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**SOCIAL NETWORKS
OF THE MOVEMENT
"VEM PRA RUA" (COME
TO TO THE STREET): A
DISCURSIVE CRITICAL
ANALYSIS OF A "SOCIAL
MOVEMENT"¹**

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1. This text is based on my doctoral thesis and a version of it was presented at the XIV Congress of the Latin American Association of Communication Researchers (ALAIC) held in Costa Rica in 2018.

Abstract: This work focuses on the analysis of the Twitter discourse of the movement "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*), in the period prior to the impeachment of former president of Brazil Dilma Rousseff. The article collects a small part of the in-depth research carried out in the doctoral thesis *The hegemonic power of social networks: a critical analysis of the discourse of those who "go to the street"* (Gambetta, 2017). Contemporary information and communication technologies have contributed to creating spaces of expression within the reach of all those who have access to the internet. Thus, social movements have found in these spaces a fertile ground for calling and interacting with their followers. This work aims to bring readers closer to the critical analysis of discourse on the social network Twitter, taking as a starting point the group's position in their presentation on the official website of the movement. The in-depth research is theoretically supported by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (FAIRCLOUGH, 2001, 2003), Communication for Social Change (CMS) (GUMUCIO-DAGRON, 2008, 2011), Multimodality Grammar (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2009) and Systemic-Functional Linguistics (LSF) (HALLIDAY, 2004) and the Representation of Social Actors (VAN LEEUWEEN, 1998, 2007), the latter being the theoretical categorization used to approximate the discourse of the movement "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*) in social networks. We found that the speech that "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*) has disseminated on its social networks, particularly in the pre-voting period for President Dilma's impeachment, has been a speech with a strong ideological content, specifically oriented towards fulfilling political objectives. We conclude that networks are, at the same time, potential tools for new ways of expression for minority groups, elements of consolidation of hegemonic groups with ideological interests.

Keywords: "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*), Critical discourse analysis, Social Networks.

INTRODUCTION

Considering the peculiarities that define current social movements, mainly represented by management and virtual articulation, these organizations maintain in Brazil, as Scherer-Warren (2008) puts it, the particularities that have defined them since the 1980s. In the words of Gohn (2011), p. 336), in line with Scherer-Warren (2008), social movements, as basic requirements, "have an identity, have an opponent and articulate or are based on a project of life and society". Even in mobile scenarios like the current ones, scholars confirm that the new movements maintain these characteristics. For contemporary social movements "in this world of information we live in, political visibility becomes an important vector of empowerment" (SCHERER-WARREN, 2008, p. 16). The new codes of organization allow invitations and calls for marches, demonstrations and occupations to be carried out through social networks (GOHN, 2014), "the initial awareness is a cause, seen as a social problem, such as the corruption of politicians, the greed of bankers, prejudice against gays etc." (GOHN, 2014, p. 21). Concrete actions are not lost and "they adopt different strategies ranging from simple denunciation, through direct pressure (mobilizations, marches, concentrations, marches, disturbances to the constituted order, acts of civil disobedience, negotiations, etc.) to indirect pressure" (GOHN, 2011, p. 335). In Brazil, in a discursive arena bombarded by messages, during the government of President Dilma Rousseff, speeches from "politically correct" organizations emerged, with promises of a new country, free from corruption, with transparency, clear policies and equality for all. These promises are made

in a context of using multiple semiotic codes. To enable the appearance of these self-styled “structures” of social movements, even with the discursive posture of a political party, a legitimizing context and a crisis scenario were needed. This way, the groups “saviors of the motherland” managed to emerge strong, full of arguments and promises.

"VEM PRA RUA" (COME TO TO THE STREET): THE MOBILIZATION GREEN YELLOW

This work seeks to analyze part of the discourse published on the social network Twitter and the subsequent construction of meaning, by a social movement of national reach in Brazil. This movement was constituted (along with some others) as a representative of the fight against corruption in the country, from 2014, and later raised the pro-impeachment banner of then president Dilma Rousseff: the movement "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*).

