27. Hence, in some parties, it is possible to appeal to nationalism, when in fact the rights, freedoms and guarantees of certain fellow citizens are mutilated; or the appeal to Catholic religiosity, when in fact it goes against the laws of charity, altruism and tolerance, which the Christian conception proposes for a human conduct; or the appeal to hegemony over everything and everyone, to live simply the notion of bastion of extremism, which operates against everyone's rights, freedoms and guarantees, taking some as enemies.

The appeals to certain ideological currents reinforces a rhetoric based on emotion, far below the ideological, logical-scientific, or ethical-practical explanation of things, phenomena and situations.

To belong to an extremist populist party is thus to have support for the reverberation of opinion about 'everything that goes wrong in the world' – an emotional factor which refers the weighted ideology to the sphere of uselessness, functioning the discursive model as an appeal to the emotion of belonging to an action of symbolic annihilation of everything, founding its discourse, more and explicitly, in emotions – the *Patho*s sphere, the basis of the Propaganda model.

Raised the question of the values that form the basis of a sustainable democracy – such as the *practice of ethics* (value foundation of aggregation) – and the use of *scientific logic* (source of content validation), what was observed in this analysis was the overelevating, *per se*, of the emotional vector in the practice of the power to opine, represented now under the bastion of extremism (right-wing, in the case of Chega party). The idea behind contemporary extremism in Portugal seems to be to recognize the interoperability of the emotional factors inherent to discontent, and the debates take place, not around issues of ideology but rather supported by the insolitus, saying the sayable, with no boundaries of rule other than emotion. In populist discourse the power of opinion production seems to be more important than the validity of matters. A performative act enhanced by the society of image and spectacle resorting to ridicule and the insolitus. Communication is largely supported by a logic of antagonistic emotion (characteristic of popular discourse that is harnessed by contemporary populism). It is thus in the recognition of the interoperability of its attributes – the emotional form and of the anti content – that the meaning of discourse is embodied. The discourse is not formed in an understanding dialectical basis and is not so much about what (the matter of fact) but rather about whom (who is emotionally the adversary). Thus, the formal aestheticization of discourse by emotion allows greater recognition, in the use of the insolitus, discrediting the interlocutor, leaving aside tolerance and the weighting, to reveal himself

in an accusatory attitude towards everything and everyone. The discourse thus becomes an *anti-discourse*, *populist* and the *emotion* (as a form) and the sense of antagonia, *anti* (as content), are thus the elements of the paradigm of communication of these parties. This form of discourse becomes, by its characteristics of reverberation of the form of the discourse of the common (not governed by the technical or specialized form), a success formula in the mediatized society.

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Seven key pathologies of contemporary democracy that make emotional
appeal a successful formula of the communication model of extremist [...]

POPULISM, PRESENTISM, EMOTIONS AND SPIN DOCTORING ON SOCIAL NETWORKS: JAIR BOLSONARO'S DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

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Summary: In this paper it will be defended the hypothesis that the digital communication of the then president of Brazil Jair Messias Bolsonaro (2019-2022) used populist discourses to react to the worst moments of ratings on social networks, materialized through official statements, facts of the presidential agenda or factoids, published both in the professional press and on social networks. Thus, we will present data collected on Twitter between January 3, 2020 and March 18, 2021, regarding reactions and sentiments related to Bolsonaro. Additionally, we will take an analysis of the news that would have reacted to the downs of popularity of the then president in the mentioned social network. The theoretical framework of this work is anchored in the concepts of populism and presentism and the relation of these phenomena with social media; in the concept of emotional media and in the practice of spin doctoring. From an analysis standpoint, it can be seen that Bolsonaro's strategy on Twitter was to take advantage of the contemporary phenomenon of presentism, by overlapping negative facts with news

that used populist and emotional aspects. Despite of somewhat working for deeper crises in digital popularity, however, it failed to make the president mentions more positive than negative. This article concludes that it is necessary to reverse this status quo of biased information, composed by populist and presentist content, and edited according to spin doctoring techniques. Without media regulation about that, the situation may degrade to levels difficult to recover from.

Keywords: Jair Bolsonaro; Twitter; populism; presentism; spin doctor; emotions; sentiments.

Introduction

The government of the then president of Brazil, Jair Messias Bolsonaro (2019-2022), had as a political communication strategy the domination of the discourse on social media when crises arose in his term of office. In addition to him and his supporters, the Brazilian press, the government's opponents, and social media users were part of the dispute around digital narratives.

This paper will use data collected by the company AP Exata, which obtained four years' worth of Twitter posts, geolocated from the main145 cities from all 27 Brazilian states, about comments dealing with the then president of Brazil. In this data sample, obtained through the analysis of sentiments/feelings and polarities, the emotions joy, confidence, fear and sadness were measured, with which it was possible to ponder whether the mentions of the president were positive or negative. AP Exata also evaluated the peaks and drops of the president's popularity, which oscillated between positive and negative until the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), when only negative evaluations were recorded up until the end of the data collection period.

1.1 Theoretical framework

Spin doctoring

Social platforms, however, carry other phenomena beyond the technological and emotional ones. Spin doctoring, for instance, is a practice of political communication that has been applied in digital media and uses emotions inside news to obtain its objectives.

The term refers to a variation of the press advisor's role, which deals specifically in the persuasion and publicity of the public image of the entity it represents. As Mateus (2022. 23) states: "the idea of spreading and amplifying messages in the public space taking into account the interest of public opinion for a product, service or, even, public figure."

> The term "spin doctor" is an amalgam of "spin", meaning the interpretation or slant put on events (which is a sports metaphor, referring to the spin a pool player puts on a cue ball) and "doctor", derived from the figurative uses of the word to mean mending, patching together, and faking. The "doctor" part also derives from the employment of professionals rather than untrained amateurs to manage the spin. (Esser, 2008. 23)

The first time the term was used dates to the 1950s, specifically on the practice of *spinning* (turning the focus towards the expected goal) (Sumpter & Tankard, 1994). In the following decades, mentions of the practice of *spin* applied to politics appear, such as mentions of the practice in the presidential governments of Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, James Carter, and Ronald Reagan. In 1984, an editorial in the New York Times commented on the debates of the then electoral race for the US presidency with the current expression, *spin doctoring*.

Thus, the term *spin doctoring* transitions between the performance of public relations, in which professionals define the framework of the facts they communicate to society; or even act as consultants specialized in political communication. In both cases, the practice aims at producing messages

with matters that give advantage to a politician and trigger appropriate results in the public (Esser, 2008. 4783-4784). Ribeiro (2015), meanwhile, defines *spin doctoring* as the

> positive projection to the public space of a particular subject or action, through the most sophisticated and updated techniques of manipulation and persuasion. In this process, the media stand out as the preferred channel for the distribution and induction of messages, having as an engine the interpersonal relationship with journalists. (2015. 20)

Of the numerous objectives, prerequisites, main tasks, techniques and instruments of the practice, the following stand out for this article (in Ribeiro, 2015. 10-19): defining and conveyance the media agenda; building a political personality; maintaining power/campaign permanent; finding the message; image management; personalisation of the politician; scandal management; use of social networks and buzz media; negative campaigning; manipulation of the truth; alternative-truth and over-promising; diversionary manoeuvres (firebreaking); "emptying the story"; testing public opinion; raising or lowering expectations; "throwing out the bodies"; bullying and intimidation.

In this case study, the digital communication of the then President Bolsonaro and its effects, it is believed that the use of populist and emotional resources (Araújo & Prior, 2021) in his messages were a strategy to react to the worst moments of evaluation in social networks, materialized through speeches, facts or factoids, published in the professional press or in social networks.

1.2 Presentism as a pillar of populism

In contemporaneity, the classical idea of harmony was subverted following the shattering of categories (Hall, 1992 Bhabha, 1994). Thus, the narratives taken as references until then were called into question, namely on History, with consequences at the level of identity, a fact which Jean-François Lyotard (1986) underlines as having resulted in the loss of credibility of the founding metanarratives. The notions of fragmentation and heterogeneity gave more importance to the so-called margins of knowledge, increasing

diversity. As already mentioned, the contemporary stamp is inscribed only in the present, to which we are all summoned (Martins, 2011). In this regard, the writer Javier Cercas warns not to simplify the present to the point of ceasing to understand it. In an interview to the Portuguese newspaper Expresso, he sustains that what is not of today is already past, and what happened three weeks ago is pre-history. This is a situation that creates a totally falsified vision of reality, because, in truth, the past is an active dimension of the present, without which the present is mutilated (Leiderfarb, 2020). Which summons up the idea of "presentism", a concept coined by François Hartog (2003) and based on the idea that there is a risk that everything that is history is compressed into contemporary history. The "modern regime of historicity" would have been broken around 1989 with Francis Fukuyama's (1992) idea of the "end of history", "surely a caesura of time" (Hartog, 2003, p. 188), leaving behind Koselleck's (2006) ideas about the trend of modernity away from experience and expectation, which are configured as "the main features of this multiform and multivocal present: a present monster. It is at the same time everything (there is only present) and almost nothing (the tyranny of the immediate)" (Hartog, 2003, p. 259).

Looking, then, at history in a banal way, underlining the unrepeatability of its moments, as well as the fact that they are irreproducible, or from simplified and predictive models of causality, Jerónimo and Monteiro (2020) point out that there is room to think from other concerns. Even if, as happens with other ways of producing knowledge, "it does not have to be immediately useful" and much of its usefulness proves even useless. And, in the face of political, institutional, and also academic anxiety, they refer to the need to reiterate this fact, "which leads to subordinating the production of knowledge to criteria of 'application', of 'innovation', of 'market' or of 'technology', or even of a given 'greater cause'" (Jerónimo and Monteiro, 2020, p. 11).

This intersects with the ideas of Daniel Innerarity (2019), who links the little understanding of a society to the measures aimed at making it measurable since, as he observes, almost everything can be quantified, in a true regime

of omnimetry. And, despite the constant invocation of international good practices that underline that blocking or banning the media does not constitute an answer to the problem of the existence of false news, the fact is that, in recent years, the opposite has been observed. This has worsened due to the Covid 19 pandemic, in which several countries have sponsored laws to punish the authors of fake news, which has alarmed the UN and the OSCE about the fact that these dynamics can potentiate censorship. Which does not mean to stop fighting them, being good to remember that this is a problem that captures more and more journalists, in an attempt to seek the truth based on fact-checking. To promote a kind of a new light on it, Innerarity proposes that pluralism is always guaranteed and that the fight against fake news is not made the focus (Innerarity, 2021). More so because, as Innerarity tells in the book A Theory of Complex Democracy – Governing in the 21st Century, we are not living in a world of evidence, but of ignorance, where truth is not the same as objectivity and rigour and there is little verifiable verification of what circulates around us.

Political leaders thus take advantage of the dynamics of presentism, in which everything that emerges in society seems to have started today and there is no history to contextualise it. This means that simultaneity will have been responsible for a new regime of historicity, a kind of continuous present, characterised by acceleration, in which the present and the past are shown in a disruptive way. It is in this framework that Enzo Traverso (Observing Memories, 2018) underlines the urgency in freeing presentism from its cage – as if it produced a world locked in the present without the capacity to look to the future – accommodating existing memories.

It is no coincidence that Peter Dahlgren (2014) states that social networks are platforms with a great deficit of democracy, since they function on the basis of the replication of similarity and not the promotion of difference; which enhances the emergence of an apparent consensus, moulded into uncontested bubbles in the relationships between individuals intermediated by these online platforms. José Pedro Zúquete (2022) compares populism

to a chameleon. Perhaps this is why populist politicians direct their discourse almost exclusively towards the new media, relegating the traditional media to an irrelevant place, altering the ecosystem that has been in force regarding the scrutinising role of the media. José Tavares (2022) observes that "the populism of others is not an excuse to ignore problems but should rather serve as a pretext to talk more and better about the problems".

In *The expulsion of the other* (2018), Byung-Chul Han underlines the standardisation of globalisation and the blurring of the 'other', whatever it may be. He does not see positive things in the dissemination of that which is equal, and which reacts to the stimuli that capitalism determines in the same way. He states that the proliferation of the equal, presented as growth, makes the social body pathological. In the chapter entitled "Listening", he predicts that in the future there will be a profession called "listener", who will be paid to listen to the other, with listening gives back to each person what is his or hers, reconciling, healing and redeeming. Han maintains that the noisy society of tiredness is deaf, so that, in contrast, a future society could be called a society of listeners and those who pay attention. Which will pass through a temporal revolution that makes a totally other time begin: rediscovering the time of the other. Which will be a good time.

Moisés de Lemos Martins points out that human practices "are in direct relation with temporality and have a local time, which is the time of experience", although they also have a contextual time, being that "between the time of experience and the contextual time walks the time of practice" (Martins, 2011, p. 64). Which means that it will not be by chance that Umberto Eco defends the idea that, even for philosophers, lies are more fascinating than the truth, a fact that justified his dedication to semiotics. For Eco, what makes signs interesting is not that they serve to tell the truth, but that they can be used to lie or to talk about things we have never seen: "A language reveals its importance when it is used to refer to things that are not there. In my collection you will not find Galileo, but Ptolemy, because he was wrong" (Leiderfarb, 2015, p. 28-30). Moreover, the philosopher,

resorting to Wittgenstein, notes that what cannot be theorized must be narrated, having no doubt that people prefer the lie to the truth.

2. Methodology

During the period of four years, a set of algorithms collected an analised posted content on Twitter about the president of Brazil Jair Messias Bolsonaro (2019-2022), using the methodology of Sentiment Analysis and polarities. Based on artificial neural networks, and by receiving human feedback through sample appraisal, this methodology uses the concept of emotions from evolutionary psychology. According to this theory (Plutchik, 1984), human beings express themselves from eight basic emotions that, when associated, generate dozens of compound emotions. In this framework, four emotions were measured in real time: happiness, confidence, fear and sadness, as well as positive and negative mentions (the sentiments feelings).

Through the analysis of keywords, and their association with other terms contained in the texts published online, it was possible to calculate the emotions present in each sentence and analyse oscillations of the feelings produced by them. For this, we searched for data published on Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Based on the netnography approach (Kozinets, 2020), it was also analysed qualitative data from social networks, profiles and pages related to the universe of interest related to the themes in question.

AP Exata also carried out evaluation of the peaks and drops of the president's popularity, which oscillated between positive and negative until the start of the covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), when then only negative evaluations were recorded. The data shows positive mentions for 275 days (34.03% of the total data collection), 463 negative days (57.30%) and 70 neutral days (8.66%).

Abr '20   Mai '20   Jun '20   Jul '20   Ago '20   Set '20   Out '20   Nov '20   Dez '20   Jan

Jul '19   Jan '20   Jul '20

Figure 1 – Daily assessment of Jair Bolsonaro's government performance
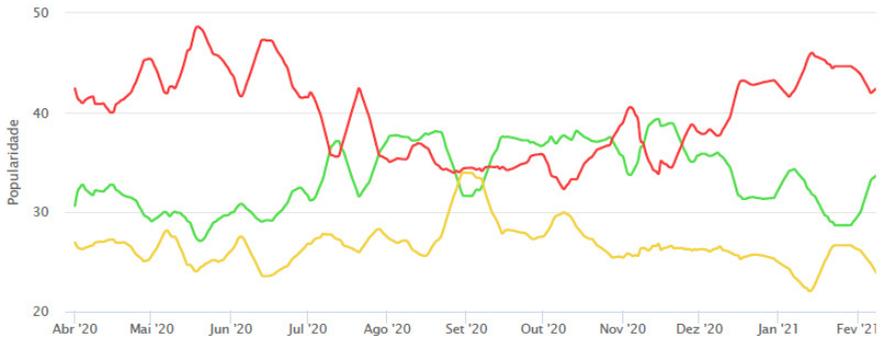
Figure 2 - Assessment of the government according to "Excellent/Good" in green, "Regular" in yellow and "Bad/Terrible" in red

The most used *hashtags* during 2019-2020 connected to the president dataset were #Bolsonaro, #ForaBolsonaro, #BolsonaroGenocida, #LulaPresidente2022, #BBb21, #Lula, #ForaBolsonaroGenocida, #Lula2022, #LulaVergonhaDoBrasil, #BolsonaroPresidenteAte2026, #COVID19, #BolsonaroPresidente2022, #NemLulaNemBolsonaro, #VacinaParaTodosJa and #ElesNao (AP Exata, 2020).
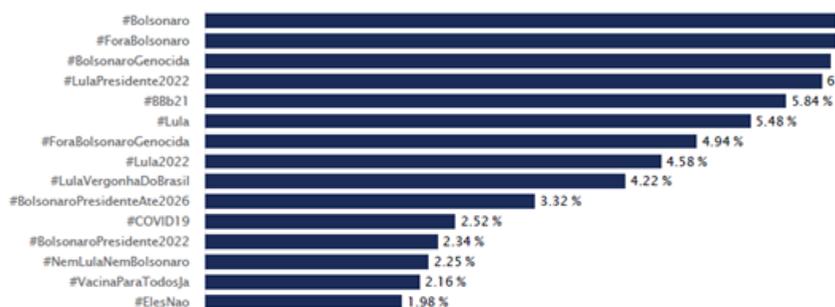
Figure 3 - Most used hashtags

3. Case study with emotional news and spin doctoring practices

For this text, it was collected related news after the drops of sentiment measurements exhibited previously, which will be analysed according to the concepts presented in the theoretical framework. These news reports contextualise some crises of Bolsonaro government, which stimulated political communication with traces of presentism, populism, and spin doctoring techniques.

