

FACOS-UFSM

MEDIATIZATION, POLARIZATION, AND INTOLERANCE

(BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTS, MEDIA, AND CIRCULATION)



**Jairo Ferreira
Antônio Fausto Neto
Pedro Gilberto Gomes
José Luiz Braga
Ana Paula da Rosa
(Editors)**



This book is one of the results of the III International Seminar on Research on Mediatization and Social Processes held in 2019. The III International Seminar on Research on Mediatization and Social Processes had a program developed on two levels: Debate Tables, with invited researchers (five discussion tables, with the participation of researchers from France (3), Argentina (2), Germany (1), and Brazil (5)). The schedule of the III Seminar and its structure can be seen at <https://www.midiaticom.org/seminario-midiatizacao/grade-de-programacao-2019/>.

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We point out that, even in the scope of training processes, master's and doctoral students, masters and doctors, post-doctors and post-doctoral graduates, and members of the organizing Research Group take part as reviewers, in a blind evaluation process, of the expanded abstracts submitted by graduates with a lower title - under the coordination of the research professors from the Mediatization and Social Processes Group. They evaluated (in a group of more than three dozen reviewers) each of the works submitted by colleagues with a lower instructional level, with classificatory notes, which resulted in the approved works. They were then grouped by the Organizing Committee, successively, until they reached the event's working groups.

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ENVIRONMENTS, MEDIA, AND CIRCULATION)**

**FACOS-UFSM
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Mediatization, polarization, and intolerance (between environments, media, and circulation)

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Presentation

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The average number of submissions to the Working Groups, in the three events held, is 200 expanded abstracts, distributed among professors, researchers (around 20%), doctors and doctoral students (around 30%), masters professors, and

masters' degree students (*idem*, 30%), and graduate and undergraduate students (20%). More than 50% of the participants are from states outside Rio Grande do Sul and the overwhelming majority (about 80%) from outside UNISINOS.

Among its results, in addition to the training processes during its realization, we emphasize the consolidation of a library of reflections, in the form of complete articles of the presentations in WGs and books published in e-book format (with chapters produced by the participants of the Conference Tables). This III Seminar extended abstracts are available at <https://midiaticom.org/anais/index.php/seminario-midiaticom-resumos/issue/view/12>. Full articles are available at <https://midiaticom.org/anais/index.php/seminario-midiaticom-artigos/issue/view/5>.

This book of the Debating Tables of the III Seminar, in this e-book edition, is available not only in the project collection (<https://www.midiaticom.org/e-books/>) but also from FACOS UFSM (<https://www.ufsm.br/editoras/facos/publicacoes/>). We reiterate our thanks to CAPES and CNPq for the financial assistance, essential for making this conversation proposal via research, both theoretical and empirical, carried out by its participants.

**

In this III Seminar, the theme of the Discussion Panels was “Polarization, Intolerance, Homophilia, and Incivility.” These themes have been referencing part of the research on the processes of interaction on digital networks that accentuate the processes of political, economic, and cultural polarization. In this perspective, the debate took place based on the inferences produced by researchers from Southern and Northern lineages, and, also, other epistemological perspectives (according to national guests: mediation, semiotics, cyberculture, communication and politics, and epistemology of communication). It was intended, in these triangulations, to add more productive perceptions and reflections for the understanding of the empirical phenomena related to the theme, straining the research carried out from the epistemologies of mediatization.

The book presents this in three parts (not corresponding to the panels but privileging the presented angles): a) epis-

temological approaches; b) media events; c) and, precisely, polarization. In each part, there are national and foreign authors (from Germany, France, and Argentina).

The Editors

Mediation and mediatization

Juremir Machado da Silva

A seminar that turns into a book. A book that comes into existence as the realization of an idea. Theme: mediatization. In his famous thesis 4, the French Guy Debord denounced: “The spectacle is not a collection of images but a social relation among people mediated by images” (1992, p. 4). Before Debord, this topic sparked debate. Then, even more. Everything is mediated, mediatized, resized, manipulated; everything is a spectacle, nothing is experienced directly. As always, two major currents of interpretation, roughly speaking, are formed for astonishment or boredom: one denounces the excessive power of the media; the other, relativizes. A speech about losses, the colonization of consciences, the trivialization of things, entertainment transformed into the main article of the emptied existence. The other scoffs at this permanent fear of new technologies and shows progress, achievements, advantages, advances, and positive civilizational changes.

Two years ago, walking through the streets of Porto Alegre with my friend Pierre Lévy, an enthusiast of technological changes and a specialist in “cyberculture,” he spoke of water transporters who were once eliminated by piped water. Does anyone remember them? Would anyone refuse the plumbing to save so many professionals from unemployment? In mediatization, there is more than mediation, information, entertainment, training, and opinion. What? Perhaps induction, conditioning, domination, control, the definition of a model of behavior. The media is not only an instrument of information and entertainment but also, or mainly, a system of social hierarchy and production of meanings. New technologies emerge. With them, old fears, new anxieties, unprecedented aspects of controversy:

should the objects have the same status as humans? The skeptic replies: if humans want to. Of course, it is more complicated than that, more sophisticated, denser, richer.

There was a time when the big question was this: what does the media do with us? So many gave answers. Each answer convinced us for some time. Then it was abandoned. Then the question changed: what do we do with the media? Everything seemed to be resolved with this inversion. It was a happy time. The reception was stronger than the broadcast. The tiredness came, doubt returned. A third, more complex, and sinuous question was attempted: what do we do with what the media do with us? It's already gone. Other formulations are possible: what do we do with mediation? What do we do with mediatization? Who's in charge? One possible answer is this: everyone. Or nobody. The butterfly gives way to the virus. Before, in good times, it was said that the flapping of a butterfly's wings in China reverberated anywhere in the world. The thesis is confirmed. Without the butterfly. And without blaming the Chinese for the tragedies that history offers us. Each time with its tragedy and agony.

Does anyone win with mediatization? Or is it a zero-sum game? Or, as market optimists like, a win-win? When the spectacle stops being a set of images to be a way of life, a "social relationship between people", something has already broken. We will never live without a screen in between. We will never leave representation again, which can be, at the same time, delegation, and staging. Would life have become an immense and permanent fake news, positive, praiseworthy, acceptable, comfortable, smooth, in short, a sincere lie to sleep? A classic way to eliminate these uncomfortable provocations is to say that it has always been this way, that there has never been this "golden age" of life without mediation, practiced directly, without representation or theatricalization. Without forgery.

It works as an argument. For a week. Then someone applies the antidote of equal proportion and effectiveness: there is never anything new on the *front*. The articles in this book organized by Jairo Ferreira awaken instincts, awaken thoughts, generate impasse. There are so many important names, national and international, reflecting without strings attached. I read, re-read, observed different aspects. One of them, quite secondary

in relation to the wealth of positions and the bibliographic reference, called my attention: the number of citations from academic journals. Once again, I stubbornly concluded: we do not quote journals. We quote books. More than that, we quote renowned authors published in books. What is wrong with it? In principle, nothing. But it seems that science, the so-called “true science”, only believes in journals. At most, it tolerates books, while it cannot get rid of them. We need the mediation of the editors and the prior legitimation of peers as blind as justice. What if this is a confession of scientific impotence, the claim that we have no instruments to measure the value of a text? We cannot present the degree of effectiveness and safety of our product. Our vaccine is open. Otherwise, it would be enough for each one to hang their article on a personal or institutional website and wait for the safe, slow, or hasty, fair, or reckless judgment of their peers. There could not be many variations in judgment. After all, they all master the same tools and the same parameters.

But we are an argumentative and consequentialist science. Our truths depend on many unstable factors. We do not know why one brother became a liberal and the other a Marxist, having both been mediated by the same educational process, under the same conditions of formation. Adhering to a discourse, a matrix, a narrative, however, has consequences: the world of those who choose is affected. The person will live in one way and not in another. Mediatization is still an offer of meaning capable of functioning. The problem lies in so many variations. Hence, perhaps, when it comes to the academic world, the possibility of a “toll theory”. Better said, more modestly, a “toll hypothesis”. And if it were the case, as the toll concessionaires in Brazil want, to close all escape routes: books, international journals, publications on Amazon, etcetera. To block everything that is beyond the control of authorized mediation. Hypothesis, as Jean Baudrillard might say, pataphysics.

A curious system based on publication without objective points for those who pay for publications. A system that devalues books and essays to some extent but is legitimized by quoting essayists (almost every philosopher is an essayist, or not?). What does this have to do with the book on mediatization on-screen? The screen. And the book. To read André Lemos,

Fausto Neto, José Luiz Braga, my colleague Jacques Wainberg, Luís Mauro Martino, Lucrecia Ferrara, Tiago Quiroga, Ada Machado Silveira, Pedro Gilberto Gomes, Ana Paula Rosa, Stefan Bratosin, Bernard Miège, and many other researchers, all revolving the topic of mediatization, produces a convulsion: are we scientists or intellectuals? What does that change? Social science is not a set of theses and demonstrations, but a social relationship between people [scientists? intellectuals?] mediated (mediatized?) by subjective ideas and evaluations? How do we know that when we say “consistent” there is consistency, in fact, in the object classified as such? Or our tranquility is statistical: nine out of ten, in appearing blind, would classify as consistent what I also saw as such? Talking about these things, pataphysics, should not offend anyone. At most, amaze. Or, more useful, make them laugh. But there is a soft hypothesis, without pretending to hurt or produce controversy: what if it was time to strongly value all texts, especially books, like this one, in an ode to expression, to the crossing of ideas, giving time for the best to stay, the worst to pass, the useless to fall into oblivion, and the wheat be separated from the chaff, pardon me the cliché, including the cliché of this request for forgiveness?

Mediatization is a social relationship. I ended up thinking about how the mediating social relationship is founded, or what gives it prominence and meaning, mediating it in the qualified spaces of scientific objectivity. We work in classroom with the ideas of authors such as Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu. Are we, however, able to apply them to our doing? Or in our mediations (I keep jumping from mediatization to mediation) is there never surveillance and an attempt to control the “field?” For the rest, one will only gain by reading this book on mediatization. It makes one think. There is no result without simulation. There is no simulation without a result. The book is a technology of the imaginary. It is part of technological imagination. It has a history. Finally, its publication is available to everyone.

In thesis 66, Debord was a poet, radical, and prophet, which, according to some, goes the same way: “The spectacle does not sing the praises of men and their weapons, but of commodities and their passions” (1992, p. 43).

What do we sing?

I hope that the tolerance and pluralism, treated by José Luiz Braga in his article of this work, come from a meeting of voices and dissonances.

Mediatization can be more relevant than mediation.

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PART I: EPISTEMOLOGIES

From mediatization to deep mediatization

*Andreas Hepp*¹

Abstract: Mediatization refers to the relationship between the transformation of media and communication on the one hand and culture and society, on the other. Starting from this initial approach to the concept of mediatization, this article has a threefold objective. First, it begins by outlining a more detailed explanation of mediatization. Second, it goes on to describe its current stage as one of deep mediatization, and, finally, it discusses the necessity of extending the perspective of mediatization research to that of the *making* of a deep mediatization. This is necessary because, with deep mediatization, new kinds of collectivities have become driving forces for change. Actors within pioneer communities such as the Quantified Self Movement, the Maker Movement, and the Hacks/Hacker Movement are harnessed as examples.

Keywords: Mediatization. Transformation. Media environment. Datafication. Social movements. Pioneer communities.

1. Introduction

Mediatization refers to an experience everybody knows from his or her everyday life: (digital) media saturate more and more domains of society and they are changing with this. More specifically, mediatization refers to the relationship

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between the transformation of media and communication on the one hand and culture and society on the other (COULDRY; HEPP, 2013, p. 197). With reference to everyday experience it can be said that mediatization has quantitative as well as qualitative effects. Quantitative observations are concerned with media's proliferation through society. This can be measured temporally (media were once only available at certain times of day, they can now be accessed twenty-four hours a day), spatially (media in the past were often static, they are now accessible in more places), and socially (our social practices are increasingly entangled with and augmented by a variety of media). Some media scholars have argued that these transformations permeate every social domain, that media have become so pervasive, we can speak of the mediation of everything (LIVINGSTONE, 2009, p. 1). A qualitative analysis of mediatization focuses its attention, both empirically and theoretically, on the specific consequences of the saturation of everyday life by media and to what extent this affects social and cultural change (for a general introduction, see LUNDBY, 2014). Crucially, mediatization research does not deal with the effects of individual media content, rather, it is concerned with the ways in which society and human practices are transformed by media's ever-increasing ubiquity.

Taking this definition as a starting point, I want to outline in the following a more detailed explanation of mediatization. Based on this, I will explain why we should consider the current stage of mediatization as one of *deep* mediatization. Finally, I discuss the necessity of extending the perspective of mediatization research to that of the *making* of deep mediatization. This is necessary because, with deep mediatization, new kinds of collectivities have become driving forces for change, actors from pioneer communities such as the Quantified Self Movement, the Maker Movement or the Hacks/Hacker Movement of pioneer journalism are used as examples.²

2 This article is based on arguments from my book "Deep Mediatization" (Routledge 2020). An earlier version was presented at the III International Seminar on mediatization and social processes at UNISINOS, São Leopoldo - RS, in May 2019.

2. A more detailed description of mediatization

Mediatization can be understood as a sensitizing concept (JENSEN, 2013, p. 206). A sensitizing concept gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances (BLUMER, 1954, p. 7) and draws our attention to (present) changes in culture and society. In these terms, mediatization sensitizes us to the fundamental changes we experience in the context of our media environment (cf. HEPP; HASEBRINK, 2017). First, we are confronted with media's increasing *differentiation* as the amount of media we encounter rapidly increases and more and more artifacts become media devices. The infrastructure of the internet brings with it the increased *connectivity* of media and the advent of mobile communications has encouraged media's *omnipresence*. The contemporary media environment is characterized by a growing pace of *innovation*, as the sequence of key innovations in the field of media technology has significantly hastened over the past thirty years. As a consequence of their digitalization, media are no longer solely means of communication but are also generators of abundant amounts of data leading to the intensifying *datafication* of media use. The terminology of mediatization complements the more general language of mediation and sensitizes us to the ongoing transformation of the fundamental trends of our everyday media environment.

However, sensitizing concepts that are used to emphasize certain phenomena have to be complemented by other analytical tools to ensure that grasping them more rigorously is a straightforward process. The essential analytical principles of mediatization research can be found in both the institutionalist and the socio-constructivist traditions (COULDRY; HEPP, 2013, p. 195-198), yet the manner in which the conceptual work of mediatization is done differs between the two. Put simply, the institutionalist tradition finds its roots in mass communication research that understood media as an independent institution with its own set of rules; so, with this in mind, mediatization for the institutionalists refers to how different social fields may adapt to these institutionalized rules. The social-constructivist

tradition, on the other hand, highlights the role various media play in the communicative construction of social reality and approaches the idea of mediatization to analyze the ways media may operate across that process.

Research carried out in the *institutionalist tradition* focuses on the role media (understood as a social institution) plays in influencing other areas of culture and society that apparently are external to it, a process often referred to as media logic. Originally coined by David Altheide and Robert Snow in 1979, media logic describes the influence discrete mass-media formats have on other areas of society, politics, or religion, for example. More recently, media logic has been utilized more broadly and is often pluralized to take into consideration the existence of many media logics (for an overview see STRÖMBÄCK; ESSER, 2014; THIMM; ANASTASIADIS; EINSPÄNNER-PFLOCK, 2018). Mediatization can be seen as having been responsible for introducing a certain media logic as a way of staging, presenting, and selecting into other areas of society leading to the language of media logic(s) acting as a metaphor and shorthand for the various *modi operandi* that characterize the workings of the media (HJARVARD, 2017, p. 11). Typically, media logic links to more specific analytical concepts such as media's forms of interaction and their organizational rules and how they shape communication in other social institutions as well as how their technological affordances mold media use. Media's influence is not conceptualized as a (more-or-less direct) effect, non-media actors bring with them their own logic(s) which in turn have the potential to work against media logic(s) resulting in inertia and resistance despite transformations in the media environment.

By contrast, the *social-constructivist* tradition emphasizes the role media play in the communicative construction of social and cultural reality and predominantly explores mediatization from the perspective of everyday actors (KNOBLAUCH, 2013; KROTZ, 2014). Researchers in this tradition question how our cultural and societal practices are altered, when they are entangled with media. Here, we can see one more way of theorizing the influence media may have, that is, by considering them as means of communication that shape our practices through processes of institutionalization and materialization (COULDRY;

HEPP, 2017, p. 32). *Institutionalization* can be explained as follows: everyday practices, talking, working, playing are, to some degree, stabilized in their social form by media's (ever-increasing) presence in our lives, and it is through this altering of everyday life that media influence our construction of society. It goes hand in hand with *materialization*, which means that social practices are, themselves, inscribed in the media technologies we use and the infrastructures that accommodate them. Messenger software, for example, materializes a certain way of talking through its software-based user interface. These influences do not, however, travel in one direction but instead move cyclically. Within each social domain there exists an *orientation in everyday practice* which may or may not be altered by media. Take the family, for example, or school; within these social realms are constructed certain practices that allow these institutions to more or less function appropriately. However, these practices are enduring and to some degree obstinate; media pervasiveness is, indeed, able to affect or change these practices but, ultimately, it is unlikely that it will ever transform them completely. This inertia, this to-and-fro of constructing practice, means that orientations in everyday practice have the potential to resist and even alter media themselves.

Despite coming from divergent disciplinary origins and applying different approaches to the conceptualization of mediatization, researchers from both traditions have come closer together in their understanding and application of the term (HEPP; HJARVARD; LUNDBY, 2015). First, they both see mediatization as a long-term process of transformation that is accompanied by other long-term processes of change such as individualization, globalization, and commercialization. It contrasts, as already emphasized, with the term *mediation*, which grasps a very general communicative moment, namely, how communication mediates, or intervenes, between multiple actors (cf. SILVERSTONE, 2005). Second, both traditions share the position that mediatization does not operate in the same way across social domains (communities, organizations etc.). In contrast, the specific way mediatization occurs differs significantly from one social domain to another (LUNT; LIVINGSTONE, 2016, p. 465). It is for this reason that empirical research on mediatization is

always a contextualized form of research with the aim of describing (and critiquing) specific forms of mediatization. Third, both traditions focus on how media as means of communication change or transform culture and society. Therefore, their interests are not the effects of media content and other more direct manifestations of media's influence (HJARVARD, 2017, p. 1-3) but fundamental phenomena that stimulate change in individual areas of society, parallel to the transformation of media and communication itself. Fourth and finally, it is common practice to consider perception as one facet of these transformations: As long as people orient their practices to what they expect to be media influence, media will have an, albeit indirect, influence on changing practices (NÖLLEKE; SCHEU, 2018).

3. The challenges of deep mediatization

A more recent focus within mediatization research is media's increasingly digital character and the challenges it presents when we are faced with the necessity to rethink mediatization. While initial contributions on the matter were fairly general in tone (FINNEMANN, 2014; MILLER, 2014), the discussion has intensified and has become more specific as digitalization has advanced mediatization processes.

The reasons for this are multifaceted. Mediatization research became increasingly aware that the present characteristic of the media is less about the dominance of one (digital) medium but the differentiation of highly connected digital forms. The focus has shifted, therefore, to the polymedia (MADIANOU, 2014, p. 323) or the media-manifold (COULDRY; HEPP, 2013, p. 34) character of today's media environment. From this point of view, in order to understand how media shape and mold each area of society, it is necessary to consider digital media in terms of their intimacy with each other; that is, to reflect on the cross-media character of mediatization. Furthermore, mediatization research has become increasingly aware of how media are not just means of communication. As digital media, they are at one and the same time means of generating data *while* they are used for communication functions. This data is used as a source for

various forms of automated analysis which has become a fundamental part of the construction of the social world (see, for example, in relation to journalism, LOOSEN, 2018). Through this shift into the digital, mediatization research has developed various connections with more general research on the influence data has on society (see, for example, BEER, 2016 and GILLESPIE; BOCZKOWSKI; FOOT, 2014).

Digitalization has seen us emerge into a new stage of mediatization, which we can identify as deep mediatization. Deep mediatization is an advanced stage of mediatization in which all elements of our social world are intricately related to media and their overarching infrastructures (COULDRY; HEPP, 2013, p. 7, 34). Researching deep mediatization presents a challenge to mediatization research as it must incorporate the analysis of algorithms and digital infrastructure into the way it approaches its objects of analysis. The investigation of algorithms becomes necessary because, in a state of deep mediatization, facets of the mediated construction of the social world occur through automated data analyses (GILLESPIE, 2014). Classification into certain interest groups when shopping online and personal recommendations based on this technology are made possible and are automated through the use of algorithmic systems, as are suggestions of new friends or users to follow on online platforms. More attention needs to be paid to the digital infrastructures that underpin contemporary media (MOSCO, 2017). As the current connectivity we are experiencing will increase, it can only be approached from a cross-media *and* global perspective. Understanding mediatization as a concept that *sensitizes* us to media change means that we must rethink the relevance of specific research paths once more and forces us to further integrate more detailed analytical concepts into the field.

4. The making of deep mediatization

As my previous statements in this article have made clear, mediatization is not a “natural” process, but a form of social transformation “made” by human beings: By “making” digital media and their infrastructures the basis of more and more social

processes, by considering digital media and their infrastructures as the central instrument for “solving” societal problems, the process of deep mediatization is promoted in all its dynamics. Based on its institutionalist and social-constructivist traditions, previous mediatization research has been interested above all in two types of actors when it has discussed such questions of “making”. These were, on the one hand, the different actors operating in media environments themselves – media professionals, journalists – and on the other hand, people acting in different social domains (political institutions, religious institutions, educational institutions etcetera) who are confronted with the increasing influence of digital media and their infrastructures.

But it is precisely the far-reaching character of the deep mediatization that makes a broader perspective on its “making” necessary. As digital media and their infrastructures have become a basis for economic practices and production practices in general, one argument at this point is to consider a new way of understanding the political economy of digital capitalism (MURDOCH, 2017). Another important point is to focus on the fact that new “intermediaries” have to be included in our considerations if we truly want to grasp the “making” of deep mediatization (HEPP, 2020, p. 30-40): Various collectives – social movements, think tanks, pioneer communities – are oriented towards “acting on media” and thus become a fundamental part of the “making” of deep mediatization. In essence, the phrase “acting on media” emphasizes the fact that “a wide range of actors [...] take an active part in the moulding of media organizations, infrastructures and technologies that are part of the fabric of everyday life” (KAN-NENGIEßER; KUBITSCHKO, 2017, p. 1). It leans toward thinking about ‘media as practice’ more broadly than originally intended. In his original intervention on the issue of practice, Nick Couldry (2004, p. 117) was concerned with describing media practice “as the open set of practices relating to, or oriented around, media.” His focus was mainly on understanding communication with media as a practice. The expression “acting on media” now travels alternative avenues, thus broadening its scope as media become so fundamental in today’s deeply mediatized societies – as institutions and as materialities – and as they increasingly come to represent an object of social struggle.

In times of deep mediatization, diverse collectivities consider that media and media infrastructures can be identified, themselves, as an object of engagement with the expectation that they might influence on processes of societal transformation. Examples of these collectivities for media change (COULDRY; HEPP, 2017, p. 180) can be seen in social movements such as the Open Data movement (BAACK, 2015), think tanks such as the Inter-American Dialogue (NEUBAUER, 2012), and pioneer communities such as the Maker Movement (DAVIS, 2017). As diverse as these collectivities may be, they share the conviction that media are fundamental to contemporary societal formations, and much like actors from the worlds of politics and economics, they consider media and media infrastructures as an object within which political engagement can thrive.

It is often the case that a change in the present gives us a different view of the past. This is the case with the idea of acting on media. While deep mediatization has directed our attention to this broader form of media-related practice, we find that once we adopt this point of view this has been a general phenomenon throughout media history and, in particular, a key characteristic of more recent digital media. We can even go so far as to write the history of digital media and their infrastructures as that of acting on media. Fred Turner (2006) presented an important draft for just such a perspective in his historical account of the history of Silicon Valley in, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture*. Through a detailed historical analysis, he demonstrated how the network that developed around the Whole Earth Catalogue, curated by Stuart Brand, had a significant influence on the development of digital technologies long before economists or politicians even gave them a moment's thought. Examining it with the benefit of hindsight, as a hybrid of social movement and think tank, the Whole Earth Network could be described as an early pioneer community (and later as a network of various pioneer communities). The point is that the Whole Earth Network was able to define itself by acting on media. After the countercultural utopias had failed, the network turned to digital media technology as a means of shaping society according to its ideas and values. Remarkably, we can attribute many media-related social movements, such as the hacker movement, directly to the Whole Earth Network (LEVY, 1984),

that the early technology designs of MIT Media Lab cannot in any way be detached from the network's broader discourse (BRAND, 1987), and that today's pioneer communities, such as the Quantified Self movement, can be attributed directly to Stuart Brands legacy (KELLY, 2016, p. 237-252). In other words, we can understand the making of deep mediatization not only by starting from a political economy of prominent media corporations (MURDOCK, 2017) but by considering the making of deep mediatization as a much lengthier historical process. We can only fully grasp it if we understand it historically and as a process of acting on media.

5. Conclusion

Altogether, the arguments made so far in this article stand for the fact that a movement towards deep mediatization is associated with the necessity of fundamentally broadening the perspective of mediatization research. First of all, this concerns the area of phenomena that we are dealing with. With digitalization as the final wave pushing us toward deep mediatization, media are generally software-based and thus no longer just means of communication, but also means of data processing. On these terms, mediatization research is confronted with the challenge to incorporate the analysis of algorithms and digital infrastructure into its approach. The discussion about the making of deep mediatization has also shown that the view of the relevant actors to be investigated must be broadened: Since "acting on media" no longer only concerns classical actors from the media themselves or media policy and regulation, but increasingly a multitude of other collectivities, a broader perspective appears necessary than has, hitherto, been characteristic of mediatization research. In addition, digital methods themselves are gaining in importance for mediatization research with the general increase in the relevance of the digital.

In this sense, speaking of deep mediatization not only refers – empirically speaking – to a particular stage of mediatization. Applied self-reflexively, it means that the self-understanding of mediatization research changes: regarding its subject area, its theories, and its methods. The past few years of me-

diatization research were accordingly characterized by a great dynamic, a dynamic that will probably continue in the coming years as deep mediatization progresses.

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Mediatization, interactions and education: a classroom- grounded sketch¹

Luís Mauro Sá Martino²

Abstract: The mediatization of society has brought new challenges for education, from elementary schooling to higher education. The presence of media devices, like mobile phones and tablets, as much as the content available on platforms such as YouTube and streaming services have provided a new learning environment. At the same time, the interaction via social media has brought socialization to a new level, for the best and the worst. This article outlines some aspects of learning in a mediatized environment based on three main arguments: (1) it is necessary to think about the ‘technique’ as a human creative skill prior to technology; (2) the media environment articulates with cognitive habits; (3) technology is not a device to be ‘employed,’ but an environment that involves education as a whole.

Keywords: Mediatization. Communication. Education. Media Environment.

1 The first version of this text was born from a proposal for dialogue and reflection on the presence of technologies in the classroom at Faculdade Cásper Líbero, in 2015/2016. I am grateful to all several colleagues who discussed the text at that time, offering valuable suggestions. Reworked, it was part of the basis for an oral presentation, in 2019, at the III International Seminar on Mediatization and Social Processes, at UNISINOS. Some of the oral marks resulting from the dialogic origin of the work were maintained. The text, in this version, is unprecedented.

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1. Introduction

I usually say something that I am fully responsible for, although I understand that it can be controversial: in recent years I have learned more didactics by watching television series than by reading specific books (Mariana MAGGIO, 2018, p. 57).

In a provocative text written in 1969, “Mutations 1990”, about how the education would be in the “future”, or the distant year of 1989, McLuhan (1969) attracted various criticisms for indicating the various problems of the traditional teaching model, based, above all, on print culture. He indicated the necessity of changes in the teaching concept to deal with people born and raised in a media environment of a completely different nature, characterized, above all, by audiovisual media - “electronic” in the time’s terms. The Canadian author was not only referring to television, cinema, or radio. In *Mutations 1990*, McLuhan (1969, p. 49) states literally: “A worldwide network of computers will, in a few minutes, make accessible to the students all kinds of knowledge of the entire world.

The problem was not the media itself, but the way culture, the human uses of these media, were distant from the school as if the school model was refractory to the aesthetic-cognitive conditions resulting from the appropriation of these means, says Lima (1989).

Thinking about the relations between media and teaching indicates, among other things, the need to understand them in their articulations, strains, and complexities, avoiding reducing or binary interpretations that sometimes come up when the subject is discussed. This essay outlines some aspects of the relationship between the digital media environment and the teaching-learning spaces, in the perspective of a mediatization theory (MARTINO, 2019a; 2019b), from three points: (1) thinking, beyond the “technology”, the tool, but the “technique”, human capacity to do and create; (2) the learning processes are, in their multiplicity, linked to the cognitive habits of the learner; (3) learning is articulated, in many ways, with the contemporary

digital environment, which does not mean the simple “use” of technology, but its articulation with the social practices of education - which refers back to the first point.

2. The dual face of technology, between medicine and poison

Plato, in his dialogue *Phaedrus*, makes one of the first critiques of the advantages and problems of adopting new technologies - in this case, the “new technology” was the alphabet. Using, as he used to do, a myth, Plato narrates the episode.

Theuth, a sage from ancient Egypt, one day approached Pharaoh Thamus to offer him an invention, a remedy (pharmakón) for memory: the alphabet, writing. With that new technology, Theuth explained, the Egyptians would never have to worry about remembering things again; once registered by writing, nothing would be forgotten. Thamus, however, declined the offer: that invention, the ability to record things outside the human mind, would be a poison (also pharmakón) for memory; the Egyptians, freed from the need to learn, would become lazy. Writing as medicine and poison, technology as pharmakón of the mind: Plato posed the question that, two and a half thousand years later, refers to the dual face of technology in its relationship with culture.

The answer of the Greek philosopher is still ambiguous: his master Socrates did not leave philosophical texts - his students Plato and Xenophon were responsible for recording his sayings and dialogues - and, as far as we know, he never needed anything beyond his mind and his *daimôn* to transform Western philosophy; Plato, for his part, devoted himself not only to the writing of his series of Dialogues but also left letters from which we can glimpse a little of his life and work. There seem to be, in this ambiguity, two extreme positions related to technology. If Socrates did not leave philosophical writings, Plato used writing with such refinement that his Dialogues, philosophical works, are endowed with a literary refinement not always (re)found in Philosophy.

Socrates’ teaching in the streets of Athens was predominantly oral. Plato, at the Academy, possibly had a written cor-

pus for his closest students, leaving the Dialogues that came to us to a broader audience. On the other hand, Aristotle seems to have written dialogues as refined as those of his teacher, Plato. Aristotelian texts that have survived to this day seem, mainly, to be notes from classes taken by his students or, at best, drafts of his courses.

Apparently, the Greek notion of *tekhné* referred to an ability to do something, to create something - and, in that, there was a process, both mental and manual, something that Latin would translate as *ars*, from which derive, at the same time, “art” and “crafts.” *Tekhné* referred not only to an ability to do something, but it was also linked to the mental dispositions for that, a *hexis* - a “mental habit” from which the “technician” could carry out his work. Part of the medieval philosophy translated *hexis* into *habitus*, leaving an implicit mind-body relationship, linked from the notion of a generating capacity not only to practical actions but also to the ideas necessary to give them shape - which Bourdieu (1983) takes up as one of its main concepts.

Thus, talking about “technique” was not just talking about a practical operational capacity related to a given action, but the potential to transform a “concept”, an “idea”, or “form” (*eidós*) into something physical, concrete. The *Tekhné* made this transition, becoming a strained notion between “concept” and “practice”.

If we consider this conception, speaking of “technique” as something separate from the human being who uses it, there seems to be a contradiction: technique, in this point of view, is not an attribute of the dispositif used to accomplish something, but inherent to the human - the opposite of that would be like saying that the carpenter’s “technique” is in the chisel, not in its operator. “Technology,” in this sense, can be considered in terms of something external to the being - which, in any case, developed it, but this does not happen with the human technique. It is in a similar sense that Heidegger seems to work with the topic in his lecture on technique: technique is not, in itself, a “technique”, but it is part of the human. The *pharmakón* is a constituent and constitutive of the human.

If *pharmakón* is widespread, what about teaching? To what extent can the *epistéme* be influenced by the *pharmakón* of

the technique? It is not the aim here to propose answers, but perhaps to outline some of these questions, which have been current for two thousand years.

3. Building the habit of learning

In his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle makes two brief considerations about learning that may offer some clues for thinking about the questions in this essay. "The success of the lessons," he says at the beginning of the book *Gama*, "depends on the habits of the listeners."

Habit, explains Aristotle, in *Ethics*, comes from learning. It is not given, but constructed from practice, which, in turn, is incorporated and subjectivized, becoming an automatic action, a "second nature." Habit leads human beings to do most of their actions, and, not by chance, a considerable part of the educational process refers to the cultivation of habits based on the constant practice of correct actions.

Virtue, explains Aristotle, is the practice of virtuous human beings; beyond any circular definition, there seems to be a proposal for the pedagogical action: the interaction between doing and understanding. It is by doing the right actions that one learns what a good action is - in contemporary terms, the practice of respecting difference and living with otherness is crucial for citizenship. The habit, in addition to a cognitive dimension, has an ethical dimension - no knowledge is not linked to ethics regarding its conditions of elaboration, practice, and use. Thus, it is the strained interaction, socially and culturally mediated, with the environment, the element responsible for forming the listener's habits from which the success of the lessons derives - a point Bordeau has retaken (1983).

It can be approximated to the perspective used by Freire (1993; 1997) in his literacy experience: when intersecting the world of social relations, history, and critique within the scope of his pedagogical work; the success of the lessons is not only linked to habits of the favorable listener but also, in the critical examination of these conditions, it presents itself as a transforming reflection.

To bring the “habits of the listener” into the classroom is, therefore, to bring his/her experiences and transformations. The class, recalls Freinet (1997), cannot be separated from life. Discovery, investigation, responsibility, and citizenship are present inside and outside the school walls. It is in this connection, problematizing but continuous, between the “inside” of the classroom and the “outside” from the students’ lives, that the act of learning becomes interesting. While the school strives to leave life outside, says the French educator, there will be no way to work on the students’ interests to provide an environment for collective knowledge.

And what are the habits, in a cognitive and practical sense, of today’s listeners? The first answer could be summed up in “entertainment and pop culture.” More elaborately, we could add “North American series,” “soap operas,” “cartoons,” and “games.” In more conceptual terms, the answer seems to lead to the notions of “media environment” and “mediatized society.”

As Flusser (1966) recalls, the fact that someone does not master the techniques for using the technologies of an environment does not prevent him from living in it. The typographic environment, dominated by writing and printing, was experienced even by those who did not master reading, just as today digital environments comprise the actions of even those who, for some reason, are not connected to them - the digital barriers, thought in this perspective, they become triply excluding in their economic, cognitive, and relational aspects.

The habits of those who were born and raised in a digital environment cannot be dissociated from the culture of the media. Their ways of seeing the world and apprehending reality must be considered in conjunction with these elements present - in different quantities, undoubtedly, according to multifactorial issues - in this environment. Their references, memories, practices, and ways of understanding are constantly articulated with these references from which people in the digital environment read the world (BRAGA; CALAZANS, 2001).

To a certain extent, think about contemporary education is to think about ways of sharing expertise within a digital environment in which individuals, living in a mediatized society, stand out for bringing habits cultivated in that environment.

As Evangelina Margiolakis (2011, p. 158) says, “many teachers in communication propose that the distinction of teaching this theme is the possibility, more than in any other field, to work with the previous knowledge of the students.” And completes (2011, p. 160): “if everyday knowledge is not critically analyzed, it can operate as a barrier to problematization.”

It is necessary to take into account that the classroom space, even when completely devoid of any digital artifact, is part of this environment. Natalia Anselmino (2010, p. 52) indicates that “the analysis of mediatized discourses requires a theoretical-methodological model which allows explaining the process of meaning that takes place in the activities of an individual subject, but from collective organisms much more complex.” It is not the prominent presence of technological devices that characterizes a digital environment, but the constant articulation of social practices with the mediations provided by technical devices. “If communicating is sharing the meaning,” says Martín-Barbero (2003, p. 79), “education would, then, be the decisive place for its intersection.”

4. Mediatization and the articulation of knowledge

The concept of mediatization has been worked on by several authors who seek to situate the connection between media and social practices, insofar as it is not possible to separate one from the other, as indicated, among others, by Sodré (2004), Gomes, Ferreira, Braga, and Fausto Neto (2008), Hjarvard (2008), Couldry (2008), Livingstone (2009), Rosa (2009), Hepp (2014), Gomes (2018), or Martino (2019a; 2019b). It is not a matter of thinking from a dichotomy between “media” and “society” but understanding social practices in their articulation with the media environment - the notion of “environment,” here, derives from Meyrowitz (1993; 1995; 2000).

As a starting point, retrieving an earlier argument (MARTINO, 2019), mediatization can be understood as the articulation between the media environment and social practices. On the one hand, social practices, constituted by the interactions

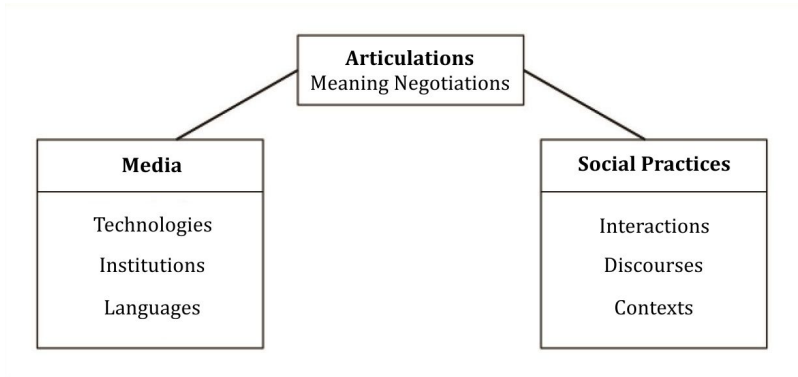
between people and groups in a context, are elaborated as an action and a discourse. On the other hand, the media environment presents itself, at the same time, as the technological device (a smartphone, for example), language (different platforms imply different semiotic codes), and an institutional production system. The idea of “articulation,” brought by Hall (1996), indicates that the relationship between both these aspects is not of cause and effect, but a constant dynamic.

The study of mediatization focuses on the articulation between both elements. The object of study is not the media itself, or the social practices - in this case, educational ones - but what emerges from the articulation between them. It is something different from the previous elements: mediatized, education can take other forms, different from the traditional one; the media environment is covered with other circuits, as Fausto Neto (2006) says, the “circulation of meanings,” when articulated with educational practice.

As Hall (1996) recalls, it is a “negotiation” in which there is, beforehand, a unique perspective. When it comes to mediatization and education, it is not a matter of thinking about the “use of technology” in the classroom but the readjustment of practice - education - in another environment.

In this perspective of mediatization, the media is neither the “center” nor the main point - Ferreira (2010) recalls the need to avoid the risk of a reduction to technology. As Braga (2010) points out, it is no longer possible to talk about the centrality of the media since it is spread across the social fabric; at the same time, it is not a matter of studying didactic-pedagogical practices at the university by itself, which is perhaps closer to education studies, but the scenario resulting from the articulation between both. Figure 01 seeks to illustrate these elements:

Figure 01: Possible elements of a mediatization process



Retrieved from: Martino (2019).

The perspective of “media environment” refers to the fact that, in contemporary society, social practices are connected, though partially, to different types of electronic media responsible for their intermediation. The medium is not just a technical channel, but it has its specific language, and its domain is the first condition for the success of any message. Among other things, living in a media environment is being in constant relationship with the media, mediating practices, experiences, and actions. The media environment, according to Meyrowitz (1993; 1999; 2000), is less the set of communication media than the interactions between human beings *with* and *from* this technological tool.

In a mediatized society, social practices are directly interrelated to the languages, codes, logics, and discourses of the media. Social interactions happen - also, but not only - through the media, adapting to their logics and languages, which in turn become habitual - and, again, reinforcing the “habits of the listener.”

“Mediatization,” says Ana Paula Rosa (2011, p. 134), “is not just about the communication media, but the logics that are used by the most varied institutions to make them known, public, and to give access to the events that have relevance or to which relevance is attributed.”

Thus, it is questionable to expect that the individual, living in a mediatized society, with his/her practices permeated in a digital environment, does not develop some of his/her

habits from the mediation with this context - habits that he or she will take to the classroom, challenging this environment to become digital and mediatized, even without any specific technological apparatus.

The languages of the media, especially the languages of entertainment, more than seen as obstacles or hindrances to learning, can be seen, in this perspective, as elements that constitute the environment of the individual who participates in the act of learning - and, in this aspect, problematize the habits, highlighting them, bringing them to the forefront, at the same time that they are experienced, may contribute to a better understanding of their potentials and limits.

5. Final considerations

Mediatization seems to change the inflection of teaching practices. Viviana Mancovsky (2011, p. 141) recalls the need for an “epistemological reflection on the role of the teacher as an evaluating subject and the power of his words in the interaction of the class.”

There is not, and this is almost a truism, a single lesson model for the media environment. There are masterful expository classes, as well as classes mounted on digital supports of questionable quality - and vice versa. It is not the devices, it seems, that are responsible for the success of a class - as Aristotle suggests, the ways of learning vary considerably, demanding a dynamic of transformation, critical and self-critical, constant to think about the environment. Maria Paula Pierella (2014, p. 160 and following) highlights the need to think of the class as an “aesthetic experience” and binding, in which the concern with the subjects, the students, is not limited or distanced too much from the “object” of a course or discipline.

There is a distinction between the “media environment” and the indiscriminate inclusion of digital devices in the classroom environment - or, even less, the compulsory perspective of its use as a *pharmakón* to solve educational problems that have deep social, cultural, and economic roots. At this point, perhaps the question, as suggested here, is not the relevance or not

of using digital devices in the classroom, but of rethinking the “class” and “classroom” models for people trained in a digital environment, accustomed to its language. Onians (2008), for example, mentions how the cognitive processes, per se, are altered in the interaction with practices and languages. The brain, he argues, in its neuroplasticity, is permeable to the practices and aesthetics of perception.

As Ana Paula Rosa (2009, p. 3) recalls, “the mediatized society arises when the means become not merely a form of intermediation, of a connection between the experienced (real) and the represented, but when the media start to become a communicative agent that generates and creates actions that affect the life of the citizen.”

Evidently, as Flusser (1966) recalls, it is not a matter of adapting content for media languages but remembering that learning goes through these languages. And this can be, he continues, a challenge or a starting point for the re-elaboration of educational perspectives - something always contemporary.

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Mediatization and virtuality in human sciences: An announced crossroads

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Abstract: The current economic form par excellence, neoliberalism undertakes transformations in the area of labor that do not allow to disassociate it from the phenomenon of mediatization. The novelty resides in *visibility* and *circulation* as foundational devices of post-industrial economies. Among the results of the new regime would be the atrophying of the virtuality of time as a difference of the humanities. Established due to its emancipatory dimension, such virtuality oriented not only diverse answers to the dialectics between knowledge and social form, but above all the very alterity of human sciences. Today, however, it seems to wither, and in the wake of its retraction remains the knowledge as management of social behavior.

Keywords: Mediatization. Humanities. Neoliberalism. Epistemology. Present time.

I. Introduction

Responsible for the formulation of a teleological time, that is, one that predicted a direction or a realization of history, the philosophies of Kant and Hegel prepare the emergence of an immanent time, fundamental to the order of knowledge, especially to the so-called human sciences (QUIROGA, 2013). From the unfolding (and criticism) of the authors' work, we move on to comprehensive intelligibility, aware of the historicity of time, the

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production of knowledge inevitably marked by the entry of time as an absolute agent of change (KOSELLECK, 2006). From the point of view of the humanities, the event would not be small; on the contrary, the advent of a *passing* time would allow the emergence of the principle of self-determination (RENAUT, 2001), based essentially on the recognition of the difference produced by immanence *in* time. It is the epistemological role exercised by the present time, especially in the field of human sciences. From its dissemination, there is the emergence of knowledge whose otherness would come from the practical idea of freedom as a power of choice - that is, autonomy as what “demands in me the definition of a part of the common, irreducible humanity to the affirmation of my singularity [...] and to which my singularity must submit” (ibid., p. 18). From this advent, we moved to epistemological practices marked not only by the record of a past that would continue to exercise its resonances, or even by the alterities of a coming to be that, uncertain or unknown, would necessarily be in the condition of what it was not yet (GIL, 2003), but, above all, the practical constitution of knowledge based on the ideal of the present time as a difference.

However, much of the dialectical *strain* between knowledge production and social form (OUELLET; MARTIN, 2018) was guided by the protagonism of the present time. Thinking in terms of Habermas (2015), it would be among the gains of the so-called *cultural modernization* and would have guided a significant part of the human sciences in their various forms of criticism - empirical, normative, and aesthetic - to the process of commodification and bureaucratization of money and power which, indifferent to the problem of communicative understanding, would produce the rarefaction of bonds of solidarity. For the author, such a protagonism would profane traditions and respond, “for cultural changes, for changes in motivation and attitudes, for shifts in valuation and identity patterns, attributed to an outbreak of cultural innovations in the world of life” (p. 84). In summary, the present time would be an emancipatory *event*, responsible for the advances of modern democracy, as well as the political idea of an expanded public sphere, acquisitions of the most important, inherited from cultural modernization, largely due to the intertwining of intellectual activity to a type of transformative social action.

2. On neoconservatism in culture

Today, however, as a direct consequence of the widespread growth of neoconservatism in culture - which, on the one hand, invests heavily in criticizing cultural modernization as the cause of the crisis and contemporary uneasiness, and, on the other hand, adheres to radical social modernization, updating the “functional needs of the State and the economy” (HABERMAS, 2015, p. 69) -, we are faced with the crossroads that involve the protagonism of the present time, especially in the realm of the humanities. In other words, in the same intensity in which *real-time* investments are radicalized - in which the so-called anticipation regimes, also characteristic of the neoconservatism of culture, predominate - there is a retraction of its virtuality, which, historically, has driven various reflections on the so-called humanities. The proposition starts from the double strife fueled by current conservatism. On the one hand, it attacks the gains of cultural modernization as “collective learning processes” (FREITAG, 1995, p. 139), which would include the rule of law itself, the expanded public space, and the process of constant democratization. On the other hand, it adheres to the most radical in terms of economic liberalism, reinforcing the diffusion of financial capital, the market of emotions, the weakening of class identities and generalized entrepreneurship. According to Habermas (2015), unlike the old conservatism, which was totally opposed to the novelties of modernity, in the name of traditional life forms, the new conservatism makes a programmatic alliance with unfinished modernization processes. Like the old conservatism, it continues to face *cultural modernization*, but as a way of justifying the increase in social modernization. That is, neoconservatism reverses the game of causes and effects concerning the diagnosis of the contemporary crisis (QUIROGA; CASTRO, 2020). For him, the cause of the economic and social problems lies in the symbolic disintegration of common inheritances, weakened by the process of cultural modernization, which we now have to restore. In this case, not only the intellectual activity, the base of the expanded public sphere, is now being discredited, and it is necessary to “cultivate the tra-

ditional culture, the powers that maintain proper conventional ethics, patriotism, bourgeois religion [...] to compensate [...] overburdens [...] of competitive society and accelerated modernization” (HABERMAS, 2015, p. 228), but also the very production of knowledge, conceived as decisive for the constitution of modern democracies, would be among the targets of the new obscurantism.

Now, one of the questions that one can ask, then, refers to the type of reaction triggered in the scientific environment, where there seems to be no doubt that different interpretations about the event in question predominate. However, given the eloquence of the attacks, one can say, comparatively, how great is still the difficulty, on the part of the different areas, in giving intelligibility to the recent events. The hypothesis developed here is that, to a large extent, this difficulty comes from the ascendancy of social modernization, under the current epistemological production, which, among its effects, would produce the dehydration of the present time as an emancipatory device erected by cultural modernization. Although it results from the neoliberal singularity, which seeks to save liberalism from the failed naturalistic ontology of *laissez-faire*, legally ensuring the functioning of the market - which demands progressive state interventionism, and then becomes a company (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016), such dehydration will be analyzed here as a result of the growing disconnection between knowledge production and social form. In other words, with the emergence of the new knowledge economy, based on the transmission of information, also altered the nature of science, pedagogical institutions, and different forms of individual conscience, henceforth made profitable investments that must be measured, but also its relationship with what could be called *society* production. From the point of view of post-industrial economies, contemporary epistemological production should no longer deal with the public political sphere or the *universality of rights*, but with the increase of services and operational procedures that improve organizations as economic agents of capital (CHAUI, 2018). It is the historical conjunction in which institutions are founded on the axiom of the company as a paradigm of subjectivation, and knowledge guided both by organizational self-reproduction and the ideals

of personal improvement. From this context, therefore, comes the sharp dissociation between knowledge production and social form, in which the retraction of the virtuality of time, as a substrate for the intelligibility of contemporary knowledge, constitutes one of its most significant practical results.

3. Social media and modernization

The social modernization we are talking about is not exactly recent. Strictly speaking, the bases of the “conservative and neoliberal shift [as] a political response to the economic and social crisis of the Fordist regime of capital accumulation” (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, p. 189), identified in the 1970s-1980s, with Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan’s governments, can be found in historical situations that precede it. It is the case, for example, of the Walter Lippmann Colloquium, in Paris, 1938, in presentations by Louis Rougier, member of the Vienna Circle and organizer of the meeting, or by Lippmann himself, honored by the seminar, who advocate both a broad educational process, which *adapts* individuals to the inevitable market economy, as a State capable of “purifying the competitive market through a carefully adjusted legal framework” (*ibid.*, p. 69). Likewise, such ideals can be observed in the principles pleaded by German ordoliberalism, especially those with a sociological impulse, like that of Walter Eucken and Wilhelm Röpke, who defended the duties and obligations of individuals as a condition of a decentralized state, in which one must have taken into account the growing individual accountability as a basis for the principle of *subsidiarity* between local, regional, and national spheres (*ibid.*, 2016). And finally, as one of the most striking marks of the current *neoliberal* format, one can mention the Austro-American thought of Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek, who undertake the *communicational* bias of knowledge as a decisive factor for the market economy. For the authors, the “market economy is an information economy,” the central issue being “knowing how individuals will be able to make the best use of the fragmentary information they have” (*ibid.*, p. 144). According to them, each individual would have a range of incomplete and structurally dispersed knowledge. However, in a

free-trade economy, they could be continually improved, as they are complemented by an intensified communication. The passage would imply recognizing both the pragmatism of the new epistemological practices, without any externality to the subject's self-construction, and the imaginary of communication as a principle of free economic exchange. In the first case, the ideal of information is synonymous with a type of knowledge that individuals can no longer prescind for life in society. Of a practical nature, it would not only organize the institutions but, since desire is an important turning point, it would make the self-conduct of individuals one of its favorite targets. Knowledge, there, would be that "directly usable in the market, related to the circumstances of time and space - which [...] refers not to why, but how much [...] an individual can acquire in his practice and whose value only he can evaluate" (ibid., p. 144). In the second case, being the basis of an entire economy of choice, the imaginary of intensified (unlimited) communication points to the improvement of the very functioning of the market, in which dominance, accumulation, and the free exchange of knowledge (information), strictly speaking, would constitute a *modus operandi* for the multiplication of financial capital.

