

Between what we say and what we think: Where is mediatization?

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SEMINÁRIO INTERNACIONAL
MIDIATIZAÇÃO E
PROCESSOS SOCIAIS



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This book is the result of a continued process of interlocution, prior, concomitant, and subsequent to the realization of the 1st International Seminar on Mediatization and Social Processes at PPGCC-Unisinos, with the support of Capes and CNPq. Previous, because it was born of several projects of cooperation, mobility, and interaction with invited researchers, from Brazil and abroad. Concomitant, because the guests participated intensely not only in the conference tables and debates but also in the Working Groups formed from the work submissions to the Event. Subsequent, because it results from an editorial process that seeks to meet the quality criteria of collective works in the area. The articles were written after the event, and we asked the authors to dialogue with the debates that took place there, qualifying their interventions.

The proposed Seminar allowed researchers, teachers, and students to join in an international debate on the Mediatization and Social Processes research line, including mobility and training. We act, thus, in time to revert already observed tendencies that this object of research may have been appropriated particularly by the North, considering its linguistic and research network competences, driven by integration systems that they reproduce. This insertion corresponds to the objectives of the training, mobility, and research processes of the proposal, seeking horizontalities and exchanges between the various poles of research. This synergy makes it possible to situate the issues, propositions, methods, and methodologies of the research developed in Brazil, especially in the groups that research mediatization, in interaction with the Northern pairs, in their training, research, and mobility processes.

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WHERE IS MEDIATIZATION?**

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THE SEMINAR AND THE BOOK “BETWEEN WHAT WE SAY AND WHAT WE THINK: WHERE IS MEDIATIZATION?” (PRESENTATION)

This book is the result of a long process of interlocation, previous, concomitant, and subsequent the accomplishment of the Seminar on Mediatization and Social Processes Research at PPGCC-Unisinos, with the support of Capes and CNPq. Previous, because it was born from several projects of cooperation, mobility, and interaction with invited researchers, from Brazil and abroad. Concomitant, because the guests participated intensively not only in the conference tables and debates but also in the Working Groups formed from the work submissions to the Event. Subsequently, because it results from an editorial process that seeks to meet the quality criteria of the collective works in the area. The articles were written after the event, and we asked the authors to dialogue with the debates that took place there, qualifying their interventions.

The International Seminar was attended by two hundred researchers. It was organized on two levels. At the first level – the tables – a downward reflexive movement is sought, with invited researchers from Brazil and

abroad, and the researchers linked to the PPGCC-Unisinos, from the Mediatization and Social Processes Research Line. Another movement is upward. The Working Groups, constituted from the public call for papers, were selected as described below.

The discussion tables were formed based on criteria. A criteria axis ensured a balance between: the participants of the PPGCC Unisinos that conduct research according to the line Mediatization and Social Processes; national and international guests also linked to this line; and national and international guests external to this line, but who accepted to discuss in a critical and analytical way about the themes proposed during the Seminar. Another axis of distribution followed the balance between national and international guests, from South and North. The proposed schedule of tables resulted from these criteria.

In the Seminar held in 2016, five tables were formed with researchers from France (3), Denmark (1), Argentina (2), and Brazil (4). The programming of the I Seminar and its structure can be seen at <http://www.midiaticom.org/programacao/>. In total, there were 15 hours of debates at the five tables.

The Working Groups were formed from the submission of papers. Submissions were made by 250 authors and 217 expanded abstracts. Of these, 188 papers got selected. After registration, the Seminar had the participation of researchers, doctoral students, masters, and undergraduates, in the proportion suggested in this proposal, in a membership four times higher than that provided by the Organizing Committee. The works were selected by two reviewers, blindly, mobilizing for this purpose researchers, doctors, doctoral students, master's professors, and mastering students, who (in a group of more than three dozen) evaluated each one of the works submitted by colleagues with inferior level of instruction, with classification grades that resulted in the approved

works. These were then grouped by the Organizing Committee, successively, until reaching the 17 Work Groups of the event (<http://www.midiaticom.org/gts/>).

The proposed Seminar allowed researchers, professors, and students to join in an international debate on the Mediatization and Social Processes research line, including mobility and training. Thus, it is now time to revert the trends already observed that this research object is appropriate specifically by the North, considering its linguistic and research network competences, driven by the integration systems that they reproduce. This insertion corresponds to the objectives of training, mobility, and research processes of the proposal, seeking horizontalities and exchanges between the various poles of research. This synergy makes it possible to situate the issues, propositions, methods, and methodologies of research developed in Brazil, especially in the groups that research mediatization, in interaction with the Northern pairs, in their training, research, and mobility processes.

In his assessment as Seminary Ombudsman, Stig Hjarvard, however, highlighted this trait as a distinctive feature of Southern research:

The discussions about mediatization here in Brazil are developed in the perspective of semiotics, philosophy of communication, and anthropology. In a Nordic and European context, this is quite different. Many of the people involved in discussions about mediatization come from media studies with a sociological or cultural sociological orientation, and many North Europeans have a stronger empirical inclination. (HJARVARD, 2016)

This important insight, however, can be weighed and enriched by the specific details of the discussion tables held.

The first panel discussed the concepts of mediatization in Brazil, and in the francophone space, with Bernard Miège, Daniel Peraya, and Antônio Fausto Neto's presences. The debate exposes the differentiation between sociological and semi-anthropological approaches to the concept. This differentiation does not precisely correspond to territories. Peraya has for decades developed an approach to mediatization in which he also mobilizes epistemological perspectives based on theories of language. This detail may prevent us from speaking of an epistemological division that corresponds to the geographical distribution of research.

Even in the scope of a semiotic cut, the approach of mediatization as linked to media studies appears. The discussion table formed with Mario Carlón, Lucrécia Ferrara, and Ana Paula da Rosa's presences, focusing on semiosis, shows that the perspective inaugurated by Eliseo Verón (Carlón and Rosa) is distinct from the semiotic perspective presented by Ferrara. This researcher operates with epistemological distinctions between media and communicative processes: "The epistemology of the media finds its counterface in the epistemology of interactions, that is, they do not oppose; however, they draw different paths that cannot be confused because they produce distinct epistemes, if not conflicting ones." That is, in Ferrara's perspective, mediatization refers to an epistemology about the media – indicating that semiotics does not solve this distinction – media processes or interactions.

This tension – between the centrality of relations and the media – is taken up by Martino, who considers it productive when one thinks of mediatization, indicating the fecundity of the concept, even for empirical researchers. At the same table, which had religiosity as its theme, the philosophical stone was launched by Pedro Gilberto Gomes, with the concept of *ambiance*, related to meta-media processes, regarding the historicity of media, and to

the relations therein plotted in the social uses. Another displacement: the socio-anthropological problem of the symbolic, by Stefan Bratosin, opens other glances on the subject, from a mediatization perspective.

This also shows in the discussion table with Muniz Sodré, Stig Hjarvard, and José Luiz Braga where they approach the relations between institutions and mediatization. Sodré builds a division between organization and institution, referring to his reflection on the dispositifs, and turning the reflection on the articulations between forms (power) and emotions (subjective), and on what gets “institutionalized”. Indicative of the interlocution between the participants, this division is taken up by Braga in his chapter but directed to a reflexive balance on the concept of mediatization that develops, at several moments, with explicit reference to the institutionalization. If these two approaches are more speculative about the very concept of the institution when related to mediatization, Stig proposes another path in which the term is not the object of epistemological questions, but rather the reference to think mediatization in the empirical research that he presents.

The latter encompasses another epistemological differentiation about what mediatization is, as Stig pointed out from his place of ombudsman:

I think Professor Pedro also pointed to this problem yesterday morning when he said that we should be careful not to turn everything into communication because then communication would not have a meaning. In the same vein, I would say that we must be careful not to transform mediatization into an abstraction that can mean everything from the stone age to the present day. Because then mediatization would end up meaning all or nothing at all. That is, from my European point of view, I think mediatization is not just a concept but denotes

transformations that have occurred since the mid-twentieth century and intensified in recent decades.

[...]

Thus, we discussed the fundamental processes of externalization, objectification, and displacement of the mind through language and the ability to produce symbolic representations on physical objects such as, for example, Oscar Traversa and Jairo Ferreira did in their seminar conferences. After that, the media got understood in a remarkably broad sense. This orientation to speculate on the fundamentals of mediatization makes the concept refer to a separate process of the specific social circumstances and historical context – almost a phenomenon universal and transhuman, both in time and space. Although such discussions about the ontology of communication and the media are important in themselves, to me, they seem far from the current processes of mediatization in contemporary society (HARVARD, 2016).

Well noted. Jairo Ferreira and Oscar Traversa's chapters, converging with Verón's approach (2014), reflect on mediatization as the externalization of mental processes in material signs, which situates them as part of the process of differentiation of the species in relation to nature. Traversa will focus this on the narratives; Ferreira presents the genealogy of the media. Differing is Giovandro Ferreira's chapter, which presents a set of inferences between theories of communication and the media, seeking epistemes to think about mediatization in this relation. The set of questions that he presents indicate the concerning with the corresponding social processes: "What is the implication of the media regarding the social organization

of a given epoch? What are the implications of the media for the development and structuring of contemporary societies and their future?"

The Organizers

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FIRST PART – MEDIATION AND MEDIATIZATION

*Daniel Peraya
Bernard Miège
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***Dispositif*, mediatization, and mediation: Three key concepts for analyzing training situations and mediatized communication**

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Abstract: This chapter addresses the transition from linguistics and semiotics to the concept of *dispositif*, one of the keys to thinking about mediation and mediatization. It discusses the genesis of the use of the concept of *dispositif* in Eliseo Verón and the differentiation between common sense and epistemological perspectives of this concept, aiming to differentiate mediations and mediatization. The field of reflection dialogues with the uses and practices in formative processes, and identifies, including, the current theoretical and methodological references and the potential for empirical research.

Keywords: *Dispositifs*. Mediatization. Mediation.

In the area of communication: from linguistic enunciation to mediatised¹ communication

What do the information and communication sciences bring to the *dispositif* concept? As a result and also unquestionably in reaction to the formal barrier of linguistics which strictly studies the statement, both a linguistics of enunciation and a pragmatic linguistics get developed and reintroduce interlocutors and their interrelations, the context of enunciation, as well as the effects of language, the relation of language to the world and its situations: operations of codification and decoding of meaning give rise to the construction of meaning by subjects located in a given environment. The term enunciation *dispositif* is already present in the works of pragmatic linguistics and semio-pragmatics². Without entering into the details of its evolution, the notion gradually imposed itself in a universe of private communication of technologies to explain the complexity of the subjects, their interactions, and their roles located, contextualized.

On the other hand, the communication analysis of the media (including the educational media) began with the content analysis, regardless of its semiotic nature (recording of representation): graphical, audiovisual, cinematographic, television. Like structural linguistics, semiotics also develops as an analysis of the statement defined as a process of coding and decoding a system of signs. When linguistics became pragmatic, semiotics adapted its

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- 1 The contribution we publish in this book is a synthesis of the evolution of our conceptions since its first formulation in the late 1990s in *Hermès* journal. The reader, therefore, will necessarily find elements of articles published until 2014.
 - 2 In the 1980s, the implementation of a method of learning French in primary education in Senegal (CLAD method – Center for Applied Linguistics in Dakar) was studied from the angle of an enunciation *dispositif*. The identification of contradictions between the roles of the announcers and enunciators assumed by the teachers has allowed us to clarify and better understand the reasons for their refusal of the method.

theoretical framework to this new linguistics that takes into account the context of enunciation, the intentions of the interlocutors as well as the relational aspects of all communication to analyze the meaning of communication (PERAYA, 2010).

It is in the context of this evolution towards a semi-pragmatics that Eliseo Véron (1983) approaches the analysis of the television news, as a *dispositif* of “media enunciation”. The author intends to define “its state, structure of functioning, its variants, the specific combinatorial of significant matters, and the intersection of discursive genres that characterize it” (ibid., p. 98). The author, then, identifies the Y-Y axis, “the gaze of a presenter-enunciator fixed on the viewer [...] eyes to eyes” (ibid.), as the pivot of the non-fictional televisual enunciation *dispositif*. The journalist “looks at the empty eye of the camera, which makes me feel, as a viewer, seen: he is there, I see him, he speaks to me” (ibid., 103). The description of the enunciative *dispositif* shows coordinated *agencement*, the three constituent “faces” of the communication process already described from the autoscopia *dispositif*: the production studio and the “camera device” or production unit, the JT (*Journal Télévisivé*) as media, in other words, the mediated content and the recipient in the context, that is, the receiving instance or context.

The analysis of this televisual *dispositif*, such as autoscopia, shows how both (television and autoscopia) induce a number of effects on the subjects who appropriate of them: cognitive, social, postural, emotional; effects of mediation as opposed to mediatization, which refers to the process of media production and, therefore, to engineering (PERAYA, 1999, 2010; MEUNIER, PERAYA, 2010), a differentiation that follows the perspective already worked with insistence by M. Linard (1996) on educational media. The media devices get defined as a heterogeneous instance, organizing technique, sense, and meaning, social

relation and posture, type of hybridization that we try to explain by the acronym DTSP (technical/semio-pragmatic dispositifs) (PERAYA, 1999); denomination that seems less relevant today, because these different dimensions are currently constitutive of the *dispositif* understood in the sense of theoretical construct.

If Eliseo Verón, in turn, claims a socio-semiotics insofar as his object of research focuses on the different “social discourses”, the distinction, however, seems tenuous insofar as the semio-pragmatics also refers to the social inscription of discourse in a context of determined social activities, as well as the linguistic marks that flow from it, including the concepts of texts genres, and types of discourse (BRONCKART, 1997). There is also the name DITSIC (sociotechnical *dispositif* of information and communication), proposed by the I3M unit of the University of Toulon South (I3M), which preferably emphasizes the social and relational characteristics of its frame of reference and its theoretical options. As we can see, each of these definitions coming from the information and communication sciences provides a particular theoretical perspective on often identical empirical objects.

In parallel, the semiotics confronted with the material representations systems – whether symbolic or abstract, like verbal language, analogical or iconic, such as photographs, virtual modes, etc. – gets interested in the symbolic or iconic nature of mental representations and mental models, as well as the articulation between material and mental representations. From the pedagogical point of view, the main question posed is the one of the effects of the media, the registers of representation and the specific characteristics of the *dispositif* in the learning. This approach is largely inspired by cognitive psychology, work on the mental image, processes of information processing according to their different registers of representation, and, finally, by the concept of a cognitive tool (mainly

JONASSEN, 1992). As for the educational media, Gavriel Salomon (1987) and Jean Donnay defined the concept of *supplantation* to describe the process through which the media, because of its own characteristics, perform materially or externally a process, a cognitive operation in place of the student, thus, alleviating the cognitive load of some of their learning.

The contribution of the information and communication sciences to the design of media *dispositifs* mainly analyzes the processes of “mediation of knowledge” and allows us to ask two questions: 1) What is the influence of semiotic systems and material representations on cognitive processes, about the form that knowledge assumes and the proceedings of learning (cognitive mediation) in the relation between material images and mental images? 2) What is the effect on the conduct of the actors, especially of the recipients, as well as on the change of their representations and behaviors? It is these effects of postural and praxeological mediations that have been most frequently analyzed in the field of socio-educational communication (GreMs in particular, research group on knowledge mediation³, Catholic University of Louvain).

In the area of informatics: towards the mediatization of training and instrumentation of human activity

Computer sciences have contributed to the definition of the concept of a *dispositif* from its own concepts (see, in this regard, the feedback analysis proposed by M. Linard, 1996), of its many applications – educational software, computer-aided teaching, computer mediatized communication, digital work environment – or even their uses.

3 Université Catholique de Louvain. URL: <<http://www.uclouvain.be/grems>>.

The generalized digital transformed the computer screen, then the tablets and telephones into display terminals and multimedia production instrument (text, sound, still image, video, and cinema). This evolution constitutes the technological basis of a systematic mediatization of almost all human activities. The “mediation of knowledge”, the object of the semio-pragmatics, is today giving rise to a multiplicity of forms of generalized mediatization of teaching and learning activity. In the area of training, for example, virtual work environments (platforms, virtual campuses, techno-pedagogical environments) mediatize the eight constitutive functions of the teaching and learning process (PERAYA, 1999, 2010), thus contributing to the evolution of distance learning, mainly through computer-mediated communication (CMC) (MASON, KAYE, 1989), and increasingly blending the training between presence and distance.

As the teaching and learning activities are particularly human activities, the concepts of the instrument (RABARDEL, 1995) and the instrument system (BOURMAUD, 2007; VIDAL-GOMEL et al., 2015) have clarified the *dispositif* in a relevant way. P. Rabardel often uses the term “mediatize” to designate the role of the instrument in the human relations with the world and the subject with the object⁴. The wide dissemination of the works of P. Rabardel and his colleagues, and more specifically the concept of an instrument among researchers in cognitive ergonomics, EIAH (Computer Environment for Human Learn-

4 “The operator’s action is mediatized by an instrument tool” (RABARDEL, 1995, p.37); “the subject-object interactions mediatized by the instrument” (ibid., p. 53); “Man’s relations with the environment, mediatized by technical objects and more generally technique” (ibid., 63); “the process of interaction mediatized by the instrument” (ibid., p. 65); “the relation of the individual with the world of human objects is mediatized by the relationship with other men” (ibid., p. 66); “the psychological instruments that mediatize the relation of the subject with himself and with the others” (ibid., p. 66); “the subject-object relationship mediatized by the instrument” (ibid., p. 147).

ing) and educational technologies, undoubtedly favored the adoption of the term “instrumented” rather than “mediatized”, whose use today seems more limited to information and communication sciences. However, any media, like any instrument, mediatizes human activity: both can be described and analyzed as *dispositifs*, in the sense of a theoretical construct. It would be interesting, however, to analyze precisely in what contexts, in which communities, from which moment and from which influences that change in which the expressions “instrumented activity” or “instrumented learning situation” can be considered as good indicators have occurred. In this perspective, two paths get presented: 1) to consider the media as a specific type of instrument appropriate for a particular human activity, that of communication and formation (ANDERSON, 1988); 2) to consider that the term mediatization refers to the first meaning of media, that third term that occupies between two others a position of intermediation. It is in this sense that P. Rabardel seems to use it in *Les hommes et la technologie* (1995).

The *dispositif*: empirical object, notion, and research object

The frontier between scientific discourse and common representations and opinion appears as a frequent epistemological obstacle in the human and social sciences (BOURDIEU et al., 1973). The term *dispositif* is a perfect example: it transgresses, transcends the boundary between the theoretical object and the experimental object, between scientific discourse and common language, since it corresponds to a theoretical construct but, at the same time, designates, in the common language, many concrete objects (HERMÈS, 1999; APPEL et al., 2010), or experimental grounds, and practice contexts (LINARD; PRAX, 1984).

This first difficulty is undoubtedly determined by the fact that the information and communication sciences were constructed in “areas of concrete objects”, whereas “more than a century of epistemology has sufficiently shown that science does not explain the existing objects: it searches for objects” (PERRET, 2004, § 2). In this search for an object, from the epistemological point of view, the maintenance of such a frontier is essential for the construction of the scientific object: on the one hand, “scientific research is organized around constructed objects that have nothing in common with the units divided by naive perception” (BOURDIEU, PASSERON, CHAMBOREDON, 1973, p. 52) and, on the other hand, “a research object, so partial and fragmented that it can only be defined and constructed according to a theoretical problem that allows subjecting to a systematic interrogation the aspects of reality related by the question that gets put to them” (ibid., 54).