Initially, of four news attesting Bolsonaro´s public reactions on Twitter (3 negative and 1 positive, indicate that there are facts with potentiality to change the emotional bias of Twitter users' comments. Such considerations suggest that the digital communication of the then president tried to reverse the negative perception of the facts addressed with the latest news:

1. *Queiroz case turns tide of Bolsonaro clan's popularity on Twitter. Source: Exame Magazine (21/01/2019);*

2. *Tweets reveal Bolsonaro supporters' relationship with religion. Source: O Estado de S. Paulo (20/05/2019);*

3. *Bolsonaristas change tone on Twitter and attack on media turns to support for Lava Jato. Source: Exame Magazine (11/06/2019);*

4. *UN speech increases positive mentions of Bolsonaro on Twitter. Source: O Antagonista (24/09/2019);*

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Then, 9 news items were collected right after the day of the worst evaluations about government, recorded by sentiment analysis of *tweets*, between January 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021. These indicated that there is modulation of the president official speech and agenda when verified popularity drop on Twitter. Of the preconditions for the execution of spin doctoring work, the characteristic identified by Ribeiro (2015) that relates to this article, is the ability to control public opinion through monitoring and reaction. Already among the objectives of the practice identified by the author, the maintenance of power through permanent campaign is what stands out in the news collected. In this analysis, it was noticed that among the biggest recurrences of *spinning* activities are permanent campaign; increase decrease expectations; image management and media agenda conduction; right after in the number of recurrences, the personification of the politician; "emptying the story", diversionism maneuvers and truth manipulation.

1. *Bolsonaro says he is in favour of any measure to combat terrorism. Source: Folha de S. Paulo* (03/01/2020);

2. *In Regina Duarte's nomination, Bolsonaro talks about "'valorizar" Rouanet law. Source: Exame Magazine* (04/03/2020);

3. *Bolsonaro issues MP[1] and decree to define essential activities. Agência Brasil* (03/21/2020).

4. *Bolsonaro pays tribute to covid-19 victims with "Ave Maria" at the sound of accordion. Source: DN/Lusa (26/06/2020);*

5. *Questioned about checks from Queiroz to Michelle, Bolsonaro tells journalist: 'My desire is to beat you up'. Source: G1 (23/08/2020);*

6. *Bolsonaro says he will not send Renda Brasil proposal made by economic team. Source: Valor Econômico* (21/01/2019);

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1. Provisional law.

7. *Bolsonaro gives a speech on TV for 7 September and reactivates "panelaço"[2]. Lula releases video on social networks. Source: El País Brasil (07/09/2020);*

8. *Covid-19. Bolsonaro says Trump will beat virus and come out stronger. Source: RTP Notícias (03/10/2020);*

9. *Fachin's decision on Lula made 'one of the biggest crooks' eligible, says Bolsonaro. Source: G1 (18/03/2021)*

3. Final considerations

As presented earlier, the then president Bolsonaro used populist and emotional resources to react to the worst moments of assessment on social media, materialized through speeches, facts or factoids, published in the professional press or on social media. It also seems clear the implementation of spin doctoring techniques in the agenda, statements and factoids of the then president of Brazil, to emotionally reach his digital followers.

According to the journalist Maria Ressa, winner of the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize, co-founder of the website Rappler, internet platforms have put an end to shared reality and are destroying democracy. In an interview with Folha de S. Paulo, she maintains that "facts are boring, they don't spread – that's why the incentive structure of social media platforms is completely wrong" (Melo, 2022).

João Carlos Correia states that communication needs facts but it also needs an interpretative effort, of hermeneutics: "Journalism needs to be oriented to facts but it also needs a good context, editorial considerations and an efficient narrative that helps to give a cultural meaning to the chaos of experiences of daily life". Even more so since "disinformation in all its extent is a buzzword and a condition of all human societies" (2022, p. 9). Quoting Nelson Traquina, he notes that it is impossible to establish a radical distinction between reality and the media that should reflect that reality,

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2. Protests made by making noise with pans during the duration of Bolsonaro's speech.

because the news helps to construct reality itself. Even if reality is constructed, so the media show their own construction of that reality (Berger & Luckman, 1999).

If there are no measures to reverse this *status quo*, such as increasing media regulation, the situation may degrade to levels that are difficult to recover from. Even if indignation, when exercised by citizens, continues to contribute to resolve conflicts and problems (Innerarity, 2019). Which may, on the other hand, mean that the social networks that helped pave the way for Bolsonaro, may also unseat him, should he fail to live up to the expectations of those who elected him (Fernandes, 2018). Hate, for its part, will make its way in social networks and at the speed of the internet.

Greetings and Support

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FRIENDS AND ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE: REPRESENTATIONS OF HISTORICAL FIGURES IN TEXTBOOKS FOR THE CHINESE POST-80S AND POST-90S GENERATIONS

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Abstract: This paper studies two sets of primary school textbooks of Chinese Literacy created in the context of the Patriotic Education Campaign during the 1980s and 1990s. It aims to unravel the relationship between propaganda and education in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the representations of the 'friends' and the 'enemies' of Chinese people created by the Chinese Communist Party during this time period. I use critical discourse analysis as the main research method. The present study reveals that the concepts of propaganda and education in the context of the PRC are ontologically interchangeable. The main 'heroes' created in this campaign are the Chinese Communist Party leaders, who are portrayed as 'friends' or 'families' of Chinese people. There also exists an ambiguous but positive representation of Sun Yat-Sen, founder of the Republic of China and the 'counter-revolutionary' Chinese Nationalist Party. This ambiguity probably occurs due to the unstable political and economic relationship between the PRC and Taiwan during this period. The 'enemies' created in this campaign mainly consist of the nationalist 'counter-revolutionaries' and the Japanese invaders. These two groups share similar representations, even though they appear in different historical contexts. These similarities can be explained by the different narratives and collective memories created about the same historical events by Japan and Taiwan during this period.

Keywords: Propaganda, Education, Populist Nationalism, Collective Memory

Propaganda and Education in Post-Reform China

The populist nationalism in the People's Republic of China (PRC) since the 1990s has generated widespread attention in the international academic community. The Chinese populist nationalism serves as a double-edged sword for the communist government. On the one hand, the rise of nationalist sentiment and pride in the country helps to legitimize the party-state. On the other hand, populist nationalism can also become a danger to the regime when it fails to meet the demands of public opinion (Fang & Repnikova, 2017: 2). For this reason, populist nationalism is used by the party-state when it feels the need to divert the people's attention from some problematic issues. One example was the positive reaction of Chinese government to the 1999 anti-NATO and anti-US protests due to the bombing of the PRC embassy and the death of three Chinese journalists in Yugoslavia, which helped the communist government to calm the tension of the 10th anniversary of the Tiananmen Protests of 1989 (Young, 2013: 175). However, when the party-state feels that nationalist sentiments do not match its political agenda, it often attempts to silence public voices. This was the case between the Reform and Opening-up period (1978) and the global financial crisis of 2008 (Zhao S., 2021: 141), when China needed to maintain good diplomatic relations with its neighbors and Western countries in order to sustain its economic development.

Several studies prove that the most active nationalists in contemporary Chinese society are young people, especially the so-called post-80s and post-90s generations[1] (Yang & Zheng, 2012; Zhong & Huang, 2019; Shan & Chen, 2021). Born in a period of economic, social and political transformation, these young people have witnessed the great progress that China has achieved since the Reform and Opening-up. In general, these young people are characterized as being more optimistic and prouder about their country than elder generations, who have experienced periods of chaos and

1. In Chinese 八零后 *balinghou* and 九零后 *jiulinghou*, which literally mean post-80s and post-90s, these represent Chinese who were born during the 1980s and 1990s.

instability, including the Great Leap Forward (1958 - 1960), the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1976), and the Tiananmen Protests of 1989.

Propaganda and education have a synergistic and interconnected relationship in communist China. Between 1983 and 1995, the Chinese government issued several central policies and guidelines in order to legitimize its regime and maintain future social stability. Thus, a 'Patriotic Education Campaign' aimed at children of the post-80s and post-90s generations was officially initiated. The program of the Campaign includes the revision of textbooks and the introduction of a series of curricular and extracurricular activities, such as watching leitmotif films and visiting sites related to Chinese revolutions, which encourage patriotic sentiment in Chinese schools (Naftali, 2018: 705 and Zhou & Wang, 2017: 169). This propagandistic campaign, which aimed to create and maintain young people's national identity, has remained in Chinese educational and cultural spheres ever since. The implementation of the Patriotic Education Campaign is also considered to be an important cause of the nationalistic sentiment of Chinese youth (Shan & Chen, 2021; Fang & Repnikova, 2017).

The discussions in the preceding paragraphs lead me to question the extent to which nationalist education and propaganda targeting children in the 1980s and 1990s are significantly influencing public opinion and fostering nationalist sentiments among the Chinese population. Propaganda is a complex concept with no conventional definition. In its most neutral sense, 'propaganda' implies dissemination or promotion of certain ideas (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2014: 2). The concept of 'propaganda' in China is a distinct concept from the Western one, although there are similarities between the two. Kingsley Edney (2014: 25) considers that the equivalent term for 'propaganda' in contemporary Chinese is '宣传 *xuanchuan*', which literally means 'dissemination of information'. This term is generally regarded in China as a neutral or even positive concept (Ibid., 22; Li, 2018: 12). Another Chinese term which is synonymous to 'propaganda' is '思想工作 *sixiang gongzuo*', which literally means 'thought works'. This term has a moral component that refers to education and correction of 'erroneous' thinking

(Edney, 2014: 22). The latter term reveals a close relationship between propaganda and education in Communist China. Many propaganda campaigns of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) are conducted in the name of and by means of 'education'.

The education system is fundamental to the stability and development of the prevailing power structures. Educating young people through carefully designed and selected school curricula can help ensure the legitimacy of governments and secure the future of a country as a political structure (Williams, 2014). In this sense, education is a distinctly political activity (Apple, 2019: 1). School textbooks have a significant impact on shaping students' view of the world. According to Podeh and Alayan (2018: 1), during the formative years of schooling, children's minds are particularly malleable and susceptible. Textbooks have the ability to influence their value system and it is possible that this influence will remain with them for the rest of their lives. The policies of education not only reveal how societies are organized in the present, but also influence the behavior of students in the future.

Corpus of Analysis

This paper aims to analyze the strategies of creating and consolidating collective memory about Chinese revolutionary leaders and the 'enemies of the Chinese people' created for the post-80s and post-90s generations through the education system under the framework of the 'Patriotic Education Campaign' of the same period.

Jaques Ellul (1973: 110) considers primary education and teachers of literacy to be fundamental to the organization of propaganda in Asia. For this reason, the corpus of the analysis consists of two sets of textbooks for the subject 语文 *Yuwen*, or Chinese Literacy of elementary education, which is one of the most important subjects of the Chinese education system. These textbooks work exactly as Ellul explains: they teach children to read and, at the same time, with a vast selection of texts prepared under CCP's supervision, promote communist propaganda (*Ibid.*).

The main research question that guides this study is as follows: How are Chinese revolutionary leaders and the 'enemies' of the Chinese people represented in primary school textbooks aimed at the post-80s and post-90s generations produced during the Patriotic Education Campaign?

In this paper, I analyze two sets of primary school Chinese Literacy textbooks published between 1984 and 1999.[2] One of the sets is comprised of 10 textbooks for the five-year primary curriculum, while the other is comprised of 12 textbooks designed for the six-year primary curriculum. Although they are printed and distributed by publishers from different provinces, they are all published by People's Education Press, an official publishing house founded in 1950 under the guidance of the Ministry of Education and is in charge of educational publications throughout China.

Each textbook consists of several units, each containing independent lessons and a review exercise. In the most recent set, there is also an introduction to each unit starting from volume VII (4th grade). The lessons are divided into three categories:

1. 讲读课文 *jiangdu kewen*, key lessons that require the teachers' detailed explanation;
2. 阅读课文 *yuedu kewen*, reading lessons that are less important than the previous ones but also need explanation by teachers; and
3. 独立阅读课文 *duli yuedu kewen*, individual reading lessons that should not need explanation by teachers.

Lessons in the first category are considered more important than the other two and appear more frequently in exams. Each lesson usually consists of a main text, a vocabulary list, grammar exercises, comprehension exercises,

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2. After the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), a new curriculum plan for primary and secondary education was created. Between 1978 and 1981, primary education in the PRC was regularized to a total duration of five years. However, in 1981, given the difficulties in completing the five-year curriculum plan and the premature age at which students were completing primary education and participating in the labor market, consideration began to be given to the possibility of extending the duration of primary education to six years. In the same year, the Ministry of Education implemented a six-year primary education plan in some cities. Thus, in the 1980s and 1990s, there were two primary education curriculum plans at the same time. See more at the People's Education Press website: https://www.pep.com.cn/rjgl/rjls/dsj/, accessed on 10-09-2021.

and reading or memorization practice. The topics of the lessons are diversified, covering subjects such as: science; history; everyday life; fairy tales and legends; and excerpts from prose and poetry by famous writers. The texts in the lessons are written by a wide range of authors from different countries and historical periods, so they also possess a variety of literary styles.

In the lessons, historical figures are often depicted. These include politicians, scientists, artists, military personnel, doctors, etc. Some historical figures are depicted as children, while others are presented as adults. Some appear in both stages of life. In addition to the more well-known figures with generally positive representations, such as Mao Zedong, Lenin, or Isaac Newton, there are also several types of less individualized historical figures that represent collective historical groups, such as the Chinese Armies and the peasants. Figures with negative representations also appear primarily in the texts as collective groups, so much so that they are often simply referred to as '敌人 *diren*', 'enemies'. This group includes figures related to religious phenomena; soldiers of the Chinese Nationalist Party (PNC); armies of foreign invaders; corrupt officials and; 'capitalists', among others.

Research Design

My main research method is critical discourse analysis (CDA), which has been widely used in Chinese language communication studies in recent years (Qiaoan, 2019: 645). The discourse analysis methods in this paper are adaptations of the methods proposed by Annabelle Mooney and Betsy Evans in *Language, Society & Power* (2015) with some modifications given the specificities of Chinese language and society. The authors create a methodology for analyzing political discourse in Western media that is based on CDA, and try to discover the relationships between political discourses and power differences, as well as the role of the media in creating authoritative and persuasive locutors. Based on these methods, I analyze the strategies of persuasion through 1) the three tactics of persuasion, which include the concepts of *ethos*, arguments of authority, *pathos*, emotion conveyed through the discourse, and *logos*, the argument itself; and 2) the rhetorical analysis,

which covers the use of pronouns and titles, contrast between descriptions of heroes and enemies, metaphors, parallelisms, preconceived ideas, and the existence of intertextuality (*Ibid.*: 45-51).

I divide the various historical figures into different categories depending on their positive/negative representation, nationality, and the political party to which they belong. I analyzed the percentage that each category of historical figures occupies. Based on the historical, social and political contexts of the 1980s and 1990s, I try to understand what types of collective memory are formed about the 'friends' and 'enemies' of the Chinese people and how the Chinese regime intends to persuade the youth of the post-80s and post-90s generations to accept such discourses.

Friends of the Chinese People

In both sets of textbooks, 26.3% of the lessons are about historical figures (91 out of 346 lessons in Set I and 78 out of 296 lessons in Set II). Although these textbooks belong to the subject of Chinese Literacy and not History, one can see the great importance that the textbook editors gave to the 'historical' content of the curricula. Although the two sets of textbooks are issued in different decades, most of the historical figures in the two sets are identical. There are a few texts that are different in the two sets about the same historical figures.

