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THE MEDIA AS A POLITICAL ACTOR: the 2013 and 2015 Brazilian demonstrations in the Folha de S. Paulo

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Abstract

This article is the result of a research entitled Digital Riots, Social Network Insurgencies against the School Without Political Party project. Our study analyzes two spaces of resistance in social networks contrary to the School Without Political Party Project, which are: School without Gag and Teachers against the School Without Political Party. The problematic originates from the questions of how collective action is organized in social networks to protest the School Without Political Party project and how these spaces are consolidated as fields of political debate. We also map the MBL collective to understand the political bias of the posts and through the concepts of Bubble, Post-Truth and Totalitarianism to go beyond binary and demystify the political interests of the project and its supporters.

Keywords

School Without Political Party; School without Gag; Teachers against the School Without Political Party; Political debate; Social networks.

The connected world

This study focuses on social insurgency movements that spread across social networks and give rise to what we call digital riots - an appropriation of the term used by Edward Thompson (1998) to portray the rebellions of the popular classes of England in the eighteenth century, when the rising price of wheat threatened the consumption of bread by the popular classes and gave rise to insurgent movements and rebellions, the well-known riots. For Thompson, such movements were not solely caused by the economic factor, but social factors were also preponderant, since the habit and custom of bread consumption were interrupted. Drawing a parallel with the present day, analyzing the demonstrations held on Facebook against the School Without Political Party Project, what would be the threatened bread of teachers? Our hypothesis is that teacher autonomy and the freedom to teach and learn are under threat. As a clipping of the social movements that are organized on Facebook, we chose the collectives School without Gag and Teachers against School Without Political Party bearing in mind the organized dynamics of the subjects who participate in them and the political content of their posts.

As a research problem, we question how collective action is organized in social networks to protest the School Without Political Party project and how these spaces consolidate themselves as fields of political debate. Aiming to analyze the organization of social networks as spaces of expression; to verify the behavior and posts of users on both Facebook pages; to analyze their political motivations and their conceptions about the role of the school; to investigate the dynamics of these posts and the popular appeal they achieve, determined by interaction and sharing.

In order to catalog the daily postings of both groups studied in the period between June 30, 2016 and March 13, 2019, we used virtual ethnography. The term virtual ethnography was popularized by English researcher Christine Hine in a book of the same name written in 2000. Hine initially proposed a division between the real and the virtual. The purpose of this approach was to delimit the field of ethnographic research on the Internet. This thought was later updated by the author herself, who puts the Internet as a cultural artifact with multiple meanings, without distinguishing between online and offline plans.

The performance of ethnographic works in digital environments raises a discussion about the role of the searcher, his/her degree of involvement with the object and its ethical implications: the silent (lurker) and the participant (insider), (Fragoso; Recuero; Amaral, 2011, p.193). We opted for the lurker profile, which is the searcher who enters email lists, forums, online communities etc. only as an observer, without active participation.

To understand the engagement between the subjects and the dynamics of the interactions that unite them, we were anchored in the concept of comprehensive interpretative frameworks, from the perspective of confrontation politics (Tarrow, 2009). Our theoretical and methodological foundation is also based on the Translation procedure (Santos, 2010), studies on social movements in the internet age (Castells, 2013), including theoretical concepts such as Post-truth (D'ancona, 2018), Bubbles (Pariser, 2012) and the context of Totalitarianism (Arendt, 1989).

The origin of the School Without Political Party project

The idea of founding the movement arose in 2004, with the initiative of the São Paulo State Attorney Miguel Nagib, coordinator and founder of the program. In an interview with *El País*¹ newspaper, Miguel Nagib says that in 2003 his daughter came home commenting that the history teacher had compared Che Guevara to St. Francis of Assisi. The analogy would have been to exemplify people who

¹ Retrieved in 01 June 2018 from: http://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2016/06/23/politica/1466654550_367696.html

gave up everything they had for an ideology, the first for a political ideology, the second for a religious one. After this episode, Nagib wrote an open letter to the teacher, printed 300 copies and distributed it in his daughter's school parking lot. The reception was not positive. He found no support from other parents and even a mobilization in support of the teacher was held. Disagreeing, he founded in 2004 the School Without Political Party program.

The romanticized version of the early movement ignores other political and ideological aspects. Nagib was a member of the Liberal Institute of Brasília, which has the support of large economic groups to defend and spread neoliberal values. An article produced by Fernanda Moura, for the magazine *Ciência Hoje* (2019), points out that it was in this space that Nagib encountered the thesis of Nelson Lehmann da Silva and Olavo de Carvalho, ideologues of the conception of indoctrination in Brazilian education.

It was also at the Liberal Institute that he met the sociologist Bráulio Porto de Matos, deputy coordinator of the School Without Political Party (ESP) movement. Nagib also acted as a writer for the Millenium Institute², which advocates and works on neoliberal ideals. For many years, the program was not very expressive. The movement reached greater projection in the beginning of 2014, with the presidential campaign that polarized society in right and left - or drumstick and mortadella - terms popularized in social networks. The opponents of the government Dilma Rouseff blamed the then president's party for the alleged *communist-homosexual* indoctrination (Moura, 2016).

