

Public Deliberation in an Age of Visibility: Political Communication Analysis in Mexico

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This paper reviews the importance of visibility in public deliberation in the theoretical construction of political communication. Political communication is the area that study social and political interactions of actors through discourses and practices within the public sphere. The social and political actors manage their public appearances in an exercise of visibility, allowing deliberation of public affairs. In recent years, Mexico has been a relevant case of study for understanding the opening of media into the public discussion of governmental affairs. As an example, this paper presents an analysis of public deliberation in the city of Querétaro, Mexico. This study analyses political participation and openness of media, based on the concepts visibility, public sphere and citizenship. The analysis was built on the idea that the press concentrates most of the issues of public interest and that it reflects actors and arguments given for deliberation. In a qualitative approximation, we analyzed the discourses published in four journals and developed an analytical framework that illustrates the levels of access and visibility of a variety of political and social actors. This exercise demonstrates the importance of the concept of visibility in public deliberation and the media as managers in the current configuration of political communication.

Keywords: political communication, public sphere, democratization, Querétaro

Introduction

The work presented here, provides an analysis of the public sphere and the democratization process in Querétaro, Mexico. First, it raises a discussion about the public sphere, defined as the space of deliberation in democracies. From this arises, with examples of specific cases, how the process of democratization of the public sphere in Mexico can be questioned due to limited space are the speeches from actors belonging to groups opposed to the mainly government agencies.

Here we present a discussion of the public sphere, meaning that while it is in daily use when referring to the spaces of deliberation in democracies, it is clear that a process of democratization, as you live Mexico, offers the possibility of questioning.

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Conceptual Approach

Today, the public sphere represents the space where society actors compete for visibility and influence in the process of incorporation of the public agenda and collective decisions. The strength or weakness of the actors and the ability of citizens to interact and participate in the definition of public affairs are manifested in the public sphere. Habermas (1981) argues that the public sphere is not reduced to the media, as has been apparent in recent years, but covers different fields of action of the subjects.

Whitehead states that democratization is the institutional fundamentation plus the consensus of the majority and participation of everyone in politics (Whitehead, 2003, p. 27). After the end of the Cold War, argues the author, democratization has become one of the most crucial issues in the international political scene. Many countries are experiencing an extraordinary difficult transition to democracy. These transitions are deeply influenced by the new international context of free markets.

Thus, for a democratization process to develop in a country, its public sphere has to be consolidated for the discussion of public affairs in different spaces, including the media. While one can argue that there has always been public sphere, there have been moments when only a few agents have access to the spaces of deliberation. For example, during the PRI regime in Mexico, in the sixties or seventies, there was a stronger state control over the information that circulated, thus, discussion was celebrated with limitations.

Since the nineties, there has been an ongoing process of democratization in Mexico. Along with the opening and the subsequent reforms in the country, the press has been subject to a number of changes, both nationally and locally. This is an ingredient that can theoretically be established as part of the democratization process. However, empirical evidence shows that this transformation has not allowed some sectors of the population access to media or the public sphere.

Querétaro and Its Peculiarities. A Socio-historical Review

The state of Querétaro has a particular geographic location. Situated in the geographic center of Mexico, it is connected to the rest of the country by the Panamerican highway that crosses the state and connects it with Mexico City and the northern area. This has significantly benefited the population flow and the establishment of industries thanks to the industrialization impulses originated in the national economic policies.

From a historical point of view, the city has played an important role. Since colonial times and at crucial moments such as the beginning of the Independence struggle in 1810, the fall of the Maximilian empire in 1867 and the enactment of the current constitution, in 1917. Beyond its historical relevance, Querétaro has been an entity that has remained with a dynamic economy and a social vocation of peace and order.

Geographical Features of the State of Querétaro, Mexico

The state of Querétaro is one of the smallest states in the country. It has a land area of 11,769 km² of territory. Due to its geographical location, it encompasses three physiographic regions with different characteristics: Neovolcanic province, the province of the central plateau and the province of the Sierra Madre Oriental.

