

Public sphere of Puno university students, an analysis of the social network The university portal

Esfera pública de los universitarios puneños, un análisis a la red social El portal universitario

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Received: 02/01/2021
Accepted: 28/02/2021
Published: 17/03/2021

Abstract

The study presents an analysis of the social network Facebook: *The university portal* and its relationship with young students of the National University of the Altiplano, where the platform ceases to be a leisure space and becomes the public sphere that is interpreted as the virtual media space for regulating in interpersonal relationships that affect others. The research is qualitative, it is developed through the application of two techniques: the interview with four founding members of the social network *The university portal* and the observation of the platform using as an instrument record sheets on the use of the new tools of the network social Facebook, in the phase of a specific event that becomes a journalistic agenda, such as the “storming of the university” of the mentioned university. The work shows the new forms of the public sphere in the Facebook network, such, comments, number of shares and reproductions. In addition, it shows the relationship of institutional political activity between students and *the university portal*, closing the communication itself.

Keywords: journalism in networks, public sphere, Facebook, university students.

Resumen

El estudio presenta un análisis de la red social Facebook: *El portal universitario* y su relación con los jóvenes estudiantes de la Universidad Nacional del Altiplano, donde la plataforma deja de ser un espacio de ocio y se convierte en la esfera pública que es interpretada como el espacio mediático virtual de regulación en las relaciones interpersonales que afectan a otros. La investigación es cualitativa, se desarrolla mediante la aplicación de dos técnicas: la entrevista a cuatro miembros fundadores de la red social *El portal universitario* y la observación a la plataforma, utilizando como instrumento fichas de registro sobre el uso de las nuevas herramientas de la red social Facebook, frente a un hecho específico que se convierte en agenda periodística como es la “toma de local” a la universidad mencionada. El trabajo muestra las nuevas formas de esfera pública en la red de Facebook, como las reacciones, comentarios, número de veces compartido y reproducciones. Además, evidencia la relación de la actividad política institucional entre estudiantes y *El portal universitario*, cerrando la comunicación en sí misma.

Palabras clave: esfera pública, estudiantes universitarios, Facebook, periodismo en redes.

Introduction

In no less than a decade the forms of communication have changed dramatically, making way for virtual spaces, new codes typical of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have emerged, a situation that generates a migration of young people to these media spaces. Informational journalism now occurs in real time, Zayani, (2020) reveals “about the ability of established media organizations to adapt to changes in technology and the changing ways in which news is produced and consumed” (p. 24). In regions such as Puno, television and radio are lagging behind for the adult generations, on the other hand, young university students are always online, social networks are the link to connect and find out what is happening in the world, in the country and in their region. Then the university students interact quickly with the network administrator, as with the followers and consequently go from receivers to senders, often making judgments of value in a compromised way through a comment or simply generating a reaction through the network’s emoticons, hashtag that allows a hyperlink and directs a page with other related publications, thus presenting itself in the public sphere today. In the Puno region, it has been seen that university students found their space for interaction preferably through the social network Facebook called El portal Universitario “*the university portal*”, becoming their source of information and the space where they present their opinions and points of view regarding the facts of university political life. Thus, when we want to know how “ideological” our growing affective polarization really is, the answer is that the ideological roots of that polarization are largely based on our social attachments to ideological labels, not just effective collections of opinions. (Mason, 2018). In this sense, you can only give an accurate opinion if you belong to a social group, then *the university portal* is the communication way with the greatest proximity that promoted and produced content for its local audiences, which value the themes of their environment (Rodríguez, 2020, p. 115). This social network created on July 8, 2013, caused a great impact due to the political situation and was articulated on a par with *smartphone and iPhone* technology, and at the same time young people were empowered by these technologies. According to the Radio and Television Advisory Council [CONCORD TV], in 2018 the audience for television news programs with local coverage dropped to only 15%, with

adults and older adults who most consumed traditional media.

