PRAXIS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITIZATION PROCESS:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEW SOCIAL MANIFESTS IN THE LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES

PRÁXIS, REDES SOCIAIS E PROCESSO DE POLITIZAÇÃO:
UMA ANÁLISE DAS NOVAS MANIFESTAÇÕES SOCIAIS
PERANTE AS DEMOCRACIAS LIBERAIS

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ABSTRACT

The general objective of this article is to carry out a reflexive analysis against the liberal democratic model, in which globalization and social media have been thought to be the main tools for gathering concerned citizens who feel unsatisfied with government as well as for spreading information and political alternatives to the established modern liberal theory of democracy. In order to change the present system, based on bourgeois hegemony, a concept from Antonio Gramsci's theory, the new social movements which start online must go through a process of politization. However, what seems to be happening is the opposite process, depolitization, as a way to weaken the social protests. Finally, the role of popular political action, is highlighted throughout the research as way to question the status quo through the dialectical process of praxis. The research now developed has a theoretical-descriptive character and qualitative bias, which is proposed within a critical and reflective perspective. The deductive method, of historical-comparative procedure and the bibliographic research technique specialized in the researched subject are used.

KEYWORDS: Liberal Democracy. Globalization. Politization. Post-Politics. Social Media.

RESUMO

O presente artigo tem por objetivo geral realizar uma análise reflexiva frente ao modelo democrático liberal, nos quais a globalização e as redes sociais têm sido apontadas como as ferramentas principais para a mobilização política de cidadãos que se veem insatisfeitos com o regime, assim como para a divulgação de modelos políticos alternativos à fórmula liberal-democrática já estabelecida. Observa-se a necessidade primordial de politização dos novos movimentos sociais para prover mudanças no sistema baseado na hege-

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monia liberal, como teorizado por Antonio Gramsci. Contudo, nota-se, na prática, que ocorre o processo inverso, a despolitização, como forma de desmobilizar as lutas sociais. Por fim, salienta-se durante toda pesquisa o papel da ação política popular como meio de contestação do status quo e, de forma concorrente a este, o desenvolvimento da práxis como processo dialético, a partir dos escritos gramscianos. A pesquisa ora desenvolvida tem caráter teórico-descritivo e viés qualitativo, que é proposto dentro de uma perspectiva crítica e reflexiva. Utiliza-se o método dedutivo, de procedimento histórico-comparativo e a técnica de pesquisa bibliográfica especializada no assunto pesquisado.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Democracia liberal. Globalização. Politização. Pós-Política. Mídias Sociais.*

1 INTRODUCTION

It's undeniable that the development of technology promotes new paradigms in world societies, which translate into new challenges; what was previously unimaginable becomes reality. Since the introduction of the internet, physical boundaries have been overcome to promote instantaneous connection between different people and social groups, and the impacts of virtual reality become latent, as they add more and more people, that is, users, in their digital domains.

In this sense, it's possible to build a positive view about this phenomenon, due to the advances provided by greater freedom of expression in the online environment; and as a result, the mobilization of citizens dissatisfied with government regimes can be cited. In this way, the connected citizen is the social actor in the 21st century, responsible for the task of questioning, and, consequently, for the demonstration that politics in a globalized world requires an analysis beyond the political models inherited from the 19th century. Therefore, it's worth reflecting on the future of these events, whose origin refers to the online environment.

Therefore, the research developed here has a theoretical-descriptive character and qualitative bias, which is proposed within a critical and reflective perspective. The deductive method is used, with a historical-comparative procedure and the bibliographic research technique focusing on the proposed and researched subject.

An analysis based on the characteristics of liberal democracy by a Marxist bias is proposed, based on the Gramscian concepts of hegemony and philosophy of praxis. In this perspective, it seeks to understand the potential counter-hegemonic aspect of the new social manifestations, whose origin refers to the online environment, in addition to the need for the politicization process of such movements and the consequences of depoliticization, a process with the focus of maintaining hegemonic discourses.

Thus, this article starts from the analysis of the relation between the liberal State and the democratic State, highlighting the incorporation, as a general thought, of the idea of Public Freedoms as a fundamental conceptual element to the democratic State, as well as Democracy as a universal value to be pursued by societies.

Then the research addresses the analysis of the phenomenon of representation as a phenomenon that, in addition to causing the citizen to distance himself from politics, causes the crisis of performance of the democratic regime, which is why it's necessary to affirm

popular power through of concrete attitudes. It's clarified, then, that political apathy is reve-aled as an important harmful consequence caused by the understanding that liberal demo-cracy wouldn't be a means to achieve significant ends, such as the existence of a regime in which all democratic values are guaranteed in practice. Its goal is procedural.

After setting these premises, the phenomenon of globalization and the close relation between social movements and New Technologies are addressed. The possibility that local social movements may gain worldwide repercussion, from the internet and social networks, is, therefore, a new reality. Recent world history is marked by the important presence of the "people of the square", who, using the "technology of liberation", would break the hegemony of the elites.

Thus, there is an urgent need to investigate whether the liberating potential contained in such technologies, in fact, has been able to be noticed, whether social media are managing to undertake the communication necessary to challenge hegemonic thinking, whether they are, in fact, undertaking an effective reflection on ethics and politics, if they are really putting into practice a new way of thinking about social issues or if they are just the essence of post--politics'?'.

