The speech on environment and health through cyberactivism: a comparative analysis between the environmental movements to confront the installation of oil refineries in Brazil and Spain

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Abstract

Facing the planetary scenery of combat to the neoliberal project of economic growing environmental movements which foresee a democratic future appear and organize themselves using technologies and strategies of communication to broaden discussions in order both participation and social inclusions at the local level, such as support for real time exchange globally. The production capacity and information sharing have also enabled the identification of similar environmental conflicts on different contexts, reaching space and time extensions. This work aimed to analyze how the environmental movements act on the cyberspace to face the problems generated by the petroleum refinery installation perspective. The analysis was developed from the websites speeches at the blog of Plataforma Ciudadana Refinería No and the Suape Forum: environmental space. It was noticed that facing the invisibility of environmental movements arguments and fights on the traditional media, the cyberspace, through the blogs using made possible to happen a horizontal communication through net strategies where the predominant speech is the sustainable development.

Introduction

The mechanism of production and accumulation of wealth is based on irrational logic of land as limitless supply of natural resources and raw materials. The progressive degradation of ecosystems, the growing contamination of air, soil and water, and global warming are examples of the impacts of human activities on the environment.

The process of industrialization in developing territories, especially oilman, has occasioned deep and serious transformations generated and environmental conflicts. Communities are excluded from the discussion and decision on the new economic and productive reconfiguration of traditional territory and populations , as farming communities and fisher folk are put at vulnerable situations (when action has already occurred affecting a territory or population) and vulnerability (process factors conditions and susceptibility to suffer damage) (Schramm 2012).

Changes are also observed in the regional epidemiological profile that rapidly alters ecosystems and biomes. This process results in the uncontrolled growth of urban areas , increased violence, the eminence of new diseases and re-eminence of eradicated

diseases and processes of deterritorialization, unemployment, pollution and slums (Rigotto 2007; Rigotto and Augusto 2007).

In a previous study we identified that printed newspapers from Pernambuco present, through a univocal discourse, a developmental ideology that sustains economic growth without a social critic and look forward to the changes among the industries that are being implemented in the state, as well as other authors identified low repercussion in the media in relation to other environmental issues (M. O. S. dos Santos et al. 2013; Carvalho 2011; Gomes, Silva, and Santos 2011).

The reaction of the people on the front territorial reconfigurations result in finding solutions in the search for strategies and technologies for producing democratic spaces that allow the politicization of information, the struggle for citizenship by the human right to communication (Peruzzo 2004).

The environmental movements, before their invisibility seek various alternatives , as in cyberspace, envisioning a democratic future and the empowerment of autonomous communication processes, mainly because this virtual space enabling new ways to build skills that include the democratization of communication, new learning styles and the eminence of collective intelligence (Lévy 2009).

This work conducted brief analysis in order to understand how environmental movements operate in cyberspace to spread their ideas and strengthen the fight against the impacts on health and environment of the target territories for installing and operating the petroleum industries.

Methodology

The analysis of productions on the Internet for environmental movements of the actors helps identify different proposals for dealing with impacts on the environment and health, as well as check different communication strategies used.

Two movements of distinct sociocultural and economic contexts were elected: Plataforma Ciudada Refinería No, from the region of Extremadura in Spain, as a movement that could prevent the construction of a refinery in this territory; and the Forum Suape: environmental space in Pernambuco - Brazil, which was structured after

the beginning of the refinery RNEST construction, in order to seek solutions to social and environmental injustices in the territory.

Among the limitations of this choice stands out not conducting a survey of movements in other territorial contexts, either in other cities of Brazil, or other world countries, leaving this task to a later time. Then the priority was to analyze two movements that use cyberspace, a move from the state of Pernambuco, for being the territory of the research that has been developed and a Spanish movement, for having been very successful in their claims. First time a characterization of the blogs was performed (blogs identifying its structure, sections, possibilities for interaction and participation) and then identifying the major ideological formations in the speech represented by the wording of blogs taking as a methodological basis the Critical Discourse Analysis and Concepts of environmental health and communication fields as a human right.