One of the factors that intervenes in the public sphere through the use of social networks is related to the exponential growth of followers who feedback *the university portal* with comments, reactions, reproductions, this growth has to do directly with a particular phenomenon that It occurs in national universities, the so-called “campus takeover”, justified by reasons that may be of a social, political, economic nature, among others. However, there is a *sui-generis* situation that relates the interests of university students and the measure of force called “campus takeover”, that is, when a group of university students decides to arbitrarily close the facilities of the university campus, to demand the solution to their requests and/or claims to the university authorities. What is constituted in the expression of the weak institutionality in the university, because although there are norms, they are not fulfilled. In addition, the uncertainty of knowing if the facilities of the National University of the Altiplano were open or not, motivated the members of the university community (teachers, administrators, students and graduates), to become followers of *the university portal* and the founders of this social network understood that the number of followers increased when there were more campus takeovers.

So social networks represent the space for deliberation and constitute part of the exercise of free expression and debate of ideas, as has been seen, commercial social network platforms have become a very relevant space for political discussion (Santana and Huerta, 2018). It is precisely the objective of this study to understand the strength of the digital medium directly related to university problems, the impact of the social network as a space for opinion and the learning of those involved (founders of the network and the sphere of university students).

Theoretical framework

Philosophy of the Public Sphere

The Kantian public sphere can be interpreted as the scope of regulation of the consequences of interpersonal relationships that affect third parties not involved in the initial relationship, this is where the State intervenes. On the other hand, in the case of Arendt’s (1997) thought, the public is

thought more in relation to its spatiality, taking into account the difference between public space and private space. For public opinion, what is directly concerned is when the State intervenes. It should look at the actions of people and their consequences that affect those directly involved and others than those immediately involved (Dewey, 2004). It is understood then by public sphere where practical matters are deliberated by citizens as autonomous individuals (Vera, 2018, p.111). With the aforementioned philosophical approaches, the public sphere is conditioned by the reasons and interests of a group directly or indirectly linked to society, which celebrates reasons for engaging in a favorable or unfavorable way, citizens are in power to issue judgment of value on a given fact.

Each citizen is capable of thinking for himself and, therefore, can publicly exercise value judgments. That is why the use of reason that is allowed to man within a civil position or a function entrusted to him is called private use (Kant, 2004). In this sense, the existence of a public sphere is understood in this way where practical matters are deliberated by all citizens as autonomous individuals and legislators, (...) everyone has the right to deliberate, since they are matters concerning the *res publica* (Vera, 2018, p.111).

Two approaches to the public sphere are defined, the first, the public begins where private acts have consequences that affect people not involved (Dewey, 2004). The public sphere is the space where each individual is recognized in his diversity, making possible the plurality of human beings (Arendt, 1993). The public space, then, is linked to that of decision-making, that is, to what is prosecuted by the right to freedom, creed and ethnicity, where the practical discourse is given, and each one asserts their individuality as long as it is respected the other as such.

However, the scenery of the public sphere linked between the actors and the web portal presents two positions, the first of the consequences “those that affect the people directly involved in a transaction, and those that affect others than those immediately involved” (Dewey, 2004, p.64). And the second, related to the deliberation of individuals, “it is spatially delimited, and the borders of the space of freedom coincide with the walls of the city, the polis or, more exactly, the agora that is surrounded” (Arent, 1997, p113), points out the insistence on the existence of an area of joint deliberation,

where everyone can assert themselves in their individuality in decision-making. Faced with this unease about the functioning of an efficient university management, critical theory has proposed a new way of understanding democracy in such a way as to ensure the participation of all those affected. Democracy constitutes a set of procedures that guarantee the participation of all those affected in the discourse (Habermas, 2000).

Public sphere in the digital age

Two decades ago, digital technology was timidly lived, the exposure of oneself through social networks was done with all reserve, we were more electronic than digital. McLuhan (1978) was still in force the name *Homos electronicus*, referring to the fact that a “mass man is the electronic inhabitant of the terrestrial orb and at the same time is united with all other men” (p. 74). A few years ago, if someone wanted to put his point of view, he could do it through his blogs, the opinions added to the consistency and foundation of ideas and controversial situations. However, in a few years the digital world has generated changes in democratic life and public affairs (Benkler, 2006). In part, it is about the techno-social infrastructure that digital technologies allow and the actors who enjoy the change are young people, they transformed these social technologies and become individual citizens and even anonymous agents that connect and exchange content among themselves the democratizing sense (Arnaudo, 2017). The digital sphere has facilitated the circulation of political ideas and public policies and, therefore, in public opinion. This contemporary democratic perspective insists on the participation of all those affected and the justification of the public powers. Contrary to the previous authors’ position, it is considered that in the digital age *Homo digitalis* arises, and this is frequently presented anonymously, but it is not a nobody, it is an anonymous someone (Han, 2018).