In this way, the definitions and successive explanations of the concept of *dispositif* (HERMÈS, 1999; PERAYA, 1999, 2010; APPEL et al., 2010) try, in their own way, to produce this distance, which in itself allows the analysis of many situations of mediatized learning, training, and communication, and, at the same time, to understand the role of media objects and technological objects in these processes.

In his meta-research (terminological and analytical) on the use of the term “*dispositif*” in the literature in information and communication sciences, Luc Massou (2010) notes that

[...] the use of the notion of *dispositif* seems more applied by different authors selected at a relatively large level of granularity [...]; we are therefore at the level of online platforms, systems or digital training environments [...] However, the contributions of the

various authors studied do not allow us to identify more clearly the level of granularity below which we can no longer speak of '*dispositif*' (ibid., p. 69).

The *dispositif* is considered here as a notion that would correspond to a stage of pre-conceptualization, a kind of first descriptive reference that allows identifying which concrete objects can be designated as a *dispositif* or which can belong to this category of objects (definition in extension). The definition of this notion is partly borrowed from D. Paquelin: "a set of material and human resources with a particular purpose, an *agencement* of originally heterogeneous elements contained by a set of rules, norms, practices belonging to various spheres" (PAQUELIN, 2009). We understand the usefulness of this notion for any empirical description. However, the question "what is the level of granularity below which one can no longer speak of *dispositif*?" is perhaps a bad one. Maybe it's just badly worded. In fact, it is the look of the researcher and his/her research question that constitute a concrete object, whatever its complexity and level of granularity, in a "*dispositif*" understood here in the sense of the object of research, of a theoretical construct.

We can take Massou's example, that seems very pertinent to us. The term training *dispositif* replaced the one of the system, as Brigitte Albero (2010) reminds us. At the empirical level, a platform, a virtual work environment, a techno-pedagogical environment or a campus almost always constitutes a particular element of such a *dispositif*, whether hybrid, open or remote. In addition, a techno-pedagogical environment, a platform, encompasses many specialized applications of a more refined level of granularity, such as forums, chats, text editors, document transfer, and deposit utilities, showrooms, portfolios, editors QCM editors, etc. In an empirical and descriptive study scope of the uses of the institutional and personal

learning environments of Toulon students, we designate these applications by the term of specific *dispositifs*. But whether it is the training *dispositif*, the platform or the embedded applications, because they are, for us, research objects and in relation to our theoretical framework, we consider them as *dispositifs*: we will describe them, model and analyze them as such, whatever their degree of granularity, and, of course, the name given to them at the empirical level.

How, then, to take into account, at the level of scientific discourse and the theoretical construct, the complexity of the *dispositifs* and interdependence relations that connect them in many cases that we observe? We have already pointed out the points of convergence between the theoretical constructs that are the *dispositif* and the instrument. The track of “instrument systems”, developed following Pierre Rabardel’s work on the observation and analysis of work situations, as well as the activity of the operators, seems extremely promising. Vidal-Gomel, Bourmaud, and Munoz (2015) point out that: a) “the formal and informal tools together constitute the subject’s instruments, the instrumental genesis makes it possible to go beyond the informal and figurative points of view”; b) “the toolkit constitutes a system of instruments, structured according to the experience of the subject, and mobilized according to the situation”; c) “complementarities and redundancies appear in the different functions of the instrument system”; (d) “this system of tools” can achieve a better balance between the objectives of the economy and efficiency (2015, p. 2).

More precisely, instrument systems and subsystems

“seem to be totally linked to the organization of the activity and to the categorization of situations: classes of situations and area of activity. This characteristic of instrument systems refers to a process of conceptual-

ization: the subject elaborates classes of situations and categorizes them from his/her knowledge of the objects and invariants of the action; these two processes are not unique to each other (Samurçay, Rabardel, 2004)” (VIDAL-GOMEL et al., 2015, p. 3).

In their article, the authors present their research. In one, they show how students in schools take ownership or not of artifacts imposed or suggested by teachers and how they organize a personal system of tools about the difficulties they encounter as students. The proposed theoretical framework would unquestionably enrich the personal learning environments and current research that attempts to describe students’ abandonment of institutional environments and the fact that they choose popular environments and applications available through the web.

Mediatization and mediation

These terms, which get are used in relation to mediatized training and communication *dispositifs*, need to be clarified since the definitions we give them seem to produce some confusion. In his previously mentioned meta-research, Massou observes that all authors whose texts form his corpus considered online training *dispositifs* to be “places or spaces of mediations” (2010, p. 65). However, he also notes differences in “situating [mediation] as a constituent element or as an effect of the *dispositif*” (ibid.). In this bipolarization of the field, we would be the only ones to situate mediation on the side of effects. Let us seize the opportunity to return to these distinctions.

The definitions of mediatization and mediation more widely used refer to the distinction of Gettliffe-Grant: “It seems that we should prefer ‘mediation’ for human mediation and ‘mediatization’ for technical mediation” (PERAYA, 2010). In the field of educational sciences, human

mediation, interpreted by educators and mainly through the Houssaye's triangle, designates the mediator role of the teacher who intervenes as a facilitator between the student and the contents that are object of learning, while mediatization must be understood such as mediation performed by artifact, *dispositif*, learner, and content, teacher or, possibly, peers.

This definition, which seems to establish a kinship relationship between these two mediations, does not seem to take into account either its own nature (human or technological), which distinguishes them irreparably, or the level at which they both operate. As a result, it presents more theoretical and methodological difficulties than it allows solving in the analysis of mediated training and communication devices (MEUNIER; PERAYA, 2010; PERAYA, 2010). Therefore, we chose a frank distinction between these two concepts:

If mediatization belongs to the sphere of conception and production of the media, as well as the process of communication in which it participates, mediation comes from observation, analysis, and understanding of the effects produced by the media in their social and personal use. Mediatization refers to engineering, mediation refers to research. As a result, mediation approaches, methods, and processes are fundamentally different from those that constitute mediatization (PERAYA, 2010, p. 43).

These definitions seem to be more consistent with the theoretical framework mentioned above. Firstly, mediatized communication and training are the product of a design and production process, of a mediatization process in the sense of *mise-en-scène* (disposing of signs on pages [layout], waves [broadcast], images, etc., terms used when referring to historical media). Whether it is instrument-

ed activity, mediatized communication, and/or training, these are always the product of the process of instrumentation or mediatization. So, the “technological mediation” that literature classically opposes to human mediation is constitutive of the theoretical model of the *dispositif*, but also of the instrument: it is its foundation. What is the relevance of the term “mediatization”, which is only one of the dimensions of the *dispositif*? As for the *dispositif*, it is, by definition, in a position of intermediation between the subject and an object (knowledge, action) or another subject (including oneself); therefore, it generates effects on behavior. We identify and analyze these effects in terms of mediations, characterized by the type of user behavior that is modified. For example, sensory and psychomotor, cognitive, relational, reflexive, praxeological or postural mediations. It might be more explicit, but much heavier, in language, to talk about the effects of the *dispositif* and its position of intermediation (PERAYA, 1999 and 2010; CHARLIER et al., 2006).

As an example, in our research which aimed at the definition of hybrid training *dispositifs* (CHARLIER et al., 2006), five fundamental dimensions were identified: the distance-presence articulation, the forms and the degree of mediatization, the expected and accomplished mediatization, the monitoring, and the pedagogical approach. As part of the European Hy-Sup project, we added to these dimensions the opening of the training *dispositif* (PERAYA et al., 2014). We see in this model that the process of mediatization – guided by the intentions of the producers and, therefore, by the expected effects – is instantiated in a first state of the *dispositif*, the *dispositif* prescribed according to Paquelin (2009). In practice, users appropriate themselves of the *dispositif*, some effects or particularly expected mediations get performed, others not, since unforeseen effects may occur. This state of the *dispositif* corresponds, in the description given by this author of the process of

appropriation of the *dispositifs*, to the phase of the “experienced” *dispositif*. In this model, where can we locate human mediation that seemed to be one of the characteristics of these environments? It finds its place in one of the dimensions of the training device: the monitoring in its various forms, which are currently well described in the field of education sciences, and in particular distance learning.

Finally, the relationship between mediatization and mediation, as we defined, allows us to show the links between engineering and research in educational technology: each new training and communication *dispositif* implemented constitutes a place for observation and analysis of uses and effects. The results of these surveys and the knowledge produced can then be mobilized and reinvested in the process of engineering the design and creation of new *dispositifs*.

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Updating the approach to the mediatization of info- communication actions

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Abstract: An update and even a reframing of the approach to the process of mediatization of information and communication actions, to which the author had already dedicated previous works, especially in 2007, are all the more necessary since there are many confusions, especially between specialists and technologists, but also in research works, mainly oriented from a semiological/anthropological or socio-symbolic point of view. If this process is, undoubtedly, stimulated by the expansion of the digital ICT, it is not justified to focus only on ruptures and discontinuities and neglect continuities, for example, with historical media. Among current issues, the author insists on the need to move beyond the superficial and hasty ap-

proaches of digital, proposes to reposition the process of social construction of digital ICT dominated by powerful global conglomerates, the Big Data, and, also, to address in depth the main structuring elements that participate in the new world order of information-communication, such as Big Data or algorithms that intervene in the stimulation of social practices.

Keywords: Info-communicational actions. Social construction of techniques. Information. Communication. Digital. Mediatization process. Socio-digital networks. Socio-technique. Digital surveillance.

Introduction

More than any other notion admitted, if not recognized, by the scientific community, mediatization needs an update, even a re-update, and this for at least two principal reasons: on the one hand, the disruptive development of the digital in techniques of information and communication since the beginning of the century incontestably launched deep mutations, when we do not attribute to it even deeper effects leading to significant and radical ruptures with the previous period. This simple statement is a source of questions and shows how much the difference is prominent among the authors, and what there is to discuss and debate. However obvious, that proposal gets widely adopted in the most diverse ways, it is convenient to give it all the reasons that justify an update or even a more fundamental revision. On the other hand, the conceptualization of the approach is far from complete, since the differences between the authors remain visible, whether theoretical differences, disciplinary or dependent on the national or regional contexts in which communication-information has been developing for more than a third century.

Therefore, from this preface, it is essential to note that these two sets of reasons combine without being con-

fused (however, as it will be shown below, we can always differentiate them), but it is a theoretical mistake, often performed, to combine them a priori; an error that must be attributed especially to those, many, who understand the digital under the influence of a thought centered on technical determinism, but also to others, for whom social mediations are the origin of almost all the communication that is made. This initial explanation allows itself to highlight the current context of what is at stake when one thinks about the issue of mediatization; it is not enough to identify the main questions. But before trying to identify these issues, which are scientific, it is important to return to some initial questions and then verify the central points of agreement and divergence.

Preliminary considerations

For many, authors as well social actors, the process of mediatization has long been at the heart of the questions without, however, having a precise definition nor even as to its use. When we look at this process, we perceive disconnected and juxtaposed meanings: hopes, as well as fears, doubts, utopias, and promises (for example, radical changes of an anthropological nature, modalities of communication, and the passage from the written word to that of calculus); warnings and disparaging appraisals (due to the realm of speed, fragmentation, and spectacularism of thought, and now more and more easily the spread of rumors, fake news, etc.); moral judgments (aiming at, for example, the possibilities of opening up to the world left for children); technology-related prejudices and their real or supposed evils, and, paradoxically, predictions about technological advantages (especially those that highlight all possible facets of multi-media interactivity and creativity); as well as doubts about the superiority of technical *dispositifs* and their claims to replace those still available, such as the mass media.

On the themes mentioned here, we could question, one by one, the discourses uttered, and the conceptions expressed, and nothing indicates that this would have an end because of the imposition of all kinds of interests that are at stake and are becoming increasingly important – not only in the advanced countries – both socio-cultural and political or economic. It all happens as if the main trends in the sphere of Information-Communication always bring us back to the question of mediatization, which would be a central process.

Predictably, this overabundance of mediatization related issues did not facilitate the formulation of well-argued and relevant reasoning; most of the time, we proceed by oppositions: before/after, traditional/modern, material/immaterial, real/virtual, analogical/digital, present/distant, directed/interactive, mono-media/multimedia, molar/molecular, centralized/decentralized, concentrated/shared, oligopolistic/distributed, etc. These oppositions persist, even as mediatization strategies spread and diversify, and even if doubts arise, more and more, about the possibility of a true replacement of the communication mode that we have known for several millennia for a new one. That is why, contrary to the substitutional or substitutionary views that are the basis of the preceding oppositions, we may ask ourselves whether the most plausible perspective is not that of joining new modalities directed towards mediatization with a communication mode that is essentially sustained (for beyond the diversity of the forms in which it reveals itself to us, across the planet). From then on, the perspective would be societal¹ and historical and no more anthropological-cultural; it would highlight continuities, complementarities, and miscegenation, not radical ruptures and mutations; more precisely, it would try to distinguish between what concerns the

1 For a distinction between the terms “societal” and “social”, see: MIEGE, Bernard. *L'espace public contemporain*. Grenoble: PUG, 2010.

historical order, even if this distinction is in the long run, and a trans-historical order that still needs to be clarified. This heuristic, it must be said, is not closed, it needs to get completed; but its advantage would be to encourage observers, specialists and researchers to clearly distinguish horizons and situate issues. We should add, without the possibility of discussing this here, that this perspective is fundamentally different from the disenchanting vision of a philosopher of technique like Bernard Stiegler, for whom innovation, leading to generalized connection, gets opposed to civilization (STIEGLER, 2016) as well as to the consequences of the instability of the concept of Nature, in a different sense, in the Anthropocene era as announced by the sociologist Bruno Latour.

It is, therefore, a re-framing operation that we intend to address before dealing with the process of mediatization itself and its actuality; otherwise, the approach to this process would get contaminated by a whole series of confusions which are related not only to the projections created by the technical imaginary applied to communication (as described above) but also to the unclear plurality of “academic” contributions to the shuffling of perceptions: the mixing of micro and macro levels, mediated and unmediated modalities, or what gets related to social and linguistic.

Still, we must agree on the meaning to be attached to the term mediatization. In a first sense, mediatization opposes to mediation and aims to identify mediated phenomena not through numerous instances of social mediation but through media, in the specific sense of the concept, or increasingly through ICT forming a category improperly called non-media. In a second sense, we take into account the action of content mediatization, that is, the fact that content (e.g., higher courses, cultural offerings or sports information) is placed online or inscribed on media customarily after the intervention of specialists

(designers, multimedia directors, etc.); and, unlike a common representation of the computer thinking, mediatization has nothing to do with a transposition linked to the use of tools and software now available. In a third sense, we try to take into account everything that, in interindividual and even intergroup or inter-organizational relationships, occurs when an ICT, or rather, a socio-technical *dispositif*, intervenes between me and myself, me and us, we and ourselves; the approach here is, above all, psycho-sociological or micro-sociological and seeks to identify the changes in the acts of communication itself, whether they rely on language or not. In a fourth sense, what we are trying to evaluate is the importance of widespread and shared information (quantitatively and qualitatively); mediatization refers here to the phenomenon of informationalization, which we have already called attention to on several occasions, but with the concern of understanding the reception and the relationship with the receivers.

This semantic plurality is the object of confusions and permanent misinterpretations, and their different meanings get hardly perceived with clarity; but this plurality must also be interpreted as indicative of the richness of a process that, although far from being the only one to intervene in the development of ICT, predominantly digital at the present time, remains the central process.

Finally, if we do not take into account the process of mediatization and its gradual development in most modern societies as a process closely linked to the issue of public space, political, and societal, we fail to realize how much these phenomena maintain close relations, insofar as societies marked by fragmentation and diversification of their public space are generally those in which mediatization is the most advanced and most complex. But, on the one hand, advanced mediatization does not necessarily contribute to the stimulation of public debate and discussions (this is especially the case for authoritarian societies

under development). On the other hand, the two processes must get distinguished because, within the sphere of information-communication, they do not have the same purposes and the social practices related to them cannot be placed at the same level.

Concordances and divergences in mediatization approaches

Once these preliminary considerations have been exposed, it is now possible to take stock of what is, within the scientific community of concern, most often accepted and what remains in discussion or reveals oppositions, more or less firmly expressed.

The authors readily recognize that it is around “historical media” (an expression used to identify the press, radio, and television, since they formed a media set, if not unified at least with components that have kept specificities but whose functioning corresponds to rules commonly accepted) that the first approaches on mediatization have been proposed. It is difficult to accurately situate the emergence of this process historically because it varied according to regional and national situations, but we may go back to the 1970s and 1980s, or even earlier in the United States. It is certain that this process precedes the movement of the technological development of communication characterized by the successive developments of ICT. However, mediatization dialogues with the generalization of public relations, from the moment it goes beyond commercial advertising and intervenes in the social, cultural, business, and political domains. Mediatization is firstly a characteristic trait of what in Latin America has been called, not unambiguously, social media, and its development gets based on ‘historical media, which will continue for two or three decades but gradually, with the increasingly active competition of ICT, so called non-media. The insistence on mediatization cannot be placed in rela-

tion only with the contemporary movement of the technological development of information-communication; currently, this is a frequently perpetrated mistake that does not allow us to understand why “historical media” remain directly involved in promoting mediatized communication actions. But this error, we must admit, is perpetrated less by researchers than by specialists or publicists; the former, for the most part, tried not to oppose systematically mediated actions (e.g., through direct, therefore, interpersonal techniques) with mediatized ones, showing continuity between them. As for specialists and publicists under the effect of the technological injunction, emphasizing the virtual advantages of the new dispositifs systematically, they sought to delimit regularly the differences between the two types of actions. This should get further emphasized because the great diversity of areas and objects of mediatization actions did not contribute to global representation; the visions and approaches we gave them remained separate, even sectorized. And this dismemberment has even contributed to the fact that the mediatization process was not designated as such everywhere, at least with that designation.