Chinese revolutionary leaders occupy a significant percentage of the lessons (22 out of 91 lessons in Set I and 16 out of 78 lessons in Set II). Within this category, one can divide revolutionary leaders into two groups: leaders of the CCP and 孙中山Sun Yat-Sen,[3] founder of the Republic of China and the Chinese Nationalist Party (CNP). Within the first group, I have chosen

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3. Sun Yat-Sen (1866 - 1925) is one of the most important figures of the period of Republican China. At the popular level, he is generally considered the '国父 *guofu*', 'the father of the Republic of China'. Throughout his life, Sun participated in numerous revolutions. In 1894, he founded the Society for the Regeneration of China, the first Chinese society to incite a modern revolution. This society was the precursor to the CNP. In 1911, he participated in the Xinhai Revolution, which overthrew the Qing dynasty government. In January 1912, he was elected as the temporary president of the Republic of China, leaving the post a few months later for 袁世凯Yuan Shikai (1859 - 1916). In August 1919, he founded the CNP (Elleman & Paine, 2019: 263-274; Mao, 2001).

the two leaders with the most lessons for the present analysis. These are 毛泽东Mao Zedong[4] and 周恩来Zhou Enlai.[5] As for Sun Yat-Sen, since he is the only historical figure of CNP with positive representation and possessing only one lesson, I will conduct analysis with this lesson only. As the communist leaders occupy a larger number of lessons with a variety of themes, I will analyze 30% of the lessons on these. The lessons on each communist leader are categorized by the subjects of the texts. The criteria for selecting the lessons for each subject are arranged in this order of preference:

1. In the case of being the only lesson of a given thematic, this is chosen;

2. If there is more than one lesson in a given theme, I prefer the text with the greatest number and variety of actions and/or interactions between different characters. I adopt this criterion because I believe that texts of this nature create more concrete representations about historical figures and events than texts of a merely descriptive nature;

3. In case several lessons containing roughly the same number of actions/interactions, preference is given to the lessons that appear repeatedly in both sets of textbooks;

4. Finally, in case there are no repeated lessons, key/reading lessons are preferred.

4. Mao Zedong (1893 -1976) was born into a peasant family in a village of Hunan province. He was one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party. He led several communist and anti-imperialist revolutionary movements during the period of Republican China. In 1949, he was elected as the chairman of the PRC central government. After the founding of the PRC, he launched several internal political campaigns, such as the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and commanded several wars, such as the Korean War (1950-1953) and the Sino-Indian War (1962) (see more in: Zhong, 1986; Terrill, 1980).
5. Zhou Enlai (1898 -1976) was born into a family of officials of the Qing dynasty in Zhejiang province. He studied at Nankai University and later in Japan and France. He was a member of the CCP and the CNP (between 1923 and 1926), and participated in several revolutionary movements and promoted peaceful negotiations between the CCP and the CNP. He was the first foreign minister and the first prime minister of the PRC. During his diplomatic career, he regularized diplomatic relations between China, Japan and the USA. As China's prime minister, he tried to correct Mao Zedong's 'leftist' campaigns by protecting several politicians criticized by the Red Guards and the Gang of Four (see more in: Wilson, 2008).

Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai: Friends and Families of the Chinese People

The lessons on Mao Zedong focus mainly on three themes:

1. Mao Zedong and his interaction with the people and children (7 lessons);
2. Mao Zedong's frugal and diligent life (3 lessons)
3. Mao Zedong as the founder of the PRC (1 lesson);

In order to understand the collective memory created about Mao Zedong in textbooks, I conduct a discourse analysis of the following lessons:

Lesson Titles	Lesson Information
1. 毛主席在花山 *Maozhuxi Zai Huashan, Chairman Mao at Huashan Village*	Lesson 24, Vol.10 of Set II
2. 补丁 *Buding, The Patch*	Lesson 11, Vol.3 of Set II
3. 开国大典 *Kaiguo Dadian, The Grand Inauguration Ceremony of the PRC*	Lesson 3, Vol.11 of Set II

Table 1: List of lessons analyzed about Mao Zedong.

Chairman Mao at Huashan Village tells a story about Mao Zedong, his guardian, and the peasants of Huashan village during the period of China's Second Civil War. According to official information,[6] in 1948, Mao Zedong stayed nine days in Huashan village and his experience with the local people is said to have inspired the author of the lesson.[7] In order to ensure that Mao Zedong can work in a quiet environment without being interrupted, his guardian asks the peasants not to use the mill near Mao's office, but to use the other one further away. When Mao Zedong finds out what has happened, he asks the guardian to call the peasants back, serves them tea,

6. See more in the report《寻找课本故事 太行山深处阜平小山村如今美如玉 *Xunzhao Keben Gushi Taihangshan Shenchu Fuping Xiaoshancun Rujin Meiruyu, In Search of the Stories of the Textbooks, The Little Village in the Middle of Taihang Mountain Which is Today as Beautiful as Jade*》, available at: http://travel.china.com.cn/txt/2020-05/11/content_76029926.html, accessed on 13-06-2022.
7. The author is 翟志刚 Zhai Zhigang. Although detailed information about this writer is not known, available information points to him being born in 1951, three years after Mao's stay at Huashan village. A biography about this author is available at: https://www.zibosky.com/shbk/202206/30902.html, accessed on 13-06-2022.

a beverage that the latter never drank before, and helps them to grind the grain. Thus, the narrative describes Mao Zedong as a caring, selfless leader, and a friend of the people.

The Patch is a text about Mao Zedong's frugal life. This lesson discusses the old, patched clothes that Mao Zedong is said to wear to receive guests, not only before, but also after the establishment of the PRC. Although these texts show an obviously propagandistic nature, there are several doubts and criticisms regarding the alleged lifestyle that Mao is said to have lived.[8] Today, disputes about the 'veracity' of the stories about Mao Zedong's frugal life continue, and have prompted counter-arguments from some researchers in the Chinese academic world.[9] The information provided by people who had direct contact with Mao is used as evidences and sources both to try to prove Mao's qualities as well as to disprove them. Regardless of the veracity of the descriptions of Mao's past, these arguments are tools to create an artificial collective memory by official and unofficial propagandists, using history as a prop. These tools aim to persuade people to accept a version of the past that brings political benefits in the present to those who promote these very narratives.

The Grand Inauguration Ceremony of the PRC is a text in which appears not only Mao Zedong, but also other first-generation communist leaders[10] who were present at Tiananmen Square on October 1st, 1949. However, Mao Zedong is undoubtedly the main character in this lesson, occupying a large

8. See more in《关于毛泽东的 "补丁衣服 "及其解读 *Mao Zedong by Budingyifu jiqi Jiedu, On Mao Zedong's 'Patched Clothes' and its Interpretation*》, an article written by an author with the pseudonym 卸甲一书生 Xiejia Yishusheng and published in 2013, sought to 'disprove' the stories about Mao's frugal life and the example of the patched clothes. The original article can be found at: http://www.mingjinglishi.com/2013/05/blog-post_4701.html, accessed on 13-06-2022.
9. In 2014, 龙剑宇 Long Jianyu, a researcher at the Center for the Study of Maoist Thought at Xiangtan University and deputy director of the Comrade Mao Zedong Memorial Center, located in Shaoshan, the hometown of Mao Zedong, published an article entitled《驳对毛泽东生活起居的质疑 *Bo Dui Mao Zedong Shenghuoqiju de Zhiyi, Counter-Arguments as to the Accusations the Everyday Life of Mao Zedong*》at the Marxist Academy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. In this article, Long tried to 'alert people' to the intention to 'destroy and defame Mao Zedong's character and spirit', and criticized the arguments in the article we mentioned above. However, it should be noted that Long Jianyu is himself the deputy director of the Memorial Center and also a researcher at the Center for the Study of Maoist Thought at Xiangtan University, so I do not consider him to be a source with an independent view on the matter.
10. These are 刘少奇Liu Shaoqi (1898-1969), 宋庆龄Soong Ching-ling (1893 - 1981), 李济深Li Jishen (1885 - 1959), 张澜Zhang Lan (1872 - 1955), 高岗Gao Gang (1905 - 1954), Zhou Enlai, 林伯渠Lin Boqu (1886 - 1960) and 董必武Dong Biwu (1886 - 1975), among other historically less important ones.

part of the narrative and being depicted in the center of the illustration. As the protagonist, Mao Zedong is described as being the charismatic founder of the PRC and as someone who led the inauguration ceremony, which is said to have been witnessed by 300,000 people. In this text, 刘少奇Liu Shaoqi, Mao Zedong's political rival who was imprisoned and tortured to death during the Cultural Revolution, is not mentioned, although his figure appears in the illustration of this lesson. The silence about Liu Shaoqi in the narrative in a historical period when his political status had already been restored after Mao's death suggests that the conflicts between Liu and Mao are possibly a collective memory of a past that the CCP wants to conceal and eliminate from younger generations, since such memories may contribute to the instability of the present government and raise an alternative perception of Mao Zedong.

There are a total of nine different lessons on Zhou Enlai in the two sets of textbooks. These cover the following topics:

1. Zhou Enlai and his frugal and diligent life (3 lessons);
2. Zhou Enlai as a charismatic prime minister (3 lessons);
3. Zhou Enlai and his relationship with children (3 lessons).

Each of the three lessons selected for analysis corresponds to one of the three topics about Zhou Enlai. The correspondence between the lessons and the topics can be found in Table 2:

Lesson Titles	Lesson Information
周总理的睡衣Zhou Zongli de Shuiyi, The Pajamas of Prime Minister Zhou	Lesson 2, Vol.5 of Set I Lesson 16, Vol.5 of Set II
难忘的泼水节Nanwang de Poshuijie, The Unforgettable Songkran Festival[11]	Lesson 8, Vol.4 of Set II
一张珍贵的照片 Yizhang Zhengui de Zhaopian, A Precious Photo	Lesson 25, Vol.9 of Set I

Table 2: List of lessons analyzed about Zhou Enlai.

11. The Songkran Festival is the largest festival celebrated by the Dai people, who live mainly in Yun-

The Pajamas of the Prime Minister is a text that describes Zhou Enlai's frugal life by using the example of his old, patched pajamas. Through the perspective of a young nurse watching Zhou's wife mending this single set of the prime minister's pajamas, Zhou's frugal life becomes convincing, as we can see through the following excerpt: 'A young nurse holds the pajamas of Prime Minister Zhou with both hands. Seeing the delicate, scattered seams of the patches, her eyes fill with tears.'

Although also a relevant political figure in Communist China's history, and even regarded as one of the Eight Eminent Grand Officers of the CCP, Zhou's wife,邓颖超Deng Yingchao (1904-1992), is not referred to in the text by her government title, but by 'Grandma Deng'. If Zhou Enlai's wife is 'grandma Deng', this means that her husband is 'grandpa'. In this way, a closeness is created between the government leader and the common people.

The second lesson in Table 2, *The Unforgettable Songkran Festival* is an account of celebrations in 1961 of this festival among the Dai people, an ethnic minority of China in Yunnan province, at which Zhou Enlai was present. In this lesson, Zhou Enlai is described as a charismatic leader adored by the Dai people. The image of Zhou Enlai described in this lesson is quite different from the usual one of him as prime minister, something that makes a great contrast to the collective memory that the students have of him, at least according to descriptions and illustrations of Zhou in other lessons in the textbooks. Here, Zhou appears dressed as a Dai man and mingles with the crowd. He also plays a traditional Dai musical instrument. These descriptions suggest that he had a close relationship with this ethnic minority group from the border area of China.

At the end of the lesson, the year that Zhou Enlai participated in the festival (1961) is repeated twice. This was not the first time he participated in the *Songkran* festival. There are several records of Zhou Enlai wearing the attire of the local people and participating in the same festival in 1960 in Myanmar (then Burma) during his official visit to the country (Wilson,

nan province and other countries in Southeast Asia, mainly in Thailand. It is a Thai national holiday.

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2008: 214). The year 1961 was a landmark year in several aspects of the PRC's history, and the repetition of the year in this lesson was not a mere coincidence. In 1961, the Chinese and Burmese government forces allied and defeated the People's Volunteer Army of Yunnan, an anti-communist battalion supported by the Taiwanese Nationalist government. They were active in the border area of China and Myanmar where the Dai people lived. Given this historical context, the description of the Dai people's warm reception of Zhou Enlai and the interaction between the communist leader and the main ethnic group of this region during the festival is intended to suggest the illegitimacy of the various attacks by the Anti-Communist People's Volunteer Army of Yunnan. In this way, the editors of the textbooks sought to promote the idea of unity and recognition between the Dai people and the CCP government.

The last lesson in Table 2, *A Precious Photo*, tells a story supposedly experienced by Zhou Enlai and a girl named Zhou Guihua on a visit by the former to a small village at the foot of Lu Mountain[12] on September 7th, 1961. The text can be divided into two parts. The first is about the interaction between Zhou Enlai and the girl on the way to the Guanyin bridge. The second part describes Zhou Enlai's visit to Guihua's house, which includes a dialogue between Zhou Enlai and the peasants of the village. This text intends to create a charismatic representation of Zhou Enlai from a child's point of view. Zhou Enlai is described by his gestures and discourses as a caring elder to the children and a close leader to the people.

According to this lesson, Zhou Enlai's visit to the village took place in 1961, the last year of the Great Famine of 1958-1961. During this period, due to the Great Leap Forward Movement, the establishment of the communes, natural calamities, and sanctions by the Soviet Union, countless Chinese

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12. 庐山 *Lushan*, situated in Jiangxi province, is one of the best known mountains in China. It was a famous mountain during Imperial China for its Buddhist and Taoist temples. In the Republican era, it was the site of several political events, including the negotiations between the CCP and the CNP to establish the Second United Front in the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. After the establishment of the PRC, Lushan continued to be an important site for Chinese politics. In 1959, 1961 and 1970, three conferences among Chinese Communist leaders of the highest positions were held there. The 1961 conference possibly represented the historical context of Zhou Enlai's visit described in this text.

starved to death. This historical context is not made clear in the lesson, which mentions only subtly about the Great Famine. Without full historical context, this story describes Zhou Enlai as a leader concerned about the people, as he uses expressions to describe the serious situation of the village people's lives caused by the political situation, although he does so in a subtle way, as it would not be acceptable for the PRC government to break the silence about the political situation of this historical period to the students of the 1980s and 1990s.

In this lesson, when they realize that Zhou Enlai is aware of the famine situation, the peasants feel more relieved and start to describe the situation they experienced in previous years. After listening to the peasants, Zhou Enlai makes a speech that has the dual purpose of encouraging the peasants and justifying Mao Zedong's actions:

> In one or two years, we have suffered calamities, and on top of that, someone is choking us. Indeed, our life is difficult. But as long as we follow Chairman Mao and work hard in order to try to be self-sufficient, the situation will improve day by day. You need to work hard, plant many cereals, raise many pigs, feed many chickens and ducks. In this way, we will overcome the obstacles together!

This speech points only to natural calamities and outside forces ('someone', certainly referring to the Soviet Union) as constituting the causes of the Great Famine of this period.

The narratives of the textbooks intend to construct quite similar collective memories about the two Chinese communist leaders. Both are represented as living a frugal and diligent life. Likewise, both are 'friends' or even 'grandparents' of the Chinese people. They are further described as excellent leaders who have led China onto a better path. Finally, both are charismatic, which makes them to be easily loved and admired by the common people. Still, there are differences in the representations between the two leaders. Mao Zedong has more texts about his experiences with the

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people and soldiers during times of revolution, so he is mainly depicted as a political leader. There is a greater number of texts about interactions between Zhou Enlai and children compared to Mao Zedong, and the former is mainly depicted as 'father' or 'grandfather' of the Chinese people.

This difference in representations is possibly related to the roles that the CCP has intended to assign to each of the two politicians in the post-reform era. Mao Zedong was a communist leader who had ebbs and flows throughout his political career, the decline of his authority after the Great Cultural Revolution and the loss of importance of the liberal faction vis-à-vis the conservative faction within the CCP meant that the CCP needed to restore its importance to the younger generation, especially after the Tiananmen Protests. For this reason, the textbooks mainly emphasize his role as the founder of Communist China and Mao's work as the leader of the CCP. His mistakes and political conflicts with other communist leaders are omitted and silenced, and the difficulties that the Chinese people faced during his mandate are justified by natural causes or the action of foreign hostile orces.

This representation of Mao as the leader of the Chinese people is complemented by the narratives about Zhou Enlai, a politician with consistent and stable performance throughout his career. The textbooks represent Zhou Enlai as a charismatic figure close to the people and extremely hardworking. In contrast to Mao, his role as a political leader is not the most emphasized, and his contributions as a foreign minister are not mentioned. The textbooks talk about Zhou's celebration of the *Songkran* festival together with the Dai people of China, but remain silent about his participation in the same festival in Myanmar as a successful act of diplomacy. This choice makes Zhou Enlai's contribution to the country not stand out from Mao's, but rather complement it. Similarly, Zhou Enlai is also represented in the textbooks as someone who sought to justify Mao's mistakes.

2. Sun Yat-Sen, the Father of the Chinese Nation as a Courageous Child

In both sets of textbooks, I encountered across several texts that narrate stories of the members of the Chinese Nationalist Party as a collective figure and as 'enemies' of the people. However, it is possible to find one positive text about the founder of this party which is considered 'anti-revolutionary' by the CCP. I am referring to lesson 12 of volume 4 of Set II. This lesson, entitled 不懂就要问 *Budong Jiuyao Wen, Who Doesn't Know, Asks*, tells an episode from Sun Yat-Sen's childhood which took place during the late Qing dynasty (1644-1911), and does not mention the later events for which Sun Yat-Sen is best known. Sun, who at the time of the story is still a child, studies at a private school where traditional neo-Confucian teaching methods are still being practiced. The teacher merely teaches how to read the texts and requires his pupils to memorize them, even if they do not understand the meaning of the texts. Sun Yat-Sen, however, asks the teacher to explain the meaning even though he is aware that he may be punished for such a request. At first, the teacher gets angry. In the end, however, he agrees with Sun and explains the texts thoroughly to the students.

In this lesson, although the description of Sun Yat-Sen is very different from the accounts about the 'anti-revolutionary nationalist enemies', neither his relationship with the CNP nor his adult biography is explained, which makes Sun seem like an amorphous figure with no relationship to the CNP.

