

Opinion and Persuasion

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ABSTRACT

The research proves that persuasion has two types of objectives. Its main objective is the change of opinion. Its fundamental and foundational objectives are the change in attitude, generic conduct and situational behaviour. The main objective controls the fundamental objectives. The change in attitudes and conduct/behaviour is presided by changes in opinion. Persuasion is thus shown to be primarily and ultimately a matter of opinion. As such, its mechanism to manage and generate at the level of opinion must be searched and rendered visible. Its specific strategies at this level must also be deciphered. Persuasion as opinion moves towards an opinion. It should not be denied that conviction also moves towards an opinion, and similarly, as manner, by means of an opinion.

Keywords: opinion; communication; natural opinion; altered opinion; persuasion

1. INTRODUCTION

The difference between persuasion and conviction comes from the intentional nature of the two types of opinion. In relation to the honest, loyal, kind and generous opinion that advances with an honest intention in case of conviction, we encounter on the other hand, in the case of persuasion the “advancement” of a voluntarily dishonest opinion, promoted with dishonest intentionality. The propulsion engines of persuasion are seduction and fiction with its two other forms, the lie and the myth (Borowski, 2013; Vlăduțescu, 2014; Powell, 2014).

An “opinion” is the object of influence, intoxication, propaganda, disinformation or manipulation as main types of persuasion and as main components of the negative journalism. The object of opposable influence is the human being. This can be and is permanently the target of some influence projects of determined meaning. Although not any influence project is approved, the reality is that almost any influence project is admissible. Persuasion creates its influence project reality by propagating some opinions of persuasive nature.

In general, opinion has the power. However, there are also voices specialised on conviction which are not satisfied just with the simple and innocent opinion. Nevertheless, the social comprehension level aimed is the common sense of the judiciously enlightened individual opinion. Within the limits of an accepted common sense, every individual is allowed to have their own opinion. As long as they do not go beyond the common sense, the reality of opinion is objective. The condition of common sense is the lack of the intervention of distorted exogenous pressures. The society strongly believes in the natural health of opinion (Dima &

Vlăduțescu, 2012; Perloff, 2012). The hypothesis of the healthy natural opinion is only fully verified on the field of conviction. When referred to the space of persuasion where negative journalism lies, here confirmatively reigns another hypothesis: the hypothesis of opinion with altered naturalness. The alteration of the opinion naturalness occurs in two ways: by seduction and by fiction. Whether in the case of conviction, the nature of opinion is concordant with the nature of reality, for persuasion the nature of opinion does not honestly coincide anymore with the nature of reality.

2. NATURAL OPINION AND ALTERED OPINION

Persuasion renders an altered opinion as a natural one. The great American journalist Walter Lippmann illustrates the alternation of opinion in the case of freedom. Thus, he insists on the fact that “although the emphasis is on the freedom of citizens, it is not a guarantee of objectivity in the modern public opinion, for this opinion is related to an unknown world” (Lippmann, 1946).

The natural opinion is altered by the excess of incertitude: the complexity of certain phenomena exceeds the capacity of natural comprehension. Public opinion is the generic assembly of a society’s common natural opinion. It is the concept of not altering the social opinion. It is assumed it would have the power to understand phenomena such as the national budget, the ratio wages/prices, the demographic balance, etc.

Although such a coverage scope is accepted, it should be said that the individual that is left exposed to the impregnation with natural opinions encounters great difficulties in creating an opinion (Vlăduțescu & Ciupercă, Smarandache, 2006). The first cause is an apparently amazing thing and this is exactly why it is at the reach of unjust denial: the individual seeks only rarely to create their own opinion. In other words, in most cases, the individual is knowingly exposed to the impregnation with the opinions of others. Even in the directly accessible problems, the individual prefers seeks to acquire reference opinions for themselves in the proximal ability to have opinions. The appurtenance group members (parents, friends, peers) and the permeability media fall into the category of proximal “opinion makers”. As Jean Stoetzel shows that “to express an opinion means for a subject to socially be situated in relation to its group and to external groups. Therefore, it is not just legitimate, but also it is advisable to interpret the meaning of their opinion relating it to the common opinion” (Apud Domenach, 2004, p. 131).