The "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*) appears in Brazil in 2014 without very defined political positions, but raising the flag against corruption at a time of great sensitivity to the numerous denunciations of politicians around the Mensalão, a well-known case of bribes paid to legislators in the National Congress in exchange for votes and favors politicians. Before that, in 2013, Brazil was the scene of massive popular demonstrations, which emerged in some parts of the country, with the initial demand against the increase in bus tickets, but which would soon incorporate other demands. In this context of political and social instability, the "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*) found a fertile ground to propose a line of struggle for the well-being of Brazilians, regardless of any party affiliation (according to the group's position), defending indisputable values, such as honesty and transparency in politics. Thus, as a supra-party,

the movement was presented on its official website. Considering the characteristics that social movements must have to constitute themselves as such, according to the addressed authors SCHERER-WARREN (2008) and GOHN (2011), the "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*) had everything necessary to fit into this category, namely: identity (at that time still under construction), adversaries (the corrupt and unscrupulous political class) and a project for social change (building a better Brazil).

The set of claims of the "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*) is not in line with what SCHERER-WARREN (2008) understands as characteristics of current movements in Brazil. In other words, neither the defense of minority rights nor the struggle for the democratization of institutions nor the search for plurality of ideas and respect for diversity are part of the movement's demands. Even so, the "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*) finds strong support pillars in the Brazilian political context with demands that have everything to do with the sensitive issues of the moment. THE "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*) had, as one of its first steps in the matter of media strategy, the creation of a website and social network accounts. From the beginning, the "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*) has invested heavily in virtual communication, which is its main source of appeal. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, with official accounts at the national level, but also with local accounts in some states and municipalities, were the strongest interactive bets of the movement.

Social media were the main channel for calling the

"*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*). O "*Vem pra rua*" (*Come to to the street*), due to its particular characteristics as a social movement, it has become an interesting object of study for some researchers from different

areas. Its training process, its leaders, its mode of articulation and the profile of its followers, among other aspects, have generated “academic curiosity” for some scholars.

THEORETICAL METHODOLOGICAL PATH

The Critical Discourse Analysis constitutes a path of unveilings through a critical look, oriented to unmask naturalized hegemonic practices.

The ASCD breaks out to contribute to the analysis, based on the discursive studies of the ACD, building a dialogue between Communication for Social Change, Sociology applied to Social Change and the Grammar of Multimodality. The research methodology is based on the presuppositions of qualitative research (Bauer & Gaskell, 2002) and of the Interpretative theory. Interpretivism seeks not only to describe and explain reality but also to interpret and understand meanings. In the theoretical bases of this research is the Critical Discourse Analysis, which is an interdisciplinary approach that allows different theoretical and methodological choices (CHOULIARAKI & FAIRCLOUGH, 1999; FAIRCLOUGH, 2001, 2003, VANDIJK, 2008). Taking the ACD as a starting point, we chose to go through the transdisciplinary proposal of the Sociological and Communicational Approach to Discourse (ASCD), as a way of understanding the social changes that represent the changing reality in which we operate. Pedrosa (2012, 2012b), promoter of the current, summarizes the ASCD proposal as an approach that presents some proposals well, and also raises some questions that move it towards development. Its dialogue occurs, in this first moment, with Sociology (Applied) to Social Change, Communication for Social Change, Cultural Studies and Functional Systemic Linguistics (Pedrosa, 2012).

Along with linguistic analysis, we will have the support of the Representation of Social Actors by Van Leeuwen (1997, 2008), which will guide us to bring together the ideological support of the texts producers when representing the various actors.

APPROACH TO DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS

Considering that this work is a limited part of the doctoral thesis: *“The hegemonic power of social networks: a critical analysis of the discourse of those who “go to the street”*, in which the corpus was constituted by the discursive manifestations of the movement. *“Vem pra rua” (Come to to the street)*, extracted from official social media (Twitter and Facebook), in the period between March 17 and April 17, 2016, the last thirty days before the vote for the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in the Chamber of Deputies, we chose just a few examples of tweets as a representation of the analysis that was carried out:

In these examples of posts, the attack on the Workers’ Party is clearly manifested in the main representatives: the then president of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff and ex-president Lula. Van Leeuwen (1997, 2008) presents in his *Representation of Social Actors*, two broad categories: **inclusion and exclusion**. Are actors included or excluded? In each case, how is this expressed in the texts? Considering this categorization, in the “tweets” above the social actors represented and included are Lula, Dilma, the other government members (the gang) and the Brazilian people (5,000 people). According to Van Leeuwen (1997, 2008), the representation of actors through inclusion can manifest itself in different ways. In the case of these examples, the actors represented are **activated**, that is to say, they are placed in charge of the actions: *“Lula spoke, threatened, threatened, but he died on the beach” and in the same post “without*

that little help that Dilma...". Activation is strengthened through individualization, that is, the actors represented (Dilma and Lula) are not "softened" within groups as in the case of "a corja" or "5,000 people". Individualization is even more decisive through the appointment, they are appointed, they are responsible for the corruption actions that the "*Vem pra rua*" (Come to the street) denounces: **individualized and named**. All choices have the clear intention of both holding the government (PT) accountable for the country's problems and exalting an image of the party linked to corruption. Discrediting the PT is one of the strategic pillars in the communication of the "*Vem pra rua*" (Come to the street).