In one way or another, in its different facets, in which it seeks to intensify a particular type of state interference in the market economy, which would no longer subsist naturally but artificially, neoliberalism finds in the *communication* bias of knowledge an important ally. When knowledge is transferred to the condition of direct agent for the accumulation of so-called post-industrial economies, they become inseparable. According to Marilena Chaui (2014, p. 92), at least since the 1970s, such economies start to be fundamentally determined by replacing the "logic of production by circulation [...] the logic of work by that of communication." In both, the novelty would be in the market society defined as an information transmission system (OUELLET; MARTIN, 2018²). It is about conceiving it as "a cy-

2 According to Ouellet and Martin (2018), the neoliberal epistemological revolution, which involves the idea of the market understood as a "cybernetic information transmission system," has as a landmark Hayeck's work, in particular, the article "The use of knowledge in society" (HAYEK, 1945). According to those authors, the text was the theoretical basis that supported a series of public policy financing, mostly in industrialized countries, from 1970.

bernetic system that transmits information to economic agents, who would, themselves, be thought of ‘as information processors’” (MIROWSKI, apud *ibid.*, p. 84). Now, from this new structure, the more explicit articulation between the phenomenon of mediatization and the type of production that characterizes today’s post-industrial economies would emerge. Redefined by the ideals of information, such economies cannot prescind *visibility* and *circulation any longer* as effective communication vectors, establishing the field of production. In other words, since information, as a form of self-reproduction of capital itself, would live from the need for both the intensification of its circulation and free exchange, it would necessarily have its predominant way of structuring in the communication bias. Unlike *laissez-faire*, based on an abstentionist attitude, neoliberalism undertakes a form of *positive* power that invests in immaterial production, in which “more information and more communication mean more productivity, acceleration, and growth” (HAN, 2015, p. 18). In summary, among the novelties of neoliberalism would be what Sodr  (2014) calls the organizational dimension of mediatization. According to him, resulting from the recent hybridism of communication with information, mediatization is the event that inserts it in the center of the administrative ideal of transparency, in which it emerges as an “ideology that mobilizes a new type of workforce, corresponding to the present stage of the production of goods by the global command” (*ibid.*, p. 85). In the scenario in question, therefore, the set of institutions is now based on the vectors of *circulation*, under the auspices of real time and visibility, in which the grammars of image predominate. In the first case, we speak of the “fusion of telecommunications with information technology [which] establishes the dictatorship of real time and the immediacy of responses to the demands of the financial markets” (GAULEJAC, 2007, p. 41); in the second, from injunctions to what would be the effectiveness of the new economic shareholder regime, which makes the “I” a source of voluntary organizational subjection. Both vectors constitute the basis of the current production system, in which organizations are guided by operational procedures that improve themselves as economic agents of capital.

4. In real time, circulation bias

In the case of *real time* as a way of assigning value to its different intelligibility mechanisms, organizations expand at levels never imagined before; *distance-speed* is like “primitive greatness that falls short of any measure of both time and place” (VIRILIO, 2014, p. 14). According to Virilio (1997), although not exclusive to modernity, the new greatness becomes a kind of universal metric, as important for politics as the material accumulation is for capitalism itself. In fact, as an object of diverse investments around its permanent optimization, time seems to have always been in the condition of one of the main substrates of value in the set of economic systems. However, today, amid the culture of interfaces, its historical relevance seems to be given in the very absence of duration as an assumption of the social functioning. In this case, the dimensions that involve the present time result not only from the acceleration of speed but also, and above all, from the future as one of the most important devices of power (AGAMBEN, 2017). Faced with the advent of *big data*, it is our openness to the undetermined that no longer resembles any other. In the case of *real time* as a way of assigning value to its different intelligibility mechanisms, organizations expand at levels never imagined before; *distance-speed* is like “primitive greatness that falls short of any measure of both time and place” (VIRILIO, 2014, p. 14). According to Virilio (1997), although not exclusive to modernity, the new greatness becomes a kind of universal metric, as important for politics as the material accumulation is for capitalism itself. In fact, as an object of diverse investments around its permanent optimization, time seems to have always been in the condition of one of the main substrates of value in the set of economic systems. However, today, amid the culture of interfaces, its historical relevance seems to be given in the very absence of duration as an assumption of the social functioning. In this case, the dimensions that involve the present time result not only from the acceleration of speed but also, and above all, from the future as one of the most important devices of power (AGAMBEN, 2017). Faced with the advent of *big data*, it is our openness to the undetermined that no longer resembles

any other. Given the *libidinal data economy* (HAN, 2015), we move on to the historical figure of *risk* as a historical mediation of a *real* reduced to the notion of intimidation (BADIOU, 2017). As Vaz states (1999, p. 12), by *calculating the future*, we follow “the invasion of everyday life by science and technology, the new articulation between media and science, and the media legitimizing themselves by taking the place of those who in society warns of the existence of risks and proposes ways of circumventing them.” In epistemological terms, therefore, we came to know that the current time management is its main alienation. They are epistemological operations that dedicate to a severe modulation of the crazy empirics of a finally accounting real, from which emerges the most explicit articulation between the phenomenon of mediatization and the type of knowledge production that characterizes post-industrial economies. In any case, we are not talking about any mediatization, but that which engenders knowledge as “management of daily life given life habits and the risks that are taken” (VAZ, 1999, p. 12) In other words, mediatization as a process that articulates a new type of knowledge production, intertwined with everyday life and in which, according to Paulo Vaz (p. 11), “the highest values [...] seem to be, in relation with oneself, well-being, prolonged youth, self-control, and efficiency; [...] values [that] imply care based on risk as a fund of negativity to be avoided.” In short, we speak here of mediatization as a phenomenon that circumscribes knowledge to the self-management of life itself. As stated by Agamben (2009), it is now the context in which men no longer see other historical purposes than their self-management. For this reason, the predominance of a type of intelligibility shaped by informational flows, which reifies the belief that *lived* experiences can no longer be thought of, where the feeling that “events [seem to be] always ahead of the possibility of being interpreted by individuals, as well as the social spill of technologies [seems] to be ahead of their interpretation by individual and collective forms of consciousness” (SODRÉ, 2014, p. 77). Therefore, circumscribed to the logics of result optimization, current epistemological practices lead to the production of narratives increasingly marked by the absence of any type of exteriority other than individual improvement or organizational self-reproduction. As a result

of both the “scientification of everyday life” and the simulation of the future as important vectors of restructuring the field of work, they remain glued to the enunciative logic of real time. However, through programming regimes, what is paradoxically atrophied is the epistemological capacity for self-determination in the present time. Linked to speed, such practices fix the experience of time to the sign of availability (HAN, 2014b), and, with this, they have difficulty collecting historical inflections that support new interpretative keys.

Considered as one of the principal philosophers of the 19th century, Hegel (1770-1831), in *The Science of Logic* (HEGEL, 2012), states that the transformation of history is the result of the permanent strain between *what is* and *is not*. Although apparently separated by the dialectical movement, they experience a unity, which, in reality, has always existed, even though in the field of appearances they seem separate. In the strain between *Being and Nothingness*, “each one disappears in its opposite,” this being the very becoming of history (CHÂTELET, 1985, p. 52). Now, based on the constitutive value of speed, the logics of real time no longer tolerate the presence of anything other than their intensification. Thus, they not only detach themselves from any experience of duration, necessarily supported by the dialectical strain I-other, positive-negative, but, above all, they end up not recognizing, in the temporality immanent to the historical becoming itself, a space of inference and construction of prospective keys. Otherwise, they are now linked to *hyper-realism* which, “more real than reality” (HAN, 2018, p. 111), no longer requires so much discernment, but adherence to its overwhelming sensorialism. Circumscribed to the *temporality of the equal* (HAN, 2014), there is, then, the current historical figure of the *spectral subject* that, according to Agamben (2009), results from the occasion when the “subjectivization and de-subjectivization processes [...] seem to become reciprocally indifferent” (2009, p. 47). A subject who lives on *simply addictive* time (HAN, 2014b) and confines temporalities to a “painful and desperate” *presentism* (HARTOG, 2019, p. 148). According to Hartog (2019), characterized by the vertigo of the cloistering of the present time to the ephemeral regime, the new historical regime - *presentism* - comes from the 1970s and accounts for

both the crisis of the future as a revolutionary horizon and the current consolidation of the race for the immediate. “Futurism has deteriorated under the horizon, and presentism replaces it. The present has become the horizon. Without a future and a past, it daily produces the past and the future it always needs, day after day, and values the immediate” (ibid., p. 148). In short, through the continuous management of the present time, a kind of condition of post-industrial economies, the emerging paradigm would produce a type of positivization of time that empties the notion of the future as *negativity* which necessarily subtracts from our desire for mastery by language. In good measure, the change helps to understand an era whose conservatism finds in technology one of its main foundations. It is now intelligibility saturated with realism that, to save itself from the disaster of time (VIRILIO, 2005), is defined by a hostile attitude towards the future, especially when it comes to the *efforts* required for social changes in the present time.

5. From the grammars of the image to the visibility bias

In summary, through speed as a practical form, neoliberalism empties the present of the vigor of its virtuality, that is, of some future already recorded in human action, as an emancipatory condition of diverse knowledge, especially of the humanities. The issue seems particularly relevant to us, not only because it points to the problematic divorce between knowledge and social forms that are necessarily *unfinished* - among them democracy itself, but also, and above all because it records the current epistemological production in what could be called the social management of behavior. Here, therefore, the centrality of the second vector is already mentioned: *image* as a structuring device in the field of production. We propose that, through the recognition logics anchored on *visibility*, the current productive system consolidates the *I* as a true organizational mutation. It is the context in which organizations incorporate, in their most intimate space, the logic of the “financial market as a *disciplining agent* for all actors in the company, from the manager

to the basic employee: everyone must submit to the principle of *accountability*, that is, the need to be accountable and to be evaluated according to the results obtained” (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, p. 201). The difference is the naturalization of the idea that “systems of coercion, both economic and social [...] [must] compel individuals to govern themselves under the pressure of competition, according to the principles of maximizing calculation and logic capital appreciation” (ibid., p. 193). To a large extent, such naturalization is produced by the current devices of power that add to the historical matrices of *duty* or *obligation* those of *power* (AGAMBEN, 2014). In other words, in the culture of generalized entrepreneurship, “power [would not be exercised] as pure coercion on a body; [but would start to] accompany the individual desire and guide it” (ibid., p. 216). In this case, the enthronement of competition and the conduct of wage earners would occur less through external constraints and more through “management by goals, performance evaluation, and self-control” (ibid., p. 228) in which are inserted “motivation, the desire to do better, not to settle, the aspiration to individual fulfillment” as decisive factors of *employability* (DRUCKER apud ibid., p. 228).

From then on, we talk about *free* subjection. As if the individual in the scope of production no longer meets external factors, but the continuous *improvement of himself* (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016), which makes his behavior the factor capable of leading him to hit goals and have his performance recognized. As a result, a whole socio-economic complexity is reduced to “organizational problems, and they are reduced to [...] psychological problems related to an insufficient mastery of oneself and the relationship with others” (ibid., p. 345). Therefore, freedom and performance are equated, causing individuals to be left to their drives as a sieve of productivity. In the transition to the new *disciplining* of financial capital, the *share value* of each organization demands “management accounting and assessment techniques [which make] each employee a kind of 'individual profit center'” (ibid., p. 226). Hence, the central condition of behavior in the current economic sphere. In the new *velvet-like violence* of financial capital, “the source of effectiveness is on the individual: it can no longer come from an external authority. It is necessary to

do intrapsychic work to seek deep motivation. The boss can no longer impose: he must watch, strengthen, support motivation” (ibid., p. 345). In short, it would be as if institutions were limited to psychological processes, and individuals were the only ones to answer for the risks of their destiny. Only of their willpower and motivation would depend on their ability to be successful, on which the maxim that, from then on, “we have to know and love each other to be successful. Hence the emphasis on the magic word: *self-esteem*, the key to all success” (ibid., p. 345).

In short, behavioral logics not only insert the *ethos of self-worth* (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016) at the center of the production process, but they establish the image as a presupposition of the new social propaganda, as Baudrillard (1991, p. 76) reminds us, making events no longer make so much sense “not because they would be insignificant in themselves, but because they would have been preceded by models (simulacra) with which their process do nothing more than coincide.” Otherwise, in Sodré’s words (2014, p. 81), as in “psychoanalysis [...] [when] the code receives the name of signifier and it, in turn, preceding the meaning, submits the subject”, there is now the apriorism of the image which, subjecting consciousness, becomes “the support of phenomena or statements.” According to Baudrillard (1991), therefore, among the developments of the occasion when “the subject as a *support* for phenomena or statements gives way to code” (SODRÉ, 2014, p. 81), there is the shape of images as a kind of pure judgment whose effect points out to the vertiginous increase of our “nihilistic passion for how the real disappears” (BAUDRILLARD, 1991, p. 197). Taken by the intensification of widespread sensorialism, a mark of contemporary hyper-realism, when our sensory perceptions become more real than the real itself - that’s why we started to demand more sensations to give our things a higher sense of reality - giving the disappearance of the real in its different ways.

Now, the present scenario points to a profound transformation of reflective culture. In the context of the most recent visibility regimes, the ideals of knowledge are then guided by intellectual managerialism (GOULEJAC, 2007), now legitimized by the links of competition and performance, as new universal metrics. Strictly speaking, anchored in the logics of the I as a syn-

onym for organizational effectiveness, we passionately launch ourselves into scientific production in which “the social genesis of problems, the real situations, in which science is employed, and the ends pursued in its application, are considered external by it” (HORKHEIMER, 1975, p. 163). With this, a kind of transparent obscurantism is inaugurated, paradoxically founded on scientific-technological procedures, which blind us to common destinations, as they adopt both real time and the ideal of the image as principles of *free* subjection. In fact, in both, we would have the management of behavior on the basis of new and refined forms of violence, in which the reflexive activity, unthinkingly glued to the logics of war, voluntarily engenders the self-reproduction of capital itself.

6. The question of the virtuality of time in the humanities

Now, from the epistemological perspective, among the effects of the experience of knowledge reduced to the notion of image and time as availability, we would have its closure to the principle of the exteriority of time itself, which, necessarily atopic, would have fed several emancipatory projects. Guided by the speed in the general calculation of the occurrences, a wide range of knowledge would today remain “devoid of the negativity of atopy” (HAN, 2014b, p. 54) of the time itself. In other words, we would live the difficulty of recognizing the presence of a becoming without place, an *ascending force* (ibid., 2014b), embedded in the immanence of time. Unlike the imaginative intelligibility based on ethics and politics, as well as founded on the effective historical situations, we would move on to the ideal of knowledge based on the “positivity of a state of affairs”, in which both the recovery of the past and the accessibility of the future become performed indifferently to the experience of the present time (HAN, 2015, p. 76). Such questioning seems to be justified if we remember that, at least as a modern heritage, the present was a type of decisive virtuality for epistemological production, especially in its connection with different social conquests, among them democracy itself. Here, it is worth remembering

Habermas (2015), for whom the present time is the basis of a set of knowledge that gives rise to our current experience in the public political sphere. According to the author, modernity is characterized as a context that no longer receives “[...] guiding criteria for models from other eras” (ibid., p. 210). Otherwise, “[...] [it] sees itself exclusively placed on itself [...] [that is,] it has to extract its normativity from itself” (ibid., p. 210). As a result, the period establishes the protagonism of the present time as its currency. Between tradition and innovation, there would be the emergence of the present time as a result of the *fusion of history* and *utopia*, as well as from this synthesis, he says, at least since the French Revolution, our public sphere experience would live. According to the philosopher, in fact, it is necessary to recognize the crisis of utopian energies that arise from the intersection of two emancipatory movements: on the one hand, the “foundation of equally structured forms of life, which at the same time should free up spaces for action for self-realization individual and spontaneity” (ibid., p. 224); and, on the other, the possibilities for the “free citizen with equal rights, extended to the sphere of production, to be able to become the crystallizing core of autonomous life forms” (ibid., p. 226). In short, the crisis would be the model that envisioned linking prerogatives of social justice to the democratic rule of law. Such exhaustion, however, would not say so much about the total disappearance of utopias, but of those linked to the context of *universal productivism*. Utopias, according to him, are part of important conquests of cultural modernization, decisive for our political condition, and should not be confused with the type of social modernization that has prevailed until now. For this reason, the need to understand both the current neoliberal forms in the field of work and the differentiation of the processes of cultural and social modernization.

To a large extent, then there would be the particularity of the time present in the epistemological scope. Created by cultural modernization, it locates precisely in the condition of passage, between possible breaks with the past and the spontaneity of the future - a condition in which the presence of a type of virtuality that is intrinsic to it is observed; that is, the present time would belong to a type of *negativity*, an openness to the undetermined, in which things that “*are not yet*” become con-

stitutive of those that already are. Now, such virtuality can be considered a landmark for the humanities. Consecrated by its emancipatory dimension, it guided several responses not only regarding the dialectic between knowledge and social form but, above all, regarding the very otherness of the human sciences - to a large extent derived from the experience of time as human self-determination. It is the assumption especially dear to the humanities that it was time, in particular the present time, the virtuality that allowed them to link with specific projects of freedom. A possible link due to the actual achievement of the virtuality of the present - not so much in the direction of futurology exercises, but of a kind of openness to the spontaneity of the future, according to our capacity, as stated by Agamben (2009), to *rethink the present*.

7. Social behavior management

Today, however, as a way to challenge the precepts defended by Habermas (2015), there are the current procedures of power by which neoliberalism renews its influence on the world of life. More specifically, these vectors now act in the agency of a new *rationalization of desire* (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016) in the field of work, which intensifies the *departure* of freedom from the historical figure of contraction (HAN, 2015). According to Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 7), in fact, “capitalism is inseparable from the history of its metamorphoses [...], from the strategies that renew it.” For this reason, they say, one of the challenges today refers to the understanding of its current historical form. It is a morphological heterogeneity that does not speak so much of ideological representations but practical norms of life centered on the self-government of individuals. For the authors, we must think of a new rationality, characterized by the “generalization of competition as a [universal] conduct norm and of the company as a model of subjectification” (ibid., p. 17). Under the influence of Michel Foucault’s governmental reason, Dardot and Laval analyze neoliberalism as a set of *dispositifs* that no longer deals with institutions, but with procedures of power, techniques of governing, which, of a transversal and systemic character, cross

quite different domains, from more intimate social relationships to global government actions. Such nature no longer allows us to speak of social fields, but of normative logics that cross them and, strictly speaking, is indifferent to their specificities. The difference now would be in the way in which such logics act positively, producing ways of living that supposedly are recognized as increasingly free. Unlike disciplinary society, in which the domestication of bodies made freedom a counter-coercion figure, the positive society has freedom as its possibility (HAN, 2015). For her, “governing is not governing against freedom or despite freedom, but governing for freedom, that is, acting actively in the space of freedom given to individuals so that they will conform themselves to certain norms” (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, p. 19). In other words, “far from referring to discipline to reach the most intimate of the individual, [governments now aim] [...] to obtain a self-government of men” (ibid., p. 18). In short, it is the idea that “to govern is to conduct the behavior of men, as long as it is specified that this behavior is both that which one has towards himself [...] and that which one has towards others” (ibid., p. 19). Now, the novelty would be the enthronement of freedom and desire as types of personal assets, independent of social and/or institutional conditions, as the only ones capable of leading us to the current ideals of a successful life. Therefore, from them, we must take all risks on our destinies, which means that the historical figure of neoliberalism is the total responsibility of the individual for his successes and failures. In the field of work, therefore, the achievement of professional recognition would depend on the merit of our personal entrepreneurship. Each of us is the company or is still *a* company. For this reason, affirm Dardot and Laval (ibid., P. 327), “the effect sought by the new manufacturing and management practices of the new subject is to make the individual work for the company as if he worked for himself, and, thus, eliminate any feeling of alienation and even any distance between the individual and the company that employs him.” All of this makes desire and freedom become the main focus of new investments, strategies, and ways of adhering to the recent work formats. It is now a matter of making good management of desire and freedom, governed by the pleasure principle, in which the cheerful and relaxed humor

becomes synonymous with the managerial strategy in organizations (GAULEJAC, 2007). In this context, therefore, “the unitary subject is the subject of total self-involvement. The desire for personal fulfillment, the project that one wants to carry out, the motivation that animates the company’s employees, in short, the desire is [...] a substitute for the conduct management devices” (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, p 327). Naturally, according to Dardot and Laval, these new forms of subjectivity and suffering result from the continuous weakening of workers’ rights; the weakening of current forms of wages; simplifications of dismissal; un-unionization; reduction in purchasing power, etcetera. In summary, “in the fragility of the pact [civilizational represented by the ethical crisis of work] the individual is left to himself and his drive flow. In the absence of *others* [...], [the] promise of infinity takes hold, for desires, for conquests and ... for failures» (Bendassolini apud GAULEJAC, 2007, p. 13).

8. Conclusion

The result is that in the new world of work, the behavior is led to the condition of substrate for capital accumulation. To a large extent, the new obscurantism that Habermas addresses arise from this condition. It is because the two points defended by neoconservatism now come together: on the one hand, the return of cultural stigma, “because a culture that has become *profane* puts into action subversive attitudes; [and] contrasts [...] with the disposition to productivity and obedience [...] on which an efficient economy and a rational state administration functionally depend” (HABERMAS, 2015, p. 71); on the other, the defense of more radical neoliberalism, now led by the State, which separates itself and competes with the democratic process itself, given the “stronger disconnection between the administration and the public formation of the will” (*ibid.*, p. 227). In the logic of effectiveness, therefore, the means are detached from the ends, and, with that, democracy moves from the *narratives* of the common, more extended and marked by the sign of causality, to the fragmented ones of practical opportunity in which “the politician [must] remain averse to the points of view of moral justification” (*ibid.*, p.

80). The change has decisive political-epistemological implications. In the context of the “strong state, guardian of private law” (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, p. 157), the body of knowledge is no longer governed by the public space, submitting itself to the defense and survival mechanisms of organizations. In other words, as a way to guarantee the practical normativity of private law, as well as to protect it from political injunctions, knowledge radicalizes the condition of a war machine. Whether subsidizing competitive struggles between companies or between them and workers and even between them and external consumer audiences, what is called knowledge has come down predominantly to the optimization of results or the defense of the companies themselves. Thus, there is a body of knowledge on the basis of the new obscurantism. Not only because they detach themselves from the public space and fail to integrate an order of representation, in which work ethics is synonymous with a broader civilizational heritage, but because their private bias plans all the symbolic production to the imperatives of income, in which result acrobatics match any common sense, given that they link (and naturalize) all value production to behavior as a logic of competitiveness, with a view to success and professional recognition.

In opposition to what was defined by Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron (2007), in relation to the production of knowledge, in the sense that one of the initial steps in the achievement of its legitimacy would be its break with common sense, knowledge as behavior management mixes with it by reducing all its discursive form to the regimes of the result by competition, of efficiency by war. Averse to the handling of “content,” which would belong to the theoretical field, as well as to a relative domain and autonomy on the part of individuals, the “practice” of management encloses knowledge in a kind of accounting and financial subjectivity (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, p. 31), centered predominantly on the values of competition and results, which make “life itself, in all its aspects [...] the object of performance and enjoyment devices” (ibid., p. 356). In short, in the name of freedom, a vast field of arbitrariness and violence opens up, which has *in* its desire an important sphere of cultural battles and epistemological amalgams in our contemporaneity. From the point of view of mediatization, especially in the cases of visibility and circulation,

communicational devices now account for the production of “discursive modalizations” centered on “programming and controlling regimes” (AIDAR PRADO; PRATES, 2017, p. 7), which intensify the valorization of the “I” as a true organizational mutation. Such devices, in short, broaden both the imperatives of enjoyment and the overlapping of private nexuses over the public, especially when summarizing political events to matters of taste or personal preference. Hence, the retraction of the extended public space resulting not only from “interactions saturated with stimulus [and] poor in encounters” (HABERMAS, 2015, p. 45) but, above all, from a true market of feelings, of intimacy as a spectacle, of the multiple forms exploration of value-affect (SODRÉ, 2006).

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Mediatization, society, and meaning: Transversal concepts

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Abstract: In the development of research on mediatization, the reality of other themes that allow the researcher to equate the trinomial: mediatization, society, and meaning emerges powerfully. There is a basic dialectic relationship between the three points of the trinomial. Society, as human and social relations, locates in an environment that identifies it as a society in mediatization and gives it meaning. An approach that seeks to understand the reality of society amid mediatization must necessarily approach it from tangible realities, accessible via studies of individual means, but that, in its uniqueness, is surpassed by other concepts that empirically materialize mediatization in today's society. It will be the transcendency vision that will allow us to go beyond the Cartesian view of reality. Excessive fragmentation can be overcome by aggregating different themes to discuss the phenomenon.

Keywords: Mediatization. Society. Transversal concepts. Transversality.

Today, it is common to speak in times of change, thanks to extreme technological development. However, many thinkers, when looking at the current moment, affirm that instead of a time of change we are experiencing an epochal change, that is a change of generation. A moment of enormous social transformation that implies a new era for humanity. To paraphrase these thinkers, we can say that, more than an environment of

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changes, society is undergoing a transformation that results in the establishment of a new ambiance, profoundly related to society in mediatization.

Accordingly, to relate the issue of production of meaning in society to mediatization is to place the reflection on a different level from that in which it had been seen until now. What we are seeking is the process of building social meaning in an environment marked by the rapid development of digital technologies, involving all dimensions of reality. In a retrospective view of the reflection on communication, we can verify that, at first, it was centered on the action of the emitter. The receiver was passive. The important was who organized the message, passing it directly to the recipient, considered a “tabula rasa.” The starting point was Aristotle’s conception of the art of rhetoric, which consisted of three parts: speaker, discourse, and listener, aiming to modify the listener’s behavior. Even with the system’s updates and later precision, the conception that there was a direct action from the sender that passed his/her message to a passive receiver still prevailed. This message was considered to have reached the recipient without any external or internal interference.

This position has evolved throughout history. We advanced to the vision of an active receptor². What was communicated by the emitter underwent an action by the receiver who interpreted it according to his/her reality, placing on the receiver’s pole an action that, in a way, counterbalanced the sender’s objective when transmitting the message.

Over time, there was a better precision since this action from the receiver was not a pure and simple activity, but one conditioned by mediation. In the relationship between receiver and emitter there were mediations that made the message reinterpreted from socio-cultural, psychological, individual, family, even video-technological mediations. This position, for example, was inaugurated and developed by Jesús Martín-Barbero, with an apex in his book *From Media to Mediations*³.

2 In 1982, the União Cristã Brasileira de Comunicação (UCBC) began to make this inflection when it rethought its Critical Reading Communication project (LCC).

3 MARTÍN-BARBERO, Jesús. *Dos meios às mediações*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora da UFRJ, 1997. Later, his thought spread throughout the continent. A great pro-

2. Transversality

Today, an adequate perspective to study, analyze, and understand communication is to address it from its transversal themes; that is, to determine, or just enumerate, the transversal themes around which the reality of a mediatized society can be nucleated.

Therefore, before moving forward in this connection, let us briefly address what is meant by *cross-cutting concepts*.

The notion of transversal concepts was born outside the universe of communication and, consequently, of mediatization. Its origin was found in the field of education, whereas a pedagogy that sought to address complexity was postulated based on themes that are tackled in the transversality of the curriculum. For some authors, the idea of rhizome, web, or neural networks may be the most appropriate way to understand the principles of transversality. The characteristic of the network is to be in constant construction, where the nodes and the conceptions are heterogeneous and mean a multiplicity of interconnection possibilities. Each node can be composed of an entire network, open to the outside, to the sum, and connections with other networks. The network has no center or can have several centers that add small branches to itself, with no hierarchy between points and paths.

The field of education, where the concept of transversality emerged and disseminated, understands it as a way of organizing didactic work in which some themes are integrated into conventional areas to be present in all. In the context of education, it is necessary to redefine what is meant by learning and, also, to rethink the contents taught to students.

From the elaboration of Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação (LDB), 1996, National Curriculum Parameters (PCNs) were defined, which, in turn, guide the application of transversality. In the context of PCNs, transversality concerns the possibility of establishing, in the educational practice, a relationship between learning theoretically systematized knowledge (learn-

moter of this position was the Mexican researcher Guillermo Orozco Gómez, a disciple of Martín-Barbero.

ing about reality) and real-life issues and its transformation (learning in and from reality)⁴. It is not a matter of working with them in parallel, but of bringing the themes' perspective to the contents and methodology of the area.

2. Transversality and mediatization

Transversality differs from interdisciplinarity because, although both reject the conception of knowledge that takes reality as a set of stable data, the first refers to the didactic dimension and the second to the epistemological approach to knowledge objects. That is: if interdisciplinarity questions the compartmentalized view of the reality on which the school was constituted - but still works considering the disciplines -, the transversality concerns the understanding of the different objects of knowledge, making possible the reference to the systems built in the students' reality. In this sense, the real intention of transversal themes is to rescue people's dignity, equal rights, participation in society, and co-responsibility for social life.

3. Mediatization and transversal themes

Within the framework of transversal themes, we questioned, or rather, inquired about those who are part of the systemic complexity of the reflection on communication. What are, in a society in mediatization, the themes that run transversally through studies and approaches in terms of society in mediatization?

We can say that the search for transversality is a way of organizing research on mediatization, where some themes are integrated into the analysis of media processes present in all of them. Analyzing the work of some of the thinkers on the theme, we identified some topics that, beyond the content, are present, transversally, in all studies.

3.1. Circulation

In this context, the concept of circulation gains importance and transcendence. When advancing on the issue of cir-

4 Today we talk about *learning to learn, learning to unlearn, and learning to relearn*.

ulation, beyond the superficiality of the phenomenon, we can state that a path is going from media to mediatization. In other words, a path that goes from a media society to a society in the process of mediatization⁵.

When the concept of circulation⁶ is brought up for reflection and linked to the issue of mediatization, we are faced with a position that advocates a different and deeper view of what circulation is. Fausto Neto does not use circulation in the manner of common sense, that is, how messages circulate in society, in the emitter/receiver relationship.

When relating the concept of circulation to the concept of mediatization, he is saying that in this process of circulation in society - in the issue of messages of interrelations - we must go beyond common sense, beyond the superficiality of the concept. In this circulation process, both the emitter and the receiver, also the society in which these media operate, undergo transformations, and are modified in the circuit.

Based on Eliseo Verón's positions⁷, Fausto Neto states that we must go beyond what surfaces, beyond the objective phenomenon of message circulation, seeing this circulation as the builder of a new society and a new ambiance. People and society are modified by the circulation process that happens from technologies that we are using.

Emitter, receiver, society, and the media are not simply material things in which an announcer transmits to the listener, an announcer who has a medium, a message, an announcer who sophisticates his/her instruments, and a receiver who has to decode the message that receives. Nobody participates with impunity in this process.

Antônio Fausto Neto develops, more rigorously, a work that considers the concept of circulation. One of the articles, among many, where he explains his thought was published in

5 For this point, see the works of Antônio Fausto Neto, Jairo Ferreira, and Pedro Gilberto Gomes.

6 A concept held dear to Antônio Fausto Neto, professor, and researcher linked to the Research Line Mediatization and Social Processes of the PPG in Communication at Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS), in São Leopoldo, RS, Brazil.

7 The Argentinian researcher considered the first on the continent to speak on mediatization. Semiotologist, he worked in France, with fruitful intellectual production. He published, among others, *Semiosis Social I* and *Semiosis Social II*.

a collective work by the Research Line Mediatization and Social Processes, at the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences at Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos⁸. For him,

language and circulation also belong to the “conceptual stock” of functionalist social science disciplines, which have focused on questions about communicational phenomena⁹.

In this binomial, circulation occupies a specific place, although it has acquired a more “problematic dimension in a more recent context,” that of “society in the process of mediatization¹⁰.” In this sense, “circulation is conceived as a region that works according to processes in which marks of its activity can be presented¹¹.” For Fausto Neto,

what would characterize circulation in the context of mediatization would be, on the one hand, its condition of a ‘structure that unites,’ by producing couplings of techno-discursive practices, at the same time that it would set them in motion, constituting itself both as the source and as the dynamics and process of new communicational complexity.¹²

In the perspective assumed by Fausto Neto regarding circulation, we see that we are facing a concept that becomes important to study and understand society in the process of mediatization systemically.

3.2. Interactional referral process

The interactional referral process is a theme and concept dear to José Luiz Braga¹³. For him, the mediatization of society in-

8 FAUSTO NETO, Antônio. Como as linguagens afetam e são afetadas na circulação? In: BRAGA, José Luiz; FERREIRA, Jairo; FAUSTO NETO, Antônio; GOMES, Pedro Gilberto. *10 Perguntas para a produção de conhecimento em comunicação*. São Leopoldo: Editora Unisinos, 2013. p. 43-62.

9 Ibidem, p. 43.

10 Ibidem, p.46.

11 Ibidem, p. 47.

12 Ibidem, p. 49.

13 Professor at the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences at UNISINOS and researcher in the Research Line Mediatization and Social Processes.

volves a third element: the issue of the answer that completes the circuit. In a 2006 text¹⁴, Braga understands mediatization as the set of socio-technological reformulations, where media processes shift to the reference interactional process. His reflection starts from what defines an interactional process as hegemonic. He proposes to approach mediatization as an interactive process at a fast pace to become the “reference¹⁵” process. For him,

An interactional ‘reference’ process, in a determined context, sets the tone for the submediated processes [...]. Thus, within the logic of mediatization (sic), the social processes of media interaction start to include, to encompass the others, which do not disappear but adjust.¹⁶

In this sense, the “interactional reference process” is a perspective of society’s organization. Such processes are the principal drivers in the construction of social reality¹⁷. Society builds social reality through interactional processes by which individuals, groups, and sectors of society relate¹⁸.

The understanding made explicit by Braga places the *interactional reference process* as a concept of extreme relevance for the study of mediatization since it, transversely, permeates the consideration of each medium in the research on media processes.

3.3. Dispositifs

Another transversal theme that cannot be ignored in the study of mediatization and media processes is the notion of *dispositifs*, inscribed in Jairo Ferreira¹⁹’s research horizon, which starts from the conception that circulation is abstract. Its realization happens through the analysis of media *dispositifs*. They are

14 Text presented at the Compós Meeting.

15 Cf. *ibidem*, p. 2.

16 *Ibidem*.

17 Cf. *ibidem*, p. 3.

18 Cf. *ibidem*.

19 Professor of the same Program and Research Line.

neither means nor messages. Jairo states that the *dispositif* “is a place of record that becomes an operator of new conditions of production and reception, and, at the same time, a passage and a medium²⁰”. For him, “research on *dispositifs* from the perspective of circulation/mediatization is always inferential, producing proposals and new questions²¹.” In this way, he finds that “the register of socio-anthropological processes in media *dispositifs* produces new uses, practices, and mediatized social interactions²².”

Jairo Ferreira’s position, summarized above, places the issue of *dispositifs* as a cross-cutting theme that allows a systemic approach to mediatization today.

3.4. Totem images

Researcher Ana Paula da Rosa²³, in turn, values the concept of totem images²⁴, presented in her doctoral thesis and her object of studies related to the concept of mediatization.

For her,

to think about images today is to think about them in the ambiance of mediatization since the social processes are crossed by the logics of the media. However, talking about the construction of symbolic images demands addressing symbolic power (ROSA, 2014 p. 28).

So, we can assume that totem images are the power pictures that constitute the symbols of an event. For instance, the image of the terrorist attack, on the Twin Towers, on September 11, one of the many the author analyzes, entered circulation, and

20 FERREIRA, Jairo. Como a circulação direciona os dispositivos, indivíduos e instituições? In: BRAGA, José Luiz; FERREIRA, Jairo; FAUSTO NETO, Antônio; GOMES, Pedro Gilberto (Eds.). *10 Perguntas para a produção de conhecimento em comunicação*. São Leopoldo: Editora UNISINOS, 2013. p. 147.

21 Ibidem, p. 148.

22 Ibidem.

23 Ph.D. in Communication Sciences from Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS). She is currently a professor and researcher at the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences at UNISINOS - Research Line Mediatization and Social Processes.

24 ROSA, Ana Paula da. Imagens-totens em permanência x tentativas midiáticas de rupturas. In: ARAUJO, Denise Correa; CONTRERA, Malena Segura (Eds.). *Teorias da imagem e do imaginário*. Brasília: COMPÓS, 2014. v. 1, p. 03-68.

whenever a new terrorist attack occurs, we are referred to that image and situation. According to the author, the totem image resists, overcoming even the controversial spaces generated, which implies that this image becomes a structuring structure or, in Bourdieu's words, a symbolic power.

Thus, what calls attention, when it comes to the mediatization of images, is that, at first, they are approximations of the event, considering, here, representations of the reference data. In a second phase, images already put into circulation on journalistic devices become syntheses because they were previously chosen, according to the logic of the media field that unfolds deep structures of the social (need for belonging), to acquire such visibility. In a third stage, that of recognition, they are again organized according to tactical rules specific to the social sphere, which does not mean a contract but involves previous short-term structures, configured in distribution and circulation, as the symbols transcend the scope of the phenomena of individual conscience. That is, the symbol is built at play, not by either player. In other words, the symbol that circulates in newspapers, magazines, websites, and blogs is the result of interactions. The notion of valuing coming from journalistic institutions is because they are the ones that support the images to be placed in distribution and circulation, even when directly impacted and affected by other spheres of mediatization²⁵.

In conclusion, Rosa states:

Totem images are self-referential images produced in circulation, as they only exist in this process, mobilizing the Freudian triad of memory, repetition, and working through in potency. The first concerns the effective recall of the event - or trauma, in the case of psychoanalysis; the second, a way of not remembering, that is, a kind of impediment to remembering. Working through, on the other hand, configures as a reconciliation with the repressed, therefore, it is to remember to *work through* or elaborate again.²⁶

25 Cf. *ibidem*, p. 42.

26 *Ibidem*.

3.5. Ambiance

The concept of ambiance occupies Pedro Gilberto Gomes²⁷ thoughts and research. The extreme expansion of digital technologies is demanding that the society in the process of mediatization be considered as the creation of an ambiance that changes the way of being in the world for people and institutions²⁸. The concept of ambiance is considered transversal, as it goes beyond the limits of different singular environments to enroll in a larger space that expresses the complexity of the system.

An approach that seeks to understand the reality of society in process of mediatization must necessarily address it from tangible realities, accessible via studies of individual means but surpassed in its uniqueness by transversal concepts that, empirically, materialize mediatization in the current society.

3.6. Some themes from Europe

Other themes come from the group of researchers from Europe. One concerns the relationship between mediatization and global changes. What is the relationship between the phenomenon of mediatization and the changes taking place in the world?

The perspective of history is another important theme. It contemplates the phenomenon of mediatization in its historical development.

Then, there is the issue of media in society: the relationship of movement and interaction, power, media, and politics, and more specific themes, such as art and the popular, faith and knowledge, and the issue of being. These approaches are transversal to the study of media and mediatization.

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BARBERO, Jesús. *Dos meios às mediações*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora da UFRJ, 1997.

27 Like the previous four, a researcher of the same Program and Research Line.

28 Our latest research and productions work extensively on the issue of mediatization and its relationship with the creation of a new ambiance, as can be seen through the works listed in our Curriculum Lattes.

- FAUSTO NETO, Antônio. Como as linguagens afetam e são afetadas na circulação? In: BRAGA, José Luiz; FERREIRA, Jairo; FAUSTO NETO, Antônio; GOMES, Pedro Gilberto. *10 Perguntas para a produção de conhecimento em comunicação*. São Leopoldo: Editora UNISINOS, 2013. p. 43-62.
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Epistemology of communication, neomaterialism, and digital culture¹

André Lemos²

Abstract: This paper aims to present neomaterialist theories, aiming at their application in the social communication domain. The concept of mediation is proposed as central to understand the communicative process, taking seriously the agency of objects and their materiality. The article starts from the hypothesis that the majority of communication studies values anthropocentric perspectives, intersubjective, contextual, and transcendent relations. This posture would not be able to encompass all the complexity of communicational phenomena in general and those of digital culture in particular. The article presents a methodological proposal for a neomaterialistic analysis of infocommunicational objects.

Keywords: Materiality. Mediation. Social communication. Cyberculture.

1. Introduction

This article points out the main characteristics of neomaterialist currents and proposes a methodology for analyzing processes, products, and objects from digital culture³. In the first part, we present these theories'

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3 This article is part of the Communication, Mediation, and Cyberculture research (PQ-1A CNPq). These ideas were presented at the III International Seminar on Mediatization and Social Processes at UNISINOS, São Leopoldo - RS, in May 2019. I owe a lot to the discussions inside Lab404 (<http://lab404.ufba.br>).

main characteristics and discuss the concept of radical mediation. Then, we return to previous proposals for *associative communication* and *the mode of existence of communication* (LEMOS, 2019, in press). In the last part, we describe the assumptions, stages, and instruments for the implementation of a neomaterialist methodology of communication in products of the digital culture.

2. Neomaterialism, mediatization, and radical mediation

Many authors point out to a materialistic turn (*material turn*) (BENNETT; JOYCE, 2010) or a non-human turn (*non-human turn*) (GRUSIN, 2015a) in philosophy and social sciences, emphasizing the agency of objects and, consequently, their performances as important mediators in social formation. However, this turn seems to have not yet influenced the field of social communication. Most communication studies value intersubjective, contextual, and transcendent relationships, little used to the recognition of the agency of objects. It would undermine the analysis of the entire communicational phenomena and those of digital culture in particular⁴. It is the central hypothesis of this article. Materiality studies have always been peripheral in communication studies (QUANDT; VON PAPE, 2010, p. 330). Lievrouw correctly points to the problem globally:

[...] most technology scholarship in the communication field, informed by classic strings of media research, continuous to follow a broadly constructivist, culturalist line, privileging the technologies' social and cultural meaning appropriations and framing technology primarily as an outcome or expression of culture. As a result, the shift toward conceptualizing the intrinsic social *and* material character of communication technology as equally definitive and co-determining remains something of an unfinished project in communication and media research (LIEVROW, 2014, p. 14)

4 Preliminary study in progress at Lab404 analyzes texts from the COMPÓS and Communication and Epistemology WGs (2013-2019) and indicates that the anthropocentric perspective is hegemonic.

Neomaterialism means a set of assumptions that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, from different authors and schools: theory of materialities of Germanic origin (GUMBRECHT; PFEIFFER, 1994; KITTLER, 1999), monadological sociologies (BENSUSAN; FREITAS, 2018), like the Actor-network Theory (LAW, 1992; LATOUR, 2005, 2015; CALLON, 2006); object-oriented philosophies and agency (DE LANDA, 2006; VERBEEK, 2005; HARMAN, 2011; BENNETT, 2010), post-humanism, feminism, and gender studies (HARAWAY, 1987; BARAD, 2007; BRAIDOTTI, 2013), among others. Concerning the current digital culture, stand out the work of Pink et al. (2016), Lupton (2016), and Dourish (2016, 2017). Neomaterialism inherits arguments developed in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, such as those of *radical empiricism* (HUME, 2003, JAMES, 1912), *modes of existence* (SOURIAU, 2009), *agency* (DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 1995), *collectives/association/monadology* (LEIBNIZ, 2004; TARDE, 2007), material semiology (FOUCAULT, 2000), and realism (WHITEHEAD, 1978).

From syntheses carried out by some authors (BENNETT; JOYCE, 2010; BENNETT, 2010; MILLER, 2005; FOX; ALLDRED; 2017; THRIFT, 2005; GAMBLE; HANAN; NAIL, 2019), we can say that neomaterialist theories start from four central perspectives: materialism, pragmatism, non-anthropocentrism, and associativism. Materialism means that every phenomenon develops in networks, producing effects or material concerns. The non-essentialist/pragmatic view holds that the object (human and non-human) is what it does and cannot be defined by a substance or *a priori* categories. The non-anthropocentric position states that the agency gets distributed in the network/agency and control and source of action are not the privileges of the human actor. Everything happens in a localized or locally connected association. The associative/local approach states that everything happens in a flat network, and the analysis of controversies should not start from *ad hoc* explanations. Material processes and agency flows are valued in experiences in which social issues are always the result of human and non-human⁵ collectives. It starts with a flat ontology, always seeking to es-

5 For a critique of the neomaterialist perspective, see Rekret (2018).

cape, *a priori*, from structural (GIDDENS, 1999) or interactionist (GOFFMAN, 1975) analyzes.

The key to understanding these four principles is in the concepts of *radical empiricism* (HUME, 2003; JAMES, 1912), *mediation* (LATOURET, 2005; CALLON, 2006; LAW, 1992), *dispositif* (FOUCAULT, 2000), synthetic situation (KNORR-CETINA, 2013), *agency* (DELEUZE, GUATTARI, 1995; DE LANDA, 2006), and *agency realism* (BARAD, 2007). To group these terms under a single denomination, I will adopt the term *radical mediation*, proposed by Richard Grusin based on W. James's idea of *radical empiricism*. As the author explains:

I argue that, although the media and media technologies have operated and continue to operate epistemologically as modes of knowledge production, they also function technically, bodily, and materially to generate and modulate individual and collective affects or structures of feeling in the *agencement* of humans and nonhumans (GRUSIN, 2015b, p. 125).

The *radical* adjective allows us to speak of mediation involving humans and non-humans, putting, therefore, the hybrid and materialistic dimension in its understanding. Every communication process results from this radical mediation, understood here as associative, non-essentialist/pragmatic, material, and non-anthropocentric, moving us away from the thought of mediation as emerging only from intersubjective relations. The concept of radical mediation goes beyond the idea of mediation as proposed by mediatization studies developed by Couldry (2008), Hjarvard (2014, 2015), among others.

I have discussed, in another work (LEMO, 2019, in press), the idea of mediation, indicating that, for pragmatic sociologies, it absorbs human and non-human actions, valuing the materiality of objects involved in socio-communication processes. Calling this mediation radical now, we can say that it is the principle of communication processes: the rupture of isolation, semiotic exchanges in intertwining, "being-as-other" (LATOURET, 2012), including the objects in the equation. At that time, he stated that we would need to move forward and think about com-

munication as an *associative* process, the result of this radical mediation, understanding the social beyond interpersonal relationships, going beyond exchanges “between human consciences” (MARTINO, 2001). The social is the result of associations in this collective of humans and non-humans. Communication is, thus, an *associative* process, the result of radical mediation. With this emphasis, we can think, in a more complete and integrated way, about how humans *are acted* and act within the associative processes without removing from the equation fundamental agents for the understanding of these processes (the objects and their materialities) (LATOUR, 2015). The comprehension of action, mediation, and communication takes place, in this perspective, from immanent analyzes, describing the action of all actors involved in (radical) mediation in a flat analysis, without resorting *a priori* to contextual or global explanations, on the one hand, or microsocial and anthropocentric, on the other.

Returning, then, to the differences concerning mediatization, we can say that the neomaterialist view defends an opposite epistemological stance. Mediatization is understood as a structural process of media influence (mass culture and communication control). Couldry and Hepp (2017) identify the action of new digital media as *deep mediatization*. Mediation studies are dedicated to “the impact of the media in specific communicative situations situated in time and space” (HJARVARD, 2015, p. 53) and those of mediatization to understand “the long-term structural change in the role of the media in society and contemporary culture” (ibid., p. 53). For Hjarvard, mediation refers to “specific communicative situations” and mediatization to “structural changes in society”:

Recent international discussions point to the resolution of these terminological disagreements in favor of the continental European distinction between 'mediatization' (denoting the long-term structural dimension) and 'mediation' (meaning the use of the media in communicative meetings) [...]. The media co-structures communication and interaction (that is, the level of mediation), but mediatization occurs through the institutionalization of particular interaction patterns (formal and

informal rules) and the allocation of interactive resources within a social institution or cultural sphere in particular (HJARVARD, 2015, p. 53-54).

Assuredly, what the authors identify as “transforming importance of the media” or “structure of the *modus operandi* of the media” is a provisional result and is always being questioned in different ways of radical mediation. Couldry and Hepp (2016) and Pink (2015) point out the need for a *non-representational* perspective, that is, not centered on the media (*non-media-centric*), recognizing the need to emphasize material and sensory aspects of media practices. However, studies are not effectively materialistic, characterizing what we will point out later as *object-washing*. Many studies reduce, as stated by Finnemann (2013, p. 298), the material discussion to the issue of *technology*. Others propose to combine mediatization with a more materialist perspective. Knorr-Cetina (2013, p. 41-41; 49) sustains, in the analysis of the *scopic media* of financial market operators, a *synthetic* position, attentive to how actions take root in practices, spaces, and objects, going beyond (better to say, below) the infrastructures.

Media communication processes assuredly lead to structuring processes (mediatization). The interesting in the neomaterialist perspective is to slowly reach them, developing local and immanent analysis that points out the agencies in action. In the case of digital culture, analyze phenomena such as sociability in social networks, fake news, the practice of selfie, the issue of design and privacy in the Internet of things (Internet of Things, IoT), the culture of platforms, starting from a macrosocial analysis of the economic structure of data capitalism, or from the perspective of communication between humans in a specific situation, would offer little clarity on the current communication challenges, as it would not take into account the materialities and agency of the objects involved there (interfaces, algorithmic logic, database construction, principles hidden in technical documents and patents, etcetera). Who is posting when we post on Facebook? To think, in this case, of an independent and sovereign human agency is to invest in a rude error.

The neomaterialist perspective, applied to the studies of digital communication, asks how algorithms, interfaces, devices, laws, regulations, patents, communication networks, spaces of use, etcetera, build a particular phenomenon. It prevents us from leaving these elements aside in discourses that seem to say they recognize the hybrids, technique, media, but that do not devote time and attention to describing and analyzing how these objects affect humans and the resulting relationships. In this case, we lose the vision of entanglement, reducing the phenomenon to the context, the interpretation, or the structure above or below the human - "mediations and mediatization." If Martín-Barbero (1997) stated that we should go "from the media to mediatization," perhaps, now, we should take the opposite direction.