Digital public sphere in politics and communication

The excess of information arises, where the various opinions can be commented on through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter; they can be reproduced, or generate reactions. Any of the above is an opinion, it is part of an element of the communication process. García (2019) “public spaces reveal an important part of the political communicational

condition of cities: multiple positions at the same time and spaces that generate not only dialogues, but also disputes and conflicts” (p.15). Communication essentially pursues the existence of the most elementary level, dialogue. This occurs in a present, almost face-to-face time. Thus, the political public sphere is understood as a system of political communications formally organized in society with those face-to-face deliberations that occur at the foundations of the political system (Habermas, 2006). However, the digital bursts in and in a way generates that these deliberations “face to face” are lost, moving to a new deliberative form on Facebook that is publication-opinion (reactions, comments) or publication-sharing (that is, it shows an absolute according to the point of view of the person who published), that is when it is emphasized that Facebook liquidates the mediation of communication, puts representative democracy in trouble (...) it consists of isolated individuals, lack of a soul, who unite in a digital swarm does not develop any “we” (Han, 2018). This new form of digital public sphere somehow becomes superfluous and tends to generate another vision of democracy, perhaps less intense; and perhaps more pragmatic, especially in young people, whose sense of the search for information is different, precise and conclusive.

Methodology

68 The research is developed under a qualitative approach and the method of phenomenography was used, which refers to systematizing forms of thought based on which people interpret significant aspects of reality (Martón, 1981). The research includes two techniques: the in-depth interview conducted with four founding members of the social network The university portal that for the purposes of the study will be coded as E = 1, E = 2, E = 3 and E = 4, there is also informed consent; and observation, using the registration cards (Sandin, 2003), in order to collect information on the new tools of the Facebook social network, in the face of a specific event which becomes a journalistic agenda, such as the “campus takeover”.

The research was based on three central questions: 1) How the young university students of the National University of the Altiplano become deliberative social actors and find in the social network *the university portal* the appropriate public sphere to be informed and express an opinion, especially in conjuncture of “campus takeover”. 2) How

the speculative intuition of a student and a small group of friends from the Faculty of Statistical Engineering, close to a university political group called Proposed for the Reform and Integration (PRI), are discovering in parallel to their political activism the possibilities of space trying to be “journalists, who have been delegated the role of administrators and mediators of networks, have become “community managers” or community administrators, without a professional or strategic guideline that comes from the specific domain that grants academic training” (Gutiérrez, 2012, p.42). 3) How young university students found this virtual digital medium to express their opinions, ironic, playful, resorting to the emotional and interfered with by the political.

In this way, the analysis and new interpretations of the digital public sphere were evidenced with the use of sources, reactions, comments, number of shares and reproductions. The intervention time was the first academic semester 2019-I (March 4 to July 26, 2019).

Results and reflections

Background on political-university participation and its relationship with the virtual platform

The National University of the Altiplano in 2019 hosted 18,894 university students, it is the oldest, most prestigious and influential of the 4 universities in the region. In this sense, it contributed by professional generations of good level and because Puno is a region of 1 million 172,100 inhabitants (INEI, 2017). The existence of the UNA is strategic for its development, since the professionals who lead both public and private management were trained in this house of studies. Like any national university, especially those that appear on the extreme poverty map, it shows radical political positions through movements, groups and/or parties, therefore, they intervene in the governing bodies of this Institution.

Historically, since its creation in 1962, the National University of the Altiplano (UNA) has been governed by two political groups with a national trajectory of the extreme left, Patria Roja (Red Homeland) and Bandera Roja (Red Flag), following the logic of “the red passions”. They are typical of revolutionary movements (democratic-radical and socialist), that is, those that are aroused

and nourished by the experiences of profound changes, by the vision of the emergence of a new world and a new man (Bodei, 1995). Somehow the radical positions in the UNA of Puno became entrenched from the 1970s until the end of the 1990s, there was even sedition. Some Marxist and Maoist parties became entrenched in higher-level educational institutions and even used spaces and student leaders and through them managed to expand their ideas and capture minority groups of young people.

