

# opción

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# **opción**

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**EDITORIAL****Public communication, political communication and disruptive technologies**

In this editorial I propose to present a brief commentary on the categories of public communication and political communication. The consideration is based on the intervention in the public space of disruptive technologies, which have come to mean for modern society a radical transformation in all its core aspects, especially in societal referents. The question is to be guided by the question that underlies this type of conceptual relationship, which is traditional, one might say, since the dawn of politics at the time of the Greek Enlightenment in the 5th century B.C. While communication is consubstantial with human nature, politics in its original sense is also consubstantial. They are two consubstantial (essential) elements of the same entity: the human being.

However, the question assails us in these times of socio-technological transformation because it reaches dimensions of thought and action that are novel in their approach and their consequences: What is the relationship between public communication and political communication in times of technological disruption? We can best approach this question in the light of H.G. Gadamer's dialogical hermeneutics and his strategy of the hermeneutic circle: interpretation goes from the whole to the parts and from the parts to the whole. So, the perspective we have on this issue is reaching increasingly complex levels due to the advances of digital technologies, which we have called disruptive, precisely because of the consequences that socio-technical development brings in the relational becoming and shaping of the social fabric in times of metaverse and artificial intelligence.

Despite the increasingly strong presence of the two technological innovations mentioned above, public communication attempts to remain unscathed by the processes of interaction brought about by disruptive technologies, which rather distort it or tend to eliminate it. If we consider that communication is the very nature of the human being (Aristotle, 1985), it is only carried out through what this same classical philosopher of the century of the Greek Enlightenment calls *logos*, which is the same as argumentation. Therefore, we start from this premise: communication in the public space, public communication, is not only the process that is woven around information, but it is at the same time argumentation. Hence, for this author, communication is *logos* but also action resulting from argumentation (one argues in order to generate action).

This being true, communication in the public space will have an ingredient that the latest version of the Frankfurt School also points out: for Habermas, communication is a process that takes place in the spaces of intersubjective interaction, since it is the very nature of the human being, as stated by the Stagirite. For the German philosopher, communication is the fundamental element that the subject uses to shape the world of life; hence, public communication is its guiding element, since it is based on the elementality of the human being: communication, which is raised as argumentation. Public communication from this perspective consequently possesses the other dimension necessary for the establishment of the world of life: public action, that is, political action (Botero Montoya, 2006).

So the connection is self-evident; public communication is political communication, since the political is what is proper to human beings in society. The social fabric is formed in the public space, because thanks to it, social life unfolds as a skein that structures the strengths on which human life is built; human life will be a world of life since the communicative processes are carried out in an open way, so that each member is wrapped by the presence of the other subjects that make up their social conglomerate. Hence, in order to live life, it is necessary to establish rules and conditions that allow all members of society to provide them with security of action, to the extent that the sense of the social is reconstructed between the private individual and the public social. This is where the public communication/political communication dichotomy comes into play.

It follows that political communication reconstructs the social fabric for the purposes of present and future coexistence. The political will thus depend on the communicative process as an essential dimension for the conformation of the structures necessary for those ends. From the current theories about communication, this is understood as we have stated: with the purpose of achieving human ends, and these are conjugated in the different dimensions in which the world of life is articulated: social, political, economic, scientific, technological, but also domestic and reproduction of life, among others. Therefore, communication implies the freedom to express what each subject prefers within the framework of his or her interests (Habermas, 1982), or his or her sociopolitical aspirations in the context of the pluralism that characterizes human life in society (Sartori, 2009).

Now, seen in this way, the relationship between public communication and the political, political communication will be nothing

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other than the public manifestation of the necessary referents for the establishment of those foundations that make possible present and future coexistence; hence, political communication stands as the normative dimension of public communication in its sense of watcher and interpreter -as Habermas would say of philosophy- of public communication. The normative dimension is pergegated by the idea of the democratic principle (Habermas, 2010): political communication in its sense of discourse, establishes the procedural bases for the establishment of democracy as a system, since, according to this author, it is the only means by which clean and transparent processes can be carried out for the conformation of the statute of the democratic system of law; that is to say, political communication will be an essential dimension in the process of democratic coexistence.

Considering the above-mentioned relationships, the question that guides this reflection takes on unusual force, since Modernity, which is passing through a society marked by disruptive technologies, is subjected to the ups and downs of this development more than in other disruptive epochs. Information technologies are no longer such; they are now digital technologies, since their essential philosophical element is not information as such; it is information elevated to dimensions never foreseen or endured. Digital technologies allow what did not happen with ICTs in their beginnings in the 1980s. In the latter, the fundamental structure was the directionality of the flow of information from the centers of power to the citizen; now, with digital technologies (DT), there are no centers of power as such: they are characterized by the idea of networks. DTs form a grid that is supposed to be a skein that facilitates communication. But this is far from being the case.

TDs are not only characterized by enchanting users who own electronic devices in order to keep them always connected, but the information that emerges in this context is no longer necessarily coming from the centers of power (although they are in the restrictive sense of the term); the information is generated from the user himself, who for reasons of expressing his impressions, opinions, tastes, preferences, emotions, sends to the digital agents, turned into centers of power, information that is then translated into direct messages to the user in order to offer not only goods traced from his own information, but articulated as management of his emotions; that is, the bidirectionality of information no longer exists, thus almost annulling the disappearance of the communicative processes.

Botero Montoya's (2006) statement regarding opinion polls is raised to the umpteenth power not only for the purpose of changing opinion (p. 10-11), which the author calls sondeocracy, i.e. the exercise of political power based on opinion polls in order to change the opinion of citizens and thus obtain benefits for those who have ordered the polls. 10-11), which the author calls sondeocracy, i.e., the exercise of political power based on opinion polls in order to change the opinion of citizens and thus obtain the profits of those who have ordered the study; but in this phase of social disruption, the opinion that is to be imposed, or that is to be denigrated, in order to maintain or achieve the hegemonic exercise of power, is individually teledirected. We are going through a new phase of communication in which dialogue is blurred to impose a dynamic of neural control of power: political communication is psychopolitical (Han, 2017), due to the intervention by technological agents in order to control emotions; we are talking about a psychopower that imposes itself at the pace of TDs.

According to the above, political communication in times of TD is practically marginalized and without the possibility of imposing itself as such communication. It must be free and with possibilities of being able to express itself in all its intersubjective dimension. Political communication, in its version of psychopolitics, by annulling the process of dialogue through neural control (Han, 2017), or control of emotions, causes the latter to occupy in the democratic process a second plane, or a second level; it will no longer occupy the first, as in the classics cited, but will rather have a stellar place but for the domination by technological agents, at this point transformed into new capitalists, since they negotiate the emotions of the deluded citizen. Communication in the digital society, a consequence of TDs, does not establish a certain dimension of political communication.

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