In the late 2015 and the first half of 2016, the movement erupted. In the classroom, teachers who denounced the breakdown of the democratic order from President Dilma's impeachment were indoctrinators who abused their freedom to teach. The program gained the reinforcement of other extreme right currents such as the Free Brazil Movement (MBL).

Picture 1 - Print screen of the post of the School Without Political Party Facebook page, April 16, 2017



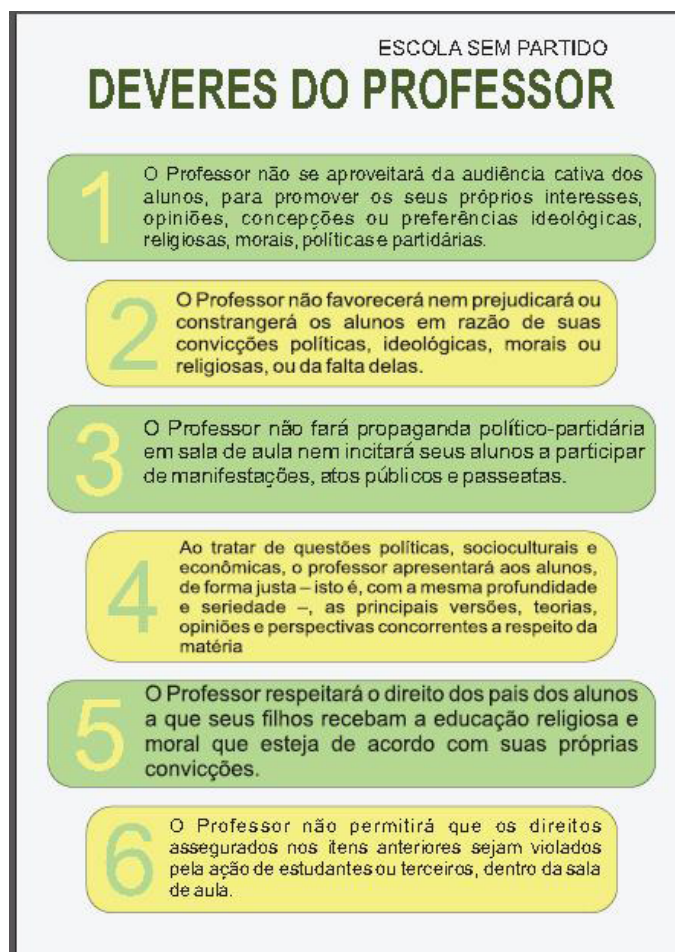
Source: School Without Political Party Facebook Page. Accessed on May 1, 2017

² The Millenium Institute (Imil) calls itself a non-profit organization with no political party affiliation based in Rio de Janeiro. Formed by intellectuals and entrepreneurs, the think tank promotes values and principles that guarantee a free society, such as individual freedom, property rights, market economy, representative democracy, rule of law and institutional limits to government action. Retrieved in 10 March 2019 from: <https://www.institutomillennium.org.br/institucional/quem-somos/>.

The researcher Fernando Penna (2016) points out the connection of the School Without Political Party program with Rio de Janeiro, because it was in the state capital that the first bills related to the program were launched. On May 3, 2014, State Representative Flavio Bolsonaro introduced Bill No. 2974/2014, which established, within the scope of state education in Rio, the School Without Political Party program. The same project, with few changes, was presented at the municipal level by Councilor Carlos Bolsonaro on June 3, 2014. Available on the program website (www.escolasempartido.org), the projects were copied and adapted to other states and regions.

One of the movement's most popular publications is this banner that lists the teacher's six duties:

Picture 2 - Print Screen of banner posted on the School Without Political Party website



Source: School Without Political Party Site. Accessed on August 19, 2017

Supporters of the School Without Political Party Project argue that this poster should be set in the classroom so that all students are aware of “their rights”. Looking at the six points, we observe that the content restricts teachers’ freedom of speech and creates a distorted picture of the teacher-student relationship. It is as if the teacher, as he/she enters the classroom, embodies the figure of a manipulative villain who will take advantage of his students’ audience to lobotomize them in a kind of brainwashing.

In an article published on the website of the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education (Anped), inserted in the collection *Resistências* (2016), Pedro Angelo Pagni (UNESP), Alexandre Filordi de Carvalho (UNIFESP) and Silvio Gallo (UNICAMP) analyze that The School Without Political Party program seriously threatens the achievements of the civil rights and the struggles of movements for gender equality, the discussion of ethnic and racial issues, and the differences in sexual

orientation, the disabled and the inclusion of citizens who live in extreme poverty as part of the country's democratization process.