It was around 1992 that the Peruvian army and police settled in the UNA in a quartered way, carrying out a military life for two years, it is then that the ideologies and activism in the two great ideological groups Patria Roja and Bandera Roja weaken as party within the institution and mutate as movements or groups, frightened by the stigma of being classified as “communists or terrorists”. Although the matrix (Red Homeland and Red Flag) remains with other denominations, the discrepancies are evident in each electoral process. The university context was definitely influential on young students, basically on migrants from rural areas. Indeed, in ideological terms it was a sort of encounter between the Andean identity and the Marxist paradigm (Portocarrero, 1992).

Currently, radical positions prevail in students, at the level of leaders; but there is a lack of ideological training and in the followers the rebellion is maintained that is enlivened when there is a “campus takeover” and this is published on the social network *The university portal*, generating actions and positions when they comment or put a simple “I like it” or they share the information on their wall, that is where the information bubble is achieved, that is, they close the communication itself, even generating political activism.

Faced with this conjuncture of movements in search of student power, student marches, strikes, takeover of the university premises strategically arises, due to the dissatisfaction of the various administrations, the low academic level, the absence of an adequate infrastructure and the subtle manipulation of the teachers and political interest groups. These reasons are what prompted a student leader to create 7 years ago, the social network of Facebook *the university portal*, whose objective was to provide information to students not involved in the various conflicts, therefore

they resorted to one of the knowledgeable sources of the crisis, at first it was just a network of mutual friends, but exponentially it became an informative medium that anticipated what was happening at the UNA.

However, this network was becoming an instrument of power, in some way it was generating a singular influence, being the movement Proposed for the Reform and Integration (PRI) elected as part of the student government in three consecutive electoral periods, that is, the students who participate in the University Assembly, University Council, are from the same political group that creates the social network *the university portal*, which at the same time maintains a strange position of “opposition”, which apparently confuses most of its followers. In this sense, as stated by one of the founders E = 1, reports that: “*the PRI group was born in the Faculty of Statistics, where Roger Chuquimamani was studying*”, (creator of the social network; in 2019 is launched as a candidate on behalf of graduates for the UNA University Council being overwhelmingly elected) returning to the testimony E = 1 continues, “*Roger was involved in the (PRI) politics his classmates asked him if there was going to be a “campus takeover”, and he only warned his classmates by mouth in mouth. He then created a personal page and published on his Facebook, about any political incident that was in the university, uploaded the news with photos; and his personal network grew in followers. There he made the decision, joined with 5 friends and “the university portal” emerged. At the beginning we never imagined the significance that was achieved, so far*”. It should be noted, although they do not call themselves journalists, they somehow assume that function, this phenomenon of social networks turns those who have more followers into a *community manager* of a social political nature.

Facebook Platform the University Portal:

An objective and systematic description is presented that will allow answering many questions about how the social network is currently constituted.

- Name of the social network (Facebook): *The university portal*, which uses as a slogan *it informs you, it amuses you*, within the formalization of the medium for commercial or information contacts, it uses as channels, cell phone 944250343, elportalu@gmail.com.