With these doctrinal outlines, the result of the research is reached, culminating in the conclusion that despite its liberating and counter-hegemonic potential, there is a capture of such mechanisms that, therefore, fail to develop a level of politicization that it's necessary to overcome the *status quo*.

2 THE INTRINSIC RELATION BETWEEN LIBERALISM AND DEMOCRACY

During the 17th century, liberal theory was developed on the European continent, whose influences go beyond the economic sphere, since questions arise about the need to affirm individual freedom, the so-called freedom of the moderns, as explained and defined by Cons-tant (1985, p. 13).

Thus, it's questioned: the role of the citizen in society and what practices would be allo-wed, in the sense that freedom would represent an intrinsic value to the human condition itself. Therefore, it's understood that it's a tradition of thought that "situates the freedom of the individual, disregarded or trampled by organicist philosophies of different orientations" (our translation into english) (LOSURDO, 2006, p. 13). Thus, political liberalism arises, whose doctrine underlies the 18th century bourgeois revolutions.

It's noted that the theory of democracy is faced with liberalism, which becomes essential in the construction of the contemporary notion about this regime. For Bobbio (2000, p. 32/33), a liberal State and a democratic State would be interdependent, since certain freedoms would be necessary for the effective exercise of democratic power, as well as that democratic power would be necessary to "guarantee the existence and persistence of fundamental freedoms" (our translation into english).

In this way, the importance of individual freedoms is emphasized as conquests of liberal revolutions, which, in turn, sedimented liberal democracy, a political regime that "[...] has in bourgeois revolutions, [...] for opening the political space necessary for the consolidation and reproduction of the capitalist economy, the historical conditions of its genesis" (our translation into english) (COUTINHO, 1996, p. 22).

We can observe, therefore, the creation of the concept of liberal democracy, as a result of the interconnection between democracy and political theory, which represents the interests captained by the revolutionary bourgeoisie. Thus, a codependency relation emerges between the governmental regime model and political philosophy, whose connection is translated into the guarantee of individual freedoms for citizens, based on the separation between State and civil society, "defining the own notion of freedom from the latter's autonomy, its ontological priority vis-à-vis the State, its prerogatives, limits and state control" (our translation into english) (GUIMARÃES, 2006, p. 230).

In this way, the society of a modern democratic regime is based on the inviolability of freedoms, accepting the understanding that modern democracy would be: the manifestation of the supremacy of such rights and the autonomy of the person.

Contemporary political science, therefore, incorporated this ideology into the concept of democracy, since both share the individual will as an origin. Consequently, the meaning of the word "democracy" changes; it represents the political regime in which individual rights are guaranteed as 'rights of the first order', being "a rational model of social order, capable of preserving free human existence" (our translation into english) (VITULLO, 2014, p. 91).

The understanding of democracy as a universal value is also accepted, in the sense that political liberalism is the condition for the existence of democracy, at the same time that it's enshrined as its economic base, that is, "speak of democracy 'without a surname' when in reality we are talking about 'democratic capitalisms', in which the noun is capitalism and the adjective, democracy", as Boron clarifies (our translation into english) (2001, *apud* VITULLO, 2017, p.92).

In this way, individual rights will be considered as a democratic "compass", that is, a way of measuring the quality of democratic government, or even if its existence is at serious risk; so, legal guarantees play a central role in this context. In this perspective, the legal system is structured to protect such rights, as it's essential that the Constitution of a democratic nation provides for fundamental freedoms in its provisions and articles, since, and after all, it's the 'Magna Carta' of a legal system.

2.1 THE REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

There is no doubt that political participation is essential to the realization of democracy, being another important issue in the debate about the characteristics of a democratic regime. The 'Enlightenment liberalism' doesn't see 'direct democracy' as viable and 'parliamentary democracy' is neglected, in which the duty to make laws concerns "a restricted body of representatives elected by those citizens to whom political rights are recognized" (our translation into english) (BOBBIO, 1987, p. 324). Thus, the citizen becomes empowered to decide on something that, in the previous political order, didn't concern him.

It's noteworthy that, at the present time, it's not possible to exercise direct political participation in its fullness, given the multiplicity and densification of political issues and opinions, the population and the territorial vastness of many countries. According to the liberal paradigm, political representation is an individual decision based on the exercise of 'power of choice', provided that the condition of being imbued with the legal capacity to do so is present. It's observed that representation is understood as a substitution for direct participation. In this sense, it's understood that political participation is valued in itself, as an exercise of autonomy, and the people are only the formal holder of political sovereignty while its exercise is carried out by their representatives who have a free mandate (CERRONI, 1976 *apud* MARTORANO, p. 43).

Another relevant aspect is the importance given to the procedural issues of the regime, which are fundamental for its proper functioning. In this sense, there would be two possibilities for the development of representative democracy, namely: the gradual expansion of the right to vote, by "constant, gradual and general evolution, for all citizens of both sexes who have reached a certain age limit" (our translation into english) (BOBBIO, 1998, p. 325); or the increase in representative bodies/institutions, composed of representatives chosen by the population through the electoral process.