The omission of information and silence on Sun Yat-Sen's full biography in the 1990s could be associated with the PRC's ambiguous position towards Taiwanese governments in the last two decades of the 20th century. After establishing official diplomatic relations with the U.S. in 1979, the PRC government presented the *Open Letter to Taiwanese Countrymen* for the fifth time.[13] This letter, which opposed Taiwan's independence, attempted to end military confrontations across the Taiwan Strait in a peaceful manner and promote economic and cultural cooperation between mainland

13. See more at 《2019年第一天，让我们重温《告台湾同胞书》！ *On First Day of 2019, Let's Remember the Open Letter to Taiwanese Countrymen!* 》, a report by *China News*, published on January 1, 2019, available at: https://www.chinanews.com.cn/tw/2019/01-01/8717289.shtml, accessed on 17-11-2021.

China and the Island. The government of the Republic of China in Taiwan practiced martial law until 1987. In this way, it was able to control all aspects of Taiwanese society in the form of a political dictatorship. 蒋经国 Chiang Ching-Kuo (1910 - 1988), son of 蒋介石Chiang Kai-Shek (1887-1975) and governor of Taiwan between 1978 and 1988, initially refused bilateral cooperation and introduced the so-called '三不 *sanbu*' or 'Three No' policy towards mainland China: no contact, no negotiation and no compromise.[14] This policy was practiced until 1987, when martial law and the state of emergency ended. In this way, the all-too-negative image of the CNP in the textbooks of the 1980s becomes understandable.

However, in the 1990s, the establishment of the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits by Beijing government and the Strait Exchange Foundation by its Taipei counterpart promoted economic and cultural communication between mainland China and Taiwan. It is possible that this was a reason for the addition of the text on Sun Yat-Sen to Set II. However, due to the unstable political relations between the governments of Beijing and Taipei, the narrative about Sun Yat-Sen at this time was rather ambiguous.

Enemies of the Chinese People

In both sets of textbooks, unlike the 'friends of the people', who occupy a large percentage of the texts, the 'enemies' appear only in some narratives about the 'friends' of the texts as secondary figures. There are in total eight categories of 'enemies': 1) Members of the CNP; 2) Japanese invaders; 3) American Army; 4) German Nazis; 5) Capitalists and Landowners; 6) Anti--Revolutionary Foreign Governments; 7) Historical Figures Associated with Superstitions and 8) Warlords.[15]

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14. See more at《兩岸「新三不」出現? 專家分析: 大家都能接受 *The Rise of 'New Three-No Policy' between China and Taiwan? Expert Analysis: Everyone Can Accept*》, published by *China Times* on May 10, 2020, available at: https://www.chinatimes.com/realtimenews/20200510001599-260407?chdtv, accessed on 17-11-2021.
15. In Chinese, 军阀*junfa*. During the period of Republican China, the term referred to military figures who benefited from foreign support and who dominated various parts of China, where they exercised autonomous authoritarian regimes.

Members of the CNP and Japanese Invaders are the two categories of enemies that stand out in both sets. In fact, the number of texts related to these two categories is much larger than the remaining six categories, occupying about 65% of the lessons in Set I and around 59% of the lessons in Set II. The descriptions of 'enemies' are, in most lessons, much less detailed compared to those of 'friends'. Many appear in the texts only with the reference of '*diren*', 'enemy', and are not identified specifically. In this way, the majority of the 'enemies' are perceived by the students as collective figures rather than individual historical ones.

1. Chinese Nationalist Party, the main enemy of the Chinese people

In the two sets of textbooks there are a total of 16 different lessons that mention the CNP members as 'enemies'. Some texts refer only once to the term 'enemies' and do not offer any further information about them. Others have some more detailed descriptions. The Nationalists appear primarily as antagonists in order to highlight the heroic virtues and actions of the Communists. The members of the two parties are described as being complete opposites, the Communists are selfless, brave, fighting and honest while the Nationalists are selfish, coward, lazy and corrupt. The Communists' struggles are always legitimate and beneficial to the Chinese people and the Nationalists' violent actions show only their greed and cruelty. These opposing representations between the Communists and the Nationalists in the textbooks are intended to explain to the students the reasons for the CCP's victory in China's Second Civil War (1946-1949), an event which is very distant from the students who constitute the target audience of the textbooks. Due to the unstable and changing political situation and diplomatic relationship of mainland China and Taiwan in the 1980s and 1990s, the creation of the negative collective memory about the CNP among the Chinese youth was essential for the recognition of the legitimacy of the Communist regime in mainland China and the acceptance of the unification policies of Taiwan, which at the time the textbooks were written was ruled by the 'illegitimate' Nationalist Party.

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2. The Japanese Invaders and the Memory of its Atrocities to the Chinese People

Japanese invaders are the second most frequently mentioned enemies in both sets of textbooks, which appear in nine different lessons. The most detailed representations of these enemies are found in the lessons about heroic children fighting against these invaders during the Second Sino--Japanese War (1937-1945). The narratives about the Japanese enemies are very similar to those of the Nationalist ones, they are also represented as corrupt soldiers, as they resort to bribery. They are also portrayed as cruel and violent towards the people, as they not only rob and destroy people's property, but also abuse and torture civilians. Moreover, the Japanese invaders are further represented as ignorant, given that they always fall into the ambushes of the communist armies.

Despite having much less visibility in Set II than in Set I, the Japanese invaders are still the most frequently represented foreign enemies. Their presence is very different from that of other foreign enemies, such as the American army or the Nazis, who have few substantive representations. This can be explained by the fact that in the 1970s the PRC regularized its diplomatic relations with Japan, the then West Germany, and the United States. In the following two decades, although there were moments of conflict, the PRC's diplomatic relations with the three countries were relatively stable. There is, for example, a great ambiguity when these textbooks talk about the U.S. participation in the Korean War. In the lessons relating to it, the Americans are referred to as 'enemy', and there is no reference to their nationality. The Germans, on the other hand, are always mentioned as '德国法西斯 *deguo faxisi*', literally 'German fascists'. In this way, it seeks to distance this collective group of 'fascists' from the common people of Germany.

The same does not happen to Japanese enemies. This difference can be explained by the attitude that the Japanese government has adopted towards the violent actions that Japan carried out in the countries it invaded and colonized. The official editors of Japanese history textbooks in the 1980s and

1990s tried to omit the war crimes committed during the imperialist period and to whitewash the history of Japanese invasion and colonization, which caused several disputes between Japan and the countries it occupied in the past. It is possible that this more visible presence of the Japanese invaders compared to other foreign enemies in the textbooks is related to this traumatic memory of the past, which continues to affect the relations between China and Japan to this day.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the discourses adopted in the 1980s and 1990s regarding historical figures and aimed at students are closely related to the social instability that the PRC was facing internally after the Great Cultural Revolution and the June 4 Incident in 1989, and externally after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. During this period, the legitimacy of the communist regime was constantly challenged by internal and external factors, so the communist leaders felt that it was urgent to create a positive collective memory about the first-generation communist leaders. The most problematic political relations that the PRC had in this period were with Taiwan, ruled by the CNP, and with Japan, which denied the violent actions committed during its imperialist expansion. For this reason, lessons dealing with the CNP and the Japanese invasion occupy the largest percentage of the texts related to revolutions.

Thus, the relationship between education and propaganda in the context of post-reform China becomes clear. As Chinese Literacy is a main subject of compulsory education, it is charged with the function of disseminating the CCP's propagandistic political agenda. In this way, children's thoughts and behaviors are manipulated in the name of education, thereby cultivating a new communist 'morality' in post-reform China.

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INCREDIBLE INDIA SHINING: THE IDEA OF INDIA IN POLITICAL AND TOURISTIC PROPAGANDA POSTERS OF THE XXI CENTURY

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Abstract: Political campaigns directed towards a national audience and touristic campaigns directs towards an international audience often deal with stereotyped representations of the nation-state. The goals of such representations are the direct and immediate consumption of the represented nation. This paper analyses the visual and textual representations of India made for local citizens through two political campaigns launched by two political parties. These are: *India Shining*, launched by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the counter-campaign *Aam Admni*, launched by the Indian National Congress (Congress), both in 2004. It also analyses an ongoing touristic campaign for foreign visitors, the campaign *Incredible India*, launched by the Indian Government in 2002. Through discourse analysis based on qualitative data, this paper shows how political campaigns spread positive or negative representations of the nation, depending on whether the politician/party in question is in power or belongs to the opposition. It also reveals that touristic campaigns are invariably positive and how positive representations function as creators and consolidators of nationalistic ideas of the nation-state in space and time. Finally, it also analyses the way in which, while contemporary and globalised, such campaigns are informed and influenced by Orientalism and re-Orientalism, that is, the reinvention of Orientalism in the public and academic spheres in contemporary India.

Keywords: *Nation branding, India Shining, Incredible India, idea of India*

Introduction

Due to the spread of mass media and the increasing influence of globalisation, images of the nation to be consumed internally for political purposes or externally for diplomatic and touristic purposes have been increasingly relevant. The creation of homogeneous and centrally planned representations has turned nations first into political and cultural ideas and into commercial brands. Accordingly, such attempts have been called "nation branding". Kerrigan, Shivanandan and Hede (2012) show how this strategy attempts to create particular ideas of a nation within the global framework of travellers and other imagined nations and how it aims at idealising third-world peoples by effacing signs of poverty and violence (322-324). According to Blaney and Shah (2018), attempts at nation-branding in India have created and reinforced stereotypes about Indian people, culture and landscapes. But where do such stereotypes come from, what are their uses, and how are they consolidated?

This article focuses on three such campaigns launched in contemporary India and aimed at national and international audiences. These include: the *Incredible India* (2002-) campaign, which has aimed to create touristic images for both internal and external consumers; the *India Shining* (2004) campaign launched by the Bharatiya Janati Party (BJP) for the general elections of 2004; and 3) the *Aam Admi* (Hindi for *Ordinary Person*) (2004) campaign, the response to *India Shining* by the Indian National Congress (Congress), the BJP's main political opponent then and now. Through discourse analysis based on qualitative data, I describe the main textual and visual representations of India created by these three campaigns. I then compare and contrast them with Orientalist discourses and contemporary Indian discourses created by influential Indian public intellectuals and academics who study modern India. I focus particularly on economist Amartya Sen, politician Shashi Tharoor and Indo-American activist Rajiv Malhotra.

To Be or Not to Be: Indian Political and Touristic Campaigns

1) *Incredible India:* Since the end of Nehruvian economic policies and the introduction of neoliberalism in India in 1991, tourism has become an increasing economic priority. In this role, it has been publicly set and privately developed.

Incredible India has been part of an Asian and global tendency of creating stereotyped touristic representations of nation-states for external consumption. Other examples in Asia include *Amazing Thailand/Discover Thainess* (2013), *Malaysia - Truly Asia* (1999), *Live it Up! Singapore/Uniquely Singapore*) (2000), *Singapore Roars* (2003), *Wonderful Indonesia* (2011), *HK: Asia's World City* (2001), *Korea Sparkling* (2007), *Cool Japan* (2013).[1] These campaigns have similar naming strategies. Most names consist of the name of the place in question (India, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan) with the addition of a positively charged adjective (incredible, amazing, wonderful, sparkling, cool), adverb (truly, uniquely) or verb (live it up, roars). There is also an attempt at localising (truly Asia) and globalising (Asia's World City). All of these campaigns have consisted of short and poetic or witty slogans visually aided by symbols which stand for the nation in question and which are immediately recognisable by international audiences.

As an ongoing campaign, *Incredible India* has an active website.[2] The website has several submenus which focus on time/history (Heritage destinations, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Museums in India), local geography (States and Union Territories, Nature and Wildlife), culture (Art, Food and Cuisine, Crafted in India), consumerism (Luxury, Shopping) spirituality (Spiritual destinations, The Land of Buddha, Yoga and Wellness). The posters made for the campaign from 2002 until 2009 are available online.[3] Unless stated

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1. See ROLL, Martin (2015), *Asian Brand Strategy: Building & Sustaining Strong Global Brands in Asia*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
2. https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en.html (accessed on 26/10/2022).
3. Https://www.incredibleindiacampaign.in/ (accessed on 26/10/2022). The year between brackets refer to the year when the poster was created.

otherwise, it is to these versions which I shall refer to. Referring to these posters, Blaney and Shah (2018) consider that *Incredible India* creates a representation of India in which iconic landscapes predominate, mainly deserts, backwaters, national reserve parks and the Himalayas (2). Geary (2013) has added more Indian "icons", such as the Bengal tiger or the Taj Mahal (41). Out of the 68 different posters which fall under the category "iconic photo with short witty slogan", there are four which represent the Bengal tiger and three which represent the Taj Mahal. There are other posters focusing on the same symbols form later campaigns, whose posters are unavailable in the official website.

Picture 1 (2007) shows a Bengal tiger inside a small monument. It comes with the tagline "not all Indians are polite, hospitable and vegetarian". The text makes use of a stereotype, the idea that Indians are all polite, hospitable and vegetarian. The use of a negative sentence makes it seem as if the stereotype is contradicted, but once the reader realises that there is a pun and that, in this case, the expression "all Indians" does not refer to "all Indian people", but "all Indian creatures", the stereotype is perpetuated, as one can implicitly conclude that "all Indian people are polite, hospitable and vegetarian".
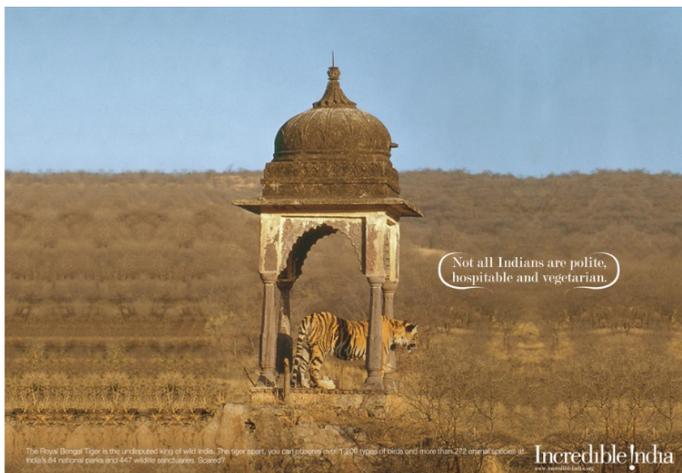

Picture 1 – *Incredible India* (2007)

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2) *India Shining:* This political campaign consisted of eight slogans and posters aimed at highlighting positive representations of India since the neoliberal turn taken in 1991. Even though this was a political campaign, its naming strategy is readily comparable with the touristic one, as it also focuses on the place (India) and on a very positive adjective associated with light (shining). The name of this campaign can be semantically compared to Korea's touristic campaign *Korea Sparkling. India Shining* focused on the neoliberal and commodified "supermarket of dreams" (Pinney, 2005) and was therefore comparable to similar discourses on the American or, more recently, on the "Chinese dream". In this universe, middle-class Indians are supposed to engage with the larger nation as individual consumers and investors and to improve the national economy through self-interest.

Kaur (2016: 630) shows how this campaign was concerned with a monolithic vision of India which focused solely in representing the contemporary global consumer. The main strategy adopted by the BJP consisted in depicting colourful and joyful scenes of everyday middle-class life related to different age and gender groups. The posters show: 1) a child raising his hand in school, 2) a middle-aged parent/grandparent raising his (grand) daughter on his shoulders; 3) a mother playing cricket while her child looks at her; 4) a group of young girls riding bicycles; 5) a group of young girls sitting near a computer; 6) a middle-aged man making a phone call in a long empty road; 7) a middle-aged man working in a traditional loom; and 8) an old man holding a bunch of colourful flowers (Picture 2). [4] These images are accompanied by poetic lines in free verse which reveal how the natural, personal and social conditions of the present are positive. The text which accompanies Picture 2 is written in English and reads: "Tourism is booming / Business is thriving / Flowers are blooming / You've never had

4. See the eight posters in Pinney (2005); Kaur (2016); https://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/10/10/from-india-shining-to-india-whining/ (accessed on 26/10/2022); http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3518029.stm (accessed on 26/10/2022; https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/the-game-of-googly/289698 (accessed on 26/10/2022.

a better time to shine brighter". English in India has been strongly associated with education and job opportunities and, in fact, textually and visually, nearly all of these images are directly related either to education or to job opportunities/business and to the relationship between two. All characters are invariably represented as smiling, confident and active, as many of them are depicted with their arms raised and/or open.
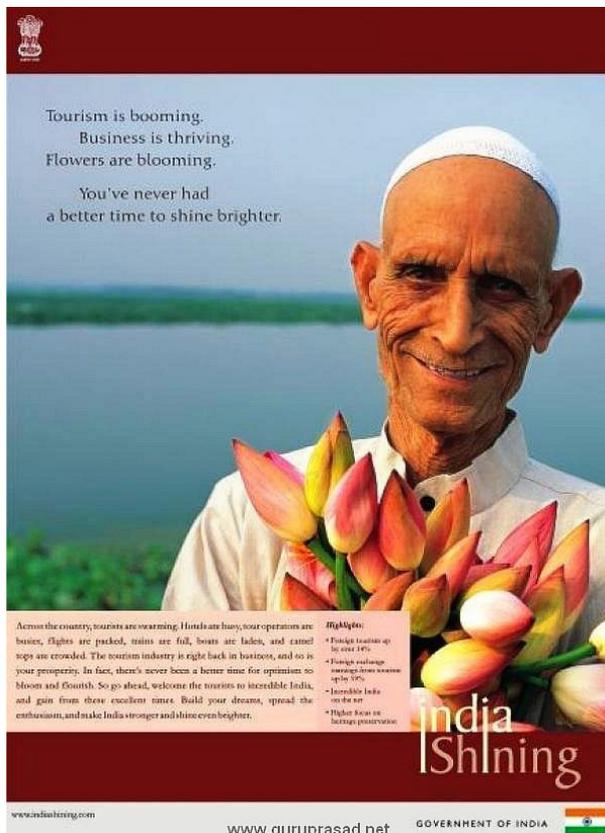
Picture 2 – *India Shining* (Pinney, 2005).