The environmental cyber activism

Currently, there is much discussion about the advent of the internet and the incorporation of this technology in daily activities. This carries deep movements of construction and reconstruction of social and political relationships at local and global levels. In the last two decades, there is an unquestionable climactic eminence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

On the issue of digital citizenship and social networks is remarkable sketch of new hues, capable of eliciting expanded and innovative dimensions to citizenship, from the creation of real-time interaction between users of ICTs across the planet (Rego 2014).

ICTs are configured as devices able to offer opening for direct transmission of information and active participation of different subjects in the collective construction of knowledge through interactive and distributive character set Network. Moreover, in the political sphere, interactive technologies are consolidated as favorable to popular public policies regulating elements, implemented by the decisions taken by elected political representatives. This fact, approach the civil society of the management discussions and significantly increases its role in the social construction process participatory (N. B. dos Santos et al. 2014).

There is a present crisis installed in the paradigm of representative political system, because it fails to give satisfactory answers to society, nor is it able to change the status quo, preserving old structures and keeping the population under control. Interactive technologies, like social media like face book, are configured as policy building platforms where dissenting voices reverberate, gaining global scale, because they are not mediated by traditional media outlets (Sakamoto 2013).

According to Castells (2003), the current model of representative democracy was exhausted and needed to be rethought so that the technology could contribute to a direct democracy where citizens could collect, monitor and propose solutions for improving their living conditions with quality (Castells 2003).

On the exercise of a citizen in cyberspace Caselas (2014, p.124) says that the universe democracy web or digital democracy can accommodate other possibilities for activist intervention and comments: "The blogosphere , the participatory web are new ways to take the floor , allowed by enlargement of public space " (Caselas 2014).

The media activism at its decentralized character elects polyphony of subjectivities and their struggle is marked by the multiplication of points of view, thus strengthening a movement of counter culture.

The movements born in the field of popular ecology, motivated by a sense of social justice in defense of their vital sustenance, are the founding elements of its political action in the practice of self-governance and participatory democracy. This is not to perform a "revolution" against the system. This type of movement of the idea of democracy of diversity, which excludes forms of hegemony and organizes networking and horizontal mechanisms. The concept of social networks is discussed from the understanding of them as flexible structures that aim to build integrated communication channels and strategies of dialogic action, transforming the structure of old commitments and establishing new perspectives among individuals, social movements and institutions (Porto 2007).

It is relevant to mention the Brazilian Environmental Justice Network (RBJA), which constitutes one environmental justice movement and is dedicated to the struggle to overcome discriminatory dynamics that oppress specific groups in favor of industrial growth. According to Porto (2007) Environmental justice is a set of social principles and

practices that ensure any social group of diverse nature to protect their rights, facing the negative consequences of actions and dynamic economic purpose. He points out that environmental justice "seeks to ensure both fair and equitable access to environmental resources of the country and broad access to relevant information to the whole society and affected groups" (Porto 2007 p.57).

Therefore, the use of Internet and cyberspace expands the possibilities of organizing participatory social practices in the construction of collective and effective communication processes in direct and decentralized nature network, enhances the premise that ensuring the human right to communication. It is reiterated that through the use of new communication and information technologies can draw alternative, participatory, creative and emancipator ways that lead the fight against hegemonic, in favor of a more just and egalitarian democratic society.

The cyber activism through blogs

Plataforma Ciudada Refinería No

The **Plataforma Ciudada Refinería No (PCRN)** was instituted as a movement in 2005 after residents receiving the news of the oil refinery project in their territory, region of Extremadura, Spain. The movement was solidified in the absence of information on the environmental impacts arising from the refinery, the lack of debate on the issue in the media of mass communication and the absence of political debate in a democratic way.

The group held demonstrations through various strategies such as marches, demonstrations, thematic forums, video production, and preparation of environmental studies, educational campaigns and fostering cultural exchange of knowledge with other residents about the future of their territory (PLATAFORMA CIUDADANA REFINERIA NO 2013).

How could no visibility in traditional media began to use the Internet to communicate directly with the people and it produced dozens of videos , created a group in social media such as face book , and created a blog to provide all the material produced (manifest movement, studies on impacts, technical documents , videos , publications , among others).