Social Control Bubbles

To understand how an idea spreads across social networks, reaching a growing audience, it is necessary to understand the tools of social control. It is in this context that we come across the bubbles. The Filter Bubble theory was developed by US activist Eli Pariser. Santaella (2018) recalls that Pariser wrote his bestselling *Filter Bubble* in 2011, five years before two milestone events in the post-truth era: the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit³ in the United Kingdom. In Brazil, the first edition was published in 2012, with the title *O Filtro Invisível* (*The Invisible Filter*). The researcher explains that bubbles are made up of people who have the same worldview, similar values and the same sense of humor. He emphasizes that sources for custom filter generation include the user's search history, the outcome of their choices, their interaction with service providers, their demonstrated interests in products and services. Nothing is haphazard, everything that is posted and shared on social networks⁴ is also engulfed by user profile capture algorithms.

In the book *Connected Democracy - The Internet as a tool for democratic political engagement* (2014), Eduardo Magrani reinforces Santaella's thinking and explains that the bubble theory gathers a set of data generated by algorithmic mechanisms used to impersonate network content:

The Internet would be turning into a space where we are shown what we think is of interest to us, but it is hidden from us what we want or eventually we need to see. Thus, it can be said that the filter bubble and its detrimentally paternalistic character may imply restrictions on fundamental rights and guarantees, the autonomy of individuals and freedom of expression, being generally detrimental to the debate in the connected public sphere. However, we know that filtering has emerged as a necessity and is often considered welcome, generating a great convenience to the user who quickly and effectively finds, in most cases, the information or any other content they want to access (Magrani, 2014, p.120).

For Magrani, the internet has the potential to become a space for democratization, debate, presentation of new ideas and changes of perspective. However, some observations need to occur, such as the bursting of the bubble. The control of the bubbles is critical to the examination of the fake news. In an essay on fake news, Sérgio Branco (2017) classifies this silent enclosure as a mixture of technological choice and digital illiteracy that limits diversity. Once in the bubble, users continue to receive content posted indefinitely by those friends and acquaintances with whom they already have ideological affinity. It is a comfort zone without conflict and space for the contradictory. There is still the capitalist aspect, especially in the case of institutional pages. The content of these pages is displayed to a limited number of followers, to expand this bubble, you need to pay.

For Sérgio Branco, there is no platform in which freedom of speech had such a great impact as on social networks. In other media such as newspapers and magazines, there is always an editor responsible for filtering content, that does not occur in social networks, where the will and urgency of the user prevails.

As it turns out, it is from users' choices, mixed with unclear algorithmic

3 The withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (EU) is nicknamed Brexit, resulting from the combination of the English words Britain and exit. On 23 June 2016, a referendum vote was approved, which approved the UK's departure from the European Union. Retrieved in 18 March 2019 from Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EuropeanUnited_United_United_United_United_.

4 In her doctoral dissertation, Raquel Recuero (2006) explains that social networks on the Internet are the networks of actors formed by computer-mediated social interaction and explains that the study of social networks on the Internet focuses on the problem of how social structures emerge, which they are their types, how they are composed through computer-mediated communication, and how these interactions are capable of generating information flows and social exchanges that impact these structures.

rules, that the democratic debate finds its greatest obstacles to consolidation in the great *ágora* that could be the internet. Since the greater effort seems to be almost always to reinforce one's own arguments rather than to understand others' arguments, most often whenever the bubble can potentially be punctured by an outsider, we came across personal attacks, false or distorted information, cynicism, mockery and all manner of linguistic manipulation. A friendly dialogue is quite rare (Branco, 2017, p. 57).

In the book *Como Sair das Bolhas* (2018), Pollyana Ferrari points out that the presence of information mediated by a mobile screen is no longer for just a privileged few, it is present in the lives of many in the global population. The excess of information available on the social networks prevents users from reading carefully all the news, reflecting on its content, searching for alternative sources, verifying the data and giving balanced opinions. Within these bubbles fake news proliferates rapidly.

Support to the School Without Political Party Project on social networks

Adherence to the School Without Political Party project, which at first seemed like a segmented current, was taking its place in political agendas across the country, passing through city councils, legislative assemblies, the federal chamber, and the senate. The rise of the parliamentary evangelical front, a strong supporter of the project, may explain its advance in the political environment. The increasing number of evangelicals in Brazil also explains the greater scope of this discourse. According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in 2000, Brazil had about 26.2 million people who claimed to be evangelicals, which represented 15.4% of the population. In 2010, this number jumped to 42.3 million, which is equivalent to 22.2% of Brazilians. On October 19, 2016, an article published by the newspaper *Estadão*, whose link⁵ is available in the community School without Gag, pointed out that the Parliamentary Evangelical Front would lead discussions about the School Without Political Party within the Federal Chamber.

Topics like sex education, politics, and religions of African origin are seeing as taboos, a way that teachers supposedly use to coerce students into a kind of captive alienation. Students are now encouraged to report teachers, including through recordings of the classroom. Among the articles proposed in the School Without Political Party bills and similar ones, the article on combating the practice of political and ideological indoctrination is common:

Article 3. The practice of political and ideological indoctrination, as well as the dissemination of contents or the performance of activities that may conflict with the religious or moral convictions of parents or guardians of students (PL 867/2015).