If “historical media” are contemporaneous to the advent of mediatization and continue to be closely associated with this process, there remains the fact that its strengthening which takes place under different modalities according to societies is inseparable from the expansion of ICTs (what leads to the common mistake of relating the future of the process only to the development of ICT). This articulation between ICT, now almost exclusively digital, and mediatization must, however, be detailed:

- At present, it is a simplification for convenience to speak only of ICT; in most cases, what gets proposed to us, consumers-users or producers, are, strictly speaking, sociotechnical *dispositifs*, as they get called by significant scientific literature. These

dispositifs generally combine access tools and “information processing”, modes of intermediation, means of diffusion and informational or cultural contents, and even so-called social networks. The combinations are multiple, and the list of *dispositifs* to set would be long. They get associated with (partly evolutionary) standards of production, circulation, and consumption. Added to this, we have the content that can be produced by professionals from access to content produced in an “amateur” (ambiguous term) context. *Dispositifs* are not technological in themselves; they incorporate a technological dimension, but also a sociocultural one;

- The process of mediatization was often supported and stimulated by the expansion of ICT, which can be perceived by socio-digital networks, as observed by many research works, but which should also get observed in relation to ICT as a whole. They are also used in less visible functions, and especially less directly related to consumer users, such as production, preservation and archiving, diffusion-distribution, etc. Therefore, as decisive as the role of ICTs for many authors and especially users as a trend towards widespread connectivity, we cannot hold on to this role and neglect the background or back office, which is equally essential in the mediatization of communicational actions, whether because a whole series of activities that act in this process is facilitated and multiplied or whether because they count on the initiative of the end users (without them really taking ownership of the production and control of the content, as the collaborationist paradigm postulates);
- Once this has been clarified, the question arises as to whether mediatization has contributed to what gets presented as a generalization of con-

nectivity and should get described as a “network connection” or a network as access to connection is (very) unequal (a phenomenon to which we give little importance but that should be taken into account because what is getting established is, clearly, a very unequal distribution of a good that is becoming common). In any case, we cannot be satisfied with the answer that is usually given, namely, that current techniques activate less hierarchical social relations (from point to mass, as it was with “historical media”) and more interactive (point to point, with a multiplication of inter-individual exchanges at a distance). These answers regard beliefs that are really well-rooted. It can easily get shown that current devices truly favor manipulative, covert, and even violent strategies; in other words, increased connectivity does not necessarily accompany the expansion of communication in societies, which also applies to mediatisation, which should not get dissociated from the means and vectors of its transmission;

- Among the many approaches on the topic of ICT and society, it seems appropriate to mention the approach of Patrice Flichy in an article entitled “Connected individualism between technique and society” (FLICHY, 2004). The author is concerned with starting from the analysis of the outstanding characteristics of contemporary societies: profound modification of the family, which is no longer the base cell, leaving the individual in the center; leisure activities are increasingly private and individual; expectations of a more autonomous and reactive individual; expectations of a more independent and reactive working individual on the part of the companies; flexibility of work; reduction of durable commitments in both

work and marriage; not parenting, and social isolation, etc. Not only, he continues, but the ICT also does not end the observed separations between professional space, private space, and public life. We should not expect them (as some have expected) to establish a link where separations or differences assert themselves. But, Flichy says, ICTs can “offer new ways to strengthen autonomy and contacts, in a word, affiliation; may allow certain ‘not affiliated’ individuals to regain their affiliation, on the condition that they have acquired a real mastery of these technologies [...]” (FLICHY, 2004, p. 46). Under these conditions, ICTs “provide resources for individuals to develop their connected individualism [...]” (ibid., p. 47), while being more autonomous and more controlled in private and professional life. Rejecting both social and technological determinism, the author insists on the existence of multiple relationships in the interaction between social and technical. Although he is more interested in sociability than in social communications, his analytical model seems pertinent to address mediatization in depth.

- Lastly, we should remember that mediatization is related to reflections on presence at a distance, which develops in television broadcasts involving the participation of viewers as in reality shows, or online courses, satisfying ourselves in indicating to what extent the notion of place is not absent, but is somehow reformulated.

These observations help to take stock of approaches to mediatization such as they have perpetuated since at least the early 1980s, first with “historical media” and then, gradually, with the addition of ICT. However, we cannot fail to observe that the analyzes come from different theoretic-

cal and disciplinary, and even divergent, premises. It seems to us that these analyzes fall into two broad categories:

- On the one hand, those based on semi-anthropological approaches (found mainly in Latin America, but also in Europe [Eliseo Verón]);
- On the other hand, those based on sociological-symbolic approaches, categorization to which it would be advisable to add several works, both semiological and sociological, that do not deal with mediatization per se, but which are part of this de facto research lineage.

Between these two categories of approach, if the methodology is different, the differences do not make discussions and exchanges impossible. Proof of this is, for example, a joint seminar by video conference between researchers from Unisinos and GRESEC (Groupe de recherche sur les enjeux de la communication of the University of Grenoble Alpes) in April 2014. However, the titles of the presentations show that the differences are significant:

On the Unisinos side:

- “Study of circuits as space of apprehension of communicational processes” (José Luiz Braga);
- “Totem images: the fixation of symbols in the processes of mediatization” (Ana Paula da Rosa);
- “The plurivocity of the concept of mediatization” (Pedro Gilberto Gomes);
- “Réflexions sur la rupture épistémologique introduite l’émergence du Web 2.0 dans l’étude de la médiatisation” (Jairo Ferreira);
- “The communion of opposites: the UN and its interpretations on creative industries” (João Ladeira);
- “The journalistic practice and the figures of control and resistance of the newsrooms” (Beatriz Marocco);

- “Affections of mediatization on the journalistic profession: ambiance, identity, interaction with readers and narratives” (Antonio Fausto Neto).

To this list was added the sociological contribution of Serge Proulx (UQAM), then present in Brazil, entitled ‘Culture of contribution: Between the gift and the commercial transaction’, which dealt especially with the practices of communication and participatory culture.

On the GRESEC side:

- “Sustainable development of cities. ICT and inhabitant’s participation” (Sylvie Bardoux-Boisnier);
- “‘Augmented reality’ applications and patrimonial visits” (Marie-Christine Bordeaux and Lise Renaud);
- “Evaluation of the relationship with the sources in the traditional media in front of the innovative social uses” (Bertrand Cabedoche);
- “Associative radios in the age of Web 2.0 – The example of Grenoble” (Maria Holubowicz);
- “ICT and industrialization of the scientific evaluation system” (Ilya Kiriya, National Research University of Moscow, then present in Grenoble);
- “Public data and information production – The local challenges of open data (Isabelle Pailliant);
- “From information to work. Social logic, modes of organization, and devices for the mediation of professional information” (Adrian Staii).

The titles of the presentations are undoubtedly not sufficient to accurately identify the methodological approaches and the theoretical bases. However, they allow us to clarify the content of the discussions held after the presentations. It is not so much the diversity of areas that attracts attention, but rather the distance or progressive

differentiation from the objects usually dealt with by “historical media”. In most cases, however, the bipolarization of the above mentioned approaches stands out: semiological-anthropological orientation / sociological-symbolic orientation. We add that some studies based on mediations and their (progressive) process of mediatization escape this framework of interpretation and, in particular, those that are not interested in the strategies of the actors of mediated communication and its gradual mediatization.

It should also get noted that a few authors have tried to overcome the bipolarization just mentioned. Among the most successful attempts that expressly had this objective, it is necessary to cite Jean-Pierre Esquenazi on the media discourse (Esquenazi, 2002) and the reflections and analyzes of the cinematographic and audiovisual visions of Roger Odin, which led him to propose a heuristic model, the semiological/pragmatic model, “[...] which aims to allow questions to be asked about the functioning (or non-functioning) of communication processes” (Odin, 2011, p. 19). The orientation chosen by Benoit Lafon is similar but applied to television productions; it is closer to the socio-symbolic, and this in the long run (Lafon, 2016).

Some very current challenges

These works open up exciting prospects and are expected to develop significantly. This is necessary since information-communication research remains very fragmented to deal with the omnipresence of expert discourse that does not hesitate to impose “global” questionings in which validated knowledge is difficult to oppose to social practices. Moreover, it is still taken little account to the fact that the mediatization process – more than ever before – is supported by a generalized commodification movement, and by a strengthened industrialization, with unprecedented characteristics (compared to “historical

media”), which should be placed as a primary element of the analysis, especially since the disruptive expansion of socio-digital networks (in the years 2005-2015).

Thus, we will distinguish three sets of questions, both societal and scientific; it is about:

1. Elucidating with precision the meaning to be given to digital:

Most of the time, the authors do not bother to define what is digital, which they consider as a totality that cannot get debated. And the most surprising is that at the same time, many of them stand in the perspective of a new era, even of a revolution, in which the digital would be in the first mark, without even specifying if this revolution is in progress or already completed. It is undeniable that digital techniques took the place of procedures that were not (analogical, photochemical, printed, etc.), but is the process finished? It seems that it is not completely the case: if we consider, for example, the different cycles of production of value in the branches of cultural and creative industries, we cannot fail to see that this type of industrial production includes, at the same time, elements of continuity and discontinuity, and even of rupture (Miège, 2017). In addition, many techniques are currently in the experimental phase or first industrial achievements are announced. They also participate in digital and considerably extend the applications: connected objects, communication chips, robotics, and artificial intelligence, implants, and prostheses, genetic engineering, and more broadly man-machine interfaces. A singular revolution that is difficult to characterize accurately, especially in its future developments, with a strategic and conceptual importance that we can already describe as primordial, but still difficult to seize.

Today, however, it is possible to go further in the characterization (revelation may be a more appropriate term, provided it is a continuing operation), not only of

the digital, strict sense, but also of what underlies a great innovation (of rupture, radical, according to Christopher Freeman, who is referenced in Joseph Schumpeter); currently, the ICT conjugate, in fact:

- the digitization in the form of 0 and 1 of increasing amounts of data and processing;
- signal compression, especially for transmission through networks;
- miniaturization of components;
- and, in doing so, the treatment, visualization of the data and its modeling, and increasingly its algorithmization, as well as the extension of the possibilities of interactivity.

It is the implementation of all these elements, combined in large scale (= conjugation of all of them), which we unduly qualify as digital (a term that took the place of the virtual). This shortcut and simplification are not only semantic: they have the serious drawback of obscuring the other modalities that characterize ICT, as well as a series of industrial operations (collection, filing, processing, exchange and commercialization available), which are linked to ICT but are also essential for its implementation. These essential aspects are hidden; they are, however, structuring. Despite the warnings of most philosophers or epistemologists of the technique, many technologists and advertisers insert their reflections (and projections) in a short period, whereas the temporal cut of the movements of the technique, we should repeat, occurs over a long period. It would be necessary to justify that what prevailed for the previous techniques does not predominate anymore for the digital techniques since they would be radically different: this is a speech that can get done in professional and social exchanges but has no consistency in the theoretical level.

The developments announced, and only established in the second digital age, are still based on infor-

mation and communication techniques but, from then on, they are integrated into the *dispositifs* and their component parts (in genetics, automation, robotics), what leads us to ask whether the fact of grouping them into a unified category that is constantly expanding, as proposed by digital, still has some meaning. What was/is at core of the ICT are, above all, the phenomena of mediation and mediatization, involving in one form or another (that is, directly or indirectly, face to face or at distance) the intervention of mediators, that is, of human actors, individual or organized, in any case, socialized; and it is these phenomena that are observed by the information-communication sciences. Even if its automation – partial – is likely in the long run, this does not justify an unlimited extension, that is, a non-conceptual framework. The confusion is maintained by the fact that the term mediatization is used, on the initiative of computer professionals, to qualify automated operations, somehow preprogrammed.

2. Repositioning the process of social construction of ICT (digital)

It is not easy to take stock of the works and theories from which they sought inspiration, which set out to understand the social determinations in the construction (or formation) of the ICT since the 1980s. Somewhat everywhere, the ICT (with this or another name) resulted in a large set of quantitative and qualitative research papers related to the human and social sciences (sociology, information science, and communication, political science, semiotics, economics, but also psychology and cognitive sciences) and, secondarily, with engineering. Much of this research focused on tools (from telematics and the micro-computer to the semantic web) or partial aspects (digitization of documents, political blogs, literary blogs, SMS, digital identities, digital media, and platforms, etc.); for understandable historical reasons, they were primarily di-

rected to employment and even uses. In other words, they form a consistent but dispersed, relatively heterogeneous set that has remained little known to non-specialists. If it is necessary to point out their common characteristics, we can insist on the fact that they were: 1st) linked to specific tools; 2nd) marked mainly by a user orientation, and 3rd) many of them little related to communicational concerns. The paradox is that ICT gets often dealt with outside of any info-communicational viewpoints. Here we also observe the limits of the monodisciplinary approaches.

But, above all, if today these approaches are increasingly considered incomplete or insufficient it is because militants or researchers who have created many expectations regarding the possibilities of sharing and initiatives, from the new media or in the context of the virtual communities (with respect to the theory of social appropriation of media or with the collaborative and creative paradigms), are led to realize that since the beginning of this century these media are, more than ever, under the control of powerful communication industries, such as Big Five (or GAFAM) in the context of the markets that they organize almost everywhere in the world: in other words, the social construction of ICT is now largely initiated by those powerful groups that in a few years have had industrial and financial successes, guaranteeing them, from their essentially Californian bases, and the stimuli of the large stock exchanges (primarily the New York Stock Exchange), an almost global and little contested hegemony. In these conditions, when one is interested in the operation of information-communication, it is a priority to take into account these strong structural trends, both socioeconomically (for example, how does cultural and creative production, industrial or not, depend on network industries?) and socio-politically (e.g., citizens in the face of global surveillance, see below) or socioculturally (e.g., what are the effects of algorithmization on consum-

er practices, and particularly cultural and informational practices, see below). All these are questions which, by prolonging the previous ones, are now undeniably assuming a new dimension. The mediatization approach, therefore, does not escape these structuring elements.

3. Thinking of mediatization in relation to the (new) world order of information-communication

Mediatization of info-communication actions is almost everywhere in (strong) progression, either because the process is part of a continuation of what has been sent with the “historical media”, or because the ongoing generalization of public relations benefits the communication strategies of companies, administrations, and agencies; because they appropriate the available techniques to extend their actions in most social fields, because new actors are more easily able to access those potential uses or because digital social networks are “multiplying” contact opportunities with target audiences and even provoking initiative and collaboration of users. These are all possibilities that combine to broaden mediatization, which even benefits from diversification and refinement of enunciative *dispositifs* as modalities. We will leave aside two questions that are beginning to be asked: are societies in the process of mediatization? And is the engineering logic, if not the engineers’, in the process of being imposed, leading to pre-programmed automation of actions? Because the essential, under current conditions, seems to be concentrated in two directions correlated between them and very problematic for the mediatization of info-communicational actions. It is to them that we intend to draw attention, undoubtedly, from other authors who, it is true, rarely stand from the point of view of the perspectives exposed in this article. These two directions are:

On the one hand, the trend towards ever-increasing digital surveillance favored by the uncontrolled so-

ciopolitical and internationalized development of data archiving of all kinds (Big Data) – including collection, processing, production, marketing – and uses escape from social visibility: this characteristic is a formidable challenge, not only for private life and individual autonomy (as more and more jurists report) but also for the functioning and regulation of societies with their different elements.

On the other hand, the algorithmization widely established in consumer practices and, especially, what interests us here, in cultural and informational practices. Following Dominique Cardon (2015), we insist on the fact that these metrics, for the most part new, are positioned, at the same time, in terms of popularity (accessible through voting or representation), authority (linked to meritocratic classifications), reputation (incitement of social-digital affinity networks is decisive here) and prediction which mixes previously distinct perspectives (at least, in principle), making the processing of the information collected more opaque. This unlimited multiplication of data is likely to be positioned primarily in terms of predictions and favor the refinement of advertising strategies as well as the development of the estimated identification of achievements and successes.

Therefore, the process of mediatization is the place of decisive changes, contemporary to the (new) order of information and communication. This expression recognizes that the science of communication and information is increasingly important in all human activities, from production to consumption, in all instances of social mediation and reproduction, as well as in the private sphere.

What is essential with the use of this expression is that the emphasis is on a new *agencement* or organization of information articulated to the communication, but this agency remains in formation.

This new order is not primarily political or sociopolitical; though it is mainly economic, sociotechnical and

sociocultural (MIÈGE, 2017), it does not focus on press information, it takes into account information of all kinds, whether edited or not; and if it is global, at least, in large part, it is also strongly linked to the polarities or inequalities of development, as was observed at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

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Mediation x Mediatization: Concepts between trajectories, biographies, and geographies

Antônio Fausto Neto

Abstract: The notions of mediation and mediatization are, at least since the 1980s, at the center of research in the scenario of the geography of communication studies, especially the ones of Latin origin. And, like other concepts, they did not emerge and develop in an 'abstract' way, but from trajectories, biographies and geographies that, so to speak, constituted 'production conditions' for different angles of their approaches, as well as for their circulation and reception in the academic, editorial and applied research fields. This article presents three Latin scenarios in which the elaborations of these concepts are thought of and announced: The first one is characterized by the 'landing' of diffusionism, in which the dissemination of its notions in the Latin American context provokes the first wave of debates about the effects of the 'functionalist paradigm' on communicational studies and practices in this continent. The second one presents the advance of the

'critical broth of the functional notion' of 'organized social action', favoring the emergence and systematization of the first studies that examine the relations between communication and social organization, according to the perspective of social mediations. And a third scenario points to the displacement of the study of communication from the angle of mediations to the angle of mediatization, a concept disseminated in the present stage of society in which social practices are affected by operations of media in a distinct but intense way. Although not emphasizing the 'performance' of authors, we highlight the importance of Jesús Martín-Barbero's and Eliseo Verón's formulations for the construction of this concept, which shows the strategic contribution of these two scholars to the development of Latin American research on media communication, despite the singularities that guide the theoretical-epistemological-methodological apparatus of each one of them. We point out that the problems reflected by both authors, although distinct, intersect and recognize one another, according to the effects of the comprehension highlighted by some readers and analysts of their works. Their paths, though distinct, bring together propositions – sometimes divergent and sometimes complementary – that may be references and hypotheses for the development of new steps in communicational research in the future stages of the ongoing mediatization scenarios.

Keywords: Diffusionism; Mediation; Mediatization; Latin America; Intersections / Differences

Introduction

The reflections that we develop here have as object two concepts that constitute the conceptual framework of communication studies, the ambiance in which specific references on the mode of media communication are at the center of the concerns. As a 'constellation' of concepts

that have fed this young path of study, the notions of mediation and mediatization are today, and since the 1980s, at the center of the attention of different contexts of teaching and academic research and even within the scope of applied research. If we were reconstituting aspects of the history of the communicational knowledge production, we would list several factors that would highlight the importance of these two concepts, especially, broader aspects that are related to the manifestation of analytical and critical views on the effects of the functionalist orientation on communicational issues. However, considering the specificity of the context in which the publication of this work takes place, we start with a more specific hypothesis: different theoretical and methodological manifestations of the 'organized social action', in various spheres of the functioning of Latin American society – and especially the Brazilian society –, have become 'production conditions' for the emergence of the concepts of mediation and mediatization in the last three decades.

Because of this proposition, we describe three scenarios: initially, we have recovered some aspects that characterize the 'landing of diffusionism' in Brazil (1962), whose conductive epistemologies guided communication actions aimed at promoting modernization processes based on a communication model around the notion of knowledge transference. The various imprintings of the 'extensionist pedagogy' in the context of various social practices (agricultural, educational, associative, etc.) in Brazil allow us to affirm that the 'diffusionist paradigm' was the first 'school' of communication studies in the country. Such a model thought the notion of communication under a carrier perspective, that is, the displacement of thought and the point of view of the actor in production over universes understood only as a sphere of receiving messages.

As a second scenario, we demonstrate the emergence of a 'critical tool' for the functional model of 'or-

ganized social action', inspired by several formulations, ranging from theses of 'sociology of dependence' about the modernization programs implemented in Latin America by North American institutions; the critical theses on 'pedagogy of extension' formulated by Paulo Freire, and in a central way, to the critique reading of Jesús Martín-Barbero about the relations of the mass media with social actors. The thought of this author contributes to the formulation of another design on such relations. Refusing the (unilateral) ascendancy of the media over the actors in reception, he says that there is a relationship, but it has to be mediated by different aspects (cultural, political, etc.) concerning the social practices of individuals. Therefore, instead of diffusion, the emphasis of communicational action would be centered on social mediations.

And as a third scenario, we describe the complexity of society as a result of the intense transformation of technologies into the media what affects all social practices. A new 'communicational architecture' emerges from where social interactions take place amid intense and complex feedbacks. These mutations point to the existence of mediatization, a concept formulated for the first time by Eliseo Verón in 1986, and whose materiality of meanings has also made through complex processes of circulation. Mediatization corresponds to the current state of the society in which we live, characterized by the internet revolution in terms of access to knowledge, culture, and institutions. The mediatization is the complexity of the two previous models, and, at this moment, we live only one of its stages: the displacement of social mediations to mediatization. Mediatization also corresponds to the detachment of media communicational phenomena from the orbit of the different sociological orientations that have hitherto inspired studies, not to mention the very existence, of the field of communication. We are facing the intertwining of social practices permeated by dynamics of mediatization, whose observational

processes have to be done through interfaces of disciplines, among which the open semiotics as a source and orientation for new study programs stands out.

