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Manipulating information and manipulating people: examples from the 2004  
Portuguese parliamentary celebration of the April Revolution

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## Abstract

Recently there has been interest in examining how language is involved in the phenomenon of 'manipulation'. This paper suggests that investigators, rather than treating 'manipulation' as an entity, should examine how communicators might engage in discursive acts of manipulating. To this end a distinction is made between manipulating information and manipulating people. Examples of both types, taken from the Portuguese Parliamentary Celebration of the April Revolution of 2004, are examined in depth to show how acts of manipulating can be performed in different ways. By focussing on acts, we show that supposed 'cognitive control' over the audience's minds is not necessarily involved in manipulating; it is shown how investigators can provide evidence that manipulators act 'knowingly' when they mislead. It is argued that the study of manipulating, and the distinction between manipulating information and people, provides a critical approach to the topic of political oratory.

Key words: manipulating information, manipulating situations, rhetoric, political oratory, Portuguese politics

Recently, a number of critical discourse analysts have been using the concept of 'manipulation' as an analytic tool to study political language. The attraction is clear: the concept is inherently critical, for by calling a particular use of language 'manipulation', the analyst is likely to be criticising that use. If the concept is to be analytically as well as critically useful, then analysts must identify what is wrong with the language that they are identifying as 'manipulation'. This is where the difficulties lie. Different analysts are defining 'manipulation' in different ways, thereby highlighting different, even opposing, characteristics.

In an important paper, Teun van Dijk (2006) has argued that manipulation occurs when the powerful abuse their power in order to influence those without power, in ways that are against the interests of the powerless but that are in the interests of the powerful (see also van Dijk, 2008). However, other analysts have denied that the formal possession of power need be involved in manipulation (Hasrati & Mohammadzadeh, 2012). Some claim that discursive 'manipulation' involves deceit because manipulators typically conceal what they are doing from their victims in order that the victims do not think ill of them (Blass, 2005; Harré, 1985; Pinto, 2004). Other analysts, however, suggest that manipulation involves using fallacious arguments, regardless of any intentional deceit (Danler, 2005; Kienpointner, 2005; Rigotti, 2005). David Buss, a cognitive social psychologist, explicitly defined 'manipulation' to exclude the possibility that malevolent or dishonest intention need be involved (Buss et al, 1987).

On the other hand, some analysts claim that manipulation involves using specific fallacious arguments, regardless of any intentional deceit (Danler, 2005;

Kienpointner, 2005; Rigotti, 2005). Regarding political oratory, some critical analysts claim the key element of 'manipulation' is that speakers exert cognitive control over their audiences. According to Chilton, manipulation depends on the propagator controlling or dominating 'an intended receiver's mind' (Chilton, 2005, p. 17). In cognitive accounts, analysts suggest that receivers are encouraged, and even constrained, to process messages superficially so that they end up with misleading conceptions. Maillat and Oswald (2011) highlight the importance of concealment in this process because 'the success of manipulation lies in its covertness' (pp. 70-1; see also de Saussure, 2005).

One might think that there is an impasse because any critical analyst, who wishes to use 'manipulation', is faced with different conceptions. Does manipulation involve conscious deceit, the abuse of power, erroneous arguments, covertness, superficial cognitive processing and so on? The present study aims to provide a way out of this impasse. Rather than adopting a top-down strategy of proposing a definition before proceeding to analysing examples, we offer a bottom-up strategy of advancing towards, rather than starting from, a definition. We will examine specific examples, hoping to discover how factors such as power, deceit, faulty arguments etc might play out in actual situations. As such, we will be following Wittgenstein who warned against the 'tendency to look for something in common to all the entities which we commonly subsume under a common name' (1969, pp. 17-8).

We will also be following Wittgenstein by examining what people are doing when they use language. There can be no 'manipulation' unless people are said to manipulate and we can ask how speakers might use language to manipulate. In

asking this question, we need not assume that there is just one way of manipulating or of exercising power or deceiving hearers. Instead we need to explore these possibilities in relation to specific examples.

### From 'manipulation' to 'manipulating'

The present study is based on a switch from examining the thing (or noun) 'manipulation' to the act (or verb) 'manipulating' and it forms part of a more general approach to the language of critical analysis. In their classic studies of ideological language, Fowler and his colleagues made an important point: when communicators use nouns to describe actions, they typically convey less information than when they use clauses with verbs in the active voice, and this is precisely why ideologists and those in power tend to nominalise and to use passive verbs (Fowler et al, 1979; Fowler, 1991). In an extension of this, it can be argued that social scientists, including critical analysts such as Fowler and his colleagues, frequently nominalise and use passives; because such language can be inherently imprecise when used to describe actions, social scientists should therefore seek to use active verbs and avoid technical nouns as much as possible (Billig, 2008a, 2008b and 2013).

Generally this means trying to produce analyses which are 'populated' in that they concentrate on examining what people actually do rather than on identifying theoretical things. As far as the present topic is concerned, a linguistic switch from noun to verb - from 'manipulation' to 'manipulating' - has several implications. It would mean that analysts switch from analysing texts qua texts, to examining behavioural acts. Strictly speaking, texts do not manipulate, but people can

manipulate by producing texts, which might contain fallacious, deceitful or deliberately misleading statements.

