Rhetoric and Politics: Some approaches on Social Psychology and Sociology of Rhetorical Discourse Analysis - presentation of a case study[1]

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Abstract: Based on Organon of Aristotle, Perelman (1997) is recognized as the contemporary philosopher responsible for the New Rhetoric studies, involving the exercise of rhetoric to dialectic reasoning (as opposed to analytical reasoning). The political rhetoric and argumentation are linked to this dialectical reasoning. In this work, the issues of Rhetoric and Politics with respect to the speeches that occurred after the Portuguese democratic revolution of 25 April 1974 are discussed. The work is of an interdisciplinary nature, combining contributions from Sociology of Knowledge, Philosophy, Contemporary History and Social Psychology, and is part of a larger research, analyzing the broader political discourses in the context of the revolutionary era. A number of specific approaches are discussed, such as the Discourse Analysis Rhetoric (Billig, 1991; Potter, 1996; Castro, 2002; Van Dijk, 2006) with respect to the Critical Incident problem of the control of the media, who at the time objected against the two major left-wing parties: portuguese Socialist Party and the Portuguese Communist Party. We have identified a number of processes of social political constructions of the time (Berger and Luckman, 1966/1973). The main objective of this study was to investigate the role of the sociology of absences (Santos, 2006), in order to understand aspects of current political behavior in Portugal, such as the difficulties of getting an agreement between the left-wing parties (Santos, 2011), eg. in order to pursue a sociology of emergences (Santos, 2006, 2011).

1. Introduction

The conflicts in the political arena between different positions are accompanied by discursive processes of legitimation and validation of each party, corresponding to the delegitimization of opposing positions, with persuasive aims and to obtain the support of public opinion. In this work, we intend to address the issues of Rhetoric and Politics, the purpose of the discussions that occurred after the democratic revolution of April 25, 1974 in Portugal, which ended a dictatorship of fascist nature that lasted almost 50 years.

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This study focuses on the issues of Rhetoric and of its use in the political arena, is part of a research project of an interdisciplinary nature, carried out at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, which aims to understand the processes of social construction of the political reality of the time, better and how it is reflected today in the Portuguese political scene, such as the great difficulties of understanding of the forces of the Portuguese left political spectrum. This work combines elements from the Sociology of Knowledge (eg. Berger & Luckman, 1966/1973; Habermas, 1987; Bordieu, 1989; Babo-Lança, 2006; Santos, 2006; Santos, 2011), Philosophy (eg. Foucault, 1971/1997; Perelman, 1997; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2006) Contemporary History of Portugal (eg. Medeiros Ferreira, 1994; Rosas, 1994; Reis, 2004; Cabrera, 2006; Varela, 2001) and Social Psychology (eg. Billig et al., 1988; Billig, 1991; Potter, 1996; Burr, 1998; Bar-Tal, 2000; Castro, 2002; Van Dijk, 2006).

The method of analysis used is based predominantly on theoretical and methodological studies proposed in the area of Social Psychology, the main area of affiliation of the author.

Understanding, today, the discursive processes in the context of the revolutionary era, means exercising a .sociology of absences in order to understand, as mentioned some aspects of present political behavior, i.e., exert a sociology of emergences (Santos, 2006; Santos, 2011).

2.   The Rhetoric in the "public sphere": the case of politics

In the field of "public sphere" (Habermas, 1987), in particular in the political terrain, i.e. the analysis of political discourse, the media is vital in the contribution to the social construction of a political reality (Berger and Luckman, 1994) and the way it is construed to suit every political position in confrontation.

The analysis of political texts, whether produced by politicians (Cabrera, 2006) or whether produced by the media (Babo-Lança, 2006) is crucial for the identification of political and ideological beliefs, which meet four functions (Bar-Tal, 2000): epistemic function of knowledge about the political positions regarding the world and the social environment, a function of training, maintenance and reinforcement of social identities, a function of preservation of the community, group or social system, and a function of orientation and legitimization of behavior .

Alongside of legitimate beliefs of every political position, are created through political speeches, the opposite of those beliefs by the political opponents.

However, on any subject of public controversy (Nogueira, 2001) identical linguistic content can manifest itself in many different meanings, according to the discursive structures and strategies used by the parties, each discursive formation can claim for itself the "veracity" of his version on an event. Discursive Approaches in Social Sciences and Humanities can articulate with the positions structuralist and poststructuralist (Focault, 1971/1997; Burr, 1998), according to which the meanings associated with language are not fixed, but open to question. The focus of discursive approaches, following the postmodern

epistemological approaches (Foucault, 1971/1997; Nogueira, 2001), is that social knowledge is anchored in exactly the ways of creating meaning, rooted in the designations ("linguistic" categories) adapted by "knowers". Discourse currents understand, therefore, that rather than predict or control phenomena, as with the positivist tradition, it is necessary to investigate the meaning of such matters (Burr, 1998; Nogueira, 2001). In this sense, the discursive approaches are suitable for the study of controversial contexts or categories that generate public controversy, such as the political controversy.