These models that are mentioned here emerge of concepts that subordinate to the trajectories and conditions of knowledge production, geographies and, particularly, the biographies of their formulators. Our interest is not to emphasize the authors' performance as 'founders' of models and concepts. It only aims to draw attention to the advances these studies promote so that these notions become the raw material for communicational research in the Latin American panorama. But these are not concepts crossed by marks of one single geography. However, we cannot ignore that the 'places of speech' from which these propositions spring, were also inspired in complex paths, gathering friends, affections, researches, and other forms of exchanges, even if under the indifference of academic geographies.

'Disembarks' of diffusionism: reminiscences

Dissemination and research communication have made several landings in Brazil since the 1960s, through technical assistance, human resources training and help missions. We highlight another form of arrival: the 'mail-coach' organized by the USIS (American propaganda and broadcasting office) bringing together books that were written – and translated into Portuguese – by North American authors, mass communication specialists, to be distributed to journalists and university professors in the Brazilian Northeast. Included in this editorial package were journalism manuals written by authors such as John Hohenberg and Fraser Bond, which served as central references to the functionalist school for the academic training of journalists. In addition to these, there were texts specialized in rural communication, such as Everett Rogers' classic work 'Dif-

fusion of Innovation' (1962), as a great theoretical-epistemological-methodological source in the formation of rural extensionists, as well as other references to social scientists who researched the theme of 'communication and social change'. It was also part of this 'mail-coach' the distribution in the local media of features, comics, and other specialized materials about the North American reality, especially the involvement of that country in the Vietnam War. In an intense way, the writings on topics related to the communicational matrix, from the functionalist perspective, migrated from US government agencies and universities to actions of programs in Brazilian agricultural areas that used communicational models with a conducive background to promote diffusion of information on agricultural processes. The central postulate of the diffusionist theory rested on the transmission of disseminated messages to farmers through the observance of patterns and parameters of knowledge transference¹. We can say that a complex theoretical-empirical approach constituted the first 'school' of communication studies in Brazil, radiating itself in the fields of teaching and training of researchers, as well as advising institutions that implemented knowledge dissemination strategies for their different policies. Many generations of Brazilian agronomists, educators, and communicators have been trained initially in American universities specializing in diffusion studies (Wisconsin, Michigan, etc.).

From diffusion to mediation

The diffusionist trajectories are also target-object of critical formulations initially inspired in the emergent 'so-

1 Several diffusionist orientation matrices serve as a reference for these actions, especially Rogers' (Innovation of diffusion, 1962); by Lasswell, on the hypodermic theory (1948); 'The Two-Step Flow of Communication', and 'Personal Influence' by Katz and Lazarsfeld; the assumptions about 'Uses and Gratifications Research', by Blumler, Katz and Gurevitch (1974).

ciology of dependence'. Among them, it was drawing attention to the fact that diffusionism does not take into account variables of a structural nature (HAVENS, 1972) related to the very social organization of the receiving populations of this type of modernization programs. The emphasis of critique was that extensionist practices valued only the point of view of their offerers, ignoring logic, traditions, histories, and languages, in short, the rationality of their eventual beneficiaries. The critical trajectories to diffusionism are still disseminated through the Latin American veins by reflections identified with the analytical frameworks inspired by the cepaline ideology of development, and the wide experience of researchers in rural communication practices (BORDENAVE, 1978; BELTRAN, 1979), and also in the resonances of Paulo Freire's theses (1970) on the application of diffusionist pedagogy in the activity of rural extension. Cultural practices that were inspired by the logic and imaginaries of agricultural collectives, such as the *cordel* literature, were appropriated in the Northeast for communicational strategies of the institutions responsible for programs (agricultural, health, scientific, associative, etc.) to convey their institutional messages. 'Grammars' of the brochures of that mode of communication were adapted to the instrumental information, coming from the institutions, in order to guide the use of this information for rural population decision-making. The booklets acquired formats that were inspired by pedagogies and ways of acting, and their narratives were replaced by new themes that were inspired by the interests and knowledge of those institutions (FAUSTO NETO, 1982).

The critique of the conductive communicational episteme in socio-communication practices in Latin America and, specifically, in Brazil is stimulated by the circulation of reflections of various orders, among them the concepts of the Frankfurt School, such as that of 'instrumental reason', which inspired debates about the 'cultural industry' under

development on the continent (PASQUALI, 1973). As a reaction to the pragmatics of 'social action' other trajectories emerged in the Latin American context, such as the appropriation of structuralism (VERÓN et al., 1971; MATTELART et al., 1970). The diffusionism have been studied in addition to its aspects of economic penetration, seeking its effects on social rules, and in this sense we research

the social production of signification [...] because we think that signification ('languages', 'the messages', 'communication') cannot be apart from the functioning of society as a whole, and, more specifically, from social production, the mode of production (VERÓN, 1974, p. 3).

We analyze, starting from the first-generation semiology – inspired by the immanent analysis of the texts – the mechanisms of production of ideologies associated with the American way of life, in the cultural industry production (DORFMAN; MATTELART, 1977). In Brazil, one of the effects of this reflexive brood is the creation (1974) of a postgraduate study program on 'Communication for development' at University of Brasília, which became a center of the debate on the diffusionist theories and formulations that were critical to it. In this context, new 'schools' emerged, such as that of the Latin American communicational thinking, whose analytical sensitivity indicated that the functionalist hypotheses could not generate symmetrical interchanges since their 'organized social action' (LAZARSFELD; MERTON, 1985) was focusing on the point of view of the message disseminator. It is in this context that the academic research shifts its perspective to the existence of other circuits of meaning production, permeated by cultural issues and social problems from specific contexts. As criticisms to the deterministic theses on the effects of mass media other analytical categories arise, such as mediations, in order to examine the manifestations of the 'cultural in-

dustry' but now from the perspective of practices related to the realities and the universes of social actors themselves.

Such hypotheses, according to which the contact of these societies with the mass media undergone the recognition of specific cultures, identities, and processes of codification of realities, displaces the axis of the attention of the investigation from means to mediations, that is to say, to articulations between communication practices and social movements, to the different temporalities and to the plurality of cultural matrices (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 1987). It is a new problem that points to a trajectory of contraposition to the functionalism logic by drawing attention to observations that allowed the emergence of meanings from the recognition of the work of cultural practices that permeate the world of life. It means, therefore, a concept of mediation radically different from the one conceived by the theory of 'two-step flow'. This emphasizes the unfolding of an action formulated at the issuer's point of view through an intermediary link that would operate as a medium of intentions transference from that instance to the contexts of reception. It was a bond of reproduction at the service of belief and the ends traced by the emission. The perspective of mediation proposed by the Colombian author predicts that cognitive, cultural, social, symbolic elements from the world of individuals would function as a condition of another interpretive work in relation to the offers of the mass media matrices. In other words, opposing to diffusionism, the interactions between media and social actors would rely on the appreciation of cultural practices in contact with the media. In these conditions, cultural patterns – politics, religion, education, culture, associative activity, etc. – would not only allow people to access the media but would also act as a reference for reading mass-media offerings.

Martín-Barbero's trajectory makes a stopover in philosophy and in semiotics (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 1978)

to think communication. But his landing takes place in the epistemologies of the social sciences, where he organizes his research program under the justification that “thinking about communication in Latin America is an anthropological task on a daily basis” (2004a, p. 209). Principles that guide this research rest on the displacement of the media objects to mediations “from the mediations and the subjects, that is, from the articulations between communication practices and social movements” (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2015, p. 29). Undoubtedly, the circulation of Martín-Barbero’s proposals has gained, over the years, profound flows in Latin American academic and associative contexts. However, the choices of analytical models identified with socio-anthropological approaches and ‘cultural studies’ allowed, on the one hand, the observation of questions that went beyond the theses of ‘organized social action’ but, on the other hand, the problem of communication appeared strongly affected by the method. If among the critiques to functionalism one was that it had drawn attention to the fact that we have imported from the ‘central countries’ not only the technique but the problems of research, the methodological alternatives to these protocols have also been fixed around techniques that were inspired by models inherited from social sciences, without taking into account the epistemological implications of this shift towards the object of communicational nature. From this results that, as a consequence, we ‘anthropologize’ the communicative phenomena with the displacement, or even disappearance, of the effectively communicational issues, in face of the emphasis given to above-mentioned methodological technologies. We understand that this modality of epistemological appropriation, apart from generating the subordination of communicational phenomena to the specific frames of social sciences, would restrain or defer the recognition of media communication as a specific research object.

This issue is changing with the complexity of the social organization itself by the presence and intensification of the media processes, an aspect that causes interest in the study of the social fields, especially the one with media nature, from a socio-structural perspective. The media field emerges as an ecosystem, distinguishing itself from other fields by the peculiarity of its organizing activity of interaction processes (RODRIGUES, 1999), and also by its mediation activity, as a 'contact link' among the other fields. The interest in media action goes beyond the functionalist notion of the 'organized social action' insofar as the media contribute to a model of social organization that is called 'media society': the one that stands out for the existence of the media (VERÓN, 1983). This means that media practices would have some ascendancy about the practices of other fields in the sense of offering them mechanisms of production and intelligibility about the social process. In addition to recognizing that the media would have as a specific competence to construct thematizations about society, it is emphasized that they would also constitute themselves from a particular reality whose observational processes would have been engendered according to operations from their own autopoiesis (LUHMANN, 2005). Perceptions about the action of the media have been crossed by the recognition of their mediational activity since they metaphorize the image that they would be a kind of 'access gate' for individuals to other complex systems (GIDDENS, 1991). This means that the media operate mediation in a distinct way from that formulated by Martín-Barbero, through linkage with practices that come from other fields, but with the inherent competencies.

The action of the media processes is intense in the social ambiance, disseminating references of a techno-communicational culture that crosses the diverse social practices, their identities and the processes of interaction with the institutions. Symptoms and indicators

emerge pointing out to the transformations that result from the new forms of contacts between media culture and the cultures of diverse social groups. As a consequence, there is the emergence of an ambiance permeated by heterogeneities of communicational practices and other natures, whose logic interpenetrate, making it difficult to distinguish between its borders and the postulates of each one of them. We are facing another shift – from mediations to mediatization.

From mediations to mediatization

We will see that the dynamic of the media processes will provide conditions for the emergence of the mediatization scenario, transforming society into a new ambiance and, simultaneously, emerging a new way of being in the world (GOMES, 2017). Symptoms would indicate the trail of complex interfaces between social practices with a basis in another type of mediation engendered by the logic of the media processes. They point to hints of a problem different from the theories that until then affirmed that the means should be subsumed to the diverse social practices, appearing more like a ‘culture’ issue (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 1987).

The interest in the mutations caused by the intensity of the actions of media processes dates back to the 1980s, when it was observable in a more systematic way the “adaptation of the institutions of the industrial democracies to the media, the latter becoming the essential intermediaries of social management” (VERÓN, 2004, p. 278). Long research on the French media coverage in 1979 about the explosion in a nuclear power plant seems to us to converge with the above statement and also to highlight a seminal mark on mediatization studies. It describes the strategies of the coverage of newspapers, magazines, and television in that country, drawing attention

to the discursive operations through which the notion of the present derivates from a determined work of 'manufacturing' carried out by the media (VERÓN, 1981). The guiding matrix of this research path was formulated in the 1970s and supports the hypothesis that the production of meaning gets done within an asymmetric activity between producers and receivers of discourses. This was called 'maladjustment' because the discourses, both in production as in reception, were structured according to distinct grammars and logic. To this factor would be attributed the impossibility of the production of meaning to be generated around the notion of balance (VERÓN, 1978). The notion of mediatization thus appears, for the first time 30 years ago, in Argentina in a seminar on the transformations of television news environments caused by modalities of interaction between 'television setting' and the news public (VERÓN, 1986). New forms of contact between these scopes result from the internalization of the television news space and, in particular, from the recognition of the existence of new collectives that no longer had a spectator relationship with TV, no longer considering it as a 'window of the world').

The notion of mediatization thus appears, for the first time 30 years ago, in Argentina in a seminar on the transformations of television news environments caused by modalities of interaction between 'television setting' and the news public (VERÓN, 1986).

In this interactional process, we highlight that the ventriloquist presenters leave the scene and there is the emergence of presenters invested with an "increasingly important expressive function" (VERÓN, 2009). A new bond was established between these two instances thanks to the performance of the body of the presenter (VERÓN, 1983). From then on, beyond the contact, the trust comes as the basis for another type of reading con-

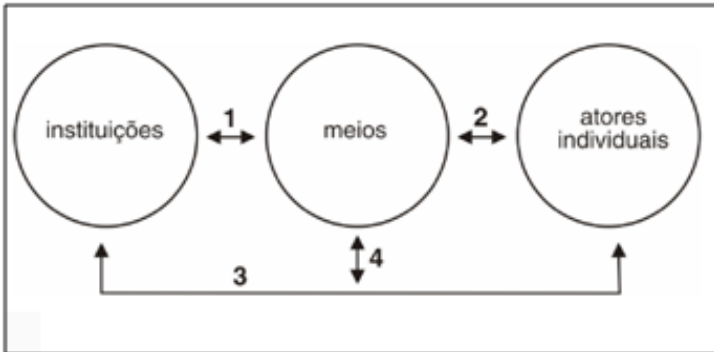
tract, based upon a comment of one television presenter: “viewers believe in us because we express our doubts” (VERÓN, 2009, 240).

When operating in diverse social practices according to distinct mechanisms in terms of non-linear and non-deterministic character, mediatization produces in each of these practices different effects, which are different from those that were manifested in the context of the ‘media society’, sending us back “to the increasing complexity of discursiveness in post-industrial society” (VERÓN, 1989, p. 43). This happens in the mediatization conditions of social discourses, where “rather than provoking, as predicted, a simplification or a ‘singularity’ of discourses, the mediatization of democratic societies turns the discursive strategies increasingly complex [...]” (VERÓN, 1987, p. 24-25). In the case of informative discourse, we observe a shift of the attributed importance of statements to an emphasis that, instead, is attributed to enunciation. The valorization of the ‘way of saying’ removes from the scene the ‘true discourse’ according to the presentation of scenarios of discursive operations in which the truth only is disputed among the enunciations in circulation. One of the effects of this shift which corresponds to the transference of the valorization of the statement to reception is that “[...] we transfer to this part of the tasks assigned to the enunciator: the interpretation” (VERÓN, 1987, p. 25). The enunciation of the political discourse is an example of this valorization of discursive materiality, since

the TV generalized the construction, in the symbolic order, of what we can call ‘significant body’. As a result of this evolution, the political enunciation now passes through the elaboration of the political body. The political body is not the signifying body of any citizen; it addresses the viewer’s body image, active in these ways of reading the daily gesturality, but is in a slight discrep-

ancy with respect to the said gesturality. (VERÓN, 1987, p. 25).

The notion of mediatization visualized in the form of a diagram below appears a decade after the first announcement of its conceptual elaboration, where the ambience, the components, and their dynamics are described drawing attention to the concerns provoked by the relations between media, institutions and social actors. The description of these relations allows us to distinguish dynamics constituted by complex feedbacks, unlike the flows predicted by theories of ‘organized social action’. The double arrows point to an intense activity of non-linear interchange between these levels. This aspect reminds us that the complexity of mediatization means that there is no sector of everyday life that has not been affected by these many relationships described by it (VERÓN, 1997).



Graph 1 – Mediatization model
Source: Eliseo Verón (1997, p. 15).

The diagram also highlights the specificity of a work of a transversal nature by logic and ‘media grammars’ and also by the circulation (ROSA, 2017), through operations of linkage of significant work carried out within the framework of institutions, media, and social actors. In these conditions the

media are increasingly important factors in determining the characteristics of change. Not by themselves, but insofar as they have inserted in specific ways in the multiple dynamics of social functioning. The media are mingling with all the significant aspects of social functioning. We have to understand how the relations between the media and social institutions, and the individual actors have been historically structured. At each of these three levels, there are multiple strategies that, in a somewhat confused way, have taken into account the strategies present at each of them. The strategies are sometimes convergent and sometimes divergent. This system of relations among media, institutions, and actors is intricate because it does not involve causal relationships (VERÓN, 1998, p. 3).

The diagram has worked as a matrix for the investigation of the functioning of mediatization in diverse social practices, involving the articulation between offers of the 'discursive market' and the strategies of readings carried out by the social actors, in different contexts: the relation of schoolchildren with libraries (VERÓN, 1999); the appropriation of scientific communications by spectators (VERÓN, 1986); the processes of reading/appropriation of exposure by museum visitors (VERÓN, 1989); the transformations of the use of the subway by the users (VERÓN, 1986); the mediatization of AIDS through reviews of media coverage and campaigns with at-risk populations in the French context (VERÓN, 1988). It has shown that journalistic coverage logic and institutional campaigns value the discursive construction, through noticeability operators (as the notion of 'actuality'), and, in the case of campaigns, the emphasis on specifically advertising aspects. The research then concluded on the effects

of mediatization by observing that coverage/strategies of communication should reconstruct AIDS as a current illness that could address each person individually, what would mean overcoming the AIDS status, considered by a large number of people just as a simple fact of journalistic actuality. But to abandon the current AIDS angle, it would be necessary to

to produce a rupture along with the receiver of this notion, and that it should be done outside the institutional advertising forms (spots). If this angle is maintained, this type of subversion may be interpreted as proof of the advertising competence of the enunciator. [...] The 'subversive' spot risks becoming a mediatic coup, which will strongly activate the positive relationship of 'actuality' (a publicity stunt is by definition an actual fact). The advertising genre has the power to subvert its own subversion (CAUSA RERUM, 1988, p. 74-77).

Results of the different strategies that have been investigated indicate that, instead of confirming the logic and expectations of the influences of the operations that have been envisaged by the media instances or not, there are complex interpenetrations between meaning production operations of institutional universes and of those of the social actors, without, however, that they converge. The challenge of the task of studying these interpenetrations imposes on the researcher a restriction: a fragmentary access to the discursivities as a possibility to describe what is happening in the production/recognition interface, in terms of the meanings that are produced by the operations of the institutional systems (media) and those of social actors.

These questions put the researcher before the study of supply/appropriation of the discourses in the perspective of the articulation between producers and

receivers, of asymmetric character, since the discursivity, that takes place between them, is done according to different grammars and logic. There, appears the circulation (FERREIRA, 2013, 2016, 2017) that is constituted by the relation of these poles, whose work of materialization of meanings expressed in the interpenetrations of these two poles. This means saying that “between the production of meaning and its recognition [...] there is no linear causality” (VERÓN, 2004, p. 82-83).

Both the dynamics of the interpenetration of those poles and that of the circulation may be examined through research processes in which the observer examines linkages. But their effects cannot be recognized a priori, as they depend on the manifestations of the complex feedbacks. It is known, however, that the effects of these articulations result in the complexity of the mediatization processes. For some, the indicators on these manifestations would be pointing towards the end of mediatization (SCHULZ, 2017).