- Foundation date: created on July 8, 2013.
 - Current number of followers is 375,898 thousand (December 2020).
 - Number of followers (October 2019) had 317,000 followers, distributed in Puno with 53,300; Juliaca 32,200; Cusco 8080; Arequipa 19,900; Tacna, 6,520; La Paz Bolivia, 4,100; Trujillo, 3,100; Huancayo, 3,000; Lima 38,800; others 5,600.
 - Mission: We are an information portal, which aims to publicize the events that occurred mainly in universities and cities.
 - Presentation of the social network is animated; it shows in chains a series of images (photographs) technically recorded with a drone and that are various panoramic views of squares and cities in the provinces of the Puno region. The duration time is 49 seconds. It reflects despite the slogan, *it informs you, it amuses you*, that its audiovisual narrative is slowed down, connoting more towards the informative/journalistic, without much resource, or audiovisual direction style, where the image is mostly worked in post-production and the sound characterized by wind instrument, he maintains the stillness and style of the funds used by traditional television newscasts in Puno, typical of journalists who migrated from radio to television.
 - Captive public: 42% are between 18 to 34 years, followed by 38% concentrated between 35 to 44 years.
 - Journalistic sections that recur: politics, sports, social.
 - Genre: mainly the informative.
 - Journalistic resources: make links to the main media in the region and the country. Indirectly they take the information as their own.
 - They have a *community manager*, who resolves and filters information that is disrespectful or that does not suit their interests.
 - Digital technology: they try to manage a bot, in order to maintain communication through Messenger.
 - Legality as a company: in process.
- This description allows to show the virtual space of the university portal, the most outstanding characteristics found would lead to explain the exponential growth of the number of followers in the 6 years, its geographical coverage reaches as far as Huancayo and Bolivia. Its consolidated corporate identity, its strategic plan by spreading the mission and added to it, permanent staff that innovates and maintains the environment. In general, it is a current photograph of the network.
- The public sphere and its interrelation with the social network *the university portal***
- Figure 1 shows the analysis by categories of a comprehensive view of the management of the social network and its interrelation with the information, thereby demonstrating the statements of Habermas (2000) and Han (2018) about the public sphere in the virtual age and how on the one hand the creators who were university students intertwine links with part of their followers, the students. In addition, it finds coincidence in the existence of an area of joint deliberation, where each one can assert themselves in their individuality (Han, 2018), in the same way, how participation in decision-making is generated and they are interrelated in the digital medium. As the virtual medium matures and consolidates
- *The university portal* also interacts in other social networks: Twitter joined in July 2013 and has only 263 followers, Instagram joined in 2015, its contact is 931254986 and the email is elportalu@gmail.com and currently has 17,700 followers, in this network they have only managed to make 975 publications (December 11, 2020), and WhatsApp, serves as a link with opinion leaders of the Puno press and with friends who can provide information on the university, as well as indicated in the interview have several WhatsApp groups, E = 2 “since they are their links or contacts to verify information”.
 - Distribution by gender; Of the 317,000 followers (2019), 53% are male and 47% are female.

its style, it could be said that it is in the phase of understanding the network with a business vision and social commitment; For the moment, it is ideal to understand phenomenography, which aims to identify and describe the qualitatively different

ways in which people experience, understand and perceive phenomena in their environment (Martón, 1981), the authors present in the figure a perception of how the public sphere The university portal and its link with the university community.