His political division consists of 18 municipalities with different characteristics. The municipalities located in the southern state, the "valley region", has had great aptitude for agricultural development. With deep soils, as the name implies, the region of the Great Plains was the one with large-scale agricultural production. Currently in

this region are located the capital of the state, along with its metropolitan area, which includes the municipalities of El Marqués, Corregidor, Pedro Escobedo and Huimilpan. This area has the largest population of the entity and major economic investments, besides being the political center of the state. In this same area, the municipalities of San Juan del Rio, Tequisquiapan, Amealco and Ezequiel Montes are also located. Of these, San Juan del Rio recorded the greatest population, making it the second largest urban center in the state.

The central part of the state is identified as the “semi-desert region”. It covers a southern portion of the Sierra Madre Oriental in conjunction with a central plateau. It has a lower altitude, therefore preventing the moist winds from the Gulf to enter this area. Consequently, soils are rocky with little possibility of agricultural development. In this area are located the towns of Colón, Toliman, Peñamiller and Cadereyta.

The most remote municipalities of the state are located in upstate Sierra Gorda: San Joaquin, Pinal de Amoles, Jalpan de Serra, Landa de Matamoros and Arroyo Seco. They have the potential for forestry, fruit and coffee production. For many reasons, it is the most underdeveloped region of Querétaro. Nonetheless, it is one of the richest areas in terms of biodiversity conservation areas.

The Sociodemographic Characteristics of Querétaro

Since the fifties, there has been a major demographic transition in the city of Querétaro. It has consisted in an increase of the living standards of the population, decreasing birth rates and a decrease in mortality rate. According to Guzmán (2007), this transition is due, inter alia, to an improvement in the living product of higher levels of income and greater access to health services. With the policies of industrialization, the occupational structure has diversified. There was an improvement in conditions of the economically active population and the integration of women into the labor market and education. Since the forties, Querétaro has changed in its urban and social structure. The data presented from 1950 to date provide interesting information to understand the demographic changes in Querétaro. The number of Querétaro’s habitants was constant over a long period. With the arrival of the industries in the sixties, the population grew. The population went from 286 thousand habitants in the census 1950 to 355,000 in 1960 (see Table 1).

Table 1

Population of the State of Querétaro

Year	Habitants	Year	Habitants
1900	232 mil	1960	355 mil
1910	245 mil	1970	486 mil
1920	220 mil	1980	740 mil
1930	234 mil	1990	1,051 mil
1940	245 mil	2000	1,404 mil
1950	286 mil	2005	1,705 mil

Source: Guzmán (2007) with data of INEGI (2005).

Changes in the Demographic Configuration of the State. The Migrant Factor

By 1985, Querétaro underwent dramatic changes in its social structure. The arrival of new companies, the establishment of industrial parks and the constant migration of people mainly from Mexico City after the earthquake of September 19 of that year, changed the social and economic life of the state capital. The decade of

1990 again stands out the state's economy via a third entity's modernization drive taking advantage of structural change introduced by president Salinas. In 1970, the immigrant population accounted for 8.38% of the total state population. By the nineties, the population reached nearly 20% of the population.

The constant migration and industrial growth have been a watershed in state population growth. According to Morales (1998), the population development of the institution was primarily due to establishment of new industrial parks, Querétaro growth rates went from below the national average in 1950 and 1960 censuses to be, in the censuses of 1990 and 2000, above the national average. Despite the nationwide 1995 crisis and because of all this factors, the city experienced a favorable scenario of economic and demographic growth.

An important factor in terms of population growth is the earthquake that took place in Mexico City in September 1985. It encouraged, as of this date, migration flows towards the city of Querétaro, among other destinations, for being the closest to Mexico City.

Counting of the Political History of Querétaro—The Configuration of the Hegemonic Discourse

Querétaro has been successful in social and political continuity due to its centralization of production activities in the state capital. Since colonial times, economic elites have been articulating a cooperation network with the political powers and the clergy (Díaz, 2004).