The effects of digitization on the processes of production, distribution, reception, and use of the means. The internet has brought a space of universal communication accessible to all, not only professionals, as well as journalists, but also laic people and above all politicians and organizations that in the past depended on the mass media if they wanted to be recognized by the public. [...] Journalists have been losing their monopoly [...] it is now quite easy to ignore the media filtering and gatekeeping [...] and, thus, evade from the media power. This process of professionalizing public communication has a far-reaching consequence for political communication systems [...]. Media-based communication and influence processes have been increasingly complementary and even replaced by communications from non-media sources [...]. Politicians can ig-

nore the media and go public on their own (SCHULTZ, 2017, p. 2-3).

Differently from what the author advocates, would not these indicators be pointing the operation of mediatization in the perspective of the angles proposed in this article? In these terms, Eco, in describing the effects of mediatization on the fate of the representative democracy, draws attention to techniques of communicational strategies that are put in place by rulers, through the creation of websites and other types of equidistant contacts of spokespersons mediating relations between social institutions, the media sphere, and society. They are devices that allow that presidents, prime ministers, come into direct contact with people, without the mediation of journalists as mediators linked to the media system (FAUSTO NETO et al., 2012). Such mechanisms would undoubtedly point to the displacement and even the weakening of journalists' mediation, but they would also indicate the emergence of new mediatization circuits that would affect the interactions between political institutions and societies.

To comprehend these new scenarios and the meaning of their transformations, we would not simply rely on verifying the heterogeneity which characterizes the interaction dynamics between these media systems and systems of social actors. It is necessary to go further, describing the relations between them, seeking indications that allow us to know something more than what some approaches of the 'sociology of communication' focused on the effects of these strategies, from the perspective and logic of institutions only, propose.

The writings on mediatization in these 30 years make an immense trajectory according to a triangular geography - 'Europe, France, and Bahia' - but they are not mentioned by younger paths in terms of the investigative production on mediatization, in contexts in which the 'paws' of functionalism announce their presence. Per-

haps because of misinformation or linguistic limitations, temporalities and Latin American contexts in which we have studied, over four decades, mediatization is practically ignored. Between two temporalities – the 1980s and the first years of this century – in an Anglo-Saxon geo-academic context, mediatization presents itself under distinct dressings and problems. Analytical models are used seeking, on the one hand, the belief in the ‘variables’ as an explanatory attribute on mediatization and its relations with social institutions. On the other hand, methodological paths emerge that, equidistant from ‘binary epistemologies’, seeks to account for objects that emerge in the drive of the ‘going forward’ process of mediatization. In these dynamics, in addition to the means to be constituted as operators and interpreters of a scenario where new conditions of management of social life appear – the receivers seem in the condition of “new collectives defined as external to the television institution (for example) and attributed to the individual world not mediated of the receiver” (VERÓN, 2009, p. 239). In this context, the internet is fundamental in the formation of these collectives, as it turns possible and visible the marks of their discourses without necessarily mediating other factors that are not fragments of (a large extent anonymous) discursivities that are changing into links of new forms of individualities.

Rather than prognosticating the end of mediatization, new forms of communication must be examined in more depth, as more and more events and other discourses of various natures merge and circulate on the mediatization platforms. Their interlacings have the potential to produce other effects and represent the importance of discourses as a condition of production of others that emerge (FAUSTO NETO et al., 2017). Rather than homogenizing enunciations, interlacings will increasingly produce enunciative modalities, keeping open the conditions of meaning production. Thus, instead of predicting the

end of mediatization, and to understand their own horizons, beyond the current stage,

it is necessary to cover all of the mediatization processes, old and new technologies: on the offering side, we are witnessing an unprecedented technological integration [...]. But it must be comprehended that this technological convergence does not imply a homogenization, but the opposite: it will produce an increasing diversity of modalities of use. Increasing convergence in production, increasing divergence in reception: the distinction between production and recognition is more necessary today than ever before (VERÓN, 2009, p. 245).

Mediatization follows other temporalities in the Latin American context through operations involving articulations of old and new media, or because of their concerns about social functioning, thus transforming them into an object of investigations. It also goes ahead through the work of researchers around the cooperation and exchange of various national and international activities at the levels of networks, institutions, etc., research projects, editorial products, postgraduate research training, research lines, events, etc.²

We particularly note the action of the “Centro Internacional de Semiótica e Comunicação – CISECO” (www.ciseco.org.br), in Japaratinga / AL/ Brazil, of which Eliseo Verón was the founder and President of Honor. CISECO annually organizes its five-day Thematic Meeting, which runs for its 9th version in 2018, named as the “Pentalogo”,

2 In summary, we highlight the Prosul Networks and the “Procad de Comunicação”; o Centro de Investigaciones en Mediatizaciones – CIM, in Rosario (Argentina); the “Midiatization and Social Processes” Research Line, of the Post-Graduation Program in Communication at UNISINOS (São Leopoldo / Brazil); its journal “Questões Transversais”; the holding of the international meeting, in its second version, on “Mediatization and Social Processes”

debating research reported by international and national exhibitors. It also conducts the 'Colóquio Semiótica das Mídias', in which investigations underway are presented by researchers, professors, and postgraduate and undergraduate students.³ One of the reasons for this research collective lies in the idea that CISECO is a space for studies bringing together researchers interested in the development and scientific application of Semiotics and Communication Sciences. At the same time, it promotes activities that develop and disseminate semiotic and communicational knowledge in the context of Latin America in dialogue with other disciplines that cast their eyes, in an interdisciplinary way, on mediatization.

Conclusion: recognition?

Reviewing papers and archives, we came across the fact that trajectories of some of the problems mentioned here intersect, although they have not generated public discussions about possible convergences in their angulations. They are questions that emanate from the circulation process itself of the works of researchers, provoking the debate more than the announcement of issues, seeking advances in the formulation of the master concepts that guide their research trajectories. There is ample material from Latin American research that gathers marks on cross-referencing of the concepts that have guided its development, and some

3 The works of "Pentalogo" are published in books, and the following topics have already been published: "Transformações da Mídiação Presidencial: corpos, relatos, negociações, resistências" - Difusão Editora (2012); "Pentalogo III - Internet: Viagens no espaço e no tempo" - Cópias Santa Cruz Editora (2013); "A Rua no Século XXI: materialidade urbana e virtualidade cibernética" - Edufal (2014); "Dicotomia Público/Privado: estamos no caminho certo?" - Edufal (2015); "Vigiar e Vigilância: uma questão de saberes" - Edufal (2016); e "A Circulação Discurisva, entre Produção e Reconhecimento" - Edufal (2017). The communications of "Colóquio Semiótica das Mídias" can be found at <http://ciseco.org.br/anaisdocoloquio/>

of them point to possible intersections, convergences, divergences whose examination may be useful for advancing the study of media communication as an object of research, particularly the points of tension between the concepts of mediation and mediatization. Undoubtedly, these concepts get appropriated by institutions' biographies and individuals that go through the research, contributing to the definition of styles, identities, and propositions of different institutional collectives. It is not a question of subjecting the concepts to the bets on disputes of their degrees of density, viability, consistency, etc., but of situating them from the movements of their paths and considering their singularity and potentiality for the description of processes. There is much to be done, and what we have done in this article are considerations that show displacements and advances of itineraries, improving maps, cartographies, and hypotheses of work. In these conditions, "the technological mediation of communication is no longer merely instrumental to become structural: technology today refers not to the novelty of some devices, but to new modes of language perception, new sensitivities..." (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2004a, p. 228-229).

There is a symptomatology that emanates from the observational processes indicating marks of a scenario of communicability in which the media present themselves as another type of operator:

[...] people are increasingly isolated, more alone, also in Latin countries, and the media are beginning to have enormous importance in terms of what we call 'home-based culture'. People no longer had the money to go out, but television provides them with everything. [...] I was already rethinking these questions, and had to make a change that was not to go from mediations to media, but to realize that communication became denser in the face of the new technicity [...] (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2009, p. 152-153).

These observations point to a more complex mutation by

recognizing that communication was mediating all sides and forms of peoples' cultural and social life. Therefore, the view was not reversed in the sense of going from mediations to media, but from culture to communication (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2009, p. 153).

Martín-Barbero specifies new epistemological angulations when pointing out that

the notion of communication leaves the engineering paradigm and connects with the 'interfaces', with the 'nodes' of the interactions, with the communication-interaction, with the intermediary communication (2009, p. 153).

The path of mediations to interfaces prompts multi-level blendings that go beyond the specificity of each medium, which will lead to the emergence of a new communicational ecology. There are crossings of trajectories between Gomes' (2017) notions about mediatization – remembering that we now also live in a 'communicative' environment with its languages, writings and grammars – and Martín-Barbero's observations: "the conception of communication is becoming much abler, 'epistemologically', to account for what is happening, with communication technologies transforming themselves from a punctual instrument into a cultural ecosystem" (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2009, p. 159).

At the same time that television got removed from a notion according to which it would exercise a substitutive or complementary function of politics, attention was drawn to the importance of the transformation of the media scene from a representational dimension to an hour in which "the media does not replace

it, but rather constitutes it, as part of the plot, both the discourse and the action of politics [...]” (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2004a, p. 252).

This means that the television would not be understood as an activity of diffusion of representations. More than that, it is the generator of politics itself, since “on the media we do, and not only talk about politics” (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2004b, p. 31).

In this aspect, Martín-Barbero’s formulation emphasizes, on the one hand, the importance that the media have as actors of this ecosystem, as he has remembered. And, on the other, it emphasizes the constructivist dimension of his work resituating, in some way, the configurations of the concept of mediation. The media that once got subsumed by culture here gets recognized by the strength of the specificity of their significant operations. They are forms of recognition that emanate from their own reflection that, thus, points out the power that can represent the revision of concepts and the incorporation of others to a certain investigative model.

Eliseo Verón and Jesús Martín-Barbero’s trajectories condense and symbolize actions, projects, friendships and observational processes that are carried out based on the density of their biographies. Their works are shared in various temporalities and contexts, bringing together the history of initiatives whose actions and results have always been in tune with the importance of qualifying the conditions of knowledge production about communication processes in Latin America. From the specificities of their paths, we cannot ask for common pacts or programs, considering the singularities of the objects and the specificities of the models that guided their investigations. However, we can say that their formulations contacted at the intersections of the processes in which their writings circulated. From these intersections, there are manifestations of recognition, in analytical terms, of the importance

of the conceptual devices they handle in their research projects.

In his latest work (2013), Verón situates his understanding of the concept of mediation:

If all communication gets mediated in the sense that it necessarily implies materialization by sound form, visual form, or whatever it is, it is clear that there is no communication without mediation. [...] In this context (of mediatization) we must carefully distinguish between mediation and media phenomenon. Mediation is a defining aspect of communication in general and results from a sensory materiality of the media, unavoidable to the support. Otherwise, we have media phenomenon only from the moment that signs have, to some degree, the properties of autonomy of both the source and the destination and persistence in time. [...] In short: human communication is necessarily 'mediated' at all levels, from the micro to the macro, simply because the meaning can only circulate materialized: from this point of view, the face-to-face conversation between two individuals is as 'mediated' as the planetary circulation of a football match. The crucial difference is that in the transmission of the soccer match the human semiosis is mediatized and in the human conversation, it is not (VERÓN, 2013, p.144-147).

For over a decade, Martín-Barbero has observed the importance of significant materiality to understand the complexities of the reconfigurations of mediations. And, in a gesture of recognition, he updates the reference to moment (1987), already mentioned, too, in 'Dos meios às mediações', in which Verón puts the first hypotheses on mediatization, from studies on the role of the 'sig-

nificant body' by building links between television and receivers:

[...] if television requires politics to negotiate the forms of its mediation, it is because this medium provides for the first time the 'axis of gaze' (VERÓN, 1987) from which politics can not only penetrate the domestic space, as reintroduce corporeality, gesture, and theatricality into its discourse, that is, the significant materiality of which it is made of [...] (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2004, p. 32).

Paths of these concepts have been made in the midst of stories of "intellectual migration", in subsequent years, through biographies that got visited in frontier contexts: philosophical, socio-anthropological and semi-otic. And in the reencounters they had, according to tacit pinchings throughout their writings, we can say that good theory gets made in the coming and going of observations, questions, but also of recognition. These are trajectories whose processes we will follow, as they remain a legacy for future generations of researchers, sharing processes and findings that will continue to emerge from such rich works for communication studies.

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SECOND PART – SEMIOSIS AND MEDIATIZATION

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Under the sign of presentism: mediatization, culture, and contemporary society

Mario Carlón

Abstract: This article highlights the need to introduce into mediatization theory the contemporary concept, which accounts for the transformations of social and cultural practices that characterize an era in which the relations between the present, the past and the future of modernity has entered into crisis. In the contemporary era, the present has emerged with strength and mediatization has been articulated with this transformation of social experience generating multiple changes. One of them is a new type of media content production, actually based on the collective and individual experiences. Another one is a new way of circulation of meaning, hypermedia, that ascends from social networks to the mass media and descends from the mass media to social networks with new logic and dynamism. These forms of circulation of meaning already affect the non-mediatized relationships and are in the interweaving of social life.

Keywords: Contemporary. Mediatization. Culture. Society. Presentism.

Introduction

This article aims to highlight the need to introduce the contemporary concept into mediation theory. This gesture implies that the time has come to address definitely the problem of periodizations. It is an inevitable consequence of the ambition of our field to make a broad contribution to the understanding of the time in which we live because, if we intend to be effective in that task, we need to dialogue from the notions with which our time is self-defined and used. But that is not the only reason: we also need to introduce the contemporary concept to identify the differences that arise between our epoch and the previous ones.

It cannot be said that the problem of periodizations has been absent, until now, in mediation theories. Since its foundation through the work of Eliseo Verón (2001 [1984]), Latin American theory has shown interest in distinguishing its epoch from the preceding ones. The same seems to have happened, as far as we know, with important representatives of the Nordic theory, which distinguish among pre-modern, modern, and highly modern eras (Hjarvard, (2014 [2013])). But perhaps what has been done in this direction is insufficient, because the definition of the current moment seems to be suspended; however, a delimitation of the moment in which we live can be a step forward since, on the one hand, it will help to order how theories tell the story of the mediatizations and, simultaneously, its own history; and, on the other because it will help others to better understand the moment we are living, in a context in which attention to the role of the media in social life has become unavoidable.

The theories of mediatizations are postmodern¹

One aspect that anyone who is interested in this topic cannot fail in drawing attention is that both the Latin American theory of mediation and the Nordic one seem to have emerged at the same time. Eliseo Verón (2001 [1984]) publishes his first works on mediatizations at the beginning of the eighties². And the same seems to have happened, as far as we know, with the Nordic theory: according to Stig Hjarvard (2014 [2013], p.23), the Swedish Kent Asp was the first to use the term mediatization applied to the field of politics in 1986. This observation does not seem to be easily objected to with precision in the coming years: since postmodernity does not have an exact starting date either if we take some years before or after as the moment of origin of these two great theories and fields of investigation, nothing is substantially modified.

To think why both the theoretical and the research fields originate at the same period is very interesting. Given the answers there can be no doubts: because at this *moment comes a transformation in the role of mass media on social life*. It does not mean to say, naturally, that the debate in which Eliseo Verón (2014) emphasized the origin of mediatization is irrelevant or that it should be discarded³. It is relevant that this debate does not become

1 Or of the high modernity or of the late modernity. At the level where we are located, the different denominations are not very significant. What is interesting is that they emerged in the late twentieth century, apparently in the eighties, when there was only one system of mediation.

2 This statement may be subject to correction because Veron's work is very profuse, it begins before and is currently undergoing the revision of its file.

3 In his last book, Verón (2013, 2014) started a definition that said that media phenomena were externalizations of mental processes of sapiens and that their first manifestations were stone tools made two and a half million years ago. Verón established a long-term (very long) perspective to narrate the history of mediatization, which starts with the

invisible to the reflection that something very important has happened in the last portion of the twentieth century. For Eliseo Verón, it is in this moment that happens the transformation from *a media society* (in which the media operated with a representational logic – acting as mirrors of the social, more or less deforming it) to a *mediatized* one, in which, according to Verón “the functioning of the institutions, practices, conflicts, culture, begins to be structured in direct relation to the existence of the media” (2001 [1984], p. 15). This is because the media assume themselves as producers of meaning, acting autonomously and playing another role on social life. And the other social institutions understand this new situation that forces them to transform their way of connecting to the media. Similar, at this level, is the reading carried out by studies which detect that this is the historical moment in which industrial societies get mediatized. According to Hjarvard, the mass media cease acting as cultural institutions (guided by the public interest) and begin to act as semi-independent institutions (in function of their own public) and integrate themselves to other institutions⁴. This semi-independence implied a process of autonomy.

The fact that Veron had explicitly admitted at that moment in his work ,that he was using a post-modern paradigm and that, instead, emblematic representatives of this research field, such as Stig Hjarvard, were keeping distance from this label, is not a sufficient reason to object to our claim that the theories of mediatization arise in postmodernity. Hjarvard’s take away from postmodern theory has a name and surname: Jean Baudrillard (2005 [1978])⁵. What he moves away from is his theory

usual dates from the origin of this history, generally at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

- 4 By emphasizing this similarity, we do not intend to obliterate the differences, which undoubtedly are many between both perspectives.
- 5 Baudrillard is a face of post-modernity. Important, without doubts, but only one of a complex age.

of simulacra and hyperreality. A theory that, it is not bad to remember, was not at all in Verón's reference when he assumes a determined post-modern condition. The post-modern character that Verón assumes is due to the fact that he perceives the existence of a change of epistemological paradigm that seems useful to him for the operations he was trying to install in the intellectual field, not to the Baudrillard's media theory, which he explicitly refuted by those years in one of his classical texts (Verón, 1987a)⁶.

But now we have left behind the postmodernity and entered into another era, contemporary, which is a challenge for media studies. To determine what lasts, what continues, and what is new are some of the challenges we will have to face.

Presentism and contemporaneity

Our thesis is that the contemporary concept has epistemic value and is fertile to think about the current moment. Thus, we have adopted the contemporary concept due, mainly, to five reasons: a) that the modern and post-modern categories, with derivations as hypermodern, are exhausted); b) that the contemporary denomination has already been adopted to denominate our epoch in fields of

6 In the second "Preface" to *Construir el acontecimiento: Los medios de comunicación masiva y el accidente en la central nuclear de Three Mile Island*, where after noting that "what we call 'the news' is also the result of a productive process, in the same way as the table where we had lunch and the chair in which we sit to read the newspaper" (VERÓN, 1987a [1981], p. III) says: "This does not mean that 'the news' is an illusion or (as some say, following an intellectual fashion a little more recent) a 'simulacrum'. On the contrary: what is involved in the *production of social reality is a collective experience*. A 'simulacrum' is always a simulacrum of *something else*: the notion of 'simulacrum' retains its suggestive power insofar as it remains associated with an ideology of representation. If through I do not know what philosophical juggling it loses this connotation, all that remains is a set of words that is only a simulacrum of theory. The 'news' is not a simulacrum because the discourse that constructs it does not represent anything: there is no 'original' anywhere" (IV).

an inescapable reference of culture, like that of Art; c) that the field of Art is the one in which this type of cultural phenomenon manifests first; d) that it is a category that works on the same level as modern and postmodern ones, and e) that it is a category in an incessant expansion⁷.

By saying that it works on the same level as modern and postmodern, we mean that, among other things, it implies a conception of the social and cultural experience of time. If modernity got associated with the future (utopia, revolution, history as a teleological construction) and postmodernity with a crisis of histories and linear conceptions of history, which was often replaced by memory and revivalist pastiche that referred to the past, the contemporary implies the emergence of a new regime of historicity: *presentism*. According to authors like François Hartog (2007 [2003]), this regime appears when the future

began to give ground to the present, which would take more and more its place, until shortly after it seems to occupy everything completely. This was the beginning of a time in which the point of view of the present would prevail, precisely that of presentism⁸ (p. 135).