The *India Shining* campaign turned out to be a flop. Most Indians perceived the difference between reality and representation and comically started to slightly alter the representations of the campaign in order to better conform with reality from their own perspective. What was initially conceived as a "feel good" campaign turned into a "fool good" one and the slogan was playfully changed to India Whining, India Stinking, India Burning, and India Declining by the general public. For that reason, the *India Shining* campaign was abandoned. Nowadays, there is no active online information associating it with the BJP. In 2014, when he won the elections for the first time, current prime-minister Narendra Modi, a BJP politician, chose not to focus so much on the "shining" present but rather on the "shining" future, as he spoke of "good days" (*ache din*) coming ahead (Kaur, 2016: 643).

Aam Admi: India Shining's representation was textually and visually countered by another campaign created by BJP's main political opponent, the Indian Congress (see Pinney, 2005; Kaur, 2016). Contrary to *India Shining*, this campaign presented black and white images which focused on the social problems of India, mainly urban and rural poverty and unemployed youth. The people depicted rarely look directly and confidently at the camera. They often look dejected, helpless and passive. Picture 3 depicts a group of farmers. Two of the women cover their heads with their hands in a clear sign of desperation. The taglines of this poster, written in Hindi at the top, translates as "special conditions for the farmers". The general slogan of the campaign, written at the bottom, translates as "what has the ordinary person [*aam admi*] gained?", whence the name for which the campaign came to be known. Apart from English, Hindi is the other language of communication for the national government, but, unlike English, it is not associated with the ex-colonisers nor with globalisation and is mainly spoken in the states of North India.
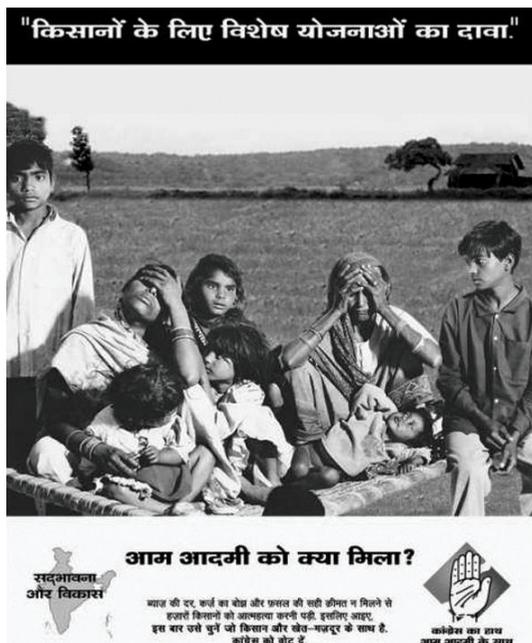
Picture 3 – Pinney (2005)

In sum, these three campaigns rely on both textual and visual representative strategies to selectively pick (or perhaps invent) parts of a wider reality and deliberately hide others in order to create cohesive and homogeneous representations and effectively convey positive or negative emotions.

Grotesquely Primitive or Dazzlingly Glorious: Where Does it All Come From?

Two Religious and Political Ideas of India

Previous to the contemporary capitalistic idea of "nation branding", the main nation-building campaign in India was informally called "idea of India", a phrase which is said to have been created by the writer Rabindranath Tagore.[5] The idea has been closely related to Hinduism as a religion and

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5. See BHATTACHARYA, Sabyasachi (1997), *The Mahatma and the Poet: Letters and Debates between Gandhi and Tagore, 1915–1941*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, India; BHATTACHARYA, Sabyasachi (2017). "Rethinking Tagore on the Antinomies of Nationalism" In TUTEJA, K. L. & CHAKRABORTY,

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as a political phenomenon. The main bone of contention related to the religious question has been whether Hinduism has been concocted or at least codified by the British colonisers, which is the view of most contemporary scholars,[6] or whether Hinduism existed in pre-colonial times, which is the view of some scholars[7] and most Hindu activists.

The debate of artificiality against authenticity has been evident not only in discussions about Hinduism as a religion but also and in discussions about India as a nation. Most works, both scholarly and non-scholarly, have acknowledged the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity of the modern nation-state of India, an idea which shows that India is "an imagined community" like every nation.[8] Discourses on India as a culturally-unified nation are similar to those of Hinduism as a culturally-unified religion. As there are arguments for the creation of a pan-Hinduism influenced by a Western holistic view, there are also arguments for the creation of a pan-India, a contemporary nation-state based on the Western concept of nationalism, but with at least a claim to difference, according to which variety is as much prized as similarity. Therefore, this identification between the constructs of "religion" and "state" has facilitated the creation of a discourse in which both concepts have been intermingled.

There exist several political concepts of India, a country with more than one billion people, but, since the beginning of discussions around this idea, two main ones have eclipsed all others in the public sphere (see Tharoor, 2020): Indian secularism and Hindu nationalism (also called *Hindutva*). The former has regarded India as a modern secular and tolerant culture with no hierarchic social preferences. The latter has seen it as an intrinsically Hindu culture in which diversity has only existed because Hinduism itself has

Kaustav (eds.). *Tagore and Nationalism*, New Delhi: Springer.
6. See KING, Richard (1999), *Orientalism and Religion: Post-Colonial Theory, India and "The Mythic East"*, London: Routledge for a comprehensive overview of this topic.
7. NICHOLSON, Andrew J. (2010). *Unifying Hinduism: Philosophy and Identity in Indian Intellectual History*, Columbia University Press.
8. See KHILNANI, Sunil (1997), *The Idea of India*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux for a comprehensive overview on the topic.

been said to allow and promote such diversity.[9] These concepts have been competing in the cultural and political arenas since colonial times. Despite their differences, some scholars have advocated that secular India and Hindu nationalist India have been similar in structure and that they have stemmed from the same root.[10] The concepts of unity and diversity have been significant for both ideas, which have posited a fundamental historical, cultural, social, and religious unity that existed throughout the whole territory controlled by the British before the British came. Secular India has emphasised diversity and Hindu nationalism unity, but both have strongly relied on Hindu textual and visual discourses. In sum, the difference between the two ideas of India has been more quantitative than qualitative. It is for that reason that Sen (2005) has acknowledged that, even though hardcore supporters of Hindu nationalism have been small in number, a larger group of proto-*Hindutva* enthusiasts have clustered around them (53).

Orientalism and Re-Orientalism

The creation of India as a modern nation-state and its representation is intimately connected with the issue of Orientalism and what has been called re-Orientalism. Orientalism refers to the way the Western sciences and arts have created the idea of the exotic East in order to impose its cultural superiority over it. This concept was first introduced by Edward Said (2003, first edition in 1978). Said stated that Orientalism constitutes a discourse based on an ontological and epistemological distinction made between East and West (2), whereby the relationship between both has been one of power and domination (5). In other words, Western intellectuals have created an imaginary representation of the East in order to exert their hegemony over the East and to define what the West is.

9. See THAPAR, Romila (2014), *The Past as Present: Forging Contemporary Identities Through History*, New Delhi: Aleph Book Company.
10. See NANDY, Ashis (1998). "The twilight of certitudes: secularism, Hindu nationalism and other masks of deculturation" *Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 283-298; NANDY, Ashis (2003), *The Romance of the State and the Fate of Dissent in the Tropics*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

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Said also argued that one aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient has been viewed (26). Through the modern mass media, Orientalist discourses have infiltrated Eastern traditions. Stereotypes similar to the ones devised by the German Orientalist school,[11] which stated in general terms that ancient Indian civilisation was highly advanced and had later decayed, may present ready-made ideas that can be put to work in favour of given native political agendas, even when they are dissociated from their European source. Contrary to Orientalism, this phenomenon has not yet become an established academic subject and has thus been called by many different names. I use the concept of *re-Orientalism*, which has been extensively used by human geographer Lisa Lau and by Om Prakash Dwivedi and Ana Cristina Mendes, both professors of English Studies (Lau, 2009; Lau & Mendes, 2011; Lau & Dwivedi, 2014; Mendes & Lau, 2014).

The concept of re-Orientalism as theorised by these authors refers to how contemporary (Indian) writers have used Orientalist stereotypes in their own fiction and nonfiction works. Lau, Dwivedi and Mendes have created and have used this notion in order to describe Indian literature in English to be consumed abroad (e.g. Salman Rushdie), as well as films, most prominently the Hollywood film *Slumdog Millionaire* (2009). Such authors and films, which have been quite popular in the West and for the most part ignored in India, have been considered to make extensive use of Orientalist stereotypes in order to better captivate their mostly Western audiences and therefore to better sell their work in the globalised market. Such stereotypes have mainly been negative and have been related to poverty, pollution, and violence.

The concept of re-Orientalism may also be applied to the cultural discourses that are created by Indians for internal and for external consumption, as Hindu nationalist Indian authors, politicians and marketing strategists have endeavoured to selectively pick the more positive Orientalist tropes

11. See INDEN, Ronald B. (2001), *Imagining India*, Cambridge: Indiana University Press for a comprehensive overview on the topic.

which Westerners applied to them. According to Sen, the Orientalist representation of India was, for the most part, "grotesquely primitive", while the Hindu nationalist one, which I regard as re-Orientalist, has been "dazzlingly glorious" (140).

The negative representation of contemporary India has often been called "Dark India" by Lau, Dwivedi, Mendes and other scholars. This name conforms both to the textual and visual representations present in the *Aam Admi* campaign. In one article about the film *Slumdog Millionaire* (2009), Mendes has even played with and inverted the BJP slogan and called this kind of representation "India unshining", therefore showing how both the campaigns and the two general representations are mirrors of each other.[12] One can therefore understand how such positive and negative Orientalist and re-Orientalist representations can be easily appropriated by political discourses. Politicians and parties in power will naturally wish to represent their nation as shining and "dazzlingly glorious", while those in the opposition may wish to represent it as dark, "unshining" and "grotesquely primitive" and to present themselves as the political alternative which will turn the nation into a shining and dazzlingly glorious one in the future.

One can also notice the influence of such cultural discourses in the touristic marketing of the *Incredible India* campaign, not exactly in the way that it presents a contemporary neoliberal middle-class fantasy but rather a dream-like Orientalist one. Picture 4 is an Orientalist artwork titled Old *Blue Tiled Mosque Outside of Delhi India* painted by the American Orientalist artist Edwin Lord Weeks (1849-1903) around 1885.[13] This picture presents a single small mosque in an otherwise empty and dreamlike landscape. The human figures within the picture all point to the ultimate exoticism of this landscape, both when one considers the lavish clothes of the characters mounted on or pulling camels, or the nakedness of the ascetic talking to them.

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12. MENDES, Ana Cristina (2010). "Showcasing India Unshining: Film Tourism in Danny Boyle's Slumdog Millionaire" Third Text, http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/10.1080/09528822.2010.491379 (accessed on 2/12/2020).
13. Retrieved from https://www.edwinlordweeks.org/Blue-Tiled-Mosque-At-Delhi-India.html (accessed on 27/5/2022).
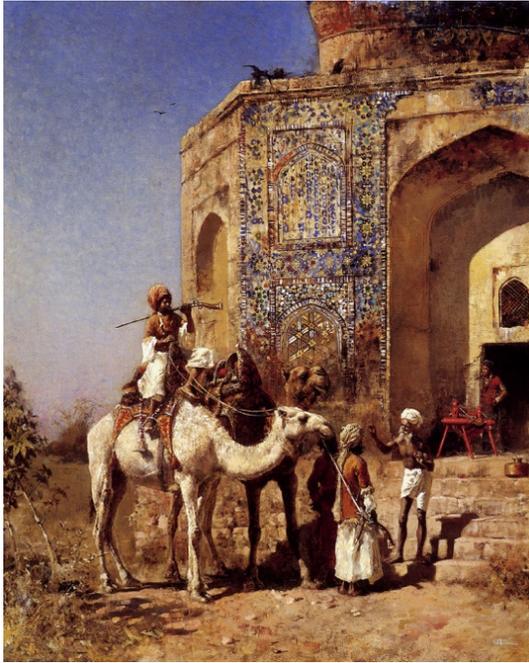
Picture 4 - Edwin Lord Weeks' *Old Blue Tiled Mosque Outside of Delhi India* (c. 1885)

Picture 5 is a poster for the *Incredible India* campaign which is not available in the campaign's official website, which means that it was published after 2009.[14] The similarities between this "native" poster and the Orientalist painting by Edwin Lord Weeks are striking. The Taj Mahal in the background and the otherwise empty and fuzzy landscape are readily comparable to the blue-tiled mosque. Similarly, the foreground reveals several lavishly and colourfully clothed men riding camels. In this case, the primitive and glorious come together in order to form the "exotic", an epithet which was negative for India and for Indians when they were dominated by the British, but which can be profitable in modern times when India and Indians themselves may reap the profits of foreigners who wish to visit India for its exoticism.

14. Retrieved from https://www.india-briefing.com/news/incredible-india-campaign-launched-chinese-8549.html/ (accessed on 27/5/2022).
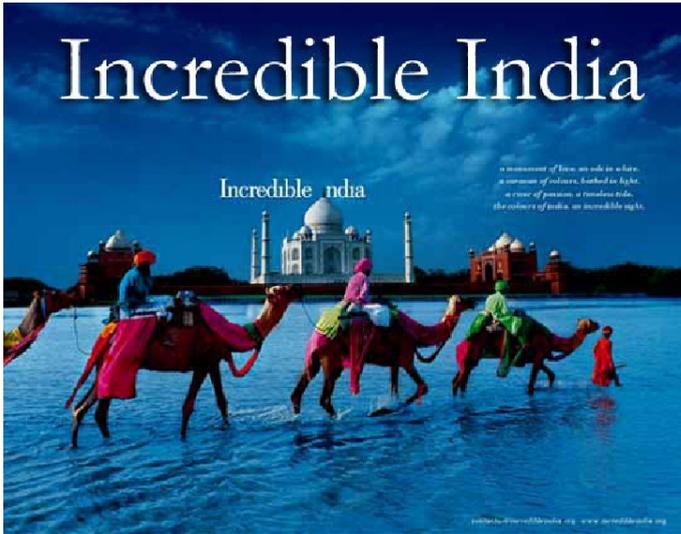
Picture 5 – *Incredible India* (after 2009)

Another poster for the same campaign (2007) makes the connection between old Orientalist representations and modern popular ones. It shows a group of colourfully dressed women lined up in a desert. The caption reads: "It's a bit like a Bollywood dream sequence. Only, you are in it". This poster invites the reader to join the Orientalist fantasy, not the one of the "grotesquely primitive" Hollywood film *Slumdog Millionaire* but that of the "dazzlingly glorious" Bollywood universe. This poster, the positive political and touristic campaign in general and Bollywood blockbusters rely on strong colours as markers of prosperity and exoticism. In fact, the 2008 *Incredible India* campaign consisted of colourful posters with titles related to colours and the way they are related to Indian nature and material culture. The titles of such posters include: "red hot", "pure white", "mustard yellow", "water colours", "revolutionary green", "mystic maroon", "deep purple", "charcoal grey", "tea green", "flaming orange", "coffee brown", "pure gold", "golden yellow", "multi-colour", "honey brown", "technicolor", "ultramarine", "oil paint", and "sun tan".

She Loves Me, She Loves me Not: Representations of India in the Posters

Religiously and politically, India and Hinduism have been represented according to a contemporary, politically correct, pluralist American discourse.[15] Given that the Indian "way of life" and Hinduism in particular are said to have had a positive effect on Indian history and geography, the general argument goes that it may have the same effect in the modern world, which is said to be in need of the same positive features.

Political scientist Jyotirmaya Sharma (2003) has been the only author who has made a systematic typology of stereotypes about Hinduism. He has stated that Hindus have usually been represented as non-violent, tolerant, mild, inward-looking and spiritually inclined, non-materialistic and non-proselytising (7). These features do not aim only to describe Hindus and Indians but also to contrast them with their most common *Others*, mainly Muslims and the British (or Westerners in general), which have often been represented by the opposite negative features. The only reason why Hindus are said to be non-proselytising is because Islam and Christianity are usually represented as religions which are proselytising in a violent and intolerant fashion. Specifically, Christianity has been connected to and has justified British colonialism, which was characterised by the outward-looking and materially inclined goal of economic profit.

I now present some of the most common traits of the "idea of India" according to contemporary Indian discourses:

1) Rural origins: It has often been said that Hinduism and "real" India culture has stemmed from the Indian countryside, where one can still find a culture which has not been adulterated by Western discourses. The same idea shaped the idea of the whole Western Romantic movement(s), which considered that the cultural roots could be found only in the rural *Völker* of developed societies or in the *noble savages* of so-called primitive societies.