The hegemonic discourse, during this period of time, was founded on the disarticulation of the notions of politics and government. Since the political origin of the governor in turn was not relevant for the elite, ideological argumentations dissolved. The center of the political activities was to "administer Querétaro's interests" and there was no attention paid to the making of politics (García Ugarte, 1992). The quest for state sovereignty was the way in which landowners and the aristocracy sought to circumvent Querétaro's political vicissitudes. Since the beginning, the idea was always to look for an equilibrium and control of the territory, specially the state capital, which, besides being the seat of power, is the symbol of the organizational capacity and political and economic welfare.

The relationship between economic and political development in an industrial entity has not been linear. However, it is clear how they have developed strains and the joints between the traditional political groups, heirs of the agreements held since colonial times (bourgeoisie agricultural, commercial, etc.) and, more recently, emergent political groups (industrial bourgeoisie and the migrant groups and academics). The new reality opened opportunities for the participation of these groups in the social economic and political transformation.

The electoral laws are an institution considered by Morales (1998) and Espino (2003) to understand the tensions and the joints between the various political groups, review the autonomy of the political and economic elites against national powers.

Between 1962 and 1982, Querétaro remained completely dormant, without participation or a diversity of political parties. During these twenty years, the opposition remained absent from the electoral process. In this period, the most conservative elites wrapped the established order for the majority of the population.

The dominance of the ruling party in the state is the product of a merger between the local bourgeoisie (treasury, commercial, industrial and real estate) and the political elite. Although in the forties and fifties, the

insurgent voice of another political party, the PAN, emerged, this dissent was gradually absorbed by the PRI. Thus, the dominance of the ruling party remained unchanged until the eighties.

Because of these conditions, the process of industrialization that took place in the eighties has a double political impact. For once, it opens some space for the political opposition, as soon as the 1977 electoral reform was consolidated, new players, product of the industrial expansion, entered the race for political control.

This stage of Querétaro's political life acquires new characteristics relevant for regional policies. On one hand, the tension between local and national powers seems to have caused the generation of plural spaces within the state. On the other, a conflict was generated for maintaining political control between the PRI's internal groups. Changes in Querétaro's society from this time can be seen in the way the vote changed.

This retrospective is relevant for understanding the social and political configuration of the state. It seems appropriate to place the geography to understand that the development of the state depends on the capital's centralized group power. Hegemonic groups configure their networks since the establishment of linkages between different sectors within society Querétaro, say, politicians, industry and the church. The rest of the population legitimates the speech of the establishment of order and social peace. This stability has served as a "card" and has legitimized discourses in different historical moments. It should be noted that changes that have occurred in the democratization process have occurred without major upheavals.

Nevertheless, this paper tries to reveal rhetorical strategies that have maintained the balance of power, despite opposition efforts. Also, it will attempt to determine elements that have change and others that remain during this process of democratization.

Public Sphere and Democratization

Democratization

Whitehead (2003) notes that the term democracy is the best way to understand a long process of social construction. As said before, democratization is the institutional foundation plus the consensus of the majority and participation of everyone in politics (Whitehead, 2003, p. 27).

The democratization process reaches its peak where there is public debate and the right to participate (Dahl, 1993). In polyarchy, as part of the democratization process, exchange of views on topical public and civil participation of the resolutions is a daily occurrence.

Democratization is a process of development of social institutions that leads to strengthening civil society. By safeguarding human rights and the reduction of inequalities, the democratization strengthens the social structure in regimes that are moving toward democracy. Morlino (1987) notes that this is a process that leads to an authoritarian state to a pluralist democracy. Democratization, refers to a real recognition of civil and political rights, creating conditions for pluralism and participation. Thus, we can talk of democratization only when the state is able to maintain, in various groups, interest in the dialogue on strategies and strengthening of institutions (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1994).

In the case of Mexico, little by little, these interests have been lost. Civil society that initially participated actively in the process that opened the door to the democratization of the country have been moving away from civic participation activities, beyond the exercise of the vote in an election day.