The first bill regarding the School Without Political Party was approved in 2016 in the state of Alagoas, under the name of *Escola Livre* (Free School). Alagoas law prohibited political and ideological indoctrination in state schools, safeguarding parents the right of their minor children to receive moral education free of political, religious or ideological indoctrination. The law was suspended in March 2017 by the rapporteur minister Luís Roberto Barroso of the Supreme Federal Court (STF). The Supreme Court was expected to review the Direct Unconstitutionality Action (ADI) in 2018, which has not yet occurred.

Picture 3 - Print Screen of a post held on March 22, 2017 in the Escola sem Mordaga (School without Gag)/Facebook community

⁵ Retrieved in 01 June 2018 from: <https://educacao.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,bancada-evangelica-vai-command-discussao-super-school-with-party.10000083205>.



Source: School Without Gag Facebook Page. Accessed on April 30, 2017

In this confrontation between different ideological currents, conflicts emerge directly linked to the field of education - such as the advancement of militarized schools and discussions about home schooling. It is in this context that new social actors and bubbles such as the Free Brazil Movement (MBL) emerge, which dominate the tools of social networks to disseminate conservative ideas and establish itself as the renewal, the solution to the old practices of making politics. This is the old with new guise.

Fascism dressed up as the new Free Brazil Movement

The Free Brazil Movement has more than 3 million likes on Facebook. The page was created on November 1, 2014, and takes the position of great digital influencer of the right wing. The collective is called “an entity that aims to mobilize citizens in favor of a freer, fairer and more prosperous society”⁶. A report in the *Le Monde Diplomatique Brasil*⁷ recovers the origin of the MBL, in São Paulo, municipality of Vinhedo, based on the predecessor movement Renova Vinhedo, a liberal militancy group.

Barcelos (2017) reports that just six months after the founding of Renova Vinhedo, MBL's predecessor, its members invested in an electoral campaign, with the support of state deputy candidate Paulo Batista (PRP), famous for the motto *privatizing ray*⁸ and his videos with appeal to humor. The campaign did not have the expected electoral success, but cultivated among the members the seed of what they call the aesthetic of joke:

For them, ‘the use of the internet as a tool was an assumption’. Therefore, it was necessary to create a ‘joke aesthetic’, coming from internet forums and ‘chans’

6 Retrieved in 20 March 2019 from: https://www.facebook.com/pg/mblivre/about/?ref=page_internal.

7 Retrieved in 20 March 2019 from: <https://diplomatique.org.br/o-conservadorismo-moral-como-reinvencao-da-marca-mbl-2/>.

8 The content can be viewed on YouTube. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htD7wM-jUuhI>. Accessed on: March 20, 2019.

[anonymous forums], blending an anarchic and iconoclastic stance with rough and coarse montages and deep references to pop culture. As the *Renova Vinhedo* concludes, 'to mock the system is to implode it with a smile' (Barcelos, 2017).

If the *Renova Vinhedo* was the father of MBL, the mother emerged from the action of American think tanks⁹, which are institutions that form liberal thought through interest groups. According to Barcelos (2017), the different organizations that perform these actions are under the umbrella of the Atlas Network, based in the United States. Still under the influence of foreign groups, it was created in 2012 the Students for Freedom (EPL) in Brazil, which exerted great influence on the origin of the MBL, by the side of Atlas.

It is in this scenario that the protests of June 2013, by the *Passe Livre* (Free Fare), highlighted the popular dissatisfaction. EPL members could not participate in the 2013 protests due to the receipt of funds from the Think Tanks, which prevented them from developing political activities. The solution was to create a brand that would dialogue with the patriotism of part of the population, through the slogan *Brasil Livre* (Free Brazil). Among the exponents of the Students for Freedom group, responsible for the political formation of the MBL members, there is the current deputy Kim Kataguirí, a 23-year-old who is regarded as the leader of the MBL.

The great height of the MBL was in 2016, when they took to the streets demanding for the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff. The movement was widely publicized by the media, especially through TV Globo, as well as entities such as FIESP (Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo), which had the famous duck as a symbol of the protests. The philosopher Marcia Tiburi, in her book *Como Conversar com um Fascista* (How to Talk to a Fascist) (2015) attributes to political illiteracy the emergence and rise of collectives such as the MBL:

What drives an individual to meet in a collective without thinking critically about the causes and consequences of his/her actions sets up what we call political illiteracy. But in the case of the young characters that emerge today, leaders of the fascistoid Free Brazil Movement, for example, are at stake in the most perverse form of political illiteracy. The ones who were manipulated from an early age and had no chance to think self-critically because their formation was, in the political sense, 'de-formation', the interruption of the ability to think, reflect and discern (Tiburi, 2015, p. 50).