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15. See KURIEN, Prema A. (2007), *A Place at the Multicultural Table: The Development of an American Hinduism*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

This tendency is obvious in the *Incredible India* campaign, whose posters never focus on any element directly related to urbane modernity. There are no images of modern concrete buildings or of people wearing Western clothes. The buildings which appear are invariably traditional and historical Indian ones and the depicted human figures always wear local or national clothes. One poster (2007) shows Westerners in modern attire travelling through the jungles of South India with local people wearing local clothes. The caption states that "one day, man will travel at the speed of thought. Pity" and claims that, in India, by contrast, one can "live life slower than snail's pace in local houseboats".

While *India Shining* is more concerned with representing India as technologically similar to other modern nations, these native origins also hold true for this campaign, as, in these contemporary representations, there are also no images of bustling metropolises and the human figures always wear traditional clothes.

2) Unity and diversity: Modern political discourses often represent India as an ethnic and culturally diverse country unified by the Sanskritic Hindu civilisation and tradition from North India. Several authors have resorted to metaphors in order to describe the contradiction between unity and diversity. The most stereotyped comparison states that Hinduism is like a Banyan tree (*Ficus benghalensis*), a single living organism which possesses many branches.[16] Other authors have compared India or Hinduism to a jungle, a sponge, [17] a mosaic (Das, 2000), a hologram (Ramanujan, 2004), and a *thālī*, Hindi for "plate", of mixed yet harmonious foods (Tharoor, 2007b).

Tharoor (2007a) has written that the singular thing about India is that one can only speak of it in the plural, given that in India everything has always existed in countless variants and that there has never been a single standard (2007a: 8). Elsewhere, Tharoor (2007b) has remarked that all

16. Julius Lipner has famously made this comparison in an academic context, but the metaphor is much older, though its origins are uncertain. See LIPNER, Julius (1994), *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, New York: Routledge.
17. See INDEN, Ronald B. (2001), *Imagining India*, Cambridge: Indiana University Press.

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Indian identities have been minorities and that there have never been representatives like the "archetypal Englishman or Frenchman" (57). Other scholars have written similar claims, not about India as a nation, but about Hinduism. Sanskritist Wendy Doniger (2009) has discussed the "eclectic pluralism of India", whereby persons or groups may hold different beliefs coexisting peacefully and which can be used in different situations, given that Hindus usually care more about proper behaviour (orthopraxy) than about straight opinions (orthodoxy) (46).

As political campaigns, *India Shining* and *Aam admni* are directed towards different but unified audiences (the Indian middle-class and the rural and urban poor) and present homogeneous representations of those same audiences, both textually and visually. In *India Shining*, Indians have been able to pursuit their educational and professional dreams and now live happy and colourful modern lives. In *Aam Admi*, Indians have seen their dreams shattered and live in a bleak black-and-white world. *Incredible India* presents a huge array of natural and cultural realities, but the fact that they are also depicted similarly in textual and visual terms and are all under the general banner of an "incredible India", make them all fit into a greater national category.

In fact, India's diversity has allowed for the sponge-like quality of India and Hinduism, which have been said to integrate and harmonise other traditions into their systems. Buddhism, for instance, is often said to have emerged as a critique to Hinduism.[18] Even though it has not been a relevant religion in India for centuries and has been more relevant in Central, Southeast and East Asia and in Western New Age religions, given its contemporary global popularity it often appears in the *Incredible India* campaign as constituting a part of India. Out of the 68 posters, two allude directly to Buddhism. Even though the *Incredible India* campaign was national, like the other touristic campaigns in Asia, it also aimed at presenting the intrinsic regional diversity of India. Geary (2013) describes how the poor state of Bihar was

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18. See ZIMMER, Heinrich (1951), *The Philosophies of India*, Princeton: Princeton University Press

represented as a significant place for the development of Buddhism (42), nowadays considered to be a "world religion". In this way, a geographic and cultural subaltern region has been turned into a universal symbol of history and religion.

3) Spirituality: Another feature which has often been mentioned is that of the intrinsic spirituality of India. This trait has often been compared and contrasted to the materialism of the West. Both are representations which have remained alive since Orientalist times.

Within the constellation of Indian holy men and sages who were and are still significant for the development of the concept of the idea of India as a spiritual nation, special mention has to be made of religious teacher Swami Vivekananda, who popularised Hinduism abroad in the 19th century starting from his participation in the Chicago World Parliament of Religions in 1893.[19] Vivekananda adopted the common Orientalist discourse and placed particular emphasis on the timeless spirituality of Indian wisdom as a curative for the nihilism and materialism of modern Western culture, but ironically he became an important spokesperson for Hinduism in India only when he achieved success in the West. This seems to hint that more important than Vivekananda's definition of his religious tradition is the way in which he compared and contrasted it with Western religious tradition(s) and therefore fitted both within the same epistemological system. Playing on the defensive, Malhotra (2016) has stated that the main goal of his work *Indra's Net: Defending Hinduism's Philosophical Unity* has been to topple this idea that Vivekananda used Western Judaeo-Christian (re-Orientalist) terminology in order to reform Hinduism and to prove that Vivekananda was truthful to past Indian discourses all along (xiv).

19. See RADICE, William (ed.) (1998). *Swami Vivekananda and the Modernization of Hinduism*, Delhi: Oxford University Press; King (1999); SHARMA, Jyotirmaya (2013). *A Restatement of Religion: Swami Vivekananda and the Making of Hindu Nationalism*, New Haven: Yale University Press; GREGG, Stephen E. (2019). *Swami Vivekananda and Non-Hindu Traditions: A Universal Advaita*, London: Routledge.
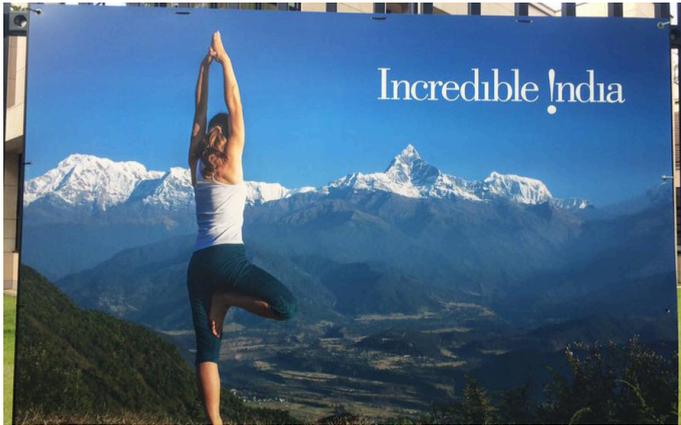
Picture 6 – *Incredible India* (after 2009)

This dimension of the idea of India has been absent in the political campaigns, which have been more concerned with material welfare than with spiritual goals. However, it has been present in the touristic *Incredible India* campaign. The 2003/2004 posters have specifically focused on yoga, a spiritual practice which has been equated with Hinduism in ancient Orientalist and modern New Age Western imagination and which has been accordingly taken up by Indian themselves.[20] Picture 6, which is not available in the official database, provides a good example.[21] Even though it is about an "Indian" spiritual practice, this image depicts a foreigner, more specifically a Westerner, which shows that the journey to India is not merely an external one but also an internal one, a means to escape the excessive materialism and lack of spirituality of the West. Another poster (2002/2003) states that the reader shall, approve yoga through his "mind, body and soul", which explicitly depicts yoga as an intellectual, physical and spiritual practice. Even one poster (2007) which focuses on very physical and emotional radical "adventures", another keyword for the touristic campaign, resort to the spirituality stereotype. The picture shows a man rafting and

20. See https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/6/21/how-yoga-diplomacy-helps-india-assert-its-rising-global-influence (accessed on 6/6/2022); https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2015/6/21/indias-modi-joins-thousands-for-global-yoga-day (accessed on 7/6/2022).
21. Retrieved from https://www.buzzfeed.com/andreborges/the-indian-embassy-in-poland-used-a-stock-image-fo (accessed on 26/10/2022).

the caption reads that, even in the face of danger, one should not panic, given that "there's always rebirth".

Buddhism has also served as one of the "refractions of one great Indian spirituality" (Veer, 1994: 23) in one poster (2007), according to which India offers "a step-by-step guide to salvation". The use of the word "salvation", more readily associated with Judaeo-Christian religions than with Indian ones, also point to the major audience of this kind of campaign.

5) Universality, inclusiveness, tolerance and relativism: Even though the idea of India has been a crucial tool for Indian nationalistic purposes, it has often been described as possessing universal value. Indian ex-entrepreneur Gurcharan Das (2009), for instance, has stated that Vivekananda already spoke about a *dharma* (human conduct) of humanity (310).

When it comes to claims to universality, comparison and contrast with other traditions, mainly Western ones, have been common. Tharoor (2018b) has stated that Hinduism is different from the Abrahamic religions, given that it has no claims to universalise itself, even though its tenets are universally applicable (274). There has also been an attempt to demonstrate Hinduism's holistic features in contrast with the partial nature of Western "ways of life". For this reason, Hinduism's tenets may also be universal in the temporal plane. In Malhotra's (2016) view, Hinduism cannot be pigeon-holed into concepts such as "tradition", "modern" or "postmodern" in the same way that the West sees itself, given that Hinduism has always been all three simultaneously and without contradiction (xviii).

Due to its universality and inclusiveness, India has been represented as more tolerant towards difference than other nations. In the view of anthropologist Peter van der Veer (1994), this discourse on the tolerance of Hinduism has been intended to unite competing Hindu groups and to establish a difference between other "intolerant" groups, mainly the Muslims (66-73). In order to prove the inherent tolerance and peacefulness of Indians, one often finds the idea that in the past India gave shelter to non-Indians with different worldviews. Tharoor (2020) has written that Vivekananda stated

in the Parliament of World Religions (1893) that he was proud to speak for a land that had always granted exile to the persecuted of all nations and faiths without ever asking about their religion.

Indian writers have often considered the inclusiveness and tolerance of Indian thought to be a model which should ideally be pursued by others, given that this trait allows cultural relativism, an important cultural trait in the contemporary globalised world. This relativistic stance has often been contrasted with a non-relativistic Western one, an idea best summarised by folklorist A. K. Ramanujan (2004), who, in his essay "Is there an Indian Way of Thinking? An Informal Essay", stated that Western thought tries to fathom what is universal, while Indian thought stresses the particular in relational and contextual terms.

The Indian propensity for relativism has been superficially manifested in the idea of debate, when different and sometimes contradicting points of view are argued for or against. Tharoor (2007a) has remarked that every truism about India could be readily contradicted by the opposite truism and that it has often been said that, with regard to anything one can say about India, the opposite would also be true (7-22). Sen's (2005) main goal with his work *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* has been to argue that India has had an ancient argumentative tradition which has been thwarted by Hindu nationalism. The author has drawn examples of past Indian leaders who followed such traditions, most commonly Aśoka (III century BCE), a converted Buddhist emperor of the Maurya dynasty, and Akbar (1542-1603), a Mughal emperor who was nominally Muslim interested in many other religions and even created his own syncretic one.

The 2008/2009 posters of the *Incredible India* campaign alluded directly to these ideas of universality, inclusiveness, tolerance and relativism. These posters focus on international visitors to India, mainly women, who have been integrated into Indian culture and society and have ultimately become Indian. When one looks at Picture 7 (2008/2009), the non-Indian element is not immediately clear. The monument in the background clearly marks

the landscape as Indian. The person depicted in the foreground is dressed in Indian clothes and performs recognisable Indian dance postures. Only the textual clues reveal the ultimate foreignness of this image. The title reveals that the physical "country of birth" of the depicted lady is France, but that her spiritual "motherland" is India. According to the text, she went to India in order to learn the ancient "spiritual" Bharat Natyam dance style and ultimately became one of its greatest exponents. These descriptions represent India as universal because "you [whoever you are and wherever you come from] will find that your search ends here". It is inclusive and tolerant because it not only integrates foreigners into its cultural system but also allows them to become the "foremost exponents" of native Indian culture. Finally, it is relative because it allows for the breaking of strict national and cultural boundaries and for the creation of hybrid realities. The other posters tell similar stories about an American, an Algerian raised in Paris and a Spanish-German couple. In other words, the claims to universality mainly rest on Western individuals and in an idealised representation in which the physical colonialism of the past turns into contemporary cultural soft power.

Picture 7 – *Incredible India* (2008/2009)

Another poster (2003/2004) claims that "many around the world are getting their daily dose of bliss through meditation". A poster (2007) showing the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar states that "doors [are] open in all four directions" and that "all are truly welcome". The temple is then introduced as a "symbol of unity", given that its foundation has been laid by a Muslim and that hymns about it have been written by Sikh, Hindu and Muslims saints. In the process, as happens with Buddhism, Amritsar and Sikhism get integrated into the greater Indian spirituality.

8) Antiquity: In both Orientalist and re-Orientalist discourses, India has often been singled out for its antiquity. Hindu nationalism has considered that Hinduism is the most ancient and perfect of existing faiths, "the mother of all religions" with nothing to learn from other faiths (Sharma, 2003: 16). Due to the diffusion of this discourse, most educated people emerging from Indian universities have believed that the length of their culture and history has surpassed others. Conversely, they have felt contempt for countries like the United States, which has "only two hundred years of history" (Brass, 2003: 383).

This stress on the antiquity of India is clear in the *Incredible India* campaign, which often presents the nation-state as constituting an ancient civilisation and as an historical alternative to the stress of modern life. Picture 8, a poster which is not available in the official website of the campaign, shows a group of camels in the desert.[22] The caption reads "Get on a camel, get on a time machine". A similar visual symbol connects this theme to another one: that of escape from materialism and, implicitly, to that of spirituality. This poster, which also shows camels, invites the reader to "watch a camel race" and "escape the rat race".[23] An image (2007) which shows a person practicing parachuting in the Himalayas, tells the reader to "rise above" the "rat race, stress and corporate friction". A poster (2002/2003) on the topic

22. Retrieved from https://www.firstpost.com/brands/from-camel-races-to-breath-taking-vistas-check-out-the-stunning-incredible-india-campaign-1084405.html (accessed on 16/10/2022).
23. Retrieved from https://www.firstpost.com/brands/from-camel-races-to-breath-taking-vistas-check-out-the-stunning-incredible-india-campaign-1084405.html (accessed on 16/10/2022).

of yoga states that the practice consists of "a few thousand-year-old recipes for eternal youth". Finally, one poster (2009) states that India is "a tale 3000 years in the making".

Picture 8 – *Incredible India* (after 2009)

9) Distinctiveness and superiority: All the previous traits define India as a culture distinct from others. Malhotra's (2015) *Being Different: An Indian Challenge to Western Universalism* focuses on the trait of distinctiveness of Indian/Hindu civilisation. As the author has stated, the text deals with the issue of how India differs from the West and how *dharmic* traditions have had no parallel in universal Judaeo-Christian ones (1-9). Malhotra's has listed such differences as: 1) embodied knowledge versus history-centrism; 2) integral unity versus synthetic unity; 3) comfort with complexity and ambiguity versus anxiety over chaos and 4) Sanskrit "non-translatables" versus cultural digestion (*Ibid.*). In Malhotra's short description, one can realise how India has been described as both more holistic and universal than the West, but also as more culturally unified. Point 2) implies that the Hindu worldview has tended to view reality holistically, while the Western one has seen it in binary terms. Point 4) implies that Sanskrit has been much more integral to the Hindu civilisation than any language has been to the West,

which has created its body of knowledge through the "cultural digestion" of many languages, including Sanskrit itself. In this point, Malhotra dismisses not only all the vernacular languages derived from Sanskrit but also all the other classical and contemporary Indian languages that did not derive from Sanskrit.

Tharoor (2007a) has ranked Indian pluralism as one of India's distinctive traits, given that, at a time when most developing countries opted for authoritarian models of government to promote nation-building and to direct development, India chose to be a multi-party democracy (8). Tharoor and Saran (2020) have stated that India has developed a distinctly non-Western form of democracy and religious freedom that have made it an exemplar of the successful management of diversity in the developing world. Referring specifically to Hinduism, Tharoor (2018a) has remarked that he has been proud to offer such a religion to the world, a religion which has never sought to proselytise, but has only been an example that others may or may not choose to follow (274). Hinduism has therefore been considered to be an almost ideal faith for the uncertainties of the postmodern 21st century, provided that it is freed from the excesses and perversions perpetrated by Hindu nationalists and restored to its "truest essence", when there were neither apostasy nor heresies (78). This is another wink at the universality of Hinduism and of the political idea of India.