If we want to understand what manipulators are doing when they manipulate, then we should take advantage of those situations where it is possible to study how communicators might be affecting audiences. Those taking the cognitive approach to manipulation often stress that receivers cognitively process manipulative message in shallow ways. However such analysts do not tend to base such claims on examining what receivers might be doing when they receive messages, but on linguistically examining the messages themselves (e.g., Maillat and Oswald, 2011; Chilton, 2005). As we shall see, in some contexts it is possible to examine the actual behaviour of the manipulated.

For a number of years, discursive psychologists have been warning against basing psychological analyses on unidentifiable cognitive processes (see, for instance, Billig, 1996 and 2006; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Edwards, 2006; Potter, 2006 and 2012). They argue that what people do with language is so intrinsically complicated that it is not advisable to speculate about the supposed cognitive entities, which underlie outward actions, before fully examining those outward actions. They further suggest that when analysts have studied the details of outward action, then they typically find that there is no need to make cognitive speculations which add little to our understanding of what is going on. The switch from 'manipulation' to 'manipulating', therefore, follows a number of the assumptions of discursive psychologists.

Prima facie there might seem to be a particular problem in relation to 'manipulating'. Much seems to depend on the intentions of the manipulator and whether the manipulator is deliberately manipulating their hearers? As we shall argue, examining whether manipulative acts are intentional does not depend on having privileged access to the manipulator's mind or internal cognitive processes. As Wittgenstein (1969) stressed, the language of psychological concepts is a public language, and therefore needs public criteria. We would not be able to talk meaningfully about 'believing', 'hoping', 'wishing', if these verbs had private criteria, rather than being rooted in outward social acts. It is the same with the language of 'manipulating'. To criticise a government or powerful agency of deceitfully manipulating others does not depend upon us knowing what exactly was in the mind of individuals. As we will see, it is possible to use outward evidence to judge whether or not acts have been consciously executed.

### Manipulating information and manipulating people

Instead of starting with a formal definition of the verb 'to manipulate', we will start with the general meaning of the word, as contained in Norman Fairclough's (1998) claim that manipulation involves using language deviously to get others to do or believe that which you want them to do or believe (p. 537). It should be noted that Fairclough recognizes that manipulators can get others to do things, as well as believe them – an aspect which is often overlooked.

We might note that the verb 'manipulate' is transitive: in order to manipulate you have to manipulate somebody or something. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED),



when citing quotations to illustrate the meaning of ‘to manipulate’ as controlling or influencing ‘in a subtle, devious, or underhand manner’, includes some examples where the verb’s object refers to persons and other examples where it refers to information. For instance, there is a quotation from Thomas Carlyle about a politician manipulating the electors and a quotation from a politician accusing companies of manipulating their books.

The OED does not distinguish between these two types of instances. Nevertheless, what is unimportant to the lexicographer can be significant for the social scientist. The aim here is not to produce a single definition, under which all instances of ‘manipulating’ can be included, but to ask whether the act of manipulating might differ depending on whether the object refers to a person or whether the object refers to information. In raising this question, we should stress one matter. Although we will distinguish between ‘manipulating persons’ and ‘manipulating information’, in order to see how these acts might be performed, we do not wish to imply that when someone manipulates information, they are not ultimately manipulating persons. For example, drug companies might be said to manipulate the results from their research if they select a single positive finding, while concealing negative findings (e.g. Goldacre, 2012). They might also be said to be manipulating those who read their reports, but the manipulating is accomplished by their treatment of the information rather than by directly acting upon their readers.

Accordingly, we seek to distinguish between situations, where the manipulator is manipulating information as the means by which they are manipulating others, from situations where the manipulator directly manipulates others without necessarily

being said to be manipulating information. We will suggest that these two forms of manipulating can be performed differently and that not all the factors, which analysts see as crucial to 'manipulation' generally, may be equally involved in both types. If there are differences, then a one-size-fits-all definition may not be helpful.

### Annual Celebrations in the Portuguese Parliament of the April 1974 Revolution

Much social behaviour is substantively influenced by the context in which it occurs. Therefore, it can sometimes be advantageous to compare different actions which occur in similar contexts, in order to minimize the possibility that observed differences might result from the contexts, in which actions have been performed, rather than from the actions themselves. When comparing a speaker manipulating information with a speaker manipulating people without manipulating information, we will be examining two acts that both occurred during the Portuguese parliament's annual parliamentary celebration of the April Revolution of 1974. Since 1977, the parliament has annually marked the overthrow of the proto-fascist dictatorship, which had ruled Portugal for over forty years (Marinho & Billig, 2013). Each political party with parliamentary representatives nominates a deputy to speak on its behalf, with the President of the Republic and the President of the Assembly also delivering formal speeches. Important figures from within and outside Portugal are invited as special guests. The official transcripts of the speeches, together with indications of audience reactions can be found on the parliament's official web-site; audio-visual recordings can be directly obtained from the parliamentary office.<sup>i</sup>

Although the focus of the occasions is to celebrate democracy in an act of national union, the speeches frequently are deeply political whether implicitly or explicitly. For

example, the left and right differ significantly in their choice of terminology to describe the events that are being celebrated, with the parties of the left being much more likely than those of the right to use the words 'fascist' or 'totalitarian' to describe the previous regime (Marinho, 2012). Sometimes, there is overt dispute about how to celebrate April 1974. In the months leading up to 2004's celebration, the right-wing coalition government launched its 'April is Evolution' campaign, claiming that 'evolution', rather than revolution, should be celebrated. The left-wing parties objected, stressing that overthrowing the regime of Marcello Caetano, Salazar's successor, had constituted a genuine revolution (Castro & Marinho, 2007; Ribeiro, 2011).

