

Media And Cultural Hegemony In Mozambique: A Look Focused On The Influence Of Television Content On Local Axiology

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Summary

The article studies the television programming schedules in Mozambique to understand the educational value of their contents based on the recognition of the educational force that television has in the lives of individuals. The research extends to the field of educational mediation, in order to understand the historical-political panorama, especially before and after national independence. The debate is based on Gramscian thought according to which television is one of the most important institutions of civil society that has the function of educating towards the consensus of fundamental social groups. For the analysis, the Epistemological Dialectic Method and the Content Analysis Method were adopted. The results reveal that the national television schedule contains mostly programs that are not useful for maintaining a cultural memory that is based on ancestry, much less for local cultural values.

Keywords: *Television; Education; Hegemony; Cultural Values.*

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I. Introduction

The concerns inherent to the educational power of television are as recent as its genesis in the first half of the 20th century. When we adopt that television, the greatest revolutionary audiovisual media sign, is the result of the manifestation of the Enlightenment and modernism, we accept that the discussion about this type of media is, in fact, relatively recent as much as its invention and popularization.

In Mozambique, the conception of Portuguese colonial (formal) education imposed on natives, in addition to being out of step with the cultural and social values of their daily lives, did not aim to emancipate colonized peoples but to ideologically alienate them in axiological terms, and make them perennially subordinate and only useful to the interests of the Portuguese in terms of work through bourgeois capitalist colonial exploitation (Mondlane, 1975; Ngoenha, 2000; Taimo, 2010). Native African children, particularly Mozambicans, found themselves harmed by having to be taught through an alien language that was foreign to their environment – with such teaching being to the benefit of Portuguese children who found all their comfort in that language (Ngoenha, 2000).

In addition to Portuguese colonial education decreeing a suspension of the cultural and social values of native Mozambicans, it aimed to alienate such colonized peoples from an ideological and axiological point of view. He intended to keep them continuously subordinated, safeguarding their usefulness for purposes of interest to the Portuguese, such as the cases of labor activities that occurred based on bourgeois capitalist exploitation. The formal education system, which focused on the Portuguese language (foreign to Mozambicans) harmed native children and benefited Portuguese children who were already familiar with that language (Idem, 2000).

Although Protestant missionaries issued harsh criticisms of Catholics, and their composure put Catholic missions in decline, their very Westernized Christianity, presented to Africans, also proved to be harmful as it moved towards the eradication of local culture (Ngoenha, 2000).

There was a collision between the status of Westernized Christianity and the ecology of Mozambican knowledge. The meaning and social value of missionary education is not emancipatory, as it offered values that conflict with the values of the “evangelized” natives. The Westernized Christianity of the missionaries, proposed as evangelization to Mozambique, had the harmful purpose of eradicating the local culture – insofar as the document (Bible) used to minister such “sacred” values collided with the ecology of Mozambican knowledge.

Although there was a devaluation of Mozambican culture by the Portuguese colonial administration, through its educational system that excluded the axiological issues of natives in Mozambique (Mondlane, 1975; Ngoenha, 2000; Taimo, 2010), there was, in the post-Independence period, in the first in the middle of the 1980s, the Education sector was concerned about incorporating local cultural values into its programmatic contents. In this way, without neglecting all the aporias that we identified and mentioned, the aim was to develop an Education

that would materialize the project of forming national identity, that is, the idea of forming the “New Man” (Mazula, 1995).

Post-independence, specifically in the first half of the 80s, the Education sector was concerned with the inclusion of local cultural values in its formal educational programs. He was also concerned with building an agenda and collective thinking through the formation of the “New Man”, with a strong national identity (Mazula, 1995; Taimo, 2010).

The migration from socialism to neoliberalism by FRELIMO ruled out the chances of building the New Man because Mozambique changed the concept of state, in order to come into harmony with the Bretton Woods institutions (Taimo, 2010) that provided financing following the crisis economic crisis that hit the socialist countries and Mozambique in particular, to another where the assumptions of the New Man no longer fit. It opened up to a pluralistic era, enabling Television to prosper. From this stage onwards, there was no longer any clarity or concern in conceiving a collective agenda centered on building the profile of a citizen whose values were peculiarly Mozambican, as occurs in other well-structured quadrants in the world.