The MBL website provides a seven-page document¹⁰ that brings together MBL's proposals for Brazil in various areas. The Education area opens this document, and contains the following proposals:

- Implementation of the voucher system for primary and secondary education, elementary, middle and high school, and higher education, with equal value for all students of each level. Separate complement for students with disabilities.
- Legalization of homeschooling.
- Presentation of the School without Political Party bill in state and municipal legislatures.
- Develop a national policy seeking to reduce the number of students per teacher.
- Tax benefits for individuals and businesses that fund education for children and young people from families who cannot afford it. Municipalities and/or states would make the registration of the children.

9 Think tank: laboratory of ideas, strategic office, thought center, or reflection center is an institution or group of investigative and reflective specialists whose function is the intellectual reflection on social policy, political strategy, economics, military, technology or culture. Retrieved in 20 March 2019 from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Think_tank.

10 Retrieved in 20 March 2019 from: <http://mbl.org.br/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/propos-tas-mbl.pdf>.

As bifurcações do tempo:

considerações sobre três figuras temporais no filme Serras da Desordem, de Andrea Tonacci

- Expansion of *Prouni* to high school, elementary and middle, and kindergarten.
- Tax incentive for companies that do technological research in exact and biological sciences.
- Reduction of bureaucracy for patent registration.
- Tax reduction of private schools.
- Militarization of schools in areas of risk, that is, in places where the private sector is unable to act.
- Private management of public schools through Social Organizations and Public-Private Partnerships.
- To promote competition among public schools using metrics such as the PISA exam, partnering with the private sector for awards.
- Reduced bureaucracy in the process of opening schools, courses and the number of vacancies in private educational institutions.
- Encouraging the vocational and technical education and less bureaucracy in hiring interns.
- Facilitate the financing of private enterprises in educational institutions of all levels for scientific production purposes.

Among the proposals in education presented by the MBL, we highlight the support for the School Without Political Party project, one of its main goals, in addition to the militarization of schools, a subject that we will discuss next, from the analysis of the rise of Rightist movements and their links with extremist currents.

The ascension of the right wing and its connection with totalitarianism

The turn of the right wing has been producing what Michael Apple (2003) calls *conservative modernization*, which has altered common sense and transformed material and ideological conditions around teaching. This new power bloc exerts an increasing influence on education:

It combines multiple fractions of capital committed to the commercialized solutions that neoliberals present for educational problems, to neoconservative intellectuals who want a 'return' to a better quality standard and a 'common culture', to populist and authoritarian religious fundamentalists, deeply concerned about secularity and the preservation of their own traditions (Apple, 2003, p.79).

For Matthew D'Ancona (2018, p. 19), we have entered a new phase of political and intellectual combat, in which "orthodoxies and democratic institutions are being shaken at their root by a wave of threatening populism." The current world political scene shows the advance of conservative ideas and actions that rescue models of government and authoritarian regimes, such as totalitarianism and fascism.

In *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1989), Jewish philosopher Hannah Arendt describes the genesis of these movements taking as examples Adolph Hitler's Nazi regime in Germany and the socialist experience with Stalin in Russia. Arendt states that totalitarian regimes, while in power, and totalitarian leaders, while alive, always command and rely on the support of the masses (Arendt, 1989). To obtain this support from the masses and establish such totalitarian regimes, it comes into scene the propaganda of the totalitarian movements, "invariably as frank as a lie," argues Arendt (1989, p.356), noting that totalitarian rulers often

begin their careers by boasting of past crimes and carefully planning their future crimes:

Totalitarian movements aim at and manage to organize the masses - not the classes, as the parties of interests of the national states of the European continent did, nor the citizens with their peculiar opinions about the conduct of public affairs, as do the parties of the Anglo-Saxon countries. All political groups depend on numerical force, but not on the scale of totalitarian movements, which depend on brute force, to the extent that totalitarian regimes seem impossible in countries with a relatively small population, even if other conditions are favorable to them (Arendt, 1989), p. 342).

Thus, the totalitarian governments become viable only where there are large superfluous masses that can be sacrificed. On the other hand, the totalitarian movements are possible where there are masses that, regardless of the reason, developed interest in the political organization. The author justifies that the masses are not united by the consciousness of a common interest and they lack that specific articulation of classes that expresses itself in determined, limited and attainable objectives. For Arendt, the term mass only applies when dealing with people who, simply because of their number, or their indifference, or a mixture of both, cannot fit into an organization based on common interest, whether political party, professional organization or workers union.

There is a frightening resemblance between what Hannah Arendt conceptualized as totalitarian movements and this rise of fundamentalist movements aligned to the extreme right and the danger of the *neutral masses*. The author states that the success of totalitarian movements among the masses meant the end of two illusions of democratic countries in general:

The first was the illusion that most of the people actively participated in the government and every individual sympathized with one party or the other. These movements, on the contrary, demonstrated that the politically neutral and indifferent masses could easily constitute the majority in a country of democratic rule and that, therefore, a democracy could function according to norms that were in fact accepted by only a minority. The second democratic illusion destroyed by the totalitarian movements was that these politically indifferent masses did not matter, that they were neutral, and that they constituted nothing more than a silent backdrop to the nation's political life. Now totalitarian movements showed that democratic government rested in the silent tolerance and approval of the indifferent and disconnected sectors of the people, as well as in the articulated and visible institutions and organizations of the country. Thus, when totalitarian movements invaded Parliament with their contempt for the parliamentary government, they simply seemed contradictory; but in fact they were able to convince the general public that parliamentary majorities were spurious and did not necessarily correspond to the reality of the country, thereby undermining the dignity and confidence of governments in the sovereignty of the majority (Arendt, 1989, p. 246).