After seven years of intense social mobilization in July 2012, failed to prevent the construction of the refinery Balboa. The Environmental Impact Statement published by the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Environment recognized the impracticality of installing the refinery due to large impacts. This is perhaps the only popular movement to achieve such success involving the oil industry (PLATAFORMA CIUDADANA REFINERIA NO 2013).

The social consciousness that was established through understanding and realization that a refinery would not improve the life and economy of the region or , on the contrary, would cause adverse effects on quality of life , environment, among other effects . All this is embodied in the name of the movement itself: no Platform citizen refinery. The denial of the possibility of a refinery in this name spells that would not have developmental or economic argument that would negotiate and accept the project.

The blog is organized by thematic subdivisions (with the following topics: meet us, addresses, contact, news, documents, galleries also by sections subdivided into. Healthcare pipeline and legislation, energy and environment, social mobilization, technical reports and PowerPoint presentations).

Figure 1 - Home Blog Plataforma Ciudada Refinería No. Source: (PCRN 2014)

The visuals also express ideological formations that reinforce this blog mostly speech. The movement uses as a logo a drawing of a seated child holding a ball and using respiratory protection mask and the background of the drawing has a black smoke being expelled, denouncing the impossibility to keep breathing with a refinery . In posting the text that shows the declaration of the impossibility of implementation of the refinery, the same child appears, however, without a mask and smiling between trees and a blue sky.

Figure 2 - Logo movement assent to non-installation of Balboa refinery.
Source: (PCRN 2014)

In different texts and documents posted on the blog emerge the ideology of sustainable development which argues that the economic model proposed by building a refinery is incompatible with the preservation of the life and the planet, as the impacts do not operate in a linear fashion. The defense of the quality of agricultural products produced in its territory, warning about health issues, defending established economy, tourism, and the desire for a better future also appears:

> These industries are extremely contaminants, once they spread rests that affect strongly and negatively the health causing diseases like cancer, bronchial and skin, reaching principally Kids and elderly people, besides the terrible society aspect that surrounds us. All these effects are multiplied about the countryside refineries, included the last generations like this (PCRN 2014).

The last item in the manifest of the movement is crucial for demonstrating the ecological awareness of the movement and its need to be active in the decision processes on a democratic way.

> We are independent citizens and want, finally, to be active, protagonist of our present and careful about our future. We want to have a good natural and cultural environment, not by stubbornness, but because it's essential to live well and do not be stupid people which sold their future going under traps of job opportunities. And we will ask to the responsible politicians and economists which damage, manipulate or mortgage our natural and cultural patrimony (PCRN 2014).

The Spanish movement built its speech advocating opportunities for sustainable economic development at the expense of building an oil refinery, and had the need of creating a space where it could be materialized, since the mainstream media in the region did not provide such possibility. It was through the mobilization network, inside and outside of the internet, that the movement got visibility and recognition, breaking the geographical boundaries for the sake of the next generations future and could promote a sense of belonging and collectivization of the individuals involved in the process.

Movimento Fórum Suape: Espaço Socioambiental

The Fórum Suape: socioenvironmental space is a civil society organization around a permanent forum that aims to discuss issues that are being experienced by the

people living around the Suape industrial complex, and its consequences for future generations. Apart from mobilizing actions articulated with community leaders in planning and hearing prosecutors, the Forum has sought to give visibility to the problems that are emerging and sought legal help to solve some of the problems of expropriation. Besides of the invisibility of major media group propose:

> In this sense, we will seek to propose, perform and interact in a positive way with the initiatives that are being implemented in different regions of the country, in what relates to environmental justice. The impacts and patterns are evident, and we want to bring different sectors of the society, which is another possible form of development that actually takes into account the basic needs of people and environmental preservation. Denounce the evils that are occurring, particularly poor people, devoid of media means, invisible to society. But we will also point out the alternatives to build a new, fair, and fraternal and solidary society (FÓRUM SUAPE: ESPAÇO SOCIOAMBIENTAL 2014).