Therefore, anthropocentric postures, contextual or focused on infrastructure, on the one hand, or micro-interactions (between humans), on the other, do not help to understand the main emerging controversies, such as the new infocommunicational objects. The network formed in the dispute should get described and analyzed to identify the forms of agency of the elements at stake, highlighting their material, non-essentialist, local characteristics. The algorithm of contemporaneous digital platforms is not a black box, as it is possible to understand not what it is (in essence), but pragmatically its agency, what it does-do (BUCHER, 2018). To map, identify, and analyze the actions in this associative communication means to exercise a more myopic position, less concerned with *cultural or social* generalizations. A neomaterialist approach allows us to escape the dichotomy established by social communication towards an *associative* communication, recognizing the particularity of radical mediation.

From a material and pragmatic perspective, it is interesting to know what types of interfaces, laws, spaces, institutions, instruments, patents, technical documents, algorithmic agency, records, and other material elements intertwining produce the problem to be investigated. We must ask ourselves how the network is settled, and how it acts, how material components enter into mediation, and how the result is made in the production of this interlacing, identifying immanent affecta-

tions, focusing on the problem locally, without calling on transcendent notions, paying the price of connections, recognizing powers and power relationships within the experience (LEMONS, 2018). Power and inequalities are produced within networks/assemblages, they tend to encapsulate, but we cannot freeze or transfer one analysis to another, under pain of losing the radical localized and moving mediation, which we recognize as these stabilizations.

Ronaldo Lemos (2019) wrote an article in *Folha de S. Paulo* stating that there is no public opinion on social networks because of bots, algorithms, interfaces. It is assumed that the public and its opinion would not be produced but rather unveiled by neutral instruments. Marres (2012), for example, will show, from the concept of material participation, the role of objects in the forms of mobilization and political engagement. The same in the public's production (LIPPMANN, 2007) or its opinion (TARDE, 2007). From a neomaterialist perspective, the issue is how artifacts make emerge (produce) the public and its opinion, as they now appear in this algorithmic socio-technical system (different from their production by agora, piazza, press, radio, TV, etcetera). More interesting than knowing what the public and its opinion (in essence) are, it is to see in what conditions of the agency they are built, discussed, disseminated. It is the non-essentialist, pragmatic, immanent, associative, and non-anthropocentric perspective.

3. Neomaterialist methodology of associative communication

We propose, next, a neomaterialist methodology to be applied to the products and processes of communication in general, and of digital culture, in particular. This method was based on the epistemological perspective presented above, insisting on pointing out the radical mediations in the processes of associative communication. The assumption is that we must recognize that no element has essential attributes and that they are only defined in their relationships, in the assemblages, in the lines of escape, in the affections, in the radical mediations, therefore.

It is necessary to start from immanent analyzes of documents, concrete practices, forms of discourse, places to identify and describe the elements in mediation, and the forms of affectation (transduction) in the constitution of the dispute. Humans are not in a privileged place in the circulation of action and should give importance to the material elements and objects in question.

In summary, the methodology starts from the *materialist* assumptions - it is recognized that everything has a material effect and exists through material agencies - and *non-essentialist (pragmatic)* assumptions - things have no essences and are what they do and what they make-to-do. These assumptions are aligned with radical empiricism to locate affectations on the identified problems. Everything gets defined in processes and material movements in which each new problem calls for new *associative force/power* relationships: everything that exists does so in relation, needs to pass through others to continue its journey of subsistence. Association is radical mediation - translation, transduction, agency, intertwining, etcetera - involving humans and non-humans. Without mediation, there is nothing. It must be observed in a flat, local, and *non-anthropocentric* topology - the analyzes must be made considering multiple agents, under pain of purifying the relationships and impoverishing the descriptions of the phenomena and identification of action flows. Humans do not always have the primacy of action. The aim here is to go beyond cultural, contextual, hermeneutic perspectives.

On this last principle, I have identified four ideal types that appear, in general, in research, texts, and lectures with an anthropocentric bias⁶ on communication or digital media (Maia, Object-Washing, Panopticon, and Ouroboros), which I describe below.

Maia: Texts that jump to generalizations without appeal to empiricism. The material world is an illusion. Visions

6 Ongoing research at POSCOM/Lab404 is applying these *standard ideals* to aid in the discussion on the hypothesis raised here: my research "Communication, mediation and cyberculture" (PQ / CNPq) and that of Professor Elias Bitencourt ("Communication, performativity algorithms, and digital platforms. Neomaterialist investigations about communicational experiences mediated by algorithms in the era of data capitalism"). Indication of such standard ideals is intended to aid the visualizing of the general argument of the text and is not intended to be a form of depreciation of the authors involved.

that focus on the concreteness of real-world phenomena should be avoided. There is no real world, except for concepts.

Object-Washing: Texts that claim to recognize the agency of objects but do not do so in detail. They say they identify agency but jump quickly to contexts. They can recognize and affirm the use of WhatsApp to spread *fake news*, but there is not an analysis on how the materiality of WhatsApp, network, cell phones produces this phenomenon. The object is like that. The expression is similar to *eco-washing*, *ethical-washing* (KITCHIN, 2019), *privacy-washing*⁷, designating the positions of companies that seem to consider related problems (environment, ethics, privacy), but that, indeed, do not lead them seriously. Studies that do *object-washing* deny being anthropocentric, claim to recognize the formation of hybrids, dispositifs (like Foucault), technologies, but they focus on the subject, structure, hermeneutics, *social and cultural contexts in the media environment*.

Panopticon: Texts that see everything with the same eyes, stuck in the classic communication theories, centered on canonical authors, framing all objects in pre-established and non-negotiable frames. Everything is explained without the need to recognize the agency of objects or materialities involved. The pre-established theories serve to analyze any empirical study, regardless of the controversies in question (they aggregate types *Maia* and *Object-Washing*).

Ouroboros: The texts of great transcendence that sound to start with broad conclusions about the world, the universe, and everything else. Without any empiricism or non-human agency, it seems that they are starting a debate, but what they do is rotate on their axes, biting their tail, turning around themes and subjects, jumping from the micro to the macro-dimension, and vice-versa (reinforcing *Maia*, *Object-Washing*, and *Panopticon* types).

A methodology that aims to treat the object by the neo-materialist assumption must seek to recognize, in a given dispute, the flow of radical mediations (that is, the agency of humans and non-humans without a priori centrality), producing

7 This expression is being used in research on projected privacy and malicious interfaces (dark patterns) under development at Lab404.

localized and provisional results. The modes of existence are relevant to qualify the mediation, pointing out the differences in the “*agencements*,” affectations, and preposition (the specific place of the mediation) in producing the well speaking, the conditions of happiness. It is possible to analyze the social networks problem through bias of gender, privacy, surveillance, intersubjective relationships, etcetera. For each mode, important mediators will appear. It is significant as a step in closing the black box, reorganizing the problem, and indicating propositions about the dispute in question. This result will be added to the controversy itself, serving as an element in the dispute over the problem.

These are the steps we propose: 1. to recognize the mode, preposition, controversy; 2. to identify all the actors involved and how they express themselves (interfaces, documents, patents, forms of action, etcetera); 3. to map the forms of mediation or transduction, understanding that actions, meanings, and forces are produced; 4. to regroup the problem by creating another element that can be instituted in the construction of truth. The instruments for carrying out these steps can be the most varied: data collection (Survey); data scraping (R); focused coding (Atlas.ti); ethnography; interviews; analysis of documents (patents, flowcharts, contracts, terms of use, etcetera); focus group; interface analysis; bibliographic review, etcetera. Controversies may call for other methods or even the production of specific tools. In particular terms, we can summarize these four steps:

Modes: It is where the question of interest, the preposition to produce a good speech, and the conditions of happiness of analysis is inserted. It seeks to identify in which field of strain the problem is surpassing a contextual, constructivist, or hermeneutic vision.

Inventory: Description of the network of objects (human and non-human) concerned in the issue to be discussed.

Transduction: Description of the mediations at play in the agency for the phenomenon production. It aims at opening black-boxes to identify what things are done of, do, and make-to-do.

Regrouping: Return to the fitting, the provisional result (which will be a concrete material element of new media-

tion produced on the object by the research itself). Propositional dimension to understanding collective affectation (human and non-human) in the reorganization and redefinition of the problem.

4. Conclusion

In this work, we pointed out the need to take seriously the materiality of communication processes, particularly those involving digital culture, although it is not exclusive to this field. Neomaterialist theories are based on four assumptions: materialism, non-essentialism, associativism, and non-anthropocentrism. Indicating that everything has a material basis, such theories predict that things are what they do, that everything is intertwined, and the human is not always the center of actions. The article argues that the communication field that is mostly anthropocentric can gain by looking more closely at the material agency in these processes.

We differentiate the idea of *radical mediation* from mediation and mediatization, which are more frequent in the communication area, calling attention to the recognition of non-anthropocentric perspectives for thinking about communication beings. We pointed out ideal types for text recognition and anthropocentric research (Maia, Object-Washing, Panopticon, and Ouroboros). We ended the article by proposing a methodology for those who wish to carry out neomaterialist studies based on instructions on the procedures. The studies must be attentive to the realization of an *inventory*, the identification of mediation with the *transduction* processes, how the problem is articulated, and the *regrouping* as a form of a final proposition about the dispute.

The work in progress at Lab404⁸ tries to apply this methodology. Studies on how Instagram affects and is affected by professional practices; how the photographic process of selfies is intertwined with specific material practices; about fake news and the materiality of the dissemination platforms; the

8 See ongoing research (http://www.lab404.ufba.br/?page_id=3521) and published articles (http://www.lab404.ufba.br/?page_id=11).

understanding of privacy in the middle of the PDPA⁹, having as debate the material processes of its constitution; the use of the material and algorithmic appropriations for the use of IoT; gender issues in transportation applications; the materiality of the wearable devices in the configuration of a smart body; the material discussion about Data Comics, questioning its status and uses, etcetera. The methodology needs to be tested, and we hope that this text can contribute to broadening the debates on material and non-human changes in the studies of the communication area in the country.

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9 PDPA, acronym for "Platformization, Datafication and Algorithmic Performativity", central features of digital culture today. See Lemos (2019a).

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Mediatization of collective emotions

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Abstract: This presentation highlights the relevance and the role that technological innovations have in promoting social engagement. Actors have learned to use the media to encourage public support. Among them are celebrities and political actors. The special case of the monarchy is examined. This regime is skilled in articulating its messages. For that, it sensitizes the public with its motives and symbols. Collective adoration of the aristocracy is the result.

Keywords: Technology; Sentiments; Media

1. Introduction

In this short speech, I want to first make a brief reflection on communication technology.

To a large extent, human history has been the history of the relationship between human beings and the material world. This approach has been belittled by those who, for a long time, separate the body from the mind, flesh from spirit, emotion from reason. The time has come to put the pieces together.

It is worth stating that there has always been a symbiotic relationship between people and their environment, natural and artificial, which is constituted with artifacts created to expand the potential of the human body. Technological devices are, in fact, extensions of our senses. We want to see far. We want to get around faster. We want to hear well despite the distances. We want to think better. We want more connection and intimacy.

The argument is this - technologists are the true revolutionaries in history. The effects of the apparatuses far out-

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weigh those caused by political and religious utopias. This fact explains why the periodization of history can and should be done by marking time with inventions.

Technological determinism has been unfairly vilified by those who despise machines. The reckless relationship of the human being with his creations is reported in the Jewish fable of the Golem, which later inspired Frankenstein's narrative. From this phobia from the creator to his creation derives not only the Luddite attacks on the machines but also the vast dystopian literature, which alerts the human being to the side effects and unforeseen effects of inventions.

It happens, however, that generations born in the 20th and 21st centuries have abundant evidence that innovation does indeed have an ecological impact. Society has changed with the emergence of writing, typography, newspapers, and books, telegraphy and cable, telephone, radio, cinema, TV, and now the internet.

We are what we lack, and that is what stimulates creativity. We cannot foresee and anticipate the - sometimes unexpected - uses humans make of apparatuses, which overcome distance and time and offer new conditions for human entanglement. It happened like this in the past with papyrus and still is in the present with the Internet. The impact was subtle, though gigantic. It penetrates all the small spheres of our existence. We only become aware of its scope when new technology is lacking.

Nothing better than a storm, a crash, and a blackout, for example, to understand the strategic relevance of electricity.

The same can be said today about the web. It was not by chance that humans settled by the rivers. After the waterways came the railways, the highways, the airways, and now the information highways.

The moral of the story: where there is a way, there is life.

2. Now, some comments on the concept of mediatization

Much has been said about this term. I intend only to consider that this concept elaborates on something that has been no-

ticed for some time and has been baptized and referred to with other labels. For instance, Harold Innis' approach to Media Ecology has emphasized the systemic impact that the media produces.

In this sense, I acknowledge the contribution of authors from different currents to consider mediatization a way of showing the relationship between the media and communication, on the one hand, and the changes that result, on the other hand, from the use of new apparatuses in culture and society.

As mentioned, it happens that this perception is not new. It has been mentioned for a long time by authors who monitor the impacts that media apparatuses have on society. Usually, they conclude that new eras arise as a result of the ability of new means to spread in the social body, conditioning the way people socialize, educate, trade, make politics, and worship their gods. For this reason, it is not by chance the relationships authors make between typography and Lutheranism, for example. Also, the emergence of televangelism is not an accident.

Following that, we can then speak of an age of chipped stone, an age of bronze, and an age of iron as we can refer now to the typographical era, the era of radio and television, and the Era of Networks.

We concluded that the concept of mediatization competes with other traditional terms in the area. In every one of these approaches, the media's impact on society is assessed to some extent.

Perhaps the factor that justifies the need for the emergence of this new concept is the speed of adherence to the new apparatuses by society. Another equally new fact capable of justifying the adoption of the new term is perhaps the current technological convergence.

In other words, my critical consideration highlights the fact that I perceive in the literature on mediatization the emergence of a vocabulary for occurrences and phenomena that are, in fact, old. This is the case, for example, with the mediatization of politics. In their actions, political actors have always taken into account the technological environment in which they lived.

I welcome the idea that the media has become so pervasive today that any and every social actor who wishes to interact with the mass audience cannot fail to consider the logic of

the media in their performance. It means that he considers the way the media operate and sensitize the audience. It turns out that even this consideration has been extensively analyzed, for example, in the Theory of the Environment.

As it is possible to criticize the expression “Knowledge Age” to name our time since, after all, knowledge has always been a relevant factor, at all times, there is a doubt about the need for a new label as mediatization. It rose, in my view, due to the fascination that new technologies such as the internet and the resources of the web and mobile telephony are exercising on people. This fascination should grow with the new stage of the development of the techno-sphere, which is now marked by the robotization of life, artificial intelligence, algorithms, miniaturization, satellites, applications, and big data.

We all know that there is mediatization, that the presence and influence of the format, grammar, content, and pace of the media are magnanimous, that people and institutions internalize in their actions, sometimes unconsciously, the language and resources of the media, and that the media can, therefore, be considered a relevant and independent autonomous factor. At all stages of the story, actors have always adapted to it.

Nowadays, it is difficult to talk about social life without involving the analysis of the virtual world created by these technologies. I suggest that the concept of *mediatization* will acquire greater consistency as empirical studies show more and more how this influence of the media in social daily life occurs in varied fields, among them, unquestionably, education, politics, religion, war, and peace, the family, health.

For my part, from the references of my moment personal interests, I think it may be relevant to list what are the emotional consequences of such a symbiosis between communication technologies and sociability. Based on this reference, I think that mediatization happens because it is necessary for the mobilization of human affect. They are the ones that push people to action. Both massive hatred and worship, for example, are only possible if the actors take into account the media’s ability to reach people, awake them from sleepwalking, satisfy their dreams and impulses. It is true for entertainment as well as for politics and collective education.

Having overcome both previous stages, in which I elaborated on the revolutionary role of technologies and reflected on the concept of mediatization, I now wish, in this third level of my presentation, to exemplify what is said with the topic of the mediatization of emotions, a theme that I consider central in this exhibition. I take as an example the case of the monarchy.

This political system is one of the regimes that most integrated the values of the media into its routine and practice. It is because without winning the devotion of the masses, the court's survival is threatened. In 2011, 87% of people supported the monarchy in England. In the Netherlands, this percentage reached 78% in 2014. In Sweden, this support was 70% in 2013.

The weddings of princes Harry and William are examples of this. They were conceived as a TV show, as are births, divorces, and monarchical deaths. Even in republics and in *showbiz* some burials of famous personalities recall the apotheosis ceremonies of ancient Rome. One such case was the funeral of Michael Jackson. Three billion people watched his burial on TV around the world. In cases like this, the media plays the role of regulator of collective worship, something that was also seen in the coffin of John Kennedy, Margareth Thatcher, Nikita Kruschev, and Ayrton Senna.

In the case of royal weddings, television emphasizes the subjects' contagious joy. They participate as actors in the worship service. Parades of decorated troops, songs and choirs, carriages, dresses, and unusual hats from the guests give these events a chic and carnivalesque tone that appeals not only to natives but also foreigners who watch the rituals ecstatically on TV.

Monarchists use the heavy symbolism of the royal courts to produce a high degree of collective fascination in the population. This effect explains why, discreetly, the end of Elisabeth II's reign is already being studied. The authorities want to speed up the transition so that, when the time comes, the Republican discourse does not take advantage of the power vacuum.

The pomp of the courts and the deification of the monarchs are capable of mobilizing reverence for the sacred in people. The sacred environment surrounding the royal court is something invented to protect specific meanings. It is also true of several *para-religious* rituals. The divine and mystical appear-

ance of personality is obtained by maintaining a certain distance and mystery between the celebrated and the idolaters. Fantasy is, thus, preserved. Another classic example of this type of occurrence is the popular cult of Kim Jong-un's leadership in North Korea, as well as his ancestors of the political dynasty.

This theme of political mediatization and collective emotions proposes a dense debate about the relevance of form for the diffusion of a particular persuasive message. In the case of monarchical and religious rituals, there is ample emphasis on the communicational medium. It is with it at hand that the content is discernible to fans and believers.

The theme is relevant, as everything indicates that the tics and rebates of royalty have infiltrated the collective imagination. The republican idea, more skeptical and less willing to worship and mystify public figures, finds resistance in countries where the monarchical tradition is consolidated. Ideological subversion must be able to generate counter-emotions, which win and align people's feelings towards the same dissident political goal, which does not happen in the case of the monarchy.

The collective emotional effect helps to explain the English decision to crown the young 25-year-old Elisabeth in 1953 with all possible luxury, despite the difficulties faced by the country at that time. The spectacle of that ceremony was ultimately aimed at providing the people with what they needed most at that moment: hope, joy, and fantasy.

Royal court rituals help to generate a collective emotion that contributes to the solidity of affective bonds. They unite the different groups that make up the nation. This result explains why there are still 43 countries led by kings and queens (23.3% of the independent states in the world).

The natural language captured this type of monarchic fantasy. Metaphors like *eating like a king* and *dressing like a queen* are used by people in their day-to-day dialogues. In Brazil, there is a *King of Football* (Pelé), a *Queen of Children* (Xuxa), a *King of Music* (Roberto Carlos), and many *Queens of Samba, Radio, and Home*. Celebrity parades at art and film festivals are done on *red carpets* that simulate real catwalks. And the headquarters of the governments are called *Palace*. In the absence of real kings and queens, the population of the country and several

other republican states cultivates showbiz stars as if they were nobles.

This appeal also seems to be the main attraction of social columns. This Olympus is a space coveted by figures who show off and strive to win the public's appreciation. They often arise, reemerge, and disappear from the view and esteem of the masses quickly. The phenomenon is called mobility of fame which, in the case of monarchies, is stable.

Collective worship is a reality in the society of the spectacle. Monarchs and stars from showbiz, politics, business, finance, culture, and sport are the preferred theme of *worship journalism, halls and sidewalks* of fame, wax museums, public monuments, and, also, the pilgrimage to cathartic places like the graves of these personalities.

This result comes from a premeditated and calculated effort. The first and main obstacle of a new star is to overcome the distraction of the audience. The fact requires qualified production of itself as a symbolic asset, available for mass consumption. It implies the novelty's ability to offer a unique emotional gratification to the celebrants. In other words, collective emotions can be managed.

From 1955 onwards, an estimated public of around 20 to 25 million people went to cinemas around the world to watch the trilogy that told the story of Sissi, the Empress, starring Romy Schneider. Animated by this narrative, about 5 million tourists visit annually the royal complex of Vienna, which brings together the palace of Sissi and its gardens.

In 1981, another royal wedding and drama conceived as a TV show touched the world. An estimated audience of 1 billion viewers watched Lady Di's wedding (the new Sissi) to Charles, the Prince of Wales. The live broadcast of this event increased the audience of TV Globo by four percentage points.

What happens is that there are dynasties, also, among the commoners. Both courts, that of kings and queens, and the mundane make use of something serious that underlies the collective habits - a person's desire to observe the lives of others, especially of those who inspire and touch them.

The media are responsible for promoting these characters by offering them to the delight of the masses. In other

words, what turns a famous into a celebrity is the frequency of his/her public exposure. The more venerated it is by the fans, the more frequently the celebrity who is famous will be on the media agenda in a vicious circle sustained by inertia.

The activation of the celebrant's feelings of sympathy and appreciation sometimes derives from an exclusive ability of the celebrated, from a role he/she plays in society, and also from his/her theatrical and scenic capacity. The well-admired famous is sometimes adored internationally, this being one of the visible aspects of globalization. The inhabitants of Mozambique, for example, were the ones who proportionately most revered Beyoncé in 2004. And the Paraguayans were the ones who most worshiped Miley Cyrus. In other words, stars positioned in the central countries manage to disseminate their voices, faces, and attitudes through the media on the four continents. It is also the case of Madonna.

In the most serious cases of this type of para-social interaction, some people become obsessed with a particular personality. This fact explains the celebrated party's concern to frequently expose himself/herself to the media. Only then he/she animates a continuous flow of stimuli that assures him/her an audience and the necessary popularity for his/her status as an idol. The celebrant even begins to imitate the behavior of the celebrated, an attitude typified as *erotomania*. The small details of the idol's life start to interest the celebrant who lets himself/herself be carried away by this type of illusory experience. It is, in fact, a passionate delusion. The celebrated gets used to meeting fans who enjoy imaginary intimacy with him/her. It is also stimulated by fan pages, which serve the purposes of worshiping his/her personality.

In addition to studying this type of relationship between form and content in political communication and entertainment, something that the monarchies of kings and queens and showbiz celebrities have learned to do to win the esteem of the masses, it is possible to present, in this fourth stage of my speech, yet another example of how communication technology imposes and shapes social behaviors. It is what I call the media-tization of voice and discourse.

Political leaders are usually identified by the rhetorical style they practice, especially the rhythm and intonation

used in their oral manifestations. Classic examples of history are the prosodic markers of the pronouncements of Martin Luther King, John Kennedy, Juan, and Evita Peron, Adolf Hitler, Mussolini, Getúlio Vargas, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Donald Trump. Religious preachers, musical interpreters, humorists, therapists, educational counselors, telemarketing agents, television journalists, radio journalists, troubadours, announcers, teachers, actors, storytellers, and declaimers also depend on voice and intonation to produce affective and persuasive effects on the audience. This fact explains the existence of voicebanks for the purposes of radio advertising.

Such an auditory and affective impact happened in the narratives of newsreels that, from 1911 to the 1960s, were presented in movie theaters around the world. It is not by chance that the voice of the speaker of these short reports ended up being called “The Voice of God” in the United States. This epithet has been used in Brazil to label Cid Moreira, former presenter of *Jornal Nacional* on TV Globo, who was celebrated with telling biblical stories. Another powerful and famous voice was that of Heron Domingues. He marked the Brazilian imagination in the period in which *O Repórter Esso* became the main information channel in the country. It is also Edward R. Murrow’s case, who became famous, in the United States, for his radio broadcasts during the Second World War and, later on, for his television campaign against Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Today’s breaking news is also narrated dramatically. This style is best perceived when watching this type of television call in a language that is not understood. In this case, the viewer neglects the semantic value of what is being communicated and observes the paralinguistic effects of the phrase. An example of this is the announcement made of the death of dictator Kim Jong-il in 2011. The emotional reaction of the North Korean TV presenter can be compared to that of Walter Cronkite, who emotionally interrupted CBS TV programming to report John Kennedy’s death, murdered in Dallas in 1963. In Brazil, it was also the case with Tancredo Neves’ death in 1985.

This device, that of telling news in a moving tone, is also used in the openings of newscasts. The purpose of this type of presentation is to add a sonority to the discourse which evokes

a sense of urgency in the audience. The soundtrack of this type of program has the same objective, to awake the public from numbness and keeps people from drowsiness.

The radio's ability to cause a similar effect of commotion and panic has already been demonstrated. It occurred in the cases of the announcement of Getúlio Vargas' suicide in 1954, a fact that gave rise to violent popular demonstrations in Brazil; and of the dramatization performed by Orson Wells of the work *War of the World*, in 1938, an occurrence that took more than 1 million people in panic to the streets of New York. Winston Churchill's speeches are an additional example of a discourse populated by prosodic resources that moved the audiences of his time, in particular, because of the intonation, rhythm, pauses in his speech, and the cavernous tone of his voice.

From these examples, there is evidence of the difference between the soothing and the choleric tone. What one expects from a Pope's speech, for example, is serenity and calm. It is highly unlikely that a peace preacher will speak using the tics of a sports narrator or those of a general positioned on the battlefield. Dubbing the voice of an angry character, like Mussolini, with that of a conciliator, like the Dalai Lama, produces a humorous effect that amuses the listener due to its inappropriate rhetoric.

The affection produced in the interlocutors by orality is a classic theme in the history of communication. In this case, the speaker's mnemonic resources are particularly valuable, including rhyme, rhythm, pronunciation, and tonic emphasis. Through them, the new generations were educated, and the combatants were encouraged to go out to fight on the battlefield. Whatever was said by the voice of the tribal elder was also intended to strengthen faith in community beliefs. Knowing how to speak was an equally valued attribute in ancient Greece, where only 10 percent of the population was (poorly) literate, and then, throughout the Middle Ages until Modernity, when, finally, the world of letters and the media became channels much more frequent of social interaction.

The voice attribute of being able to stimulate the listener's feelings was and remains one of the main biases of orality. This property explains the fascination that intimate conversa-

tion and face-to-face encounters still have for people. It is also the case of communal meetings. In them, the collective singing and emotional discourse of a preacher is capable of raising spirits or even tormenting them with fear and anger. Among the attributes of the voice is its ability to dramatize injustice, mobilize hope, release stress, generate emotional energy, affirm identity, and express moral indignation.

Sociability teaches the person how to infer a meaning from this variation of tone, including surprise, irony, anger, and fear. The concern with this theme is typical of sacred songs. This way of singing prayer has been consolidated as an efficient tool for social stimulation. Such a result is called, in the Christian tradition, *adoration*, a theme referred to in the previous stage of my speech.

Ultimately, the melody of a speech is one of the ways the person introduces himself/herself to the interlocutor. Also, it serves as a link for the integration of a certain community and the expression of a particular identity or position, which is notable in the noisy dissident anti-social manifestations.

The relationship between the prosodic effects of discourses and collective emotions is a relevant topic, considering the impact that some political speeches have on mass audiences. The relevance, in this case, is not what is said, but how one says it. This fact explains why the voice of a religious preacher is easily distinguished from that of a sports narrator. The mediatization of voices works because, in this case, its effect is also subtle.

An empirical study shows that, in general, political voices, both coming from the right and the left, are similar. They are welcoming. Of course, there are abrasive voices that, with their bellicose tone, crave to produce another type of emotional effect on the audience. There are angry voices like Maduro's, as there are dark voices like that of Uruguayan Tabaré Vázquez, melancholic like Nestor Kirchner's, and floating ones like Churchill's.

The emotions derived from the tone of the pronouncements are unconsciously decoded by the listeners between 300 and 600 milliseconds, an effect that also occurs with the hearing of musical tracks of films. The emotions generated by this variable relationship between expression and content, between what is said and how it is said, can also be detected in the labo-

ratory. One of these experiments shows that the degree of precision of the emotion identified by the listener was 84.8% for joy, 87% for anger, 83.8% for surprise, and 81% for sadness.

3. In conclusion

In conclusion, I suggest that the current reality, marked by the rapid adhesion of the masses to the media, technological convergence, and virtual entanglement, provides numerous examples that give to the concept of *mediatization* a solidity and clarity that old cases in the history of communication did not provide. I also suggest that the current influence of the media on the attitudes and behaviors of social actors has, to a large extent, the objective of managing collective emotions. The cases examined in this presentation of the mediatization of the royalty, that of monarchy and the showbiz stars, and that of the mediatization of the voice, are examples that document how the actors now take into account the technological bias of the media in their interpretations.

PART II: EVENTS

Collectives, circulation of social discourses, and citizen mobilization: the case of #RosarioSangra¹

Natalia Raimondo Anselmino²

Abstract: This paper is the product of a group and interdisciplinary research aimed at analyzing the ways in which social discourses on the public-political that are visible when they are put into circulation through social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter acquire, outside of them, visibility located in the co-presence of the more traditional public space or media visibility. In pursuit of this objective, some reflections are presented following the study of a unique case of an instrumental nature: the citizen mobilizations for “security and justice” that happened in the city of Rosario (Argentina), under the slogan #RosarioSangra, during the second half of 2016. The ideas thus shared seek to understand the articulation between different visibility regimes of public-political discourses as well as the intersections between socio-individual and collective actors in hypermediatized societies.

Keywords: Citizen mobilization. Social discourses. Circulation. Collectives. Mediatization.

1 This article is a rework of the exhibition presented on the occasion of the III International Seminar on Research on Mediatization and Social Processes (UNISINOS, 2019) and has originally been published in *Revista Sociedad*, n. 39 (November 2019 to April 2020), from the Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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1. Introduction

The possibility and meaning of collective action, more/less organized, represents one of the most desired issues for social sciences, in general, and, also, for studies on the future of the *historical process of mediatization* (VERÓN, 2013) in particular. The constant intersection between individual and collective identities, the dynamics of the constitution of social ties in times of discrediting of the most traditional institutions, and the commitment to the circulation of social discourses in conflict or protest situations are part of the fabric through which phenomena, such as the one presented here, are interwoven. It is precisely in this line of interest that the reflections shared in this article are located. They are part of a group and interdisciplinary research³, whose general objective consisted in analyzing how social discourses on the public-political sphere (understood in the sense proposed by Raimondo Anselmino; Reviglio; Diviani, 2015), made visible when published on connective platforms (VAN DIJCK, 2016), such as those of Facebook or Twitter, outside of them, acquire located visibility of co-presence of the more traditional public space (square, street, etcetera) or media visibility⁴. With this aim, the research was devoted to the study of a case that functioned almost as an excuse or a starting point from which to know how the articulation between the different *visibility regimes*⁵

3 PI+D *Nuevas visibilidades en la cultura digital: esfera pública contemporánea y redes sociales en Internet* (1POL253), based at Centro de Investigaciones en Mediatizaciones (CIM) of Universidad Nacional de Rosario, Argentina. The referred project was executed under Sebastián Castro Rojas' direction, and Natalia Raimondo Anselmino and María Cecilia Reviglio's co-direction, and had the participation of professors, students and graduates of the degrees in Social Communication —Ricardo Diviani, Irene Gindin, Mariana Busso, María Cecilia Echeopar, Natalia Coiutti, Daniela Sánchez, Alejandro Sambrana—, in Anthropology —Emmanuel Pérez Zamora—, in International Relations —Virginia Brussa—, as well as in Information Systems Engineering —Guillermo Leale, Ana Laura Cardoso, José Rostagno.

4 Here, the arguments about visibility elaborated by Thompson (1998) are recovered.

5 Visibility regimes are linked to "certain ways in which that visibility has been - and is - socially and historically circumscribed and classified. Thus, among its different meanings in Spanish, the term regime is defined as a 'set of rules by which an institution, entity, or activity is governed' and, likewise, as a 'set of reg-

occurs, as well as how media platforms (FERNÁNDEZ, 2018a) participate in the configuration and circulation of the public-political in hypermediatized societies (CARLÓN, 2019), such as ours. The choice to study a single case supposed, by the way, “a research design oriented to the analysis of the relationships between many properties concentrated in a single unit [seeking] [...] an intense analysis of its meanings to understand it in its specificity rather than look for generalizations” (ARCHENTI, 2018, p. 291-292). More precisely, it was a case study of an *instrumental* nature, to recover one of the several typologies with which the investigative strategy is usually classified, insofar as the case is accomplished, as has been said, “the role of mediation for the understanding of a phenomenon that transcends it” (ARCHENTI, 2018, p. 296).

To study this complex social phenomenon, we decided to articulate the tasks of the analysis of social discourses provided by the Veronian socio-semiotic (VERÓN, 1987) on several textual packages, with qualitative data collection⁶ techniques that conveyed the approach to the perspectives of certain leading actors, as well as the use of computational methods that made it possible to obtain, systematize, visualize and manage a large amount of data and metadata from Facebook and Twitter platforms. All this is based on the fact that as Archenti (2018) explains, in studies concentrated on a single case and “given that the objective is to address a complex phenomenon holistically, the researcher approaches the case through different methods of research or methodological triangulation” (p. 293).

In what follows in this writing, we begin by describing the case in question, and, then, give way to some of the inferences that emerge from the mentioned research.

ular or habitual characteristics in the development of something” (RAIMONDO; REVIGLIO, 2017, p. 3).

6 An allusion is made here to in-depth interviews carried out on an ad hoc basis to retrieve the testimonies of the actors who convened the first march. The analysis of the discourses, thus, recovered allowed the outlining of family profiles, as central figures of the collective action studied, to understand the different modes of participation during and after the mobilizations. The findings produced from the interviews are unpublished at the time of publication of this article and have been summarized in Reviglio and Castro Rojas (in press).

2. The #RosarioSangra case

The chosen case is named from the tag #RosarioSangra. As explained in Raimondo Anselmino, Reviglio, and Echeopar (2018), using a phrase that, in a certain way, became a slogan — in the sense that Canetti (1981) gives to this term, that is, as a kind of “battle cry” - a diverse set of social discourses on *insecurity*⁷ were activated and brought together.

The phenomenon analyzed took place in Rosario, which is one of the main urban conglomerates in Argentina, in terms of population size, and, for some years now, has been in a context of high social sensitivity as far as security is concerned, especially concerning criminal acts linked to drug trafficking.

During the second semester of 2016, a series of massive marches took place calling for “security and justice” triggered by a string of three violent homicides. The journalistic coverage of these events strongly thematized the security problem; that is, — as indicated in Raimondo Anselmino et al. (2018) - both the printed press and television and radio promoted an informative treatment that brought together different events in the indication of a problem that has public significance, and demands a solution. Among the discursive operations observed, one may note, for instance, that the principal local newspaper, La Capital, from August 18 began to use, in its printed edition, a kind of pseudo section called “Violent Times” to cover both the news around the murders and, later, the marches studied and their political repercussions. It is a procedure of amalgamation between citizen mobilizations and previous criminal events. To these operations of diagramming and putting on the page were also added others, oriented to the “construction of a solid relational structure for the facts” (Van Dijk cited in FERNÁNDEZ PEDEMONTE, 2001), promoted by discursive strategies, such as the connection of facts or not, and the framing in the same phenomenon:

Such is the case of the image of the wave, a metaphor built on the ideas of advance, growth, pull,

⁷ Insecurity is understood here as a sociological pre-notion, that is, “a way of explaining the reality of common sense rather than a concept developed by the social sciences” (KESSLER, 2015, p. 11).

and, eventually, withdrawal, which is repeatedly noticed in the analyzed media: “wave of crimes” (RosarioPlus, El Ciudadano, Rosario3), “Crime wave” (RosarioPlus, El Ciudadano), “wave of violence” (La Capital). In this same sense, the image of the wave is complemented by others that also refer to meanings of continuity and growth: “escalation of homicides” (Rosario/12), “anguishing string of crimes” (La Capital), “mortal saga” (El Ciudadano) (RAIMONDO ANSELMINO et al., 2018, p. 39).

Image 1 - Serialization of the pseudo section “Violent times”



Source: Author elaboration with hemerographic material.

The three crimes mentioned above, without connection to each other, occurred in a period of ten days. In the first place, during the first fortnight of August 2016, the disappearance and subsequent discovery of the body of the young Fabricio Zulatto; four days later, the murder of Nahuel Ciarroca on the occasion of attempted theft of his mobile phone, and; lastly, the death of Héctor Villalba at the hands of a group of criminals who carried out an “entry”, that is, an assault when the victim entered his home.

The local media gave great coverage to these three cases, whose victims met specific characteristics that worked in favor of identification by citizens: all belonged to the middle class, and the first two were young students, while the last a “man of work.” In this way, these three crimes functioned as catalysts for

public anger and became a substrate for the marches through which the popular claim was conveyed.

Image 2- Images of the first march



Source: Author reworking from images taken from the Facebook⁸ platform and the web.

Although between August and November 2016, not fewer than nine citizen concentrations were registered in the city of Rosario; the case, as it has been delimited, is circumscribed to only three, in particular; all of them with the following characteristics:

1. the call for them was made visible and initially circulated through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp⁹, and, therefore, they are mobilizations in which the “mediated discursive exchanges through platforms” (FERNÁNDEZ, 2018a, p. 14) played a central role;
2. they were organized by groups of relatives of victims of insecurity; and
3. they were oriented to the general request for greater “security and justice”, that is, they were not limited to the claim for a particular crime¹⁰.

The marches that comprise the #RosarioSangra case, then, are a total of three and were held on August 25, Septem-

8 For example, you can see the following album shared on Facebook by a photographer from Rosario: https://www.facebook.com/pg/SebastianCriadoFotografia/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1022436651207144

9 As noted in Raimondo Anselmino et al. (2018), the call for the first of the three marches takes time to reach the local press (both print and online). The *visibility threshold* (WOLE, 1987) of the event in the media begins with a note from the newspaper La Capital, three days after the first event appeared on Facebook.

10 It is worth clarifying, however, that, in the three marches, it was possible to observe the significant place occupied by the posters carried by the mobilized citizens, many of which alluded to the memory of a murdered relative or close friend.

ber 8, and November 10, 2016. These are mobilizations that acquired, unlike many others, great public notoriety and triggered extraordinary citizen participation that gained significant visibility in the mass media. Likewise, its political repercussions were not minor; among others:

- There was a proliferation of declarations of referents of the executive, legislative, and judicial powers, who do not usually pronounce easily on security issues;
- A meeting for security was held in Buenos Aires between the Governor of the province of Santa Fe, the Mayor of the city of Rosario, and the provincial and national security ministers;
- A conclave was held between the Governor and national deputies and senators for Santa Fe;
- The chief and deputy chief of the Santa Fe Province Police were replaced;
- The provincial ministers of Security and Justice made a presentation at the express request of the Chamber of Deputies of the province;
- An extraordinary meeting of the Parliamentary Labor Commission of the Municipal Council of the city of Rosario was held, which resulted in the declaration of the “state of security emergency” for six months, and the approval of a set of measures proposed by the local executive, among them, budget reallocation, and;
- An additional and overtime increase in the salary of the Provincial Police was announced and made effective.

Image 3 - Media treatment of political repercussions



Source: Author elaboration with hemerographic material.

All that has been said allows us to think of the phenomenon's gestation in terms of what, from the point of view of the semiotics of culture, would be defined as an *explosive moment*. Unexpectedly, what started with some events on Facebook “materialized on the streets, became a trending topic on Twitter and occupied the agenda of the local - and even national media” (RAIMONDO ANSELMINO et al., 2018, p. 26). Lotman (1999) distinguishes *explosive moments* from long-term processes. Unlike the latter, the former gives rise to *timeless brevity*, “a casual, unpredictable moment [...] [that] breaks through the regular chain of causes and effects” (LOTMAN, 1999, p. VI) and that, in this case, gave rise to a proliferation of different types of social discourses: the discourse of socio-individual actors mediatized through the connective platforms; the information discourse that made the claim part of socially shared news, beyond all personal experience, and; the political discourse of both the protagonists of the protests and the public officials of the various powers of the State. As Steimberg and Traversa (1997) warned, visibility is always built from discursive processes.

As noted above, what made the #RosarioSangra mobilizations a case of interest for this investigation was, initially, the fact that the call to march circulated exclusively – except for what is restricted to the non-public sphere of interpersonal communication mediated face-to-face – through Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp platforms. It is something that in terms of the analytical model proposed by Carlón (2016) on the circulation of meaning could be thought of, in part, as a horizontal circulation – between users-peers within the networks, and, in part, as a vertical circulation of ascending type – from the bottom up, from the media platforms to the mass media.

3. Call, circulation, and collectives

The object of knowledge of this research —that is, the articulation between different regimes of visibility of the discourses on the public-political at present, particularly attending to those whose circulation is motorized through what is vulgarly

called “social networks” and what the specialized discourse defines as *connective platforms* (VAN DIJCK, 2016) or *media platforms* (FERNÁNDEZ, 2018a) - involves brooding around the conformation of collective identities - those *pluralities* of which the socio-individual actors feel part, whether they are thought of in terms of *social collectives* or *communication collectives*¹¹.

As noted above, what made the #RosarioSangra mobilizations a case of interest for this investigation was, initially, the fact that the call to the march circulated exclusively - except for what is restricted to the non-public sphere of interpersonal communication mediated face-to-face - through Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp platforms. It is something that in terms of the analytical model proposed by Carlón (2016) on the circulation of meaning could be thought of, in part, as a horizontal circulation - between users-peers within the networks, and, in part, as a vertical circulation of ascending type - from the bottom up, from the media platforms to the mass media.

The first mobilization, which took place on August 25, was convened from two events on Facebook: one created on August 19 by a family member of a violent crime victim and another, on August 20, by the administrator of a Facebook group, of a public type, which at that time was called “Rosario de pie” and later renamed “#Rosario Sangra.” Both invited people to march from different parts of the city to the headquarters of the Provincial Courts and, from there, to the local headquarters of the Government. A detailed analysis of the enunciative configuration of these and other events through which were called the three marches that constitute the case studied can be read in Busso and Echeopar (2019).

11 Both the issues of the constitution of collective identities and the notions of social or communication collectives are recovered as Eliseo Verón raises them in several of his works on the matter. A reading of the distinction that this author makes between the different types of collectives can be seen in Raimondo Anselmino (2019). According to Verón (2005), *social collectives* “are part of the social fabric, they can be recognized and even individualized” (p. 8). These are groups whose distinction seems to be related to the world of work (such as, for example, “teachers,” “scientists,” “businessmen”) and that appears in various social discourses. For their part, *communication collectives* are those that “exist to the extent that their members share a more/less intense focus on a social scene” (VERÓN, 2001, p. 76), either from a situation generated by the media system (for example, a certain audience) or from non-mediatised experience.

Image 4 - Central images of the events on Facebook



Source: Author rework based on images taken from Facebook.

From that moment, the call began to circulate through the most popular platforms, and during the first three days no traditional media echoed; the citizens' initiative, therefore, went unnoticed to the *information discourse*. Thus, while the number of people interested in Facebook events grew, and strongly interpellating images were tweeted and retweeted with information about the mobilization, the hashtag #RosarioSangra has become a trending topic on Twitter (GINDIN et al., 2019).

Image 5 - Images that circulated on Twitter before the first march



Source: Author rework based on images taken from Twitter.

It was only on August 22, three days before the mobilization, that some journalistic notes began to appear, little by

little, referring to the march scheduled for August 25, thus, beginning there the *threshold of visibility* of the phenomenon in the mass media. In general, it was the news that emphasized, particularly the emotional state of citizens, that is, the *emotions* that had triggered the protest. In those first media discourses, phrases such as “hot weather,” “fed up,” “we are tired,” “they claim not to know what else to do,” “no more”, and sentences of this style proliferated (RAIMONDO ANSELMINO et al., 2018).

On the other hand, it should be noted that among those who promoted and organized the marches, a particular social group stood out, which was that of *the relatives of victims of insecurity*. As Reviglio and Castro Rojas (in press) warn, the groups of relatives of victims of insecurity are not exceptional in the current public sphere and they become a relevant actor in studies on social movements, even becoming, for sociological thought (cf PITA, 2010), a particular type of political activist¹². So much so that, for Jelin (2007), “familism” is one of the central criteria for legitimizing the public voice concerning crimes. According to Galar (2016), these are groups that tend to seek access to the media to become “legitimate interlocutors with the public powers with a view to providing definitions of the problems” (p. 80).

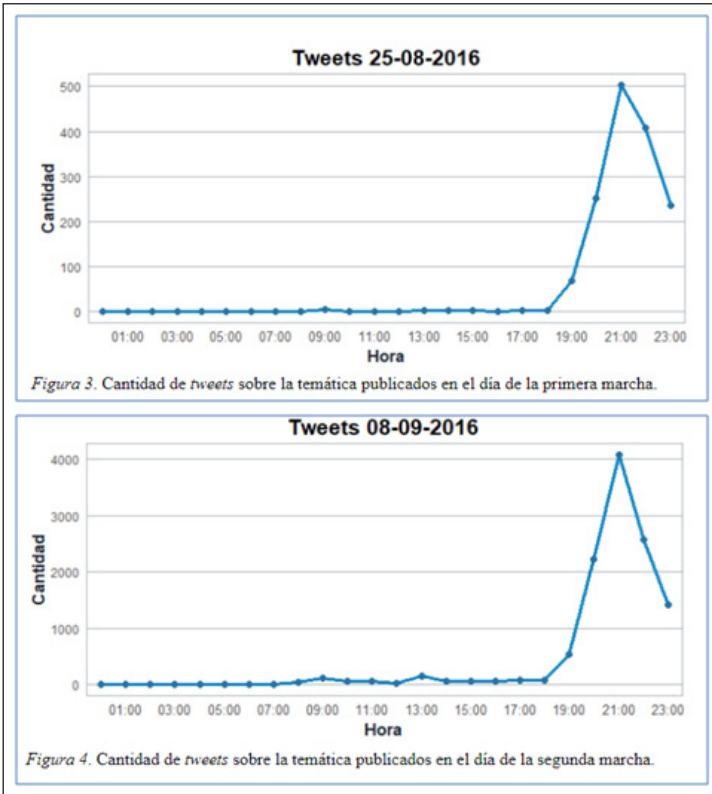
However, unlike the organicity assumed by groups such as Mothers or Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the plurality of relatives of victims of violent crimes who gathered behind the slogan #RosarioSangra to create and carry out the marches, promoted slogans of great ideological heterogeneity, as dissimilar as the imposition of the death penalty, on the one hand, and the demand for “more education and fewer police officers,” on the other. What did they have, then, in common? What did lead, in this case, to collective action management? They were brought together by the experience of having lost a son, a father, a brother, in circumstances related to crime and the expression of pain and indignation at that loss; in other words, they were united by

12 As the authors recall, “the most salient antecedent of family collectives is made up of those linked to the crimes of the last military dictatorship: Relatives of Detained and Disappeared for Political Reasons, Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the groups H.I.J.O.S. y Hermanos are examples of familistic collectives that took and still retain a presence on the public scene in claiming crimes against humanity that the State committed against its citizens” (REVIGLIO; CASTRO ROJAS, in press, s/p).

the manifestation of *affection*, understood, as Dahlgren (2018) puts it, as the “collective side of emotionality” (p. 33). As the author states, “we can understand the importance of affect if we consider that what shapes participation is something more powerful than just the ideas in the minds of individuals; the social experience” (DAHLGREN, 2018, p. 33). It was precisely that shared affection, put into discourse, around which commitment was initially encouraged and motivated the consequent participation. This favored, at least momentarily, a certain identification with the opaque request for “security and justice” not only among the family collective but also thousands of other citizens who participated in the protest. Here, we can clearly observe that as Valdetaro (2012) warns in her reflections on the phenomenon of the “Arab Spring”, the relationship between media platforms and the streets is one of inter-dependency, because both environments function as “*conectores-de-afecto-en-vivo*” (p. 161; highlighted by the author).

If we examine, for instance, the temporal distribution of the cluster of tweets published on the days of the first and second marches (Image 6), on their occasion, we can see that the moment of greatest concentration coincides with the period of the effective mobilization in the street. They are, predominantly, discourses through which those who were marching published and shared, in turn, live and through the Twitter platform, their lived experience.

Image 6 - Temporal distribution of tweets studied during the day of the march



Source: Elaborated by the research group.

It is how, with the effective presence of many bodies in the march and the replicas of those bodies on the “networks,” a whole *communication collective* was created that exceeded the image of the “public mourner” that each *relative of a victim of insecurity* assumes. Following Verón (2001), we understand that every communication group is always an audience (face-to-face or virtual). A public, a communication collective that - as Verón (2002) also thought in relation to the “cacerolazos¹³” of early 2002 in Argentina¹⁴ - knows itself as a point in a network, that is,

13 A protest in which people bang pans.

14 Reference is made here to an unpublished text by the author, dated by himself at the “dawn of January 11, 2002”, which is part of the materials summarized in the Eliseo Verón Archive (<http://archivoveron.una.edu.ar/>), under the supervision of Universidad Nacional de las Artes.

those who are gathered, manifesting, have a growing awareness that many others are watching them on television, or following their performance through the several media platforms. As proposed by Fernández (2018b),

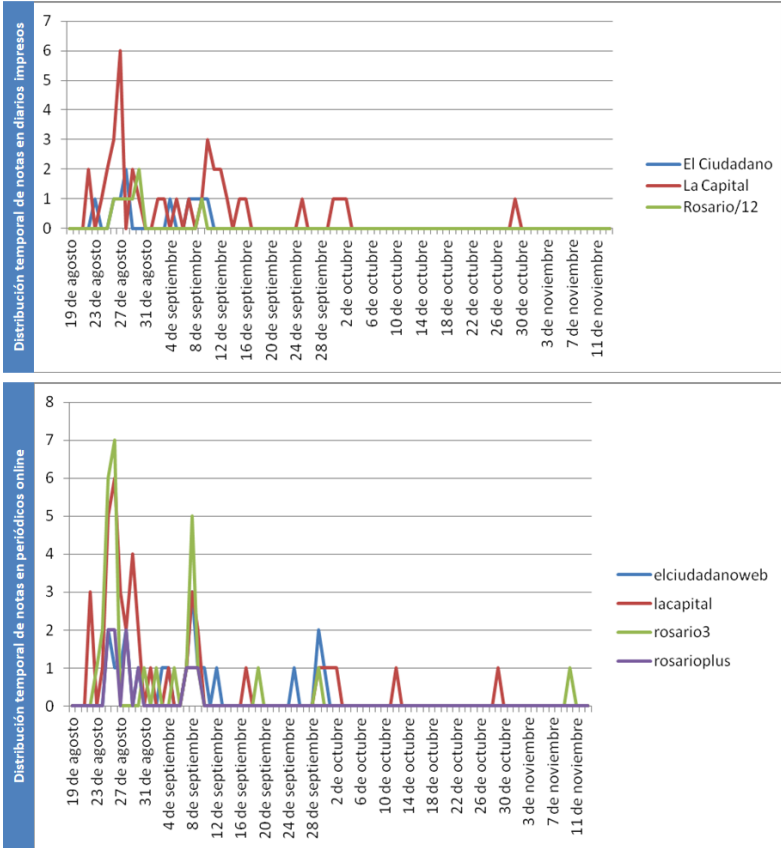
The public is a constitutive element not only as a subject of the action but as a *spectator*: it is a proposed destination horizon that regulates the forms of *performance* and the production of discourses, and, at the same time, indicates that the meaning of the events is only completed beyond the circle of the direct protagonists (p. 92).