The distance between the population and its representatives is emphasized; if there is a guarantee that the elections will take place as provided for in national legislation, democracy exists, even if "reduced to a simple technique of self-reproduction of power relations and of separation between representatives and represented" (our translation into english) (VITULLO, 2014, p. 94). There is no concern in evaluating the result produced by Democracy, such is the concern with its form. In this sense, as explained by Amorim and Rodrigues (2012, p. 80), the indexes created to measure democratic access to public offices, as well as the holding of periodic and free elections, are unable to measure important dimensions of democratic practice, such as: a) institutional quality, b) political efficiency, c) the behavior of political leaders, d) citizen satisfaction with Democracy.

In this way, it's not possible to challenge the status quo or, at least, to ensure that it's challenged, through such merely formal rules. Therefore, the democratic theory shows itself guided by the notions of governance and stability and the development of the regime would occur by the good functioning of the institutions, mainly the regularity and the existence of free elections.

However, the results of a government aligned with such proposals, don't necessarily seem beneficial to the population, consisting of an elitist democracy model, as theorized by Schumpter, who argues that democratic practice should be reduced to a method of choice, choice by the people, of that group within the elites that for the people seems the most capable to govern. In this way, democracy is understood as a "method of relaying elites in power" (our translation into english) (SCHUMPETER, 1961 *apud* DURIGUETTO, 2012, p. 328). But, the availability of representative options doesn't seem sufficient. There is a limitation in this model by distancing the citizen from politics and placing him only to decide between groups belonging to the elite, since they would be better prepared for politics.

In this sense, a consequence is the rematch of interests, that is, the subversion by the representatives of interests that would theoretically emanate from the popular mass of represented. Political participation is limited in the name of: the "rules of the game" mentioned

above, and of the procedures established by law; that is, "the set of procedures established by the normative language of law to prevent the colonization of society by the market and by the administration" (our translation into english) (CORVAL, 2015, p. 247).

The influence of Weberian thinking is emphasized by the structuring of the bureaucracy, whose procedural aspects determine the 'good functioning of the system', which is rationally developed by "fully developed bureaucratic mechanism compared to other organizations in exactly the same way in which the machine compares to non-mechanical modes of production" (our translation into english) (WEBER, 1982 *apud* FARIA, 2010, p. 249).

Although stability is fundamental, it's worth emphasizing that the *status quo* must be questioned by citizens when it isn't beneficial to them. However, this aspect is relegated to the background and the act of the election and its implications aren't sufficient to guarantee the effectiveness of political participation, since, for that, it's required that "the voices of citizens in politics are clear, remarkable and equal" (our translation into english) (VERBA *et all*, 1995 *apud* HINDMAN, 2002, p. 6).

In turn, a second model of liberal democracy rejects the elitist bias and adopts a different analysis about the opposition groups. In this way, it's accepted: the demands of a notably plural society and the right to express ideals freely, which constitutes a legal guarantee. In this context, the State acts according to the needs interposed by the groups, having the duty to maintain order to avoid the appearance of conflicts. Therefore, it can be concluded that, for pluralists, democracy is guaranteed by "the existence of different groups that defend their specific interests and private" (our translation into english) (DURIGUETTO, 2012, p. 292). Thus, the influence on decisions is combined with political-electoral participation through the articulation of interests.

It's possible to infer criticism of both models of democracy, since the gradual conquest of social rights comes from collective struggles, which implies concrete political action, which surpassed the limitation of the mere choice of representatives Being satisfied with the conditions of political participation of liberal democracy implies confusion between disparate practices (that is, restricted political deliberation within the scope of elected representatives and the construction of power by the popular mass), and the possibilities within a bureaucratic and procedural system become an obstacle to political transformation.

This implies forgetting that: democratic legitimacy must not, and cannot be, only, *a priori*, and must, also be *a posteriori*, that is, there must be instruments to evaluate the results produced by democracy after the election of representatives. This is all the more important when it's observes that the crisis that democracy is going through today is, above all, a crisis linked to a deep crisis of performance arising from several unfulfilled promises (Mounk, 2019, p. 160).

Bobbio (2000, p. 34/45) correctly points out six such promises, namely: 1) The individual's empowerment; 2) The prohibition of the imperative mandate; 3) The defeat of the oligarchies; 4) The exercise beyond the political frontier, with its performance in non-political spaces in which a power is exercised and that makes binding decisions for an entire social group; 5) The elimination of Invisible Power, such as the power exercised by the mafia, militia, organized crime etc., and finally, 6) Education for citizenship, that enabled the exercise of an eminently active citizenship.

It should also be noted that the normalization of such a form of government also limits opposition to the system to action according to the democratic "rules of the game", necessary for the gradual approval of progressive policies. The legal prerogatives of freedoms and representative democracy are not enough, if when popular manifestation occur, the state apparatus takes charge of containing and criminalizing them, since "collective actions that come into conflict with the interests of the apparatus government and capital are subject to repression" (VIANA, 2018, p. 132).

The consequences fall on the population, which is in a position that can easily lean towards political apathy, in a passive position, since political action is relegated to voting, in a context of choosing representatives whose interests may clash with popular. In this context, other ways of thinking about collective organization seem to gain strength and the democratic regime and, what is worse, their values, are threatened. Many people ask (themselves): Why insist on Democracy if it no longer meets society's wishes? Why insist on Democracy if political agents do not represent or realize the interests of those who elected them?

Therefore, it's necessary to affirm popular power through concrete attitudes; it's a way to establish democracy in fact. The creation of an inversion in democratic practice is observed, since "democracy isn't created by popular power, but this is created by that" (our translation into english) (FERNANDES, 2019, p. 72).