We examine extracts from two commemorative speeches of 2004, using both the official transcripts and audio-visual recordings. The first extract comes from the speech by Bernardino Soares, a leading member of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP). The second extract comes from the speech delivered by Anacoreta Correia, a parliamentary representative of the far right, Social Democratic Centre - Popular Party (CDS-PP), which at the time was part of the governing coalition. We will suggest that Soares provides an instance of a speaker manipulating information while Correia was manipulating people. In selecting these examples, we are not suggesting that speakers from the political extremes are more likely to manipulate than are centrist speakers. It is just that these two extracts, in our view, present typologically clear examples.

### The Concept of Manipulating Information

We can ask 'What does it mean to claim that someone has manipulated information?' The claim can be understood by contrasting it with the claim that someone has deliberately fabricated information or is straightforwardly lying. In the latter case, it is alleged that a speaker or writer is knowingly making a claim that is at variance with the truth. For instance, a government might claim that unemployment is falling and invent figures to support their claim. Manipulating information is more complicated and subtle than telling downright falsehoods (Galasinski, 2000). It involves presenting information, which is not itself untruthful, in ways that are misleading. No utterance of a literal untruth need be involved. Thus, a drug company may cite a scientific study in support of its product. Manipulation occurs when the company, in citing the one positive study, knowingly conceals or fails to cite other negative studies, which do not support the product. In this case, the company is manipulating information by knowingly presenting a part of the information as if it were the whole information (e.g., Danler, 2005; Saussure, 2005). Precisely because 'manipulating information' differs from straightforward dishonesty, it is an important critical concept. If there were no difference between the two, there would be little point in retaining 'manipulating information' as an analytic concept.

Information can be manipulated when quoting the words of another. This does not mean that a speaker/writer invents the words that they attribute to the other person, but that they lift words, which were actually spoken or written, out of their original context, and in so doing knowingly change their meaning. McGlone (2004) has called this 'contextomy'. Advertisers of theatrical productions might selectively quote from unfavourable reviews, in order to make the quoted passages appear favourable. No literal untruth has been told: the quoted words were actually written in

the original review. However, the words, taken from their context, have been presented in such a way that the meaning of the original text has been altered. We might say that manipulating information combines the letter of the truth with the spirit of the lie.

#### Manipulating information: Soares's quotation

In his speech, Soares strongly criticised the policy of treating April 1974 as an 'evolution', arguing that the supporters of the policy were distorting history. To make his case, Soares proposed the general rule that revolutions are made by the people (o povo), typically by rebelling on the streets. He declared that 'April was a revolution' because 'it was made by the people (o povo)' and those who talk about 'evolution' wished 'to hide the revolutionary character of our achievement of freedom'. The use of the term o povo was crucial throughout his speech. Soares used it in the left-wing sense of depicting the unprivileged mass or class as a unified force, which is contrasted with the privileged few. In this sense, 'the people', as a construct, does not include all sectors of the nation. In arguing that the people (o povo) overthrew the fascist Salazarist regime by taking direct action on the streets, Soares was justifying calling the events of April 1974 a genuine revolution (for details, see Marinho, 2012).

Soares, following the custom at these celebrations, began by greeting the President, fellow parliamentary representatives, honoured guests etc. Having done this, he started his speech proper with the words: 'Wrote the chronicler' ('[Escreveu o cronista](#)') and then proceeded to quote the chronicler, only identifying after the quotation who was the chronicler and what were the events being chronicled. This is

a translation of his quotation in the official written record, with the same punctuation symbols as the record:

“The people who heard this went out onto the street to see what it was; and, starting to talk with each other, their wills were aroused and they started to take in arms each one as best and as quickly as they could. (...) Noisy voices sounded throughout the city, all hearing crying out that the Master was being killed and they all moved with arms in hand, running quickly to where it was said that this was being done, in order to give him life and pardon the death. (...) People started joining him, and they were so numerous that it was a strange thing to see. They did not fit along the main streets and crossed to unusual places, wanting each one to be first.” The chronicler was Fernão Lopes, in his Chronicle on D. João I, describing the people of Lisbon during the 1383-1385 Revolution’.

(“As gentes que isto ouviram saíam à rua a ver que coisa era; e, começando a falar uns com os outros, alvoroçavam-se as vontades e começavam a tomar armas cada um como melhor e mais depressa podia. (...) Soaram as vozes do ruído pela cidade, ouvindo todos bradar que matavam o Mestre e se moveram todos com mão armada, correndo à pressa para onde diziam que isto se fazia, para lhe darem vida e escusar a morte. (...) A gente começou de se juntar a ele, e era tanta que era estranha coisa de ver. Não cabiam pelas ruas principais e atravessavam lugares escusos, desejando cada um ser o primeiro.” O cronista era Fernão Lopes, na sua Crónica de D. João I, descrevendo o povo de Lisboa na Revolução de 1383-1385.)

Soares presents Fernão Lopes, a respected figure in Portuguese history, as a credible witness to the events that support the historical argument that he is making. The people, according to the quotation, were engaging in armed street action to bring down the rulers, who were about to kill the people's leader (the Master). Soares was to suggest that if those fourteenth century actions of the people merited the title of 'revolution', then so would similar actions six hundred years later.