4. The discourse on the marches on traditional media

On the discourse of the marches by the traditional media — an aspect analyzed in detail in Raimondo Anselmino et al. (2018) -, only a few issues will be pointed out, here, which allow us to review the relationship between the different visibility regimes.

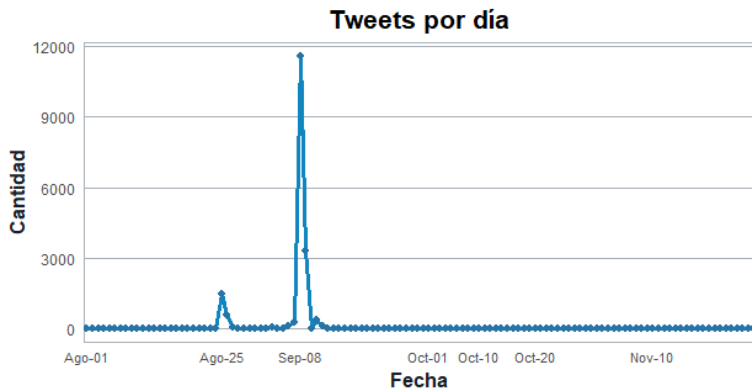
In the first place, beyond the difference that could be recognized in the treatment provided by the different press media analyzed in Raimondo Anselmino et al. (2018), we noted that the march to which the most coverage was given was the first one. On the contrary, with regard to the discourses of the socio-individual actors, mediatized through the connective platforms (confronting, for example, images 7 and 8), we observed that, on both Facebook and Twitter, the second mobilization was the one that led most discourses. In line with this, according to the testimony of the leading actors interviewed in the investigation (REVIGLIO; CASTRO ROJAS, in press), it was the mobilization of September 8 that achieved a higher call of people.

Image 7 - Temporal distribution of notes on the marches on the local press of the city of Rosario



Retrieved from: Raimond Anselmino et al. (2018) – rework

Image 8- Temporal distribution of tweets studied about the marches



Retrieved from: Gindin et al. (2019).

Second, in the discursive configuration of citizen mobilization by the media, a process of acting was observed (RAIMONDO ANSELMINO et al., 2018) through which the subject of the action is the entire city, which becomes an *entity* arranged as a *singular meta-collective*. In this way, the media turned Rosario Sangra into an organization: for example, in the first note published by the newspaper *La Capital*, it is said that the march is being called “by the Rosario Sangra organization,” giving it the solidity of an institutional statute. Apparently, if there was no institution to support the mobilization, the media should create it.

Third, it is possible to see how the newspapers reiterated and reinforced the massive nature of the march, especially the first, to highlight its newsworthiness value. As expressed in Raimondo Anselmino et al. (2018),

throughout the analyzed period, the five media reiterate and reinforce their massive nature through evaluative adjectives that classify them as “massive,” “multitudinous,” “overwhelming,” “nourished,” “gigantic,” “unprecedented,” “impressive,” and that tend to hyperbolization, a rhetorical procedure that is not only present in reference to the number of people or summons, but also to the feelings conveyed by it: “desperate regret” (Rosario3), “Massive, imposing, shocking, and emotional” (La Capital) (p. 40).

At the same time, all the newspapers also took care to highlight, among other characteristics, their non-partisan condition.

Finally, in the fourth place, regarding the treatment of information sources, we noted that the most cited were, as is often the case, the “official”. However, in addition to the latter, the privileged place granted to some socio-individual actors who participate in the collectives of relatives of the victims of insecurity stands out, especially those “notable” relatives who enjoy public recognition that exceeds their mourning¹⁵.

5. Final considerations

It is impossible to affirm that there is “a” gestation place for social mobilization of these characteristics. Rather, we can say that the different regimes of visibility constantly intersect inextricably. It is due to the complexity of the case and the growing complexity of current societies (VERÓN, 2013), in which, more and more, it is difficult to dissociate the non-mediatized individual experience from the collective media-constructed experience. Thus, this type of situation proliferates, which Verón (2002) called, on one occasion, a subjective multimedia experience because “every semiotic network connects, today” - Verón said already at the dawn of the 21st century - “the daily and the media, and by definition, has areas of uncertainty” (p. 9).

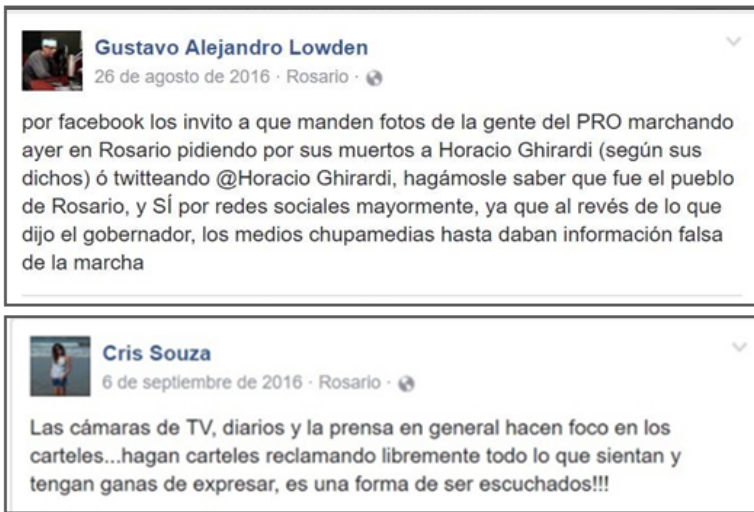
The intersection between the different visibility regimes is, therefore, neither linear nor unidirectional. For example, in the production grammars of the discourses of the marches’ organizers, the recognition of specific modes of functioning, both mass-media and typical of media platforms, is observed. It is evidenced in some of the posts published in the “Conversation” tab of the event¹⁶ created in the public Facebook group

15 Among the testimonies most frequently collected by the press are those of Enrique Bertini - a recognized businessman from the city of Rosario who was a candidate for councilor in the last local elections - and Eduardo Trasante - an evangelical pastor who was a councilor for Ciudad Futura and resigned from the bank in December 2018 following a harassment complaint.

16 Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/182338725520230> (recuperado el 18/09/2019).

“#Rosario Sangra” to divulge the first mobilization, and which have been studied during the investigation. There (see Image 9), a certain *knowledge of the arché* (SCHAEFFER, 1990), put into play, can be noticed; that is, among the conditions of production of the discourse of the socio-individual actors, there is a knowledge that circulates about the genesis of media discourses and on-device constrictions.

Image 9 - Posts took from the Facebook event “March to claim Security, Justice, and Change of Criminal LAWS”



Retrieved from: Facebook.

As Valdetaro (2012) would say, these are long-trained cognitive and perceptual capacities, after generations of iconic-indexical mediatization via television. In the case studied, some of this was manifested when the organizers of the events encouraged other users to “arrogate” or “tag” certain State officials in the messages they published through any platform, or when the administrator of one of the Facebook groups, from which the call was made, explained how to get registered by traditional media during the street demonstration. In short, these socio-individual actors know, as Verón (1987) argues, that beyond the “lived” or “direct” experiences of a personal nature or - we could add now - even those mediated through the various platforms interconnected through the Internet, the traditional me-

dia continue to officiate even in (hyper)mediatized societies, as the place where what we usually call current affairs, our social reality, is configured.

At the same time, it is true that platforms, as *performative infrastructures* (VAN DIJCK, 2016), expand the possibilities of association, collective organization, and political performance, as well as transform how socio-individual actors link with institutions policies and media organizations. And, thus, *new spaces for public enunciation* are configured (CASTRELO, 2018, p. 80) where other discourses, even some from interpersonal communication, can acquire a public horizon. It is usually opposed, on the other hand, by a mutation in the quality of group ties that, at least in the case studied, are not very stable. The possibility, however, of having achieved that the claim assumed situated visibility of the more traditional co-presence - the multitudinous of the putting of the body in the street - and had a concrete impact on public policy issues is not minor.

In this way, from the point of view of its mediatization, the mobilization - each of the three marches studied, but especially the first two - assumed several of the characteristics that Dayan and Katz (1995) gave to the type of phenomena that they define as a media event:

- These marches are not part of the information routine of the traditional media which covered them but, rather, they are interruptions to assumed routines;
- They were televised and broadcast on several live platforms;
- They took place outside the television studios and were not started by media companies;
- They have been planned and announced in advance; and
- They are even coated with the halo of the ceremonial.

On the other hand, returning to popular mobilization in the street, it remains to be said that, far from the success of the first two, the last march held on November 10, 2016, had much lower attendance, and went completely unnoticed by the tradi-

tional media: only one of the five newspapers, whose discourse was analyzed, published a note about it; at the same time, a clear decrease in the discourses published on Facebook or Twitter was observed (see Image 8).

Under this, the protagonists organizing the mobilization expressed, during the in-depth interviews, the difficulty they noted in sustaining the commitment of the general public and achieving higher popular involvement, beyond the reaction and catharsis aroused by the conjuncture. Because the manifestation of *affection* — that is, its materialization in some sensitive medium, and, above all, its mediatization through varied media phenomena — serves to call, but is not enough to achieve, by itself and without other slogans, that collective actions of this type last in time.

Usually, this type of local protests, anchored on the complaints about “insecurity” and the request for “justice,” tend to be relatively short-lived. They do not persist beyond the existence of some cells with more active members —often belonging to the group of relatives of the victims of insecurity— who are renewed and generate actions of minor scope. Among other things, because what unites them is, above all, the personal drama and a generalized emotional state. To this are added broad and diffuse slogans, built from a sociological pre-notion (KES-SLER, 2015) such as “insecurity” and an abstract value such as “justice,” both difficult terms to translate into concrete public policy actions in the short term. Consider the manifest difference of these more elusive slogans with others such as those of “alive appearance” or “trial and punishment of the ones responsible for disappearances and State Terrorism” that were held, for so many decades, by the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, in Argentina.

To close, it remains to remember, bringing up again the reflections of Dahlgren (2018), that the commitment to participation depends on the conditions in which each civic culture finds itself; that is, it depends on those resources that are prerequisites of the participation, among others: relevant knowledge, democratic values, trust in institutions, or self-perception as a political actor with the power to transform.

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La médiatisation du mouvement des « gilets jaunes » : religion et politique¹

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Mihaela Alexandra Tudor³

Abstract: The paper discusses dimensions of an answer to the following question: How and why is the mediatization of the “Yellow Vest” movement associated with political and religious references in the French public space, which has always been refractory to an amalgam between religion and politics (Bratosin & Jauffret, 2018)? In order to answer this question, the hypothesis tested here is that mythic-religious thinking ontologically reconnects religion and politics as a foundation of the public space (Tudor et al., 2018) and at the same time it is a thinking that affirms and defends its lay and secular character. From this perspective, the analysis will cover a corpus of media products publicly available between October 2018 and April 2019. The presentation of the results is organized in four parts: (a) “Yellow Vests”: political and religious foundations; (b) “Yellow Vests”: publicization of religion; (c) “Yellow Vests”: spiritualization of politics; (d) “Yellow Vests”: mediatization of the movement.

Keywords: Mediatization. Yellow Vests. Publicization of religion. Spiritualization of politics. Mediatization of the movement.

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1. Introduction : posture, approche et méthode

Apparu dans l'espace public français à la fin de l'année 2018, le mouvement populaire, connu désormais sous le nom de « Gilets jaunes » en raison du vêtement jaune à haute visibilité utilisé comme signe de ralliement au mouvement, fait l'objet d'une médiatisation fournie aussi bien au travers des *mainstream media* qu'au travers des *new media* ou des réseaux sociaux. Le caractère inouï et déconcertant de la nouveauté du mouvement « Gilets jaunes », trans-générationnel et trans-professionnel, qui se désolidarise ouvertement de tout parti politique, de tout syndicat ou de toute autre forme précédente organisatrice de mouvements sociaux et qui refuse notamment de se donner des « chefs », a déstabilisé, entre autres, les pratiques journalistiques et a mis en exergue plusieurs aspects du fonctionnement médiatique auparavant moins visibles. Parmi ces aspects on compte bien sûr l'organisation médiatique de la désinformation, l'asservissement des médias aux pouvoirs politiques et économiques, la défiance massive des citoyens vis-à-vis des médias *mainstream*, etc., mais aussi la pensée mythico-religieuse à l'œuvre dans le traitement de l'actualité.

Ce travail se propose d'apporter des éléments de réponse à la question suivante : Comment et pourquoi la médiatisation du mouvement des « Gilets jaunes » associe les références politiques et les références religieuses dans l'espace public français qui a toujours décrié l'amalgame entre religion et politique (Bratosin et Jauffret, 2018) ? Afin d'y répondre, l'hypothèse mise à l'épreuve ici sera celle de la pensée mythico-religieuse qui relie ontologiquement la religion et la politique comme fondement de l'espace public (Tudor et al., 2018), pensée manifestée même dans la mise en acte de l'affirmation et de la défense de sa laïcité ou sécularité. Dans cette perspective, l'analyse portera sur un corpus de produits médiatiques rendus publics entre octobre 2018 et avril 2019⁴. La restitution et l'explicitation des résultats seront organisées en quatre parties : a) « Gilets jaunes » : ancrage politique et religieux, b) « Gilets jaunes » : publicisation de

4 Le mouvement a ultérieurement connu des changements, mais l'analyse concerne les données correspondant aux mois d'avant mai 2019.

la religion, c) « Gilets jaunes » : spiritualisation de la politique, d) « Gilets jaunes » : médiatisation du mouvement.

En ce qui concerne l'ancrage théorique, nous faisons usage de la théorie de la médiatisation (Livingstone, 2009 ; Hepp, 2012 ; Deacon et Stanyer, 2014 ; Bratosin, 2016 ; Krotz, 2017 ; Bratosin, Gomes et Neto, 2017 ; Bratosin, 2019). Plus précisément, nous inscrivons notre travail dans une compréhension de la médiatisation d'une part, comme programme de recherche qui repose sur l'intégration croissante des médias dans la vie quotidienne, l'enchevêtrement augmenté des médias et de la société et l'unification dialectique de la multiplicité des mondes sociaux composant la société et d'autre part, dans le sillage de l'école de Marbourg par le biais des formes symboliques (Bratosin, 2007 ; Tudor, 2013). Quant à la méthodologie employée pour approcher le corpus d'articles de presse, images-photos document et vidéos choisis comme représentatifs et publiés/diffusés sur les médias *mainstream* et sur ceux propres au mouvement, c'est-à-dire des pages et groupes sur le réseau Facebook, nous avons utilisé l'analyse du discours (Fairclough, 2010).

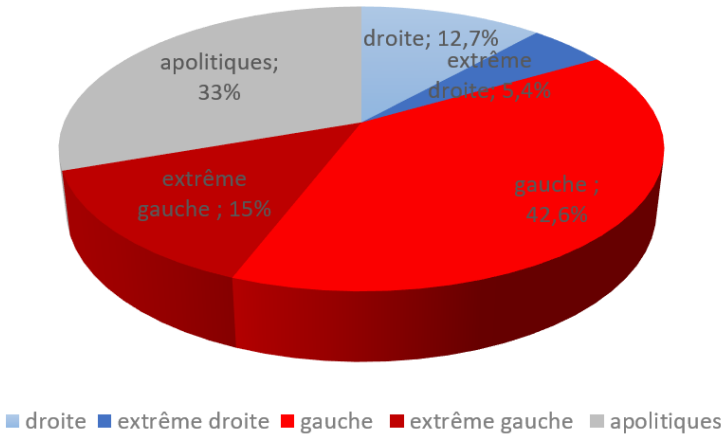
2. « Gilets jaunes » : ancrage politique et religieux

Même si le discours des « Gilets jaunes » rejette tout embrigadement politique, les revendications dans leur contenu, dans leur formulation et dans leur déploiement dans l'espace public ont tout de même un fort ancrage politique. La vigilance des « Gilets jaunes » face aux tentatives de récupération politique du mouvement n'efface pas pour autant l'engagement politique d'origine de chaque participant mobilisé. Cette situation jouit dans l'analyse d'une certaine stabilité car les « Gilets jaunes » ne se sont jamais présentés comme une alternative politique. Dès lors, l'ancrage politique du mouvement des « Gilets jaunes » doit être entendu comme la résultante des affiliations politiques des participants. Dans ce contexte, alors que les apparences et les médias traditionnels voulaient accréditer l'idée que les « Gilets jaunes » s'inscrivaient dans une mouvance d'extrême-droite, les études empiriques ont montré que le mouvement était ancré plutôt dans la gauche politique : « (...) ils sont bien plus nom-

breux à se situer à gauche, entre 1 et 3 sur une échelle de 1 à 7 (44%), qu'à droite, entre 5 et 7 sur cette même échelle (15%), et majoritairement aux extrémités de l'axe. De façon générale, la surreprésentation de la gauche (graphe 1) est patente » (Arsinée et al., 2019, p. 883). La déclinaison sociologique de cette surreprésentation telle qu'elle est faite par l'une des meilleures synthèses médiatiques de ces études, retient que : « âgés de 45 ans en moyenne, ils [les « Gilets jaunes », *n.n.*] appartiennent aux classes populaires ou à la « petite » classe moyenne. La catégorie des employés est surreprésentée : 33% des participants et 45% des actifs présents, alors qu'ils sont 27% de la population active française. Les ouvriers ne comptent que pour 14% des « Gilets jaunes ». Les artisans, commerçants et chefs d'entreprise sont également bien représentés : 10,5%, et 14% des actifs présents, contre 6,5% de la population active. Les cadres sont peu nombreux : à peine 5% des participants, 7% des actifs présents contre 18% au niveau national. Les inactifs forment le quart des participants au mouvement et pour l'essentiel ce sont des retraités. Autre particularité notable, la forte proportion de femmes, souvent issues des classes populaires et traditionnellement peu mobilisées politiquement. 25% de l'ensemble est diplômé du supérieur et 35% titulaire de BEP ou CAP. Des ménages aux revenus modestes : en dessous du revenu médian de près d'un tiers. 33% se déclarent apolitiques, les autres se situent à l'extrême gauche (15%), à l'extrême droite (5,4%), à gauche (42,6%) et à droite (12,7%). » (cf. <https://groupedhistoiresociale.com/2018/12/14/sociologie-des-gilets-jaunes-france-culture/>).

Graphe 1. Rattachement politique

GJ: rattachement politique



Retrieved from: <https://groupedhistoiresociale.com/2018/12/14/sociologie-des-gilets-jaunes-france-culture/>.

La représentation politique fortement à gauche et la configuration sociale des Gilets jaunes focalisées sur une recherche de solidarité comme lien social et de justice sociale comme repère économique laissent supposer qu'au delà de la matérialité des revendications portés par le mouvement, il y a fondamentalement un déficit national de projets de socialisation qui nourrit aussi des mécontentements en rapports avec des besoins vitaux immatériels. En effet, « jusque dans les années cinquante et soixante du vingtième siècle, la France offrait deux grands projets de socialisation à travers l'Église catholique et le Parti communiste. Ces deux institutions proposaient une compréhension du monde, une raison de vivre, une presse, des mouvements de jeunesse, des lieux d'engagement et de formation... Dans le dernier tiers du vingtième siècle, ces institutions ont perdu leur surface sociale et n'ont été remplacées par rien, ce qui a laissé les personnes seules, seules face à leur travail, leur sexualité, leur consommation, leurs écrans » (cf. <https://regardsprotestants.com/societe/gilets-jaunes-la-grille-de-lecture-religieuse/>). Dans cette configuration, l'hypothèse d'une quête de spiritualité, c'est-à-dire d'un ancrage non seulement politique, mais aussi religieux du mouvement

des gilets jaunes apparaît comme une conjecture pertinente surtout si l'on considère les symboliques religieuses de la fraternité, des rites, des liturgies et des martyres, convoquées dans l'agir communicationnel du mouvement. Afin de mettre à l'épreuve cette hypothèse de travail, nous allons considérer ici la médiatisation des gilets jaunes à travers la couverture médiatique en images du mouvement.

3. « Gilets jaunes » : publicisation de la religion

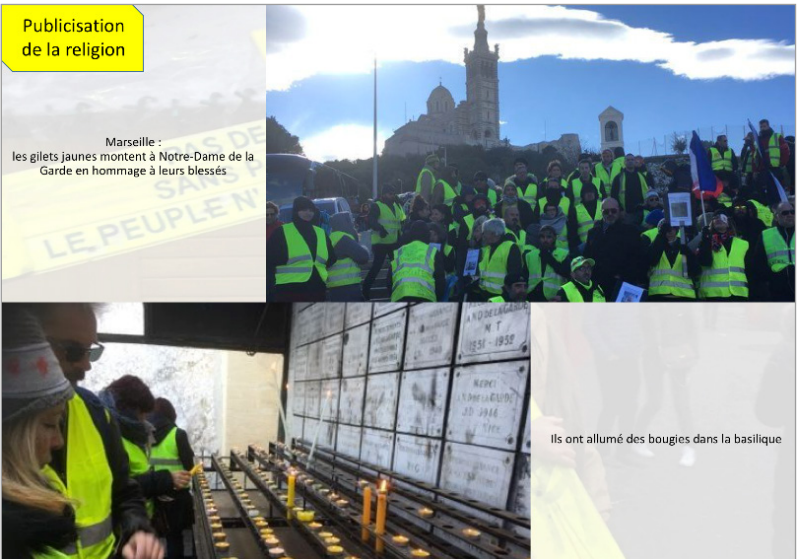
Ignorée dans le message explicite porté par le discours médiatique sur les Gilets jaunes, la religion surgit d'une manière implicite dans le contenu même de l'information sur l'actualité du mouvement. Habituellement, écartée de l'espace public au nom d'une laïcité marquée par l'ambiguïté de son sens et par une séparation conceptuelle entre le politique et le religieux impossible de saisir dans la quotidienneté de la pratique sociale (Bratosin et Jauffret, 2018), la religion trouve dans le mouvement des Gilets jaunes un vecteur pour sortir de l'espace personnel, de l'espace intime qui lui a été octroyé légalement et idéologiquement. Les images « imposées » par le mouvement des Gilets jaunes participent pour le compte de l'actualité à la publicisation de la religion. A titre d'exemple, le rassemblement des Gilets jaunes devant l'église Sacré-Cœur à Paris et le déploiement d'une banderole en haut de cet édifice religieux (photo 1) dont la symbolique spirituelle transcende l'histoire, illustrent une remise populaire de la religion au centre de l'actualité la plus brûlante de l'espace public français. Cette manière de publicisation de la religion suite à une réappropriation laïque des lieux sacrés, non pas pour les séculariser, mais pour réactiver leur sens spirituel en plein débat public, est une dimension forte du mouvement. A Marseille, les Gilets jaunes sont allés à Notre-Dame de la Garde en hommage à leurs blessés et en signe de piété ont allumé des bougies (photo 2) sous les objectifs de la presse du monde entier. Egalement, à Avignon, le célèbre et symbolique Palais des Papes est associé par les gilets jaunes au mouvement en médiatisant le religieux comme lieu symbolique de débat public et scène de l'actualité politique (Photo 3).

Photo 1. Publicisation de la religion. Eglise Sacré-Cœur



Retrieved from: Pages Facebook Gilets Jaunes Paris & Gilets Jaunes Officiel & capture d'écran Europe (Montage par Tudor & Bratosin).

Photo 2. Publicisation de la religion. Notre-Dame de la Garde



Retrieved from: Pages Facebook Gilets Jaunes Paris & Gilets Jaunes Officiel & France 3 régions.

Photo 3. Publicisation de la religion



Retrieved from: Page Facebook Union Gilets Jaunes 84.

Cet enchevêtrement de symboliques, qui fait revenir le fait religieux et la question religieuse sur la place publique française en lien avec des faits traditionnellement laïcs, tout en leur donnant un pouvoir de participation en tant qu'acteurs entiers de la sphère publique, représente un effet de la médiatisation profonde caractéristique de nos sociétés. La médiatisation permet l'ouverture vers et l'accès à plusieurs domaines de réalité. En tant que phénomène global, elle facilite la prise en charge de plusieurs monde sociaux et la connexion à des mondes nouveaux, écartés explicitement ou oubliés, connexion sans doute pas possible en dehors de la communication médiatisée augmentée.

4.« Gilets jaunes » : spiritualisation de la politique

Dans le sens inverse, la religion trouve son goût historique pour la politique. Le mouvement des gilets jaunes est une opportunité à ne pas manquer pour la religion de spiritualiser la

politique. Ainsi, alors que dans des conditions habituelles l'expression de foi dans les lieux publics aurait reçu peu d'adhésion et généré même une certaine hostilité largement partagée, dans le contexte du mouvement des Gilets jaunes, elle spiritualise l'action politique et recueille une sympathie particulière qui légitime l'acte religieux sur la voie publique. En effet des prêtres sont allés s'agenouiller et prier parmi les Gilets jaunes ou bénir les rues devenues scènes médiatisées des revendications sociales, comme par exemple les Champs-Élysées. D'autres prêtres avec gilet jaune par dessus leur soutane et brandissant autour du cou la croix ont rejoint les manifestants dans les ronds-points afin de « rendre la dignité aux travailleurs » (photo 4). Dans la même perspective, la politique trouve les nuances de la spiritualité quand des religieuses se mêlent dans la foule de manifestants et dansent, comme à Avignon, avec les gilets jaunes ou quand en pleine période de fêtes de la nativité, les prêtres célèbrent des messes de Noël sur les lieux publics de rassemblement de gilets jaunes (photo 5).

La spiritualisation de la politique occasionnée par le mouvement des Gilets jaunes n'est uniquement d'ordre symbolique. Elle est aussi discursive. Associer la rhétorique biblique et religieuse avec la rhétorique idéologique du mouvement est une autre forme de spiritualisation de la politique dans ses formes les plus originaires. Promouvoir le même combat pour « la fin du mois » et « la fin du monde » est l'une des meilleures illustrations concernant la spiritualisation discursive de la politique revendicative des Gilets jaunes, comme d'ailleurs la proclamation de la fraternité comme seule et dernière valeur politique des Français qui déplorent la perte de la liberté et de l'égalité (photo 6).

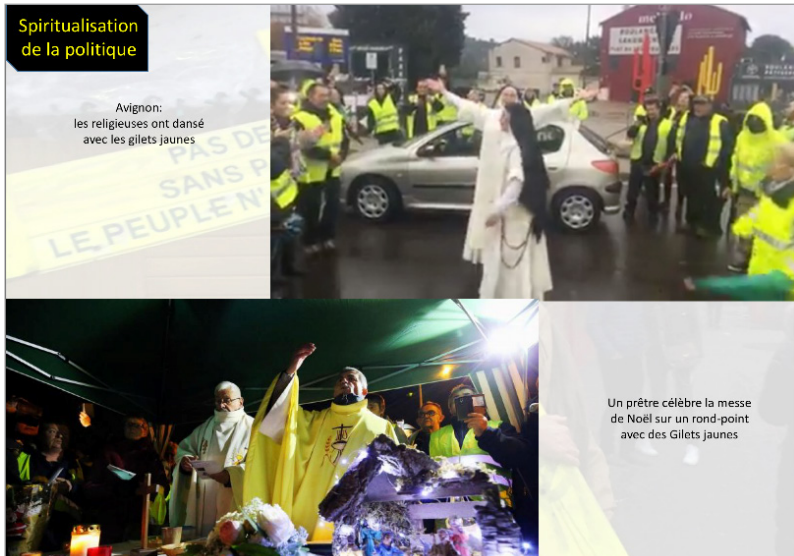
Enfin, toujours dans le registre du discours, la spiritualisation de la politique advient dans le mouvement des Gilets jaunes par la médiatisation des textes bibliques – « Dieu est amour » – ou par le détournement ad-hoc à des fins politiques de certains syntagmes avec forte connotation religieuse dans le contexte des fêtes chrétiennes de fin d'année, comme par exemple, le sens du prénom du Président de la République, Emmanuel – « Dieu avec nous » (photo 7).

Photo 4. Prêtres dans une manifestation des Gilets jaunes



Retrieved from : Pages Facebook Gilets Jaunes Paris & Gilets Jaunes Officiel & La Vie.

Photo 5. Manifestation des Gilets jaunes et présence religieuse à Avignon et durant les fêtes de Noël



Source: Page Facebook Union Gilets Jaunes 84.

Photo 6. Spiritualisation de la politique. Fin du mois et fin du monde



Retrieved from: Pages Facebook Gilets Jaunes Paris & Gilets Jaunes Officiel.

Photo 7. Spiritualisation de la politique par le discours



Retrieved from: Pages Facebook Gilets Jaunes Paris & Gilets Jaunes Officiel.

La mise dans le moule spirituel de la politique est ainsi structurée par les transformations que le méta processus de médiatisation a apportées à l'espace public français, un espace médiatisé qui accueille et entrecroise des thèmes, sujets, symboliques, discoursivités « spiritualisant » la politique, les mouvements de contestation et l'expression citoyenne.

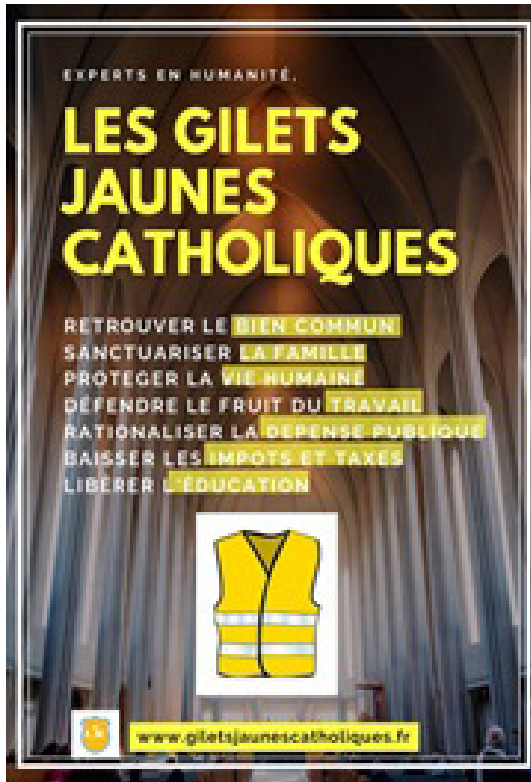
5. « Gilets jaunes » : médiatisation du mouvement

La médiatisation de la publicisation du religieux d'une part et de la spiritualisation du politique, d'autre part, dans le contexte du mouvement des gilets jaunes est manifeste par trois conséquences dont l'autoréflexivité offre des indices visuels médiatisés à leur tour. Ainsi, d'abord, la médiatisation du mouvement des gilets jaunes qui articule son ancrage politique avec l'attachement intime à une symbolique, à une tradition et à des valeurs spirituelles, a comme conséquence le fait que le religieux redevient public et donne dans une certaine mesure sens au concept de société post-séculière (Habermas, 2008). La présence protestante sur les Champs-Élysées et sur les réseaux sociaux pour soutenir le changement social ou la mobilisation de « Gilets jaunes catholiques » (photo 8) montrent, au-delà du message circonstanciel, une émancipation du religieux qui, sans abandonner l'espace intime comme lieu de repli, se donne une voix dans la sphère publique. Ensuite, la médiatisation du mouvement des gilets jaunes, puisqu'elle induit la publicisation du religieux, exerce une influence sensible sur le sens même de la revendication sociale. Plus exactement, l'émotion qui produit la fusion du rassemblement citoyen porte la marque d'un social redevenu spirituel, un social transmue en fin de logique discursive en rhétorique religieuse. Les revendications deviennent doléances, les doléances sont associées à l'espérance – une référence spirituelle – et non à l'espoir, le salut de la vie et le mépris des biens matériels sont mis en opposition et le porte croix transporte les valeurs d'une « Marianne » pénitente (photo 9).

Enfin, la médiatisation du mouvement des gilets jaunes indique une tendance qui mérite d'être observée dans l'espace public : le politique redevient désécularisé. En effet, lorsque le

grand débat politique mis en place le gouvernement afin de répondre aux attentes du mouvement des gilets jaunes, a lieu dans des églises, comme, par exemple, dans de la paroisse de Belloy-sur-Somme près d'Amiens, la désécularisation du politique est effective. (photos 10 et 11) La désécularisation du politique, dans ce contexte, apparaît encore plus si l'on considère la déclaration d'Emmanuel Macron lors du débat avec les intellectuels : « Je ne demanderais jamais à personne en République de croire modérément ou pas, cela ne m'intéresse pas. Je veux que chacun puisse croire librement, qu'il puisse *être* aussi absolu dans sa foi qu'il ait besoin de la vivre. Mais je leur demande de respecter absolument toutes les règles de la République » (<https://www.franceculture.fr/politique/la-laicite-selon-emmanuel-macron>).

Photo 8. « Gilets jaunes catholiques »



Retrieved from: Pages Facebook Évangéliques du Bas-Rhin et Gilets Jaunes Catholiques.

Photo 9. Mobilisation des religieux



Retrieved from: Pages Facebook Évangéliques du Bas-Rhin et Gilets Jaunes Catholiques.

Photo 10. Social et rhétorique religieuse



Retrieved from: Pages Facebook Gilets Jaunes Paris & Gilets Jaunes Officiel.

Photo 11. Politique désécularisé



Retrieved from: France3-regions.fr et franceculture.fr.

La médiatisation du mouvement exprime un effacement à l'œuvre des frontières entre la sphère de l'intime, la place de la religion dans le paradigme sociétal français, et la sphère publique, la place de la politique dans les représentations politiques, médiatiques, citoyennes françaises. La médiatisation ouvre une porte pour l'entrée de la demande de spirituel, des narrations qui font appel à des transcendances plus ou moins liées aux traditions religieuses institutionnalisées, plus ou moins épurées des traits et caractéristiques classiques du religieux, par le biais d'un vocabulaire et des éléments de langage de l'ordre du sacré.

6. Conclusions

Cette tentative de répondre à notre question de départ – comment et pourquoi la médiatisation du mouvement des « Gilets jaunes » associent les références politiques et les références religieuses dans un espace public qui a toujours décrié l'amalgame entre religion et politique ? – nous amène à l'observation conclusive que le sens de la médiatisation du mouvement des « Gilets jaunes », en considérant son ancrage politique et religieux, est celui de pont, de lieux de passage entre deux visions du monde, entre matérialisme et idéalisme. Dans la médiatisation du mou-

vement des Gilets jaunes, la publicisation de la religion est en fait la publicisation de la souffrance humaine et sociale. La religion médiatisée ici est « le soupir de la créature opprimée, l'âme d'un monde sans cœur, comme elle est l'esprit des conditions sociales d'où l'esprit est exclu » (cf. Karl Marx, 1982, p. 381-382). Dans la même médiatisation, la spiritualisation de la politique correspond à la spiritualisation de la puissance et de la violence. La médiatisation de la politique dans le cas des Gilets jaunes est celle d'un monde que la religion dans l'absolu rejette : « Les premiers chrétiens savaient (...) que le monde était régi par des démons et que l'individu qui se compromettait avec la politique, c'est-à-dire avec les moyens de la puissance et de la violence, concluait un pacte avec des puissances diaboliques » (Weber, 1959, p. 191).

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Surveillance of the watchmen: analytics of mediatization and newsworthiness

*Ada C. Machado da Silveira*¹

Abstract: The text is dedicated to addressing the perspective on mediatization of the professional journalist-news universe, circumscribed by the notion of newsworthiness. The proposition of an analysis of mediatization and newsworthiness in face of the communicational questioning of journalistic mediation allows us to study the alleged centrality of the media in the communication process. The argument focuses on the effort of evaluating news activity in a specific scenario. It deals with the disempowerment of institutional public security agents, who responded by collaborating to strengthen the political-police-military agenda in the coverage of the mainstream media and digital social media. From the point of view of the increase of news content the process emphasizes the military intervention that took place in the city of Rio de Janeiro in 2018 and, finally, the return of the military to the government of the Brazilian state in 2019, seen as the visible face of the institutional crisis of the surveillance regime.

Keywords: Mediatization. Newsworthiness. Journalism. Media. Communication. Public Security.

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1. Introduction

The text is dedicated to addressing the perspective of the mediatization of the professional journalistic-news universe, circumscribed by the notion of newsworthiness. The proposition of analytics of mediatization and news in face of the communication issue of journalistic mediation allows us to study the alleged centrality of the media in the communication processes². It is a process that would catalyze changes assumed both in the media environment and in communication in general, in addition to interfering in culture and society (HEPP, 2014, p. 45).

Addressing the phenomenon of the polarization of Brazilian society calls for attention to extremely critical aspects of social division, for which the media activity competition is understood as centralizing the diverse, instituted, and emerging agents.

By deepening the study of the disempowerment of institutional public security agents in the crisis unleashed in the city of Rio de Janeiro at the beginning of 2018, I understand that there has been a strengthening of a political-police-military agenda for the coverage of the reference media and digital social media as a reaction articulated by such agents³. I also understand that the task force organized to operate military intervention and carry out civilian control of the city of Rio de Janeiro in early 2018 sought to count, in several ways, precisely with the power of proliferation of a culture of surveillance to carry out

2 The text integrates activities of the joint research project entitled “Mediatization: empirical, epistemological, and methodological inferences of media research in Brazil and Sweden”, approved in Edital no. 19/2019 CAPES/STINT Program, coordinated by UNISINOS and with the participation of UFSM. Its objective is to develop methodological and epistemological approaches for the analysis of social media processes. The perspectives developed in Sweden were present at the II International Seminar on Mediatization and Social Processes, also held by UNISINOS with the participation of UFSM, and will be at the fourth Seminar (in 2020). The interlocution, in particular the perspective of Göran Bolin, in the relations he develops between the mutations in the social uses of the media, narratives, and mediatization, provided the opportunity for the development of the cooperation project.

3 The city of Rio de Janeiro has already been the target of localized action by the National Force in 2007, a time when there was coverage of the return of military presence in Rio’s favelas, images of broad symbolic impact (SILVEIRA, 2008).

the purposes of the said intervention in favor of public security from the increase of media activity⁴.

The text is organized into three sections. In the first, I address the mediatization scenario and the presence of newsworthiness. In the second section, I address the communication crisis of journalistic mediation. In the third section, the previous questions point to the journalistic theme of military intervention in Rio de Janeiro as a research proposal in mediatization and journalism.

2. Mediatization and newsworthiness

The space of newsworthiness in the contemporary world observes different approaches. In the perspective of Jaap van Ginneken (1998, p. 15-6), "We primarily experience the world through the lenses of science, of education, of the media [and] this world view is constantly nourished by the media." This perspective had already been evaluated by Niklas Luhmann (2000, p. 1): "Whatever we know about our society, or indeed about the world in which we live, we know through the mass media." Thus, a perspective is articulated that observes the connection between journalistic activity and social identity. This connection makes it possible to inquire about the legitimacy of the information disseminated by the journalistic activity, which, with mediatization, ceases to be situated in an understanding that centralizes the news process in the journalistic vehicle to place it as a product in dispute for the social recognition of a universe permanently updated by other media products (apparently non-journalistic) and processes that compete with it.

The approach constructed in terms of mediatization is also related to the perspective of Stig Hjarvard (2012), an approach that emerged as a theoretical framework for reflecting on the media in its relations with society and culture. Theorizing from its location in the Nordic countries, the author points out that, by integrating itself into the routines of institutions and social life, the media is committed to the broad domain of

4 Actions defined by the Department of the National Public Security Force or National Public Security Force (FNPS).

social interactions: “By the mediatization of culture and society we understand the process whereby culture and society to an increasing degree become dependent on the media and its logic” (HJARVARD, 2012, p. 64).

David Deacon and James Stanyer (2014, p. 1-2) point out the current understanding of mediatization as an influential concept in media and communication studies, contradicting a previous use linked to imperialism. The authors understand the widespread use of the notion of mediatization as directed to the study of “how causal processes are thought about, how historical change is understood, and how concepts are designed.”⁵

This original usage described processes of disempowerment, whereas the more recent invocation describes the accrual of power created by the increased pervasiveness and autonomy of media institutions, values and technologies. In essence, these factors no longer mediate power, they constitute it, and it is this proposition that is used to justify the need for this new nominalization to replace the old descriptive workhorse of ‘mediation’. (DEACON; STANYER, 2014, p. 2)

In response to Deacon and Stanyer, researchers Hepp, Hjarvard, and Lundby (2015) ponder what they see as confusion between what can be termed (in a free translation) as media-centered approaches, a holistic understanding of social forces, and others called media-centric, from a unilateral perspective⁶. They argue that the distinction does not capture how mediati-

5 Deacon and Stanyer (2014, p. 1-2) point to applications in different processes, such as politics, war, religion, medicine, science, music, identity construction, health, childhood, theater, tourism, memory, climate change, formulation of politics, performance, consumption, madness, death, intimate relationships, geography, and human education. They do not, however, point to applications in the study of the media itself in its news activity.

6 “Following Livingstone (2010), we find it important to distinguish between being ‘media-centric’ and ‘media-centered’. Being ‘media-centric’ is a one-sided approach to understanding the interplay between media, communications, culture, and society, whereas being ‘media-centered’ involves a holistic understanding of the various intersecting social forces at work at the same time as we allow ourselves to have a particular perspective and emphasis on the role of the media in these processes” (HEPP; HJARVARD; LUNDBY, 2015, p. 316).

zation research deals with the complex relationship between changes in the media and communication and changes in various fields of culture and society. Their proposition is that mediatization as an emerging concept can be conceived as belonging to a paradigmatic change in media and communication research.

Mediatization puts in check the double condition pointed out by Hjarvard (2012, p. 68): “[...] it intervenes in human interaction in many different contexts, while it also institutionalizes the media as an autonomous entity with its own logic.” In the Brazilian case, it is possible to sustain that the semi-autonomy intended by the community of journalism researchers needs to face what I call the communicational crisis of journalistic mediation. Thus, when Swedish and Scandinavian researchers refer to the media, they seek to focus journalistic activity within media processes. When I point out the crisis of journalistic mediation, I try to point out the passage from a “media-centric” perspective (endowed with groups or parts around the same center) to the emergence of a “media-centered” conception (HEPPP; HJARVARD; LUNDBY, 2015). Obviously, these notes are typical of a pre-diffusion period of the leak phenomena: WikiLeaks and, especially, *The Intercept Brazil*.

Hjarvard’s (2012) mention of the independent condition cultivated by the media in a certain historical period and contexts requires consideration. In Brazil, the prevalence of media oligopolies has defined the structuring of activity in multimedia groups since the emergence of companies and which, with digital convergence, had their action intensified by the editorial bias specific to each group, bringing together the previous editorial action of newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV stations. Therefore, it was not the digital convergence that brought challenges to the news activity. In the Brazilian case, it was before the proliferation of digital social networks and new business models (if they can be called memes and fake news producers) that deepened the questioning of journalistic mediation in audiences tired of hierarchical positions of political life and, especially, social, and religious, in a diverse and fragmented Brazil.

Thus, I want to point out that the news built by the media oligopolies, together with their hierarchical action on regional groups and local irradiation companies, is especially con-

cerned with registering selected events in terms of violence and fear of life in the city (VAZ et al., 2005; VAZ; CARDOSO; FELIX, 2012), in the countryside, and at the borders (SILVEIRA; GUIMARÃES, 2016). It is worth noting the colonial perspective that built an imaginary in which the coastal coast is idyllic for the exploitation of foreigners, given that it is difficult for beaches and ports to be covered as a news agenda. Even with the present environmental disasters, responsible for contamination by mineral waste and oil, the news coverage has not been able to reverse this silencing.

On the other hand, Brazilian researchers engaged in the debate on Communication Theory understand that the emergence of the shared communication scenario supposes overcoming the informational paradigm in favor of the interactional paradigm (FRANCE, 2003). Network communication, when establishing a new paradigm, requires stripping the modernization of linear communication practices. In this context, it is understood that the notion of shielding takes on densely ideological meanings when promoting the news of events that bring together a great capacity for synthesis. I understand that news would act, thus, seeking to summarize the spirit of a moment, in what Rodrigo Alsina (2009) pointed out as a fusion of the universal and the particular in journalism, transforming the event into a symbol.

The clash of emerging or instigated communicational forces is confronted with symbolic materiality impregnated with the normalizing order of the hegemonic media project, centered on professional media. It is a scenario that presents analysis challenges. One of them is pointed out in face of the insufficiency of definitions about newsworthiness criteria (FRANCISCATO, 2014; SILVA, 2005), given the emphasis on the news-values approach taken as structuring in the debate. According to Traquina, “news values that determine whether an event or subject, is likely to become news, that is, to be judged as worthy of being made into news” (TRAQUINA, 2000, p. 63)⁷.

7 Using Wolf, he reiterates the primacy of the notion of news values so dear to the American academic environment: “Defined newsworthiness as the set of elements through which the news agency controls and manages the quantity and type of events, from which news must be selected, we can define news values as a component of newsworthiness” (WOLF, 2001, p. 195).

To face a research program established around journalistic mediation as an organized activity and subject to specific rules allows for a very recent way of entering media studies. The journalistic activity recognizes a crisis scenario regarding its canonical values, which, besides, allows the questioning of communication competence and legitimacy. The crisis scenario is defined, especially, by the mobilization of journalistic vehicles when affected by the irradiation of social media, which promotes collaborative and nonhierarchical practices (DEUZE; WITSCHGE, 2013). They are, therefore, processes arising from the frank adherence of journalistic mediation, conceived as a self-regulating system, to mediatization.

3. The communication crisis of journalistic mediation

The crisis can be taken from the dispersion of the journalistic power to report the reality in face of the emergence of social media. Proximities, localism, amateurism, non-professionalism came to be seen as attractions that discourage journalistic professionalism. Gradually, activities based on fragile foundations started to be incorporated in the news coverage, structuring a meta-coverage incorporating strictly regulated professional activities, supported by popular production content that legitimizes through the content found on the spot and offered spontaneously.

The transformations in the activity of production/circulation of news provide the opportunity to articulate the institutionalist tradition of mediatization (occupied by professional media) to another of a socially constructed character (occupied by social media) (HEPP, 2014). Observing Brazilian news consumption, the phenomenon of the emergence of a new social group has led to a shift in the visibility of a significant portion of the Brazilian population. The social identity of the inhabitants of peripheral spaces started to be exhibited not by their support networks, reciprocity, and solidarity, but by the consumption capacity of the “new middle class.” The presence of the periphery in weekly magazines was, therefore, a news innovation, as

they sought to express the incorporation of a social agenda that was causing new forms of coexistence in Brazil. Journalistic innovation indicated that the exhaustion of the order of news was being proven, its hidden and explicit logics. The activity of the reference media, with its hierarchical power in the news system, ends up directly affecting what journalism studies have consecrated as news values, news agenda, and productive routines.

Digital convergence and, in the Brazilian case, structured news in media oligopolies determine an impact on the maintenance of shared rules, norms, and practices based on structured professional practice in more than a century of news activity. Taking the organizational prism, which is defined as journalistic mediation, it is pertinent to study its permanent reconstruction (see, about this, PALLAS; FREDRIKSSON, 2013).

Seeking to apprehend the news phenomenon through decolonial ways, the notion of news is affirmed, resulting from the understanding of a news order that reproduces the perception of a given social order. That was how, at a certain moment, the changes of society in economic growth started to animate the news report of new social relations. The debate on news and social exclusion, with the relevant recovery of notions of class and representation, allowed to expose the emergence of new news perspectives. The phenomenon of updating news about the periphery by increasing its purchasing power provides subsidies for understanding a broader issue: the complexity that involves the social production of meaning in times of mediatized society that has consumption as one of its primordial defining principles.⁸

The appearance of social networks poses a profound questioning on journalistic work. Many collectives, as militant groups in social movements are called, have vetoed collaboration with professional journalistic activity. However, external threats to journalism date back a long time. The emergence of the shared communication scenario supposes the recognition of overcoming the informational paradigm in favor of the interac-

8 The research group "Communication, identity, and frontiers" (CIFront-CNPq) has developed this perspective, and has published a set of works on it (HARTMANN; SILVEIRA, 2018; SILVEIRA; GUIMARÃES, 2016; SILVEIRA; GUIMARÃES; SCHWARTZ, 2017).

tional paradigm. When studying the origins of journalistic activity, literary journalism and its deontology impregnated with the values of modernity are identified. In opposition to it, it stands out business journalism imbued with the values of an international market for goods and services, globalization. In the wake of this, collaborative journalism emerges, promoting new bases for journalistic credibility. If, on the part of society, the communicational questioning of journalistic mediation is observed, on the part of the corporation the opposite is observed, that is, the exhaustion of the communicational approach by journalism accustomed to the centrality of the professional environment in the communicative chain.

The media was seen as an independent institution, and this value was deeply dear to journalism, its source of social legitimacy. With mediatization, however, institutions and modes of interaction change when perceiving the growing influence of the media (HJARVARD, 2012, p. 65). Journalism cannot be conceived outside of this scope, even though the Brazilian journalism research community has deepened a perspective that makes it emancipated from broader communication processes. It is a position that opposes the precepts of other research communities, such as Swedish researchers who point out that mediatization research proposes an open agenda, in which transdisciplinary and transparadigmatic tasks are outlined. They point to the urgency of studying aspects of historicity, specificity, and measurability as a research agenda (EKSTROM et al., 2016).

In the wake of the previous considerations, I register introductory notes on the development of a research agenda in mediatization and journalism, considering, at first, aspects of the historicity of the processes.