The apathy and indifference of the masses to politics can have serious consequences. Applying Arendt's concepts to our object of study, we identified some characteristics of the School Without Political Party project with the totalitarian movements. Mass recruitment and advertising by new digital media platforms, such as social networks, conquer this portion of the population who did not speak up, but identified themselves with the alarmist and menacing tone of WhatsApp's texts, videos, and sharing messages. The School Without Political Party project would then be a totalitarian movement that uses democratic freedoms in order to suppress them.

The School Without Gag community

It is the end of the first semester of 2016. On June 30 of that year, the School Without Gag page made its first post on Facebook, announcing the launch of the National Front against the School Without Political Party project. The launch was scheduled for July 13, 2016, in Rio de Janeiro, having as its location the UFRJ Institute of Philosophy and Social Sciences.

Picture 4 - Print Screen of the first post of the School Without Gag/Facebook page, July 2016



Source: School Without Gag Facebook Page. Accessed on July 12, 2017

The month of July was intense, with many posts on the page. At that time the focus was the launch of the National Front. On July 6, 2016, the page brought information that the state of Alagoas was the first in the country to authorize the *Lei da Mordça* (Gag Law), under the name *Escola Livre* (Free School). To legitimize their fighting flag, the speech of others and reports from newspapers and magazines have been incorporated and appropriated. An example is the July 14, 2016 post, in which the *Caro Amigos* magazine brought a text stating that the School Without Political Party project was more authoritarian than the dictatorship's educational curriculum.

Picture 5 - Print Screen reverberating *Caros Amigos*/Facebook magazine report, July 14, 2016



Source: School Without Political Party Facebook Page. Accessed on July 13, 2017

Also, in July 2016, the federal senate launched a public consultation on bill no. 193/2016, by

Senator Magno Malta. The outcome of the consultation showed that most people were against the implementation of the School Without Political Party program, where 199,873 votes were in favor of the proposal and 210,819 votes were against it. In the School Without Gag Facebook community there was a lot of encouragement for people to vote against the bill. The most frequent post read: “#escolasemmordaca (#schoolwithoutgag) Do not allow the bill ‘School Without Political Party’ to be approved: fight with us against this setback!”

Picture 6 - Print Screen of the public consultation results conducted by the Federal Senate



Source: Site of the Senate, portal E-cidadania (E-citizenship). Accessed on by March 13, 2017.

On July 19, 2016, the *Sala Debate* (Debate Room) TV program, which airs on the channel Canal Futura, promoted a debate about the project. On the one hand the professor of the UFF, Fernando Penna, on the other the founder of the *Escola Sem Partido* (School Without Political Party), the lawyer Miguel Nagib. That same day, tweets were carried out promoting the hashtag #escolasemmordaca (#schoolwithoutgag).

Researching the history of the page posts, we found that one of the most used tools to generate engagement is the publication of memes, which achieve great repercussion and sharing due to its replication character. Regarding the nature of memes, Raquel Recuero (2009) states that a story is never told in the same way and these small variations are generating great changes over time. The selection is the element that causes some memes to get more attention than others, remaining and being copied more, while others are not remembered.

Characterizing memes, Recuero (2009) addresses those of the mimetic type, which despite mutations and recombination, remain with the same structure and are easily referenced as imitations. We have identified the use of this type of meme in posts in July 2016. The publication refers to the famous meme of the TV host Bela Gil, who in her show *Bela Cozinha* (Beautiful Kitchen), featuring on the listings of the cable channel GNT, offers healthy alternatives to food.

Picture 7 - Meme posted on July 20, 2016 in the School without Gag/Facebook community



Source: School Without Gag Facebook Page. Accessed on March 05, 2017

Picture 8 - Meme Parliament Without Pastors, published on July 20, 2016 in School without Gag/ Facebook community



Source: School Without Gag Facebook Page. Accessed on March 15, 2017

Other forms of engagement are commonly associated with the page, such as publishing manifestos generated by digital platforms such as the *Change* - which collects signatures in the form of petitions and online petitions. The purpose of these initiatives is to show popular support by joining people who approve the manifesto, a way to show the legitimacy of their cause. Through search engine on the Change platform we found 31 petitions directly related to the School Without Political Party. The search engine increases the result when we enter other keywords such as School Without Gag, School Without Censorship and School Without Fascism. Besides petitions against the project, there are also fewer manifestos favorable to the project.