For Hartog, the notion of the historicity regime tries to provide a tool that

“contributes to better apprehend not time, neither all the moments nor all the time but, mainly, *moments of crisis of time, here and there, just when the articulations be-*

7 These issues were raised in different works, including Carlón, 2014 and 2016c.

8 From the original: “empezó a ceder terreno al presente, que tomaría cada vez más su lugar, hasta poco después parecer ocuparlo todo por completo. Daba inicio así a un tiempo en el que prevalecería el punto de vista del presente: justamente el del presentismo” (p. 135).

tween the past, present and future cease to seem obvious"⁹ (p. 38).

The indication that the present has become important has not been realized only for our time; in fact, Hartog observes that the growth of presentism is important in the eighties and this diagnosis was also formulated regarding postmodernism when its narcissistic dimension was analyzed. Thus, in the chapter dedicated to narcissism in his classic about postmodernism, Gilles Lipovetsky (1994 [1983]) states:

Living the present, only in the present and not in terms of the past and the future, is 'that loss of sense of historical continuity', that erosion of the feeling of belonging to a 'succession of generations rooted in the past and that extends into the future', which, according to Chr. Lash, characterizes and engenders the narcissistic generation (p.51).

However, there are relevant differences between the postmodern and contemporary eras. While postmodern narcissism expressed itself in the care of oneself, personal fulfillment, and the abandonment of interest in public issues, starting with politics; the contemporary is in many ways the continuity of that, but with a major difference: each narcissus today manages its own means of communication¹⁰. This work is part of this articulation between individualism and social networks. But the cen-

9 From the original: "contribuya a aprehender mejor no el tiempo, ni todos los tiempos ni todo el tiempo sino, principalmente, momentos de crisis del tiempo, aquí y allá, justo cuando las articulaciones entre el pasado, el presente y el futuro dejan de parecer obvias" (p. 38).

10 From our point of view, the so-called social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram are social media networks and what defines them is that they are networks of amateur media, professional individuals, collectives, etc. That is, each one administers their own means of communication in those networks (CARLÓN, 2012).

ter will not be on issues that have already begun to get discussed, such as the expression of subjectivity. We are interested in other issues, such as the transformation of public space by the emergence of the new individual, professional and *amateur* enunciators. And, also, how they were transformed, inside and outside the network, the social links from the exponential growth of information about others to which, suddenly, we have all agreed.

Returning to Hartog, it should be noted that he does not focus on the role of the media in the installment of presentism¹¹, therefore, what we present here is an analysis based on his diagnosis. In our point of view, since Hartog, who is a historiographer, does not provide examples of media communication, it does not mean that the concept of presentism cannot be applied to the study of contemporary mediatization. The interesting about the concept of presentism is that it also allows us to understand the transformations of the technological determinism that has naturalized many discourses about the current era. The introduction of this concept allows that the emergence of a new internet-based mediation regime does not appear as the single cause of the new global presentism. From this point of view, the Internet has consolidated presentism, but this regime of historicity also has social and cultural causes that enabled the emergence and social consolidation of the Internet. In other words: Internet was the appropriate media channel for the arrival of this new regime of historicity, but no less important is the crisis of modernity and the coming of a new social experience, defined by the emergence of new enunciators in public spaces. To understand the dimension of the process to which we are referring, we can

11 In one of the few examples of this type that says that “in the race increasingly accelerated to the direct, they produce, consume, and recycle ever faster words and images, and compress time: any subject, anything of one and a half minutes for thirty years of history” (HARTOG, 2007 [2003], p. 140).

remember what the quarrel between ancient and modern meant from this point of view. In a context in which “the general feeling was that moderns were dwarfs compared to the ancient giants” (Calinescu, 1991 [1987], p. 34), modernity meant, among many other things, the emergence of new enunciators who, unlike those who populated the libraries, *were alive*. This emergence of living as enunciators in public spaces is quantitatively insignificant compared to the one that has just made social networks by giving to professionals and *amateurs* the possibility of managing their own media (considering only Facebook, which had 1,800 million of active accounts by the end of 2016, we must account for half of the world’s population connected to the Internet). Understanding this irruption beyond the institutions of the living in contemporary culture is something that will probably take us much more time and effort than we imagine. To advance in this task, we do not doubt that a concept such as presentism can be of relevant help.

To characterize the contemporary, we will focus on three levels that are closely linked: a) that of mediatization, fundamental for the development of the other two; b) that of the emergence of new enunciators and receivers, and the transformation of the historical, which will allow us to focus the mutation of public and social space; c) the new circulation of the media and mediated meaning, which will allow us to think about the cultural and social transformation that gets derived from the change in the circulation of information about social enunciators.

Presentism and mediatization

There are, firstly, two major transformations to be considered. The first is that the mass media system is no longer what it used to be, it has lost power in its traditional mode of operation. The Latin American debate on the end of the mass media and the Anglo-Saxon one on

the end of television allowed obtaining certain conclusions (Carlón, 2016a). Without going into details, we can say that the mass media, particularly those with the greatest daily penetration – radio, and television, carried out certain successful operations in social life: a) they generated discourses that have built a *shared world*¹²; b) they generated a *programmed social life* (Verón, 2009) when adopting the offer after the emergence in the radio of a structure of a programming grid that got articulated with the habits and routines of daily life (morning, evening, and night programs); and, c) in a time of scarcity, they managed to *control the discursive circulation* because the programs could only be seen and heard at the times when the TV and radio institutions transmitted them. This operation mode lasts, it has not totally disappeared, but social life is increasingly structured around it. All the statistics we know tell us that in countries with high Internet penetration, television does not stop the decay of its historical ratings (the Argentine case of open television, for example, is dramatic: it has lost 13 rating points, 39 to 23 from 2004 to 2012); and that the attendance in movie theaters has also decreased (in the fifties and sixties attendance was not unusual between six and ten times a year, today it barely exceeds one). What is behind this crisis? From our point of view, presentism, embodied in the fact that *the viewer lives and wishes to live more and more in the present that he models according to his own needs, not the ones imposed by the institutions*. Media institutions did not generate on demand or put their content at our disposal (with the repeated at this point “whatever you want, when you want, through the *dispositif* you want”) because it was a big business. If they do not do it anymore, it is because there are fewer and fewer spectators willing to follow the times of the institutions.

12 As Verón pointed out: “... the media produce the reality of industrial society as a reality in becoming, present as a collective experience for social actors” (IV).

A second transformation is that the second system of mediatization got consolidated based in telephony and Internet networks (which support social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.) with crescent relevance on social life. This panorama allows us to affirm that we have left modernity and post-modernity behind, periods in which there was just one system of media. The link between this new mediatization system based on the Internet and presentism is evident. In the first place, as we proposed, the Internet became available for all new and dynamic content production space, reception, appropriation, and publication and, by doing so, it has presented us with an *expanded present*¹³. It achieved this because its logic gets based in *present time interactions*, which is why it got designed so that it finds its place *before the institutions that still dominated modernity, the biological and organic enunciators, that is, those who are alive*¹⁴. Thus, the dominant discursive production is not done as the publication of a book, hoping to find its readers over the years, much less with a work of art, which is supposed to be capable of paramount action over temporary barriers, to become eternal. These are moments much closer to Snapchat, which has adopted the policy that messages get deleted in 24 hours. It is this logic of transience, just another symptom of the domain of presentism, which has already been quickly adopted by other social networks. Not only that, *the logic of interaction stresses the temporality of the discourse produced by broader dispositifs and*

13 Although it is not the direct taking, which is over-determined by natural conditions (which is why it cannot enunciate flashbacks or flash-forwards, Carlón, 2009), it frames with the temporality of the dominant use of these discourses (that is due to the fact that the interaction on the Internet get usually done to converse with another or others in a short time, if not immediately).

14 Following Eliseo Verón in his last work, we can say: by socio-individual systems rather than social because “the temporality of the socio-individual systems is necessarily that of an organic cycle of life. This is not the case of social systems”(VERÓN, 2013, p. 431).

languages which embalm the time when they are present on the network (CARLÓN, 2013, 2014); that is to say those that allowed us to Access from the present to a past (photography and television and cinematographic recordings), which also served to institutions¹⁵. *On the network, the discourses of these dispositifs and modern languages get submitted to the presentism of interaction, and its temporality gets reconfigured.* Which temporality does not modify on the network? The direct one, of course, fits perfectly. That is why the direct was, in the field of media languages, the one that anticipated the emergence of presentism and contemporaneity. And it was a pariah in modern and postmodern analyses of *dispositifs* and languages: its approach implied the need of another perspective, neither anthropocentric nor contemporary.

Society: enunciators and receivers under the sign of presentism

It is not new to say that modernity was the era of strong institutions, mainly on the national level, which created links with massive and stable audiences, in addition to a common public space. In postmodernity, an important transformation happens because media institutions assumed their role as producers of meaning and became more independent, but also unstable. These are the years in which the seeds of the “crisis” of the mass media are sown (this is how they were interpreted earlier, when the “end” of generalist television began to get talked about), and in which the public begin to fragment into diverse collectives that got conceptualized in different ways: fans, communities, niches of consumers, tribes, and so on. De-

15 In “Register, upload, comment, share: photographic practices in the contemporary era” (CARLÓN, 2016c), we present an analysis of photographic presentism on the web, which deals with how the communicational uses of photography subject it to a temporality of the interaction other than that identified by historical trials dedicated to this *dispositif*.

spite these changes, there are important continuities between modernity and postmodernity: the public space is dominated, more or less, by the same enunciators, the media institutions and the historical institutions (the Church, the State, etc.), though now they are directed, increasingly, to collectives. That is, by enunciators whose life is not governed by natural cycles, they do not have the time of biological organisms.

But in the contemporaneity, at the same time that presentism gets imposed, a set of transformations arise. The first is that the new Internet-based media system is articulated, in many ways, with the social fragmentation into collectives and individuals that emerged in postmodernity. This implies a gigantic reconfiguration of public spaces, with a change of order and role of those who were previously in recognition and now are, also, in production. Of order because, as we have already pointed out, they increasingly dominate, for the first time in history, in public spaces, organic enunciators, which are alive. Of role because the passage of being placed in recognition and also in production has transformed the circulation of contents. In addition, it is a system that has allowed, on the one hand, the emergence in public spaces of new individual enunciators and, on the other, a new place of the group, or groups of greater or smaller size¹⁶. Synthesizing, we can distinguish here three types of new enunciators: a) individual professionals, b) individual *amateurs*, and c) collective. And establish three phases in their incorporation to mediatization: in the first, they agreed to *publish*, thanks to the possibility of administering, each one, their own personal medium. In the second, they went on to *edit*, thanks to the massive diffusion of editing programs of relatively low complexity, and, especially, to the “filters” that

16 Just because space is impossible to occupy in the framework of this work we leave behind projects and collectives (social, political, ecological, etc.) that like the individual enunciators found in the networks a privileged place of action.

the social networks put at their disposal at the moment (which they offer to the internauts to put into play easily the particular operations of contemporary art: appropriation, assembly, intervention, juxtaposition, repetition, incrustation, etc.). On the third, they definitely began to *perform*, thanks to the stories of Instagram, Facebook live broadcasts, etc.¹⁷ (a process that had begun earlier, with selfies, for example, but that with the promotion of direct and recorded audiovisual languages on the networks increased in frequency of use and became more complex in its mediatization).

One way to make a quick approach to this dimension of contemporary development is to concentrate on the individuals, who also make up the collectives (we recall that Verón conceptualized them as a set of individual actors). In the contemporary era, the new enunciators interact within the framework of a mediatization system in which modern social fragmentation predominates. Not only that: it is a very flexible system. The enunciators are part of stable networks (family, close friends, some belonging to institutional) and unstable ones, which are continuously activated and deactivated in a different way. Now it is the individuals, whether *amateurs* or professionals, who *from the present of their lives configure day by day, from their decisions, the groups, and collectives with which they interact and of which they are part*. Canceling old contacts, and linking with new ones, accepting requests or

17 If as Andreas Huyssen (2002 [1986]) said, regarding the situation of the vanguard in postmodernism, “its inventions and artistic techniques have been absorbed and captured by Western mass culture in all its forms, from the cinema of Hollywood, television, advertising, industrial design, and architecture to the aesthetics of technology, and the aesthetics of consumption” (p. 39); today we can say that social networks, by appropriating the operations of contemporary art through the filters have continued that path (CARLÓN, 2014). But not only that: by promoting the performances via the stories, and dissolving the difference between discourse and life, they are doing something similar with respect to the most contemporary art, based on happenings, performances, etc.

requesting to be accepted are operations that are carried out daily. Through this, for example, the Facebook or Instagram of each one is different. Not only that: it is common to sustain links over time with those we hardly meet personally (something very common in the academic field, but not only in it), and maintain intense and complex links with others living nearby (because we start an activity that gathers a group on a social network but then it gets discontinued, etc.). All this intense and complex mediatized social life, which gets perfectly linked to the lability of the links, leaves permanent discursive traces on the network, but it is impossible in the context of this writing to deal with it. What we will do in the next items will be to focus on only three of these aspects. First, in a determined type of content produced by these enunciators, those that get intimately linked to presentism. Second, to explain how the circulation of online media content is transforming social life offline. Finally, we will focus on how the contents circulate between the two systems, that of the mass media and that of the “new media”. All these phenomena are characteristic of the contemporary era and its main novelty, which is the transformation in circulation¹⁸.

Contemporary culture: new production and circulation of meaning and new interpretative contexts

1. Presentism and Internet users production: new types of news

If we want to focus on how culture is changing through mediatization, there is no alternative but to stop

18 The subject also has been especially focused in Latin America by other authors, such as Antonio Fausto Neto (2016, 2010), and José Luiz Braga (2012). And in 2017 CISECO (Center for Research in Semiotics and Communication) has dedicated its second Symposium to it.

at the level of meaning. As we are going to concentrate on the discourses of individual Internet users and the subject had already received important studies, we have made a brief comment before moving forward, in particular on the difference between the analysis that will get presented here and others¹⁹ that focus on how privacy is exhibited on social networks. The specificity of our analysis, which continues others that we have been developing²⁰, lies in the fact that it focuses on *two distinct aspects of the privileged by these type of studies, the link with presentism, analysis that will allow us to incorporate a specific conceptual development of the current concept, and the social effects (online and offline) of that discursiveness.*

What did the contemporary media enunciators bring as new and what is their link with presentism? It is important, to answer this question, to remember that the link between presentism and mediatization did not begin with the Internet. There is determined logic intimately linked to the mediatization that has been predominant throughout history. One of them is *the news*. The mass media historically focused on major international and national issues and, of course, these issues remain for these media as the main focus of interest²¹. But it is interesting

19 Like the one that Paula Sibilía (2008) put into play in "*Intimacy as a show (La intimidad como espectáculo)*". The author analyzes how, beyond modernity in which there were rigid separations between the public and the private, the "personal writings" get currently manifested. This fact is undeniable and important, but it seems necessary to complete this analysis with another, more attentive to the contemporary construction of sociability, which is carried out through circulation phenomena.

20 In particular on the *contemporary enunciative dispositif* (CARLÓN, 2017).

21 It is true that the contents of the mass media get highly commented on social networks. But it is also true that the contents of the mass media have changed, and that an important part of that content currently arises from social networks. It is a consequence of the disintermediation process that they unleashed, which allowed each one to communicate their actions, feelings, and opinions directly through their own communication channels.

to note that, over the recent years, there was the development of the mass media crisis as there was a decrease in its power, and in the dominance, which was hegemonic, of its agenda on social life. Does this mean that today's news is not important? No, what has happened, instead, is that *new types of news*²² have emerged. An obvious fact: although on social networks the contents of media institutions are still relevant, they are not the only ones: they have diversified significantly. This is due to those that have become very important and emerge produced by other enunciators, such as individuals and collectives.

Among these new types of news, we are interested in *the daily life of individuals*. It is a type of content that previously belonged mainly to the realm of privacy and intimacy, and that strongly has been stimulated by mediatized social networks through questions like "what are you thinking (Facebook)?" or "what are you doing (Twitter)?" Professionals and *amateurs*, updating their daily lives, communicate daily through texts, photographs, and videos, about what newspapers and books they have *read*, what series they have *seen*, what show they have visited, what social, political, and sports events they have participated, etc. The events are multiple: from if they went on vacation or if their children left school, even if their dog died, how is their house, how they dress, what they eat, etc.²³).

22 The first type of news, in which we are not going to stop, is the events that the mass media ignore which have found, on the networks, a privileged channel of communication, academic events; art shows; courses; social days; sports events; etc. Gigantic activities, social, political, cultural, ecological, religious, etc., that society deploys on a daily basis and that will never be featured content on an international/national/regional or local news portal.

23 In addition, which is not minor from the point of view of the analysis of meaning, the *dispositifs* and languages used to communicate these contents have grown remarkably in quantity and enunciative complexity in recent years, since the "performative" languages expanded, the periscope of Twitter, the Instagram stories, the live transmissions of Facebook, the Snaps of Snapchat, and so on.

Here, what we want to point out is that all this production must not only be considered for what it means in itself, for its break with modern values of privacy through its exhibitionist and narcissistic dimension, or the complex link that it maintains with the institutions of media capitalism (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), which undoubtedly have promoted it and try to exploit it, but which can also be addressed from another point of view: one of *how the discourses of the new mediatization are changing social life*. It has been known that, as a result of the mediatization in societies, there has been an increase in complexity. The interesting about this approach is that it allows us to advance in the analysis of *one of the reasons that explains why societies have become more complex*. The fact that now we are all media enunciators has produced a scenario of very different circulation of meaning in contemporary society, both in mediatized and non-mediatized situations. This is due to the production an *exponential increase of information that society circulates about itself, not only about the institutions but about all of us*. And this fact has profound consequences. Why? Our thesis is that because these contents are permanently building *new interpretative contexts that did not exist before on the offline social practices of institutions, collectives, and individuals of contemporary life*. This happens both with the one who maintains an only mediatized link and with whom it sustains, in addition, an interpersonal bond. If we add to this, as we will see on the next item, that the contemporary circulation is characterized because of the existence of a new system of mediatization that has allowed the meanings to circulate not only “from top-down” of the socio-institutional *dispositifs* to the collectives of individual actors, there is no doubt that the transformation we are experiencing is radical.

In the next item, we will briefly explain how contemporary hypermedia circulation works, *going from*

mass media to networks and from networks to mass media. Therefore, we will enclose this part of our exposition with an analysis of a case that will allow us to show how the present content produced by internauts articulate with a hypermedia circulation, generating an unforeseen, but not for that exceptional, example of our time.

2. Presentism and hypermedia circulation

In modernity and postmodernity, mediatized content circulated mainly 'from top-down' that is, from institutions and media to collectives of individual actors (Verón, 1997, 2013). But the emergence and consolidation of a new mediatization system have brought new forms of circulation, which are just beginning to be studied.

Before moving forward, we would like to point out why it is important to pay attention to the circulation forms. To turn clearer what we want to say, we made a brief comment on an important recent approach: the one that Jose Van Dijk (2016 [2013]) put into play in *La cultura de conectividad – Una historia de las redes sociales*. Van Dijk focuses on the sociability within each platform and between platforms²⁴, but *he does not focus on the relationship between what he calls platforms and social life not mediatized, nor between platforms and mass media*. It is an intra-systemic analysis (between networks), which does not attend to the inter-systemic circulation (between networks and mass media) that for us, on the other hand, is central (CARLÓN, 2016b). And that does not draw attention to the links between online and offline.