As Soares began his quotation, he indicated by a pause, shift of gaze and change of intonation, that he was citing words that were not his own. However, in the course of making the citation, he gave no signs that his quotation contained the two omissions, which are indicated in the written record by the sign '(...)'. The parliamentary record is actually incomplete for there was a third omission, occurring after the words 'that the Master was being killed and'.

Omitting parts of a quoted text does not in itself indicate that a speaker is manipulating the quotation, even if the audience is unaware that the quotation has been shortened. A speaker, for instance, might shorten a quote to omit irrelevant parts, which might confuse, bore or distract recipients. The question is whether Soares was manipulating his quotation by omitting crucial passages that would have substantially undermined the argumentative purposes to which he was putting the quotation. In order to discover whether a speaker has manipulated a quotation, it is necessary to compare the quoted text with the original text, which in this case can be found in Lopes (1814/1897, pp.46-7).<sup>ii</sup>

The first question is whether Soares only omitted unimportant details, or whether there was an argumentative pattern to his omissions. Basically, Soares omitted passages indicating that the Master, whom the people were seeking to rescue, was a member of the Royal Family and that he had aristocratic supporters. The first omission describes Alvaro Paes, accompanied by his servants, calling out “Come rescue the Master, who is the son of the King D. Pedro!” and the omitted section refers to Alvaro Paes ‘and the young nobles’ ([‘e o pagem’](#)) going onto the street. The second omission mentioned the possibility that the Master might marry the old widowed queen (who was not his mother) and so become the new king. The third omission does not refer to the Master but to Alvaro Paes, whose name had already been removed in the first omission. Because Soares’s quotation would make less sense if the name of Paes were introduced here for the first time, this third omission follows from the previous two.

An audience might not realise from Soares’s edited version that the crowd had responded to a cry to save a member of the royal family, who was bidding to succeed the previous king, and that young nobles were mobilizing the crowd. Soares began his quotation at a rhetorically strange point, for it begins with a preposition whose meaning refers back to the previous sentence, which is not included and not explained. Soares starts: ‘The people who heard this...’ without indicating what ‘this’ ([isto](#)) refers to. The original text makes plain that ‘this’ was a cry uttered by a young noble (Lopes, 1814/1897, p. 46; [see also footnote two](#)). Through his editing, Soares is able to depict the people as the main actors on the streets. They are no longer following young nobles and their Master is not identified as the king’s son, albeit an illegitimate son.



Not all Soares's changes were rhetorically manipulative in the sense of aiding his argumentative point. When Lopes wrote 'The people who heard this...', he used the old Portuguese word for 'this' (esto). However Soares, here and elsewhere, changed archaic terms into modern Portuguese, in this case changing esto to isto. Such changes are not manipulative because the speaker was using them to facilitate communication, not to further his argument.

Other changes were, however, rhetorically more ambiguous. When Soares identified the source of his quote, he claimed it was Lopes's chronicle 'describing the people of Lisbon during the 1383-1385 Revolution'. In both the spoken version and the written parliamentary text, Soares does not indicate that 'Revolution' and 'the people' (o povo) were not terms used by Lopes. In the quoted passage, Lopes referred to as gentes, not o povo. The difference between the terms is ideologically important. As gentes or a gente are better rendered in English by 'people' (without the definite article) or by 'persons'. Although as gentes (but not a gente) can now appear archaic, Soares's switch to o povo is not just a switch from old to modern Portuguese: it is an ideological move, for it introduces the left-wing construct - 'the people' (o povo) – as the sociological class that makes revolutions. In this way, Soares recruits Lopes to his own position, presenting the chronicler as if agreeing that 'the people' (o povo) were making a 'revolution' in 1383 on the streets of Lisbon.

Left and right wing historians have long disputed whether the events of 1383-5 represented a class-based revolution or a national reaction (e.g., Saraiva, 1998; Serrão, 1990). In fact, two of the major figures of the April Revolution had written

sharply different histories of the fourteenth century events. Salazar's successor Marcello Caetano, whose regime was overthrown in 1974, wrote a nationalist history, depicting the nation as a whole being involved in the disturbances (Caetano, 1985). By contrast, Alvaro Cunhal (1980), a leading opponent of Salazarism and leader of the PCP, wrote a Marxist, class based account. Thus, Soares, by citing Lopes as he did, was entering into a continuing ideological argument about Portuguese history.

#### Manipulating information: observed features

It is possible to highlight several aspects of the Soares example in relation to some of the features, which previous analysts have discussed as characterizing 'manipulation' in general. First, as has been noted, Soares does not explicitly fabricate anything, or utter anything which is a literal untruth. Second, we can note that one need not possess formal power to manipulate a text. Soares was not a member of the governing coalition and, in addressing fellow deputies in parliament, he was addressing equals. When he delivered his speech, he, of course, possessed the power of being the recognized speaker of the moment, but this power would pass to another immediately after he completed his speech.

Nor did Soares possess 'cognitive control' over the minds of the audience. Where manipulating information is concerned, the actual control of information, which is supposedly being manipulated, is arguably more important than the hypothesized 'control of minds'. Drug companies, for example, possess the resources for controlling the dissemination of evidence about their products, such as concealing the existence of negative findings. Soares did not possess power over the dissemination of Lopes's original text. Despite the lack of such power, he still could

be said to be manipulating Lopes's text. Indeed, it is only because Lopes's original text is publicly available that Soares can be identified as having tendentiously altered the part which he quoted.