Formed by a variety of institutions (Associação Brasileira de Agroecologia, Action Aid, Associação dos Geógrafos Brasileiros, Centro das Mulheres do Cabo – CMC, Comissão Pastoral da Terra, Conselho Pastoral dos Pescadores, Movimento dos trabalhadores sem Terra, etc.)[1], the Forum also uses cyberspace as articulation and dissemination strategies. Its home online was structured like social media format because it enables discussions and publications among the registered people (FÓRUM SUAPE: ESPAÇO SOCIOAMBIENTAL 2014).

The space came from popular unrest against the accelerated development at Suape process, with no care to any inclusion in the premises of factories and lack of public debates in which those affected could express their opinions and should advocate as legislation environmental.

In fact, the process of industrialization in Suape happened since the 1970s, during the military dictatorship, when the government decided to invest a huge financial amount.

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[1] (Brazilian Association of Agro ecology, Action Aid, Association of Brazilian Geographers, Women's Center of Cabo, Pastoral Commission of the Earth, Council Fisherman, movement of landless workers, etc).

However, after almost thirty years in full democracy, with a complex environmental law, history repeats itself. Major industries are installed without considering the public interest, without consulting residents and without questioning the implications of changes in the lives of the people from the cities that host the works, and also in other cities of the state of Pernambuco, including its capital - Recife. For construction of its speech Suape Forum uses clear that researchers and environmental activists launched in 1975. The manifest emphasized its concerns regarding the interventions proposed by the Government in Suape:

> It has been signed as the latest style tradition of promoting economic development - which is understood as increase in per capita income - the launch of major projects by the government of its initiative, the authorities assume consulting the public interest and judge to meet the aspirations of the population, without consulting with the latter is effectively performed. This is a rule almost universally followed, whose validity has not been - except in exceptional cases - in doubt. This does not avoid, however, interested people and groups of individuals express their opinion about such projects and enterprises, reacting against the intention of transforming into an indisputable truth autocratic tradition of not making the fabrication of large projects be preceded by consulting with collectivity aspirations (FÓRUM SUAPE: ESPAÇO SOCIOAMBIENTAL 2014).

So, the blog Forum Suape is nonetheless a ransom fight against civil society development discourse, which presents the developments as beneficial to the population and the state, and dictatorial stances in full democracy.

With its inception, the blog has managed to gather in a virtual space and open to all, voices coming from who is overwhelmed by the power of money. In it, netizens can register and participate in the discussions and post your ideas through texts, photos and videos. With a simple user interface the navigation is allowed through sections - Home,

the founders, manifest, history of resistance, blogs, publications, events, photos, videos and members. In relation to the predominant ideological discourse presents the concept of sustainable development, environmental injustice and human rights that pervade the various types of posted texts. In the forum logo denotes the idea of solidarity through representative figures of people holding hands demonstrating equality, unity and acquaintance.

Figure 3 - Home Blog Forum Area Socio Suape
Source: (FÓRUM SUAPE: ESPAÇO SOCIOAMBIENTAL 2014).

Breeders Forum Suape able to provide an interactive environment where people with common interests , interested in issues related to the environment and the industrial area of Suape , can collaborate to expand the debate , is talking to another member or posting text, photos and videos . The "publication "session brings together several texts, monographs and studies on the subject.

Conclusion

After these analyzes, differences are perceived between blogs *Plataforma Ciudadana Refineria No* e *Fórum Suape*. At first, the mobilization occurred before installation of the refinery, which originated a kind of website produced communally. In the second, the creation of online space happened after public intervention on the environment. In the case of Forum Suape it is possible to note a characteristic of an open community in permanent construction, the PCRN seems to be more a way to record both the locals as to present the lived experience for the world. In the discourse of both perceives the presence of interdiscursivity - incorporating speech of others - and intertextuality - incorporation of other texts either for reproduction or transformation of meaning. Importantly, both movements weave their arguments relying on concepts of sustainable development advocated in universal documents, as the Brundtland Report and Agenda 21, emphasizing the cultural and territorial belonging of each context.

Social movements are important representatives of minorities and seek new possibilities in communication space to mobilize citizens who share the same goals, promoting the feeling of collectivization of dialogical, liberating and educational way. Thus, and with the ability to produce and circulate different worldviews, demands, public interests, and above all, building the diversity of actors the actual situation of the environment and its social implications in pursuit of the preservation of life .

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