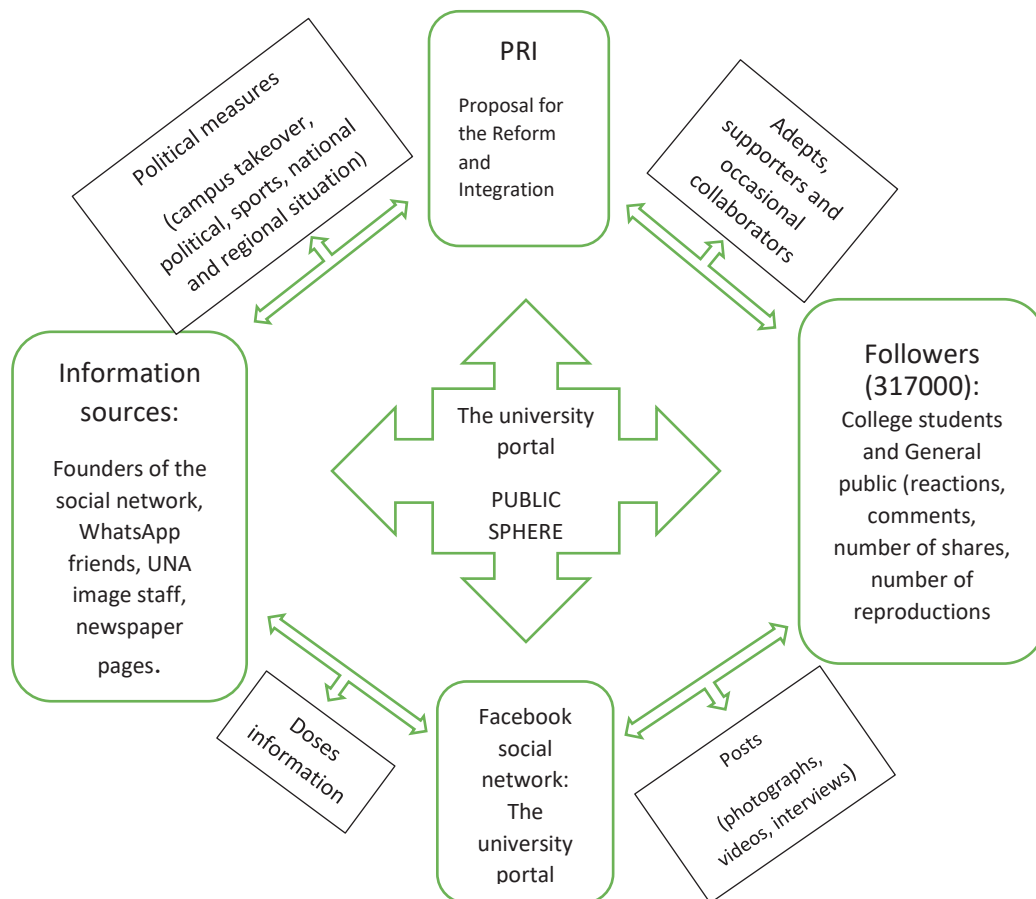


Figure 1. Conception of the public sphere in the journalistic exercise of the social network Facebook the university portal.

The university portal and journalistic work

The use of social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and the WhatsApp application, are now the spaces where citizens interact freely, E=3: *“We are serious because we do not manipulate the information, we always corroborate the information before it is published, it generated confidence in our followers and we have not lost spontaneity”*. Dewey’s (2004) proposal places the public sphere not only in space, but also in time. It is redeemable how the followers seek to maintain a direct relationship through WhatsApp by sending information about events that can be covered journalistically by the administrators of Facebook. In the democratic spectrum, the main political parties have official accounts, which are

essential during electoral campaigns (Saldaña, 2013), in this case it is often confused, although they emerge from a political group, they also assume journalist roles. The managers of this initiative must lead the project with a view that formulates future scenarios in favor of the virtual medium in question. One way for current and future leaders to have prospective thinking regarding the dimensions of sustainable development towards 2030 is by training all professional technical personnel (Vera, 2015), if that is the reality of the media in Puno, The University Portal has in its management, a group of *community managers*, who are currently a workforce, with “swaps” or with eventual salaries according to campaigns; but the specialization and training of those involved is imperative.

Perception of young university students related to the virtual public sphere

A society like today's where young people are imbued with digital technology and feel better able to develop and provide "programs that guarantee education; being those between 24 and 29 years old (43%) who feel the most strengthened" (Vera, 2015). Currently, the techno-social infrastructure that digital technologies allow receives, in addition to the already known actors, the exchange of individual citizens and even anonymous agents that connect and exchange content between them (Santana & Huerta, 2018). The University Portal divides its political information into national (32%), regional (10%) and institutional (48%) coverage of the information. In the case of the use of graphic/multimedia material, national and regional information is complemented by photographs that are downloaded from hyperlinks or recognized media sources (El Comercio, El Correo, El Diario Sin Fronteras, Andina virtual newspaper); But when it comes to institutional information (UNA-Puno), most of them are live recordings, students interact, report and participate and the most striking thing is that they present greater coverage when the "campus takeover" arises, E=1 "People request our transmissions". It is necessary to emphasize that it is precisely the institutional conflicts that have the greatest number of reproductions.

72 Within the study carried out, the conflict (May 22, 2019) that took place at the door of the University between students of Agricultural Engineering and Mining Engineering has attracted attention, a fact that raised more than 40,000 thousand reproductions. The media like blogs, Twitter or Facebook liquidate the mediation. The current society of opinion and information rests on this demediated communication. It puts an end to the age of representation ... it gives way to presence (Han, 2018). It would have to be conclusive that the existence of this network, which became a mediated space, has grown and positioned itself

given the absence of an institution that fails to understand the real interests of the university community.

As the university crisis worsens, the university portal grows in followers, it is a feedback that sometimes seems like an avalanche of snow, as the hours of the "campus takeover" pass, the movement of the network is dizzying. Figure 2 shows the estimate of a metric of the conglomerate of followers by age, sex that indicated Like referring to the page. The figure shows the new likes that resulted in a month and what age it belongs to, it is significant that the preference to follow and be interested is between 18 to 34 years old, that is, digital natives.