Support from external entities is also widely publicized, such as the declaration of unconstitutionality of the project by the Federal Public Prosecutor (MPF), published on July 24, 2016:

Picture 9: Print screen on the positioning of the MPF, published on July 24, 2016, by the School without Gag/Facebook Community



Source: School Without Gag Facebook Page. Accessed on April 05, 2017

In late July, the School without Gag front summoned interested parties to join in the work of articulation, agenda formation, the creation of a YouTube channel, Instagram and Twitter profiles, website, the management of a Facebook fan page and the creation of state fronts. The launch of the YouTube channel¹¹ did not have the expected impact by the organizers. Although the channel is active, only four videos were released, and these had little audience.

In her studies, Raquel Recuero (2006) approaches consistently that one of the characteristics of social movements anchored on the internet is the Cooperation. In researching the history of social movements in the Internet age, Manuel Castells (2013) points out that social networks' sites are spaces of autonomy that go beyond the control of governments and companies that, over time, have exerted a monopoly on Communication. For Castells (2013), insurgency does not start with a program or a political strategy, but by emotional actions. Therefore, the insurgency is a consequence and arises from the movement's internal or external leadership, when it fosters political, ideological, and personal agendas that may or may not relate to the origins and motivations of the movement's participants. However, the trigger for a social movement begins when emotion is transformed into action.

In this sense of cooperation and solidarity, in the months of October and November 2016, the occupation of hundreds of schools in Brazil, with students taking a stand against the high school law reform, was strongly reflected by the dissemination of videos, photos and news. The collective website was launched on November 20, 2016, with the domain www.escolasemmordaca.org.br.

Since then, the most up-to-date news goes back to August 2018. The year 2016 represents the height of the School Without Gag movement. From 2017, the publications have been reduced, to the point that in January 2017 there were only two posts. Until March 2017, the main subject was the repercussions around the School Without Political Party project. From April and May 2017, the posts started to add other political agendas. Tarrow (2009, p.92) argues that the "decline of the militant mass does not mean a decline of the classical social movement" but determines a new cycle of confrontation that is unstable and subject to division.

11 Available at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCc88YWG_qwrv7I27zxLgTJg. Accessed on: 8 June 2018.

The monitoring carried out by the collective Teachers Against the School Without Political Party

The collective Teachers against the School Without Political Party is an insurgency movement with strong resonance in social networks. Keeping a daily routine of updates, with an average of three daily publications, the group appeared in August 2015, on Facebook. They identify themselves as a group of teachers and students who make opposition against the School Without Political Party project. The page of the collective on Facebook maintains a fixed post, in which a map with the number of bills in progress in the country is available.

The researcher Fernanda Pereira de Moura cataloged the bills that allude to the School Without Political Party and analyzed their impact on the teaching of History. By early March 2018, more than 150 bills¹² in progress in the country were cataloged, a number that is constantly updated.

In the blog of the collective there is a section called Mobilization, in which two links are available. In one of them, readers can sign the letter *In Defense of the Freedom of Speech in the Classroom*¹³; in the other one, it is possible to access the Mobilization Against the School Without Political Party form¹⁴, in which supporters can contribute to the gathering of information about how the resistance and opposition to the School Without Political Party is advancing in Brazil.

The letter *In Defense of the Freedom of Speech in the Classroom*, written by the Professor Fernando de Araújo Penna (UFF), one of the spokesperson of the resistance movement against School Without Political Party, points out that no Brazilian citizen, in any situation, should be deprived of its freedom of speech:

Everyone must always respect the limits imposed by the law on their freedom of speech and never give it up. The teacher obviously has a program to follow, but how he/she will do it – using any valid pedagogical conception and relating the subject to the topics he deems pertinent - depends only on his professional knowledge.¹⁵

Through the page, teachers can share reports on cases of harassment, censorship or retaliation suffered in the workplace. Examples of complaints include *indoctrination* charge, be prevented from working on gender issues or African-based religions, among other complaints.

The initiative of the collective *Teachers against the School Without Political Party* is consistent with what Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls the procedure of translation, as a work both intellectual and political, as well as emotional, because it “presupposes nonconformity before a deficiency resulting from incomplete or poor character of a given knowledge or a given practice” (Santos, 2010, p.129). Through studies, data collection and monitoring, the work developed by the subjects of the group *Teachers against the School Without Political Party* provides readers with contextual information and an overview of the scope of the School Without Party project. The answer is permanent and has a specific logic that gives you daily update.

The page uses the media convergence as a dissemination strategy. It is through Facebook that

12 Retrieved in 02 March 2018 from: <https://professoresubraoescolasempartido.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tabela-1-panorama-do-escola-sem-partido-no-bras-1-1.pdf>.

13 Retrieved in 02 March 2018 from: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdx9JZR9HM9QGIt-dI4NXRncZgwfB13OY6c0Wk-4eP7jeccyyw/viewform>.

14 Retrieved in 02 March 2018 from: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf4p_j_tWFPX9Kw-ZM0iIG9gDWo-eCjmZ4r22TOS06ovIQ2Lzw/viewform#responses.