Lastly, there is the issue of awareness. We have mentioned that manipulating information depends upon acting 'knowingly'. Here we can see the advantage of taking a Wittgensteinian position which concentrates upon actions. We do not need to have access to inner states of mind in order to say that someone is knowingly manipulating information. Instead, we assume that the acts involved are so complicated that they cannot be performed without conscious awareness. When Soares omits those precisely parts of a quoted text that would undermine his argument, he is engaging in an act that is too partial to have been performed by chance and too complicated to have been performed inattentively. In the same way, we can accuse a drug company of deliberately manipulating its data, when it selectively quotes one positive study and overlooks twenty-five negative ones, but never does the reverse. We can make the accusation confidently without knowing the precise states of mind, or indeed the identity, of those employees who performed the acts. In this regard, we might say that a critical perspective should be based upon examining the nature of the actions performed, rather than upon suppositions about unknowable mental processes.

This does not mean that the actors, who are said to be manipulating information, will agree with this assessment, for justifications are always possible (Billig, 1996; Edwards and Potter, 1992). In the case of Soares, we are suggesting that he artfully constructed his quotation to fit his political position. However, he may not have been

the person who actually constructed the quotation from Lopes. He might have employed a speech-writer or research assistant who did this without his knowledge. Similarly Soares may have been quoting in good faith a secondary source, whose author selectively quoted from Lopes. We can say, however, that whoever constructed the quotation must have done so artfully and almost certainly did so as a contribution to an ideological controversy.

### Manipulating people: example of CDS-PP

Because it is hard to study directly how people might be manipulated to change their beliefs, we will concentrate on the methodologically simpler case of manipulating people to do things, rather than manipulating them to believe things. In the context of formal oratory there is one action, which political speakers often try to induce their audience to perform: namely, to applaud. It has been shown that speakers can use a number of rhetorical devices to create 'clap-traps' or spaces which audience members recognize as moments appropriate for showing support by applauding (Atkinson, 1984; Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986; Bull, 2006). Most of this research looks at political speakers addressing their own supporters. In this context, speakers are not manipulating their audiences, for they are enabling members of the audience to do what they would wish to do anyway. However, we can ask whether a speaker can manipulate an audience to applaud when that audience would not want to applaud. If so, how can a speaker manipulate the audience to do this?

An example seems to have occurred when the representative of the far-right CDS-PP was speaking during the 2004 celebration. To understand the incident, some background information is necessary. The CDS-PP was established by supporters of

the old regime after the April Revolution, and thereby embodies the political heritage of the Salazarists. The annual celebration presents the party with a dilemma: it must join in the celebrations in order to demonstrate its democratic credentials, but, if it celebrates too enthusiastically, it would upset its ideologically minded members. To resolve the dilemma, the party's speakers frequently criticise the left-wing revolutionaries, who initiated the 1974 Revolution, rather than criticise the old regime, whose overthrow they are ostensibly celebrating (Marinho & Billig, 2013).

During the commemorations, members of left-wing parties rarely applaud CDS-PP speakers. According to the parliamentary record, between 1977 and 2012 CDS-PP speakers received applause eighty-two times.<sup>iii</sup> On exactly half of these occasions only fellow CDS-PP members applauded. Twenty-seven times members of the centre right PSD also joined in. On thirteen other occasions members of the centre left PS also applauded. Only three times did any member from the far left applaud a CDS-PP speaker: one of these occasions occurred in 2004.

At one point early in the speech of the CDS-PP speaker, Anacoreta Correia, members from all parties, except the Greens and the Communist Party, but including the centre left Socialist Party and the far left BE (Left Block), applauded. The BE had been in parliament since 1999 and its members had never previously applauded during a CDS-PP commemorative speech. Somewhat puzzlingly, the BE was applauding in the year when the left were vigorously opposing the government's plan to celebrate 'evolution', not 'revolution'. The BE, along with all other left-wing parties, considered this plan to be downplaying the fascist nature of Salazarism. Yet, exceptionally, some members from the left applauded during a speech given by a

representative of the party, which they saw to be comprised of fascist apologists and which was a formal member of the right-wing governing coalition.

If clap-traps represent invitations to applaud, then the left's regular refusal to accept CDS-PP invitations is not just because of the words, which right-wing speakers use to induce applause. In the past, CDS-PP speakers have used general clichés, or common-places, to attract applause from their fellow right-wingers. For example, in 1981, the speaker used uncontroversial common-places of 'trusting the future', 'Portugal', 'democracy' and 'freedom' to create a three-part list, which, as Heritage and Greatbatch (1986) have shown, is particularly effective for eliciting applause:

'We trust the future.

We trust freedom and democracy.

We trust Portugal.'

(['Confiamos no future.](#)

[Confiamos na liberdade e na democracia.](#)

[Confiamos em Portugal.](#)')

Only members of right-wing parties then applauded. When left-wing speakers, particularly those from the centre left PS, use similar common-places, the far-right tends not to applaud. Members of the CDS-PP rarely applaud far-left speakers: they have only twice applauded a PCP speaker and never a BE speaker. Thus, both the far left and right display reluctance to applaud each other, whatever words are uttered to invite applause.