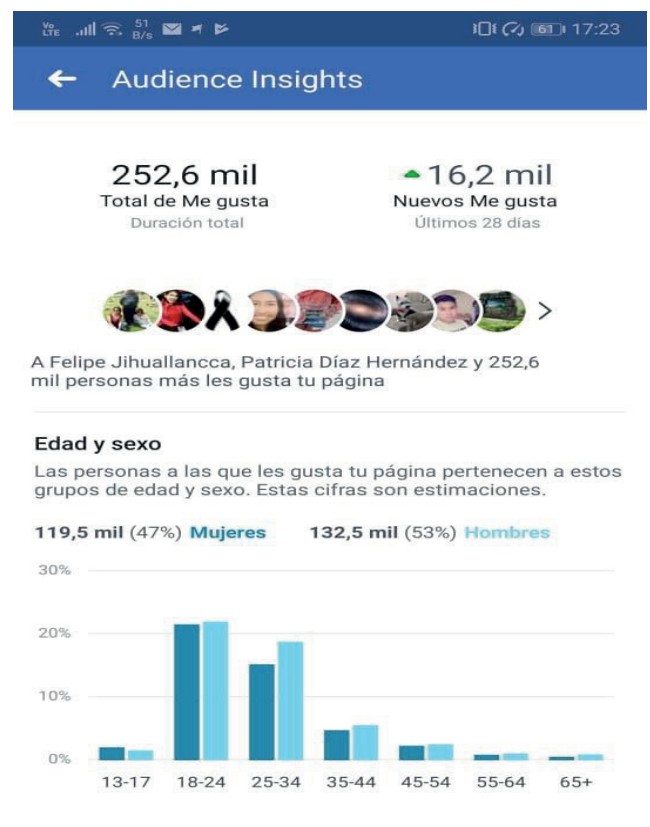


Figure 2. Number of followers clustered by age and sex. Source: Reproduced with permission from *the university portal*.

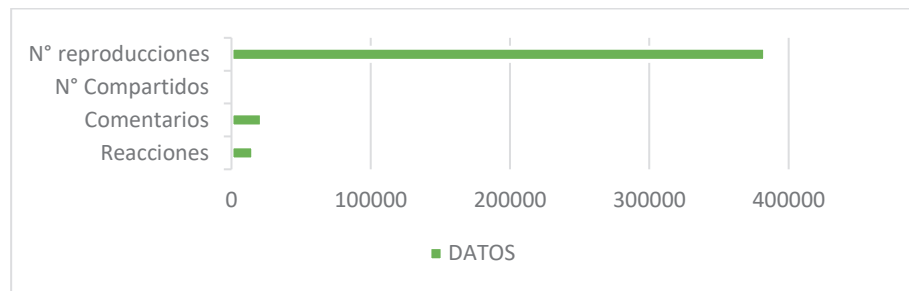


Figure 3. Young university students and the new interpretation of the public sphere

Figure 3 shows the events that occurred in the vicinity of the university on May 22, 2019, and it is corroborated how university students present their opinions with other codes such as reactions, comments, number of times shared, number of reproductions and It also reaffirms what is subscribed by (Bodei, 1995) the red passions, they are typical of the revolutionary movements (democratic-radical and socialist); that is to say, those that are aroused and nourished by the experiences of profound changes, by the vision of the emergence of a “new world” and of a “new man”. The young spirit is always behind changes and the young person of today is a spectator who uses the networks to interact, convene and revolutionize with ideas and proposals. However, there is a huge migration to web platforms such as Facebook (mainly), which establishes a change in the logic of interaction with social groups in universities, mainly students, which is based on the production of easily consumable audiovisual narratives (Porto, Angulo and Rodríguez, 2017).

New virtual protocols in the public sphere

Reactions, comments and number of shares are part of the new public sphere. Politics is in a way a matter of accessory, the “Like” button is the digital election card, the “click” or a brief press replaces the speech (Han, 2018). Opinions have currently been virtualized, Facebook followers manifest themselves in another way, even ignoring the written word through the use of social network tools such as: emoticons, reactions, comments, number of shares and number of reproductions Thus, the new communicational codes of the public sphere, which are composed of the intention, at least express, to participate in related conversations (Santana & Huerta, 2018). However, the administrators, E=3: *“Everything is still very spontaneous, the portal for us is not*

considered a job. If we stay, it is because there is a good working environment”. However, this medium summons, informs and in certain cases controls the followers and they are assertive because they resort to the same communication styles: irony, double meaning, making fun of the crisis, both achieve a very effective feedback of the message. Precisely, when there is greater action is when followers and administrators of the network discover, the potential that they suppose as a form of direct contact, as a platform for the visibility of the person and their management, as a cyber-activity tool, as an alert of possible conflicts or as discussion forum (Tuñez and Sixto, 2011). Figure 4 shows how citizens, mostly students, take a position and express their opinions through these new virtual protocols in the public sphere.