Political pluralism is essential for democratization. There should be a competitive opposition capable of ensuring the transparency of elections, equal rights and a normative framework that represents all sectors of society. To understand a process of democratization should be three key aspects (Dahl, 1993):

- (1) Freedom of expression;
- (2) Equal rights and representation;
- (3) Strong social structures and legitimate.

What characterizes transitions from authoritarian regimes is that the rules are not clear since the democratic regime is still in its infancy, so there is an ambiguity. One is not quite authoritarian but not entirely democratic (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1994).

Democratization is a process whereby extending the democratic rules and procedures. In today's democracies, the electoral rules are clear and there is a government of many in which the actors in the public space to discuss the public interest and there is tolerance for other's arguments. The participation of civil society is active and proactive at the time of decision-making (Dahl, 1993).

These networks have made collective the discussion between of the socio-historical processes in which we are immersed: new rights, new duties and a new citizenship, resulting from economic and cultural globalization. The civil society participation in public space has established their own forms of dialogue, in collaboration with other sociopolitical actors. The shared discussion, among other things, has allowed the democratization of other arenas.

Public Sphere

The public sphere is the place where it builds consensus and dissent in a democracy. Different stakeholders of public interests converge in the public sphere. Together they affect the construction of democracy. These are inevitable considerations when speaking about discourse in the press.

A social sphere that breaks the limitations of the sensory domain argues spreads along with the expansion of market relations. This obliges the adoption of accordingly forms of government. A new mode of association is formed by the rise of the "bourgeois public sphere". There, the general will of universal reason is interpreted in some way (Habermas, 1981). The public sphere can be understood today as much as the visual space that can be associated to the media (electronic, print) as the setting for social interaction (trade unions, civil, social movements).

The conceptualization of the public sphere refers to the idea of a field of deliberation and collective action. Also to a place where citizens are in common action to discuss the goods and values that affect community life. More than a physical space, is a symbolic space for deliberation and collective action where people interested in public issues arise. Since this is a collective space, the discussion takes place in the open, therefore it prohibits the anonymity. Though not every public sphere is an area for decision, sometimes represents a step towards making decisions.

In Habermas's oeuvre, the public sphere is the scenario in which modern societies there is the political participation based on dialogue. It is a scene from institutionalized discursive interaction. This scenario is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that may be critical of the state.

For this paper, the concept of public sphere is central, since there is no process of democratization without public sphere. The conceptualization is made from Habermas's public sphere, not restricted to the media.

The importance of the socialization of information in the construction of public spaces, is crucial since it enables new ways for the increasingly large groups of society, to enjoy access to multiple opportunities of citizen discussion, far outside the education reserved for the nobility. Habermas argues that the transformations of capitalism and its multiple effects on social life, led to the emergence of the bourgeoisie, more and more enlightened and space that were developed to discuss concerns.

The relationship between public and private domain includes both the expansion of economic relations as the intimate sphere of personal relationships. A new public sphere emerged among the field of public authority or the State and the private sphere of civil society and personal relations: a new bourgeois public sphere whose private individuals met to discuss including the regulation of society civil.

With the development of the media, the “public sphere” has been brought back by the presence of urban masses on the social scene. This has risen the visibility of changes in public policy, from being a matter purely of state becomes a matter of community in a public matter. The visibility of large groups poses a new stage in the public sphere, one set-up in which mass culture articulates new spaces for political movements, particularly created by media coverage.

The scenario was of the rise of the bourgeois public sphere, and the arrival of these large groups on stage. Then, Thomson (1998), following Habermas (1981), assigns a special importance to the appearance of the periodical press. This type of press provided a new forum for public debate.

The press in the “public sphere” connects the private and the public speeches through the debate between ideology, the struggle for hegemony and propaganda. It “covers” private interests as if they were of public notice (Habermas, 1981).

Between the domain of public authority or the State on one hand, and the private domain of civil society and the family, on the other, a new field of “public” raised: a bourgeois public sphere composed of private individuals met to discuss among themselves on the regulation of the civil service and state administration (Thompson, 1998, p. 84).