4. Research on mediatization and journalism

Adopting the perspective outlined by Hepp, Hjarvard, and Lundby (2015), and taking the purpose of studying how “historical changes are understood”, the present text seeks to highlight some aspects that mark the transformation that Brazilian journalism has undergone in the last 25 years of stabili-

zation (1994-2019) based on the performance and impact of the reference media. From this point of view, I understand that the approach to mediatization is valid for the study of the media itself, as a professional activity, and that, in this sense, encompasses aspects of what I call the impact of mediatization on newsworthiness.

The historical change that the media coverage of news in Brazil brings is profound and wide-ranging. Never before there has there been such an immediate and rapid spread of events in a polarized perspective⁹.

The period immediately before this phenomenon requires considering the emergence of a new social group that has turned the issue of visibility for a significant portion of the Brazilian population.

At a specific moment, defined by the governmental agenda implemented by the Workers' Party, the changes of society in economic growth started to animate the news report of new social relations.

Analyses carried out in the period between 1994 to 2019, therefore, 25 years old, demonstrate that the periphery, on the one hand, is progressively gaining prominence as deserving of news content and non-stigmatizing treatments, and, on the other hand, in the situation in which it emerges, there is evidence of the political-police-military bias in dealing with news about social events established with the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff.

In terms of newsworthiness, the relationship between news practices and the periphery has aspects that profoundly demarcate an authoritarian and elitist perception of social life by the media. I analyze aspects of the coverage of public security policy, taken as an example of the class perspective that observes the reference media, guiding oligopoly practices.

It is feasible to consider the 1994-2019 period as a clear articulation of police and military forces to contain activi-

9 Searching for antecedents on the theme, the work of Renée A. Dreifuss (2015) records an empirical study that documented in details the mobilizations that gave rise to military intervention in 1964, for the conquest of the Brazilian State and that remained in power for 20 years, in which activities currently known as media have had a spectacular role.

ties considered threatening to social peace. Briefly, I would like to highlight both interventions authorized for the National Force to be summoned to control activities, that of 2007 and that of 2018, alongside actions in other States of the Federation. Those were moments of expansion of mediatization in the production of news in which the National Force was observed carrying out interventions in the city of Rio de Janeiro, and consecrating a perspective at the same time political, police, and military to deal with events.

The question that remains is whether the intensification of the political-police-military agenda in the coverage of reference media and digital social media was guided by what Göran Bolin and Anne Jersley (2018) highlighted from Andrejevic when he pointed out the “surveillance acclimatization”. His call for the dossier on “surveillance through media, by media, in media” pointed to different conditions. The logic supported there allows us to interpret that, in the specific case of the Brazilian media, it operates to strengthen itself as a beloved agent of the surveillance regime¹⁰.

Returning to the concerns about the actions of imperialism, evoked by Deacon and Stanyer (2014), and highlighted at the beginning of this text, David Spurr (2013) dedicated himself to recognizing the presence of colonial discourse in journalism, with particular attention to surveillance processes. He highlights the post-colonial by two conditions, the second being an intellectual project, and a cross-cultural condition that, together with specific possibilities, involves a “crisis of identity and representation” (SPURR, 2013, p. 25). I understand that the consequences of the mentioned crisis are just beginning to be perceived, and its consequences may explain the popularity of content from a non-professional origin, especially fake news.

It is in such an unstable context that the renewability of news is established, and it allows us to perceive the transition in news activity from an institutionalist tradition to another, of

10 Through the reading of Michel Foucault (2008), we began to pay attention to the problematic triad that involves security, territory, and population, aspects present in a significant part of our investigations, notably those made on the panoptic pretensions analyzed in Brazilian weekly magazines (DALMOLIN; SILVEIRA, 2016; SILVEIRA; GUIMARÃES; DALMOLIN, 2013).

a socially constructed character. Deeply shaken by the participatory revolution implemented by digital social media, which overturned the legitimacy of established news production canons, organizations reiterated the skills of professional journalism in face of improvised fake news agencies.

Seeking to historicize the process, I consider that it is possible to conceive that the institutionalist perspective of mediatization in the news agenda is clearly perceptible until the increase in consumption power in Brazil. However, this moment saw the progressive autonomy of news content production activities by non-professional media agents who began to compete with professionals in the dispute for consumers. The new agents, active both in the production and in the proliferation of news content, can be understood as protagonists of the social construction in mediatization. Thus, in Brazil, the phenomenon of the proliferation of ICTs and their skills, which had consequences in other parts of the world in terms of democratizing access to news content, has gained its contours which I seek to summarize in this text.

The clash between the centrifugal force of the proximity media, especially represented by social media (the private circulation of WhatsApp groups, especially), questioning the centripetal presence of the national reference media, is constituted. The reference media, threatened in its autonomy and pervasiveness by the proliferation of social media, considered that the phenomenon of false news would be the marker of such a process.

The interweaving that marks the experiences of what we call “peripheral journalism” establishes a practice installed in a being between ambivalence and liminality. Its ambivalence is explained when trying to construct discursively what is socially recognized in a previous way as a representation of identity. The liminality of the so-called peripheral journalism, on the other hand, addresses the passage made in the face of the scarcity of resources that such proposals have. A contract for the construction of an inter-place carried out respecting canons consecrated by the journalistic activity instituted by the productive routines, establishing a transitory zone that seeks to articulate the margins that border the Brazilian urban society.

Thus, we asked to what extent it is possible within the

structures linked to the reference media to incorporate the peripheral. I understand that its activity operates superficially and is only supported by figures of media prestige and popular appeal by well-known personalities. Thus, I seek to contrast the journalistic coverage of national and metropolitan peripheries carried out by the national media with the local media.

In the course of our investigations, we observed how this memory marks, in the same communicative style, the reporters from the periphery and the images transmitted from the Other reported when they point to the sharing experiences, and the representation of the mediated periphery, in a style based on belonging to the imaginary of the territory and the mediatized periphery, which, despite its particularities, is brought together as if it were one.

5. Final considerations: around the political-police-military agenda

When reflecting and arguing about the communicational implications resulting from the strain of journalistic mediation in face of mediatization, the constraints aimed at the development of newsworthiness in the context of the mediatized society are addressed. Studying the theoretical arguments pertinent to the conception of journalism as an autonomous discipline vis-à-vis the field of communication in times of mediatized society rises as a challenge. In parallel, studying the constraints associated with the development of newsworthiness due to the colonial discourse supposes to approach the journalistic activity through an innovative approach. And evaluating aspects related to power relations, and the ascendancy of the reference media in proximity communication involves a complementary dimension to the theme. It is a research program that requires knowing the arguments relevant to the media condition of journalistic activity and the relevance of its framing in the disciplinary field of communication in Brazil.

The proposition of analytics of mediatization is defined succinctly in three aspects understood as renewers of newsworthiness: (a) the updating narratives of the new middle class; (b)

the activity of the printed media when recognizing the visibility of the periphery; and (c) journalism as a disciplinarian in dealing with social relations.

From an empirical perspective, many issues deserve attention, given the media's centrality evoked in such processes. The task force organized to carry out military intervention and carry out civilian control of the city of Rio de Janeiro in 2018 sought to count, in several ways, precisely with the power of proliferation of a culture of surveillance to carry out the purposes of the said intervention in favor of public security. The disempowerment of institutional public security agents in a crisis unleashed locally strengthened the political-police-military agenda in news coverage, a purpose that had been fueled for a long time, as noted in the 25 years of weekly magazines studied. Alongside this process, a crisis in journalistic mediation shifted it to a satellite condition between different communication processes. The intended search for a collaborative relationship between the reference media and the digital social media sought to reverse the proliferation of the surveillance culture in political gain in a wide proliferation in face of the violence and fear disseminated in the news. There, we have a set of forces that ultimately proved to favor the return of the military to the presidency of the Republic of Brazil in 2019.

Understanding that, in the historical process of the last 25 years, the leap in the consumption of news from professional activity (institutional approach to mediatization) has been allowed to the strong performance in digital social media (socio-constructivist approach to mediatization), the polarization of Brazilian society for a conservative and authoritarian impact is one of the perceptible consequences. The analytics of mediatization and the news outlined here may allow us to understand that the communicational questioning of journalistic mediation brings together the political disempowerment of institutional public security agents.

An analysis that focuses on the political disempowerment of institutional public security agents, taken as strong collaborators in strengthening the political-police-military agenda in the coverage of reference media and digital social media, requires specificities particular to the Brazilian communicational

and journalistic context. From the point of view of the contents, the event emphasizes the military intervention that took place in 2018.

In both situations, the militarized presence on the streets was evoked by the authorities, as being capable of producing a “sense of security for the population” with the expected media collaboration. It was an ostensive practice of exposing professional security guards, trained to fight enemies. In this regard, many summoned that the surveillance of compatriots did not correspond to the constitutional purpose of the Armed Forces. Otherwise, the return of military personnel to state control can be understood as the visible face of the institutional crisis of the surveillance regime. From the point of view of the processes, the same event determines to ask: what has been gained from the propaganda of military activity in the metropolis of Rio Janeiro, a world-symbol of the Brazilian nationality? Arguments are still being sought for the issue, and the event of the intervention raises strong questions about its causal links.

The World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016 took place in an atmosphere of absolute security, an aspect endorsed by the international media coverage. What happened in the course of a year? What serious events called for the return of the National Force to the city for a long and wide action of eleven months? Such questions call for clarifications that, however, were not provided by the responsible authorities, with the collusion of democratic institutions with a legitimate mandate at the polls.

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Image in circulation: shattering of the gaze and memory

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Abstract: This work adopts as its starting point the assumption that media images carry previous images, fruit of discourses and other temporalities, but that become present as shadows in our current productions. Based on this consideration, this article proposes to analyze two dynamics of conflict, understood here as dynamics of mediatization, which are quite different in terms of process and logics, but which involve common elements: a) media images and imaginary; b) broad circulation; c) social actors and media institutions and, finally, d) the logics of image management in terms of control/power. Our gaze falls, precisely, on the agency logics of image in terms of power, considering that our empirical object is constituted by two events separated in time and space, but united by the presence of the child as a victim, by forms of intolerance and aspects of incivility evidenced in interactive games, including the right to visibility. As an image that shatters the eye, we summon the photograph of Aylan Kurdi. In analogy, we deal with the image of “memory shattering”, bringing to the scene the photograph of the boy Marcos Vinicius, a student murdered at favela da Maré in Rio de Janeiro, in 2018. Among the loneliness of the dying (ELIAS, 2001), the life that does not deserve to live (AGAMBEN, 2010), and the “ungrievable life” (BUTLER, 2017), we propose to discuss the image in circulation and its impact on memory based on the theme of power and death, from the perspective of the condition of visibility, understanding that, given the mediatization of conflicts

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(HJARVARD, MORTENSEN, 2015), new dynamics are founded and updated, including those related to human storytelling.

Keywords: Mediatization. Image. Circulation.

1. The “I and the others” is a way of devising the world

When talking about image, we talk about something that is initially fugacious - conceptually, materially. The image appears to us as the representation of something, materialization of some idea, but, more than that, it is a constituent of man from the moment his creative capacity is manifested through images. Thoughts occur through images. Kamper (2016) highlights that there is no other way of thinking than via images and, therefore, the attempt to deny them is always unable to achieve its feat. The more one wants the end of images, the more they are mentally produced. However, it is not only this mental image that interests us; our gaze turns to media images. These specific images, so unique, that also supply our iconographic repertoire every day, whether on the covers of newspapers, printed in magazines, or even on our bright and colorful screens of games and cell phones.

We are talking about images that form a set that is a media imaginary. This imaginary is not only built of photographs, videos, and memes, but also of comments, headlines that show positions, expressions that operate meanings and, together, compose images. But they are not simple drawings, figures, engravings; they are images that carry, in them, positions, polarizations, layers of light, and shadows that exceed the time of events. In this case, take the idea of the expression “Muslim” as an example. Assuredly, an image of what a Muslim² is has come to mind, whether by the 6 pm soap opera³, or by the news cover-

2 When researching Islamic literature, the concept of Muslim also appears in dispute for meanings. For Al-Khazraji (2014), the “Muslim is one who, freely and spontaneously, embraces Islam and submits to God, adopting Islam as his faith and practice. Muslim is not a people or race. One should not confuse Arab (the people) with Muslim”.

3 In 2019, TV Globo (Brazil) broadcasted a soap opera called “Órfãos da Terra” (Earth Orphans), in which the plot tackled the life of Syrian refugees in Brazil. (Retrieved from: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%93rf%C3%A3os_da_Terra. Access on February 04, 2021.

age involving the migratory crises, or even by the historical visions that bring us an angle regarding wars, territorial disputes, and terrorist attacks that make religions, movements, and races synonymous. Western views of the expression “Muslim” put it in a type of “form, including in the visual construction of photographs when, for example, we adopt the left-right axis. Luciano Guimarães (2006) already tackled this visual journalistic strategy as a way of framing the comprehension (reading) of the conflicts that involve the Arabian people.

Thus, when we think of media imaginary, we are thinking of a set of images that circulate and, therefore, trigger multiple meanings around determined issues, even promoting constant points of contact with this deeper imaginary, which is linked to symbolic images, to our imaginative ability. It is because the expansion of the supply of media images complexes the creation of interior images from the moment when the previous become barriers or modeling images (ROSA, 2012). Let us return to the expression “Muslim”: although our experience or knowledge of the culture of Muslim people is brief, the risk to the stereotype is broad, as there is a range of images that reinforce this idea, even when it should be positive. In the case of the children’s football team that was trapped in a cave in Thailand in 2018, the mention that the only boy who could speak English to communicate with the rescue divers was a Syrian refugee, a Muslim boy, has put him in a place of distinction in relation to the others.

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It is precisely the point: the distinction between “*the I and the others*.” Mbembe (2018) understands otherness not as equality, nor the simple recognition of difference, but the recognition of the other as *another*, in which the symbolic of races, colors, and powers are not “*the*” dominant symbolic. Butler (2017, p. 19), when tackling recognition, highlights that the emphasis is not on the act of recognizing each other, but on the “*condition of being recognized*.” This condition, therefore, in her view, precedes recognition, that is, when we go into this issue, questions about the set of rules that allow certain people to be “recognized” and others not, lead us to realize that there are ways of seeing and operations to make invisible. Such operations are increasingly mediatized. That is, they do not come only from traditional media strategies, but they are updated and based on the fabric of society due to their specific logics and operations. One of them concern storytelling.

Mbembe (2018, p. 60), an author who does not approach mediatization, but the conflict of races, refers to the idea of black people as a storytelling problem. That is, the black reason is made up of a set of voices, statements, and mistook statements, “whose object is things or people ‘of African origin’.” It is affirmed as their name and their truth (their attributes and qualities, their destiny and its significance as an empirical portion of the world).” This set of statements constitutes an activity of imagination, thus, a way of narrating the world and of, in that, producing images about it. For Mbembe (2018, p. 60), “‘Black reason’ names not only a collection of discourses but also practices - the daily work that consisted in inventing, telling, repeating, and creating variations on the formulas, texts, and rituals whose goal was to produce the Black Man as a racial subject.” In this sense, the author considers that the fable carries negations and profound marks of power because if the world is what we see, what is excluded ceases to exist as a being.

The approach, while it may sound disconnected from the idea of mediatization, is not. The operations to see and make

visible, today, pass through, at least, two significant instances, different from the idea of the racial subject of the slave trade, brought by Mbembe, but which also result in restrictive media imaginary and loss of subject's image rights. Among these instances, we can say that the storytelling is not centralized; this implies diverse constructions. We could assume, then, that access to the narration space of the world, the creation of potential images, eliminates the "effect of black reason". However, on the contrary, we see that the diversity of offerings in production does not mean the plurality of meaning offer in circulation. Fausto Neto (2013) always warns that the gaps in the production of meaning remain because they are not solved by access to the discursive space nor technology. The second instance, which relates to storytelling the world, is linked to what ceases to exist. For Mbembe, if there is a historical disappearance that is not recoverable because much is on the subject's orality that was erased as such, in the society in mediatization, the subjects ascend to the space of media, assuming the condition of existence, but this becomes a condition limited by other filters and flows that are also independent of the subject's will. It can be erased by other - more pertinent - images, it can simply be involved in commercial logics of apparatus, or completely lose the right over its image, since and when it enters the circulation (ROSA, 2016a), no longer belonging to the subject, but to the flow. This is the situation that we will see in our case of mediatized research.

2. The case of mediatized research: approaching the unthinkable to see on the threshold

In this work, we developed a case of mediatized research. That is, we have chosen to activate the theoretical perspective from the mobilization of empiricism, therefore, from the configuration of case. It has been an identity trait of the researchers who integrate the Research Line Mediatization and Social Processes at UNISINOS, both in training and ongoing research, the case of this text that articulates with post-doctoral internship work developed at Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) under the supervision of Prof. Fernando Resende. Having

made this caveat, we consider here as a case, not a journalistic or a “ready” case (BECKER, 1999), given in advance, but, on the contrary, our case is configured from its central character, which is a mediatized case. As it is not a given case, it is the result of the construction of the researcher; this implies saying that it takes into account our artisanal making and approaches that, at first sight, do not seem possible even in terms of time and space since we deal with two events that are separated geographically and thematically. We are speaking of Aylan Kurdi’s death - a Syrian boy found dead on a beach in Bodrum, Turkey, in 2015. On the other hand, about the death of the boy Marcos Vinicius, a *ca-rioca*⁴ student murdered at *favela da Maré*⁵, in 2018.

Although they are two different facts in terms of contextual issues, the cut that we bring to this article, given the theme of intolerance and incivility, turns to the strain on the logics of image *agencement* in terms of power. Thus, our empirical object, therefore, our case, consists of two separate events (in time and space), but united by the presence of the child as a victim, by forms of intolerance as to power⁶, and aspects of incivility evidenced in the interactional games, including the right to visibility.

In this way, we adopted as a premise of our investigation that media images carry previous ones, a result of discourses and other temporalities, but that present themselves as shadows in our current productions, affecting the modes of recognition, especially their conditions. Based on this consideration, this text proposes to analyze two dynamics of conflict, understood here as dynamics of mediatization, which are quite different in terms of process and logics, but involving common elements: a) media and imaginary images; b) broad circulation; c) social actors and media institutions, and, finally, d) image *agencement* logics in terms of control/power. These two dynamics will be addressed from the relationship with empiricism.

4 A person from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

5 Favela da Maré is a shantytown in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

6 When we mention forms of intolerance regarding power, we refer to the idea of the south-global axis, an expression we will revisit in this text though not from an economic perspective.

3. The imaginary weaved by the social: children in conflict

Talking about Aylan Kurdi does not even seem necessary. The mere mention of the name of the Syrian boy found with his face turned to the clear sands of the Turkish sea (if he was found that way, given the countless images that discuss the possible adulteration of the body's "finding" place) already triggers our visual and affective memory. Produced by the lens of photographer Nulifer Demir, the image that, in a few seconds conquered Twitter trending topics, was the cover of, practically, all journalistic publications in the world, becoming a symbol of the Syrian tragedy⁷ from the moment it started to restrict access to other images or to link itself, as an emblem or decal, on other videos and photographs that refer to the situation of the immigration crisis, even when the veracity of the image is put to the test or questioned.

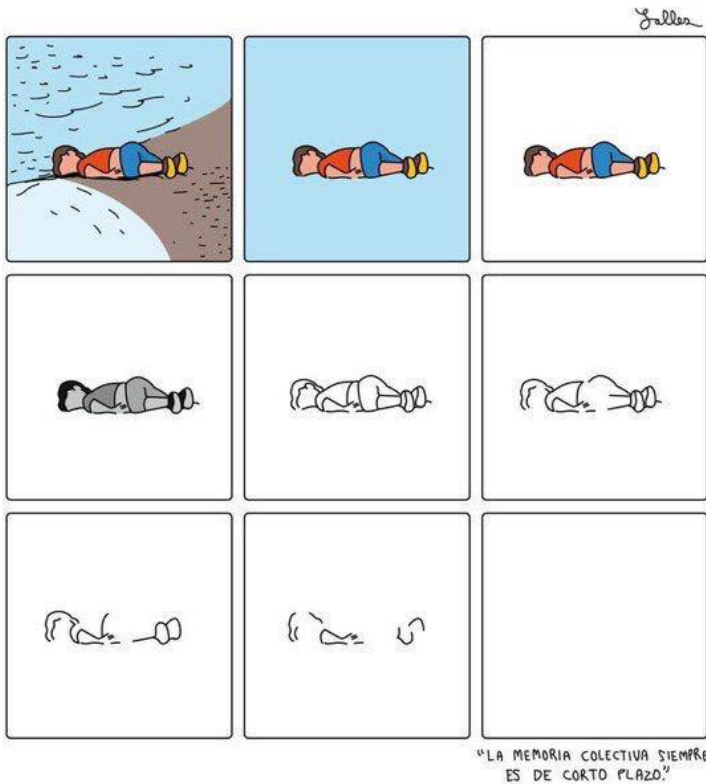
However, Kurdi conquered a unique space in the media imagination. His image is not just a photograph of a journalistic record of an event; indeed, journalism lives less and less on events records. Pepe Baeza (2004) already warned of this photojournalism crisis, in the sense that there is another type of visual journalism emerging. Without entering this clash, the boy's photograph shows a set of mediatization operations, orchestrated both by the media and social actors and institutions. It is interesting to investigate what types of operations come into play in this case, as some of them have different durations. We can consider that, at first, Aylan Kurdi's image was produced for circulation, which already demonstrates a logic that extrapolates the journalistic making of the report but is able to think of strategies to make such an image visible to the point of "*galvanizing the world*".⁸ In a second moment, the image caused social commotion and was replicated and appropriated by artists and illustrators, who reinserted the image in circulation, prolonging its visibility and, therefore, its posthumous life span.

7 The discussion on the symbolic or synthesis-image role of Aylan Kurdi's case may be seen in ROSA (2017).

8 The expression was used by the father of another boy found dead at the beach in Myanmar, referring to Aylan Kurdi's image as a symbol-image.

We observed that the commotion was amplified because it is not the immigration crisis, but a child, the faceless child, the child who carries all the other children - the past and the future ones. Kurdi is a portrait of childhood, of precarious life, but one worth seeing (BUTLER, 2017) because it is a body that recalls the importance of life. The boy is a little martyr, receives homage, continues to appear cyclically in Facebook posts attributed to an unknown person, including as a loan (without citing the source) of a post made on his memory by Noam Chomsky. In this post, Kurdi disappears. Strangely, he does not disappear from circulation.

Figure 01 - Post alluding to the disappearance of the debate about Kurdi



Retrieved from: Facebook.

Here, what we mean as operations is that, if, on the one hand, there are movements in journalism to produce the image aiming at circulation, there are also movements by social actors so that this image remains in circulation. Also, institutions like the UN itself, humanitarian forces, like White Helmets, make efforts so that Kurdi's image is always triggering flows, if not present, in shadows. It leads us to consider that how we storytell about Aylan Kurdi's death affects his permanence in circulation.

As we move on to our second observable, we have a slightly different situation. When mentioning the name Marcos Vinicius, perhaps the picture of the 14-year-old will not come to mind readily. The image was also widely reproduced and gained international repercussions; however, it disappeared over the days until its complete fading, which already gives us hints of other procedures in terms of circulation. Marcos Vinicius da Silva, 14, died shot on May 20, 2018, at Favela da Maré Complex, during a police operation. The student and a friend were heading towards Marcos Vinicius' house when the young man was reportedly shot by an armored vehicle. News coverage of the case took place as soon as the event was made public. Portals and news sites announced not only the fact that the student was shot, but particularly the protests derived from the police action located in an intervention process. However, in terms of headlines, we can take the example of the G1 portal as an example:

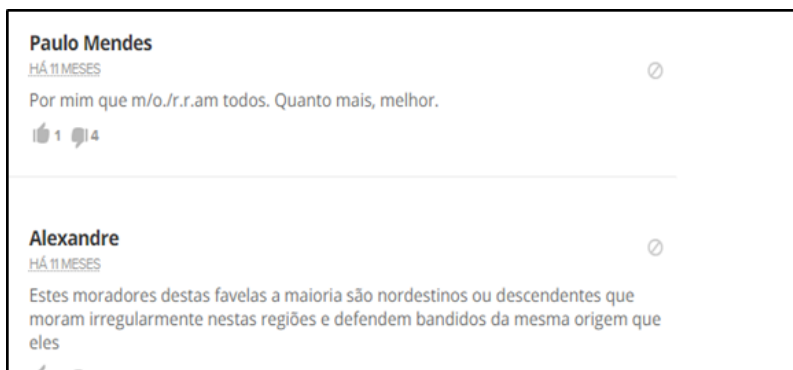
Figure 02 - G1's Headline⁹ Printscreen from 06/26/2018



Retrieved from: Portal G1.

As seen above, when the journalistic institution engages in news about the death of the student and protests in the community, the first fact, that is, his death becomes secondary to popular manifestations. It is due to two reasons: the first, because, by inserting the connective “e [and]” in the sentence, the headline reduces the emphasis of death, so much so that the comments of the social actors, as we will see below, ratify this position. Such comments also point out the lack of understanding of the notion of otherness as recognition. There is a stereotyped view, not of the youth and the favela people, but the need for recognition is evident: to recognize, it is necessary to know. And to a certain extent, journalism contributes to reinforcing a media imaginary that only intensifies the incivility already present.

Figure 03 - Reactions of social actors to the publication of G1



Retrieved from: Portal G1.

The other reason for the reduction of the initial fact is that the image of the dead boy was not broadcast. Although the picture of the shot boy had been available and had circulated moments after the event, it was banned, even removed from Facebook pages. Today, when searching for Marcos Vinicius' image, it is impossible to find his photograph at the site of the event, only archival images, made available by the family, in videos and reports, as can be seen below.

Figure 04 - Archive image, Marcos Vinicius at school¹⁰



Retrieved from: RJ1.

Figure 05: Marcos Vinicius and image already appropriate¹¹



Retrieved from: RJ1.

In both images above - which are excerpts from a report in the RJ 1 newscast of Rede Globo TV, but were also seen in Extra and O Globo newspapers - we can observe, in a trans-media way, that the photographs chosen to “represent” Marcos

10 “Dead student at Maré.”

11 The caption is the same as the previous image.

Vinicius in life bring two important impressions. The first is of the student, and in the second one, he already appears in the “frame” as a young “criminal”: cap turned back, shirtless, eyes squeezed. This image was used to create fake news, that is, to circulate constructions that strained Marcos Vinicius’ place as a youngster on his way to school and put him on the path of drug trafficking. Both images have been verified and proven to be montages.

Figure 06 - Montage associated with trafficking

Marcelo Manfio Retweeted

Paula Moreno @PMorenoB · Jun 23

Isso a Globo esconde !!! Est a ai o menor estudioso que foi morto na Mar e.

@FlavioXSid @limaynardes @AnaBiapax @niceferrante @mfmMimi @luiztenda @TonyIL_1960 @aruthcao @PauloFr61402360 @Rita_Guim @CambeiroMaria @LimaDoc @freitas_ivanize @Francoubiratan @Gus_Moreira @CarlitoMoraes

Translate Tweet



Bombeiro Rea a @4Reaca

Following

Replying to @carollinelima1 @g1

Ainda sobre o menor de 14 anos que foi baleado e morto ontem no Complexo da Mar e.

Infelizmente n os temos um jornalismo lixo e manipulador no Brasil!

Translate Tweet

2018/06/21 22:114 - Aluakooda ha 9 horas




3:26 PM - 21 Jun 2018

15 110 157

Retrieved from: Checamos – AFP.

It shows that, in this situation, there is an operation to produce strained images that try to question the place of the first one, which disappears from circulation. In the absence of an image of the fact, there is an attempt, on the part of the family, classmates, and non-media institutions, to activate mediatization logics to circulate a counter-image to face the images that journalism, critics, and social actors build on a discourse that

comes from another place, from the expression “a good bandit is a dead bandit,” which historically has been fixed in the collective and social imaginary.

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Figures 07 - Media coverage of the adolescent's funeral



Retrieved from: Domingos Peixoto/O Globo.

Figures 08 - Media coverage of the adolescent's funeral



Retrieved from: Mauro Pimentel (AFP) para *El País*.

In this sense, we are faced with a set of mobilized medi- atization operations and logics that interfere in the media imagi- nary and, consequently, in recognition. At first, the image of the injured boy was put into circulation but then removed, in a kind of prohibition. Some images were banned by Facebook itself under the claim that they were inappropriate. However, when the work of the journalistic institutions begun, death was viewed with discredit and distrust; after all, there was a confrontation between the power of police and the power of traffickers, with the community being held hostage by the discourses elaborated about themselves, on the violence suffered in the skin and symbolically on the storytelling of others about themselves. The commotion only occurs, in this case, in a second moment, when the mother enters the scene watching over the child's body. And although some vehicles have brought the image of the coffin, it is the non-body, the T-shirt, that gives it life. As an image, as materiality, Marcos Vinicius does not exist, he translates into a piece of cloth.

4. Between the splintering of the gaze and the splintering of memory

In Portuguese, we can produce a wordplay between the words *estilhaçar* and *estilhaçamento*, translated in this article as *splintering or shattering*. Here, we are interested in understanding how the image agency logics set from the activation of production and recognition operations. We are facing two situations that involve conflicts, and both are mediatized conflicts. If in the first case, we have the Syrian war and the migratory crisis derived from it; in the second one, we have the complexity of the civil war, the violence of armed conflicts between police and militias that have already resulted in significant numbers of victims.

Kurdi's image has the effect of splintering the gaze. The photograph, when it reaches our eyes, causes a rupture. It does not matter who the child was, nor his name, but his ability to represent every child (including the one we were) creates an effect. Although we do not want to see it, this image adheres to later ones. Besides, there is a central element: it reaches us contemplatively. Our gaze is on something that is there, far away; therefore, Aylan Kurdi's afterlife is sustained by an image that hits, touches, but that becomes autonomous because every time it reappears, it reignites not the first discussion, but the way we storytell about childhood. The body stretched out on the beach is the opposite of the ideal vision of childhood, but upon seeing it, we ratify the existence of this angel child, worthy of being seen, but for not being immortal (ELIAS, 2001), it is deprived not only of the body, but of the right to death and, consequently, of being. Although it is a widely recognized image, widely valued in circulation (ROSA, 2016b) for splintering the gaze, it is an image that empties the subject, which manifests the place of his non-power.

Marcos Vinicius' image disappeared from the flow, it was removed, leading to a double erasure. The deletion of the file indicates a "this was" Barthesian, and it is a deletion of the memory of the event. In this sense, it is the shattering of the memory, which is fragmented. To recompose Marcos Vinicius' story, his photograph

is not enough; it is necessary to narrate, to recover his data. The 14-year-old appears, his injured body replaced by a bloodstained shirt. The school uniform represents the body of a teenager who mixes with so many others who became statistics. However, when Marcos Vinicius is mentioned with the hashtag Present, like Mari-ele Franco, he stops being just a T-shirt and becomes a guy with a name, family, friends, integrates a symbolic network of quiet voices. However, he is a subject without a body, prevented from having his image in circulation and, nevertheless, is permeated by the dispute of meanings of doubt. His image is personalized and non-transferable, and there is no way to give him other contours and features. Although other young people from the favela see themselves represented in him, there is no way to produce the integration of the splinters; thus, the effect is momentary, it tends to have the durability of the news, and his remembrance turns into a milestone date, typical of journalistic work until another broad, and more relevant fact occupies the space.

The image of the young boy murdered in the favela is not contemplative; it is inclusive because it results from a process in which we are all part. Thus, there is no afterlife for Marcos Vinicius' image, but its complete erasure from memory, although a good part of his images is accessible with a click. There is no intention of storytelling about the favela because that would imply refounding an already created imaginary. The case exposed here shows its maintenance. When the image of the student is not recognized, therefore, it is less valued in circulation; we are faced with a tacit (symbolic) power that installs, determining those who are not "subject to mourning".

5. The dynamics of the mediatization of conflict: between the life that does not deserve to live and the life that does not deserve to be seen

This article tries to approach authors who, to some extent, bring the issues of power and death as central to understanding life. Norbert Elias, in *The loneliness of the dying* (2001), reflects on death in the West and how it is linked to the notion of image since we have an attitude towards death and an image of

death. The latter always is postponed; in the author's words, it is "repressed". Furthermore, Elias points out that the current society prefers to see the bodies than the dying. After all, they show the rawness of death itself, because they show life destituted of meaning. In another approach, Agamben (2010) deals with death and power by mentioning the notion of life that does not deserve to live. The author recovers the concept of "life without value" and that this decision to "judge" with value, or not, falls on legal and, more obviously, political aspects that indicate the powers at stake. Judith Butler (2017) discusses life as "not subject to grieving" and the precariousness of life, that is, the fact that man, constantly, is exposed to social variables. However, as there are still limitations on recognition conditions,

not everyone counts as a subject in contemporary life [...] what is at stake are communities that are not exactly recognized as such, subjects that are alive, but that are not yet considered "lives" (BUTLER, 2017, p. 54) .

In this scenario of disputes of power, the notion that we heavily assume on circulation emerges as a relation of attribution of value. When considering that the image in circulation is the result of an intense dispute for meanings, what gains visibility is the result of operations of power, exclusions, erasures, and, on the other hand, valuing. This valuing is not given by one or another agent; that is, it is not journalism that defines a framework alone, nor is it an institution, but in mediatization, this procedure occurs in interaction and multiple ways. It is not the photograph distributed by the news agency that generates a unison in the way of looking; it is not the Facebook rule to restrict the violence that erases the image of the crime scene; there is a set of elaborations and tactics that are developed in parallel because they have the same basic purpose: to narrate the world and man from the media imaginary.

But to what extent is this imaginary compromised? Thinking about the condition of visibility leads us to understand that the heart of the debate is not in the image itself, but in the mediatization of conflicts to which it reports (HJARVARD;

MORTENSEN, 2015. It is because mediatization sets in motion new dynamics that are founded and updated, including those related to human storytelling. In other words, our ways of narrating are no longer the same. Technologies and apparatuses cross and interfere in these processes, including the possibility of excluding a narrative made. On the other hand, there are more voices, more space for counter-discourses, subversions, and attempts.

Hjarvard and Mortensen (2015) argue that, nowadays, mediatized conflicts are no longer just mediated and involve dynamics generally of three orders: amplification, framing and performance agency, and co-structuring. These dynamics are at the core of mediatized conflicts, but currently, they are manifested in combined and complex ways to varying degrees. One of these complexifications, for example, is the infiltration of the media within conflicts, as occurred in Gaza or new forms of embedding, a practice already adopted in the Gulf War, for example. The authors also indicate the presence of social actors at the scene as new dynamics or updates, producing narratives about conflicts, going beyond what was known as a “police/Army-media” interaction model.

In other words, both in wars, like in Syria, or against trafficking, at Complexo da Maré, the dynamics of mediatization are such that they do not circumscribe circulation to the territorial space of what is apparently in dispute, including because the dispute is rarely about the physical good, but the immaterial, since it is about power. Thus, if conflicts leak, they concern much more with the imaginary than the materialized. In summary, in the conflicts of polarization and incivility that we investigated, their dynamics is constituted by operations of making visible/erasing; valuing/excluding, putting into circulation/repeating; fixing/restricting, and, thus, it is not the plan of practical actions, but of mediatization of imaginary that is weaved between the life that does not deserve to live and the life that does not deserve to be seen. Recovering Mbembe (2018, p. 309), the black reason does not concern the black *per se*, but a black becoming of the world, where the only form of combat is “a thinking in circulation, a thinking of crossings, a world-thinking.” We are left with the invitation to start traversing and thinking together.

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Trajectories of coronavirus and interpenetrations of social discourses

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Abstract: The spread of Covid-19 in Brazil is done through the intertwining of social discourses – political, sanitary, legal, and mediatized – according to engendered strategies within the scope of circulation. Some operations of production of meaning are described which, in addition to dynamizing the trajectory of the virus in the social organization, offer intelligibility about its existence and manifestations, according to “grammars” and logics of different discursive practices. Attention is drawn to the effects of the interpenetration of different institutions in the combat against the virus, emerging at least two types of discourses: one that calls for knowledge collaboration to fight the virus, and another, based on a different logic, by excluding discourses-in-cooperation, even the tentative interactions, according to the demand of social actors and their logics.

Keywords: Covid-19. Circulation. Discourses in dispute. Effects of meanings.

1. Introduction

The first version of this article contemplated a discussion on the transformations of political discourse, especially the enunciated speeches of the current president since his inauguration to addressing manifestations during the first 18 months of government. We emphasized aspects of the mediatization of

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political discourse, disjoining from the injunctions of the mass media as “contact links” between political systems and society, to function in a new “regime”, according to the dynamics of the social networks. It was a problem in which institutional practices were contacted through interactive protocols based on their borders, through communicative actions that constituted *autopoiesis* processes; they depended on interdiscursivenesses to circulate in the social fabric around which the conditions of production and dispute of meanings also originated. Its products were designed in the sphere of the circulation of meanings, in a typical scenario of symbolic activity that took place around techno-symbolic mediations.

In these mediation scenarios, in which the *mass media* functioned as a kind of “contact link” between institutions and social actors, we recall the role they played in the production and circulation of meanings about AIDS, whose intelligibility depended, on a large scale, on the work of media operations (FAUSTO NETO, 1999; VERÓN, 1993). The media operated as co-operators in the corporate life management process and aimed to generate representations about their social dynamics. This mediating function was more distantly named by functionalist ideas as “organized social action” (PARSONS, 1968). But also, for other theoretical aspects that elaborated formulations on the notion of social fields (BOURDIEU, 1994) and, specifically, the field of media (RODRIGUES, 1999). In this context, the media, especially those of a journalistic nature, had a central performance in the co-operation of political discourse. The significant work of media logics and operations emerged as a reference for the functioning of the political discourse, whose manifestations were engendered through the perspective of discoursivenesses and their significant operations (VERÓN, 1994).

However, the transformations in architecture and communication practices that lead to the constitution of the “society in the process of mediatization” - via appearance and effects of digital networks and their socio-technical dissemination - engender mutations in the discursive production. In the past, the forms of contact in society were referred to in enunciative practices, many of which operated as a condition of production for the manifestations of interdiscursive practices and their mean-

ing effects. The field and modalities of media discourses not only functioned as input suppliers for the political discourse but also offered possibilities for their broadcast and circulation. Nevertheless, in posterior terms, it can be observed that the dynamics of the mediatization in progress have resulted in effects caused by complex *feedbacks*. Among them, the weakening of discourse producing and/or co-mediating structures as they become directly weaved by the actors, through the intensive use of other technologies transformed into media, as is the case with the digital networks. It is a more recent phase, whose manifestations materialized in the presidential campaigns or in the communication policies of the elected presidents, who put themselves in direct contact with their followers or potential voters (FAUSTO NETO et al., 2012). Political actors, due to the emergence of networks and their potential, abandoned old narratives and, advised from “advisers”, opted for the personal management and direct contact with technologies, in some cases monitored by new instructors, like in the case of the “digital influencers.” Still, in the territory of the effects of these complex *feedbacks*, we can say that one of the consequences of mediatization is the weakening of the vitality of mediation operations in social fields, with the rise of new techno-communication practices, whose dynamics of an interpenetrating character engender meanings that weave and feed new interactional processes, in the context of a new landscape of meaning production. Such dynamics are, in a way, reflected throughout Luhmann’s (2008) work, when examining the functioning of social practices around the coupling of different systems, a scenario in which the communicative dimension, its means, and operators, assume a new role (FAUSTO NETO, 2015). Put in contact according to different logics, the discourses that are enunciated there point to scenarios and marks of meanings in production, highlighting bundles of differences, many of them in a situation of a collision or, in some circumstances, cooperation. They are permeated by dynamics that are centered on strategies whose relations are established through the logics of belligerence, disputes, but also by the potential for convergent interaction.

Aspects related to the mediatization in process are manifested differently about social discourses (including po-

litical discourse), their production processes, and the relationships between them. Occasionally, in 2020, the outbreak of coronavirus in Brazil stands out and manifests itself through interweaving discourses (political, medical-sanitary, legal, and mediatized), through dynamics that allow couplings involving their singularities and disputes of points of view. Our initial object transforms as the political discourse starts to be enunciated according to new conditions of production; this time, in dynamics of interpenetration with other discourses, from where their combat strategies start to manifest in clashes with other discursive practices of meanings. Discourses start to operate in this context of mediatization, and their 'grammars' are employed to bring together several kinds of discourses whose marks try to explain their objectives and differences when placed in a situation of interpenetration and circulation. It is in the sphere of strategies that they are engendered and put into operation and manifest their singularities and pretensions, whose intentions are specified in operations of meanings under construction. Political discourse enters another path, and, under these conditions, it starts to be analyzed, in the context of this article, in a scenario of coupling with other discursive manifestations.

The outbreak of the coronavirus and the dynamics of its spreading are the preconditions that unfold the entry into the scene of operations of the four types of discourses mentioned here, particularly the political discourse. They circulate according to different 'grammars' that are inherent to the foundations of their existence, origins, and expectations of the very practices that use them to insert themselves in the interpenetrating ambiance of disputes of meaning. However, it is not a matter of juxtaposition couplings and homogeneous articulations; if we consider that the production of meanings takes place around the work of 'bundles of relations' generated around different strategies, operations, and rationalities. In the past, the social fields articulated around interactional processes in which the ones of a media nature had a particular role in the management and thematization of these processes. In current times, the significant material raised by mediatization (FAUSTO NETO, 2016) permeates the discourses of the different social systems complexly, in such a way that logics and media operations start to

constitute 'raw material' for different processes of discursive production/circulation.

Our objective is to describe aspects of modalities of the four types of discourses that are enunciated differently, but that, when contacted, also highlight, and mix their specificities. They point out the "place of speech" of their different matrices, but also the clues that indicate possibilities for cooperation and conflict. The manifestation of the virus and the echoes of its circulation raise forms of intervention through which the discourses analyzed with it establish a bond. The medical-sanitary discourse puts in place its instructions for containing the virus. They are inspired by the epidemiological traditions that contemplate fight to it through strategies aimed at inhibiting contact between social actors, as well as their circulation conditions, imposing isolation practices, alongside hospital therapies. The media discourse acts as an instance that does the didactic management and corresponds to the sanitary discourse, insofar as it stands out for its discursive strategies that aim to offer prevention instructions against the virus and are transmitted in broad radialities and through intensive enunciative protocols.

The political discourse, when showing itself, as we shall see, in divergence with the tactics and strategies of the medical-sanitary field, fights its fundamentals, since its theses converge with the logics of economic-commercial production which are at odds with inhibition measures to the population mobility, especially those that affect consumption. From the perspective of the political discourse, we highlight its concern that seeks, at the same time, despite its alliance with the logics of economic agents and markets, not to lose the company of the actors of the political market, especially of the followers of the president. Therefore, its appeals converge to two focuses: to ensure the functioning of the economy, and to act on the forms of contact that make it impossible for the population to adhere to the medical-sanitary appeals, since, according to the political discourse, the speech of a medical-sanitary nature puts aspects of governance itself at risk. Inevitable meaning effects generated by interdiscursive disputes (as we will see ahead) cause strategies from the legal discourse to enter the scene, in an attempt to make forms of regulation of actions possible in conflicts in

the relations between medical-sanitary appeals and political discourse. According to its origin, which articulates asymmetric foundations, and using digital media practices, which provide direct contact between the president and the population, the political discourse systematically operates against mediational logics. It does so by expressing strategies of a discourse that combats the isolation of society, whose main enunciator is the President of the Republic himself.

He uses strategies that appeal to a combat discourse, not necessarily to the virus, but to the medical-sanitary guidelines themselves, through slogans whose modalities aim to disqualify the ones of the medical-sanitary field. In these conditions, while the virus circulates, placing Brazil in the second or third place in the number of deaths, in the fifth month of its occurrence, in another scenario of production and circulation of messages, discursive battles occur, produced in other contexts, on the margin of the coronavirus circulatory ascendancy curve.

2. Clashes: pro-isolation discourses

The coronavirus takes a journey that affects and transforms the country's geography, its routines, and the way of being of the social organization. It is transformed into the object of diverse social institutions that intertwine around different points of view, such as those that emphasize the ways of fighting it.

In terms of health guidance, we highlight the discourse supported by institutions that take care of policies in this area, such as the Ministry of Health itself, that, in convergence with WHO guidelines, supported throughout most of this period a thesis in defense of policies of implementation for the isolation of the population as a possibility to contain the transmission of the virus. Such guidelines also followed methodological procedures that have inspired the practices of "campaigning" that have guided, over the years, health education and communication policies, in the face of the occurrence of virus appearance phenomena, etcetera, in different contexts. The activity implemented by the Ministry of Health was carried out for some time, during the first months of fighting the virus, in an operational

context of cooperation with other institutions, such as the Unified Health System (SUS), public health institutions (state and municipal), and other forms of agents and collaborations. It consisted of the equipment of hospital units, processes for testing of the population, by specialized personnel, in addition to educational campaigns that were promoted by different institutions, under the guidance of the Ministry. Also, in the monitoring and presentation of the occurrence of cases of affected people, through the data collected around a daily meeting involving, over two months, technicians, and the minister of health himself, journalists from different media, giving rise to the appearance in this context of a certain observatory format, including social listening, co-managing, according to exchanges there generated, tracks of monitoring and intervention on the action of the virus. According to these choices of crisis management procedures, the Ministry of Health distinguished itself as a central reference to express the government's presence at the head of an attempted policy to combat the virus. Besides the exposition of technicians and specialists, the minister, after being dismissed, gave the fact a discursive, multi-institutional construction, highlighting marks of cooperation between multiple forces. He moved to the field of actions, associating with the work teams, making evident and valuing the references of the epidemiological knowledge employed in the fight against dissemination.

This policy mediatized other actors, also putting in the "public square" medical specialists - infectologists, virologists, epidemiologists, etcetera - who left the borders of their offices, and whose identity marks mixed with those of other professionals in the health field, as well as experts from other fields. The conditions for expanding a modality of technical-professional dialogue deepened according to practices of knowledge interpenetration, many of which functioned as collateral references that, if maintained, could have been useful to policies to combat the coronavirus. SUS, for many years, was in sight of government officials interested in its dismantling or privatization, under the allegation that it constituted a pachyderm amid health policy practices. It came from the first two ministers - even with a distant background in sanitation - the recognition of this model of public health provision as a central agent in the internalization

of policies to combat the virus in the country. Both ministers were later dismissed.

3. Mediatized social action

In this multi-collaborative action exercised by interpenetrating social practices, mediatizing practices are evidenced playing a relevant role in times of crisis, which goes beyond the health matrix, but spreads systemically in the social fabric. On the direct front of “virus exasperation,” the media became converging actors with health policies. The programming routines were transformed into protagonist dynamics in which journalists, producers, etcetera, showed the existence of the virus and its manifestations, placing actors in the health field on the media scene. Not only were their voices conveyed, but their identity, through the “place of speech”, as well as the specialists in health, nursing, patients, and operators of other practices in convergence with the case were recognized.

The transformation of radio and television routines, etcetera resulted in new forms of public conversation in multi-institutional contexts in which the virus was “hunted” through discursive and argumentative dialogues between various fields and specialists who, perhaps, never had access to cameras and microphones and other communication modalities. Social networks also give image and voice to the figure of different specialists, and discussion circles were created, solidarity networks became channels of support, giving materiality to the foundations of civic journalism. Images not only reported but updated, through the intervention and pedagogical irradiation of specialists, the fight against coronavirus. Indeed, an immense army of the population has not followed the guidelines to remain isolated, according to health institutions - an aspect that deserves more investigations and may be able to detect these gaps in meanings between calls for isolation and practices of refusals by the increase in agglomerations of people in public environments. But we cannot ignore the fact that thousands of Brazilians followed broadcasts of different natures that gave voice to different actors who, according to “their knowledge”, emitted their views on

the pandemic. Other institutions, like primary schools, cultural centers, associative entities, etcetera, have expanded and diversified their programmatic routines, introducing content about COVID-19. An immense production of imagery was also seen on television, radio, and other media studios, widening, and diversifying their messages, as spaces converted to problems that went beyond media routines. It can be said, in a way, that many of the media, due to the conjuncture strength, were transformed into spaces for an emerging pedagogical conversation.

In these conditions of continuous mediatization processes, different media were transformed. At the same time, at school, on the street, in the square, in the doctor's office, at the service station, etcetera, an "architectural-communicational" conformation emerged that only could be constituted in times of crisis, allowing that not only specialists but all types of social actors, of different ages and origins, could enunciatively build their coronavirus. Even in the most distant peripheries and cultural circuits, communicational practices of popular origin adopted the Covid-19 as the theme of their discourse. Poets and declaimers from the cordel leaflets, authors of the old and new *suelos pliegos* (sold at popular fairs), circulated in markets made up of agricultural populations leaflets reporting in poetry the "coronavirus", containing instructions on the virus and how to fight it. Many of these pamphlets called attention to the nature of some of the uttered discourses, such as those dealing with the coronavirus theme, according to different imagery marks. Distinct branches of knowledge were projected onto these communication supports, such as the case of a professional nurse who mixed different "reading contracts" to enunciate, in the context of oral culture or literature, in verses, the discursive constructions about the coronavirus (Coronavirus in Cordel - Anna Karlynne, poet and nurse).

If the virus circulated in the socio-biological tissue, constructions about its way of being were disputed in the combination and articulation of several types of discourses, involving health, cultural, legal, and media knowledge, political, popular, etcetera. Possibly, an act that called attention to transformations that involved not only the media but also their performance in the mediatization environment, interfering in another way in the

scenario of the virus occurrence. It was the moment when websites, newspapers, radios, TVs, from various journalistic institutions - in old and new formats - decided to take over the work of collecting and announcing cases of people affected by the virus, in face of the announcement of the Ministry of Health that it no longer would make the daily report of incidence report. Such refusal gave rise to a “media consortium” around an action distinct from its routines, due to the uniqueness of a cooperative initiative, which called attention to a practice of media interpenetration. It evolved, expanding its spectrum beyond media borders. There was adherence to its dynamics in other systems, such as the legal system, through the Supreme Federal Court, by order, on the day after the media announcement (06/09), that the Ministry of Health should publish again a bulletin on the number of the COVID-19 cases, based on the methodology used until the suspension of the bulletin.

4. Political discourse: fundamentals of combat

Operating through methodologies that have been supported since the period of the 2018 election campaign to the present day, the presidential speech circulated, in conflict with other discourses, mainly institutional, directing criticisms to journalistic media, and sending messages to social networks, specifically to followers, exhorting watchwords. In the first year of his administration, the president accelerated his attacks on news media and concentrated his forms of communication with society on the digital networks. He removed the spokesman he had instituted. And, with networks and applications in tow, the president carried out, in the context of the virus crisis, a journey through the streets, in search of contact with followers, through visits to snack bars, bakeries, pharmacies, without observing the health prescription for wearing a mask.