Our understanding of culture is not so distant from that of television, although the term emerged a century (19th) before the genesis of television. There is, from the group of hundreds of authors, little consensus on the concept of culture, however we consider some that were early and others that came later, all of which deserved attention due to the relevance of their approaches, which have extremely useful information for the main discussion.

Regarding the educational function of television, in Civil Society institutions, our reference is António Gramsci, to understand what the private devices of hegemony are, who the intellectuals of Television are and how this relates to the issue of cultural hegemony. We included Noam Chomsky (2015) to establish a parallel between his theory of media manipulation, with the exploration of the distraction technique, and the center-periphery model in terms of television content production.

Maxwell McCombs (1996) brings an interpretative lens on the place of Agenda Setting on Television. With António Gramsci (1992) we will discuss cultural hegemony in the context of television. Claude Lévi-Strauss in Cabral (2019) offers contributions to understanding the notion of culture without reductionism. Cheick Anta-Diop (1991) was called upon for his transcendental vision with marked respect and honesty for History and the ecology of knowledge when we have to think about culture – it was important to have him in the debate to explore his thoughts on the narratives that whitewash History of Africa in understanding culture.

Gramsci (1992) gave us an understanding of the logic that guides global culture through the object of study, Television. In this approach, Stuart Hall (2008) shed light on the understanding of cultural hegemonic issues. Severino Ngoenha (2000) enters to question Mozambican culture based on Western references brought by the religious catechism offered by Western priests. In this discussion we are interested in understanding the meaning and meaning of television and culture, based on the logic of television as a non-formal educational mediation device?

II. Cultural Values And The Hegemonic Meaning Of Television’s Educational Function

If we take Lévi-Strauss's criticism of evolutionism as rational, which occurs because the West sees itself as the purpose of human development, it is from this assumption that ethnocentrism is generated, which consists of seeing and analyzing other cultures based on their own. own categories, it is acceptable that the Values approach respects this postulate. It would also be acceptable that discussing values implies valuing Cheick Diop's statements, according to which culture is a bulwark that protects a people; by Stuart Hall, in the argument that cultural identity is not just a matter of being, but of becoming, belonging to both the future and the past – as identities undergo constant transformations, transcending time and space; by Severino Ngoenha on the aporias between the status used by Western missionaries to evangelize a native Mozambican without calling into question their cultural axiological references.

In this light, to avoid confusion about the polysemy understood by the term Values, we adopted the following understanding: “Cultural Values” do not refer to something that humans are born with. They refer to what is learned and developed in the interaction between humans and other beings. Cultural Values are a product of the history of one or more people, particularly early childhood and adolescence. In addition to being maintained by a group of people, Cultural Values are perceived by the most enlightened as those that have a lasting or permanent nature, as they are taught and learned (Cultural Memory) as absolute and with little reference to other possibly competing values.

We take as a basis that culturally and ideologically directing a society constitutes the foundation for maintaining the supremacy of the dominant class, highlighting the importance of the media as private devices of hegemony, which determinedly maintain the cohesion of social blocs. Therefore, as Rummert (1986) observes, the media can be considered a collective intellectual and vital to the materialization of the objective of the dominant classes. It is based on these considerations that we can understand the logic of Television.

In the discussion above, regarding the issue of Education, we realize that, for Gramsci (1971), two types of control mechanisms operate within the State: the mechanisms of the State itself and the mechanisms of Civil Society, through the hegemony that makes up social institutions and cultural). We understand, however, that the concept of hegemony is salient in the media, particularly television because of its focus on culture and ideology.

In the search for understanding the place of television in the institutions of Civil Society, it makes some sense to absorb the idea of television carrying a force superior to that of its mentors, insofar as it proves capable of establishing in the subaltern classes the ideology of the hegemonic class without, however, show signs of imposition and coercion.