2.2 THE POLITICAL APATHY IN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Due to the complexity of the democracy model based on bureaucratization and rational organization in the liberal molds, the results of the consolidation of such regime indicate that: isn't convenient to have a democracy whose structure allows the population to exercise effective control over the process and ensure that will have a participatory voice in politics, which results in an unequal enjoyment of political freedoms guaranteed by law.

In this sense, questions arise, and one would have to think about the growing need for the expansion of democracy, through the continuous expansion of institutions as spaces for popular participation, in facto or real. This solution is avoided in a context of liberal democracy, as it's undesirable for favored social groups that the lower classes become more active and aim for greater political participation. With this objective, over time, institutional barriers were created [...] to, in the face of social inequality and facing the possibility of the emergence of more intense social conflicts, block the penetration of popular spheres in the political regime (MARTORANO, 2007, p. 40).

In this sense, it's worth emphasizing a key-concept to understand the maintenance of oppressive relations in democratic society: hegemony, theorized by the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci, based on the methodology of historical-dialectic Marxism. Hegemony is understood as a relation of domination between classes, guided by inequality of power. Gramsci develops this concept by turning to what he calls subaltern class, that is, inserted in a lower position in the relations of domination existing in society, and points out that "subaltern groups always suffer from the initiative of dominant groups, even when they rebel and rise: only 'permanent' victory breaks, and not immediately, subordination" (our translation into english) (GRAMSCI 2002, *apud* SIMIONATTO, 2009, p. 42).

In this way, hegemony develops in a context not only of coercion, but also of consensus. That is, the bourgeois hegemony in the state structure manifests itself through its control, when a class is able to present and make them accept the conditions of its existence and class development as a universal principle, as a world conception (our translation into english) *("[...] consegue apresentar e fazer aceitar as condições da sua existência e do seu desenvolvimento de classe como princípio universal, como concepção de mundo")* (GRAMSCI, 2006, p. 302).

After all, force is, in isolation, a fragile legitimizing element, devoid of any ethical justification. Yes because, the strongest is never strong enough to always be the sir/master, if he doesn't transform that strength into a right and obedience into duty (our translation into english) (*"o mais forte não é nunca assaz forte para ser sempre o senhor, se não transforma essa força em direito e a obediência em dever"*) (Rousseau, 1989, p. 24).

It's, in certain aspects, what La Boétie (2010) identified as "voluntary servitude" (*"servidão voluntária"*). The fact that an infinite number of men, facing the political sovereign, not only consented to obey, but to serve, voluntarily, putting themselves in the position of tyrannized people, worried La Boétie, who rightly warned that vassal/subjects do not need to fight tyrants or even defend themselves against him. It's enough that they refuse to serve him, so that he is naturally overcome.

It's evident that, today, delicate and efficient seduction techniques, supported by the most recent neuroscience studies, are used to ensure the maintenance of 'self-compliacent mistake' (*engano autocomplascente*). See Roitman's (2007, p. 10) insightful analysis about how we accept democratic discourse devoid of democratic practice:

> Algo similar ocurre con el discurso de la Coca-Cola, transformado en refresco, dice acabar con la sed al tiempo que se presenta como la chispa de la vida. Pero si la tomamos, fracasa: no acaba con la sed y, si estamos deprimidos, ponernos frente a la botella no nos fortalece el espíritu. Sin embargo, se consume como si tuviese ambas cualidades y lo que es peor de todo, se vive autocomplaciente en el engaño. Así, aumenta el número de bebedores de Coca-Cola, los cuales son conscientes de su cobardía al renunciar a ver la realidad. Siguen consumiendo Coca-Cola como si acabara con su sed y la depresión. Algo similar ocurre con los productores de democracia representativa, imponen una lógica de consumo. La fiesta de las elecciones. El ritual electoral donde se eligen elites gobernantes. Competencia para administrar eficazmente el Estado. Así, argumentan quienes asumen su discurso. Se vive en democracia cuando se compite por el control de las instituciones y existe alternancia en el poder. Por consiguiente, la democracia consiste en elegir gobernantes para crear, aplicar leyes y desarrollar normas por gobernantes elegidos. Una tautología, recurrente. (ROITMAN, 2007, p. 10)

Therefore, it is common for the subject to adopt the worldview of the superior, even if such conception is in contradiction with practice. Furthermore, is emphasized that this conception of the world is imposed by the external environment, therefore, "it's devoid of critical awareness and coherence, it's disaggregated and occasional" (our translation into english) (*"é desprovida de consciência crítica e coerência, é desagregada e ocasional"*) (ALVES, 2010, p. 4).

Also is observed that "[...] every relation of 'hegemony' is necessarily a pedagogical relation" (our translation into english) (GRAMSCI, 2006, p. 399), since the relation of domination

also develop from the discourse and from the ideology propagated for the society, in order to establish relations of domination by culture.

Thus, is observed that there is a harmful consequence of the understanding that liberal democracy isn't a means to achieve significant ends, such as the existence of a regime in which all democratic values are guaranteed in practice, in addition to legal guarantees, however, as an end in itself. Still regarding the liberal-democratic formula, it can be inferred that: a major problem for the regime isn't identified if the citizen is apathetic, as it's a sign that the system is without risks to his integrity.