The bourgeois public sphere, according to Habermas (1981), settled on a network of cafes and lounges where the emerging class met to discuss politics and economics, and science and philosophy. In this bourgeois public sphere, the rational discussion of public affairs was the hallmark. This discussion was underpinned and nourished by the ideological newspapers including political commentary and satire. The way discussion developed in this area gradually conditioned the very constitution of the bourgeois states, which continued throughout the century XIX. In these conditions, advertising became a critical principle, as a place where the personal opinions of private individuals can develop in a public space.

However, the public sphere (in its specific characteristics) did not endure beyond the nineteenth century. The increasing intervention of the state sought to spread its power to every part of the social fabric to the administration of the entire social life and the commodification of the newspapers.

In opposition to Habermas, some authors (Thompson, 1998) have suggested the existence of a public space that cannot be subsumed in a bourgeois area emptied of content, but has its own identity. In this struggle emerged the figure of public opinion and public space. The first one refers to the action that was opposed to the practice of secrecy concerning the absolutist state (Habermas, 1981). Public opinion will then be a right to discuss public policy decisions, building the public debate.

In the public space civil society becomes organized and a political society forms the basis for conflict and consensus, key element for the formation of the public sphere. The concept of public space transcends the field of interaction defined by political communication. It is the “media” frame in which an institutional and technological conglomerate, characteristic of contemporary societies, is able to a “public” audience many aspects of social life.

The new public space would thus be an area defined in part by media coverage. What results in the audience and the spaces are increasingly difficult to limit and delimit. This means that an issue becomes public from its placement in the press.

In this sense, it is clear that the idea of public space, defended by Habermas (1981), that is focused on the actors’ rational dialogue on an equal basis of reciprocity, does not apply to this new public media space. Thompson argues (1996) that with the development of the media, the phenomenon of advertising is unrelated to the fact of participation in a common area. It has been de-spatialized and has become viewed as non-dialogical, while increasingly been linked to the specific kind of visibility caused by the media and feasible through them (Thompson, 1998, p. 95).

Habermas (1981) also noted that the public sphere that emerged with the entry into the politics of large groups is gone, erasing the boundaries between state and society. For this reason, the public sphere has entered a crisis and is in need to re-discuss what the reason for the breakdown of boundaries was and where it has led the debate on public as well as its borders with the private. That is, to question who leads the way in the construction of the discourse that is debated in the public bodies.

The crisis in the public sphere has been the catalyst for individuals to return to their areas of privacy. This crisis points to a transformation of social relations. Beck (1998) argues that these changes have led to shape a society in which this change threatens major institutions that modernity became the source of the meaning of the public.

Public Sphere and Democratization in Querétaro

For the analysis, we worked with journalistic articles that constitute the discourses reproduced by the press of the city of Querétaro. These ideas in circulation help locate those actors who dominate the discourse exchange that circulates in the public sphere of Querétaro. This is relevant because through this discussion we can analyze the configuration of the public sphere and how actors construct the hegemonic discourse that, we argue, has not allowed the democratization of the public sphere Querétaro.

To perform the analysis, four daily newspapers in the state were chosen. We selected journals due to the composition of the notes, the structure of written text and the given possibility of more clarity in the revealing of actors and editorial direction that might exist in a given time by the media.

The analysis focuses on the front page and the political section of the four daily local newspapers circulating in the city of Querétaro. The analysis period runs from March to August 2009. To recover the news, before the electoral period, a random schedule was used in the form of composite weeks Monday through Friday (Monday of a week, Tuesday of the next, etc.). All through the election process, notes were retrieved daily from Monday to Friday. Additionally, relevant news reported on Saturdays and Sundays were retrieved by the principle of “special events”.

It was necessary for the analysis to establish who the actors subject of news were. Those who produce the information select their sources, therefore, making them part of the public debate. On the other hand, it was important to consider is the interpretation (information processing) that the media makes of the subject's statement by how the source is reported.

For the analysis to be representative, there was set an agenda of specific issues of the public agenda and that were relevant for the news coverage. The topics were:

- (a) Infrastructure Development;
- (b) Social participation;
- (c) Use of public resources.