Television is a greater force than its commanders (the large media centers) due to its ability to establish, in the subordinate classes, the dominant ideological vision, revealing the pseudo idea of impartiality, the imposition of which is hidden. The place that television occupies in Civil Society institutions is clear. Television appears to be an instrument of mediation in modern society aiming to significantly disseminate arbitrary ideology, to the benefit of one class and to the detriment of the other. Through television, the hegemonic class seeks to legitimize pseudo ideas about common sense – which Coben (1998) takes as an incoherent set of assumptions and general beliefs common to any society and time. Through television, the hegemonic class also seeks to legitimize common sense. It is based on the legitimization of common sense that dominant philosophies are disseminated and established that cover up imposition and coercion and make the consumer class (subordinated) increasingly alienated with few possibilities for the cultivation of intellectuality and rational freedom.

Public opinion is conditioned by the content disseminated by the media, in particular television, which exerts strong interference in the public's opinion formation process. The importance that the formation of public opinion has for maintaining the hegemony of the ruling class is obvious. It is equally obvious that cultural policy, as an instrument that materializes hegemony, is designed by the hegemonic class - hence the explanation about them being owners of the media industry that has control over the production of audiovisual content that feeds television in the quadrants of the universe.

The entire way television operates materializes an educational function, good or bad, through various strategies and, regarding this, Rummert (1986) cites control over the dissemination of information and the values disseminated in society; the mobilization of society around the objectives of the ruling class; the legitimization of the social and political system; the approach to the capitalist structure as something natural and immutable; the replacement of qualitative cultural values by quantitative values that meet the ever-growing need for consumption; the reorganization of the different modalities of cultural production, of the various social segments, into a single and homogenized content – mass culture; the construction of the social illusion that everyone can achieve, through their own merits, the right to equally enjoy the goods produced in capitalist society.

These strategies, through which the educational function materializes, seem to be in line with the media manipulation strategies in the light of Noam Chomsky, used to create a common sense, uncritical in relation to the origins of social problems, and make the population act accordingly. the interests of a hegemonic class through the flood technique. In his conception of the 10 strategies of media manipulation, Chomsky refers to a world immersed in a situation of pure distraction.

In this perspective, this sense of culture that is offered through the television media window collides with the sense of culture already announced by Gramsci, which refers to something capable of leading the individual to development, as also argued by Sen (2010), and not to the alienation that condemns the disadvantaged, peripheral and less intellectually educated classes to permanent subordination. For this subordination to last, or be permanent, the hegemonic class seduces the subaltern to divert the plan of struggle in favor of their rights to exciting representations, in fiction, so that the subalterns see their desires, which they cannot live in real world, realized at the level of fiction.

III. Television And Education For Local Cultural Values: An Approach Based On The Production Of Television Content From The Center To The Periphery

Television operates as a hegemonic device that propagates ideological values, through organic intellectuals who appear to be the main faces with the function of building “common sense”. Each social stratum has its own “common sense” and its own “good sense”, which are, basically, the most widespread conceptions of life and Man on Television. Common sense is a mechanism that reconstructs the dominant ideology and culture – individual thinking, when different, changes and comes into conformity with the social and cultural position of the masses on which such hegemonic ideology falls, creating the folklore of the future. From this perspective, global television materializes globalization in only a romantic sense.

Global television has the power to set the agenda for public thought and discussion in which its content becomes, to a considerable degree, the agenda of the global public (Stevens, 2003; McCombs, 2013). It is these pre-determined programming contents and dynamics, and produced from large media centers to peripheral centers, that make the hegemony of global Television an interesting area of study in post-colonial Africa.

It should be noted that the media industry does not manipulate its “oppressed” in a physical way, but rather does so through cognitive methods and psychopolitics of Byung-Chul Han (2020), which reach their target in a natural and falsified way. So, this disoriented herd must sit alone in front of the television, absorbing the message that the only important value in life is to own more consumer goods or live like that middle/upper class family you see, and cultivate appropriate values, such as harmony and Americanism.