15 Retrieved in 02 March 2018 from: <https://professoresubraoescolasempartido.wordpress.com/mobilizacao-.fm-esp/>.

they promote the YouTube channel, the Instagram profile and make available Podcasts¹⁶ with updated themes on democratic education and the fight against censorship at school.

This stance is an example of collective action repertoires, cultural and mobilization structures as potential sources of power that “can be employed as easily for social control as for the riots” (Tarrow, 2009, p.87). As an example, we cite the release of public comments and posts that are contrary to what the collective preaches. This attitude, in allowing the expression of contrary thinking, demonstrates an attempt to enlarge the bubble in which the collective is inserted, as well as to notify the gaps and weaknesses present in this discourse, which demonstrates an exercise of argumentation. This is evidenced in a post in January 2019:

Picture 10 - Print Screen of the post in the Teachers Against the School Without Political Party/Facebook community, January 14, 2019



Source: School Without Political Party Facebook Page. Accessed on March 14, 2017

Picture 10 exemplifies what Sidney Tarrow calls the “Interpretative Frame of Injustice,” which occurs when social movements collectively unite discontents into broader structures. The interpretative framework does not only relate to the generalization of discontent but defines us and them in the conflict structure of a movement.

Regarding people’s engagement in political confrontations, Tarrow (2009) adds that this occurs when their struggles revolve around major divisions in society:

When they gather people around inherited cultural symbols and when they can extend or build dense social networks and connective structures, then these confrontational episodes result in sustained interactions with opponents - specifically, social movements (Tarrow, 2009, p. 30).

The collective action of confrontation is one of the foundations of social movements. Tarrow

16 Podcast is like a radio show, but its primary difference and advantage is content on demand. You can listen to whatever you want, whenever you want. Just log in and click play or download the episode. Retrieved in 22 March 2019 from: <https://mundopodcast.com.br/artigos/o-que-e-podcast/>.

(2009) states that this action of political confrontation occurs when ordinary people, always allied with the most influential citizens, join forces to resist and confront elites, authorities and opponents.

Regarding the use of social networks as a means for confrontation, Malini and Antoun (2013) state that the activist community has transformed the meaning of the word resistance by plunging into the bowels of the Internet and constituting an anarchic and libertarian attitude to their communities and practices. "Resisting has also become the inventing of movements through which the autonomous ways of living and governing one's own life can be, at the same time, ways of fighting and manifesting publicly" (Malini & Antoun, 2013, p.142).

From October 2018, on the eve of the presidential election, until March 13, 2019, we cataloged 258 pages of posts, a volume that shows the level of organization and daily updates, factors that help retain readers' attention. The average number of publications is around three posts per day, but in periods of greater political upheaval, such as the voting of the bill, this number increases.

Final considerations

The discussion about the School Without Party project takes place at a time when Brazil is going through one of its biggest political crises, with demonstrations in the streets, change of government and the creation of devices that change high school, such as the Common National Curriculum Base. A milestone in this study: 2016 was the year teachers were most attacked in the classroom on charges of ideological indoctrination. Drawing a parallel with contemporary society, we realize that today dissatisfaction is exposed in the virtual universe and the internet is used as a tool to claim rights in social networks. In the case studied, what is at risk is a constitutional right that reaches teachers and students: freedom to learn and freedom to educate.

This research was conducted in the Internet environment, on Facebook. We analyze people's engagement based on Sidney Tarrow's (2009) concept of "comprehensive interpretative structures" and we used the sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos's Translation procedure to analyze the articulation, collaboration, and record developed by the subjects of the communities studied. For Santos, the objective of translating practices and their agents is to create the conditions for a global social justice based on the democratic imagination, since "presupposes nonconformity before a deficiency resulting from incomplete or poor character of a given knowledge or a given practice" (Santos, 2010, p.129).

As problematic, we set out to analyze how collective action as a basis in social movements is organized in social networks and how these spaces are consolidated as fields of political debate. We found that the two collectives studied managed to reach many followers. They use their networks to publicize meetings, debate, mobilize, lobby politicians and even prevent voting.

Both pages efficiently use virtual tools to release their fighting flags and, with interaction, can gain more supporters, expanding the bubble imposed by the algorithms and architecture of networks such as Facebook, which limit the scope of the messages. Such pages grow and mobilize amid a historical process that indicates the advance of the conservative and extreme right movements around the world. It is frightening to think that regimes such as totalitarianism, which influenced and annulled the thinking of the masses, have been acting in a new way in social networks, contextualized here by the MBL.

From an optimistic perspective, we believe that digital riots can offer resistance, but the controversy surrounding the School Without Political Party project is far from over. Its influence on schools, spread by increasingly conservative speeches in classrooms and amidst the political world, is proof that this project is part of something bigger and far more dangerous: it is a worldwide movement of ascension of the extreme right, this new right-wing that dominates the technological tools of communication, using them as dangerous virtual trenches.

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