What is generally called public opinion, it alternatively represents a mathematics of averages. In the surveys performed, sociologists sample a stochastic average which they institute as representing the manifestation of public opinion on any subject. It has to do with evidence that seldom such surveys result in the opinion of an individual involved in a certain group. They bring into light a rather abstract, generic opinion, to the extent where it is artificially extracted and placed all at once at a national or international scale. These opinion surveys represent in themselves an average of what is already an average. Their limits and error margins result from this artificial articulation (Siminică & Traistaru, 2013; Traisatru & Avram, 2014). Investigating the opinion leads to exploiting the gross opinion which emerges from the group level, where what has been stated as an opinion is manifested. The appurtenance groups are inevitably many: family, party, union, entourage, relationship circles, etc. This makes the individual issue different opinions as member of one of the groups, with the consciousness of honesty. The opinions can sometimes be contradictory. The only and rare cases of uniformity of what has the ability of opinion are represented by the moments of crisis. The crises have to

do with a public opinion that is massively predictable by its uniformity. Political crises or revolutions clot a party opinion. Wars coagulate a national opinion. In these cases, the individual opinion is mimetically and mathematically grafted on an average of the extended group, macro-group. They fall into the opinion sketches which tend to be solidly created at a level which its aspirations are also directed to. There are situations when an average opinion does not crystallise on such a major interest with permeability. When the individual opinion may fluctuate between the various abilities to express an opinion, it get a certain contour through suggestion.

Every individual shows a trend which Gallup called “impression of the universality”. This consists in the propensity of most people to follow not the opinion of the entire nation, but that of the small group which represents its world. Gallup believes that the runner has a small and well defined world, he undertakes its opinion. The individual becomes typical when one rallies the opinion of the appurtenance group. This feature has been called typicality. When the individual refuses to take over the opinion of the group, they become atypical. Typical or atypical, the individual is not uniform. Moreover, they can be typical in one group and atypical in another: typical within the family and atypical within the party, typical within the union and atypical within the family, etc.

As it is known, for S. Freud there is no natural and primary social instinct. The individual’s universe is limited to a group of people who have acquired a prestige, an overwhelming significance in their own eyes. Thus, Freud and Gallup confirm each other. The individual takes over the opinions of the group. Changing the individual’s opinion takes place in the perspective where it has been formed at the group level. This also explains the variation of the overestimation and correlative underestimation between the individual’s opinion and group’s opinion. Thus, it is also deciphered that public opinion does not actually have an original and authentic character, but it is relative to one or another of the groups. It does not naturally reflect the reality, but on the contrary, it provides an image deprived of the group’s common interests, regardless whether it would be a matter of the national interests, class interests or professional interests. Therefore, it emerges that to operate on an opinion is not the equivalent of necessarily distorting the reality. To act on an opinion means to change the data of a view that is usually particularly far from reality and this could bring it closer to reality.

However, the individual’s natural opinion is not superficial and changeable in essence, as is the feeling which determines a customer to abandon a certain soap brand for another, whose ad is more attractive. The public opinion is more than this relativism, but however it has no immobility.

The individual natural opinion has fragile anchors. Public opinion also has its own stronger ropes anyway. Opinion in general is simultaneously related to the group and to the individual. It is particularly stronger as it belongs to a strongly structured group. The individual natural opinion has an underside. There is always a deep individual opinion beyond the natural opinion. A serious opinion underlies the changeable and superficial opinion. Both bear in the consciousness the pressure of the group in different ratios, as both are indissolubly linked to the person, to their philosophical beliefs, their experiences, religious ideas and ideology. The individual has a natural opinion which raises on a hard core of opinion (Craig, 2014; Grabara & Cosmescu, 2014; Bajdor & Grabara, 2014).

Conviction and persuasion search both on one in order to flatter it, and on the other in order to despise it by change. Both release the deep opinion, the conviction in the spirit of coherent honesty, persuasion intended for injection and anaesthetisation. Every time there occurs a commutation between the obscurity and the transparency of opinion. The views are

engaged as opinions, the opinions are sterilised as faiths (Grabara, Kolcun & Kot, 2014; Dima & Man, 2014; Gîfu, 2014; Strehie, 2014).