When thinking about dominant media, it is important to consider not only their size and international reach, but also their cultural, economic and political influence, as they generally serve the interests of the dominant class, which are in harmony with the objectives of international financial institutions. Thus, the dominant media continues to promote a way of defining the limits of political debate and reinforcing the economic extremism of neoliberalism (Muswede & Lubinga, 2018), against the winds of change in post-colonial Africa. Their order is intimately linked to a subtle and invisible network of centrally based political, ideological and economic elite who use the communications industry to perpetuate particular needs, tastes, values and attitudes in order to increase profits.

The media are, to a large extent, driven by expansion trends that determine their corporate and behavioral structure to serve the interests of their financiers based in large, economically robust centers. Linked to the interests of advertisers, the global media supports neoliberal economic policies that serve the business community and the general interests of transnational companies, while undermining social and democratic realities.

IV. The Mozambican Television Context And Identity Hypertrophy

With the entry into force of the Press Law in Mozambique in 1991, which provided for the possibility of the emergence of private and independent media bodies, the country witnessed a “boom” in communication companies, including newspapers, radio and television.

With the universal process of migration from the analogue to the digital system, Mozambique was not left out, and therefore opened up to change, although relatively slowly compared to other quadrants. It is in the context of the migration from the analogue to the digital system, given the obligation for new broadcasters to be born in the new system, that more television broadcasters emerged and continue to emerge, such as Media Mais, Strong Live, Mega TV, among others.

In the 2017 population census, statistics from the National Statistics Institute (INE) indicate that half of the population, in a universe of 30,832,244 inhabitants, communicates fluently and fluently in Portuguese in the most varied communicative situations. Of this percentage of almost 50%, there are those who use Portuguese as their main (L1) and secondary (L2) language. Around 35% of the population declares the Emakhuwa language as their native language (L1), and 20% of the population (approximately 6 million) uses Portuguese as their main language (L1), 5.2% in the rural context. The Bantu languages, which are part of the country's linguistic mosaic, equally spoken by majority groups, hierarchically ordered, are the following languages: xichangana, elomwe, cinyanja, cisena, echuwabo, cindau and xitwa.

Considering that the country states, in the Constitution of the Republic, that Portuguese is the official language of the territory, but that highlights, in the same Diploma, the valorization of Mozambican languages as cultural and educational heritage, Television of Mozambique (TVM) began broadcasting of news in native language, as a way of extending information to viewers who do not speak Portuguese.

As television is one of the main sources of contemporary information, and the commercial television programming grid in Mozambique consists of programs broadcast in the official language, and native languages continue to be the main means of communication for Mozambicans (Joanguete, 2016), contrary to the official Portuguese language, spoken by a small portion of the population and essentially urban, it is rational to infer that the majority of the Mozambican population that does not speak Portuguese is excluded from television communication, although seduced by programs that do not add useful values such as referred to Noam Chomsky (2015) when discussing the deluge or media distraction technique found in the center-periphery model in terms of television content production.

If, on the one hand, Mozambican viewers are excluded due to the language used to broadcast content, a fact that “attacks” article 10 of the Constitution of the Republic, which makes Portuguese official as the main and/or national language in Mozambique, on the other on the other hand, the absence of local languages in television content threatens cultural heritage and weakens the Mozambican television sector from an axiological point of view in the dissemination of content.

Alongside linguistic exclusion on television is the exclusion of viewers with hearing limitations. With the exception of TVM and RTP, television stations in Mozambique do not use sign languages. Aware that the Press Law does not establish an imperative command for private television stations to use national languages and signs to meet special needs, the exclusion sharpens concerns about the place of local cultural values on the television grid in Mozambique, mainly because we assume that language can constitute a greater vector of axiological dissemination. At this point it is worth recalling Gramsci (1992) who led us to understand the meaning

that guides global culture through Television. Antonio Gramsci (1992), as well as Stuart Hall (2008) and Severino Ngoenha (2000), make it clear that hegemony is also established through language.