Infrastructure development. This topic was chosen all the notes where talk of urban development, housing, roads, public works. Not only that political actors reported speech on the subject, but also other civil society actors presented demands on the need of work.

Social participation. Here is the news chose to speak mainly from civil society or to invite decision-making. During the electoral process where the main issue was referred to social participation was the call to "vote no".

Public resource management. This was a topic with particular avidity during the electoral process and in subsequent weeks. The main concern was the political party economic outflow for electoral reasons.

With these three items may support the idea that the practice of discourse in the media involves transformations of original texts, a press conference, interview, a meeting, in an article. The text is likely to have undergone a series of versions and revisions. In this sense, discourse is reproduced as it is transformed into a chain of events linked to an institutional process. The practice of the journalistic discourse on this idea is complex, in the sense that it articulates features of the speech of the source with the characteristics of discourse "aim" of the press and the discourse of consumption.

With this separation was obtained following newscasts (see Table 2):

Table 2

Number of Notes to Analysis

Media	Number of notes
Diario de Querétaro	150
Noticias	129
AM	60
El Corregidor	42
Total	381

Source: by self.

Once we got the selection of the notes, a count was effectuated to locate the players and detect those the most coverage. This establishes a first approximation to those who dominate the news spaces in the local press. The number of times an actor appeared was accounted and whether it was on the cover page or inside the journal. The count is an average of entries between the published notes.

For starters, coverage to the government (state or municipal) and the legislature declined significantly in the months of May and June while the information relating to political parties and autonomous public agencies grew during this period.

In the selected period of time, a note of the governmental actors appeared daily. Actors from the civil society organizations or independent citizens are scarce. This gives an idea of how unbalanced news coverage is. And it helps to sustain the argument that the media, in this case the press in the city of Querétaro, covers only a part of the discussions that are generated in the public sphere.

Being an election period, and despite not being targeted by the investigation to know which candidate was given more space in the press of the city of Querétaro, a count was taken concerning this issue, just to get extra data. Also nominal speech practices were recorded. This means that actors would always appear in the notes by the position they hold: "Candidate ...", "president ...", "secretary ...". And, under this logic, every discursive resources were used to support their arguments. It becomes clear in the notes that this position is used for the emphasis of information. That is, there is a vast difference in the treatment of the information generated by a candidate or the governor than one from a member of civil society.

The articles tend to simply reproduce what the political actor says. The newspapers are involved in the location of the note in the journal. Even if that is saying a lot, the leading role is the message and the actor who said it. Every political actor provides the discursive strategies in which they build the messages. Significantly, the notes expose the positions from where they carried out the struggle for hegemony.

In the notes studied it was clear that the contest takes place around the hunt for governmental positions and the search for the legitimacy of their various practices. Each actor, when referring to their views, employs argumentations in order of gaining control of the discourse. However, it is noteworthy that the arguments are similar. Only constructed in different ways, and located on distinct pages of the newspapers.

The weight of the struggle for hegemony is placed on the leading political actors. It is unusual for civil society organizations or public agencies to establish autonomously the topics of discussion.

Apparently, the press is very clear on which of the stakeholders has what kind of space. This is significant in the discussion of an equilibrated public sphere and a democratization process. Theoretically, the press should be one of the spaces most open to debate, and even promote it. However, despite the incentive of opening in the nineties and early the early XXI century, today it is increasingly difficult to find space for discussions not reserved for political actors. The negotiation of meaning, occurs clearly between political actors and the media.

Conclusion

Understanding the processes of democratization in the regions of the country means to analyze two episodes. On one side, the transformation meant for Mexico to have competing elections. On the other, the need of new government differentiates themselves from PRI administration. Mexico now has a greater political plurality. Although this does not seem to have resulted in a real democracy yet, since historically prevailing patterns persist especially in political economic and social practices.

The city of Querétaro is currently one of the cities with the highest economic and demographic growth rates of the country. Despite the series of transformations that are visible throughout its history, there are aspects that appear to have reached a standstill.