The argument of India's distinctiveness has usually carried with it the idea of the superiority of Indian traditions. This idea is expressed both qualitatively and quantitively in the poster of the *Incredible India* campaign. The Taj Mahal is ranked in one poster (2002/03) as "the most photographed monument on this planet". Another poster (2007) depicting the same monument tries to presents the qualitative/quantitative superiority of India and, more specifically, of pre-modern India. The caption reads "And to think these days men get away with giving flowers and chocolates to their wives". This is the contemporary consumerist St. Valentine's Day view on love relationships. The implicit idea is that Indian culture is grander than the global contemporary one, as in the past men (or at least Indo-Persian rulers) offered

grandiose monuments to their beloved. One poster (2007) announces India as "the biggest [art] gallery on Earth", another (2007/2008) announces the Himalayas as "the world's highest playground" and another (2007) states that India has arguably "the highest concentration of forts and palaces on earth" which "deserves at least one visit per lifetime". Two posters (2008) specifically number the forts and palaces as 476. Explicitly stating numbers of natural and humanmade touristic spots, dishes, spoken languages, deities, festivals, dance forms, animal and plant species (as in Picture 1) in the hundreds of thousands is a common hyperbolic strategy, particularly in the 2007/2008 campaign. Picture 9 (2007/2008), for instance, presents the reader with the gradation: "Hundreds of spices. Thousands of curries. Millions of colours. Billions of People".
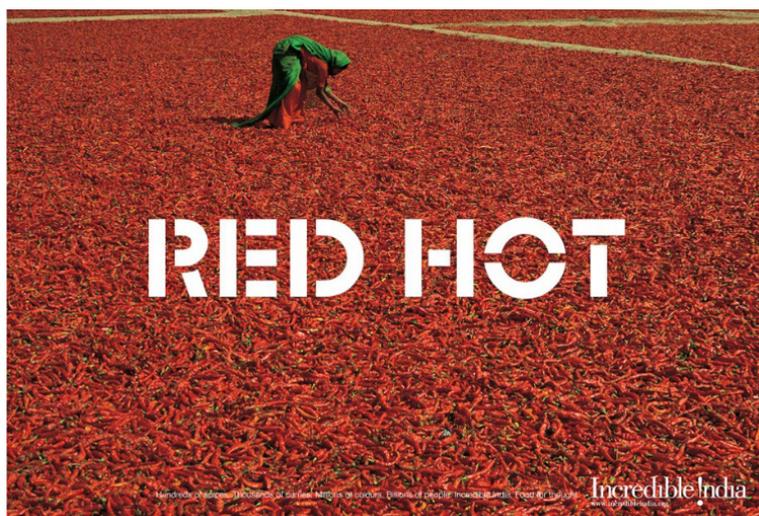
Picture 10 – *Incredible India* (2007/2008)

Conclusion

This paper has tried to show how the phenomenon of nation branding is both a political and economic enterprise. The *India Shining* campaign launched by the BJP and the counter-campaign launched by the Congress reveal how political representations of the nation usually hover between two positive

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and negative extremes, depending on whether the politician/party making such representations is in power or in the opposition. Such positive or negative representations do not appear in a cultural vacuum. They are clearly informed and influenced by similar past discourses. In India's case, these past discourses are related to Orientalism, the way Western nations have represented Asian societies, and the way these past discourses have been updated in order to fit globalised discourses of the "global village". According to these discourses, citizens of two metropoles in distant and historically unrelated countries share more commonalities with each other than with the rural folk of their own countries, even when there is a deliberate attempt to identify with the rural folk.

The touristic *Incredible India* campaign reveals that, while touristic campaigns are supposed to be always positive and appealing, the fact that they also need to be direct and immediate also makes them rely on well-known stereotypes, which can also be traced to past Orientalist ones. The engagement with such stereotypes reveals the complex love-hate relationship between India and the West, simultaneously India's greatest source of epistemological inspiration and its main epistemological competitor.[24] This complex, ambiguous and hybrid relationship has been represented in the hybrid posters of the *India Now* (2007) and the *LA* (2009) campaigns, two subsets of *Incredible India*, which were launched in London and Los Angeles, respectively. The posters produced for the former campaign presented words and expressions one would typically associate with England ("Oxford circus", "Arsenal", "King's Cross", "Elephant & Castle", "Bayswater", "All Saints", "Green Park", "Archway", "Shepherd's Bush", "Whitechapel"), while showing semantically related images of India. The posters produced for the latter did the same for classic Western films ("The Sound of Music", "From Dusk till Dawn", "Some Like it Hot", "Mystic River", "Toy Story", "Trainspotting", "Natural Born Killers", "Fight Club"). India's universality and superiority have recently been symbolised by Indian/Hindu Rishi Sunak nomination as

24. See PATTANAIK, Devdutt (2016). "From Macaulay to Frawley, from Doniger to Elst: Why do many Indians need White saviours?" Scoll.in, https://scroll.in/article/824732/from-macaulay-to-frawley-from-doniger-to-elst-why-do-many-indians-need-white-saviours (accessed on 18/11/2021).

the prime-minister of Great Britain. The Indian media celebrated this nomination as a reversal of power paradigms according to which the ex-coloniser is suddenly ruled by a representative of the ex-colonised.[25] Implicit in such discourses is the idea that the traits of India and possibly of postcolonial societies fit the contemporary world better than the old-fashioned artificial universality of Enlightenment-based thinking.

These political and politicised touristic discourses ultimately mean that nation(alism)s are never constructed in isolation. Representations of specific nations are always contrasted to those of other historically/geographically and politically/economically competing nations as they are understood in time: the stereotypes of the past, the aspirations of the present and the predictions of the future. In the case of India, the visual and textual representation which has been created since Orientalist times until the present have consisted in the following traits, which have been considered to be distinctive and superior: its local rural origins; unity rooted in diversity; spirituality; universally applicable inclusiveness, tolerance and relativism; and antiquity.

It would be interesting to see whether these conclusions would hold true in the political and touristic campaigns in other postcolonial countries in Africa and Asia which were subject to Orientalist representations.

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HOW PROPAGANDA COULD INFLUENCE SOCIAL MEDIA: THE CASE OF CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE ON TWITTER

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Abstract: We analyzed 21,338 tweets over a period of six months, collected automatically based on the keywords "climate change" and "environment" in tweets from Brazil and Portugal. We concluded that Brazilians and Portuguese differ in their relationship with the topic and the underlying principles associated with it, as well as the personalities invoked and responsibilities attributed. The principles invoked in the tweets from Portugal generate engagement with a European perspective on the issue. On the other hand, the principles invoked in the tweets from Brazil generate a type of engagement that is dualistic and based on national political propaganda.

Keywords: morals, propaganda, climate change, Twitter.

"The logic is very simple. Propaganda belongs to democratic society what the truncheon is to the totalitarian state. Again once, let's say, it's good to do it and it's be wise, because the common good completely escapes the confused herd. He is unable to understand you." (Lipmann, in Chomsky, 2005, p. 15)

Introduction

The topic of climate change tends to generate a set of dilemmas and conflicts of interest that need to be taken into consideration. Digital platforms are the stage for conversations that accentuate both these dilemmas and conflicts. Thus, the objective of this study was to analyze Portuguese-language tweets on the topic of climate change, understanding the mode of engagement with the subject and how Portuguese and Brazilian users on Twitter position themselves.

In this study, we analyzed 21,338 tweets between October 1, 2021, and April 1, 2022, collected automatically based on the keywords "climate change" and "environment" in tweets from Brazil and Portugal with the words "climate change," "Greta Thunberg," "Environment," "Liberal," "Left," and "Climate Denialism." The information search program generated a grid with four pieces of information: name and link of the tweet's author, date, written content of the tweet, and IP origin. The collection resulted in the following geographical distribution of tweet origin: 20,609 tweets from Brazil (96.6%) and 716 tweets from Portugal (3.35%).

To analyze the content of the tweets, we used the NVIVO software, aiming to formulate two types of analysis: a quantitative and purely descriptive analysis, and a more quantitative analysis focused on moral foundations used. In the qualitative analysis conducted here, we relied on Graham et al. (2011) and the five moral foundations of the Moral Foundations Theory (MFT), which, according to the authors, aim to express sociopsychological dynamics in five independent domains: Harm, which refers to suffering and includes notions of caring for others and compassion; Fairness, which

concerns the global notion of justice and rights, as well as cooperation, competition, and cheating; Ingroup, which relates to commitment to the group, self-sacrifice, loyalty, and vigilance against betrayal; Authority, which refers to obligations related to hierarchy, obedience, respect, and fulfillment of duties; and finally, Purity, which pertains to physical and spiritual influences on chastity, cleanliness, and control of desires.

This text will present the theoretical references on moral attributes, climate change, Twitter and propaganda. Next, it will present part of the results of the research project "Engage for SDG – the engagement of young people with the goals of sustainable development: choosing the moral arguments of the news for use in debate". Finally, it looks at how aspects of propaganda are embedded in the climate change debate on Twitter.

1. Theoretical framework

1.1 Moral attributes

Graham et al. (2011) summarize the Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) into five moral foundations that serve to resolve social dynamics in five domains:

a. Harm - refers to suffering and includes notions of caring for others and compassion;

b. Fairness - concerns the global notion of justice and rights, as well as cooperation, competition, and cheating;

c. Ingroup - related to commitment to the group, self-sacrifice, loyalty, and vigilance against betrayal;

d. Authority - refers to obligations related to hierarchy, obedience, respect, and fulfillment of duties; and

e. Purity - pertains to physical and spiritual influences on chastity, cleanliness, and control of desires. The original authors expect that there may be additional foundations beyond the proposed five (Graham et al., 2011); however, the five foundations offer a more parsimonious explanation for the different cultural manifestations of morality (Silvino et al., 2016, p. 488).

In this study, we want to establish a theoretical and empirical relationship between MFT and environmental and climatic questions, from a perspective of understanding the world, from a perspective of understanding the phenomenon of climatic emergency. Also, in the Portuguese language the terms used seem to be slightly different: in Portugal, it seems to be more common to use the term "alterações climáticas" in comparison with a more Brazilian expression of "climate changes" – in which the term tries to differ from "climatic variations" originating from natural causes. Furthermore, it is important to highlight the growth in the use of thermos and "climate emergency". "climate emergency. We will see before this question, in 2019, the European Parliament will publish a resolution on the climate and environmental emergency. (2019/2930(RSP)) and there is an international campaign for the declaration of the State of Climate Emergency (Climate Emergency Declaration), through local governments, which in May 2022 exceeds two thousand jurisdictions and 39 countries, thus involving, more than one thousand thousand cities. This means that there is a public recognition of the current climatic state that requires new confrontation measures.

In this sense, social networks can provide important information about the "awareness of users, attitudes and propensity to act" (Auer et al., 2014, p.295). The social network Twitter has never been considered as a thermometer of public perception about current events (Brown & Wake, 2015), even the question of opening the social network encourages users to answer "what is going to happen?".

1.2. Propaganda

The propaganda phenomena shares an interest in Communication Sciences and Political Science. Since the studies of Harold Laswell and his contemporaries in the Social Sciences, the "effort to control attitudes through the manipulation of symbols" (1927, p. 627) ceased to be an instrument used in politics and of interest to the Chicago School, to become a broad object of investigation. The practice that had come to stay in the mass societies that

flourished in the first half of the 20th century was "place of more direct means of control (which) change in the structure of social control merits thorough examination" (Lazarsfeld; Merton, 1957).

In addition, with the recognition that propaganda did not create opinions in individuals, but reinforced their attitudes, the beginnings of strategic communication emerged, the professionalization of the direction of opinion movements, in this case, politics: "successful propaganda is limited to unloading the aspirations and discontents of the public in the symbolic media selected by its agents." (Rüdiger, 1996). Thus, the definition that political propaganda seeks to lead public opinion, aims to establish an ideological hegemony is coherent (Lázár; Horváth, 2013, 221-222).

In digital environments, political propaganda, financed by states and governments, has grown exponentially with the advent of social networks (Bjola, 2017).

> "Algorithmic dissemination of content and the circumvention of traditional media filters and opinion-formation gatekeepers, make disinformation spread faster, reach deeper, be more emotionally charged, and most importantly, be more resilient due to the confirmation bias that online echo-chambers enable and reinforce." (2017, 189)

Twitter, the social platform that is the subject of this work, is one of the great stages of this dynamic. Thanks to the presence of social bots, fake profiles that publish information aimed at influencing real users. These programs drastically alter the information flow of the debate in the digital environment, by sharing messages from certain hubs, enhancing their content on the network (Caldarelli, 2020).

1.2. Methods

Regarding the collection of comments on Twitter, we used automated methodology to analyze social network data based on Big Data Science, generating knowledge through computational systems, and Social Big Data, capturing

and analyzing data from digital social platforms. Thus, we created a remote collection tool for comments on environmental news on Twitter, with a geolocated focus on Brazil and Portugal and specifically on terms related to climate change. We used the Python and PHP languages, managed the database with MySQL, and extracted data by communicating these algorithms with the Twitter API.

Next, we selected a set of keywords related to the environmental debate to identify Twitter profiles interested in this topic. The chosen terms were "climate change," "environmental change," "environment," and "nature." At this stage, it was noticed that comments on environmental news were as much or even more related to political-ideological aspects and public opinion spokespeople, such as the case of the young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, than to the originally used environmental terms for tweet collection. Therefore, it was considered necessary to modify the methodology for collecting posts by including the previously identified terms, such as "climate denialism," "Greta Thunberg," "liberal," "capitalism," "progressive," "conservative," "right," and "left," alongside the environmental terms used in the original collection.

The collection period spanned six months (from October 1, 2021, to April 1, 2022). The number of tweets collected with the programmed keywords was 21,338, resulting in the following geographical distribution of tweet origin: 20,609 tweets from Brazil (96.6%) and 716 tweets from Portugal (3.35%). In the quantitative analysis, we studied word clustering statistics and associations between terms, by country and their numerical recurrence in relation to themes and arguments.

For the analysis of tweet content, we used the NVIVO software, aiming to formulate two types of analysis: a quantitative and purely descriptive analysis, and a more quantitative analysis focused on the moral foundations used. We relied on Graham et al. (2011) and the five moral foundations of the MFT, which, according to the authors, express sociopsychological dynamics in

five independent domains: Harm, Fairness, Ingroup, Authority, and Purity. Building upon these five moral foundations, we sought to understand, in a second part of the analysis, how the collected tweets relate to these moral foundations, both through numerical analysis and expressed meanings. Finally, we used NVivo again to cross-reference the moral foundations with the topics used in the tweets.

2. Results

The topic of climate change and the environment raises strong opposition, controversies, and dilemmas. Therefore, the polarity generated throughout the data observation period carries a negative connotation, where negative, offensive, and accusatory words and expressions circulate, both from an institutional perspective and from the standpoint of digital conversants' positions.

Figure 1. Polarity associated with the topic "climate change"
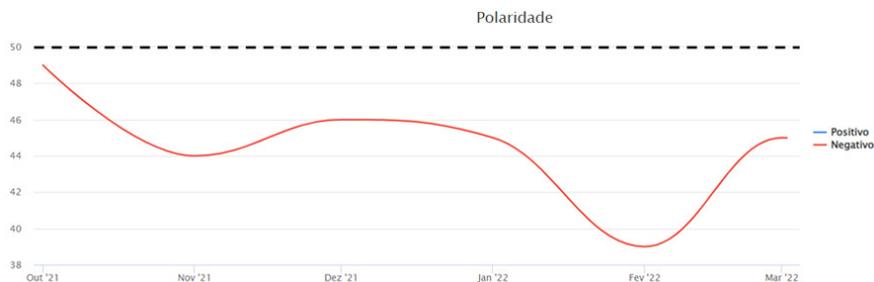
Source: own authorship

Regarding the emotions expressed about the topic, the collection period revealed a considerable fluctuation, in a temporal accumulation, between confidence (13.41%) and fear (12.03%), and between sadness (10.65%) and anger (10.16%).

Figure 2. Accumulated emotions between 01/10/2021 and 01/04/2022
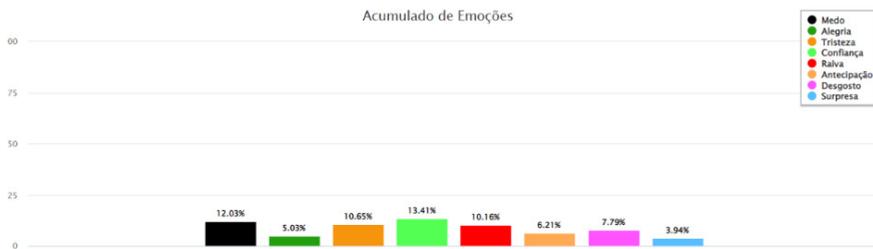
Source: own authorship

Still regarding the emotions involved, it is possible to observe a stable trend in each of the seven primary emotions analyzed, with a slight growth of fear throughout the analyzed period. The tax of negative emotions (fear, sadness, anger and disgust) is higher than the sum of neutral and positives (joy, confidence, anticipation, surprise) together, as can be seen in figures 2. And 3.

Figure 3. Behavior of expressed emotions throughout the observation period

Source: own authorship

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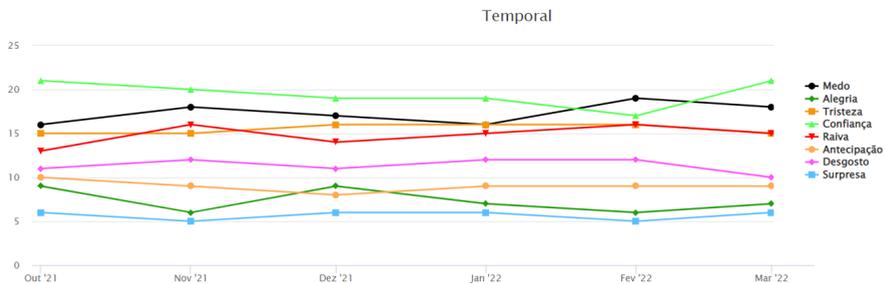
2.1 Brasil

In the results from IP addresses in Brazil, we found a word cloud dominated by the expression "meio ambiente" (environment). Approximately three out of four tweets, or more than 15,000 cases out of 21,338 tweets, contain this term.