It should be noted that political apathy is a way of maintaining bourgeois hegemony and reinforcing the notion of consensus, being understood as passive adherence to the concept of 'government of the dominant class', as it indicates the existence of an electorate ready to choose their representatives, without making political decisions in factFurthermore, in certain circumstances a democratic system can be highly stable "if a substantial part of the electorate merely accepts it" (our translation into english) (DAHL, 1961, p. 314), moreover, for a democratic system to be highly stable is fundamental, as already saw, voluntary submission to such a system.

However, new ways of contesting the hegemony present in society have been developing. In this sense, it's essential that citizens can be aware of the existence of such an unequal system, planned in such a way as to protect the interests of the political class and its maintenance in power. The politically apathetic citizen only technically chooses who will represent him and his interests, however, it's about deciding which group, among the dominant social class, will have political power and will remain privileged in the oppressive structure.

3 GLOBALIZATION AND DEMOCRACY

The liberal democratic formula resists despite notable global changes, which pose new challenges for civil society, which implies greater demands in the relation with the State and the democratic political regime. In this perspective, liberal democracy and its social institutions remain and adapt to changes, without, however, changing the structure on which it rests, "because the bourgeois class puts itself as a moving organism, capable of absorb the whole society, assimilating it culturally and economically" (our translation into english) (GRAMSCI, 2007, p. 271).

One of the phenomena that has resulted in more complex implications since the 1990s is the globalization, which imposes challenges for regimes, as it demands a repositioning of the State in a broader field of power and a reconfiguration of the work/function of States. This broader field of power is partly constituted by the formation of a 'new private institutional order', linked to the global economy (SASSEN, 2010, p. 31).

The post-globalization policy requires renewal, because the molds of classic democratic institutions aren't sufficient to represent the citizen who demands change, as a political subject. It's observed that social life was also affected by this process of the intensification of social relations on a world scale, which link distant locations in such a way that "local

events are modeled by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (our translation into english) (GIDDENS, 1991, p. 69).

According to Anthony Giddens, globalization constitutes in a dialectical process because such local events can "move in an opposite direction to the very distant relations that mold them" (our translation into english) (GIDDENS, 1991, p. 70). That said, the changes that occurred in the local sphere become as significant for globalization as the lateral expansion of social connections across time and space, as there are greater chances that local transformation will generate effects on a global scale.

In this sense, there is the creation of technological innovations that increase the reach of the 'means of communication'; the Internet made possible to expand the public sphere, as it allows real-time communication and increases the possibility of reaching a certain message. It also constitutes an obstacle to media control by governmental regimes, that is, of matters widely publicized and consumed 'for and by the' population, since the web allows "individuals to post, for a minimal cost, messages and images that can be seen instantly by global audiences " (our translation into english) (LUPIA *apud* HINDMAN, 2009, p. 316).

This characteristic of the globalization process is relevant to the understanding of social movements that have worldwide repercussions from the internet, not limited to generating consequences only at the local level, since an event can have a global impact. In this way, an era is inaugurated in which there is a greater possibility of greater understanding about hegemony, by enabling citizens to use it as a means to express their dissatisfactions and to connect globally with other citizens who share their ideas. In this sense, the internet shows itself as a multifunctional tool, since users "are no longer empty recipients, but journalists, commentators and organizers" (our translation into english) (DIAMOND, 2012, p. 5). Therefore, since 2007, approximately, social networks were developed.

4 THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

From the advent of the internet, collective spaces are created for the transmission of ideas, in which the user is allowed to be part of a virtual community. According to the regulations made by the social network itself regarding users, everyone can create a profile and express themselves on different subjects. Soon, different social groups would contact each other through the promotion of diverse debates, which can be generated from simple events. As an example, we can mention the dissemination of a video that raises questions about structural racism, by demonstrating police brutality in relation to the black community. The importance of discourse in cultural and social domains in networks is emphasized, because, in contemporary society, production is also based on social relations, symbols, identities and individual needs (MELUCCI, 1996, p. 99).

Thus, there is a possibility of starting an online debate about oppression, and, consequently, of a political mobilization around such social problem, with the focus of promoting change. However, the crucial difference between 'manifesting online' and 'effectively making an impact' must be considered, as this consequence depends on the reach of online publications.

It's a question related to the identification of readers with what is being said and propagated there, that is: the ideas contained in the characters exposed in some social network. It's, therefore, a different way of mobilization, and it becomes possible to bring together people who belong to the same social group to fight for changes that will be beneficial to them. This union can become a social movement, "when such groups merge, that is, when they come together and carry out mobilizations" (our translation into english) (VIANA, 2018, p. 127).

It's also possible to expand the critical thought, as it's possible to share digital documents that contribute to expanding access to knowledge. It's worth mentioning that the access to information in the online environment isn't enough as a political action, as it's necessary to generate concrete effects. It's possible to identify the following example: during protests against the Iranian government in 2009, which, although they arose through online mobilization, didn't prevent human rights violations from occurring; the technology hasn't prevented the torture and execution of many protestants (DIAMOND, 2009, p. 14).

In this sense, it's observed that the mobilization is a central piece to reach a collective objective of great proportions, although instantaneous. It's observed that a series of events isn't necessary to provoke the existence of the questioning movements; there is mobilization because the group of citizens who want to change certain characteristics concerning the government has the/a motivation to do so. However, the results of these may be insufficient, if there is no essential element to promote the continuation of the mobilization until it's victorious in its struggle against the *status quo*, the politicization.