Something exceptional, either rhetorically or politically, must have occurred in 2004 to induce some of the far left to applaud during a CDS-PP speech. We will suggest that the speaker successfully manipulated some far left representatives. He did not do this by manipulating their minds, but he manipulated the situation to make left-wing members uncomfortable withholding applause.

### Manipulating the situation to elicit applause

Correia, having begun his speech with a list of formal greetings, then specially welcomed one of the invited guests – Xanana Gusmão: ‘I begin by greeting the President of the Republic of East Timor, who wanted to honour us with his presence at this commemoration of the thirtieth Anniversary of April 25’ (*‘Começo por saudar o Presidente da República de Timor Leste, que nos quis honrar com a sua presença nesta comemoração do XXX Aniversário do 25 de Abril.’*). The grammar is interesting. The sentence starts with the first person singular, as if Correia is speaking on his own behalf: ‘I begin by greeting...’ Then, by using the first person plural, he positions himself as speaking on behalf of the whole parliament, not just his party: the President ‘wanted to honour us...’ He continued with the first person plural:

‘It is always with the greatest pleasure that we see you in this House of the Portuguese democracy, Mr. President Xanana Gusmão’ (*Applause from CDS-PP, PSD, PS and BE.*)

(*‘É sempre com o maior prazer que o vemos nesta Casa da democracia portuguesa, Sr. Presidente Xanana Gusmão.’ Aplausos do CDS-PP, do PSD, do PS e do BE.*)

As he named Gusmão, Correia's intonation rose in pitch and he raised his gaze, dropped his left hand and paused, thereby indicating that he was leaving a slot for the audience to applaud (Atkinson, 1984; Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986; see Marinho, 2012, for details).

When Correia spoke, the representatives from the Greens, BE and PCP had already given their speeches. Despite the president of East Timor being respected by the left, having been a veteran fighter for his country's independence first against the Portuguese colonial power and then against Indonesia, the far left speakers had not accorded Gusmão a personal welcome. This oversight provided the opportunity for the CDS-PP speaker to lead the parliament in a display of respect to Gusmão, although the whole parliament had applauded when the President of the Assembly had earlier personally accorded Gusmão a warm welcome.

Correia's greeting of Gusmão was literally a 'clap-trap', because he had rhetorically set a trap for left-wing deputies. They either had to respond by applauding at his bidding, or they had to risk publicly offending someone, whom they greatly respected. Correia had taken hold of the social situation – manipulating his audience by manipulating the situation. There could be no middle ground. The left-wingers had to react immediately, without time for consultation or planning. Or to be more precise, each left-wing representative had to make their own spontaneous decision.

The parliamentary record conveys that the left-wing members did not respond en masse. The members of the PCP and the Greens did not applaud while those from the BE and PS did so. Possibly the record is not strictly accurate in terms of party



membership, but the recorder indicated that some members of the far-left applauded while others did not. And this in itself shows how Correia had placed the left in a dilemmatic situation. This is reinforced by the fact that the left had been united in applauding when the President of the Assembly had welcomed Gusmão.

After Correia's speech, Manuel Alegre, the representative from the centre left PS, greeted Gusmão, along with other left-wing overseas visitors. This time, all the left-wing deputies, whether from the centre or far left, showed their welcome by applauding. It was, of course, too late to undo the situation that Correia had created. The left had allowed the representative from a party, with a dubious pro-totalitarian, pro-colonialist heritage, to greet their anti-totalitarian, anti-colonialist hero.

In manipulating the situation to his advantage, Correia had not actually hidden or distorted information in the way that someone who manipulates information does. Yet in claiming that Correia was 'manipulating' the situation and thereby manipulating part of his audience, we are claiming that he was not being entirely straightforward, for there was a possible gap between his outward display of genuineness and his underlying purposes.

When Correia orchestrated the applause for Gusmão, he began with the first person singular, indicating that he was welcoming the president 'with the greatest pleasure'. In so doing, Correia was presenting himself as if motivated by nothing other than his personal admiration for Gusmão. To suspect Correia of being manipulative is also to suspect that his motives may not have been as simple as he was presenting them. In the absence of a post facto confession, it is difficult to provide hard evidence about

underlying motives. Nevertheless, an analyst can cast doubt on a manipulator's motives by pointing to aspects of their outward behaviour (including verbal behaviour) that are consistent with someone acting problematically.

There are indications that Correia was no simple admirer of Gusmão. After having obtained the welcoming applause, Correia went on to praise Gusmão in a way that Kenneth Burke (1969) would have recognized as 'showing identification'. Using the first person singular, he declared:

'I confess that I feel an enormous emotion for having present today at this celebration the man whom for more than twenty years I have admired, then as commander of the struggle for freedom and today as the head of the friend nation that is East Timor.'

(*'Confesso que sinto uma grande emoção por ter hoje presente nesta celebração o homem que desde há mais de 20 anos admiro, então como comandante da luta pela liberdade e hoje como chefe da nação amiga que é Timor Leste.'*)

One might ask why Correia did not say this in the build-up to his applause-seeking welcome. The order is significant. This second praising had to come after the applauded welcome: otherwise, it would have undermined any bid to lead the whole parliament in applause.