Politically, the most important change in recent years, occurred in 1997 when an opposition political party attained the state government. This consolidated a number of alterations that were already on track and that started with the arrival of agencies and personalities to the political and economic life of both the city and state.

Some areas remain unaffected. The press is one of them. With a city in constant growth, the journalistic offer persisted as was in the seventies. The review made of the socio-historical context proves that there has been collusion between the press and the political powers. This relationship has migrated from one of agreements to a clear subordination of economic interests. This shows that, despite the political opening of the democratization process in which the country finds itself, the press remains a laggard sector.

Lawson (2003) said there is a gradual opening has modified the role of the media in society. Nationally, as well as locally there are signs of it. In the case of Querétaro, the highlights are issues such as coverage of election campaigns or spaces gained by opposition parties or civil society organizations. However, the way in which this information is covered and how it is played, performed and published, it allows us to observe that there is still some way to go to talk about a genuine democratization in the press.

The data analysis showed that some discourses are similarly presented by more than one journal. This is, notes that are almost the same, relating almost the same facts, with almost the same emphasis. In this sense, we can sustain the idea that the Querétaro city's press reproduces the discourse of the sources thus serving as a vehicle for the consolidation of the hegemonic discourse.

Notes are practically an account of what actors said. A discursive reproduction is evident. The journalist collects what its source states and describes it in note format. They make political party members or government officials much more visible than civil society organizations. Newspapers offer their readers a series of notes built without any critical organization or clear editorial line.

This is not new if we review the history of the press in the city of Querétaro. According to the anecdotes of the foundation of the newspapers in Querétaro, almost all of them emerged in electoral processes or to support the candidacy of a political character of an elective office, usually the state governor. This is one more argument to state that, in Querétaro's press, there is a biased discussion of public affairs. The hegemonic discourse, pooled by economic and political power, is what dominates the pages of newspapers. If we turn to the ideas of Dahl, O'Donnell and Schmitter, the media, particularly the press Querétaro, opens no room for negotiation in its pages. The press reflects a minuscule space of the debates that take place in the public sphere.

The topics selected effectively refer to democracy issues. However, far from the true meaning of the concept of democracy, at least during elections, these are used as an excuse to mention the offerings of the candidates seeking the vote or seek elected office.

Normatively speaking, one might expect that the press would have to open spaces for different groups, as to enrich the public debate for the process of democratization to take place. This way, different voices expand the discussion on certain topics in a true exercise of democracy.

Most of the articles reviewed focused their attention on the electoral campaigns. This contingency might have biased the sample spectrum. However, it is considered an advantage since, in ordinary daily reading, the concept of democracy is associated with elections.

Theoretically, it should not be so. Therefore, in the studies those two elements (elections and democracy) were not associated. Instead, the focus was to analyze the construction of meaning for democracy through the negotiations that occur in the production of information about selected topics.

We can analyze the role of language in social processes throughout discursive constructions and articulations. The news helped to study and analyze hegemonic articulations that occur permanently in journals.

The discourses that the press presents have allowed the consolidation of certain social practices and the formation of hegemonic powers. They achieve sustainability and legitimacy by the means of discourse. In the time of PRI, political practices were legitimized. Now, from economic agreements, are legitimized other processes. What prevails is the hegemonic discourse.

As noted by Lawson (2002), in Mexico has been a gradual opening up the media. In fact, in Querétaro the press grew from two to four newspapers: AM came in 2002 and in 2003, El Corregidor. At one time, this might had mean spaces for other social actors. Both cases have adapted to reproduce information production practices and discursive reproduction, with the exception of AM at some point, when it collided with political and economic powers.

Ultimately, economic and political powers are in control of the public debate, at least in the local press of the city of Querétaro. If one estimates that Querétaro is a sample of the national environment, it can be assumed that the agenda of the country's democratization process is still missing the opening of media spaces. What one can find in journals is only published reproductions of discourse provide by the hegemonic groups. There is no space for other voices, therefore there is no enrichment of the public debates nor of the public sphere. Discourse in the press is largely subsumed to the negotiations of power. This is evident in journalistic texts.

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