He also traveled to plazas - stages of demonstration in his favor - where he welcomed the people, not avoiding crowds, and without making use of virus prevention equipment. In this context, the president let himself be photographed, embraced with followers or people, and, also, made statements associated

with the theme of the virus, and with an eye on the old and new media, with which his Twitter was in permanent contact.

Circling on the networks, the president's goal was, however, not to lose contact with the streets, something that seemed impossible, given the possible effects of the containment discourse enunciated by the health instances. But it was not only in the street space that the president chose, along with the networks, possibilities of moments to combat the medical-sanitary discourse and others issued by different institutions. An area reserved for journalists and followers was created at the entrance of the presidential palace. The latter sought time to applaud and greet the president. And, in the case of journalists, with whom they maintained aggressive relations, to capture some statement from him, according to the surveillance imposed by the security guards.

4.1. Combat escalation

In the context of the virus advance, the president built the combat escalation, addressing various themes, according to the enunciative strategies described next. In the first days of the virus circulation, the president announced a position of denial about the virus and opposed to the construction of the medical-sanitary appeal. In front of journalists, he claimed he could not explain it (although doing it) as he wished, fearing the effects of reading of the media: "The Corona issue is not all that the media propagates [...]" (FSP, 10/03 / 2020); "The power was given to this virus, which if I say it is oversized, will make headlines in this garbage called Folha de S. Paulo, among newspapers that are waiting for the wrong word to attack the government. It is not attacking the government. It is attacking Brazil" (FSP, 15/03/2020). He directed attacks on the health field, according to a comment in which he disqualified, with the use of irony, the person of WHO's Secretary-General: "People talk so much about following WHO [...] WHO's president director is not a doctor, it is the same thing that talking here in Brazil {that the president of Caixa is not someone from the economy} to the television media, which like printed newspapers, such as the FSP, are explicit and disqualifying" (BBC Brasil, 23/04/2020). His assessments

also enunciated the Ministry of Health's anti-guidelines position on isolation: "The harm we will have with horizontal isolation will be much higher than the harm we will have with the virus" (FSP, 03/25/2020). And, according to non-specific allusions, he expands the ways of evaluating the containment measures: "Many people, to give satisfaction to their electorate, take absurd measures. Closing the mall, there are people who want to close the church, which is the last refuge of the people" (FSP, 26/03/2020).

He evaluated the impact of the virus by designating it as a fantasy - or a small crisis - attributed to the media: The coronavirus is "a small crisis that, in my opinion, makes the issue of the coronavirus much more a fantasy, which is not all that the mainstream media propagates throughout the world" (TERRA, 10/03/2020). He treated it as a small illness, which he named as little flu, incapable of producing discomfort for himself as for his government: "After the stab, it won't be a little flu that will bring me down, okay?" (TERRA, 03/20/2020); he explained who his opponents were in the context of this fight, as they converged with the health field regarding social isolation measures: "Soon, the people will know that they have been deceived, right, by these governors, and by a large part of the media in this issue of the coronavirus" (TERRA, 03/22/2020).

Without losing the media as a target, he placed himself as a place of self-reference to assess the effects of the virus: "Have you ever thought what a set meal for the press if I had been infected? I haven't been. It's my word. My word is worth more than a piece of paper. If something happens to me, it messes with the economy and that is not good for the country. In case the virus comes to me, and I become a carrier, I have no problem disclosing it, I would not lie to the Brazilian people. But I am not affected. I think there is information, disproportionate interference in the life of the human being" (BBR, 03/26/2020, 04/01/2020). Days later, he announced the "end" of the coronavirus cycle, focusing on the association, for the first time, with the economic crisis: "It seems that the issue of the virus is beginning to go away. But unemployment is coming and beating hard" (TERRA, 12/04/2020). Upon dismissing the minister of health, for diverging from the guidelines he followed, in conver-

gence with WHO, a dialogue between them is made public by the media. “You will be responsible for the consequences, for the deaths,” said the minister. The president replied: “I won’t, the governors are the ones who will.” And, commenting on the profile of his substitute, the resigning minister, declared: “[...] he should organize a team that can build another view and may it be done also based on science” (EM, 16/04/2020).

A week later, asked by a journalist about the increase in the number of death cases, the president defended himself and adopted another type of denial, when he said, sarcastically: “Oh, man, who talks about ... me? I’m not a gravedigger, okay? I am not a gravedigger” (TERRA, 20/04/2020). The same reaction is repeated and, when asked by a journalist about the rising cases of death, he made fun of his name, mocking the misfortune and fate of the dead: “So what? I am sorry. What do you want me to do? I am Messiah, but I do not perform miracles” (TERRA, 04/28/2020). Appearing higher conformity with the rates of increase in cases, he gave a speech that naturalized and, at the same time, popularized the epidemic: “This is a reality, the virus is there. We’re going to have to face it but face it like a *fucking* man. Not like a kid. Let’s face the virus with reality. It is life, we will all die one day” (GLOBO/G1, 04/20/).

He justified the resignation of his first minister of health, calling himself a spokesman for the people: “My view is a little different from Minister Mandetta, who is focused on his ministry. My vision has to be broader, of the biggest risks. I have to decide, I cannot omit myself, I have to look for what the people who believed in me want” (VALOR ECONÔMICO, 04/17/2020). However, the dismissed minister, when saying goodbye to his colleagues in the Ministry, reiterated the defense of the theses of cooperative knowledge and whose emphasis he imposed on policies against the spread of the virus: “This problem of dismissal is insignificant. Nothing has a meaning other than the defense of life, SUS, and science. Stay [when reporting to his helpers] on these three pillars that you will conquer everything with them. Science is light, it is enlightenment. Bet all your energies in science. Don’t have a single vision and don’t even think inside a box” (FSP, 04/16/2020).

4.2. When does to say mean to do?

The device created at the entrance to the presidential palace remained the place where the president while being honored by his followers, sharpened his verbal attacks on journalists.

They continued to be the target of critique and attacks by the president, according to verbal escalation. The tone and effects of the message sent by the president to journalists evoked a threat that would overpass the linguistic boundaries, as he made an order whose limit was the interruption of any message by the journalist interlocutor. When asked by a reporter about changes in the Federal Police, he ordered, violently, in an injunctive tone: “Shut up! Shut up!” (FSP, 05/10/2020). The reply came from the journalistic field itself, from a newspaper ombudsman: “We are not at war and we must ensure that the ‘shut up’ died, and its ghost does not scare us.” It is in the context of this scenario, within the limits of this environment, and according to untimely protocols, that the president’s forms of contact with the media institutions became more strained. It aggravated the way of answering a journalist’s question about his responsibility given the large number of deaths caused by the coronavirus, and stated, in response: “The question is so stupid that I will not answer it” (FSP, 04/29/2020). By the tactic of “verbal counterattack,” he refused to answer the question.

Something like these two incidents was repeated days later. When asked by a reporter on the same subject, he replied: “So what? I am sorry. What do you want me to do? I am Messiah, but I do not perform miracles” (ESP, 28/04/2020). He shifted the attempt to answer the question on the same issue, disdainful of the figure of governors and mayors: “The press has to ask Dória why more people are losing their lives in São Paulo. There is no point in the press putting everything in my account. My opinion is not valid, what is valid is the decrees of the governors and mayors” (FSP, 04/29/2020). With the appointment of the second minister of health, he once again attacked the guidelines on relaxation. But, in response to pressure from the President, the new minister of health, recently appointed by him, reaffirmed the sanitary theses, and he said that “nobody is thinking

about relaxing the isolation. Right now, nobody is thinking about making anything flexible. There is a guideline ready, a starting point, but you cannot start a social liberation when you have a curve in clear ascendancy” (EL PAÍS, 04/30/2020).

4.3. “I am the commander”

In the strategy of antagonizing positions of instances inserted in cooperation and convergence with the contention theses (such as those of the press and sanitary), the president asked one of his targets: “Isn’t health life? Why are gyms closed?” (EM, 05/08/2020). In his escalation against the containment measures, he announced that he would include gyms, beauty salons, and barbershops as essential services, claiming that the three activities were essential for maintaining health. Despite the minister of health, the president issued a decree announcing these measures, taking him by surprise (ESP, 11/05/2020). On the eve of the fall of the second minister of health, the president indirectly announced, through a declaration, that the departure was about to be completed: “If it were up to me, everything was open with vertical isolation, and that was it. The Federal Government was never an obstacle [...]” (FSP, 05/14/2020). Still on the same day, in another message, he pointed out causes and suggested taking a new step to remove the minister: “I am demanding the issue of chloroquine now too. If the Federal Council of Medicine decides that it can use chloroquine from the first symptoms, why will the Federal Government, via the minister of health, say that this will only happen in a serious case? I am the commander, President of the Republic, to decide when to come to any minister and say what is happening. And this is the rule, the north is this [...]. I am not extrapolating any minister, I never did that, nor interfering in any ministry, as I never did. Now they voted for me to decide. And that chloroquine decision passes through me [...] Everything is fine with the minister of health [...]. I believe in his work, but we will resolve this issue” (TERRA, 05/14/2020). Days after resigning, the second minister of health, when bidding farewell to the post, alluded to the divergences of conceptions between him and the president, confirming the importance of methodologies that valued knowledge in cooperation and the

principles of science: “[...] The health mission is tripartite, it involves the MS, CONAS, CONASEM, the Health Department. This is an important thing to make clear. The Ministry of Health believes that this relationship is true and essential for conducting operations, both in terms of strategy and execution. Here I thank the SUS professionals once again. When you go to the tip and you see what these people’s everyday lives are like, you get impressed” (UOL, 05/15/2020).

5. Anonymous message harms testing

In the transition from the second to the third minister of health, an agreement was signed between the ministerial office and Universidade Federal de Pelotas to test the occurrence of the coronavirus in several municipalities in the North and Northeast of Brazil. Researchers, when moving to the universe of research, were prevented from carrying it out. The day before their arrival, a message was sent via social media, stating that the population should not open their doors to strangers because they were swindlers who would be scamming homes in various locations in the region. Technicians were hindered and sent to inquiry with the police, their equipment was collected, and, shortly after, they were pressured to leave the testing sites. To this day, the authorship of the note broadcast on the networks calling on the population not to have contact with the researchers is unknown. The information vacuum between government and society makes it possible for anonymous messages to enter and circulate on social networks, instead of one whose content would guide the population in advance about the tests’ accomplishment.

Successive changes in the Ministry’s actions demonstrated the dismantling of its multi-institutional, health, and educational policy. In addition to the removal of two ministers, and the failure to establish contact with the local community, via testing, there was the abandonment of communication policies initially shared with the society. In the name of logistics, the policies built by different social systems were abandoned. In the name of adopting actions aimed at reformulating the protocols

of information of public interest (on the occurrence of cases of coronavirus in the country), attempts were made to modify treatment methodologies and the circulation of data on the spread of the virus. However, in face of the reaction of sectors of society, concerned with the possibility of data manipulation on the occurrence of cases, a decision taken by the Supreme Federal Court determined that procedures current until then should be used again. The effects of this 'deviation' were not more prominent because a 'media consortium' started to take care of the production and daily dissemination of public information about the data, something that remains today.

6. Conclusions

At the end of this brief descriptive-analytical path, we draw attention to the fact that Covid-19 carried out various kinds of trajectories, which dealt with several levels of observation and discourse production. The first level referred to the production of epistemological models whose references supported guidelines and levels of procedures' application by the health field itself. As a second observational level, instances of systems mediation stood out (such as health, media, educational, legal, etcetera) and operated as producers of reports, offering intelligibility which have put knowledge into circulation, functioning as species of "reader-mediators" - as is the case of the *media* - of the references generated by the first level, and which turned to the broader social fabric. The third level of observation would be attributed to the observational work of the academic field on the strategies that link, in analytical and interpretative terms, the references produced by both previous levels.

We are at this third level of observation, by proposing to study the operations of meanings that tried to describe the virus' trajectories through discursive strategies put into practice by each of these systems, but also by their interpenetrations. It means that we examined the work of these systems, as a set of 'systems-producers <> readers' that sought to name the existence of Covid-19, according to matrices contacted via discursive practices. This observation process could be complexified,

including, for example, observations on discourses enunciated by social actors, as members of collectives that constituted the broad social fabric. Not having been the subject of this work, it is worth remembering, however, that speeches that emerged from social actors outcropped in some discourses that were produced by statements from other systems, as analyzed here.

They were recovered by observational processes from the extraction of utterances from the discourses made by different systems and from which we recovered the ‘tentative rise’ of the social actor’s speech. This appeared in the interpenetrating architecture of discourses about the coronavirus, particularly those stated by the political system. At some point, he treated the social actors as unspecified collectives, to whom he sent argumentative discourses to persuade them, etcetera. In others, he named them as ‘president’s inspectors’, urging them to inspect health services like hospitals. However, they were words of exhortation, whose speeches did not open space to receive, while listening, demands and requests coming from the actors’ voice.

If the corona made its trajectories “tracked” by social discourses, the discourse trajectories were affected by institutional, symbolic clashes, etcetera, but also by interactional disruptions, circumstances in which they manifested records about society’s refusals to develop walks in convergence with the logics and optics of the ‘combat discourse’. A tentative voice emerged within the framework of the device in which only the followers would have access to the president, for a ritual of greeting the commander. Escaping the surveillance of the “Cercadinho do Palácio”, a former militant of a Bolsonaro movement, sought face-to-face contact with the president and, in the face of the security guards and admirers, addressed the message: “I am here making posters only with numbers for you to see. Because there are not 38 thousand statistics, 38 thousand families are dying at the moment. There are 38,000 people who are crying,” said the woman. “I came here with all my heart. I feel that you have betrayed the population. The population dying and you ignoring me. [...]” (YOUTUBENOTICIAS, 10/06/20). Keeping distance from the woman, the president signaled the strain produced by the nature of the contact as an event distinct from the ephemeris of the followers’ greetings. And, in response, he not only

announced his refusal to the request for interaction but enunciated in an injunctive manner his non-fulfillment, by ordering the woman to leave the interactional framework that she tried. "If you wanted to speak, get out of here because you were heard. Ask your governor. Get out of here" (YAHOO NEWS, 10/06/20).

In this scenario in which Covid-19 was spreading, the rationality of the political discourse was challenged and set back. On the one hand, the invitation to move to another relational context. On the other hand, on the part of the president, the refusal of interaction when inviting her to go on another route, since he remained on the one where the "combat discourses" circulated. Political discourse renounced interpenetrations with discursiveness since the postulates of its functioning did not contemplate other attempts at interactions.

The president refused to follow his collectives, according to the listening to a discourse whose effects would send him to another frame of understanding, in addition to the presumed effects of his combatant speech. When challenged by the woman who, emerging from his collectives, demanded another role from him to understand differently the unfolding of the virus trajectories, the president refused, announcing that he would remain there, alongside those with whom he would maintain the combat trajectories.

By putting himself as someone who delegated, the president incited his peers to a mission whose delegation effect exposed them to a situation of a conflagration. A practice emerged that has put actors more in situations of combat than in events of dialogue, conversation, or understanding. The circumstance by which he delegated a supervisory action covered by the ingredients and motivations that emanated from the rationality suggested exclusively by the leader himself seemed to be problematic.

In the tentative meeting between the activist and the president, we had another communicational framework, in which someone who emerged in the context of collectives invited the president to another listening enterprise, whose practice removed the "ordinary man" from the supervisory role, as the president suggested when exhorting his followers to inspect hospitals. It would also remove the president from the condition of

supervisor of social practices, when he was invited to a protocol that would allow him to develop other observational processes that would give him another understanding of the coronavirus, in addition to the assumptions of the combat discourses.

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PART III: POLARIZATIONS

Complementary contribution to the discussion begun at the Seminary on mediatization

Contribution complémentaire à la réflexion engagée au sein du Séminaire sur la médiatisation

Bernard Miège¹

ABSTRACT: The chapter discusses perspectives on mediatization, taking up a debate begun at the School of Higher Studies and then continued at the Seminar on Mediatization itself, which resulted in the publication of books (Miège et alii, 2016 and Ferreira et alii, 2019) with contributions of mine. The core of these reflections contains the specific elements of my approach to mediatization (which might be called socio-symbolic), which differs fundamentally, and not only methodologically, from the semio-anthropological approach developed here at Unisinos and may be articulated with it, confronted with it and, under certain conditions, be complementary to it. I remind that the reference to mediatization is a source of confusion, since both among professionals and scholars we must distinguish at least four different meanings of the term. Based on these distinctions, I propose inferences about the relations between mediatization, incivility and intolerance.

KEYWORDS: Mediatization. Mediations. Information and communication technologies. Intolerance. Incivility.

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1. Introduction

Si je me dois de faire part de ma satisfaction et de mon intérêt intellectuel à prendre part à ce 3^{ème} Séminaire tant les deux précédents ont été pour moi riches d'enseignements et de contacts, et si ne peux que remercier les organisateurs de faire à nouveau appel à moi pour cette entrée en matière, je ne saurais cacher l'embarras dans lequel je me suis trouvé lorsqu'il s'est agi de préparer cette contribution. Ma contribution précédente est somme toute récente (le texte qui en est issu date en fait de 2017) et elle a fait l'objet de deux publications, d'abord en portugais (Miège, 2018) puis en anglais (Miège, 2019) et je me suis vraiment demandé si j'avais de quoi composer une nouvelle présentation, d'autant que je ne suis pas un spécialiste de la thématique choisie - je le suis devenu à l'occasion de mes travaux sur le développement des techniques de l'information et de la communication-et je ne chercherai pas à le faire croire. Et de plus ma contribution précédente au Symposium d'Unisinos était déjà une ...actualisation d'une première approche sur la médiatisation datant de 2007, mais ceci n'est pas gênant car la production de la connaissance scientifique procède souvent par ajouts successifs, c'est du moins ma façon de faire la plus fréquente. Aussi, ne pourrai-je que proposer une intervention décalée, c'est à dire un regard argumenté et interrogatif sur les thèmes retenus, et ce du point de vue des sciences de la communication.

Il me faut dans cette introduction rappeler ce qui est spécifique de mon approche (qui peut être qualifiée de socio-symbolique) de la médiatisation, et que celle-ci se différencie assez fondamentalement et pas seulement méthodologiquement, avec l'approche sémio-anthropologique développée ici à Unisinos, tout en pouvant s'articuler, se confronter et sous certaines conditions se compléter avec elle. Et je rappellerai combien la référence à la médiatisation est source de confusions, car chez les professionnels comme parmi les universitaires, on doit distinguer au moins quatre sens différents. Dans un premier sens, médiatisation s'oppose à médiation et vise à identifier les phénomènes médiatés par l'intermédiaire non des nombreuses instances de médiation sociale mais par l'intermédiaire

de médias au sens spécifique du concept ou de plus en plus par le moyen de techniques de l'information et de la communication formant une catégorie improprement appelée hors-médias. Dans un second sens, ce qui est pris en compte c'est l'action de médiatisation de contenus, c'est-à-dire le fait que des contenus (par exemple des cours d'enseignement supérieur, des offres culturelles ou des informations sportives) sont mis en ligne ou inscrits sur des supports, généralement à la suite de l'intervention de spécialistes (designers, réalisateurs multimédia, etc.) ; et contrairement à une représentation courante de la pensée informaticienne, cela n'a rien à voir avec une transposition quasi automatique liée à l'emploi des outils et logiciels (= des applications) désormais disponibles. Dans un troisième sens, on s'efforce de prendre en compte tout ce qui, dans les relations interindividuelles et même intra- groupales ou intra- organisationnelles, se produit lorsqu'une technique désormais essentiellement numérique ou mieux un dispositif sociotechnique s'interpose entre je et je, le je et nous, et le nous et nous ; l'approche est ici surtout psycho- sociologique ou microsociologique et cherche à identifier les modifications des actes de communication eux-mêmes, qu'ils prennent appui sur le langage ou non. Dans un quatrième sens même, ce que l'on s'efforce d'apprécier c'est l'importance de l'information diffusée et échangée (quantitativement et qualitativement) ; la médiatisation renvoie ici à l'expansion et à la multiplication des modalités de l'information dans les sociétés contemporaines mais avec le souci d'appréhender les relations entre les participants, et pas seulement la réception, et la relation avec les récepteurs.

Le qualificatif de médiatisation est ainsi profondément ambigu, et par voie de conséquence sa conceptualisation est nécessairement complexe ; impossible dès lors de se limiter au concept lui-même, *per se*, mais pour le comprendre, il faut le mettre en rapport avec d'autres concepts tels que : informationnalisation, marchandisation, individualisation des pratiques, mise en réseau, technicisation, numérisation (objet de mes recherches actuelles et qui sera donc au centre de la présente contribution), et « dépassement/ prolongement » des médias historiques.

C'est de ce point de vue seulement, avec ces perspectives, et non pas directement, sans « cadrage » des phénomènes

de médiatisation, et en me projetant seulement dans l'avenir que je peux m'interroger sur les questions soulevées par ce Séminaire centré sur les intolérances et les incivilités (en rapport avec l'avancée des réseaux sociaux numériques). Si je ne mets pas en doute les faits relevés, voire leur émergence parfois brutale et souvent imprévisible, il me faut faire remarquer dès ce long préambule, qu'ils :

- Prolongent des phénomènes antérieurs (tels que ceux analysés antérieurement par des psychosociologues avec la théorie dite des rumeurs);
- Ne justifient pas la reprise d'une approche triviale, et critiquée depuis longtemps, celle des effets supposés des médias, alors que les médias et notamment les réseaux sociaux-numériques en tant que dispositifs sociotechniques font l'objet d'une construction sociale (cf. ci-après §1);
- Et ne sauraient être pensés comme radicalement nouveaux (ce qui est d'ailleurs rarement la marque des phénomènes sociaux et sociétaux, comme en sont d'ailleurs convaincus la plupart des chercheurs en sciences humaines et sociales).

On me permettra enfin de citer cette conclusion d'une étude réalisée pour l'Unesco: « La littérature examinée (=550 études datées de 2012 à 2016) ... ne fournit pas de preuves décisives de l'existence d'un lien direct entre les spécificités des médias sociaux et les manifestations de la radicalisation violente (mais cela peut être élargi au cyber-harcèlement et aux *fake news*, etc. B.M.) chez les jeunes... Plutôt que de susciter des comportements violents ou d'en être la cause, Internet et plus précisément les médias sociaux jouent le rôle d'intermédiaires dans le cadre de processus plus larges de radicalisation violente ... en ce qu'ils facilitent l'accès à des contenus, des contacts et des comportements... La radicalisation violente ... ne se réduit pas à l'accès à Internet, mais fait généralement intervenir plusieurs processus complexes, notamment des processus socio-psychologiques complexes et une communication de personne à personne en lien avec d'autres facteurs : sentiments d'injustice, de mise à l'écart, d'anomie, de privation... » (Alava, Frau-Meigs et

Hassan, en collaboration avec Hussein et Wei, 2018). Sans doute une recension d'études ne saurait être mise sur le même plan qu'une recherche, s'appuyant sur une méthodologie adéquate et admise ; mais dans le brouhaha actuel des discours d'experts , de technologues et de publicistes sur la numérisation de l'information –communication, les conclusions de cette étude internationale méritaient d'être présentées.

Mieux vaut donc prendre de la distance, et ne pas mettre dès le départ « la tête dans le guidon ». D'où mon insistance sur les trois assertions suivantes (qu'on peut du reste considérer comme des thèses) qu'il me paraît indispensable de prendre en considération, dès le moment où on cherche à évaluer ce qui est en jeu avec la numérisation des sociétés contemporaines, en l'occurrence présentement certaines tendances affectant la médiatisation:

2. Les techniques numériques sont des dispositifs sociotechniques faisant l'objet d'une construction sociale:

Aux auteurs, notamment les technologues, qui font comme si la dite révolution numérique était le point de départ de pratiques et de raisonnements irréductibles, marqués seulement par la nouveauté et la non-prédictibilité, il convient d'opposer une analyse basée sur les méthodologies des sciences humaines et sociales, et de mettre l'accent sur les éléments suivants que je ne peux que citer ici sans procéder à une analyse détaillée.

Le fait est que cette révolution annoncée fait suite à une assez longue période initiée par les techniques d'information et de communication (les Tic ou ICTs) alors analogiques, et elle prolonge ces mêmes techniques en les développant et même en les multipliant ; mais les fondements théoriques et scientifiques sur lesquels elle s'appuie étaient connus pour une part conséquente dès les deux à trois dernières décennies du siècle précédent; si on s'accorde généralement pour fixer les prémisses du tournant numérique dans les premières années du présent siècle et même

quelques années auparavant, qui ont été marquées par une expansion rapide de firmes spécialisées dans la recherche d'information et les réseaux sociaux-numériques désignées actuellement comme les *Big Five*, il serait prématuré de considérer la révolution numérique comme effective, et encore moins comme achevée; elle est en cours et commence d'ailleurs à donner lieu à des réalisations relevant de l'intelligence artificielle. En tout cas, ce qui caractérise avant tout les techniques numériques au cours des deux premières décennies du 21^{ème} siècle c'est une forte expansion de marchés conquis par des conglomerats américains (aujourd'hui en voie d'être concurrencés par leurs homologues chinois), fortement soutenue par le mouvement de financiarisation (surtout avec le *Nasdaq*). Ces marchés, résultant d'une pluralité d'innovations de produits, ne sont pas encore généralisés à l'ensemble de la planète ; ils restent assez diversifiés, sinon hétérogènes. De ce procès en cours, on peut d'ores et déjà tirer plusieurs conclusions, et particulièrement celles-ci directement en rapport avec les questions envisagées ici :

- les modalités par lesquelles les différentes techniques, aujourd'hui numériques s'ancrent dans les sociétés ne sauraient entièrement différer de ce qui avait été engagé avec les Tic analogiques; elles se positionnent dans leur continuité. C'est un acquis scientifique important qui rend caducs bien des raisonnements triviaux et des perceptions courantes.
- les dispositifs techniques offerts ne sont pas eux-mêmes sans liens avec des pratiques informationnelles, culturelles et communicationnelles, dont elles intègrent des éléments aux produits offerts ; de ce fait ceux-ci se trouvent être en correspondance, en opposition ou en distorsion avec les pratiques des sociétés-réceptrices ; et c'est d'autant plus observable dans les cas où les nouvelles techniques numériques ne se substituent pas à des techniques antérieures (par exemple radio ou télévision), mais prennent la place de pratiques sociales anciennes (ainsi pour les réseaux sociaux-numériques qui prolongent des relations interindividuelles de proximité).

- la construction des usages sociaux des dispositifs nouveaux s'appuie nécessairement sur les compétences acquises, qu'elles soient culturelles, informationnelles, éducatives ou culturelles ; elle ne saurait s'en abstraire comme c'était le cas antérieurement avec les techniques analogiques ou les médias « historiques ». *A priori* les techniques numériques n'offrent pas plus de facilités ou de raccourcis que les précédentes, contrairement à des opinions fréquentes.
- la construction sociale des techniques aujourd'hui numériques relève donc de procès divers et complexes dont la recherche ne saurait faire l'économie. Non seulement, on est en présence d'une pluralité d'innovations de produits en cours de réalisation, mais celles-ci varient très significativement selon les pays et en leur sein. Ainsi, est-il préférable de parler de procès d'innovations plurielles en cours.

Entres autres caractérisations de la (grande) différenciation des ancrages sociaux des outils numériques, on donnera quatre exemples:

- Selon les pays, le taux d'équipement en microinformatique ou en téléphonie mobile est variable, parce que la diffusion de la téléphonie mobile a été plus tardive ou pour des raisons d'ordre économique (les consommateurs n'ayant pas les ressources pour payer un double- équipement, ou en raison du recours à des appareils réparés) ; de ce fait, les pratiques numériques ne sont pas comparables ; les usages « complémentaires » ne peuvent être mis sur le même plan que des usages uniques ;
- Si les consommations de produits numérisés ou via les techniques numériques connaissent des progressions certaines, elles sont toutefois très différenciées socialement et culturellement ; y compris dans les pays dominants, se maintiennent de fortes et même de très fortes inégalités d'accès et d'usage, de sorte qu'on est en présence d'infos-riches et

d'info-pauvres, et même de catégories sociales, totalement démunies face au numérique.

- La dynamique marchande, facilitée par la faiblesse et même l'absence de régulations publiques, débouche en effet sur une diversité de situations structurellement différenciées où la résorption des retards et des écarts est une perspective improbable et s'apparente à une course en avant où les concurrents non seulement ne partent pas sur la même ligne mais surtout disposent de ressources et d'atouts très inégalement distribués. Ainsi, le projet de réduction de la supposée « fracture numérique », qui est au cœur de stratégies d'organisations internationales, relève du mythe (impossible à atteindre) pour ceux qui sont peu ou mal équipés, ou peu ou pas formés;
- La connexion à des réseaux sociaux-numériques donne parfois lieu à des résultats surprenants dont l'interprétation ne va pas de soi. Ainsi la connexion à *Facebook* atteindrait-elle dans les principales villes de Tunisie des taux supérieurs à ceux observés dans des villes européennes, de l'autre côté de la Méditerranée. En dehors du fait que les données diffusées émanent des diffuseurs eux-mêmes et demanderaient vérifications, il est vraisemblable que la comparaison ne met pas en regard les mêmes pratiques, un RSN « garantissant » aux usagers tunisiens un accès facilité et immédiat aux informations de toutes natures et ainsi qu'aux communications interpersonnelles, en dehors de tout contrôle public ; du moins c'est ainsi qu'ils le ressentent ;
- La forte concurrence faite à l'information de presse par les médias sociaux. Pour beaucoup d'observateurs, il est entendu que les réseaux sociaux-numériques, et plus encore ce que l'on désigne maintenant comme des médias sociaux, sont en train de remplacer les médias d'information « historiques », et notamment la presse d'information. L'individualisation de l'accès à l'information rendue possible

par les techniques numériques rendrait caducs les médias imprimés, et les condamneraient à plus ou moins brève échéance. Or, une telle appréciation, relevant plus ou moins aujourd'hui du sens commun, ne rend pas compte des évolutions différenciées des relations entre ces deux catégories de médias. En tout cas, elle ne concerne pas également toutes les catégories de presse écrite, et s'il est exact que la presse écrite quotidienne connaît un peu partout des baisses de ses ventes, parfois importantes, premièrement cette tendance n'est pas récente et elle avait débuté bien avant les avancées des techniques numériques ; deuxièmement les médias sociaux s'appuient eux-mêmes sur les productions de la presse écrite pour se valoriser sans consentir à une rémunération équitable des « emprunts » rédactionnels ainsi effectués ; et troisièmement des tendances similaires ne sont pas constatables dans la presse magazine. Dit autrement, les relations entre médias écrits et médias numériques justifieraient une analyse approfondie des stratégies respectives ; et il en est de même pour les autres industries culturelles et informationnelles (cf. Miège, 2017).

Il serait évidemment intéressant de procéder à une analyse détaillée de ces quatre exemples, ce qui n'est pas envisageable dans le cadre de cet article, l'objectif étant ici d'insister sur le nécessaire ancrage dans les sociétés contemporaines des techniques numériques, en continuité le procès identifié précédemment avec les Tic analogiques.

3. La temporalité des médiatisations= entre temps court et temps long:

Les outils numériques s'inscrivent dans la continuité des Tic. C'est particulièrement observable si on se positionne dans le temps long qui seul permet de mettre en évidence à la fois les discontinuités, les substitutions et les continuités (ces dernières rarement prises en considération).

Et ce faisant, on peut évaluer les mutations (et non les révolutions) opérées, au premier rang desquelles on signalera la multiplication des échanges interindividuels à distance qui sont à mettre à l'actif des réseaux sociaux-numériques, les échanges en présentiel se voyant complétés/ remplacés par des échanges à distance accessibles en permanence par un ensemble d'« amis » qui antérieurement n'étaient pas sollicités et impliqués. La communication interindividuelle change ainsi de dimension, et est plus difficilement maîtrisable par ceux qui en sont à l'origine : ainsi pour les *tweets* (les décideurs politiques et économiques, et même les sportifs et les artistes sont ainsi dans l'obligation de faire appel à des spécialistes pour gérer leurs communications) et même pour les messages accompagnés de photos. La nouveauté réside bien sûr dans l'élargissement quantitatif et géographique des destinataires des messages, mais aussi dans l'obligation de contrôler les traces laissées le plus souvent malgré soi.

A contrario on peut mieux comprendre le « maintien » comme déjà indiqué de certains grands médias ou des industries culturelles (musique enregistrée, cinéma, etc.) ; l'« ancien système » se trouve repris, et non pas remplacé comme le voudraient *a priori* les normes de l'économie numérique favorables aux productions des amateurs et aux échanges directs entre producteurs et consommateurs (cf le *peer to peer*).

Ces phénomènes nous sont connus, car ils concernent maintenant plus ou moins chacun de nous dans sa vie quotidienne. Mais ce que nous ne percevons pas, ou mal, c'est qu'ils sont la traduction d'une tendance plus fondamentale : l'industrialisation de l'information- communication (pour plus de précisions sur l'articulation entre information et communication: Miège, 2015). Engagée dès la fin du 19^{ème} siècle, et élargie durant le 20^{ème} siècle, elle connaît désormais une impulsion décisive dont il s'agit de prendre la mesure. Et à ce stade de mon argumentation, il me paraît nécessaire de mettre l'accent sur les deux formes principales que prend, avec le développement des techniques numériques, ce procès tout à fait spécifique, consistant effectivement à industrialiser des activités dont on n'envisageait pas jusqu'à peu, qu'elles prendraient cette orientation : en quoi consistent ces deux formes principales ?

- le positionnement préférentiel des géants du numérique (et de bien d'autres firmes de moindre importance à leurs suites) au stade de l'intermédiation, celle-ci entendue comme le lieu (dans le cycle de la valeur des produits) où ces nouveaux intermédiaires, loin de ne vendre que des services de mise en relation, orientent la consommation de plus en plus individualisée, mobilisant même les consommateurs de prendre part aux actes d'achat, en respectant leurs libertés d'acheteurs, tout en laissant dans l'ombre toutes les stratégies d'influence et de promotion et en promettant même une baisse des coûts de transaction.
- la médiatisation des actions info-communicationnelles (celles auxquelles participe l'individu connecté sur les différents réseaux sociaux-numériques), et spécifiquement des médiations que l'on peut qualifier d'organisées (à l'initiative par exemple des institutions éducatives, des centres d'action culturelle ainsi que des organisations sociales et administratives), mais pas uniquement, car les techniques numériques permettent à de nouveaux collectifs de se former et de fonctionner, ponctuellement et même durablement.
- Souvent confondues car parfois mêlées de fait, et embrouillées par le dynamisme et l'omniprésence des grands réseaux sociaux-numériques, ces deux formes relèvent de pratiques sociales qui doivent être distinguées. Elles sont formalisées dans le schéma ci-dessous.

On ne manquera pas d'ajouter que dans l'économie numérique l'essentiel, c'est-à-dire ce qui marque le « mouvement » en profondeur, l'organise et en assure l'avancée, réside aujourd'hui dans l'intermédiation et donc dans le fonctionnement des plateformes.

4. S'intéresser prioritairement au couple données massives/ algorithmes:

Ce que l'on connaît des *Big Data*, ou plus exactement ce que l'on en pressent, c'est qu'elles fonctionnent à notre insu et dans le secret des affaires (dans le double sens du mot affaires, le sens lié au commerce et le sens portant sur les événements publics), sauf lorsque des fuites émanant de lanceurs d'alertes ("whistleblower") ou des révélations provenant d'enquêtes de presse conduites avec patience, réussissent à en publier des aspects généralement partiels, contribuant alors au renforcement de la croyance forte que ce qui est en jeu c'est surtout l'atteinte aux droits humains et à la *privacy*.

Or, en se centrant sur l'individu, et tout particulièrement son activité de consommateur, et en occultant la dimension sociale, les données massives laissent de côté le travail et l'activité des travailleurs d'une part, mais aussi participent de l'expropriation du commun dans la vie en société d'autre part. Les données massives sont loin d'être représentatives du fonctionnement des sociétés ; elles sont mêmes au cœur d'un processus de dépossession des activités des travailleurs-citoyens pour produire des connaissances bénéficiant aux entreprises et aux grandes organisations, et à ces dernières seulement, contrairement à une perception répandue et selon laquelle elles pourraient donner lieu à de bonnes connaissances.

A l'aide des données massives auxquelles ils ont accès, et qui consistent successivement en vues, liens, *likes* et traces les algorithmes opèrent toute une série de choix qui cohabitent et se mélangent, mais qu'il importe de distinguer conceptuellement, et exprimant/traduisant successivement, comme l'a bien montré Dominique Cardon (Cardon, 2015):

- l'imprécise popularité des clics ;
- l'autorité des méritants ;
- la fabrique de la réputation,
- et, la prédiction par les traces.

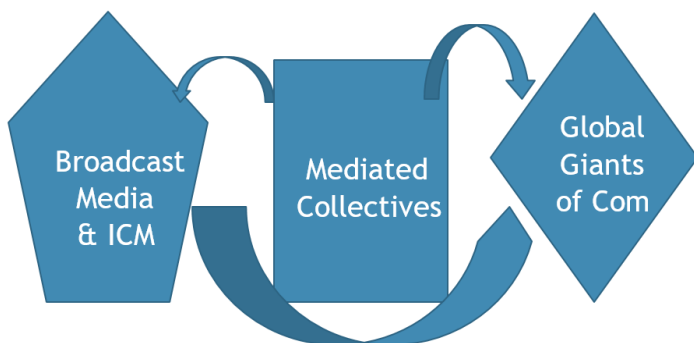
De ce fait, la raison calculatoire se substitue à la rationalité professionnelle ou sociale supposée, avec la multiplication de « théorisations » révisables, non contextualisées, non

publiques, et issues du traitement des seules données à la disposition des entreprises et des grandes agences publiques.

Il s'ensuit que le couple algorithmes / données est au cœur des nouvelles médiatisations, dans le secret des affaires, sauf lorsque le voile est levé, par exemple par des lanceurs d'alertes, ce qui est encore très exceptionnel.

D'où de nouvelles priorités pour la recherche en matière d'information – communication, et particulièrement la mise à jours des stratégies entrepreneuriales actuellement à l'œuvre sans s'afficher ouvertement. L'enjeu est de taille, et les difficultés méthodologiques considérables. Mais le travail est engagé, et des « résultats » sont déjà publiés, notamment dans des revues anglo-saxonnes et maintenant francophones.

Diagramme sur les « nouvelles » médiatisations



Source: Auteur.

5. Et pour conclure:

Bien d'autres éléments seraient à mettre en avant pour contribuer à la connaissance de la « nouvelle » médiatisation, j'ai été contraint de me limiter à ce qui me paraissait essentiel pour compléter l'analyse que je propose de la médiatisation, à savoir **ces 3 assertions**, mais je pourrai apporter d'autres éclairages, notamment sur la question de savoir ce qu'est un média aujourd'hui (sur ce point on pourra se référer à l'ouvrage dirigé par mon collègue Benoît Lafon (Lafon, dir., 2019).

Si j'ai mis l'accent sur des interrogations qui me paraissent centrales, du point de vue de la perspective scientifique

qui me paraît devoir être privilégiée, je dois reconnaître qu'elles se relient de façon heuristique avec des interrogations d'ordre socio-anthropologique, qui sont généralement formulées à propos/ à l'occasion de l'émergence des techniques numériques, sans être pour autant entièrement corrélées à cette émergence, et cela dans deux directions principales conduisant à observer l'apparition 1° d'un nouvel éthos (nouvelles manières d'être, nouveaux styles, etc.) ainsi que 2° de nouvelles rhétoriques, ceux-ci accompagnant la reconfiguration en cours des dispositifs techniques jusqu'à présent dominants, et tout particulièrement la télévision (qui s'éloigne de plus en plus du modèle de la télévision généraliste de masse). Ces interrogations mettent l'accent sur des dimensions qui deviennent effectivement primordiales : la culture de l'image, la vitesse, la surveillance, la performance et aboutissent également à modifier sensiblement ce que l'on peut désigner comme le sens du collectif ou du commun. Elles se coordonnent assez aisément avec les perspectives que j'ai ouvertes, mais à condition de ne pas les traiter en soi, comme des « valeurs » indépendantes du développement technico-industriel à l'œuvre dans les sociétés contemporaines.

Enfin, et peut-être pour me faire mieux comprendre, je ne peux m'empêcher de clamer mon désaccord total avec les perspectives énoncées dans un récent appel à articles, rédigé par deux intervenants à ce Séminaire et publié à l'initiative de la revue canadienne *Communiquer – revue de Communication sociale et publique*. Sous le titre : « Croire en la technologie : médiatisation du futur et futur de la médiatisation », on peut lire en effet ceci :

« Entendue comme une partie du processus de construction communicative de la réalité socio-culturelle actuelle d'un monde dans lequel la science conquise par l'intelligence artificielle est rattrapée par la religion, la médiatisation du futur, d'une part agglutine les craintes d'une apocalypse où la prise technologique du contrôle sur la vie serait le sens de l'avenir de l'humanité, et, d'autre part, suscite l'espérance quasi évangélique d'une percolation salutaire de la technologie dans le corps humain et dans son environnement ».etc.

Tout m'oppose à ce discours, où les sciences humaines et sociales ainsi que les connaissances qu'elles produisent/ sont

susceptibles de produire, sont *de facto* complètement évacuées, au profit d'une anticipation des voies du futur fondée sur un moralisme d'inspiration religieuse, jouant à la fois sur les peurs et les croyances dans les techniques, et qu'on doit rapprocher des thèses post- et trans- humanistes. Ce type de discours a toutes chances de ne pas aider à la compréhension des phénomènes de médiatisation. En tout cas, je tiens à affirmer fermement ma différence.

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Individuals, collectives, and polarization in the unstable situation caused by mediatization and the contemporary circulation of meaning

Mario Carlón¹

Abstract: This article reviews the role of individuals and their link with polarization processes in the transition from mass media society to the contemporary one. According to Eliseo Verón, “Among the factors operating in the social meta-space, individualism is undoubtedly the main responsible for accelerating divergence”. That was its role in postmodern media society. Today individuals are still factors of divergence, but they are polarized. Why are individuals polarized in contemporary societies? The thesis that is presented says that contemporary polarization is complementary to individualism, that it is no longer a choice but a hypermediated destiny. And that one of the main causes of articulation is the permanent instability established by mediatization and the new conditions for the circulation of meaning.

Keywords: Circulation. Meaning. Polarization. Mediatization. Power.

This article addresses how mediatization, circulation, and polarization are articulated in contemporary society, in which mediatization and circulation underwent major transformations. It is developed in six parts.

In the first, we will review Eliseo Verón’s postmodern thesis on mediatization and circulation, which includes as a relevant aspect the diagnosis that the individualist revolution

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that characterizes a mediatized society results in an acceleration of divergence. In the second, we will update this analysis in the light of the “contemporary Verón,” which insists on the increase in divergence; and we will ask ourselves about the characteristics of the time. In the third, we will review the theses of the echo chamber and personalization via algorithms, which was used to explain polarization on Twitter in the framework of the analysis of a major mediated political event in Argentina. In the fourth, we will analyze the strengths and weaknesses of this type of analysis to explain the contemporary polarizations. In the fifth, we will question to what extent the principles of equality and freedom can be the “amalgamation” of the current polarization. In the fifth, we will question to what extent the principles of equality and freedom can be the “amalgamation” of the current polarization. We will analyze polarization as a space-time phenomenon that works in “two times”; and ask ourselves if these principles enable complex social phenomena of diverse origin, such as political, environmental or ecological, and gender, to converge in determined contexts, building specific polarization scenarios. In the end, we will argue that the new mediatization and circulation of meaning have generated scale leaps in the instability of individuals and that this instability is complementary to the current processes of polarization.

1. Mediatization and postmodern circulation – the role of individuals

As a result of the expansion of studies on mediatizations, currently, there is a certain consensus concerning the diagnosis made by Eliseo Verón (2001 [1984], 1995 [1986]) that in postmodernity, there is a *transition from a media society to a mediatized one*. This transition implied that, in the conceptualization of the mass media, we moved from the domain of representative logics to the logics of production of meaning: the media stopped being seen as more or less distorting “mirrors” of social reality to being considered meaning-producer dispositifs and builders of events (VERÓN, 1987 [1981]).

But that was not the only contribution that Verón made to think about the era of mass media (modernity and postmodernity). It is possible to argue that taking advantage of the debates on postmodernism as a specific time, between the eighties and the nineties, he articulated a theory that, in addition to identifying the specificity of mediatization, worked on three other thematic fields: a) that of semiosis or the network semiotics (1987); b) that of “communication,” which in its terminology corresponds to the circulation of meaning as a non-linear phenomenon (1987) and, c) that of “actors” (through which it incorporated institutions, media, and sociological notions, collectives, and individuals as *signs* temporarily located in the semiotic network) (VERÓN, 1994, 1999).

After these texts, he wrote a series of essays in which he made very valuable clarifications. One of them is “Conversation about the future” (VERÓN 2001), in which he specified his hypotheses on mediatization and circulation (under names such as lag and divergence) and on what role do social actors occupy in the articulation of these fields, particularly individuals². I review them quickly.

Mediatization and circulation. Verón does not yet speak, in this 2001 text, of the end of television, a thesis that he will develop a few years later; but how he narrates the history of mediatization and circulation already advances his account of a growing gap or divergence between production and recognition. The era after the Second World War until the 1970s, of consolidation of television, management, and marketing, is for Verón the one with the smallest gap and the largest convergence:

In the period ranging from the end of the Second World War to the 1970s, management and marketing theories and their precise and proven techniques for controlling the articulation between sup-

2 This work was written before those that characterize his last period, which includes his reflections on the “end” of a mass medium such as television and its programming capacity for social life (VERÓN, 2006, 2009); the development of a non-anthropocentric paradigm to conceptualize the new individual and organic enunciators in public spaces, and the “access” revolution as a transformation of circulation of meaning thanks to the Internet (VERÓN, 2013). These elaborations are absent in his texts of the eighties and nineties.

ply and demand took hold in the business world. It was a period of powerful convergence, also marked by the advent and the definitive installation of television (2001, p. 134).

In the passage from the seventies to the eighties, and in particular in the eighties, that is, in full postmodernity, the transformation would begin - *management and marketing crisis*, despite the latter expanding into politics (because politics begins to reveal its crisis of legitimacy); the advertising crisis, that had been a symptom of convergence as an articulator between the common meta-space (the economy) and the social, which was evidenced by a progressive crisis of the brands; the crisis of a mass medium - the graphic press - inseparable from the origin and consolidation of the democratic system (in addition to the Nation-State).

What is the reason for this story, what are its foundations? One of them is his vision of mediatization:

Contrary to many prophecies [...] that were formulated before the emergence of so-called 'mass' communication technologies, the technological supports whose emergence have made possible different modalities of collective communication, tend, in the long term, to accentuate the gap and not to reduce it [...] to increase the complexity of circulation [...] The multiplication [...] of technological supports [...] that allow the diffusion of the same messages throughout society makes society more complex [...] the more the society is mediatized, the more complex it becomes (VERÓN, 2001, p. 130).

The other, as he points out, that is "much more difficult to visualize," is the "change of social actors" (VERÓN, 2001, p. 136). And among the different social actors that generate change, there is one that stands out: the individual. In the first period, "the couple *brand/loyal consumer* symbolically expressed convergence" (ibid., p. 136). The crisis begins again in the late 1970s and early 1980s and is confirmed in the early 1990s when

[...] se multiplican las investigaciones sobre recepción, y se comienza a comprobar que los individuos que habitan el meta-espacio social son menos lisos, pasivos, manipulables e influenciables de lo que se había imaginado (ibid., p. 137).

As he points out towards the end of the chapter, “of the factors operating in the social meta-space, individualism is undoubtedly the main responsible for the acceleration of the divergence” (ibid., p. 138). In his opinion, the

The media have not invented the individualism of modernity, but they have exacerbated it to the extreme and have consequently contributed to accentuating the fragmentation and growing complexity of consumers (ibid., p. 136).

2. Continuities and ruptures between postmodernity and contemporaneity

It is possible to assure that, in his later work, Eliseo Verón did not regret what he had written, but, on the contrary, continued his story. A clear example of what we are saying is his thesis on the “end” of television. For Verón, the divergence between production and recognition did not stop growing and, finally, caused the crisis of mass television. As he expresses in the last section of “The end of the history of a piece of furniture” (2009),

It is necessary to cover the whole process of mediatization, old media, and new technologies to understand the current situation: on the offer side, we are witnessing an unprecedented technological integration. Until a decade ago, three major industries - telecommunications, computing, and public television - had separate histories [...] Thanks to the Internet Protocol, the three sectors today converge technologically and commercially [...] This process is ending the third (and last) stage of ‘general public’ television as we knew because the traditional audiovisual sector is the most affected in its business structure. But we must understand

that this technological convergence does not imply homogenization, but quite the opposite: it will produce a growing diversity of modes of use. Growing convergence in production, growing divergence in reception: the distinction between production and recognition is now more necessary than ever (VERÓN, 2009, p. 300-301).

In this development, the “central element of the ongoing evolution is that the *programming of consumption passes from production to reception*: in the audiovisual sector of mediatization, it is a radically new phenomenon” (ibid., p. 301). This process has exploded in our contemporaneity and is one of its defining features. Since then, the successful audiovisual “*new media*”, that is, platforms like Netflix can be an unprecedented articulation of elements characteristic of the 20th century (cinematographic language; subscription-based business model, such as graphic media and cable; home consumption such as television, video-recorder, and cable TV) and other novelties (digital interface, personalized recommendation by algorithms, promotion narratives of the institution and the “*transmedia*” series), but the important thing is that *they became what they are because they started from the new logic, based on the programming of consumption*, which, in a certain sense, is the abandonment of the media from its claim to program social life and the triumph of divergence.

In short: it is difficult to deny the thesis that the combination of greater complexity in mediatization and circulation generates, in our contemporaneity, broad divergence and fragmentation. But the theme of this Symposium forces us to face this scenario from another angle, that of polarization. The question that we ask ourselves, from our point of view, is approximately the following: how can it be that in an era in which there is even broad divergence, one of the most characteristic phenomena is, nation by nation, polarization, that is, agglutinations in two great poles of social collectives of massive reach? So, aren't Verón's theses correct? And is our analysis of contemporaneity inspired by him wrong? Is that what is happening?