24 Very important distinctions, such as those established by differentiating two modes of sharing: "From a technological point of view, the two great meanings of 'sharing' are related to two types of coding forms. The first one is related to the *connection*, encourages users to share information with others through interfaces designed for it. (...) The second type of coding characteristics relates to *connectivity*, insofar as it has the purpose of sharing the data of users with third parties such as Beacon (now extinct), Open Graph or the button 'I like it' "(VAN DIJK, 2016 [2013], p. 80).

On the other hand, one who has attended to another form of circulation of meaning characteristic of our time has been Henry Jenkins (2003, 2008 [2006]) and those who work in his fertile wake. These are studies that focus on how ‘top-down’ are soon mass appropriated, re-signified, and answered ‘from below’, in the ‘bottom-up’ direction, often to be again appropriated ‘from the top’. As the latest book by Jenkins, Ford, and Green (2014 [2013]) shows, important advances are getting made in this field.

But from our point of view, what is getting done is insufficient. It is necessary to expand the scope of these studies. By saying this, we mean that other modes of circulation of meaning have exploded. Today many new enunciators, not only professionals but also amateurs, are capable of generating new collective networks, imposing a logic of discursive circulation completely different from that which characterized modernity and postmodernity. Their productions follow unpredictable paths. They produce content from their pages and accounts (not always referring to the mass media) and win followers. Then they stay through time. Or they reach the recognition of the mass media. Along the way, the link with their followers is transformed: collectives grow, or fragment, and so on. They are absolutely new phenomena, which are changing radically the media circulation of meaning far beyond what is being warned. In recent texts (CARLÓN, 2015, 2016b), we have studied in detail a case of this type, the photographic project *Chicas bondi*, presented as an analytical *dispositif* for the study of *new cases of hypermedia circulation of meaning* (between both media systems, the mass media and the new media) and a *typology that tries to formalize new forms of circulation* (CARLÓN, 2017)²⁵.

25 We distinguish then, from the consideration of three important communicational directions (ascending, descending, and horizontal), three relevant forms of hypermedia circulation: 1) ascending/descending; 2) descending/ascending; 3) descending/horizontal. Also a fourth type, which is not hypermedia because the contents do not travel between

How does presentism manifest itself here? In different ways, but first of all, we must take into account that, having emerged a media system that relies on Internet and telephone networks based on presentism, *the pace at which content circulates has accelerated*. A single example: before, when the response to what a mass media said should be made by another one with a similar status, due to the very nature of their routines, the rhythm of the circulation processes was, seen from the current era, slow. The mass media think, evaluate, check, before giving information or opinion. Today there are important active actors on the networks that are not guided by these routines, they comment and respond immediately, and the rhythm of circulation between the “up” and the “down” has accelerated until it becomes vertiginous. We will see a sample of what we are saying through an example that we will analyze in the next item.

3. The rhythm of the hypermedia circulation and the effects of the new interpretative contexts: ‘friendly fire’.

Both the meanings that Internet users put into play in the form of ‘actuality of their private lives’, which construct new interpretative contexts in *offline* “social life”²⁶, as well as those that circulate hypermediatically, characterize the contemporary era. But what are the links

both systems, but due to its relevance it cannot fail to be considered: it starts being *ascending*, and then it is *horizontal*.

26 We say social life in quotes because it is increasingly difficult to separate both spheres, especially due to the hyperconnection and the evolution of smartphones. However, and although our lives tend more and more to be hybrid, maintaining the distinction is important, at least for two reasons. On the one hand, because it allows us to compare our era with the previous one. On the other, because although the mediatization of social life does not stop, we continue in many moments of the day have a life not mediatized. When? Simplifying every time that, for different reasons, we disconnect the cell phone, and we all do it many times throughout the day.

between these two modes of circulation of meaning? We conclude this article by giving a recent example that is emblematic. But it is only one example of what, we understand, constitutes a whole field of research.

On September 7, 2013, one day before her birthday, Camila Echegaray, 18, found, when she was going out to celebrate with her friends on Saturday night, a 0 km car wrapped with a blue bow. Happy, she posted the photo on her Instagram account. The car was an Audi A1, valued between 35,000 and 45,000 USD²⁷, and was a gift from her father, Ricardo Echegaray, General Director of the AFIP (Administración Federal de Ingresos Públicos). The photo became “viral” on social networks, with various comments, mostly ironic. In the following days, the news reached the mass media²⁸ and got commented on by various social referents, among them, the film director Juan José Campanella, winner of the Oscar award, who criticized ostentation. Camila deleted the contents of her account, though it did not help much because it had already circulated. And the father, consulted by the mass media, finally could not avoid making statements on an AM radio station, Radio del Plata, where he could not deny the news. He limited himself to saying: “When you love your children, you give them everything you can give them.” There was no way to deny the information emerged under friendly fire mode since it was his own daughter who turned it public by her own will, although obviously without the intentionality with which it got read. A product of presentism that dominates in contemporary hyper-mediatization, all this happened in just over four days.

27 The theme gave rise to a series of notes from different newspapers in Argentina (La Nación, Página 12, Clarín, etc.). In this link you can consult the coverage of the Nation: <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1618843-ricardo-echegaray-le-regalo-un-audi-a-su-hija-y-estallaron-las-redes>

28 Available in the newspaper La Nación: <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1618843-ricardo-echegaray-le-regalo-un-audi-a-su-hija-y-estallaron-las-redes>

Before commenting on this case, let us reconstruct, albeit schematically, its circulation so that it becomes clearer how both media systems are articulated. First phase: a content published on an Instagram account, that is, in the medium under personal administration by a young woman who told a happy event about her current life to her circle of friends on the network, it begins to circulate on the networks beyond what she had imagined (among strangers, something evident that emerges from the analysis of the contents that circulated that we could examine). The second phase, hypermedia: the news arouses the interest of the mass media because her father is a civil servant. The mass media publish the news. In this phase, the father cannot avoid being questioned by the mentioned media and giving explanations in a radio note. A third phase, also hypermedia: social referents comment the news from their accounts on social networks.

This case is one of the many that could be cited and demonstrates how the circulation of meaning has changed in contemporary society, in contrast to the modern and postmodern eras. In the era of mass media, journalists had to obtain information. Then, if the information they accessed was capable of provoking a scandal that was going to affect the life of a public figure, that is, to *change the public interpretation of his/her life*, the usual, before publishing, was to try to contact him/her. He/She would be informed of the content that would be published and given the floor to be denied or confirmed. We know what was the first thing that civil servant tried to do: deny the fact. But how to deny a fact if the source of the event that created a *new interpretive context of his life* was spontaneously his own daughter? What if in addition did he/she turn it public? These are some features that characterize the new circulation, in which new interpretative contexts are constantly constructed and the

development of events become more unpredictable as it accelerates²⁹.

4. Presentism as a transversal factor of contemporaneity: mediatization, culture, and society

To conclude, two reflections. The first is that it is difficult to avoid, by referring to the emergence of presentism in the history of the West, to establish links between the history of mediatization, of globalization and the development of the consumer society. Although the subject exceeds the framework of this article, we would like to leave a reflection. We note that Hartog does not link especially mediatization and presentism. Who, however, according to our reading, established an explicit link between these topics was Jonathan Crary (2015 [2013]) on 24/7: *El capitalismo tardío y el fin del sueño*. For Crary, mediatization plays a fundamental role in the transformation of the experience of time in the history of the West, because the media is becoming increasingly ubiquitous in everyday life. From another point of view that we have worked on here, and on its own terms, Crary narrates how the West advanced what Verón called, on the part of media institutions, the *programming of social life*, which was invaded with a logic based on the stimulation of consumption and the spectacle of daily life. For Crary, also, the eighties are a very important moment, because until then “the (television) channels organized their programming according to the traditional patterns of the dream of human beings” (p.105). Since then the night transmissions begin, and the Internet finishes installing a regime that

29 We also know what else the civil servant would have tried to do in case he could not deny the fact: to say that the meaning of the event was different, that it got taken out of context. What enables that response? The fact that we all know quite well since mediatization consists, above all, in a decontextualization, which is another way of defining what mediatization consists of.

culminates with the current 24/7 connectivity away from the natural cycles. A machinic operating regime,

a 24/7 environment that has the appearance of a social world, but in reality is a non-social model of machinic performance and a suspension of life, which does not reveal the human cost that is needed to maintain its effectiveness (p. 36).

We have an absolute agreement with Crary's diagnosis in that we are in a 24/7 environment with profound consequences, which is one of the darkest faces of the emergence of presentism and contemporary life. We disagree in what he points out in terms of the power it provides to this system and organization, a power that we in no way underestimate, but that, at least punctually, we would like to comment. Crary argues, for example, that the construction of subjectivity, since the 90s, was carried out by media corporations because at the moment that cyberspace appeared it was announced as a set of tools with the power to reinvent the self, and its relationship with the world but by the mid-nineties, it had become clear that "although cyberspace was, in fact, a reinvention of the self, that transformation and reinvention were done by transnational corporations" (p.98). It is true that the irruption of large corporations (especially since the emergence of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, etc.), by establishing themselves as successful intermediaries on social life, established the frameworks for the expression of subjectivities in an Internet that was not yet dominantly seen from a dystopian perspective, at the service of global capitalism. Not only that, we also consider that the stimulation of consumption done by the mass media under advertising guidelines based on the programming schedule went into crisis along with the mass media, the new corporations, starting with Facebook and Google, developed advertising that stimulates increasingly ubiquitous

consumption, personalized, and, perhaps, more powerful. However, the thesis to which we have subscribed in this paper says that *presentism was not established only by mediatization and the institutions of the business world, it is also due to the crisis of modern and postmodern paradigms since the effects of media presentism 24/7, as described by Crary, must be checked permanently, point by point, with the social presentism that has now become, in addition, mediatized*. A quick comment: nobody, much less the transnational corporations, could accurately foresee the uses that societies gave to social networks in the Arab spring, in the protests in Brazil, or the one carried out by the feminist collective #niunamenos in Argentina. The uses that institutions, collectives, and individuals make of networks in an increasingly complex society *based on the presentism of their lives* makes circulate more and more information about themselves are, in many ways, unpredictable.

While this debate, of which there are signs already among us, crystallizes and develops, I understand that the adoption or not of the contemporary category constitutes a challenge for our field. At the end of this text, I limit myself to saying that, although that question is avoided, there is one that at this point we can no longer avoid: *what happens when individually half of the world population gets mediatized, and so do all institutions and social collectives?* To give an answer, even if it is tactical and provisional to these questions, we must ask ourselves: do we have a *macro* approach in our field that allows us to approach such complexity? Although in his last book Eliseo Verón (2013) did not explicitly address this discussion, he gave us important observations to make progress. In the chapter devoted to photography, in which he returns to his analysis of the printing press, its link with Protestantism, and the importance it had for the development of modernity, he refers to the relevant moments of the history of mediatization. He says that media phenomena are “from the point of

the variables that allow us to explain historical processes, *cross-cutting factors*: their emergence concerns in a radial way and, we could say, simultaneously, all sectors of social functioning” (p. 248). These moments generate at the same time “*gigantic processes of positive feedback*, with the consequent circular reinforcement of the variables at play, processes to which it is impossible to apply the linear model of the cause/effect relationship” (VERÓN, 2013, p. 248). From our point of view, if we can say that about the emergence of a *dispositif* such as photography, much more we can say of the contemporary transformations that affect both the level of mediatization as well as of circulation, which became hypermedia and so is changing culture and society. They are mutations that are affecting at the same time the online and offline social practices of institutions, collectives, and individuals, to the point that they have reconfigured divisions that traditionally organized social life in modernity, such as that between labor and leisure, or between public, intimate, and private life. From this point of view, not only media phenomena are cross-cutting, perhaps much more it is *presentism*, that does not influence only at the media level, but seems to affect everything: social practices, the mass media system and the new system of mediatization.

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The Semiosis of Mediatization

Lucrecia D'Alessio Ferrara

Abstract: Considering the analysis of convergences that are established between mediatization, social transformation, and semiosis proposed by this Seminar and debate, we deliberate that it is necessary, from the epistemological viewing, to set up the distinction between technical means and communicative means, whose differences are responsible for remarkable epistemes that are often confused because they place communication under the aegis of technical means. Thus, we emphasize the epistemological difference that we can find between “communicative processes” and “media processes” and, as a hypothesis, the possibility of considering among them a possible inversion of semiosis and its continuous re-significances. Looking at the difference and inversion of the semiosis of those processes, we ask to what extent can mediatization be an important vector in the communicative processes and the ponderable coadjutant of a possible social transformation? Mediatization may be the author of a non-expansive social transformation if considered from the quantitative point of view, but qualitatively ponderable as procedural

and irregular semiosis, author of another living body.

Keywords: communication, mediatization, epistemology, semiosis, social transformation

1. A necessary epistemology

The proposed theme requires that we dwell on the analysis of some epistemological bases so that we can understand how mediatization can process its semiosis and, as a possible consequence, produce a social transformation. It seems vital to have some clarity about the episteme of the subject studied and its epistemology to be able to organize the cognitive bases of the concept of mediatization that, as communication, interferes in contemporary human culture and associations.

The epistemology of mediatization is based on the nature of the technical means and the supposed dialoguing mode that can characterize its concretions and justify the study of the articulations and socio-cultural transformations that it promotes. In the contemporary world, these transformations are the result of information technologies, but they also authorize the emergence of another communication bias led by multiple senses that allow us to understand how nature and life develop through a communicating mode of existing, even if technological impact puts them under control and dominion of *dispositifs* of the capital acted by technology.

Although technologies interfere with the way the communicative process takes place, this does not mean that they determine it or that all communication is, in our day, always mediatized. To consider this difference is indispensable not to transform epistemology into a simple descriptive or narrative scientific artifice of the media action, focused on the representative detail and/or application of explanatory theories and methods, without realizing that the media way of being can discover or cover up

a vast territory defining the object of communication as a scientific area. That is, it is understood that mediatization can act in the intersection of technological processes, but this does not mean that all communicative processes are, in a mandatory way, partially or strictly mediatized. In other words, studying mediatization and developing its possible episteme requires understanding its role which, besides operating through media and /or machinery resources, is another paradigm and demands that the communication epistemology goes beyond orthodox statements about the determination of the technical means in contemporary society, to reflect on the role of technical means in the civilization that contemporary man is building, rather than considering what or which are the media vectors of that society. Thus, it is not a question of proposing a mediatization that converges, in an affirmative way, a totalizing definition of technical performance, but of perceiving how the technique, constructed by the invention of man, interferes but does not determine, the world and culture which involves him. The point is not to define what mediatization is, but to know what it can be or already is.

Thus, we highlight the epistemological difference that we can find between “communicative processes” and “media processes” and, by hypothesis, the possibility of considering, among them, a possible inversion of the growth of the respective semiosis and its continuous re-significances.

Observing the difference and semiosis inversion of those processes; it is possible to ask: to what extent can mediatization be an important vector in the communicative processes and, thus, contribute to a viable social transformation?

Reviewing mediatization from the standpoint of a continuous process of semiosis requires distinguishing the media processes from the communicative ones. For this review, it is necessary to consider the relevance of the

consequences that result from the centrality of the media in everyday life concentrated in the real-time, cyberspace, speed, acceleration of the reproductive systems and metamorphosis of the productive work that, although immaterial and competitive, invades, in a specular mode, public and private life, while modeling a machinery subjectivity. Above all, this revision considers that the continuous process of socio-cultural and daily occurrences of the media technologies also affects the semiosis of its signification processes and the evolution of the culture constructed by human daily life.

If the instrumentalized focus of the American empiricism was interested in achieving a receiver intended to be passive and inert, because it thus determined the leadership of an issuer interested in a merely transmissive mediation; the unquestionable presence of the media, in contemporary society, requires the epistemological attention to consider that the world can reissue Greek *phrónesis* by proposing the interaction, technological or not, that leads to another communicative process.

Media processes and communicative processes get counterposed, or, in other words, the bios-media (SODRÉ, 2002) and the bios-interactive are confronted.

2. From the epistemology of the media to the epistemology of the interactions

Naturally, the media epistemology finds its counterface in the epistemology of interactions, that is, they do not oppose, however, they trace different paths that cannot be confused, because they produce distinct, if not conflicting, epistemes.

If the media epistemology seems to favor a socially legitimized bias because of mass communication research and its empirical findings or mismatches, the episteme of interactions operates in the opposite direction because it

must be attentive to the empirical and theoretical difference that gets established between media processes and communicative processes. In this sense, it is necessary to perceive the conceptual difference of the communication involved in both cases, besides observing the diversity of the respective scientific objects.

If, in the middle of the twentieth century, American experiences have found, in the media, instruments that guaranteed the transmissive communication that generated notorious symmetry between sender and receiver; advanced technologies of the contemporary communication produced another temporality that, in speed and acceleration, emerge empirically as the real-time responsible for the construction of planetary cyberspace: the world seems to become a technique which demarcates the everyday life as a diffuse reality, where the stable and secure is in crisis, albeit in a network. Everything seems to be reduced to eternal present time, in which the acceleration does not delimit the distinction of spaces and times dedicated to working, leisure, individual, and collective practices of living.

Everything is immediate, and everything is equivalent: times, spaces, life, men, and affections, and nothing comes to complete the thickness of reality, despite the incessant need to retain everything in the technological memory of digital records that, in quantity, lose their referential relevance. Everything is registered, but everything is lost in the memory of a machine.

In view of this reality of media processes, it is necessary to ask about which communication we are treating. Everything suggests that the concept of communication has changed because it has become mechanical and available to activate all the connections characterized by coexistence with technical means. On the one hand, it seems evident that this communication no longer even transmits, because its message has become the act of en-

tertaining and filling a nonexistent or precarious time of empty idleness. On the other hand, it is necessary to consider that the famed crisis between representation and represented, which placed reality distant and apart by image or visuality, has been overcome; it has become the great subject of postmodern analysis, as a theoretical and empirical parameter, and it has nourished the epistemology of the last decades of the twentieth century and the first decades of the twenty-first century; developed by authors, such as Baudrillard (1981); Virilio (1984); Sfez (1992); Luhmann (2004); on the dates of their original publications.

Without messages, we understand mediatization as a consequence of the everyday invaded by the techniques, but in its semiosis, mediatization can go beyond the technology that, however, demands to be considered. In this sense, Simondon is decisive:

Culture has become a defense system against techniques; now this defense is presented as a defense of man, assuming that technical objects do not contain human reality. We would like to show that culture ignores a human reality in the technique and that in order to fulfill its full role, culture must incorporate technical beings in the form of knowledge and a sense of values [...] The opposition between technique and culture will last until that culture discovers that each machine is not an absolute unit, but only an individualized technical reality, open according to two paths: that of the relationship with the elements, and that of interindividual relations in the technical (SIMONDON, 2007, p. 31/162)¹.