In any case, it remains undeniable that Manjoo (2016) is absolutely correct when he affirms that Social Media has become an increasingly powerful cultural and political force, to the point that its effects begin to alter the course of global events.

Larry Diamond (2012) goes so far as to include Social Media in what he calls "liberation technologies" in the face of the empowerment that they would give to citizens and civil society to facilitate independent communication, expose opinions, mobilize protests, monitor elections, oversee the government and other ways of achieving freedom. An important sample of such liberation movements can be found in the "Green Revolution" in Iran, in the "Arab Spring" in the Middle East and North Africa, and in Brazil, in the mobilization in favor of the half-way, and demonstrate that, in fact, *NTIC´s* enjoy significant potential to reduce the communication gap between insiders and outsiders. These are examples in the sense of how the 'manifestations' motivated by Social Media can have some level of politicization.

Friedman (2014), for his part, came to imagine that the democratization and diffusion of the revolution and universalization of new technologies, which went from the computers of the Elites to the Smartphones of the people, would give rise to a new global political force, bigger and more important than the "Davos Men". In this sense, it should be clarified that the expression "Davos Men" was coined by Huntington (2004) to identify a global "superclass", emerging from the Davos World Economic Forum, a cosmopolitan and transnational elite, formed by high technology, finance, multinationals, academics and NGOs and who had "little need for national loyalty" and more in common with each other than their fellow citizens.

Well, this greater and more important force than the "Men of Davos", Friedman (2014) called "Square People". Such 'people in the square' would represent a diversity of policies

and would demand a new type of social contract. They would fight to have their voice heard more and more. They would also fight for better schools, roads and a better 'Rule of Law' (*Estado de Direito*). They would demand for the possibility of a better future and for to have their voices amplified.

5 POLITICATION AS A CONTEST OF HEGEMONY

It's observed that social insurgencies are intrinsically related to complex processes, which directly influence the achievement of results of a certain social movement and whether the objectives achieved will be short, medium or long term. That is, the organization of a social movement, even if it starts online, must go through a process of politicization, which implies understanding the power relations existing in society. Furthermore, politicization doesn't happen instantly; on the contrary, it's developed in a complex way, wich the scope needs to be gradually expanded, from theory to practice, in a dialectical process of praxis. This concept was further developed by Gramsci, from the Marxist historical-dialectical materialist analysis.

In this way, it's about the unification of practical and theoretical consciousness, being "a policy that is also philosophy, and a philosophy that is also political" (our translation into english) (GRAMSCI, 2000, p. 351). It's argued that the process of the philosophy of praxis must be understood as the way in which social classes without privileges build a new hegemony, from the deposition of the domination of the classes responsible for social inequalities.

For that, it's necessary to understand the historical subject. Thus, an analysis of the social subject is proposed as an agent that has the ability to promote his emancipation from awareness, therefore being "a historical creation and not of nature" (our translation into english) (MICHELIS, 2017, p. 58). Gramsci reinvents the category of materialism, understanding it as a condition for articulating the questioning of the *status quo*. Thus, the philosophy of praxis isn't a synonym, but an "interpretation of historical materialism as an independent and original philosophy" (our translation into english) (LIGUORI, 2017, p. 593).

In the process of emancipation, praxis becomes fundamental for changing paradigms. It's based on the understanding that, in a society whose hegemony is bourgeois, the class conflict exists and is assimilated by hegemonic institutions. That is, the dominant groups create a kind of common sense whose main function is to promote the demobilization of popular struggles.

It's noted that such influence by the dominant classes isn't violent, but reductionist, because it places popular manifestations on a level of mere corporate interest. Therefore, it's a way to reinforce the bourgeois hegemony, since the reinforcement of common sense has the objective of combating possible counter-hegemonic discourses, that is, the State creates, preventively, the adequate public opinion, that is, it organizes and centralizes certain elements of civil society (GRAMSCI, 2002 *apud* SIMIONATTO, 2009, p. 43).

The notion of common sense is essential to understand how the philosophy of praxis will be emancipatory, that is, so that the subordinate classes have the possibility to "leave

the economic-corporate phase to rise to the phase of political-intellectual hegemony in civil society and become dominant in political society" (GRAMSCI, 2002 *apud* SIMIONATTO, 2009, p. 43). Thus, it's necessary to promote a new way of thinking about social issues in addition to conflicts of interest between social groups that must be resolved within the institutions. For Gramsci, the change in hegemonic discourse also develops in the scope of discourse, that is, the consensus that exists in society. In this sense, it's essential to ensure that the subordinate classes have "a hegemonic activity even before going to power" (our translation into english) (GRAMSCI, 2006, p. 63).

For that, there is the importance of praxis, which offers the necessary means "to overcome common sense and make the subordinate classes capable of producing a counter-hege-mony" (SIMIONATTO, 2009, p. 43). It's worth emphasizing that Gramsci doesn't understand philosophy as coming from bourgeois intellectual practice, but as a reflection about ethics and politics that can be done by everyone; therefore, popular sovereignty is sought through autonomy and liberation from the existing oppressive paradigm. Thus, praxis emanates from subordinate social groups that encompass not only workers in the factory environment, but that "extend to the social reality of marginalized regions" (SEMERARO, 2014, p. 139) (our translations into english).