3. Why is society polarized? An answer from the analysis of political science and big data

In this development of deep individualism and personalization, how to explain polarization? In a significant study on political polarization and social networks, the researcher Ernesto Calvo (University of Maryland) stated that the *logics of media networks favor the generation of strongly polarized scenarios in the political field*. In *Political Anatomy of Twitter in Argentina. Tweeting #Nisman* (CALVO, 2015), Calvo showed how two strongly polarized communities acted on Twitter following the prosecutor's death on January 18, 2015³. Nisman was the one who was in charge of the investigation of the terrorist attack on the AMIA (Israeli Mutual Association Argentina) that happened in 1994 in the city of Buenos Aires, which caused more than eighty deaths. A few days before his body was found dead, the prosecutor denounced President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in a television program for having built an “impunity pact” with Iran, a country that Nisman had held responsible, along with other actors, such as the SIDE⁴ and the United States, for the attack through the Hezbollah group. Relying on the perspective of the “echo chamber,” Calvo maintains that “social networks are an echo chamber, which permanently returns messages that are consistent with our prejudices” (ibid., p. 14). Thus, the author distinguishes, on Twitter, two large communities, the government and the opposition, based on the presence of different narratives - on the one hand, that of suicide, enunciated by adherents to the government; on the other hand, that of murder and the “suicided,” supported by those of the opposition. To make what we are pointing out clearer, let's see the following graph with which Calvo illustrated the positioning of these communities on Twitter:

3 His death gave rise to a riveting documentary, *Nisman: the Prosecutor, the President, and the Spy* directed by English Justin Webster and produced by Netflix, which was released, on the platform, in 2019.

4 The SIDE, later renamed, was the Secretary of State Intelligence, the institutional space for spies in Argentina.

tweets generated by opponents. Those who live in government neighborhoods receive a disproportionate number of government-related tweets. Each user lives in a politically segregated neighborhood or at least much more segregated than in their non-virtual lives (ibid., p. 27).

It happens on social networks, according to his analysis, that are dominated by institutional actors and powerful enunciators (the most retweeted⁶). And from this analysis, Calvo points out that

The fundamental question that a study on polarization must answer is not the reason why there are fakes, opportunists, and operators willing to manipulate public opinion. The issue is why a large mass of voters accept and take as their own what the opinion-makers say, regardless of whether the narrative was created out of conviction or to obtain political gain. The answer is simple: on Twitter, the vast majority of those around me agree with what I think (ibid., p. 29)⁷.

In this way, the question of the reason why society is polarized finds, in the perspective of the echo chamber, a new version, updated to the digital media, automation, personalization, and algorithms. It is a new version, we could say, of the *power of the media*. According to this perspective, communities are

6 Thus, he points out: "In the virtual space, institutional actors dominate. Political parties, journalists, civil servants, government agencies, governors, mayors; all try to construct narratives that maximize their own political goals. Only a few bloggers and professional operators (trolls, bots, fakes) alter the institutional logic of information transmission. Although social networks democratize the access and dissemination of information, the voices that are recognized by the public are not many. What Aníbal Fernández says (at that time Chief of Cabinet of the government - clarified by the author) is incomparably more visible than what Adriana, Pablito, or Lucas Fernández says. It is because, behind Aníbal Fernández, there is a political party with thousands of militants, government institutions, and a set of political, social, and economic relationships that Adriana, Pablito, or Lucas do not have at their disposal. Power asymmetries in Argentine politics are rebuilt on social networks" (CALVO, 2015, p. 22-23).

7 "The goal of Twitter is to improve the browsing experience for those who use its service. However, the result is an information distribution mechanism that is spatially segregated by communities and reinforces original identities" (CALVO, 2015, p. 26).

organized in the media and polarized by the logic of media social networks, which segregate each user into communities in which everyone thinks alike and only receives information consistent with their positions.

Based on this type of analysis, which advances in new objects and updates old debates, we must ask ourselves: is the power of algorithms enough to explain contemporary polarization? We hypothesize that although these phenomena are powerful and operate specific dynamics, *it is not enough*. Investigating why it is not enough is one of the central tasks of this work, as well as of the answers that we will try to outline.

4. The echo chamber holes

The explanation of the motif why the argument of the echo chamber is not enough is due, in the first place, to the fact that *social life, that which, as Calvo himself affirms, is more diverse than the Twitter bubbles, never stopped*⁸. In the period in which the case analyzed was developed, in all public and private spaces of Argentina, the death of Nisman was debated, which became a central theme of social life.

Second, it is because no one lives only in the bubbles of social media. Networks are permanently permeated by content produced by other media, which is the mass media - that have not disappeared. In the Nisman case, for example, during the forty days in which the data collection lasted, from which that graph was constructed, the broadcast of content about the Nisman case was incessant: hours and hours in prime time radio and television (in addition to the coverage of portals, blogs, and newspapers). And many of these contents were shared, discussed, and debated on social media networks⁹. In other words,

8 Interestingly, the comparison between social life on networks and outside of it in spatial, geographical, and even urban terms is also present in PARISSIER (2017 [2011], p. 215-249).

9 Between January 19 and 20, the major newspapers in Argentina dedicated their cover and main headline to Nisman's death (not all of them covered the case on the 19th, some did on the 20th). For instance: Clarín, main title: "Political commotion: prosecutor Nisman found dead" (January 19), La Nación, main title: "Stupor and protests over the death of the prosecutor who denounced the President" (January 20); Página 12, "What was it that led you to kill yourself?" (January 20). Their principal columnists also wrote on the subject.

there are media issues to attend to, but the answer does not come only by giving attention to social networks.

A third answer that can be offered is that there are political reasons that explain the polarization. And of course, there are. But these are reasons that exceed the logic of traditional politics, based on loyalty to political parties and the stability of institutions. They have to be others, based on *general or transversal principles, capable of articulating diverse groups*. Because contemporary polarizations often articulate sectors with different interests, such as identity (gender), ecological, or environmental.

To move in this direction, we will return to political theory. But we will do it from a specific angle: examining more than ideologies to democratic principles, those that supposedly we all share, such as freedom, equality, and fraternity. At a time when death certificates have been drawn up for great stories (LYOTARD, 1986 [1979]) and history in its teleological sense (HUYSEN, 2014 [1995]), we need to put into play other arguments to interpret what are the causes that enable the extensive processes of social polarization.

5. Can equality and freedom amalgamate contemporary polarizations?

Contemporary polarization builds specific poles that unfold in space and time. The poles are media and social spaces, hybrid, that work in two stages.

On the one hand, they organize and reorganize all the time according to the development of events. In this way, they allow the articulation of tactical and fleeting adhesion strategies. They are “soft spaces” because they are large containers for groups that do not require any affiliation or the obligations that all institutions traditionally require. Anyone can feel represented by any of them, anyone can say publicly, at some point, that they adhere to one of them or attack the opposite, but the conditions of belonging are soft enough to participate at will, dedicating the time available to participate. What’s more: one can enter and leave these spaces day by day, moment by mo-

ment, giving a “like,” intervening in a hashtag, or sharing content on social media (which does not mean, in any way, that it does not imply involvement).

On the other hand, *they generate long-term loyalties and consolidate consistent collectives* (which, moreover, are periodically expressed in electoral processes). So they are also the other side of the tactical strategies that operate in the short term. Because they enable the construction of solid links that do not go through the conditions of traditional party politics, these links are generally present in militant minority groups, which are very active elements, with the capacity to intervene in all media and social spaces.

Now, how are these poles constituted today? What is your mortar? One argument that can be sustained is that, in part, these poles are organized from the dominance of determined democratic principles, which is what the famous Italian political scientist Norberto Bobbio (1995) identified in his classic *Right and Left*. According to Bobbio, right and left uphold democratic principles. But what differentiates them is *an accentuation: that the left gives more privilege to equality and the right to freedom*¹⁰. The interest of Bobbio’s argument lies in that it is a thesis that helps to think, in an era of crisis of political institutions and of extreme personalization and individualization, of how polarization is built. According to this logic, one of the poles - the progressive one - is articulated from the dominance of the principle of *equality* while the other does from *freedom*¹¹.

10 Bobbio’s prologue author, Joaquín Estefanía, synthesizes: “the essence of the distinction between right and left ‘is the different attitude that the two parties - the people on the right and the people on the left - systematically show in the face of the idea of equality: those who declare themselves on the left give greater importance in their moral conduct and in their political initiative to what makes men equal, or how to mitigate and reduce the factors of inequality; those who declare themselves on the right are convinced that inequalities are an inescapable fact and that at the end of the day they should not even wish to eliminate them” (1995, p. 16-17). In that same text, Bobbio establishes a conceptual map in which he identifies four poles (he refers to “doctrines and political movements:” 1) the extreme left, 2) the center-left, 3) the center-right and 4) the extreme right (BOBBIO, 1995, p. 160).

11 To provide another foundation for this argument, we can recall what Daniel Innerarity pointed out more than twenty years later, already in the contemporary era, about the differences that characterize the culture of the left and the culture of the right: “In general, the left expects too much of politics, most of

We provide two examples, developed within the framework of the so-called “populism” that characterized Latin-American political history in recent decades and had a relevant cycle in power since the beginning of the 21st century¹². The first is a movement that we have studied at a key-moment of its mediatization, one that has promoted the Voting of the Equal Marriage Law in Argentina (CARLÓN, 2012). This movement was supported by Kirchnerism, then in power, given that the President was Cristina Fernández de Kirchner¹³. It based its argument on the principle of *equality*. Until then, Kirchnerism had occupied a very important place in the human rights issues, particularly in the reopening of the trials of the repressive military of the Dictatorship, but less relevant in gender issues. But the support for that initiative, which was consistent with its center-left position, allowed it to build a strong bond with diverse gender minorities who base their demands on that same right^{14 15}. A bond that extended on time.

the time more than the right; for that reason, it expects too much. It demands not only equality in the starting conditions, but also the results, that is, not only freedom but also equality. The right is content if politics is limited to maintaining the rules of the game and has an idea of the common good that is closer to mere aggregation of individual interests; it is more procedural and satisfied if politics guarantees limits and possibilities, while the concrete result (in terms of inequality, for example) is indifferent to it; at the most, it will accept the corrections of a ‘compassionate capitalism’ to mitigate some intolerable situations” (INNERARITY, 2017, p. 251). Comment: “To expect too long” is a comment that, formulated in this way, we do not share.

- 12 That cycle culminated in countries such as Argentina and Brazil with the triumphs of Mauricio Macri (2015-2019) and Jair Bolsonaro (2019-) but, since the triumph of Alberto Fernández (2019), it is currently in recovery.
- 13 To support that Law, it was the only time that former President Néstor Kirchner, at that time a Deputy, attended a session of the Legislative Chamber.
- 14 Even without forcing things too much, we can add more social groups to the center-left space based on the principle of equality. For example, environmental movements, which adopt, according to Maristella Svampa (2018), the form of anti-capitalist and ecological transition narratives, implicitly uphold the principle of equality between culture and nature by defending, like non-anthropocentric theoretical movements, biodiversity. Behind these movements lies, as in non-anthropocentric theories, resistance to modern anthropocentrism. It is considered that this separation between the human and nature, installed by philosophical movements such as those that rely on the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*, is part of the problem, that is, of the constitution of an increasingly less sustainable capitalism. Indeed, center-left movements, when for other types of political reasons (for example, territorial), do not assume environmentalist positions and play in favor of mega-mining or agribusiness, are not without internal strains.
- 15 Resistances to this modernism, that appear behind concepts such as “end of the

The second example is even more interesting because it shows that these principles act in a complex and, sometimes apparently, contradictory way in contemporary conjunctures. But, at the same time, it highlights its power to conceptualize different situations and controversies. Let us then remember what happened in another case of broad social adherence, such as the debate over the “right to abortion,” which was treated in Parliament as a bill in Argentina, called the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy Law in 2016. The analysis is interesting because center-right and center-left appear in this case, at first glance, holding inverted positions. As expressed in the title, which supports the idea of a right to voluntary interruption of pregnancy, the argument in favor of abortion, mainly supported by the center-left, was centered on the defense of individual *freedom*. On the other hand, the anti-abortionists, located to the center-right (Church, politicians, media), supported the argument of *equality* because they defended the right to life of the embryo, expressing that this life is worth the same as any other. However, the analysis does not end there; because it is worth remembering that the argument for the right to freedom to individually interrupt pregnancy was accompanied by another, in favor of the intervention of the public health system, based on equality. Or, in other words, to reduce the inequality in which, in abortion situations, are, on the one hand, rich and middle-class women (who attend a paid health service under hospital conditions) and, on the other, women in need, who often lose their lives due to lack of access to professionals and essential hygiene conditions. The case is interesting because it shows, on the one hand, how the center-left pole was able to grow by consistently adding more groups in the case of the Equal Marriage Law because it relied on the equality argument. And, on the other, even in a case that expressed the argument for freedom, such as the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy, it knew how to find a way to articulate it with equality.

Thus, the articulation of these dimensions and the updating of *equality and freedom* values, in their new manifesta-

human exception” (SCHAEFFER, 2009 [2007]) or the criticisms of the Anthropocene, are expanding today in the scientific literature, both within the social sciences and the sciences of nature, and acquire, according to Maristella Svampa (2018), the form of anti-capitalist narratives and ecological transition.

tions¹⁶, are essential for us to understand contemporary polarization. Not only as schematic phenomena but in their complexities and strains. But maybe not enough because from our perspective, it is necessary to add a more specific reflection on the status of individuals, the main acceleration factor of divergence according to Verón, and its transformations within the new mediatization and circulation.

6. Contemporary polarization, mediatization, and circulation: a scale leap in the instability of individuals and groups

To end a more general reflection on the question that we tackled in the first part, about mediatization and circulation, now rethought in terms of polarization. We have no doubts that contemporary transformation, which affects semiosis (semiotic network), mediatization, the status of enunciators (social actors), and circulation, is creating new and dynamic processes of convergence and divergence at a global, regional, and local level. Let us remember that, according to Verón, at *The end of the history of a piece of furniture* (2009), we live in an era of “growing convergence in production and growing divergence in reception.» But since Verón wrote that text in 2009, ten years have passed, and many things have changed. So it is time to get back to that discussion.

In the argument that we are going to present, all these dimensions are essential, but, above all, it is very relevant to pay attention to the difference in actors/ enunciators that exist between modernity/postmodernity, the era of the mass media, and the current one, in which organic enunciators (individuals and collectives) have multiplied, that were previously in recognition and are now also in production¹⁷.

Let's start by attending to this question according to how it can be seen *in production*, particularly from power-

16 An issue that has been studied by Isidoro Cheresky especially (2015).

17 VERÓN, 2013; CARLÓN, 2016b.

ful enunciators (political parties, companies, large companies). The development of algorithms that we comment on when referring to Calvo's text has been feeding different processes that, considered from the point of view of their social effects, are not homogeneous. On the one hand, there are projects based on the concept of *personalization* (PARISSIER, 2017 [2011]) implemented by corporations and of vast influence in the world of entertainment, information, and politics. The procedure analyzed by Parissier, promoted by Google since 2009, then turned into the matrix of search engines and media social networks, is also the pillar on which contemporary advertising is based. The accumulation of knowledge about Internet users allows one to dream of *news and advertisements tailored to each particular consumer*, and this device has concentrated the interest of advertisers since the fall of the historical business of mass media, which was based on notions such as audiences, rating, target, programming of consumption, and social life from production. So, *in production*, the logic of personalization seeks to solve, first of all, the problems posed *in recognition* of postmodernity for the development of individualism. *It promises to solve the challenge of the individual*, that "social actor" who is the main responsible for the acceleration of the divergence, according to Verón. In other words, it promises to make convergence a reality. It is the logic of *Netflix*, whose utopia is, as its CEO Red Hastings put it, to be able to recommend to everyone the movie they want to see. However, it is enough to carefully observe its operation to notice that the task is not easy¹⁸ because always the taste of consumers is labile and changing, especially when the product offered has the complexity of a narrative and not that of a yogurt. It is difficult to believe that this new knowledge is capable of dissolving the gap inherent in circulation, of the divergence that is activated each time the person communicating is different from the person receiving, among other reasons because *the logics of*

18 Here it is interesting to note that if Netflix has dedicated itself to accumulating information on user consumption to offer a coefficient that, supposedly, identifies the degree of coincidence between the film and the series offered and its costs (98%, 85%, etcetera), it should not be underestimated that, in turn, it has endeavored to improve the historical categories of classification of films developed by Hollywood and the video clubs, which are the genres.

individualism based on subjectivity are multiple and dynamics. That is why it is not enough to see this logic from production, as understood by powerful enunciators, a phenomenon that we can verify when we observe the behavior of individuals on social media networks, that is, when they are in production (on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, etcetera). What we can observe in production is that the logic of showing different ways continued to expand, providing the contents that they share or producing accentuations that pretend to be unique.

On the other hand, the emergence of a new media system based mainly on the Internet and telephone networks should not make us forget the limitations of research that is restricted to investigating the logics that is based on a single media system, even if it is the newest, as we saw when we stopped at the “holes” of the echo chamber topic. We live in a hypermedia society, in which at least two media systems coexist, that of the mass media and the one based on the Internet. The new conformation of mediatization has not merely enabled individuals and groups to speak; it has done much more than that because it has subjected them to two simultaneous processes. On the one hand, to an increase in complexity, a phenomenon that is known as inherent to mediatization. On the other hand, and our thesis is an increase in instability. Both are inseparable from each other.

We can recall here that one of the characteristics of postmodernity (or “liquid modernity,” according to the terminology of Zygmunt Bauman (2003 [2000]), based on the space-time transformation that occurred in recent decades, was that not only institutions became more “liquid,” rather they became *zombies* and individuals had to assume new roles¹⁹. In this classic work, Bauman recalls that Ulrich Beck, another great researcher of postmodern individualism, expressed that “the way one lives

19 Bauman points this out by citing Beck, who in a 1999 interview spoke of “zombie institutions”, “that are dead and still alive” (2003, p. 12), among which he distinguished “family, class, and neighborhood” (ibid., p. 12). In that note, Beck wonders: “Ask yourself what actually is a family nowadays? What does it mean? Of course there are children, my children, our children. But even parenthood, the core of family life, is beginning to desintegrate under conditions of divorce [...] [G]randmothers and grandfathers get included and excluded without any means of participation in the decisions of their sons and daughters. From the point of view of their grandchildren the meaning of grandparents has to be determined by individual decisions and choices” (ibid., p. 12)

becomes a biographical solution to systemic contradictions "(ibid., p. 40). To which the Polish sociologist adds: "Risks and contradictions continue to be socially produced; the individual is only being charged with responsibility and necessity to face them" (ibid., p. 40). In this context in which individualism "is a destiny, not a choice" (ibid., p. 39), being an individual, it can be said, is far from being a panacea²⁰.

And it can readily become a frightening situation if we consider that, since then, it is a destination that has become increasingly unstable, demanding, and complex. When Bauman wrote in 2000, social media networks had not yet appeared, which gave individuals the possibility of managing, each one, their media (Facebook in 2004; YouTube in 2005; Twitter in 2006; Instagram in 2010; Snapchat in 2011; TikTok in 2016, etcetera). Managing a media is not just for showing and giving an opinion, to satisfy the famous postmodern narcissus. It also implies for individuals a practically mandatory public exposure that is permanently evaluated by their positions. *Having almost the obligation to express oneself about the multiplicity and complexity of the issues of the time - between flows of meaning that overflow their knowledge and expertise - is, we could say, paraphrasing Beck, the destiny of the contemporary individual, not a choice.* It happens to them in the two main modes of circulation of meanings in which they are located and characterize our time: the vertical-horizontal and the transversal (CARLÓN, 2020).

Individuals who manage their own media are located in the vertical-horizontal mode concerning the discourses that come from "above" (from the mass media) and "horizontally" (from the social media networks). That is to say that they permanently have to pronounce on everything that, on the one hand, is reported by the mass media and, on the other hand, that comes to them "horizontally" produced, appropriated, commented on, and shared by their "peers."

And they are located in the *transverse* circulation mode when the meaning "travels" from "inside out" and from "outside-

20 "The self-containment and self-sufficiency of the individual can also be another illusion: that men and women have no one to blame for their frustrations and concerns does not imply, today more than yesterday, that they can defend themselves from their frustrations" (BAUMAN, 2003 [2000], p. 39).

in." Of what? Of their own social and media identity that is also located in multiple groups and institutions with which they have different bonds. Example 1, the individual and the family: every time an information about the family to which they belong is made public either because it is published by their children, parents, or by themselves, that is to say, "*outside*," one way or another they are or may be affected. Example 2, the individual and the university: every time a ranking is published on the position that their institution of belonging occupies, it affects, for better or worse, "*inside*" and "*outside*," the prestige of its members.

With which we finally arrive at the question that motivates us, which is the following: in this complex process of acceleration of the divergence that characterizes our contemporaneity in which individuals play such an important role, what is their participation in each pole that, we can hypothesize, relies on processes of "convergence²¹?" We hypothesize that, besides, the success of the polarization is due to the power of the "media" (thanks to phenomena such as algorithms, as Calvo explains) to which each pole provides, at some level, responses, to individuals and groups, to the increase in complexity and instability that characterize the multiple situations in which they are located. According to this argument, after the institutions, the media (as institutions), the parties, and the brands entered into crisis, a product of individualism and divergence, the new conditions of circulation of meaning generate *even greater instability for individuals*. And it is at this point that with polarization, which contains and gives answers, they find their complementarity.

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21 We say convergence following the use that Verón makes of the pair convergence/divergence in "Conversación Sobre el Futuro" (VERÓN, 2001). But it must be clear that, from our point of view, based on circulation, the poles subsist while supporting "inside" the "divergence": the difference that allows each individual to feel a constitutive part of them without losing their individuality.

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Among Media: The place of mediatization

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Abstract: Considering the informative environments where different communicative processes are organized, this work proposes to study the differences established between technical media and mediatization, seeking to achieve matrices (between fixed and flows in polarization) that write another epistemology of communication. Plural mediatization processes are affected by the connections between media, but they redefine their dimensions as they are affected by new informational means; they are not determined by them but operate as a critical action power that can have, in expectation, the revision of a previous polarized epistemology to give rise to more critic and consequent communication.

Keywords: Communication. Information. Epistemology. Mediatization.

“On the telephone or on the air, it isn’t messages that travel at electric speed: the sender is sent, minus a body, as information and image, and all the old relationships of speaker and audience tend to be reversed. The laws of media in tetrad form reveal some of the subliminal and previously inaccessible aspects of technology. To the extent that these observations reveal the hidden effects of artefacts on our lives, they are endeavours of art, bridging the worlds of biology and technology” (MCLUHAN, 1988, p. 109)

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1. The diversity of mediatization

If medialogy establish differences, which create oppositions between technical and communication media, theoretical and heuristic epistemologies, nomological-deductive methodologies, and inductive or abductive hypothesis, mediatization point to ambivalences that overcome oppositions because, among them, symmetries or asymmetries, polarizations or dichotomies are not established, but diversities and multiplicities. In this way, the polarization that would draw singular and individual characteristics is overcome to adhere to collective and multiple singularities. That is, the differences give space not for polarizations but for antagonisms that lead to the perception of the differences between the singular identity and the plurality of the other (MOUFFE, 1996, p. 13).

Differences and diversities study approximations and distances between technical media and mediatization; thus, the main interest of mediatization is of a more epistemological and general nature than a descriptive and phenomenological one.

Within this diversity, media, information and communication or techniques, culture and society are all confronted. Confusion regarding the plural form "media" of the Latin noun *medium* gave rise to the neologism "*midia*"² almost dictionaryed, as it gets used with a clear semantic guideline that designates the means but understands them in their intention and pragmatical effects. In this sense, the means become media because what is in question is not the technological uniqueness of each medium or group of media, but its performative cultural effect that intersects mediations and interactively affects the mediatization.

Working with digital media and especially with the Internet, Dominique Wolton (2008, p. 149) distinguishes three levels of analysis: the Internet user, the individual, and the citizen who, when in an interface, complete themselves on the Internet, the planetary connection, and the network. Such interface process makes it possible to evidence an axis of analysis that interests this work:

2

From this root, the word mediatization is formed in Portuguese (mediatização).

[...] the most difficult is not the information, but the communication. The Internet is but an automated information system; one way or another, it is men and collectives who integrate these flows of information into their communications. Information is always a segment, and only communication, with its prodigious ambiguities, gives it meaning. (WOLTON, 2008, p. 149)

The quote seems to state that information is merely content transmitted by communication, hence the difference and, above all, the difficulty established in the transition from information to communication, which, understood *as prodigious ambiguity*, would transform meaning into information. It is necessary to emphasize the cognitive and conceptual distance that establishes between information - understood as a technically transmitted content and the other one that indicates the process of informational production that, in an entropic development, supposes the organization of information as a constitutive element of cultural environments. The need to consider the media environment, which derives from the interface between the organization and technical and human agents, is fundamental to situate the territory of a media ecology where information and communication, subject and object, message, and content, meaning and the production of meaning meet.

Undoubtedly, an extraordinary process that generates ambiguities is due to the traditional conceptual reduction that confuses information and communication while trying to distance itself from the difficulty of processing the transition between them. It seems appropriate to go past the concept of information as transmitted content or simple quantitative data to achieve the interface established between information and communication, which, unanticipated, may not be ambiguous but ambivalent since both act together and generate the media difference that produces the distinction between transmission and production of meaning, by establishing communicative bonds between men, men and techniques, means and ends. Would we have reached the need to understand how we could define mediatization?

If, on the one hand, to inform is to shape the mind, on the other, it is up to the mind to organize, formulate, communicate, receive, propagate, and maintain that sense that shapes the mind through the specific and distinct way of the environmental organization of information. That is if living beings communicate because they respond to sensible stimuli developed by vital needs and necessary to adapt to the characteristics of the environment that maintain that subsistence, the man also develops analogous adaptation, however, adding to it the ability to invent, use and transform languages, which expand and specialize through the extensive materiality of technologies, media, science, and arts. It is the new dualism proposed by Logan to correct the dualism of Descartes, who understood extensive materiality incapable of producing knowledge (LOGAN, 2012, p. 12). That is, through the environmental dimension, which characterizes all knowledge that can generate meaning produce, involve information, communication, technologies, science, and arts:

The notion of information, regardless of its meaning and context, is akin to looking at a figure isolated from its background. When the background changes, so does the meaning of the picture. (LOGAN, 2012, p. 35)

As it may be seen, Logan started from the Second Law of Thermodynamics or from the field of Physics to define, considering McLuhan's strong influence on his work, the reflexive and ecological operation developed by a receiver to achieve a concept of structurally based information, as meaning that is "given by the process that interprets it" (LOGAN, 2012, p. 40). Close to Logan's concept, but starting from the consideration of the spatial matrix of information, Augustin Berque (2000, p. 99) speaks of ecumenical, material, and immaterial unfolding of an environmental nature, which affects all living beings in different degrees of complexity but which, for man, constitutes their mediatization.

This is how our media body was constituted. The structure shown through it divides the human body, so to speak, into two halves, one of which is the animal part of our body, the other, our social

body. This division into two halves that extends from the interior of our animal body to the horizon of our world is the structural moment of our existence, it is our media power. (BERQUE, 2000, p. 150-151)

In this escalation of complexity lies the interactive characteristic that marks the structural activity of production of information as a distinctive ecological trait among living species in search of increasingly stable equilibrium for survival, far beyond mere adaptation. (LOGAN, 2012, p. 69). In this sense, it is possible to understand the whole process of production and organization of information as a complex path that goes beyond the simple mimetic tendency that makes all living beings prone to conform, in the case of man, as “extended mind” that expands such path and encompasses all activities which, going beyond mimesis, coordinate themselves in all other creative activities that influence language, technology, and the arts although they distinguish between material and non-material instances. As a non-material, language, technology, and arts differ from the biosphere and constitute the *symbol sphere*, where complex action extends from material to immaterial instances. However:

The symbolic domain of human language and culture is a product of human conceptual thought, and they represent emerging phenomena and the propagation of the organization. They differ from living organisms who populate the biosphere, insofar as they are abstract, conceptual and symbolic, not materially instantiated, except for technology. In the case of technology, it is the concepts and organization used in creating the physical tools that are emerging and propagating, not the actual physical tools. (LOGAN, 2012, p. 150-151)

The material and immaterial dimensions of technology make it the holder of a complex characteristic that, as a consequence, influences its propagation: man-made technological programs propagate because they are created by them; however, technological devices evolve technically but they are not suscep-

tible to evolutionary propagation as information. Therefore, the technology of instruments differs from the symbolic information that propagates to the extent that it constitutes the specific sphere of man's creation. Two consequences of technology that make it significantly different.

Thus, there are two dimensions of technology that, while propagating information, must be considered in their differences: the technology that develops while new types of devices get created, often obeying the economic logic of the market, and the technology that propagates because it is symbolic, and constitutes different environments, exchanges information with its constituents, which present social, communicative, cultural, economic, and political dimensions that affect humans in all their complexity, as living, interactive beings. The mediatization, which we are interested in studying, is directly connected to the second dimension.

2. The mediatization of language

From the productive, economic, and financial processes of globalization, it is necessary to note that the global technological network provided by the digital is a base characteristic of productive modernity, but not enough to absorb all the complexity of symbolic exchanges that are also operated by the same digital technology.

To say that everything is information and exchange is not enough to create a new economy. On the one hand, there is the Network, which accelerates the circulation and profitability of capital, and on the other, the Network, which creates value and wealth itself. Contrary to common belief, there is no direct link between the two: the problem of creation of value, thus, of the link between information and production, which has always been at the heart of the economy, is not in fact regulated.

Then, for man to understand each other better it is not enough that they exchange a lot of informa-

tion. It is the cultural and social interpretation of information planes that count, not the volume or diversity of such information... That is why, at some point, it is advisable that the Internet user abandons mediatized communication and confronts natural social human communication. Hence the importance of contacts, voice, looks, beyond the mere exchange of signals. Beware of interactive loneliness! (WOLTON, 2008, p. 150)

As mentioned in the previous section, the citation clarifies the difference between the two technological dimensions, but, above all, stresses that mediatization does not only refer to the use of the network or devices provided by technological capital; on the contrary, mediatization is more directly linked to the environmentally organized territory through the exchange and evolution of human mind and values. Information and the consequences provided by technology are mediatized, but not the technologies themselves.

The mediatization provided by the organization and dissemination of information requires the reinvention of human values and relations capable of redirect technical systems, leading them to consider that, although planetary, the network connects cultural, social, linguistic, and productive differences that make heterogeneous something that technically presents itself as homogeneous. Mediatization uses technical resources, but its informational characteristic comprises of multiple differences. We live on a technologically connected, but multiple and diverse, planet; so, mediatization does not refer to the technological world in which we live, and from which it seems we are not willing to escape, but it refers to how we can reinvent the world and human relations, and this is an eminently political program, of which contemporary mediology is directly aware. Though technologically mediated, there is not a mediatized project that does not contemplate the differences and multiplicities which constitute the only possibility of reinvention worthy of the ability of man to generate information and produce affections. The seemingly homogeneous territory of mediatization gets altered, and so does the place for human relations.

3. There is no software

Friedrich Kittler is pointed out by Gumbrecht (2017), not only as an early scholar of the media, resulting from the current technique and their genealogy that goes back to the Greek rhetoric, but above all, as an author who sensed the importance that the technique would have in the not-too-distant future of the date of his premature death on October 18, 2011.

In “There is no software” published for the first time in 1993, we can find, from the first paragraphs, the basis of this feeling:

The East can go ahead and explode. All that matters is what happens in the Western world at the present moment: first and foremost, the implosion of high technologies – and as a result, the implosion of a set of signifiers [...] that otherwise would still be called ‘World Spirit’ [Weltgeist]. Without computing technology, there would be no deconstruction, Derrida declared in Siegen. Writings and texts no longer exist in perceptible times and spaces, but rather in the transistor cells of computers. (KITTLER, 2017, p. 373-374)

Observing the analogy between Western non-isolative writing and the technologic nature of software, Kittler notes, with the wit of a curious, however suspicious, student of his findings, that software does not exist compared to the complex programming of hardware that performs programmed actions and, as a consequence, discrete and unmanipulable, though calculable, as Turing had observed in proposing his machinic invention:

This postmodern Tower of Babel reaches from simple operation codes whose linguistic extension is still a hardware configuration, passing through an assembler whose extension is this very opcode, up to high-level programming languages whose extension is that very assembler. [...] Formulation in Hilbert’s sense does away with theory itself, insofar as ‘the theory is no longer a system of meaningful propositions, but one of sentences as

sequences of words, which are in turn sequences of letters. We can tell (say) by reference to the form alone which combinations of the words are sentences, which sentences are axioms, and which sentences follow as immediate consequences of others.³

When meanings come down to sentences, sentences to words, and words to letters, there is no software at all. Rather, there would be no software if computer systems were not surrounded by an environment of everyday language. (KITTLER, 2017, p. 377-380)

Understanding that software must be the writing of hardware justifies the analogy between software and the non-isolating language system that characterizes almost all Western languages, and, through this analogical approach, one understands why software does not exist. Considering that it would only support itself as a hardware language, if it were capable of generating its significant system and its semantics unrelated to the programmed hardware matrix, one would have to admit that software is as symbolic as any language and, therefore, capable of exchanging information with the surrounding environment, and far from technical programming system. If the software does not exist, the digital-technical language is just programming.

Kittler's view of the technological world is that of a world without software, language, and, above all, without ethical or political awareness of the everyday technocracy. The excessive presence of a missing software as a language explains why, at the end of the century, and more precisely from 1995 onwards (GUMBRECHT, 2017, p. 517), the technical philosopher and media theory scholar took refuge in Greek culture in search of self-unveiling, capable of overcoming the self-controlling programmed technique, which would reduce consciousness and autonomy of beings to technocracy. Kittler was neither apocalyptic nor integrated, but in his *Media Theory*, he sought the meaning of technicality for man.

3 Stephen C. Kleene, quoted by Robert Rosen, "Effective Processes and Natural Law, in *The Universal Turing Machine: A Half-Century Survey*, ed. Rolf Herken, Hamburg, Berlin, Oxford, 1988, p. 527.

4. A present without history

McLuhan's epigraph that initiates this work calls attention not only to the cultural transformations resulting from the new media but to the absorption of those media that will be as quick as the more dense the internalization of these new technological resources that bring them closer to biology. But this internalization requires a historical dimension; however illusory we may consider this claim at a time that seems to have overcome history by forcing us to speak in real time.

However, this need to think about this history resonates with the volume of several theoretical voices in the present that need to get recovered; so that it is not possible to lose their measure and not transform them into another alienation.

Gunther Anders (2003), in studying the mass media, especially television, seeks to understand the axiology of those media that deliver the experience of the world at home:

Quale essere povero di istinti, l' uomo, per essere al mondo, doveva esplorare il mondo successivamente, cioè: a posteriori, farne esperienza e imparare a conoscerlo, prima di potersi dire giunto in porto e provvisto di esperienza: la vita consisteva in un viaggio di scoperta.... Ora che il mondo viene all'uomo, che gli viene fatto entrare in casa in effigie, tanto che egli non há bisogno di prenderne contatto diretto - il viaggio di scoperta e di apprendimento è supérfluo, e, poichè quanto é supérfluo si atrofizza, è diventato impossibile. (ANDERS, 2003, p. 136)⁴

This everyday self-intelligent world demands the alienation that constructs the narrative of belief in a stable and defini-

4 "As well as being poor with instincts, man, in order to be in the world, needed to explore the world, that is, to experience it and learn to know it *a posteriori*, before he could consider himself oriented and provided with experience: life it consisted of a journey of discovery ... Now that the world is ready for man and enters his home as an image, without having to have direct contact with him - the journey of discovery and learning is superfluous and since all that that atrophy is superfluous, the discovery of the world has become impossible." (ANDERS, 2003, p. 136)

tive world. Although Anders referred to television, his discourse echoes the conception of a false experience, which would lead humanity to consider having reached the end of its complexity or its history. However, for this self-intelligent world, not to assume this *belief* is to be old-fashioned, but: “l’ uomo non é un essere fisso⁵” (ANDERS, 2003, p. 315).

Making the same tonic resonate, Lev Manovich asks himself:

mi analisis de los nuevos medios los encuadra en la historia de los medios y culturas visuales modernos. De que manera se valen de los viejos lenguajes y formas culturales? Hasta que punto rompen con ellos? Que tiene de específico el modo en que los objetos de los nuevos medios crean la impresión de realidad, se dirigen al espectador y representan el tiempo y el espacio? Como actúan las convenciones y técnicas de los viejos medios, como el encuadre rectangular, el punto de vista móvil y el montaje, en los nuevos? Si elaboramos una arqueología que vincule las nuevas técnicas con las antiguas técnicas de representación y de simulación? Donde cabría situar las rupturas históricas fundamentales? (MANOVICH, 2006, p. 51-52)⁶

To overcome the comfortable recognition of a fixed and definitive world requires realizing that if the technology changes, man is also not fixed and unique; he does not become antiquity if he does not adhere to the effects of media. On the contrary, that interiorization requires the experience of life with the media, without being determined by them; it requires veri-

5 Man is not a fixed being.

6 “I analyze the language of new media by placing it within the history of modern visual media and media cultures. What are the ways in which new media relies on older cultural forms and languages, and what are the ways in which it breaks with them? What is unique about how new media objects create the illusion of reality, address the viewer, and represent space and time? How do conventions and techniques of old media – such as the rectangular frame, mobile viewpoint, and montage – operate in new media? If we construct an archeology connecting new computer-based techniques of media creation with previous techniques of representation and simulation, where should we locate the essential historical breaks?” (MANOVICH, 2006, p. 51-52)

fyng how man launches himself in the historical time from the media which are not external or ghosts but project him in the history of his technicality and allow him to recognize, in technique, another face of himself. In this sense, few themes seem to be as close and demand recognition as the creature and creator not being alienated. Connected, both constitute the experience that currently invades our daily lives, our way of thinking impregnated with technological-digital speed. The history of the present in real time requires our epistemological attention, and, within it, we find mediatization that goes far beyond the simple, natural, and irrefutable presence of digital in the construction of the current man who, without being old-fashioned, cannot forget his antiquity.

If we consider the Second Law of Thermodynamics and its informational irreversibility, focused on the production of an increasingly entropic and insecure, but increasingly rich, knowledge, we are obliged to consider the technology that impregnates our daily lives as our reality and with which it is necessary to operate. We are not mediatized, but we are in mediatization, and, in this historical need of the present, it is essential to know how we mediatize. Mediatization is not predicated on us by modernity, on the contrary, it demands to be thought of as what belongs to us and with which we are experiencing.

In this sense, the extraordinary timeliness of Simon-don's thought leads him to conjecture about the dubious and double relationship between man and machine:

La cultura se comporta con el objeto técnico como el hombre con el extranjero cuando se deja llevar por la xenofobia primitiva. El misoneismo orientado contra las máquinas no es tanto odio a lo nuevo como negación de la realidad ajena. Ahora bien, este extranjero todavía es humano, y la cultura completa es lo que permite descubrir al extranjero como humano. Del mismo modo, la máquina es el extranjero; el extranjero en el cual está encerrado lo humano, desconocido, materializado, vuelto servil, pero mientras sighe siendo, sin embargo, lo humano. La mayor causa de alienación en el mundo contemporáneo reside en este desconocimien-

to de la máquina, que no es una alienación causada por la máquina, sino por el no-conocimiento de su naturaleza y de su esencia, por su ausencia del mundo de las significaciones, y por su omisión en la tabla de valores y de conceptos que forman parte de la cultura (SIMONDON, 2007, p. 31-32)⁷

As can be seen, technology and man do not act by default; on the contrary, they are mutual extensions that complement and complete each other in a media manner. In this sense, what we can understand by mediatization confuses with technicity as an entropic but evolutionary instrument of technique and man. It is the cultural and epistemological reality of mediatization. It remains to know how it can be grasped through the experience and the epistemological and cognitive matrices at its root.

5. The political genealogy of mediatization

If the internalization of technical means validates their power, the meaning of technologies in social life is not found in them, but in their consequences, just as every technical medium finds its meaning in the means that preceded them (MCLUHAN, 1969, p. 76). An intelligent mechanism of media and mediatization guides the understanding of the transformations undergone by culture and contributes to the development of knowledge built, at the same time by an epistemology of technical media, that goes beyond its mere phenomenological use and creates, in counterpoint, its mediatization concept. Therefore,

7 Culture behaves with the technical object like the man with the foreigner when he lets himself be carried away by primitive xenophobia. The aversion oriented towards machines is not so much out of hatred against the new as it is a denial of the unknown reality. Well, however, that foreigner is human, and culture is what allows us to discover the foreign as human. In the same way, the machine is the foreigner, it is the foreigner in which the human, unknown, materialized, made servile is enclosed, although he remains, despite everything, human. The greatest cause of alienation in the contemporary world lies in this ignorance of the machine, but it is not an alienation caused by the machine, but by the lack of knowledge of its nature and essence, its absence in the world of meanings, and its omission in the table of values and concepts that take place in culture. (SIMONDON, 2007, p. 31-32)

between technical media and mediatization, an epistemological continuum establishes that makes them monitor and control each other in a kind of realistic co-naturality. Technicity is, therefore, this intelligent principle that causes media to interfere with mediatization while creators coordinate the use of their creatures. In this sense, the question remains as to how the principle that establishes links between technology and communicative mediatization is built or has been built, although each one presents itself as independent, or as if the second were not, if not, a simple linear effect of the first.

Although exaggeratedly predictable in the effects that may result from the different uses of the media, the concept of mediatization underlies its character, as the result of a media action, in its distinct technical deeds. However, under this action, the social, cultural, and political configurations that constitute the root of communication itself, and, consequently, of mediatization, are present in the archeological features of mediatization.

Thus, it is impossible to think of media and their effects without observing the distinct ways of understanding how communication has been thought of in its medialogy and the complex social and cultural dimensions inherent to mediatization in their unflinching political roots which constitute the genealogical basis of communication. It is not possible to study media, medialogy, and mediatization without considering their political bases.

6. Mediatization: power and potency

The political bases of mediatization are not unique but plural and irregular; that is, they can manifest themselves as a policy of planned action power as well as operative or inoperative potency of action, subject to the free exercise of choice and expression. Accompanying, to some extent, reflections by Agamben (2014, p. 311; 2018, p. 59), we observe that two political possibilities are considered: the power of action and potency of action but, if the first is necessarily constituted by an established and represented power, the second is a constituent of itself in the dynamics that identifies it as action or inaction but, in both cases, characteristics of potency and resistance. Mediatization

has two sides: they are submissions or decisions, control, or criticism. Although the complexity of mediatization characterizes them in the territory of multiple epistemologies, some essential elements need to be considered:

- Going beyond the linearity of the simple circle of actions and reactions that, although dynamic, are always predictable, mediatization is organized by the acts that define them as action or inaction, as the power of control and discipline or potency to do nothing. Resistance presupposes criticism and the choice of modes of action, even if they appear as inaction.
- Contemporary mediatization is directly affected by the polarization that, observing, classifying, hierarchizing, centralizing, or limiting, develop paradigms, apparently hidden, but capable of governing our worldview and our cognitive, and often, ethical values. In this discursive and epistemological polarization, Western civilizations let themselves be marked by unique and monological dimensions, credited with parameters of certainty, and security that the technological transformation per se is demolishing. However, there is a broad displacement to be developed in this path that, like a scientific revolution (KUHN, 1975), points out to uncertainties that build the contradictions, temporalities, and the epistemological multiplicities of the contemporary.
- Without the naive belief in the possibilities of spontaneous reversal of this reality, but it is possible, facing its complexity, to activate the potency of action that may enable men to be the masters of their destiny and assume that everything develops in an entropic way and far from any other parameter of balance.
- Now, Western civilization distinguishes by the urgency to find other cultural marks. However, for that it is imperative to rediscover/reinvent a West,

which does not hide life but reveals it in its differences, which contemplate inequalities and multiplicities. If in the naive balance of a mediative epistemology, knowledge was safe because it was monological, in the contradiction of new mediatization lies an epistemology responsible for dialogues between contradictions and mismatches.

- Overcoming the humanist sophism of equalities that trivialize differences, it is necessary to note that every human action has the mark that establishes the only contemporary certainty: in inequalities and polarities, Western civilization shows conflicting territories and, going beyond the spectacle, needs to find another point distant from the balance, but visible, so that possibilities of expression and choice that constitute the contemporary urgency get established. We live in unequal mediatization spheres, but we can choose and decide. It is the political dimension that is at the root of the media technology that transforms the planet into a village, of the mediology that we still need to produce, and, above all, of the mediatization that needs to contemplate the political dimension of epistemological ethics, capable of revealing other nuances of communication as an area of knowledge.
- In this policy, instead of limits, porous borders are established between territories, countries, nations, villages, and they transform global news into performative news that establishes geographical and historical contacts, but above all, subjective ones. In this news, the planet is porous and borders on all places in the world. Therefore, we are in communication.

7. Media, mediology, mediatization

Media, mediology, mediatization are dependent epistemological matrices, although each one observes specific demands and points out changes and alternations in the investiga-

tive, methodological, and cognitive path. However, it is necessary to consider that, between media and mediatization, technology and communication, man and machine, there is a co-naturality that confirms technicity like a characteristic principle of contemporary subjectivation.

The medialogy that studied the technical media as instruments for the use of utilitarian communication observed conceptual polarizations that met the epistemological demands of Communication Theories, notably in the mass, which, however, and as a cultural industry, already had distinct social and political characteristics. Observing these characteristics is fundamental to understand the strained articulation between concepts of communication that, despite information and, above all, obeying a linear-utilitarian tendency, are present in the first media that ignored differences between conceptual matrices and opted for an epistemology supported by the conviction of investigative certainty. Thus, they moved away from the heuristic possibilities that, considering the phenomenological bases but surpassing them, seek, in the contemporary, a genealogical *arché* that can generate other concepts of communication or evolution of these concepts, attentive to the narrow but strained relationship that we can observe between communication and information, tautological relations of simple causality and the cognitive complexities interested in the production of new knowledge. In this density, it is possible to catch the not evident but profound relationship established between technical media and communicative media and, above all, it instigates to know what relationship is found between media, medialogy, and mediatization.

Currently, it is impossible to study media, medialogy, and mediatization as unrelated concepts and epistemologies because relations are established between them, bringing them closer together, although we observe each one's specific characteristics. It is a hypothesis to admit that the evolution of the relationships between technical and communicative media have interfered in the way and sense of what can be understood by communication medialogy and, above all, to perceive the consequences that those relationships are building between mediatization processes which, although affected by new digital technologies, are distinct as communication and information.

In other words, such technologies are at the root of the differences we can observe in contemporary media, which, with a strong political coloring, understood as the matrix of a new epistemology of communication, demand the surpassing of conceptual and methodological certainties that have defined, once and for all, what is understood as communication that, transmissive, presented itself as a utilitarian instrument of power, in the use of technical media administratively manipulated. Living among media requires us to identify another informational environment and the production of a provisional epistemology, but observant to the urgent medialogy differences.

It is indispensable to recognize that the development of digital technologies has accelerated the relationship between communication and information and has made it possible to approach other study bases for communication, in an entropic and insecure way, but certainly more cognitively consequential, which, finally, seems obliged to recognize that the political dimension is inherent to it, just as it is the matrix of culture (FLUSSER, 2014, p. 45).

This political dimension considers not only the entropic relationship established between information and communication but also the intrinsic difference between mediations and interactions, sending and receiving, receiver and audience, message communication and knowledge strategies, monolingual bases, and dialoguing adventures open to alterity as a communicative possibility, although irregular and unpredictable.

In this dimension, the mediatization worth studying, in contemporaneity, demands that we realize that media, medialogy, and mediatization are convergent and can be related, but, also and above all, that contemporary communication cannot dispense the genealogical roots that value its political bases and consider behaviors compatible with a planet in vertiginous transformation, however attentive to the construction of values, relationships, and cultural processes that favor contacts, affections, multiplicities, and differences among all.

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Polarization as a structure of intolerance (a communicational issue)¹

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Abstract: The article proposes that intolerance reaches its most problematic degree when structured as polarization and makes a communicational approach to the internal mechanisms of this structure. It explains communication as a work of articulating differences that organizes sharing and inferences of adjustment. The central item of the article elaborates the definition of polarization as the inevitable coexistence of opponents, restricted to the super code of their exacerbated difference in binary structure, excluding inferences related to other dimensions, and whose actions cannot fail to interfere with each other. It also discusses aspects of symmetry and asymmetry of the structure. It makes an observation of angles through which polarization is related to the mediatization of society. The conclusion, pointing out the difficulty of dismantling the polarized structure, shows some challenges involved in this confrontation in the country.

Keywords: Polarization. Intolerance. Communication.

1. Introduction

Intolerance runs through history, as an issue related to the challenges of civilization. Considering the plurality of human

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beings - in behavior, cultures, interests and opinions, motivations, and preferences, in addition to socially produced differences, we can often observe a refusal of the ones assumed to be different, leading to an oppressive intolerance, despite the perceived (but little accomplished) importance, today, of recognition and appreciation of human diversity.

Voltaire, in his *A Treatise on Tolerance*, argued that

the right to persecute is therefore absurd and barbaric; it is the law of the jungle. Nay, it is yet worse, for wild animals kill only to eat, whereas we have exterminated one another over a parcel of words (VOLTAIRE, 1763, p. 39).

Assuredly, all intolerance is absurd and barbaric - but it becomes particularly detestable in polarized situations, which stimulate their exacerbation, developing an organization that structures human behavior.

The variation in the characteristics and intensity of the phenomenon of polarization, positions, and attitudes manifests itself from different angles. There are varying degrees of possible ferocity, which can lead to physical violence between people or a situation of war between countries. Even outside these extremes, interactional risks deteriorate society and cause damage.

There is also variation in expressive ways. Attitudes and behaviors usually associated with polarizing situations - intolerance, incivility, antagonism, argumentative bad faith, fake news, hostilities, hate speech, exclusionary propositions - are both symptoms and reiteration of the process.

The theme of intolerance in polarization appears to be a sociological or political issue, among other human and social sciences. However, we will treat the topic as a communicational issue, a legitimate perspective for its approach since it can provide specific contributions to a comprehensive understanding.

The referred behaviors easily occur as part of communicational processes in all systems of social interaction. They are social expressions of conflict, passion, emotions exacerbated in the very process of communication between people, whenever their differences stand out and for as long as they do not find or

do not seek possibilities of minimally productive understanding for purposes of strain.

We believe that the country's situation - although effectively delimited by the intensity and scope of the phenomenon - calls for a more substantial analysis than that of pointing out conflict and emotionality.