This category of posts, which we have grouped together as mobilizing, has some particular characteristics, including the clear intention to strengthen the group's unity and to bet on the emotional side of the followers. Evidence of these statements emerges in the lexical-grammatical choices with a strong nationalist content, which are a constant in the official Twitter account of "*Vem pra rua*" (Come to the street). An important part of the consolidation of this "green yellow" strategy is based on the appropriation of those patriotic symbols, such as the flag, the anthem, and even the almost cartoon style of the Brazilian team's shirt. The appropriation of identity symbols of "being Brazilian" is present in almost the entire discursive path of the texts.

Starting from the macro categories of **inclusion and exclusion** in the Representation of Social Actors (VAN LEEUWEN, 1997, 2008), we see that in the grouping of **mobilizing** posts, some of the texts include the speaker himself in the action (Let's strengthen the movement in favor of impeachment) and in other tweets, the enunciator takes on the role of encourager (Disclose in all media), directly addressing the movement's followers.

These publications mainly represent the members of the movement and the followers, the group is **activated** in the *call itself*, it is the *agent*, in an activation "*in the future*", "*let's fill the streets*", "*let's strengthen the movement in favor of impeachment*", "*let's color Brazil yellow green*".

Although it is possible to infer that the "we" refers to all those who support the president's departure from power, the actors are no longer represented in a specific way. This indeterminacy is also foreseen in Van Leeuwen's category, since these are actors represented in an anonymous form, although it is possible to identify that they are those in line with the "*Vem pra rua*" (Come to the street).

The impersonalization, category that, in opposition to personalization, allows the representation of actors through an abstraction, highlighting a quality of the group, is also present (Gambetta, 2017). The exaltation of nationalism, the use of patriotic symbols such as the flag and its colors in all representations, constitutes a strong and appealing communication bet in the strategies chosen by Come to the street (Gambetta, 2021).

Media articulation based on a strong communication strategy is only possible when there are investments in qualified human resources, as well as privileged access to Information and Communication Technologies. These conditions favor the appropriation of symbols that rightfully belong to the Brazilian people as a whole and not to a sector committed to an ideological line that is not shared by all. The insistence, in all possible ways, in identifying the symbols of Brazil with the movement in favor of the PT's departure from government demonstrates an attempt to naturalize an ideology of combating the left as representative of the symbolic values that make up the Brazilian's patriotic identity (

Gambetta, 2017).

According to Magalhães (2009, p. 23) discourse is at the same time “structure and process”, this perspective allows us to understand that the period chosen for analysis can be approached at various levels of context. The discourse of the networks of “Vem pra rua” (Come to the street) takes place in a historical context in which raising the flag against corruption is giving an answer, at least discursive, to the Brazilian people.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The development of marketing strategies, the investment in dissemination through traditional channels, the hiring of professionals specialized in different areas of Communication, among countless coordinated and carefully planned actions, are aligned in order to achieve the communication objective of the “Vem para rua” movement (Come to the street).

Technological innovation, highlighted in the field of Communication, has brought drastic changes to all types of social movements that currently coexist in Brazilian society, in the fields of: content production, information distribution, ways of interacting with their followers, calling channels for virtual and face-to-face events, parallel mobilization spaces, identity strengthening mechanisms and ways to motivate the group.

“Vem pra rua” (Come to the street) discursively appropriated Brazilian national symbols such as the anthem, the flag and, through it, the green and yellow colors as elements that ended up being representative of the movement’s identity.

Social networks were used to consolidate a process of identity construction that bet on the exaltation of nationalism as a way of raising awareness among dissatisfied Brazilians. The discursive positioning of “Vem pra rua” (Come to the street) on the

movement’s official page does not match the discourse of its social networks. While on the page the movement presents itself as “a supra-party, democratic and plural movement that emerged from the spontaneous organization of civil society”, throughout its discursive positioning on Twitter, “Vem pra rua” (Come to the street) adopts an aggressive discourse, with a declared enemy: the Workers’ Party and its leaders, specifically former president Lula and then president of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff.

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