Referring to the importance and value that must be given to the ethnic plurality of the population, in the context of content broadcast on television, Muatiacale (2007, p. 32) postulates that “Mozambicanity will have to be the result of a sociocultural acquisition. In this sense, it is worth questioning the identities that Mozambican public and private television propose to the audience and the processes of their construction”. There is no structured value chain in order not to make Mozambican viewers dependent on external television products such as music, soap operas, films, scientific or self-help material.

It is in the legal coverage of the Press Law that the media have the prerogative to create their internal and specific rules, that is, each broadcaster must have its editorial status, aiming to define its orientation and objectives. This presupposes that, technically, the programming schedule of each television station should not conflict with its editorial status. The following table presents the origin and percentage of the content broadcast on the three television channels under study, without neglecting their classification, which includes Local, Canned and Pseudo-Local Content or Disguised Canned.

Table 1: Originality of content and its percentages

CONTENTS	MIRAMAR TV	STV	TVM
Local Content			
Canned Contents			
Pseudo-Local Content or Disguised Canned Contents			

Source: Prepared by the author based on the television programming schedule, 2023

Subtitle:

	Very high percentage	70% onwards
	High percentage	Between 50% to 70%
	Average percentage	Between 30% to 40%
	Low percentage	Between 20% to 30%
	Very low percentage	Below 20%

The logic of the functioning of the media field in Mozambique, for Miguel (2020), comprises four strategies: (i) positioning in the market through social projects; (ii) sensationalism; (iii) social merchandise - the media present themselves as solvers of social problems; and (iv) White-plate journalism that focuses on covering government activities, often in a critical manner, as a materialization of control over the actions of the government of the day (resembles the watchdog).

Digital media are also counter-hegemonic spheres, with the potential to confront, so to speak, economic or political power. After all, digital media have the potential to create and disseminate content capable of imposing an agenda, or even an agenda, on the public sphere; however, for João Miguel, the multiplicity of bodies does not dictate the existence of pluralism of ideas.

The three televisions under study, MIRAMAR TV, STV and TVM, also operate across the four aforementioned strategies; However, each broadcaster has its own particularities, as shown in the following table.

Table 2: Operating Strategies of the three broadcasters

Órgãos	Projectos Sociais	Sensacionalismo	Merchandise Social	Jornalismo de Chapa-branca
MIRAMAR TV				
STV				
TVM				

Source: Prepared by the author based on the television programming schedule and Miguel’s approach (2020)

It can be seen from the previous table that Miramar TV; STV and TVM have their own factors that affect the scheduling of content in their schedules.

Although Miramar TV was founded in Mozambique, its contents are defined according to the central command of Record TV in Brazil. In analogy, and not only, Record TV is the structural basis of the content broadcast by Miramar Television (Miramar TV). Currently, Miramar TV has focused, like Record TV, its Agenda Setting on the strategy of (i) sensationalism and (ii) social merchandise. Entertainment and information are the programmatic categories that materialize Miramar TV’s sensationalism and social merchandise.

As expected, TVM found itself tacitly forced to reformulate its editorial policy and restructure its program schedule to face the dynamics of a market that was already gradually receiving alternative audiovisual offers. However, TVM remains dependent on the State budget, which has been insufficient to meet the broadcaster’s demands from the perspective of improving the technical-professional quality it needs (idem).

V. Final Considerations

In short, television is a means of communication that understands the audio and visual dichotomy and means seeing from a distance. Considering the fact that it was war and mass coercion that led to the creation of Radio and Television, its meaning and position in society that is guided by contemporary capitalism is guided by its usefulness of educational mediation, by establishing itself as a school not formal in arbitrary ideological dissemination, to the economic benefit of one class and to the detriment of the other. It is our understanding that establishing itself as a cultural field that builds consensus of the dominant ideology over subordinate social groups ends the meaning and position of Television in Civil Society organizations. We also understand that Television legitimizes the dominant fabric by constructing narratives that hide the arbitrariness of such a dominant class.

The viewer alienated by television is the potential target of distraction from futile canned programs, which do not lead to development, as they are “prevented” from generating interest in knowledge that is useful to them – especially in different areas of science. This alienated viewer is vulnerable to conceiving ideologies of the dominant classes, with almost no chance of questioning the commercial interests of the elitist capitalist classes, who use the television agenda to maintain the status quo for their exclusive benefit. This is a viewer who, in some way, results from the harm of formal educational processes in the country, as we will see below in the chapter on Education in Mozambique.