3. Methodological Considerations on the Theoretical Analysis Rhetorical Discourse in Social Psychology.

Perelman (1997), the philosopher responsible for the movement of the New Rhetoric studies, claims the foundations of such an approach are with Aristotle. Aristotle, in Organon, distinguishes between two types of reasoning: analytical reasoning, which aims to relate the truth of the premises to the conclusions, and the dialectical reasoning, based on assumptions that are made up of generally accepted opinions, to make others accept theories that can be controversial, aiming at persuasion.
The rhetoric is associated to the dialectical reasoning. Thus, for example, the field of political argumentation, philosophical, literary and even legal "is the credible, the plausible, the probable, in that (...) escapes the calculation of certainties" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2006, p.9).
We adopt in this work the discursive perspectives on rhetoric in Social Psychology, as Psychology of Rhetoric of Billig (1991), Critical Discourse Analysis of Van Dijk (2006), and analysis of the mechanisms of constructing arguments (Potter, 1996; Castro , 2002).
Discussing some of these discursive approaches, Castro (2002) identifies three common aspects:
1) intra-subject variability: A single subject or sender of a message can convey varying versions of a subject, depending on the audience you want to persuade
2) Function: The variability of transmitted versions may have different functions persuasion: from the interpersonal to the ideological functions
3) Construction: A speech precisely builds a version aiming to persuade an audience

Below, we describe briefly the theoretical and methodological assumptions of current discourses in Social Psychology, in conjunction with the rhetorical analysis (Billig et al, 1988; Billig, 1991; Castro, 2002):

1) The language may be used as a way of building reality; linguistical descriptions not only serve to explain the world, but also to build it
2) The social thought - and political - is essentially argumentative; speech commonsense has a persuasive meaning, so that their contents and their persuasive functions are articulated
3) Therefore, in discourse analysis, understanding the persuasive functions can be a way to identify and reconstruct the meaning of what is said

4) In relation to any issue, there are always two themes or contradictory positions. The thought of commonsense as well as political thought, is dilemmatic
5) As a consequence, what is implied in a speech only becomes evident when, in speech analysis one is confronted with another (dialectical analysis of discourse). In rhetorical terms, any action is more than the expression in favor of a position, it is also, implicitly and explicitly, an argument against the opposite position (Billig, 1991)
6) To understand a position, it is important to understand the argumentative context in which it is expressed (see tactical reasons, strategic, etc.).

It also takes into account the analysis model proposed by Potter (1996), incorporated by Castro (2002), and some aspects focused by Van Dijk (2006), which allows the identification of mechanisms inherent to rhetorical persuasive speech: taking the argument to its extremes in order to persuade a predisposed audience, or its inverse, the minimization; description of arguments using evidence, the arguments for inoculation (want to show the audience that there is no interest in the subject of the arguments presented); mechanism of distance (assuming neutrality and not wanting to prove anything); presenting credentials in argument (use of subject categories with particular knowledge on the subject in order to make the message credible).

This paper seeks to address the rhetorical speeches around a critical incident in the context of post-revolutionary April 25 - the "Republica Case" - served by two political parties, the Socialist Party and the Portuguese Communist Party.

4. Objectives of this study: the study framework

Through political rhetoric, both parties sought to impose certain "meanings" (Bourdieu, 1989) around ideological polarities (Van Dijk, 2006), arising from two views about the nature of political legitimacy: an "electoral legitimacy" claimed by the Socialist Party; since the first free elections in Portugal after the fascist dictatorship - the elections for the Constituent Assembly (Assembly that drafted the first constitution of the country after the revolution) - and a "revolutionary legitimacy" claimed by the Portuguese Communist Party. Through the analysis of political rhetoric used by the two party formations in question seeking to understand, as stated, some processes of social construction of political reality at the time (Berger & Luckman, 1966/1973), which impacts even nowadays (Santos, 2011).