At first sight, Correia appears to be continuing his praise for Gusmão by drawing a parallel between the parliamentary celebration of Portugal's freedom and Gusmão's bringing freedom to East Timor. But there is a subtle sign that Correia's admiration

was partial. Correia declared that he had admired Gusmão for more than twenty years. This encompassed the time during which Gusmão led East Timor's struggle for independence from Indonesia, but excluded the time when Gusmão fought against Portugal for his country's freedom. Significantly, Correia did not say that he had admired Gusmão for thirty years. That would have included the time when the CDS, in continuing the imperialist policies of the previous regime, had opposed granting independence to the colonies. Thus, having apparently welcomed his hero to this anti-Salazarist celebration, the speaker excluded Gusmão's record as an opponent of the Salazarist regime. Had Correia said this before setting his clap-trap, the left might have sensed that a trap was being set. The number 'twenty' – and the corresponding absence of 'thirty', the key number in the celebration of 2004 – is crucial.

As with manipulating information, the rhetorical complexity, and indeed subtlety, of the act leads one to suspect that it could not have been produced accidentally or without purpose. There is another piece of evidence to suggest that Correia may not have been entirely open, nor acted innocently. When the PS speaker then greeted Gusmão and other visitors by name, Correia and other CDS-PP representatives sat silently without applauding. It was back to business as usual.

#### Manipulating people: observed features

Correia had manipulated his opponents by trapping them in a no-win dilemma, accomplishing this by exploiting the social conventions of the situation to his own ends. In this regard, a manipulator is like a seducer, who puts their victim in a

position, where the victim either submits to an unwanted advance or risks social embarrassment. This can be accomplished by words, not by physical power.

Manipulating a situation to one's own advantage does not necessarily depend on the possession of a formal position or of control over resources, although these can assist a manipulator. Although the CDS-PP possessed formal power as part of the ruling coalition, Correia did not use this political power to manipulate his opponents. Had his party been in opposition, he still could have seized the opportunity as he did. He needed to possess the momentary social power of being the designated speaker, confident that he was protected by convention from being interrupted. Correia was able to enact some control over his opponents because he was manipulating the situation: he was not manipulating the situation because he exerted prior control over his opponents. As such, manipulating the situation can be a means of obtaining power, just as a seducer can become powerful by the act of seduction.

The manipulator might not be telling outright untruths – Correia might well have admired Gusmão for twenty years – but in saying he was ‘manipulating’ part of his audience, we are implying that he might not have been acting in a totally straightforward manner. In this case, the critic might suspect that Correia was being less than open in the presentation of his motives. The admiration, which he claims to lie behind his current welcome, is ‘partial’, both in the sense of not being total (Correia does not admire Gusmão's early struggles for his country's freedom) and in the sense of being politically motivated.

We might also note that in manipulating the actions of some of his audience, Correia is not changing opinions: he provides no persuasive reasons why the left should applaud at this point. He just exploits the situation in which they find themselves ensnared. Having obtained compliance, Correia, as it were, mocks his new followers by mentioning that he has admired Gusmão for just twenty years and, at that moment, social convention dictates that the audience must sit silently, rather than cry out in protest.

As such, Correia is not controlling the left by exerting control over minds, but over their reactions. He is exploiting his opponents' unwillingness to break the social conventions of a celebration, which they genuinely respect but which his own party does not. We might suggest that the more socially responsible an audience might be, and the more sensitive it is to social requirements, the more it can be exploited by a manipulative speaker, who acts primarily out of self or party interest. For example, Hasrati and Mohammadzadeh (2012) demonstrated that self-interested students find it easier to exploit ethically minded tutors to raise their grades. Even though ethically minded tutors suspect that the students' excuses may not be truthful, they are less willing than other tutors to take the risk of making a mistake.

Here lies the core of manipulating people by manipulating the social situation in which they find themselves. The speaker's power need not depend on possessing the rhetorical power to persuade or to control minds. On the contrary, the rhetorical power of the manipulative speaker can lie in the speaker's awareness of the social sensitivities of others and, in the uninhibited pursuit of advantage, treating those sensitivities as exploitable weaknesses.

### Concluding Remarks: 'manipulating' as a critical concept

Although manipulating information might differ from manipulating people, there is one similarity. In both cases, the use of the term 'manipulate' carries a critical connotation, because it implies that the speaker/communicator is doing something illicit. Although this makes 'manipulate' an essentially critical term, the level of critique, as so far discussed, has been somewhat limited. We might suspect speakers of manipulating texts if we can provide evidence that they have altered such texts in ways that suit their political and rhetorical purposes whilst leaving their audiences unaware that the texts have been tendentiously altered. Similarly, we might suspect a speaker of manipulating their audience if we can provide evidence that members of an audience do not usually wish to act in that way, but the speaker benefits by placing them, not altogether openly, in a situation where they might consider that, if they do not behave in that way, they will have to do something even less desired. In both cases, the analyst has to provide evidence to back the interpretation that the speaker/communicator's actions have been manipulative and also, in both cases, the analyst needs to show that such actions are so complex that they cannot have been undertaken unknowingly.

Even if we provide such evidence, nevertheless the critique is limited to suggesting that an individual speaker is acting in a devious manner. However, the critical element in much social critique is not confined to criticising individual speakers, whatever their politics, but is linked to a wider ideological critique. Accordingly, there is a further step in our analyses, concerning the ideological purposes to which the two speakers were manipulating either information or their audience.