In terms of identity hypertrophy in Mozambique, due to the fact that national independence coincided with the beginning of globalization, the country did not have a favorable atmosphere for the consolidation of its own culture, education, politics and economy, as occurred with China, which It closed itself off from the world and became the second largest economic power in the world. Mozambique did not have space to consolidate its own utopias, as the decade of national independence almost coincides with the genesis of national television in the country.

The popularization of television at national level, ten years later, occurred in a context in which its target population was not yet clear, given that, until 2007, Mozambique had 40% of the population illiterate, according to the 2007 census. enough, nor opportunity, to liberate Man rationally and the possibility of the country building an “Integrated Mozambican Thought” as a nation was prohibited by the alleged manipulation and media distraction on which it has always been dependent in terms of Canned Content.

The value chain for the production of television content exists, but it is still in its infancy. Televisions, in addition to being incapable of producing, still do not buy content made by independent producers, which is not only detrimental to the audiovisual market, but is also reflected in the diversity, dynamism and, ultimately, the quality of the content. television stations in Mozambique. Television channels, under the pretext of savings, still want to completely take over the production of content, even without human and material resources, breaking the possibility of consolidating a more professional and competitive market.

It is worth mentioning that there is a relationship established between television content and the dynamics of ethnicity in terms of identity. The development of an ethnic identity is a critical process with regard to full self-identification. Ethnic identity is often influenced by cultural behaviors, traditions and values recognized as the norm in any community. Mozambique is no exception.

Although we recognize the Mozambican ethnic identity as multicultural and socially constructed, it nevertheless articulates and connects with other cultures, both intra and extracontinental. There are many Mozambican communities that use ethnic identity to make meaningful connections with others. However, some experiences reveal that cultural hegemonic weaknesses lead to feelings of inferiority in relation to one's own identity compared to other ethnic identities. This sense of inferiority inhibits the Mozambican who feels culturally subordinate from evaluating the cultural patterns that result from hegemonic cultures, commonly disseminated through the content of television schedules.

In this context, the alienation and hypertrophy we refer to is related to the development of Mozambican ethnic identity. It means that, depending on the quality of their epistemological preparation, a Mozambican can be forcibly or voluntarily alienated – what we chose to call “Volitional Myopia”. It is important to emphasize that alienation during the development of ethnic identity can lead to separation from the community. However, we do not forget that, considering the intimate nature of ethnic identity, alienation can be a characteristic that defines the way each individual sees and interprets the world. Whatever the case, alienation, whether voluntary or forced, especially in childhood and adolescence, has an extreme influence on the development of Mozambican ethnic identity.

If we take into account the fact that identity is an important factor in the development of adolescents, considering that it is the tissue that sticks most to television, and that which most absorbs children's canned content, then the concern in understanding the axiological value of such content must be permanent. Here a Mozambican fabric is formed, at a young age, more likely to challenge national ancestry and ethnic values. A fabric is formed that is more prone to and in favor of cultural homogenization, as, for them, a culture should not express a particular principle.

However, the relationship between alienation in adolescence and the development of ethnic identity is evident, that is, it is through the way in which alienation progresses that aporias arise in Mozambican ethnic identity resulting from the indiscriminate axiological absorption of canned goods. However, we should emphasize that, although adolescence is a phase marked by doubts and questions, it is also a stage of inclusion. In this sense, Mozambican children and young adults are flexible in absorbing beliefs and values alien to their environment, as they are permanently searching for answers to their concerns inherent to the little experience they have, unlike adults, who rely on the wisdom attributed to them. time to make more informed decisions about identity change. This means that alienation is not considered negative or positive by all Mozambicans. There are those who find in it feelings of shame, depression, anger, exile, doubt, and those who find another way of seeing the world, in which inclusion and hybridity are what matter most - regardless of whether there is a culture that has been “swallowed” by the hegemony of the other.

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