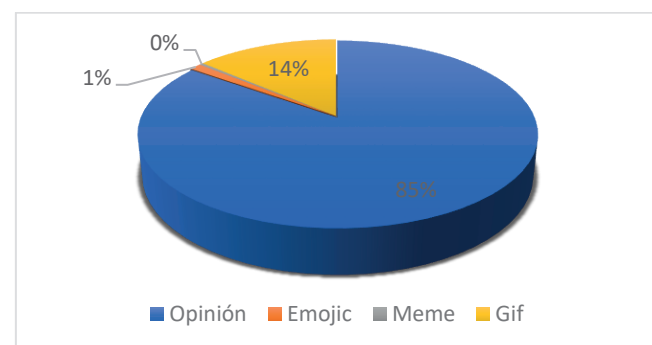


Figure 4. New forms of public sphere in the digital age

The registration cards applied show that 85% of university students express an opinion, not necessarily through the use of words, but using the new tools of the Facebook social network such as reactions, comments, emoticons, number of times shared and number of reproductions, therefore, these new communication codes are now used with an ideological and activist connotation in the situation of political conflict that the University was experiencing, in general people are more exposed to content that confirms their ideas and

They tend to isolate from contrary ideas (Pariser, 2012), especially when their network of contacts is not very heterogeneous (Bakshy, Messing, & Adamic, 2015). Regarding the existence of a code of ethics or self-regularization, E=1: “*Facebook has a filter that regularizes some words. We do have a bot, but only to give instant answers and also to ask questions. We are working to improve*”. Virtual platforms meet cyber-troops operating mainly through false accounts, which can be automated, such as bots, or false human accounts, which meet the same objectives, but through a coordination of operators who manually manage (Santana- Huertas, 2018). We return to Dewey and Arendt when they refer to the implications of consequences and deliberative spaces, supported by the theoretical framework.

Conclusions

Young university students from the Puno region have found in the Facebook social network called the university portal (El portal Universitario), the space to express their opinions, using messages to issue value judgments in reference to the current political context that exists within the National University of the Altiplano, these new tools of the Facebook social network, such as reactions, comments, reproductions, are distinguished by being linked to certain characteristics such as irony and confrontation related to the approval or disapproval of the higher institution where they study. In the virtual age, this network has become the public sphere of the students’ media, which even guides their information on regional and national events. The coverage of the social network is determined by the number of followers, its distribution is concentrated in the Puno region and then in neighboring regions such as Arequipa and Cusco. The largest number of followers is grouped in young people between 18 to 34 years old.

This social network, being created by students of the National University of the Altiplano, manages to understand the needs and interests of the media information required by its target audience. The emergence of a student political movement, facilitates the process of elaboration of the message, the way to establish presence in the conjuncture of the “campus takeovers” and to easily collect favorable and unfavorable opinions of the

facts, even sometimes the information through a community manager, resulting in the construction of a public sphere devoid of information with social responsibility.

The creators of the social network called the university portal, despite the considerable number of followers and the degree of credibility, do not yet understand the potential of their power and limit their actions to situations of institutional conjuncture, which often do not build citizenship. They are unaware of the functions of the press, which are to guide and educate in order to generate proactive professional citizens in their followers. However, their performance is correct when they interact with others, they show that they know their reality which coincides with their profiles and at certain times they achieve the information bubble, that is, they close the communication itself, even generating political activism.

Another positive feature is that those who run this network intuitively work and assume the new forms of the public sphere: they use conversations (comments); are presented reliable (live broadcasts and comments about it); they present the facts as if they were gamers; They resort to the emotional (use of jokes, irony, using emoticons and reactions) and skillfully work on the references of others, (they use interviews and other journalistic sources). Therefore, this new public sphere can become superficial spaces where the mass dies and the individual predominate and this is demonstrated through their comments, reactions and reproductions, today converted into spaces of opinion.

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