The dictatorial regime before the democratic revolution obviously not only had political implications, but also social and economic. Fascism became a monopoly capitalist ideology and structure, which led to the exploration of much of the working class (Rosas, 1994). The revolution and the end of the regime symbolized, on the left-wing, the end of that oppression. In part because of this, and as regards Varela (2011), "terms like 'socialism', 'classless society', 'revolution', 'democracy' were part of the lexicon of propaganda all Portuguese political leaders of the PPD (Democratic Popular Party), PS (Socialist Party), PCP (Portuguese Communist Party) the extreme left" (p. 125), which still continues in

todays lexicon, e.g., in the designation of the portuguese Social Democrat Party: "Portugal is the only country in Europe that has a liberal party called Social Democrat" (Varela, 2011, p.125).

As that author also states, in a historical perspective and "The speeches, political programs, documents are relevant for what they say, but also for not saying" (ibidem) adds to these considerations, for the historical understanding of the revolutionary period. It also will be necessary to understand the context and argumentative strategies in which what is said gets a precise meaning, with functions not only rhetorical, but with historical implications, such as the difficulties of understanding between the political parties of the left spectrum (Santos, 2011).

Such conflicts between, on the one hand, the Socialist Party and forces with the similar ideas or more to the right, and on the other hand, the Portuguese Communist Party and similar forces or more to the left showed up in so many other incidents critics of the time (Medeiros Ferreira, 1994;). It was, for example, the case of controversy concerning the "Lei da Unicidade Sindical" ("Trade Union Law of Oneness"), around pluralism versus centralism to adopt a framework for trade union representative of the diverse workforces. Regarding this incident, terms like "Unity" or "Democracy" acquire different meanings depending on the argumentative strategies used by these two party formations (cf. Varela, pp. 142-145).

A historical event of primary importance was the right-wing coup on March 11, 1975. Beyond the political repercussions or political-economic (as nationalizations that followed, including the Banking and Insurance, and the expropriation of farmland, policies carried out by the 4th Provisional Government), became the argumentative positioning of the Portuguese Communist Party, related to its political priorities, and their understanding of a new phase of the revolution (cf. Brito, 2010, p. 139).

In fact, from the events of March 11, according Seabra (2007) "all public interventions, all speeches Cunhal (historical leader of the Portuguese Communist Party) dramatized (...) confrontation with the reactionary forces, for the country to realize (...) we were in the midst of a revolution that would be taken until the end against those who oppose it "(p. 242).

Not only are terms such as "Revolution" or "Socialism" that acquire different meanings in the argumentation of the parties in question, but also the term "Democracy". To the Socialist Party, from the elections of April 25, 1975, the word "Democracy" would correspond to a "pluralist democracy" of parliamentary base "(Reis, 2005). For the Communist Party "Democracy" would be" a bourgeois democracy that Portugal does not serve "(Cunhal, apud Varela, p. 203), defending himself another kind of Democracy.

It is therefore in this context, both historical and from the point of view of political rhetorics, one can understand the political rhetoric around the Critical

Incident in the case concerning the control of the media between the Socialist Party and the Portuguese Communist Party.

5. The "Republica Case": two versions in confrontation

During Salazarism the newspaper "Republica" symbolized (along with the "Diário de Lisboa"), the legal press, a possible resistance to the regime. According to Mesquita (2005), the newspaper "came to 25 April (...) with the prestige of being the only Portuguese daily that assumed, explicitly, as an organ of the democratic opposition" (paragraph 14).
During the revolutionary context that pitted the Socialist Party to its left, an incident occurred which opposed most journalists and the director of the newspaper to most other workers of Republic, which led to the kidnapping of the former by the latter.

A journalist of a leading weekly publication at the time in Portugal ("Expresso") (quoted in Portugal's Socialist 05.23.1975, p. 15) described the general framework given in the public opinion as follows:

"There are two conflicting theories. The position of the Editorial Board and who, on behalf of the newspaper's independence and freedom of the press, want to continue the same body and the same editorial direction. Another theory is that of other workers, that too in the name of freedom and independence would not want to continue the direction. "

In the present work, we do not intend to get to the veracity of the facts and versions presented, but single out the rhetoric analysis about the "Republica Case", a corpus of news texts published in official organs informative of each parties – the "Portugal Socialista" , official organ of the Socialist Party, and "Avante", the official organ of Communist Party - how those who sought to legitimize the exercise of power, and how the content served by each political formation (" Socialism "," Democracy "," Freedom ") took on different meanings depending on the context and the argumentative strategies used.

6. Method

Period - May to July 1975

Corpus Analysis: official press organ of the Socialist Party (Portugal Socialista) and Portuguese Communist Party (Avante)

We selected 26 news items, 13 of every newspaper, given the following selection criteria: they are opinion articles about the case, correspond to political speeches on the situation in the country and / or on the case, or correspond with the news

content relevant to understand the historical background, social and political environment in which it occurs.