Figure 4. Word cloud from tweets in Brazil, with "environment" as the most important expression

Source: own authorship

Excluding propositions, adverbs, linguistic ticks, and programmed keywords that led to data collection, we find strong associations and foundations using the terms "Brasil" (Brazil), "governo" (government), "crise" (crisis), "ministro" (minister), "saúde" (health), and "Bolsonaro" (referring to the Brazilian President), denoting a strong national politicization of the topic.

Figure 5. The 20 most repeated words from Brazil

Word	Count
nao	6001
brasil	1486
governo	1189
crise	1117
contra	1111
ministro	1088
saude	1010
bolsonaro	926
ajudar	883
mundo	773
educacao	760
pais	717
agora	701
hoje	668
anos	626
nada	605
destruicao	583
vida	569
ministerio	554
@rsallesmma	540
defesa	522
jade	500
presidente	498
amazonia	496
secretaria	487
indigenas	485
povo	484
calcinha	471
descartavel	456
politica	456
economia	446
projeto	426

Source: own authorship

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Just as can be observed in the topic tree map, through the tweets from Brazil, it is evident that the topic of climate change is dominated by a discourse where national political power is the central element. The conversations start with climate change, with the context being the discussion about Brazil, which in recent years has been loosening environmental legislation in the country. Then, the terms "government" and "minister" shift the focus of the discussion to the topic of national politics and its decisions regarding the issue of climate change.

Among the 20 most repeated words per tweet (excluding language aids), eight of them are related to politics in Brazil, with Jair Bolsonaro as the central figure. In fact, Jair Bolsonaro is mentioned 926 times in association with the topic of climate change. The theme related to the Amazon region and its "destruction" and/or "deforestation" is also considerably addressed. However, there is also a constant criticism of previous left-wing Brazilian governments as a counterpoint to the criticisms made against the current government.

In Brazil, the average number of words per sentence on Twitter during the observed period on environmental topics is 22.7%. The strongest associations between terms (excluding technical programming terms) stem from a relationship between the term "environment," the verb "to help," and the connection with the "minister" (of the environment, Ricardo Salles). Terms such as "environmental sustainability" or "ecology" are interrelated with a discourse advocating for the "environment," while the prominently mentioned verb "to help," in terms of volume of writings and conversations collected, relates to "children," a "disposable" dimension of the phenomenon.

Figure 6. Network of associations from tweets in Brazil, with "environment" as hub
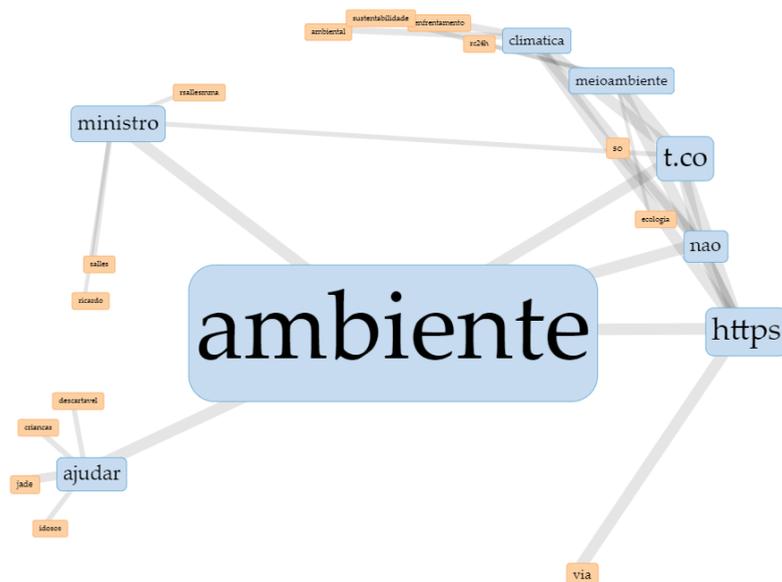
Source: own authorship

Among the most used and repeated arguments, the "climate crisis" stands out with 923 repetitions, highlighting three lines of argumentation: that "the climate crisis is still ignored by many"; that "the climate crisis is a crisis of rights"; and that "the climate crisis is real and we need to address the problem." Additionally, there is a prominent repetition of the idea of "environmental destruction" with 294 repetitions, and the combination "Bolsonaro government" with 167 repetitions, which primarily focus on criticizing his administration (e.g., "we have regressed 100 years in everything"; "Bolsonaro government is an ecological disaster").

In the case of Brazil, it is worth noting that it is where the proportion of people who say they often or sometimes avoid consuming news because it has a negative effect on their mood has increased the most (Digital News Report 2021). The number of this type of selective evasion has more than doubled in Brazil (54%) and the United Kingdom (46%) in the last five years.

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2.2. Portugal

Comparing the results from Brazil with those from Portugal, there are some considerable differences in the analysis of the most used terms. The word "climática" (climate-related), associated with terms such as "emergency," "transition," or "action," is the most representative. This may also reflect the preference for terms suggested by the European Union, as well as the criticisms of using the term "climate crisis." For example, some climate scientists argue that "crisis" may imply the possibility of a turning point or overcoming, which they claim is no longer possible.

Although the average number of words per sentence on Twitter during the observed period on environmental topics is 22.5 (very similar to Brazil's 22.7), in 714 collected tweets, there is not the same level of national politicization of the issue of climate change as in the case of Brazil. Nevertheless, there are direct mentions of the new mayor of Lisbon (Carlos Moedas) and the need for him to do more and better in the city, which is the capital of the country, regarding this topic.

Figure 7. Word cloud of tweets from Portugal, with "climatic" as the most important term

Source: own authorship

From a percentage standpoint, the term "justiça" (justice), one of the five main axes of the moral foundations theory that guides this research, appears more frequently in tweets from Portugal (0.23%) than in tweets from Brazil (0.03%).

Figure 8. The 20 most repeated words from Portugal
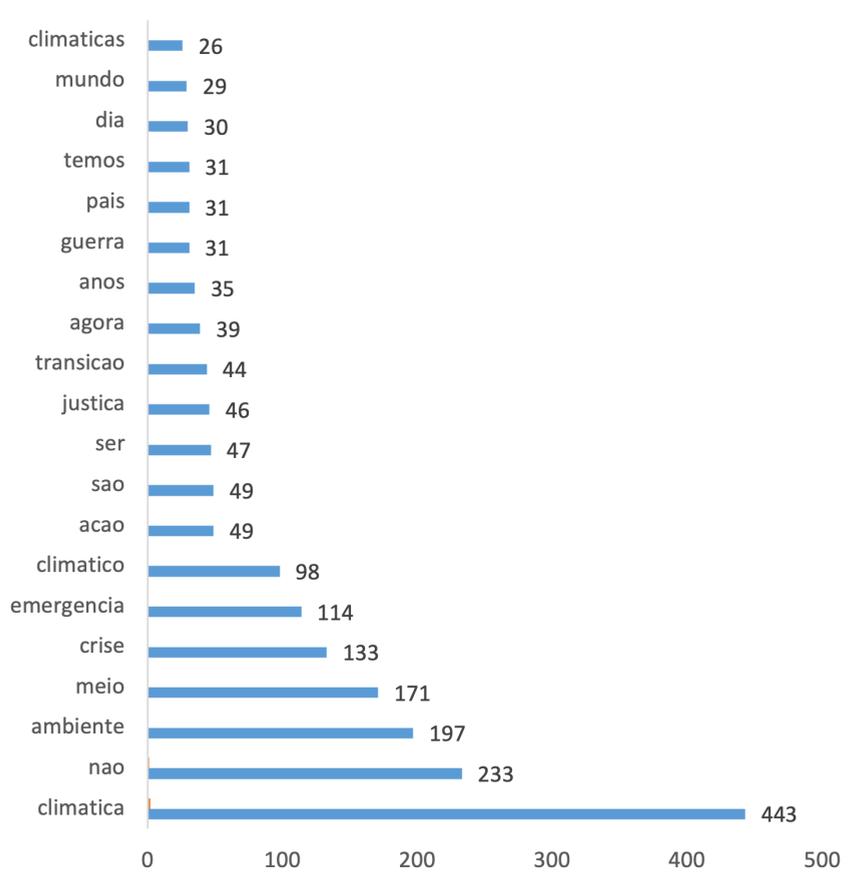
Source: own authorship

Among the most mentioned personalities in the Portuguese case, Greta Thunberg (0.10%) is the most associated with the theme, contrasting with Jair Bolsonaro (0.16%) in the Brazilian case. However, similar to the Brazilian case, there is an accusatory and ironic tone surrounding the moral foundations invoked around the young activist, with a majority of cases portraying her negatively. Examples include: the far-right accuses Greta Thunberg of hidden interests; Does Greta Thunberg already have her driver's license? No; a conspiracy orchestrated by Greta Thunberg; Greta Thunberg, a staunch advocate of European dependence; eager to see Greta Thunberg protesting in Moscow, ask her friend Greta Thunberg to go talk to Putin.

These results align with the analysis by Mazetti & Freire Filho (2020, p. 29) on opinion articles and media coverage of the activist in Brazil. The researchers identified a series of "mechanisms of silencing Greta Thunberg," including considering the activist, who is already a teenager, as a child, and thus, "the activist can be accused of not fully understanding what she says or of reproducing... Her anger is disconnected from demands for justice and interpreted as childish immaturity." Additionally, there is the element of sexism: "positions that identify gender inequality in modes of expressing anger and claim for women the capacity to become enraged" (2020, p.30).

Among the most frequent terms, we find the expression "climática" (climatic), which is related to "emergência" (emergency), "crise" (crisis), "transição" (transition), or "ação" (action). In the Portuguese case, the focus on the "climático" (climatic) aspect is greater than the focus on the "ambiente" (environment).

Figure 9. Network of associations based on tweets from Portugal, with "climatic emergency" as the most important term
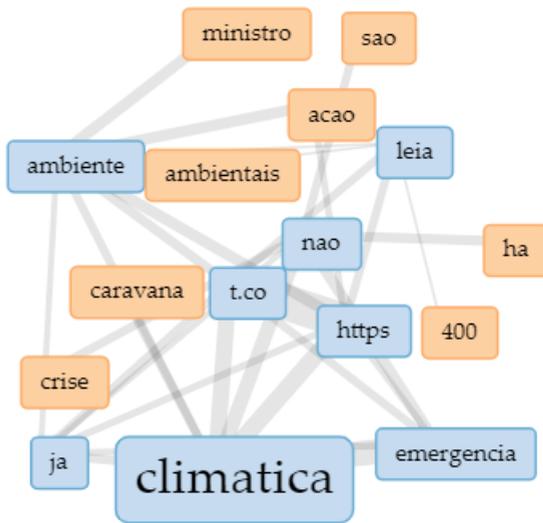
Of the 443 occurrences of the expression "climática" (climatic) from Portugal, there is a strong relationship between the climate emergency and the extreme drought experienced in the country during the data collection period. Additionally, there are several connections established between climate urgency denial and right-wing parties in general. However, there is no systematic alignment with the theme, as the arguments follow various directions and angles. The relationship between the climate emergency and economic development ranges from debates about energy sources in vehicles to the government's positioning regarding companies like Galp and others.

As for the expression "justiça" (justice), which appears 14 times associated with climate justice, it represents a dynamic movement on this social network that advocates for sectoral and geographical reductions in order to more effectively combat climate change. There is also a recurring idea that climate justice holds responsible those who pollute.

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Regarding the expression "transição climática" (climate transition), it is oriented towards a discourse of "more sustainable economy," although examples of irony arise, blending various types of transition agendas (gender, business through energy sources, etc.).

3. Analysis

Regarding the negative connotation associated with climate change, apart from being a problem that inherently carries a negative charge, there is a strong relationship with media coverage, which tends to focus more on catastrophes (within factual coverage) and the international agenda rather than providing a continuous approach that establishes the cause and effect relationship with climate change and actions to combat, mitigate, and adapt to its consequences. The fear-focused approach, often used for awareness purposes, can also have a counterproductive effect, inducing inaction due to a feeling of powerlessness in the face of the challenge (Balbé & Loose, 2020).

Although the difference between the most representative emotions is around 1.3%, with confidence at 13.41% and fear at 12.03%, we consider confidence as a positive signal. In an analysis of tweets in Portuguese and Spanish, about COP 21 – the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Balbé and Carvalho (2017) identified that the most popular content on the social network was the one that conveyed hope for a global agreement to address climate change as the outcome of the conference.

The results are also consistent with studies in English where the constant use of words like "science" and "scientists" demonstrates recognition of the consensus on the state of knowledge and society's confidence in research. At the same time, the words "climate" and "denial" are associated with natural disasters (Cody et al., 2015). As for the feeling of anger, there seems to be a connection between the content and references to activist Greta Thunberg.

Regarding the most used words in Brazil, there is a tendency towards strong national politicization of the environment and climate change theme, while in Portugal, there is a Europeanization (exaggerated Europeanism) of the topic (with Greta being the most mentioned personality, albeit often in a pejorative and ironic manner), and Europe is seen as the solution to the climate crisis.

4. Considerations

Specifically on the presented study, the debate on climate change on social platforms such as Twitter, it is seen that the manipulation of symbols to represent it is immense. It ranges from communication devices to substitute correct information for opinion disguised as information, to serious debate, bringing together different actors of public opinion.

The contamination of the public debate, to paraphrase the theme of climate change, seems to take place when the political polarization between the extreme left and the extreme right monopolizes the symbols on the networks. In this way, they occupy most of the time and space devoted to debate on Twitter, just as political propaganda aims to lead public opinion and establish ideological hegemony. It is noticed that the climate issue becomes a Manichean theme, without permissiveness for intersections between intermediate views on the growing crisis.

Thus, we found that Brazilians and Portuguese differ in their relationship with the topic and the moral foundations associated with the issue of climate change, as well as the invoked personalities and assigned responsibilities. In the tweets from Portugal, there is a strong association between the topic and the activist Greta Thunberg, often with an ironic or derogatory tone towards the activist, or even accusing her of being involved in a global plan with other leaders. On the other hand, in the tweets from Brazil, users tend to significantly politicize the discourse around the environmental issue, attributing responsibilities to the government of Jair Bolsonaro and former Minister Ricardo de Aquino Salles. The discussion on

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the topic among Brazilians tends to generate frequent opposition between those who are against the policies and attitudes of Jair Bolsonaro and his supporters. Unlike the foundations invoked in the tweets from Portugal, which generate engagement with a European perspective on the topic, the foundations invoked in the tweets from Brazil generate a type of dualistic engagement through the politicization of the issue, highlighting the national political propaganda.

Concerning the Twitter platform, it has become an interesting and volatile digital environment, which requires caution from scientific works. Its popularity and choice by social and political actors for public debate have also created various pitfalls, such as the proliferation of fake profiles, bots for mass messaging, and other strategies to inflate what the social platform should ideally be. In addition to these issues related to post-truth phenomena and digital populism, among others, the entry and exit of major global players significantly disrupt the platform's stability, such as the suspension and return of Donald Trump and the acquisition and management methods of Elon Musk. However, we understand that Twitter is a mature platform and already part of the global public debate, which is why it is necessary in communication studies, media studies, journalism, and other social sciences.

Lippmann (in Chomsky, 2005), thought it a good idea to use propaganda to manufacture consent, as the common good would not be a notion that completely escapes public opinion. Likewise, attention should be paid to the use of propaganda to communicate about climate change. After all, as the subject is complex, due to the difficulty of establishing relationships between current causes and future problems, such as global warming, it can be a tool for public opinion adherence. At the very least, such use must be watched, so as not to become a tool for manipulation by denialist groups or hijacked by extremist ideologies.

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This book delves into three significant communicative phenomena. Firstly, it examines the resurgence of a communication style characterized by simplicity, speed, functionality, and an alleged anti-elitist approach. In this style, message consumption is driven by emotional interactions, closely aligning with group consensus and resembling a particular propaganda model.

Secondly, the book explores a notable communicative phenomenon in which the acceptance of messages relies on the gratification and pleasure they provide to receivers, rather than their adherence to established truths. This phenomenon, commonly referred to as misinformation, challenges conventional notions of truth and its role in communication.

Lastly, the book addresses a third communicative phenomenon in which the celebration of one's own identity is achieved through the discursive annihilation of opponents. This form of symbolic annihilation, commonly known as hate speech, manifests through various means such as stereotyping, stigmatization, objectification, and the dehumanization of those perceived as the "Other" outside of one's own "Inner-Group." Hate speech serves as a mechanism to assert and reinforce one's own identity, while simultaneously marginalizing and silencing opposing viewpoints.

By exploring these communicative phenomena, the book aims to shed light on the intricate interplay between propaganda, misinformation, and hate speech, and their impact on democratic processes within the media context. Its goal is to provide a deeper understanding of these phenomena and their implications.