It's possible to compare the participants of social movements driven or created by the intermediary of social networks with the populist phase of praxis, according to the description of "a long process, with actions and reactions, sets and separations and the growth of groups" (our translation into english) (GRAMSCI, 2000, p. 351). However, there is a need for awareness on praxis. In this sense, theoretical knowledge is fundamental. It is noteworthy that, even though social networks have the power to bring together people under the same ideal, allied to the dissemination of information, guaranteeing what the future of such social insurgencies will be becomes an arduous task since the motivation of the people involved in such manifestations it can change.

In this perspective, it's possible to observe that, although there is action, that is, the practice of insurgency against the system, it's meticulously dismantled in the same mean-time by which it was initiated. Therefore, even though these are effective as a means of sum-moning citizens to political action, there is also a disadvantage in this area, that is, in the post-manifestation political processes. Here, we cannot fail to recall the correct and precise observation of Krastev (2018) in the sense that the new authoritarians ended up being the biggest beneficiaries of the wave of protests of the last decade, having also contributed to the declining influence of NGOs as an agent of social and political change.

That said, it's important to highlight the possibility that the media reinforce the hegemo-nic discourse, as a strategy of degenerating the discourse of the questioning groups of order, in order to maintain public opinion based on the consensus existing in domination relations, because "there is a struggle for the monopoly of public opinion bodies: newspapers, parties, parliament, so that only one force shapes opinion and, therefore, national public will, disag-gregating those who disagree in an individual and inorganic dust cloud" (our translation into english) (GRAMSCI, 2002 *apud* SIMIONATTO, 2009, p. 41).

As an example, it can be pointed out the discourses proliferated in the networks that are assumed to be ideologically neutral. This neutrality isn't beneficial, as it reduces the signifi-cance of the politicization process, by associating it with the mere identification with political

parties or prominent figures in the political context. Therefore, the act of politicizing cannot be considered interesting for social groups indignant with oppression, as it implies an understanding of the need for praxis as a form of fight against oppression.

In this perspective, the demonstration would acquire "knowledge of the world as it transforms it" (our translation into english) (GRAMSCI, 2002 *apud* SIMIONATTO, 2009, p. 43). Thus, it can be said that the social groups involved in a given protest would proceed towards a new phase in the praxis process, with the aim of changing the reality in which they live from the recreation of social facts and the elaboration of a new vision of the world.

However, from the moment that politicization is placed in the guise of choice among the political spectrum, individuals can reject it, as the process becomes framed in common sense. In this way, the process of depoliticization proceeds, that is, the dismantling of the political conscience that is at the origin of the social insurgency. In turn, the proper notion of praxis can be identified as negative, in the sense of "disturbance of order", whose effects will not be relevant in the long term.

About the rapid demobilization of global movements organized by Social Media, Friedman (2014) rightly reminds us that behind several massive manifestations on the streets, especially those that occurred in the last century, a well-founded and permanent organization rarely can be found, that is able to follow the demands of the protesters and carry out the complex political work, face to face and without grace that produces real changes in the government.

Along the same lines, Zeynep's lessons (2014, apud Friedman, 2014), who rightly clarifies that before the Internet, the tedious organizational work required to circumvent censorship or organize a protest also helped to create infrastructure for decision-making and strategies to sustain the movement, given that the current technological state allows such movements to overcome this stage, often at their own expense.

And this infrastructure is relevant to give strength and long life to counter-hegemonic movementsAnd this is all the more true when we are faced with Brumberg's precise observation (apud Friedman, 2014), in the sense that the most successful 'people in the square' in the Arab world, who forged a whole new constitution, would be in Tunisia , which would be the Arab country with the strongest civil society institutions - especially a powerful union federation, as well as business associations, human rights and lawyers.

But that's not all! The movements motivated by Social Media have another important opponent to prevent or hinder its effective politicization: the spectacularization. In this sense, political articulation isn't understood as relevant at first moment, which puts the movements, as already seen, as susceptible to the dismantling of counter-hegemonic discourse. Examples of spectacularization can be seen in several world insurgencies, such as the 'Occupy movement', which has achieved great repercussions. In this way, it's a superficial understanding, which underestimates the potential for change of the manifestations; it's translated into "doing politics on the streets", which acts as a substitute for the important task of political organization; "the manifestation is seen as both, a political beginning and an end, when, in fact, it's a means" (our translation into english) (FERNANDES, 2019, p. 72).

On the other hand, for the depoliticization discourse, the insurgency constitutes as a threat to the existing peace in the system, which was structured with the fulcrum of being a

"form of government characterized by a set of rules that allow the change of governments without the need to use violence" (our translation into english) (BOBBIO, 1996, p. 233). The narrative according to which elections would promote social change in a safe manner is reinforced, unlike political action. Political apathy is understood as positive, as it doesn't represent a concrete threat to the system.

When depoliticization occurs, there is a high probability that social movements will not be able to achieve the ends for which they were created, consequently, without promoting effective changes, except for a brief period of time in which the unrest against the system prevailed and it became a driver for the practical aspect of praxis, therefore, the action. The result consists of a group of individuals who, although they may have similar ideas about a certain fact, they aren't able to organize themselves to question it, limiting themselves to social networks to express their discontent. However, it doesn't mean that the result of cyber social movements is unique or that depoliticization is their fate.