Soares was manipulating a text in order to present forcefully his party's position. He might have been less than open when quoting the events of six hundred years ago, but he was open in opposing the government of his own day and in celebrating the Revolution of 1974. Correia and his party were in a very different situation. According to John Richardson, contemporary fascist parties, that seek mass support through democratic procedures, are 'inherently duplicitous' (2011, p. 38; see also Wodak, 2011). The CDS-PP claims to be democratic, while still maintaining its ideological roots in the totalitarian history of Salazarism. The party's basic contradiction is likely to be keenly felt when appearing to publicly celebrate the April 1974 Revolution (Marinho & Billig, 2013). Accordingly, Correia's manipulative presentation of his own motives was not just personal: arguably it stemmed from his party's ideologically ambivalent stance towards the celebration in which it was ostensibly participating.

We might predict that, when a party has ideological matters to hide, its speakers are more likely to engage in illicit strategies. That being so, critical analysts might find it useful to use the verb 'manipulate', when observing in detail how speakers and communicators subtly use language to distort information or to control situations to their own advantage.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Available from

[http://debates.parlamento.pt/page.aspx?cid=r3.dar&diary=s1I9sl2n80-](http://debates.parlamento.pt/page.aspx?cid=r3.dar&diary=s1I9sl2n80-4376&type=texto)

[4376&type=texto](http://debates.parlamento.pt/page.aspx?cid=r3.dar&diary=s1I9sl2n80-4376&type=texto) (accessed 29.4.2013). ~~For reasons of space, only English translations of the speeches are given here. The original Portuguese of the quoted extracts can also be found in Marinho (2012).~~

<sup>ii</sup> ~~The Portuguese originals of Lopes and Soares's quotation of Lopes are in Marinho (2012, chapter eight).~~ The following extracts reproduce the original passage from Lopes (1814/1897, pp. 46-7) that Soares uses to construct the quotation and our English translation of that passage. The parts that Soares quotes are indicated in italic.

The young noble of the Master who was at the door, as they told him to go by the town, according with what was already understood, started to ride firmly and in gallop, on a horse, saying in loud voices, shouting out in the street: «They kill the Master! They kill the Master in the real palace of the Queen! Rescue the Master, that they kill him!». And thus he reached the house of Alvaro Paes's house, which was far from there. *The people who heard this, went out onto the street, to see what it was; and, starting to talk with each other, their wills were aroused and they started taking up arms each as best and as quickly as they could.* Alvaro Paes, who was already ready and armed, with a 'coifa' in his head, according to the usage of that time, rode immediately in hurry, in a horse that did not ride for years, and all his servants with him, were shouting out to anyone they found, saying: «Come rescue the Master, friends! Come rescue the Master, that he is the son of the King D. Pedro! » And thus were shouting he and the young noble, going onto the street. *Noisy voices sounded throughout the city, hearing everyone crying out that the Master was being killed and, like widow who did not have a king, and*

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as if this one would stay instead of her husband, *they all moved with weapon in hand, running hurriedly where it was said that this was being done, in order to give him life and pardon his death.* Alvaro Paes did not stop to go there, shouting out to all: «Let us rescue the Master, friends! Let us rescue the Master that they kill him without reason!». *The people started joining him, and they were so numerous that it was a strange thing to see; they did not fit along the main streets and crossed unusual places, wanting each one to be the first, and asking to each other «who killed the Master?» it did not lack who answered «that the earl João Fernandes killed him by orders of the Queen.»*'

(‘O pagem do Mestre que estava á porta, como lhe disseram que fosse pela villa, segundo já era percebido, começou d’ir rijamente e ao galope, em cima de cavallo em que estava, dizendo a altas vozes, bradando pela rua: «Matam o Mestre! Matam o Mestre nos paços da rainha! Acorrei ao Mestre, que o matam!»’. E assim chegou a casa de Alvaro Paes, que era d’ali um grande espaço. *As gentes que esto ouviram, sahiam á rua, ver que coisa era, e, começando de falar uns com os outros, alvoroçaram-se nas vontades e começavam de tomar armas, cada um como melhor e mais azinha podiam.* Alvaro Paes, que estava já prestes e armado, com uma coifa na cabeça, segundo usança d’aquelle tempo, cavalgou logo á pressa, em cima de um cavallo que annos havia que não cavalgara, e todos os seus creados com elle, bradando a quaesquer que achava, dizendo: «Acorramos ao Mestre, amigos! Acorramos ao Mestre, ca filho é d’el-rei D. Pedro!» E assim bradavam elle e o pagem, indo pela rua. *Soaram as vozes do arruído pela cidade, ouvindo todos bradar que matavam o Mestre e, assim como viuva que rei não tinha, e como se lhe este ficasse em logo de marido, se moveram todos com mão armada, correndo á pressa para hu diziam que esto fazia, pero lhe dar vida e escusar morte.* Alvaro Paes não quedava de ir pera alá, bradando a todos: «Acorramos ao Mestre, amigos! Acorramos ao Mestre que o matam sem porque!». *A gente começou de se ajuntar a elle, e era tanta que era extranha cousa de vêr; não cabiam pelas ruas principaes e atravessavam logares escuzos, desejando cada um de ser o primeiro; e perguntando uns*

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aos outros «quem matou o Mestre?» não minguava quem responder «que o matava o conde João Fernandes, por mando da rainha.»’)

iii Commemorative speeches of each political party over time are available from <http://debates.parlamento.pt/search.aspx?cid=r3.dar> (accessed 29.4.2013).