In the fundament of opinion there is a program of the ability to express opinions. The expressed natural opinion withholds a deep opinion. The first instance opinion is relatively easy to manage the last instance opinion is obstinate. Doubtfulness is the name of the phenomenon that occurs when the two individual opinions cannot be separated, indecision also.

Nobody is indifferent, the individual is not indifferent. Indecision and doubtfulness are the results of the inhibition of rational-personal reasons.

There are no latent opinions, but only opinions in the course of decipherment, disclosure, decryption and interpretation.

Should conviction firstly search the deep opinion, persuasion instead primarily aims the surface opinion. In relation to the basic opinion, they guide their effort towards awakening an opinion related to the deep one and attracting it into the circuit of intervention forces. Negative journalism primarily and especially addresses therefore the natural surface opinion. It does not act *ex nihilo*, but it builds on an already existing platform. It starts from an idea, from a feeling, from a generic word. It starts from something already formed and cherished by those which it is addressed to (Neacșu, 2005; Păun, 2014).

Persuasion is a problem of persuasive message. In preparing the persuasive message, the communicational impulse is often minimal. However, it proves sufficient to induce or transform an opinion. Powered by seduction and fiction (lie and myth), negative journalism operates in a sector of dually ambiguous ambivalent ability to express opinions. Its field can be polarised in the posterior of opinion towards opposed attitudes. In relation to the fissional core of the ability to express opinions, five altitudinal variants may be distinguished, as A. Sauvy does it (Sauvy, 1979, p. 43):

- a) to work for defeat;
- b) to hope in defeat and enjoy when it occurs, without however working for it;
- c) to fear the defeat, without withstanding this feeling;
- d) to fight against the fears of defeat and maintain hope;
- e) not to imagine any possibility of defeat.

Persuasion is a communication of attack. When the persuader works “for defeat” and on the “hope of defeat”, they rely on a defeatist background of the ability to express opinions. Therefore, based on a deep opinion favourable to persuasion, it shall only perform maintenance and refreshing operations at the level of natural surface opinion.

When (b) the persuasive communication has to do with a deep opinion directed towards demobilisation, the persuader shall militate to make it move from the feeling to the act in a surface opinion. Here, passing from the shameful opinion-hope to a practical self betrayal shall be encouraged. Without however rejecting the idea, the deep opinion that has in its core the fear of defeat represents a fertile land for the negative journalism. Those subjects with such an opinion are vulnerable on two ways. First of all, they are vulnerable on the path made possible by the existence of the presentiment of a defeat and the idea of admitting the defeat. Persuasion shall need to transform this vulnerability into a natural feeling of the fatality of the defeat. What is admitted allows the advancement in the admitted direction, and persuasion shall not hesitate to valorise the opportunity (Mangra, Cotoc & Traistaru, 2013; Smarandache & Vlăduțescu, 2014; Gîfu & Teodorescu, 2014). Second of all, subjects are vulnerable through their very own fear of failure. Profiting by this, negative journalism shall take benefit by transforming the fear into a decision of not defending and of taking a step back.

3. CONCLUSION

Persuasion is the communication of persuasive influence. Generally, persuasion encounters typicality and may fail if it does not succeed to create and induce a typicality, a deconstructive and destructive one, followed then by a conformation proposal to the already silenced anti-typicality. Persuasion installs in the mobile area of the opinion, which unfortunately are most often particularly vast. The versatility of opinion stimulates negative journalism. On this unbalance of the abilities to express an opinion, there are cases where negative journalism leads the mass with unstable opinion from one extreme to another. The undecided, indecisive, disoriented mass, the mass lacking a deep non-handling opinion obviously forms the characteristic group taken as object by the negative journalism. The role of this type of communication is to subject the amorphous, unstructured groups to influence and to attack the organised groups hoping for a breach.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work was partially supported by the grant number 33C/2014, awarded in the internal grant competition of the University of Craiova.

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(Received 16 June 2014; accepted 25 June 2014)