Procedure

. Identification and contrast between arguments presented by each of the political forces.

. Reconstruction of speeches by interconnecting between arguments (content) and their functions. .

Identifying mechanisms rhetoricians used, based on the Potter system (1996).

7. Results

7.1 Some used rhetorical mechanisms (examples) (Potter, 1996; Castro, 2002)

1. Construction of the argument using extremes (Objective: mobilization)

Defend the independence of the "Republica" is to defend the Portuguese democracy, is to defend the revolutionary process in which the Socialists are particularly active, is still the defense of national independence.
(...) Nor the pouring rain, nor the presence of military and armored vehicles demobilized people," or "Men who do not sleep when they are concerned the rights of the People. (Portugal Socialista, 22/05/75)

The reaction is still too hard. The conspiracy continues. (Avante, 5/22/75)

Our party was the target of daily provocations ... The reaction was mobilized (...) candidates of our party beaten, invaded work-centers (...) The Communists received death threats. (Avante, 10/7/75)

2. Construction of the argument using facts (objective: strengthening the argument)

(...) Editorial in the period leading up to March 11, the constant attacks on inter-union, the anticommunist campaign of that newspaper became spokesman ... (Avante, 22/5/75)

Everything serves to manufacture anticommunism. The 1st of May, the single union, the occupation of a radio, the internal conflict of the "Republic." (Avante, 7/10/75)

3. Arguments by inoculation

(...) Because we are opposed to this global condemnation of the role of parties here and there that you begin to sketch. But these trends will gain ground rapidly, if the action of the parties did not enter in the revolutionary process. (Avante, 5/22/75)

4. Resource credentials of the individuals directly involved in the case

(...) Want to reorganize the antifascist fighter Raul Rego (director of the newspaper) (Portugal Socialista, 5/23/75)

(...) Undisputed figure of resistant and anti-fascist fighter who has just been elected to the Constituent Assembly and to whom April 25 owes so much (Portugal Socialista, 5/21/75)

5. Presentation of Credentials

(...) No more than the Communists fought for the freedoms and rights of citizens. Ensuring (...) distribution of the glorious Avante! (...) Unique example of the struggle for freedom of the press (...) (Avante, 6/12/75)

7.2 Synthesis on rhetorical mechanisms on the "Republica Case" (mechanisms mainly be used by each of the Parties)

• Communist Party: Action minimizing the rhetorical mechanisms for the Republic event. Polarization of social and political reality, building with this polarization image of a PS divisive and reactionary, countering the image of a PCP unifying the masses. There is also recourse to the mechanism of distancing case against the Republic, serving up this mechanism extremes to the facts.

• Socialist Party: Appeal to the mechanism extremes to the facts. The Socialist Party is entitled defender of freedoms threatened - in particular press freedom - and serve up this rhetoric for extrapolation. Often uses the resource credentials for credible opinions (eg the anti-fascist Raul Rego, director of the newspaper). Looking to join the audience for their theses making some allusion antifascist militants or sympathizers. They do not have the credibility of the PCP (Communist Portuguese Party) as a party, due to the years of illegitimacy, looking for singular facts to emphasize

8. **Analysis and discussion of results: provisional findings**

Looking for an interpretative analysis of the moments in which the discourses convey and provide a possible interpretation of the political concepts of time, based on the Billig assumption (1991) that advocate a certain position always opposes another. This means that the analysis of the contents of the arguments necessarily articulated with their functions, allows us to elucidate - to later - the meanings of concepts current in the revolutionary period in Portugal, as "Socialism", "Democracy" and "Freedom" and, as we proposed, the purpose of the Republic case, by two parties: the Socialist Party and the Portuguese Communist Party.

The Meanings of "Socialism", "Democracy" and "Freedom" and the problem of Political Legitimacy

Dichotomies / Ideological Polarities

Freedom of opinion	Freedom of working-class
Reformist Socialism	Socialism
Party pluralism (Electoral Legitimacy)	Legitimacy revolutionary
Democracy Policy (Party pluralism)	Popular Democracy

These results basically clarify the divisions of the left who are still in Portugal, given that show two completely different programmatic visions between the two major parties of the Portuguese left.

This stresses also, we believe, the usefulness of rhetorical analysis of speeches in the "public sphere", in particular in the political domain – a domain privileged, in democracies, for persuasive speech that argues exactly the same kind of societies that political formations project. Finally, this research is also useful in the study of historical rhetoric for the analysis of the evolution of Portuguese society, particularly in implications of the past even at the present, despite the passage of time.

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