6 CONSEQUENCES OF DEPOLITIZATION: THE POST-POLITICS

One of the possible results of such long-term manifestations, when the groups involved don't go through the process of politicization, is the post-politics, a concept defined by Zizek (ZIZEK, 2008 *apud* FERNANDES, 2019, p.217), when referring to the new ways of doing politics from the 1990s. In this way, post-politics is a depoliticization that doesn't aim to question the current social structures, but to reaffirm knowledge from common sense as a post-ideology, that is, to overcome existing ideologies, since "the conflict of global ideological views embodied in different parties that compete for power is replaced by the collaboration of enlightened technocrats and liberal multiculturalists" (ZIZEK, 2008 *apud* FERNANDES, 2019, p.217).

According to the post-political discourse, reflection on issues directly related to 'doing politics' isn't necessary, as this constitutes a process of negotiating interests, through which it's possible to reach a consensus; this is an important concept to understand this type of depoliticization that is vehemently opposed to extremism. This position isn't reasonable if we consider that the concept of radicalism in a post-political discourse is based on the idea of opposition. Therefore, anyone who fights against the oppressive structure and opposes exploitative relations and seeks its end from praxis, can be considered as "extremist".

However, this narrative has the facility to delegitimize political action and the organization derived from it, in order to weaken the fight against the hegemonic system. It's noteworthy that post-political discourses can be used for both, on the ideological positions on the right and on the left, and are adapted to serve the interests of those who propose to reproduce it selectively, because "it offers conflict management artifacts along the way of consent that are useful, even to those who build themselves in ultrapolitics" (our translation into english) (FERNANDES, 2019, p. 246). In this way, they offer possibilities for the emergence of conservative figures on the political scene. Therefore, post-politics isn't so beneficial for those who wish to fight against the status quo, as for those who wish to maintain the system.

Since post-politics rejects political antagonism, it's proposed that consent and negotiation are the alternative to eliminate persistent contradictions in society. For that, it uses technocratic responses, with the fulcrum of integrating scientific basis to the reproduction of common sense and presenting solutions with a new appearance, thus being "a fantasy of a policy without politics" (our translation into english) (DEAN, 2013 *apud* FERNANDES, 2019, p. 246)

In this sense, one of the defining characteristics of post-political discourse is the presumed neutrality. An example is the "neither left nor right" discourse, widely disseminated online by prominent current political figures who present as renewal, and who consider that the solutions they propose for democratic problems appear to overcome the natural conflict between left and right. In this way, the ideological spectra are seen in a similar way to the Horseshoe Theory (*"Teoria da Ferradura"*), which sees the left and the right as equal in their extreme forms, when, in truth, they are ideologies diametrically different from each other.

In this meantime, social networks reveal their usefulness to promote the massive diffusion of post-political thoughts, built according to the interests of those who wrote them, aiming to reach a certain class, which finds itself agreeing with a common sense discourse, because it's naturalized.

The power of social networks is, in this way, used to weaken the social manifestations whose origin was also from these same means. Even the agenda related to human rights of a social character is considered post-ideological, that is, as a question of common sense. Thus, this narrative ignores the origins of the recognition of the set of human rights, constantly relegated to a level of inferiority in relation to the rights of the first order, namely, fundamental freedoms, since "any possibility that is beyond, in the essence of thought radical and basic, is excluded" (our translation into english) (FERNANDES, 2019, p. 220).

7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It's undeniable that the problem of political representation in the post-globalization world is an urgent issue to be developed by political science, however, it's necessary to look beyond the immediate and instant character of social networks, if there is an objective to change structures social. It has been proven, by the awakening of manifestations around the world, that the liberal model of democracy isn't sustainable in a world whose transformations are increasingly vertiginous.

However, the occupation of the streets as a space for political manifestation isn't enough as political representation, since it isn't an end in itself, but a means to propose a redefinition of the concept of democracy beyond the liberal modelIn this sense, Gramscian reflections are essential for understanding the need for praxis as a driving force for political change. The overcoming of the liberal-bourgeois hegemony demands the construction of a new hegemony, based on the overcoming of the relations of domination and the oppression of the subaltern classes.

In this sense, although social networks can contribute to social change, and indeed they can, these can also be means to reinforce the existing structure, based on the post-political discourse, as, unfortunately, it has been occurring, which sees theory coupled with practice as a radicalism, when, in fact, it's a way of understanding liberal hegemony and its objective of maintaining political apathy and citizen participation in decisions just by choosing representatives within the own elites.

In short, it's essential to fight against the post-politics for the development of praxis, based on the negation of the supposedly neutral discourse, which, in fact, is in favor of hegemonic structures. To this end, it's necessary to re-signify the role of social networks in this area, given its potential to promote changes and encourage the organization of citizens to call for new political horizons. Thus, it's urgent to think about ways of politicizing the new social manifestations, as well as ways to develop the critical awareness of interconnected citizens, whose power of mobilization has already been felt.

Therefore, it's imperative to agree with Friedman (2014) who warns that despite the capture of the speech and praxis of the "people of the square" by the hegemonic forces, it's possible to assume that without such people, no major change will be possible, especially in certain countries, so social media has that important potential to reach, move and keep them moving.

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