The article does not address all the diversity of conflicting situations that can be expressed by those interactive indicators of behavior; it limits itself to reflect on some internal mechanisms that characterize *polarization*, assuming that perceiving the logics in action, in the specificity of an occurrence, can increase the chances of a praxis aimed at facing the risks involved. Definitely, in concrete episodes, the mechanisms will be different - but we believe that this reflexive approach can be an adequate heuristic for investigating specifics in their empirical diversity.

In the space provided in this article, I will not give examples related to our current situation. It is not a matter of considering that a reflective text needs no materialization - but we have everyday examples in daily newspapers and alternative websites. It is not for any other reason that we see the theme becoming, almost suddenly, an issue that imposes itself on everyone - in our day to day, fears, in face of the risk - more than imminent, in progress - of breaking up plural processes and diversifiers that must sustain the complexity of true citizenship. For no other reason, the III International Seminar on Mediatization marks, with its theme, the urgency of reflections that must go beyond the refusing stance of the current state of affairs. Examples are available particularly in Brazil, but also at a global level - when we consider the advancement of the extreme right in many countries, with its "single-minded" strategies, which divide societies between those who reinforce polarizations and those who are there oppressed.

The present reflections are based on empirical observation found in newspapers, television broadcasts, and con-

sultations on internet circuits. Observation that, in the circumstances, coincides point by point with the current circulation of information received by the citizen in his daily life, reinforcing mediatization as an arena in which the clashes take place.

2. A communicational perspective

The communicational perspective does not detract from different aspects of the social processes studied by the other CHS. The position only implies not accepting that communicational processes are the epiphenomenon of any of these disciplines, a mere resource in the service of the social processes they study. Communication is a *constituent part* of political, social, cultural events. It is relevant to study, in them, the present incidences and procedures of a communicational order - their modes and logics - aiming at the development of the perception in a transversal way to other areas.

It does not imply that Communication is interdisciplinary knowledge. It seeks to elaborate its perspectives on any social facts without ignoring their specificities and insertions. Like History, which, being able to turn to politics, culture, the arts, knowledge, literature, does so *from its own perspectives*, from historical knowledge, and not as if it were interdisciplinary. What we argue here is the possibility that the communication target offers a specific contribution, which is added to other bits of knowledge.

To constitute the perspective of communication with which we will observe the phenomenon in question, I summarize here some characteristics of the interactional process that I have been elaborating on in recent articles.

I consider communication (in the social environment) as the work of human differences - to enable interaction in the most diverse environment and for all types of differentiation, using material and symbolic resources; and suffering the injunctions and incidences of the technological, natural, and cultural environment that surround all human actions. It is necessary to observe, alongside idiosyncratic differences, socially constructed differences, and the circumstances in which this construction occurs.

In the work of differences, communication is not the space for consensus: rather, it is the scope for recognition of differences and work of sharing in search of their efficient articulation. Politics manifests not only as a relation of forces but also, and above all, as a space for negotiating differences. To realize, in this space, how the interactional logics are established is to perform a communicational study.

Communicational issues refer, then, to the problem of articulating different symbolic orders, different processes, positions, preferences - and even personal idiosyncrasies. All elements - participants, contexts, urgencies, and strategies - focus on ongoing or sought interactions.

The work of human communication is not to erase differences, which would be constitutively impossible, but to make articulations between them feasible, seeking that the strains resulting from diversity are productive or overcome, avoiding the generation of disruptions, and reducing the likelihood of violence and oppression. It is communication that reduces the relativism of things, producing meanings.

Studying research reports in the field of communication, especially within the scope of COMPÓS³, as well as through empirical observations in my research group (BRAGA et al., 2017), we discern, through a whole diversity of processes, two basic aspects in the occurrence of interaction - which we characterize as “codes” and “inferences.”

The meaning of the word “code”, in the concept of “interactional codes”, is markedly distinct from that of the same term in the mathematical information theory. In the informational theory, it corresponds to the process of transposing something (thought, idea, proposal, information) into a message, in such a way that the reversion of that same code, at the arrival point, recovers that something, identical to the one at the point of departure; therefore, a purely transmissive process.

In the expression “interactional codes”, in contrast, what we have are pre-shared or *sharing elements*, in the spaces of a common culture, of an experience already given, at the moment of the episode, between the participants, with the support

in which, together, even with disagreements and different interpretative processes, they can elaborate something that was not ready or predicted in the interactional episode.

Inferential processes, on the other hand, correspond to the need for interpretation and adjustment of the shared elements to the concrete circumstance of interaction. The codes, always necessary, never adjust rigorously to the circumstances - it is necessary that the participants themselves, by personal tactics and joint strategies, elaborate this necessary step.

Both components, thus, highlight the aspect of joint production of communication - through the choice and adaptation of the codes already available. More than just the pursuit of the participants' own goals, the communicational process - in its multiple episodes in the context of culture - tentatively generates the required codes, either by the social invention or constant adaptation and readjustments of what has already been given. Just as the codes always require inference - both for the articulation between non-coplanar shares and the adjustment to the specificity of the circumstance - the inferential, tentative work, in facing the urgencies and developing strategies, is what generates and stabilizes interactional codes insofar as attempts confirm its relevance. Both elements are mutually elaborated in the very practice of the communicational interaction.

At the same time, we emphasize that the simplest communicational episodes trigger a whole range of shared elements: the verbal language, gesture, the usual expressions of the participating group, the established standards relating to the immediate context of the issue, and, also, the means and mediations triggered, with its panoply of material and symbolic effects.

We highlight there two central aspects:

- a) the codes, thus, triggered and the processes shared among the participants do not correspond to a contractual standard, they are only varied perceptions of the personal collection of memories and habits, or adherent in the activated materials. They are multiple and approximate references put in common;
- b) this plurality of codes is not pre-adjusted as a whole - that is: there is no super code that articu-

lates them; and, therefore, the adjustment between them will depend on the inferential processes at work in the circumstance.

The game between shared aspects and the inferential work historically produces interactional *dispositifs*, pragmatically organized by the society. The concept of *dispositifs*, by Michel Foucault, is adapted to serve the communicational perspective (BRAGA, 2018, p. 89) as a process according to which codes and inferences are elaborated.

3. The polarizing structure

The polarization processes are shown as a communicational issue insofar as they derive from differences constructed between human beings in coexistence and generate risks for the interaction work. It is important to understand the conditions and characteristics of its disruptive occurrence. From a praxiological perspective, this knowledge is central to the effort to correct course, when the risk presents itself, or to face an effective disruption.

The phenomenon of polarization should not be confused with the simple debate of opposing positions, even if vehement. In polarization, there is no debate, or it leads to disconnection and symbolic violence - which, depending on the circumstances, can lead to physical violence.

A characteristic of polarization is evident in the very choice of the word to refer to the phenomenon. Faced with an urgency, a problem to be faced, in which there is a divergence of perspectives between participants - whether to characterize what the issue is, to define the objectives of the confrontation, or even to develop strategies - the positions are organized in a binary way.

In any contemporary situation, we live by triggering multiple codes - related to knowledge and practices common to a significant number of participants in a culture, and which serve as the basis for a whole variety of actions, harmonic or strained. Each specialized sector, although a preferred user of determined and specific interactional *dispositifs*, recognizes other *dispositifs* present in the culture - and perceives the mul-

tiplicity of differential aspects that characterize them. This perception enables diversified and flexible interactions in the social environment.

When differences are organized with larger variation, they favor arrangements and compositions in which divergences can be diluted, offering ways to avoid the emphatic confrontation of positions. But if the plural fades into binarism, and the diversity of positions is subjected to a double artificial alternative, intolerance prevails, and polarization becomes constitutive and defining of the very profile of differences. If opposing binarism is a necessary condition for polarized development, it does not seem to be sufficient for its implementation. Also, part of this organization of things is an over-emphasis of difference, in an excluding binary format.

In polarizing situations, the other, defined at the opposite pole, is seen exclusively by the characteristic that makes it to be classified as different. Reduced to this unique dimension, all the indicators that would put it in a space of plurality, allowing interactions, are deleted. The only link between the poles becomes the axis of the excluding difference.

The reducing entity itself is self-limiting: “my position”. The world is now made up of a binary classifying process, “we” versus opponents, no longer simply by finding disagreement, but by reducing both poles to the single dimension of a radicalized difference.

At the same time, all inferential efforts to adjust the shared codes to the concrete situation disappear, which could turn to conjuncture reworkings of interpretations, of considerations that, in the interactional process of human communications, *complete* the codes, allowing their efficient activation.

The examples are easy to realize: everyone who, today, disagrees, in the country, with an attitude contradictorily called “liberal” is immediately categorized into a polarizing code - “communists”. The same type of structure acts on racism and homophobia.

The polarized situations are, therefore, in a zone of risk of rupture. Here, another negative quality appears, to which those attitudes and behaviors of intolerance, Apparatus, and hatred refer. The search for common action between differences

disappears. The rupture is the cessation of the communication process⁴.

The rupture, in itself, insofar as it simply would make cease the work of articulation by removing opposites, would no longer characterize a polarized situation. If the type of urgency, objective or strategy was no longer a dimension of debate, the distance between both pole participants would also eliminate the axis of difference. But a characteristic of polarization, in addition to the growing unfeasibility of interactions that makes some adjustment between differences, is the impossibility of removing the "coexistence" between opposites. On certain issues in the social sphere, both sides have something to say, some perspective to defend in a space of action that they cannot escape.

This interaction, *thus structured*, is what justifies the term "polarizing". For this very reason, polarization is structuring: the actions, propositions, behavior, often with those hatred characteristics mentioned above, are not simply emotional occurrences of intense disagreement - they are structured and driven by this double and contradictory condition of participants (as individuals or as collectivities formed by such a perspective) in a situation of inevitable interaction, which do not articulate their differences and refuse mutual recognition. They are at the same time in a rupture and *cannot stop interacting*.

With that, the polarizing code of differences becomes a kind of super code, which equalizes all other codes present, making them unimportant, and imposes itself as if it were full and sufficient, dispensing with any interpretive reflection - including those that would be required by the facts. What I characterize as "super code", in my communicational perspective, is a standardizing process that aims to dispense with any need for flexible adjustment to the changing circumstances and actions in progress, canceling or overcoming the diversity of other shared elements. This rigidity completes the structure of intolerance: the inferential work, necessary for communication, disappears, preventing the fine adjustments that make interaction feasible.

4 Although it is not the only way. Indifference, simple non-recognition, boredom, lack of common goals, problems, as well as the stiffening of inflexible codes, can be factors of a communicational absence.

We can, therefore, define polarization as the forced coexistence of opponents, restricted to the super code of their exacerbated difference in binary structure, excluding inferences related to other dimensions, but whose actions cannot fail to interfere with each other.

We still need to examine an impression induced by the pole metaphor. The geographical reference of a rotation axis, as well as the electromagnetic reference, with its positive and negative poles, reinforce a perception of symmetrical structure.

Indeed, there is a tendency towards the inverse symmetry if we consider that the reduction of the opponent to a single dimension stimulates, in the practical order, the reverse reduction. This possibility is reinforced by the prevalence, in the co-presence of the poles, of exacerbated difference. Not finding other shared references that can be activated, the opposite pole is attached to an equally refusing position of the pole that refuses it. Whoever intends to avoid the monotonous clash does not find actionable shared processes in the interaction: any arguments to surround the direct line between the poles is reinterpreted as confirmation of the difference established and imposed. Just as we are judged, with disregard for our perspectives, we tend to symmetrize the judge in his/her reducing position: this, if reducing, is also characterized as its only significant dimension.

On the other hand, this characteristic of symmetry should not be generalized for all aspects of the structure - several angles must be examined in specific concrete cases, because of which the polarized entities are not similar with the exchanged sign.

The first possible aspect may be the question of who is right - since one side can have it more clearly than the other -, deviating the situation from an effective symmetry. It is not simple, in a given situation (even if we are looking from the outside), to decide who is right and who is wrong - both sides may show different mistakes. Even together, if united (the expression is paradoxical, but it can be true) in the structural construction of the impasse. Still, the discussion of reasons and non-reasons will be an important angle to the study of polar-

ized situations and their history of origin as an important mark of asymmetry.

Even more relevant is the fact that both sides of such a structure are unlikely to be balanced in terms of powers (political, physical, material, economic) and other conditions of action. It means that, despite a possible symmetry in the reducing code, polarization situations can be strongly asymmetric in social reality - placing one pole in the position of oppressor and the other in the position of oppressed. It is where the issue of intolerance appears with the most serious results. Inequality of forces leads to restraint, coercion without arguments, and the impediment of self-defense.

With these characteristics, another difference will correspond to the internal articulation of each of both fields, with their participants and supporters. As diversity remains probably more noticeable in the oppressed pole, there are reasons for articulation - but it can suffer, on the contrary, from internal lines of conflict and rupture.

In the field of polarizing intolerance, the frame is different. Undoubtedly, there is a factual diversity of group interests, categories, and social status, corporations, and lines of preferential action. How to explain *the unique thought* that seems to erase the plurality of perspectives from different circuits? How do they forget their differences (particularly when removed from the nuclei of power) and face a joint oppressive front?

Umberto Eco (1995) shows the aggregator potential, in certain political-economic-social situations, of frustrations and resentments in parts of society that consider themselves not met (or not recognized) in their expectations. Despite the variety of problems and difficulties, if the different circuits are led to attribute the blame for the situation to a more/less identifiable part of society, a polarization dynamic can be there generated, which starts to feed itself. The "guilty" sector is constituted, in a generic and comprehensive reference, as responsible for all the problems of society:

Ur-Fascism derives from individual or social frustration. That is why one of the most typical features of

the historical fascism was the *appeal to a frustrated middle class*, a class suffering from an economic crisis or feelings of political humiliation, and frightened by the pressure of lower social groups. (ECO, 1995, 6th characteristic)

Intolerance becomes the project of action, articulating the participants in this field, with the aim of silencing, removing, or destroying the other.

4. The mediatization of intolerance

I do not intend to attribute the current social polarization to the processes of mediatization. Directly political and economic issues play a major role here. However, such polarization develops in the context of the ongoing mediatization – and, thus, takes on the profile demarcated by this circumstance. Mediatization, as an interactive reference process (BRAGA, 2007), affects the polarizing structure in different ways.

We will address here only three of these modes of incidence - enough to highlight their relevance. Two correspond to the direct effects of mediatization on social processes. The other derives from a complex political drive for *affordances*⁵ of digital technologies at the service of polarizing attitudes.

4.1 First Angle

In the 20th century, radio and TV directed us towards centralized discourses. At the turn of the 21st century - as part of the strategies to face the problem of this centralized voice, proposing access to diverse voices - technologies ended up making a “centralized voice” available to each organized group, with interactional conditions to become the center of the world itself. The technological functionalities favor the meeting of participants around a focus of opinions and attitudes. This singular fo-

5 Gibson's concept relates characteristics of the environment to the perspectives of the species that trigger it. Correa Gomes et al. (2018, p. 59) observe that “the agents of an environment perceive what a niche offers, interpret *affordances*, and act on them”. I use the term “viability” with this meaning - an expression that I will use in this text as an adequate translation of the term *affordances*.

cus acts as an aggregator - defining the profile of its participants by this singular dimension.

When digital networks aggregate profiles and ideas based on similarities of positions and attitudes, not depending on physical proximity, circuits organized by zones of prior agreement can manifest a process of exclusion of dissenters. In corollary, the ease of exclusion fuels a tendency to internal alignment, further reducing variations. The risk of exclusion due to deviation leads the participant to abdicate even their small differences - generating a more automatic cohesion.

In this space, the apparent consensus among participants is doubly artificial. It is pre-established in the process of aggregating the participants; and it is not elaborated by processes of communication and adjustment between them, but by the constant pruning of dissidents, characterizing a singular scope of thought. Such micro-environments are breeding grounds for polarizing postures.

4.2 Second angle

Here, we have a more comprehensive and diffuse focus. The offer of interactive technologies and the social experimentations that are developed at all levels and in all areas of action expands the spaces of uncertainty and reduce the effectiveness of previously common interactional patterns. Mediatization studies show increasing porosity at the borders of specialized fields. Patrice Flichy (2016, p. 15) demonstrates that “the knowledge of amateurs, in different fields, places new relationships with specialists, including creating new expertise”. There is a loss of consistency in specialized fields of action - internal participants trigger new experiments, in direct relation with other fields, and with the general system of the environment, in the competition for the expansion of social capital. The diversified experiences of activation and invention based on the *affordances* (viability) of new technologies dilute, more/less, the defined lines of action.

As a result, society is faced with the insufficiency of shared references to organize processes in common. Communication becomes cacophonous, stimulating social anxiety. The feeling of cultural and social insecurity expands. Those who fail

to articulate their expectations and values there try to mitigate anxiety by adopting simplifying “truths”, by looking for those guilty of the situation and aligning themselves with leaders who seem to comfort this resentment.

Here, the electromagnetic pole metaphor seems more effective than the geographic metaphor. Elements dispersed in the environment start to move from a more/less random distribution or crossed by different dynamics and are attracted by one or the other pole, according to the proximity of any order - which starts to prevail over other stimuli and causes.

4.3 Third angle

This scope of relations between mediatization and polarization also arises from the dilution of established standards, related to the viability proposed by media technologies. If the previous incidence mainly involves reactions resulting from emotional insecurity, this third point is the space for malicious initiatives.

The very historical moment of mediatization - given that complexity not entered in culture - implies vast spaces of anomie, with the dispersion of shared truths, norms, and values, and with the porosity of borders between the public and private spheres.

In this situation, both experiments are carried out aimed at resolving social urgencies and perfecting processes, as well as attempts are made to take advantage of short-term circumstances. For this very reason, the current situation stimulates fake news and *ad hoc* truths as an instrument of action and the occupation of spaces of power. Given that the other is the opponent to shoot down, all means seem adequate.

Fake news does not correspond to the simple mediatization of rumors, factual inaccuracies, and lies. They are processes orchestrated due to polarizing structures. The objective is twofold: to demarcate the opponent as showing a profile below human dignity; and in the same step, based on this radical distinction, to make intended allies forget the differences that they could entertain with the disseminating pole of fake news.

In the spaces of undefined standards and experimen-

tal construction of relations between the public and private spheres, we see the perverse effectiveness of characters who fall into the realms of power exercising such tactics, which only work by grafting polarizing structures into anomic spaces and dispersion.

The issue of mediatization complements the communicational perspective (along with political, ethical, and psychological perspectives) to face polarizing situations. Interactional processes, in the contemporary world, imply a mandatory passage through the media reference - for this reason, it is necessary to seek ways of working with differences through mediatized interactions, promoting the encounter of diversity through multiple shares; inventing social operations of technology, at the service of interactional flexibility; and curbing those who trigger media for intolerance actions.

V. Conclusion Brazil

There is a usual sense of the word “polarity,” not necessarily related to intolerance, in the realm of politics. It refers to dualities as “situation vs. opposition”; “Left vs. right”; or still, preponderant bipartisan structures (such as the alternation of both main American parties in power).

In Brazil, this type of political polarity has been observed, between both main political forces, since 1996. Until 2014, this dual organization of politics did not appear to bring larger risks to democracy.

My interpretation of this coexistence *in polarity*, but not polarizing, involves two complementary angles. On the one hand, the possible intolerances on the part of the parties, between the parties, and among the voters, are generally diluted in the diversity of interactional processes in contemporary society which, despite social zones of strain and discrimination, had developed some strategies in the work of differences. On the other hand, the expectation of alternation between both poles did not seem to prevent the diversity of options and social paths, despite the differentiation of political projects.

After the 2014 elections, however, the party then in opposition, not conforming to the absence of alternation for another period, gave up the democratic path, triggering a political and social instability that crossed the quadrennium, leading, through the electoral period, to a polarization of intolerance with the characteristics that we observe, conceptually, in this article. The process replaced the polarity of a democratic profile, ironically taking the party that took the initiative to break down.

The economic circumstances at the base of the process have exacerbated the political polarization, which has permeated all spaces. It is no longer a question of opposing political projects, assumed as alternatives for conducting public referrals or defining political-economic strategies, but rather of imposing the strict alignment on a level treated as “worldview” but awkwardly composed of a weird aggregate of prejudices, resentful perspectives, anti-democratic positions, a conservatism of customs, disregard for education, absence of public policies for poverty, social inequality, and unemployment - all of this permeated by an attitude of social bullying capillarized as an excluding perspective to broad sectors of society.

Evidently, as an organized policy in these terms would obtain very low adhesion, what aggregates people and sectors around such a program are motivations of other orders. It is in this space that the polarizing characteristics that we point out in the third item of this text come into play. Polarization is installed in situations of anomie and ready ideas.

One cannot fight it as if facing a rational policy - based on counterarguments. But it is always necessary to resist the oppression of intolerance. Along with a necessary strict refusal of the obscurantism implied in the mentioned attitudes, some challenges must be faced in all social spheres to strengthen the spirit in dismantling the polarized structure - as a paralyzing process of democracy and civilizational development.

The uncompromising refusal of the disqualification resulting from the paralyzing structure is different from just wanting to invert the poles or intending to simply return to a *status quo ante* as if polarization had never existed - because then we would not have learned anything. The project to face polariza-

tion must be guided by a search for civilizational improvement and not by a narrow vision of seizing power.

In politics, but also the sectorial levels of social action, we must be able to elaborate plural projects, foreseeing a possible future coexistence, showing the possibility of an existence outside the polarizing structure - focused on productive interactional work among all those who decide to rework their differences by refusing intolerance.

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Hypotheses about polarization, mediatization, and algorithms

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Abstract: The purpose of this chapter is to establish a relationship between the polarization process and algorithms. In the first part of the article, we present our formulation on algorithms as a central sign in culture, whose materialization in modernity is central to the industrial revolution and capitalism. The algorithm understood as syllogism - the core of its inferential power in culture and digital machines - differs from the approach that situates it as complex mathematics - although it includes this one. However, in culture and use of material algorithms, abduction is always at play as a form of inference resulting from the distinction between logic and environment. In the third section, we approach the interactions in a semiotic perspective in which the algorithms and abductions are the mental operative center. In conclusion, polarization is addressed as a permanent possibility in interactions, particularly when culture does not constitute systems in which the abductive logics and processes are not in a socially productive synergy.

Keywords: Mediatization. Polarization. Algorithms. Interaction. Semiotics. Systems.

1. Introduction

A cosmological perspective is part of the reflection on mediatization. Polarization is part of the nature of semiosis;

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contrary poles constitute nature. Neutrons, protons, electrons, Bairon's octet, black holes, stars, planets, satellites, meteors, cosmic storms, etcetera are poles in interaction. In these interactions, depending on the interactions between themselves or with other poles or systems, they can constitute systems or destroy each other, configuring new poles, systems, and environments. A pole is a system and an internal environment; a system can have various poles and environments; "external" environments can be composed of multiple poles and systems. In the solar system, for example, there are logics. But when the sun sends its energies, in material form - visible or not, it does not do it consciously, calculating when, how much, and in which direction to send a wave flow, etcetera. In ancient systems of thought, cosmology occupies a central place in the development of means. It is in Western modernity that media innovation and cosmology separate.

In the organic nature semiosis, there is a central interposition in the interactions: the algorithms. Their basic format is syllogism ("if..."then") and abductions. Abduction is at the basis of the adaptive processes in which systems are transformed in the face of the difference between their logics and the environment. Therefore, what differentiates the logic of the cosmos and the logic of organic life, included in this cosmos, is the algorithm. Algorithms are the reference underlying the semiosis of organic nature. This syllogistic and abductive process occurs from viruses (coronavirus, for instance) to human life forms. Socio-material algorithms increasingly appropriate these logics of nature and social life.

2. Algorithm in the mediatization perspective²

Like other linguistic signs appropriated by the field of communication, an algorithm comes to us as a metaphor for an infinity of meanings requested by a semantic field. In this broad universe of meanings, it is valid for the execution of a culinary

2 This section reproduces, with modifications, a fragment of the text published in FERREIRA, Jairo. Algoritmo e mediatização: entre a digitalização e a busca de epistemologias críticas. In: XXIX ENCONTRO ANUAL DA COMPÓS, 2020, Campo Grande. XXIX Encontro Anual da Compós.

recipe or predictions about the climate, including city management, politics, etcetera.

We suggest a starting point: the algorithm is, above all, a mental experience. Without it, life would be impossible. It refers to the system of possibilities and alternative decisions sequenced in the execution of operations to be carried out. Whenever there is an algorithm, life seems to get easier. This “*cognitive logic*” accompanies us in all activities in face of the natural and social environment, concerning our bodies, affections, problems, solutions, and projects. This materialization is essential to the mediatization processes (VERÓN, 2014; FERREIRA, 2018).

In culture, the algorithms confuse themselves with the operations, but it is important to consider that they are different, even if articulated. The most uncomplicated example is a set of mathematical operations for addition, division, multiplication, subtraction, root extraction, and potentiation. The rules that sequence these operations, in a concrete or abstract problem, are essential to the results. They constitute the algorithm, although some authors (we will see, next, in the section on appropriations in the field of computing) call the operations of algorithms, too.

Cultures are rich in these references. But in cultures, there is not an algorithm, but more and more diversity. It leads to a problem: what happens when two or more individuals are interacting but have different systems, sequences, and operations? In these interactions, we suggest that interesting objects emerge for anthropological, communication, and media research.

Social uses of these material media can be private, specialized, or public at different levels - and for mediatization, social uses in the public space are fundamental. As the mental experience materializes in new media - iron, chipped stone, the city, the wheel, among others - new processes of production and consumption of these media are constituted, in a sphere that does not reduce to what each of the poles is; but it should be the object of investigation since the place is different - circulation. In the retroaction of these accesses, uses, practices, and appropriations on social interactions, new social relations are often configured, in the sphere of culture, economics, and politics; but especially and centrally in the directions that the circulation

agency in each of these spheres, including new mental experiences, individually and socially.

The perspective of mediatization suggests that the materialization of mental experiences expands the scale of the existence of the perceived social environment, which is deterritorialized, at the same time that it connects, in its forms of differentiation, innovation, and social integration through the production, consumption, and circulation of this medium. In the process of engendering mental experience, the materialization of the social representation forms of the algorithm itself amplifies the expanded processes. There it accentuates our ability to write and register the process; thus, installing a scale expansion of the use of these rules whenever other individuals of the species are looking for identical or approximate results.

If the algorithm has this positivity in culture building, why are we perplex by its existence? The hypothesis we found is that perplexity in the communication area manifests itself when the algorithms start to manage the media of interaction, content, and program in networks. However, in this case, it is no longer a question of the algorithms of culture, handmade or manufactured but of those materialized in media appropriated by the capital - in a path that passes through advanced manufacturing and industry as appropriations of work in general (even robotics), and it arrives, with artificial intelligence and expert systems, at the taking over of knowledge of modern technical-scientific wisdom. The annoyance of the communication field comes to the fore as it becomes aware of the long and essential process of alienation, with configurations suggested by the new media, which retroact in all previous processes of appropriation by the capitalist formats.

2.1. In addition to mathematics, syllogism

Some documents available on the web inform that the phrase algorithm comes from the name *Abu Abdalá Mohammed ibne Muça ibne Alcuarismi*, an Iranian, sage from Baghdad, mathematician, and regular of the House of Wisdom. The algorithm, in his proposal, refers to rules that regulate the procedures to perform a mathematical operation.

It is less popularized that Ada Lovelace developed the founding discourse. Babbage's friend, she inferred that the machine he had developed could be 'applied' even to the musical score. She was the subject of controversies that even include Ada's gender status, being characterized by some informaticists as crazy, by others as discriminated. She did not receive all credits in the computer field. Many prefer to credit the concept to Turing for his suggestion, made a century later. We do not express an opinion on this, but we only want to show that there are also epistemological clashes in the area of information technology, including the approach to the area's genealogy (ESSINGER, 2005).

In this reflexive passage, we want to highlight the broadening of the scope of automatic operations that refer not only to those *that have it as an object that can be modeled mathematically* - including the complex ones, like music. Here, we have found the controversy in the information technology area, which gets updated with the reflection on artificial intelligence. In Rocha Costa's words (1986):

Opening a more general perspective we can affirm that there are two types of human behavior that can be taken as models to simulate intelligence. The first type of behavior corresponds to those the human being presents when performing tasks with an algorithmic definition. Typical of this type are tasks performed by employees in organizations (inventory control, payroll, etcetera) and duties with an algorithmic mathematical solution. The other type of behavior, performed by human beings during the execution of tasks, is characterized by a high degree of subjectivity and dependence on the knowledge and previous experience of the subject who performs the duty. Specialized problem solving, text comprehension, image analysis, etcetera are examples of tasks with these characteristics. One can perceive that the simulation of this type of behavior is, par excellence, the scope of contemporary AI (COSTA, 1986, p. 22).

However, the same author converges with the general proposition that information builds when he states that "it is

not seen, however, why a general theory of the structure of the world, taken as a working hypothesis, needs to be linked to the speculative-verbal philosophical method,” suggesting that the mathematical and artificial intelligence logics can achieve this interpretive goal even when it comes to accounting for symbolic systems. In this sense, he states:

In this perspective, the study developed by two psychologists, Moore and S Anderson, was fundamental for the emergence of AI. This study consists of solving a problem (the conclusion to be reached) based on a set of rules made available to a subject, in addition to the premises to be respected. Applying the rules, the subject should try to derive the conclusion from the premises, or from other formulas that he derived himself [...] the most interesting phase: that in which the subject builds the solution to a problem that is new to him, that he “finds for the first time”, as opposed to the second phase of the resolution process, which consists of solving problems that have already been encountered by the subject before (COSTA, 1986, p. 19).

We highlight, from these passages, the difference between solving known and unknown problems.

We started from the solution of Harmon and King (1988). They proposed that symbolic programming would include heuristics, structured knowledge banks, symbolic processing (in the sense of symbolic logic), and interactive (between user and system), surpassing the conventional programming based on what they consider algorithms, numerical and sequential. However, even with few references to the term algorithm, the authors, in their book, present abundant situations referring to cultural algorithms, including specialist systems, and their transformation into computer systems, in a process of appropriation and realization in flowcharts (diagrams), which, to be digitized and suitable for computer languages (software) with potential for use in digital media, called hardware, use and abuse *modus ponens*.

The referred book, in abundance, establishes an analogy between the “knowledge engineer” and Sherlock Holmes. He must have the experience of “subtle observation” of the last one. Relations between nodules, arcs, and links, in triads of objects/attributes/values, are called “semantic networks.” Objects can be a jacket, hats, people, etcetera; the links are connective, descriptive, what establishes a relationship between them, the attributes, and values. Every process must be carefully diagrammed. We understand this as a representation of objects, agents, situations, etcetera of the algorithms. But this only takes place with logical operations, whether mathematical or symbolic. In the latter case, it manifests itself in the relationship between the rule, case, and result (therefore, a syllogism). Example of variable “rules” (HARMON; KING, 1988, p. 49):

If the tattoo is of a fish and the scales of the fish are pink. [...] So, the origin of the tattoo is from China [...] If the tattoo is of a snake and the color of the snake’s scales is blue [...] Then, the origin of the tattoo will be Hong Kong [...] If the tattoo is of a dragon and the color of the dragon’s scales is red [...] Then, the origin of the tattoo will be Beijing.

This system of the “variable rules” presented by the authors is typically a deductive syllogism, according to Peirce’s perspective, but the issue does not end there. On page 61, they present “a table of truth” (publicized in symbolic mathematical tables), which, in a less pretentious way, can be translated using Piaget’s formulation - it is a combination of propositions that tends to increase complexity according to the number of syllogisms involved. The examples presented by the authors are going to the theater (a relatively simple problem) to more complex problems, in which six hundred rules are identified (like the medical diagnosis system of the time, Mycin, created at Stanford University - never used commercially due to ethical conflicts in the medical field).

We have, in the references above, expressions of the deductive argument. However, one can question the scope of the validity of the combinatorics of propositions. For example, one

may ask whether algorithms classified as genetic or flocking, according to Kishimoto (2004), are also syllogistic. There are indications in the documents that yes, as this sequence shows:

If there is a bone nearby and the dog is hungry, it will eat it; If the dog is hungry, but there is no bone nearby, he looks for one; If the dog is not hungry, but is sleepy, he will sleep; If the dog is not hungry and is not sleepy, the dog will walk and bark (Kishimoto, 2004, p. 6).

It should all be well researched. Assuredly, it is necessary to investigate the underlying logics, which may require dialogues, in cooperative research, with researchers in the field of information technology. One of the examples we mentioned, to end this section, on appropriations of social algorithms has, as its object, the interactions - not necessarily human. Animal interaction is studied as an object of the configuration of diagrams, flows, and inferences. For instance, according to Serapião (2009):

Swarm Intelligence, also referred to as Colony Intelligence or Collective Intelligence, is a set of techniques based on the collective behavior of self-organized, distributed, autonomous, flexible, and dynamic systems. These systems are formed by a population of simple computations with the ability to perceive and modify their environment locally. This ability makes it possible for the agents to communicate, which captures the changes in the environment generated by the behavior of their counterparts. Although there is not a centralized control structure that establishes how agents should behave, and even if there is not an explicit model of the environment, local interactions between agents generally lead to the emergence of global behavior that is similar to solving the problem. The main properties of a swarm intelligence system are (Millonas, 1994):

- Proximity - agents must be able to interact;
- Quality - agents must be able to assess their behavior;
- Diversity - it allows

the system to react to unexpected situations; • Stability - not all environmental variations should affect an agent's behavior; • Adaptability - capacity to adapt to environmental variations. Two main lines of research that emerge from these properties can be seen in swarm intelligence: it works inspired by the study of the behavior of social insects, such as ants, bees, termites, and wasps (SERAPIÃO, 2009, p. 271-272).

The richness of this text is in presenting each “family” of algorithms according to assumptions that we can characterize from animal anthropology. The study of animal behavior transforms into a system capable of algorithmic language. Thus, she cites the experimental research with real ants, in which observes their behavior in collecting animals in the laboratory:

An ant nest was placed in an aquarium with a food source at the other point. To get to this food, two paths were created, one longer than the other. Initially, each ant followed a random exploratory path. As the ants that chose the shortest path made the route faster than the others, they deposited a higher amount of pheromone in this path compared to the other in the same interval of time. Therefore, at a particular moment, the intensity of the pheromone in the shortest path was so high that almost all ants followed it (SERAPIÃO, 2009, p. 273).

Another interesting reference is the study on the behavior of bacteria modeled for the construction of algorithms. It is the Bacterial Foraging Optimization (BFO):

This algorithm was based on strategies for locating, manipulating, and ingesting food from cells of the bacterium *Escherichia Coli*, as this bacterium is one of the most well-known organisms today. Bacteria tend to migrate to nutrient-rich areas using a mechanism called chemotaxis. It is known that the bacterium swims in the liquid medium by rotating the flagella, guided by a reversible propellant embed-

ded in the cell wall. *E. coli* has 8-10 flagella placed randomly in the cell body. When all flagella move counterclockwise, they become compact, propelling the cell along a helical path. When the flagella move clockwise, they all pull the bacterium in different directions, resulting in a random change in the direction of movement, with very little displacement. Such movement (θ_i) is justified as a way to increase the chances of the bacteria to follow a path that makes it reach more favorable regions to obtain nutrients. Obviously, the sequence of movements and the duration of a unidirectional shift will depend on the concentration of harmful nutrients or substances (or be neutral), or on the presence of a nutrient or harmful gradient (dependent on the spatial variation in the density of nutrients or harmful substances) in the region where the bacterium is (SERAPIÃO, 2009, p. 280).

We could follow with these cases, hypotheses developed by the area of information, based on laboratory studies on the behavior of other animal species, which have been supporting algorithms for the management of social processes aimed at “solving human problems.”

This may indicate the importance of studying algorithms as systems, according to the authors who assume themselves in the realm of artificial intelligence (following the trail opened by Herbert Simon Allen Newell; Frank Rosenblatt; John MacCarthy; Marvin Minsky) and their updates. But we can observe in documents that, in addition to the permanent reference to the term algorithm, their works are in a powerful interface with cognitive psychology and anthropology, in the perspective of its computational formalization.

These formulations reach several levels of algorithmic agency: the so-called machine language (which makes it possible for a system to be transformed into digital media operations, from the computer to the cell phone); the operating systems, which mediate between machine and software; singular languages (called by some high-level languages - such as expert systems); diagrams, flows, models, heuristics, and inferences

strategies that transform a problem into a potential solution. In execution, they range from formulas for creating content (such as games), setting schedules (such as Netflix), managing digital networks (such as Instagram and Facebook), which provide feedback on content indexing processes, to the interposition in interactions between content and users or products and their consumers.

2.2. In addition to syllogism, abduction

This formulation focuses on a question of method: there, the algorithm refers to a deduction based on known and sufficient rules for solving a problem; artificial intelligence, in contrast, refers to problems with no known solution (what demands abduction). This formulation should be considered. The difficulty is broader: does mental experience come down to logic? What are the limits of mediatization, from the perspective of the materialization of this experience?

This relationship can integrate the *modus ponens*, the “if ... then” relationship, but also abduction. This syllogistic relationship would make it possible to formalize, to some extent (the measure of logic), the practical know-how of cultural algorithms. Such proposition suggests moving from the solution based on mathematical logic *stricto sensu* to symbolic logic, or new logics being produced, but also thinking about inference beyond logic.

3. Algorithms and interactions³

The lag (or the difference and the strangeness) of meaning in the communication processes is, above all, due to the different ways in which the sign is activated in the communication processes. It is the proposition of communication and semiotic models developed from Peirce. We argue this to think about circulation from a semiotic-media perspective. We start from the schemes of Elisabeth Walther Bense (2000), who also

3 This issue was addressed in FERREIRA, Jairo. A pólis que se faz em processos midiáticos: proposições sobre a política na perspectiva da midiatização. In: JESUS, Eduardo; TRINDADE, Eneus; JANOTTI JR., Jeder; ROXO, Marcos (Eds.). Reinvenção comunicacional da política: modos de habitar e desabitar o século XXI. Salvador: Livro Compós 2016 - UFBA, 2016. v. 1, p. 65-84.

addresses the sign from Peirce (relations between environment, object, and interpretant). The medium corresponds to the icon; the object, to the index; the interpretant, to the symbol. The medium (and the icon) is the first; the object (the index) is the second; the interpretant (the symbol) is the third. This formulation is already sufficiently publicized. In this sense, the icon is the medium of material means (technique and technologies) and immaterial (social symbols).

According to Bense (2000), every communicational interaction is a relationship between two repertoires of signs, of the emitters and receivers and/or interlocutors, as we prefer to refer to when we approach relationships in digital networks. This repertoire (BENSE, 2000) is not homogeneous. In the interaction, there is a shared zone of repertoires, from which a common zone is established, which is strained by the zone of differences.

The problem posed by Bense is well situated for our reflection. The repertoires do not contain homogeneous signs. She does not talk about content. She talks about operations. They are heterogeneous in terms of specific operations:

- a) the generation of a sign, defined as a succession of relationships: medium -> object -> interpretant. This is the ascending sign: the first, the second, and the third; icon, index, and symbol; abduction, deduction, and induction.
- b) the degenerate sign: interpretant -> object -> environment.
- c) the tetic sign: interpretant (the third) -> the medium (the first) -> the signs (the second).

Bense tries to affirm that the repertoires are semiotic operations that interlocutors, in the positions of emitters, receivers, or productive receivers, activate when a particular object is at play. Therefore, interactions are strained by operations. Cognitive heterogeneity triggers uncertainties and indetermination, with multiple differential positions according to the various possible operations at stake.

In this scheme, the most abstract about circulation, circulation demands the artisanal study, analyzing the operations (sign) mobilized by the interlocutors. Bense, however, presents

(three) possible schemes that locate the place of the interpretant in the interlocutions, analyzed as a symbolic constitution in the interactions between an emitter (E) and a receiver (R): an interpretant (which, in our formulation, can consolidate positions of an institution or actor, individual or collective) activates an iconic representation; an interpretant (institution or actor, individual or collective) triggers an indexical representation; an interpretant (institution or actor, individual or collective) activates a symbolic representation. There are three semiotic operations in media interactions. The schematics indicate processes. There will not always be symbolic consolidation, because the repertoires of the interactants are differentiated, that is, the semiotic context of the interlocutors, in the situation of emitters, receivers, or interactants, is differentiated, which will provide different degrees of inferences about the operations carried out by producers or interactants.

The lag means: *semiosis* is faced, when using and attempting to appropriate the means, with the paraphernalia of objects (technologies, techniques, language, discourses, people, interactions, etcetera). That is, one of the characteristics of the new media is the proliferation of media and unknown objects, which favors the activation of *semiosis* in a disruptive process, in non-linear processes.

Semiosis, in this perspective, is a disruptive process that puts historically and socially stabilized discursive interactions in check as practices (*habitus*).

However, in digital networks, this recognition is blurred by the entry of individual actors in the scene, who start, thus, to record in circuits in which they lead and antagonize, activating new environments and circulation processes. De-institutionalization, derived from semiotic disruption, thus, can be seen as another major process of transformation of the *polis*. Postmodernists have placed this as a cultural issue. We place it as inherent in mediatization processes. We disagree, however, that fragmentation due to disruption is the only possible process. Disruption refers to a process in which the systems in interaction are in crisis: indicating the failure of the regulatory processes or the difficulty in finding (through individual and collective abductions) new solutions.

3.1 The difference (or the inevitable) lag

However, in our formulation, semiosis is an abstract object if we do not consider algorithmic mediation. When two individuals, actors, and institutions interact, there is a multiplicity of syllogistic and abductive inferences, which put imagery, index, and the symbolic into play. It refers not only to the relationship of each individual with another but to how it is situated in the interaction with institutions and objects from these institutions (example: the interactions of individuals with the financial markets are not a relationship between individuals that can be thought of concretely without considering interactions with objects in these markets: money, goods, prices, etcetera). There, a 'dialectic' is established between the interactions between individuals and objects, in which individuals are often situated as objects.

It is the mental algorithms that agency the semiotic activations (at different levels). That is, the displacements of what we call an icon, indexes, and symbols proliferate according to the cognitive operations, here located as syllogistic and abductive, of the individuals in interaction, those with the institutions and the objects of pertinence (and impertinence). In this perspective, there is no semiosis without algorithmic mediation. As this mediation incorporates social values, there is an interposition of social mediations (psychological, anthropological, sociological, and linguistic), which can be investigated correlatively to the contexts in which interactions occur (economic, cultural, and political markets).

4. Polarizations and algorithms: The urgency of abductive processes

From the interfaces above, we can suggest a hypothesis for the issue of polarization and mediatization.

The polarization in interactions, in this perspective, is a derivative of a crisis in the systems, in their regulatory configurations, which can lead to disruptions or adaptations. The basis of this polarization is in the contact (connection) that gives rise

to new times and spaces of interaction, where, as we try to illustrate below, the mediation of material algorithms constitutes an agency of new processes. As we argued above, they are materializations of the culture's algorithms. But this materialization is not horizontal: there are appropriations of the algorithms of nature, especially of organic life, including those of the species, as syllogisms. Hypothetically: the very materialization of social algorithms reconfigures the relationships between actors, institutions, and their objects.

Let us consider, in this perspective, three random moments to think about this reconfiguration of times and spaces.

The first is the Vale do Javari Indigenous Land⁴. In this space, 26 different peoples live, with a population of approximately 6 thousand people. They are characterized as isolated. It would be necessary to see, in detail, how much isolation occurs. There are reports that, when they interact, there are conflicts between these peoples. They are tribes, in the sense of clan-type family relationships, unquestionably marked by ancestry, without the constitution of states and nations. An anthropological study would easily reveal the complexity of its cultural algorithms in the interactions between individuals from these tribes. The absence of material mediations between these tribes differentiates them, for instance, from the Incas, in which various tribes were gathered around practices, symbolics, and cultural forms - including inferential logics and capacities that constituted the space and time of the Inca Empire, as a State and Nation. It is known that this constitution is not necessarily emancipatory or happy. States and nations establish classificatory, domination, and power relations.

The second moment is the stock exchange until the beginning of this century. The image of a 'trading floor' is still alive for many⁵:

4 Retrieved from: <https://terrasindigenas.org.br/pt-br/terras-indigenas/3895>

5 Retrieved from: <https://economia.ig.com.br/2016-08-11/bovespa.html>

Image 1: Image of the trading sessions of the last century



Retrieved from: Economia.ig.com.br.

This tribe, that of stock traders (called investors by some or speculators by others), according to some parameters, is different from the isolated tribes. The financial market, especially in the form of a stock exchange, is considered the meeting place of several tribes (including actors linked to different institutions in the economic markets - branches, fractions, sectors, including the state-owned companies that operate there). The stock exchange forms a complex system, in which mental algorithms and abductions of stock traders are articulated with different material algorithms (from accounting to economic, to normative, and prescriptive, etcetera). The strong strains between merchants are mitigated by the logics of the system that regulates each other, including innovation processes, resulting from abductions and power relations, in which the system adapts, in the resolution of conflicts that emerge in interactions. It has never been like this in the stock and economic objects markets. It is not always so. From pirates to trade wars, the polarizations in economic markets have a history that is confused with the reconfiguration of times, spaces, and connections between different tribes, states, and nations.

In this century, a great change occurs in the Bovespa stock exchange⁶:

6 Bovespa is not the only stock exchange in Brazil. But today, it centralizes the stock market.

In September 2005, the live trading session ended, making the exchange fully electronic. In the following year, 100% domestic electronic trading began, putting an end to all that mess of papers and brokers on the telephone that had long been a symbol of the financial market.⁷

The following fragment image indicates this new space, time, and form of connection:

Photo 2: Bovespa after domestic electronic trading: image shows a completely different reality from the chaos with the actions on paper.



Retrieved from: Economia.ig.com.br.

Where are the individuals in that market? In their individual and collective offices, in networks, with operations and speeches about these operations, publicly available.

This stock market is connected to other markets: commodities, currencies (including virtual currency markets), other stock markets around the world, all mediated by diagnostic, analysis, and prescription algorithms, with thousands of information media (the real of these markets), opinions and advisers

on what to do (abductive inferences about tomorrow, today, and yesterday), all involved in perspectives in face of uncertainty, aiming at financial valuation, in integrated systems worldwide. The conflict in these markets is strong (from the small ones to the global - for example, now about the access to the 5G system), polarizations occur, including between “sharks” and “sardines⁸.” However, the system (called financial), due to its regulations, logics, and inferential potentials, survives. It is not known to the date⁹. It is a landscape of the financial market, which manages all capitalist markets. Clearly, it is not the same reality for cultural and political markets.

To differentiate these markets, one issue is to know if antagonism, the basis of polarization, is a logical derivation per se. Our hypothesis is that polarization derives not from logic itself, but from what it adds to the dimension of values (psychological, anthropological, sociological). It is the order of cultural, economic, and political mediations. If it were only logic, the argumentative resolution would solve the system’s crisis.

However, cultural and political markets, due to their greater complexities, are not reduced to the possibilities of objectification of financial markets. The values of these markets are of a difficult exchangeability. In the culture, the “higher rule” is not economic valorization. Although it can also manage the interactions and objects traded in these markets, we prefer the hypothesis that, there, the greatest value is the gift; in political markets, even with crossings with economic ones, the central rule is the construction of rules and mediations between all markets, internal and external. Here Bourdieu’s criticism is placed: part of these markets are subordinated to the systems of the economic market (BOURDIEU, 2016). On the other hand, even if they do not constitute a whole system, it is possible to identify several operating subsystems.

We suggest, in the context of this hypothesis, that, even with different rules between the markets, the current question,

8 Retrieved from: <https://economia.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,a-revolta-das-sardinhas,70003600862>

9 Our hypothesis, presented in another article, is that the materialization of the algorithms is the basis of capitalism. In the history of the species, the permanent materialization remakes the game. See 2020.

the object of several investigations in the field of communication, is: how do algorithmic mediations influence interactions? If we consider the characteristics of the economic and cultural markets, the algorithmic mediation in these markets is not enough to mitigate the polarizations since the non-interchangeable values are accentuated, due to the reconfiguration of times and spaces of the new connections. The question then arises: what rules are these in the cultural markets (in the manner of Bourdieu's question, when tackling the rules of the literary field and art)? What system is being configured? The same question is asked about political markets: which market is this that emerges from indexed, networked interactions, managed by material algorithms?

In other words, the logics are still under construction and are not sufficient, in their syllogisms and abductions, to overcome situations in which the poles in interaction overcome the antagonisms that lead to fierce conflict, including the death of one or more of the previous systems involved, integrated into expanded tentative systems.

In both markets, the "law" seems to be that whenever individuals, actors, and institutions try to impose a/their logic, in interactions, there is either domination or antagonism, and it can result in polarizations. Abduction is required to establish a new interaction reference system. And the art of doing it is its greatest form in culture.

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The average number of submissions to the Working Groups, in the three events held, is 200 expanded abstracts, distributed among professors, researchers (around 20%), doctors and doctoral students (around 30%), masters professors, and masters' degree students (*idem*, 30%), and graduate and undergraduate students (20%). More than 50% of the participants are from states outside Rio Grande do Sul and the overwhelming majority (about 80%) from outside UNISINOS.

Among its results, in addition to the training processes during its realization, we emphasize the consolidation of a library of reflections, in the form of complete articles of the presentations in WGs and books published in e-book format (with chapters produced by the participants of the Conference Tables). This III Seminar extended abstracts are available at <https://midiaticom.org/anais/index.php/seminario-midiatizacao-resumos/issue/view/12>. Full articles are available at <https://midiaticom.org/anais/index.php/seminario-midiatizacao-artigos/issue/view/5>.

This book of the Debating Tables of the III Seminar, in this e-book edition, is available not only in the project collection (<https://www.midiaticom.org/e-books/>) but also from FACOS-UFSM (<https://www.ufsm.br/editoras/facos/publicacoes/>). We reiterate our thanks to Capes and CNPq for the financial assistance, essential for making this conversation proposal via research, both theoretical and empirical, carried out by its participants.

“There was a time when the big question was this: what does the media do with us? So many gave answers. Each answer convinced us for some time. Then it was abandoned. Then the question changed: what do we do with the media? Everything seemed to be resolved with this inversion. It was a happy time. The reception was stronger than the broadcast. The tiredness came, doubt returned. A third, more complex, and sinuous question was attempted: what do we do with what the media do with us? It's already gone. Other formulations are possible: what do we do with mediation? What do we do with mediatization? Who's in charge? One possible answer is this: everyone. Or nobody. The butterfly gives way to the virus. Before, in good times, it was said that the flapping of a butterfly's wings in China reverberated anywhere in the world. The thesis is confirmed. Without the butterfly. And without blaming the Chinese for the tragedies that history offers us. Each time with its tragedy and agony.”

Juremir Machado da Silva

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