1 From the original: "La cultura se ha constituido en sistema de defensa contra las técnicas; ahora bien esta defensa se presenta como una defensa del hombre, suponiendo que los objetos técnicos no contienen realidad humana. Querríamos mostrar que la cultura ignora en la téc-

Aside from the affirmatives that tend to dismantle a humanistic concept of culture, Simondon is still more radical when, expanding to two socio-cultural influences, he presents a key-concept to sustain his technical theory: it is the transduction “the technical being evolves by convergence and adaptation to itself; it is unified internally according to a principle of internal resonance”² (p. 42). This principle constitutes a key-element to sustain the technical matrix and to technically introduce another concept that seems directly interfere with the epistemic territory of mediatization:

The machine that is endowed with a high technicality is an open machine, and the set of open machines involves man as a permanent organizer; as a living interpreter of machines, some in relation to others. Far from being the guardian of a troop of slaves, man is the permanent organizer of a society of technical objects that need him, as musicians need the director of orchestra. [...] In order for the representation of technical contents to be incorporated into the culture, there must be an objectification of the technical relationship for man³ (SIMONDON, 2007, p.33 / 163).

nica una realidad humana y que para cumplir su rol completo, la cultura debe incorporar los seres técnicos bajo la forma de conocimiento y de sentido de los valores....La oposición entre técnica y cultura durará hasta que la cultura descubra que cada máquina no es una unidad absoluta, sino solamente una realidad técnica individualizada, abierta de acuerdo con dos caminos: el de la relación con los elementos, y el de las relaciones interindividuales en el conjunto técnico” (SIMONDON, 2007, p. 31/162).

- 2 From the original: “el ser técnico evoluciona por convergencia y adaptación a si mismo; se unifica interiormente según un principio de resonancia interna” (Simondon, p.42).
- 3 From the original: “La máquina que está dotada de una alta tecnicidad es una máquina abierta, y el conjunto de máquinas abiertas supone al hombre como organizador permanente, como intérprete viviente de máquinas, unas en relación con otras. Lejos de ser el vigilante de una tropa de esclavos, el hombre es el organizador permanente de una so-

In a comprehensive analysis of mediatization and trying to overcome a sterile humanism of opposition between culture, man, and technique, it is essential to consider that the socio-technical relationship is only complete when man can understand it as a power that can determine or complement it, operating in the first case, its subversion or, in the second, its conversion. In that analysis, we propose another culture made of the unity of technical objects that are at the service of man, insofar as he comprehends them as broaden or intelligent resonances of himself.

To defuse the matrix of mediatization, shifting it from the technique to man, seems to constitute a fundamental strategy so that we can understand the contemporary world made of men and technical objects on flows of convergence, but without norm, control or hegemony. This strange mobility seems to constitute a perceptive-key for us to interpret what we may understand as mediatization, which can only take place on the flow with which we apprehend the transformation of society from the technical point of view, though without determinism or submission. This perception demands that we consider other mobilities that come from the same flow, although its inexorable displacement is not always evident. The mediatized social reality is one that incorporates, from the technique, the flow of its doubts, to find possible certainties also fluid, although without determinations.

3. Flow interactions

In the realm of the technical territory, we verify that if mass communication has invaded the private space

ciudad de objetos técnicos que tienen necesidad de él, como los músicos tienen necesidad del director de orquesta. [...]. Para que la representación de los contenidos técnicos se pueda incorporar a la cultura, es preciso que exista una objetivación de la relación técnica para el hombre” (SIMONDON, 2007, p. 33/163).

without any permission, the communicative processes that occur, as a consequence of the technical means, or in spite of them, already happen in the strange space of the networks that subverts or neutralizes the private domain to display themselves as a new reality without place; because their space presents the absence of physical construction, geographically and politically defined, though it manifests itself through real-time, diffused in planetary dimension and places:

The space of flows is the material organization of time-shared social practices that work by means of flows. By flows, I mean the intentional, repetitive and programmable sequences of interchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political, and symbolic structures of society (CASTELLS, 1999 [2003], (1999) p. 501)⁴.

If the technical sequences are programmed in the manner of a dominant structure, they are also interactive, and this difference supports the flow of mediatization that is mobile by leveraging values, behaviors, habits, society, economy, production, and reproduction of man as a labor force in interactivity. As flow, that agency is mobile and as such is also relative. In the relativity of this flow, it is urgent to review the certainties that presided over the epistemology of the means until recently; among them, we find the concepts of reception, public space, and norm leveraged not as epistemic concepts, but as habits that

⁴ From the original: *O espaço de fluxos é a organização material das práticas sociais de tempo compartilhado que funcionam por meio de fluxos. Por fluxos, entendo as sequências intencionais, repetitivas e programáveis de intercâmbio e interação entre posições fisicamente desarticuladas, mantidas por atores sociais nas estruturas econômica, política e simbólica da sociedade* (CASTELLS, 1999 [2003], (1999) p. 501).

manifest in the network and interconnected in planetary and scalar dynamics.

On the contrary and on the counterface of the media, the interactions become mediatization that is cut out in the daily praxis and requires to get revised or remodeled because, in them, there are no longer transmissions or messages that isolate a passive receiver and are only alert to the commands of an issuing leader. On the contrary, the space of the communicative processes has its happening marked by the virtual public space, in which there are no autonomous gestures or statements:

Its advent is equivalent to the end of separation and even the distinction between audiovisual media and print media, popular culture and erudite culture, entertainment and information, education and persuasion. All cultural expressions, from the worst to the best, from the most elitist to the most popular, come together in this digital universe that links, in a gigantic historical super text, the past, present and future manifestations of the communicative mind. With this, they build a new symbolic environment. They make virtuality our reality (CASTELLS, 1999 [2003], (1999) p. 458)⁵.

Without time and space, to what extent does this mediatization take on social and public aspects? On the counterface of reception, this new space is virtual but public; however, and paradoxically, it does not demand

5 From the original: Seu advento é equivalente ao fim da separação e até da distinção entre mídia audiovisual e mídia impressa, cultura popular e cultura erudita, entretenimento e informação, educação e persuasão. Todas as expressões culturais, da pior à melhor, da mais elitista à mais popular, vêm juntas nesse universo digital que liga, em um supertexto histórico gigantesco, as manifestações passadas, presentes e futuras da mente comunicativa. Com isso elas constroem um novo ambiente simbólico. Fazem da virtualidade nossa realidade (CASTELLS, 1999 [2003] (1999), p. 458).

consensus, requiring that the concept of the public sphere and its capacity to construct opinion in Habermas' (2003) view be revised. Although it is prior to the concept of mediatization, the notion of the public seems to be able to interfere with the first and demands to be resumed:

Was there an audience in the Middle Ages? No, but there were fairs, pilgrimages of tumultuous crowds dominated by pious or warlike emotions, anger, or panic. The public can only begin to be born after the first great development of the press invention in the sixteenth century. The transport of force at a distance is nothing compared to that of thought at a distance (TARDE, 2005, p. 10).

The old public sphere hermeneutics of the 60s of the twentieth century is overcome, for now space seems to be devoid of intentions: the receptor that should produce consensus is replaced by the public which, on network "is a social standard, not an accumulation of isolated individuals" (CASTELLS, 2003, p. 109), and their respective individualities are marked by a convergence of social individuations connected to the technique.

This condition confers to the public sphere the possibility of overcoming its individuality and, understanding it as an articulator of technicity, comprehends that it differs from technique and offers another logic in which not only technical functionality is proposed, but its dimension or social consequences where it resonates the invention of man and technical efficiency:

If we suppose, on the contrary, that individuation does not only produce the individual, we will not seek to pass so quickly through the stage of individuation to arrive at this ultimate reality that is the individual: we would try to capture ontogenesis in all development of its reality, and to know

the individual through individuation rather than individuation through the individual. [...] the human being has the capacity to understand the functioning of the machine, on the one hand, and to live, on the other: it is possible to speak of technical life as that which man performs in this relation of the two functions. Man can assume relationship between the living being and the machine that he makes; the technical operation demands a technical and natural life⁶ (SIMONDON, 2007, p. 9/143).

If the dominant interactive structures require the revision of the concepts of reception and consensual space replacing them by the public and the virtual public sphere, it is in the symbiosis between life and technique that we can find the possibility of a revision of those norms coined by the habit. In addition to the individuality sustained by the norm of identity construction, man discovers that in its ontogenesis, there is an undefeatable general pre-individuation that generates its particular individuation, in so far as it pluralizes it and leads it to discover itself as an individual of the world, holder of another collective identity:

The individual gets individuated in the measure in which he perceives the beings, constitutes an individuation through action

6 From the original: "Si supusiéramos, por el contrario, que la individuación no produce solamente el individuo, no buscaríamos pasar de manera tan rápida a través de la etapa de individuación para llegar a esta realidad última que es el individuo: intentaríamos captar la ontogénesis en todo el desarrollo de su realidad, y *conocer al individuo a través de la individuación antes que la individuación a partir del individuo*. [...] el ser humano tiene la capacidad de comprender el funcionamiento de la máquina, por una parte, y de vivir, por la otra: se puede hablar de vida técnica como aquello que realiza en el hombre esta puesta en relación de las dos funciones. El hombre es capaz de asumir la relación entre lo viviente que es y la máquina que fabrica; la operación técnica exige una vida técnica y natural (SIMONDON, 2007, p. 9/143)."

or manufacturing construction and forms part of the system that understands his individual reality and the objects he discerns or constitutes. Consciousness would then become a mixed regime of causality and efficiency, linking according to this regime the individual with himself and with the world. Emotion and sensibility would then be the transductive form, par excellence, of the psyche, intermediate between clear conscious and subconsciousness, permanent union of the individual with himself and with the world, or rather union between the relationship of the individual to himself and the union of the individual with the world. [...] Individuals are group individuals as the group is a group of individuals ... the group is not an interindividual reality, but a complement of large-scale individuation that brings together a plurality of individuals⁷ (SIMONDON, 2015, 311/379).

The mediatization becomes, therefore, a regulating element of the dominant technical structures and an agent of the interactive semiosis that gets processed between the technical objects and man, between society and

7 From the original: "El individuo se individúa en la medida en que percibe seres, constituye una individuación a través de la acción o la construcción fabricadora, y forma parte del sistema que comprende su realidad individual y los objetos que percibe o constituye. La conciencia se convertiría entonces en un régimen mixto de causalidad y de eficiencia, ligando según este régimen al individuo consigo mismo y con el mundo. La afectividad y la emotividad serían entonces la forma transductiva por excelencia del psiquismo, intermedia entre la conciencia clara y la subconciencia, unión permanente del individuo consigo mismo y con el mundo, o más bien unión entre la relación del individuo consigo mismo y la unión del individuo con el mundo. [...] Los individuos son individuos de grupo como el grupo es grupo de individuos [...] el grupo no es tampoco realidad interindividual, sino complemento de individuación a gran escala que reúne a una pluralidad de individuos" (SIMONDON, 2015, p. 311/379).

the world. Therefore, mediatization activates language and communication between the individual particular and the collective singularity. But how to understand this semiosis?

4. The semiosis of mediatization

In the realistic trace of the processes that lead individuation to undergo the indispensable path between the pre-individual and the meta-individual that allow to observe, from Simondon, and prior to him, in Peirce, that in the escalation of a reactive existence of actions and responses towards a general law, there is a chronological time of constant contiguities which construct the regularity of facts, towards a norm and the organization of habits of logical perfection of the world and manifestations of regular stability that sponsors a necessary semiosis. In this sense and in a pragmatic way, we consider as semiosis those meanings that emerge from the reactive singularity of the behaviors, tending to the construction of norms and habits of action. In this scenario of regularities, the logical perfection of the world finds in its mediation its captive place, inasmuch as it acts as a thermometer of the capacity that leads the individual to activate a logic that, in the world, takes place between the means, the objects, and the techniques and that are motors of conducts, norms, and values.

In the path of the inferences that allow the mobility between the concepts of media, reception, mediation, interaction, circulation, and the public, mediatization seems to undergo intense transduction and converge to the concepts of pre-individuation, individuation, and collective trans-individuation which surpass the character of a transmissive communication. In this convergence, the element that most interests us is the complexity of the social systems that flow and confuse with mediatization it-

self, now transformed into a key-concept of contemporary communication (VERÓN, 2014, p. 13).

In this sense, it is necessary to observe that mediatization promotes openness to consider other levels of analysis and among them communication that, although common to all living organic and inorganic species, finds in anthropological phylogeny another cognitive and perceptive matrix, one that establishes intimate relationships between sensibility, mind, body, space, and language, inaugurating a cognitive pattern that is not anthropocentric and more complex than the phylogenesis common to all living beings:

Everything that happens in the object of the idea that constitutes the human soul must get perceived by the human soul: in other words: the idea of this thing will exist necessarily in the soul, that is, if the object of the idea that constitutes human soul is a body, nothing can happen in this body that is not perceived by the soul⁸ (ESPINOSA 1973, 151).

In the validity of this anti-anthropocentric paradigm and sensitive to the mind-body unit, we can overcome the simple transmissive contract of the verbal technically performative, to consider the very complex nature of communication that, interactive, does not know that transmissive monology because it processes based upon every communicating gesture.

It is necessary, considering its public updating, to observe the language that crosses mediatizations and impresses them with the character of meaning that migrates

8 From the original: “Tudo o que acontece no objeto da idéia que constitui a alma humana deve ser percebido pela alma humana: por outras palavras: a ideia dessa coisa existirá necessariamente na alma, isto é, se o objeto da idéia que constitui a alma humana é um corpo, nada poderá acontecer nesse corpo que não seja percebido pela alma” (ESPINOSA, 1973, p. 151).

from the media to the interactions. If, for man, language constitutes a communicative matrix that involves and unites idea, body, and senses, it is not possible to reduce it to the transmissive character; on the contrary, it is indispensable to perceive the differences that occur with language by interfering in the way communication occurs and seems to be more comprehensive than the simple transmission of immanent messages. Language, understood as semiotics or the logic of signs, establishes the relationship that occurs between mediatizations and, if the media processes can sponsor a kind of solitary language that, through the domain of a code, closes itself in solipsism of the individual immersed in the complexity of his subjective ego, the communicative processes that are the other side of the media generate the bio-interactive processes, as we have seen.

In this other bios, the way of communicating acquires relevance that needs consideration, so that we can reach another level of analysis and face the role of its consequences as an agent that unites man to all living species. In this union, it is necessary to consider the distinction that turns man capable of producing and transforming languages as enunciative possibilities, but they surpass the code supported in an arbitrary sign when presenting themselves like a general value in which the interactive communication gets supported.

Overcoming that soliloquy of a language understood as an expressive and/or enunciative instrument aimed at the passivity of a receiver/mass, it is observable that the public presents the capacity to transform the language that is of a social nature, produced and used collectively, and tends to the sharing that makes it solidary to the experience of all and provider of that cooperation that is understood as semiosis.

Producers of relentless mixture between media, the interactive processes surpass the semiosis that pro-

duces habits of thinking and acting, to assume, in continuous processes, another logical face that sponsors constant re-signification of meanings because they are refractory to the norm and managers of the collective, shared relationship, and, therefore, transforming the network society itself with which it connects. This semiosis constitutes the common skin itself that is sensitive, thinking, social, and distinct from the mediated semiosis that, symmetrical, are vectorized by the pragmatic complicity between action and reaction and are also predictive of beliefs and habits. If, with the mediated semiosis, we are in the logical territory of the norms and laws of thirdness and reactive emergencies of the secondness, according to the semiotic dialogue that characterizes the Peircian categories, in the semiosis of the processes of re-signification of meanings and language, we witness the emergence of another communicative environment constituted by the continuous logic of semiosis that is defined by the absence of norms and habits that lead to behaviors.

5. From mediation to interaction: semioses

If, since the Greek civilization, we understand the political dimension of praxis and techné, we will observe that the ontogenesis of communication gives them social and public dimension. Contemporary communication, marked by the urgency and speed of real-time, exhibits the exposure to the eyes of the other as a characteristic of its technical nature, even if merely online. Self-image gets transformed into visuality that acts as the propellant of public applause or condemnation; that is, in the social dimension of communication, everything speaks publicly and becomes an exposition composed by the way it presents and/or communicates because if everything is virtual nothing can remain to be performative as visuality. Mediatization is communicated by the technical visu-

ality that, in the subjectivity stimulated by the imaginary, transforms everything into an image that consolidates appearances and natural belongings, without showing, in the relationship between representation and represented, a reason for the cultural and human crisis. Mediatization encourages us, therefore, to not leave ourselves to be reached by the way technical visuality makes us, on the contrary, everyday and trivial, the technical image no longer attacks man, because he already understands it as a natural expansion impregnated by the echo of his own humanity. If, on the one hand, the domain of technology as a strategy for a consumer market can make us anonymous or automata, on the other hand, the public and collective space, where bodies and planetary subjectivities meet, is the interactive place of exchange of experiences and constant resistance, although they manifest in a unique way in each region of the world.

The social and public dimension of communication transforms the pre-individual and individual particular into a collective of singularities inherent to it: in the shadows of the subject another individual emerges, now turned to the cultivation of his collective and expository singularity. This visuality turns the public space into an open scene for the emergence of bodies invested with a political force that constitutes the procedural continuity of its semiosis; while, at the same time, it makes it responsible for the transformation of communication that surpasses the transmissive reduction and arises as a privileged space which assumes its ontogenetic and socio-political role, perhaps in a definitive way. For this, it is necessary to understand how the semiosis can be present between mediations and interactions and end up constructing the own fundamental vector of mediatization:

The power/act relationship is anthropogenic. Its cyclicity affirms that any molecule of our experience is charged with the

inherent unrepeatability of everything that occupies a place in the arrow of time, reproduces in miniature the origin of the species. The recursion of anthropogenesis (the cycle), far from inhibiting or paralyzing history, guarantees mutability and irreparable contingency (the arrow). If the language faculty were a code-libretto, rather than an inarticulate potentiality, the origin would not be a permanent condition (VIRNO, 2013, p.107)⁹.

Going beyond the verbal basis that seems to be Paolo Virno's principal interest, it is observed that, alongside the linear verbal contiguity marked by the chronology of time, are the circle or volume that, when pointing out to a power without predictions, are always updated as if they were new, in opposition to the permanence of that contiguity. That is, the interactions are in germ in the mediatized semiosis, and both are interacting although they do not determine each other. It seems indispensable, to understand this difference, to realize that between mediations and interactions distinct modulations of time and different semiosis are constructed.

In this sense, it is necessary to consider that time signals cognitive differences, as it refers to the mediatized and reactive predictability that builds between beliefs, habits, and actions or contemplates the unpredictability of feelings/sensations of pure quality and difficult apprehension. According to Peirce (C. P. 5,395), it is necessary

⁹ From the original: "La relación potencia/acto es antropogenética. Su cíclicidad afirma que cualquier molécula de nuestra experiencia, estando cargada de la irrepitibilidad inherente a todo aquello que ocupa lugar en la flecha del tiempo, reproduce en miniatura el origen de la especie. La recursividad de la antropogénesis (el ciclo) lejos de inhibir o paralizar la historia garantiza la mutabilidad y la irreparable contingencia (la flecha). Si la facultad del lenguaje fuese un código-libreto, antes que una potencialidad inarticulada, el origen no sería una condición permanente" (VIRNO, 2013, p. 107).

to produce clear ideas and to distinguish the cognitive differences present in the dimensions of the time that is established between contiguity as adhesion, which contaminates the functionality of the reactive or normative experiential chronological time and the time that, unlike the previous chronological chain, is always present, making and remaking itself indefinitely. If mediations are marked by the contiguous chronology of actions, reactions, norms, and habits with predictable tendencies from the former to the latter, the interactions are led by a continuous and strange process to the contiguity of linear time that characterizes the mediations (Peirce, C.P. 1,328). It goes from the predictable mediating semiosis that organizes norms, actions, and reactions to an interactive semiosis with distinct indeterminate vectors of irregular, unpredictable semiotic configuration, although in possible simultaneity:

It would be a little less erroneous to say that we only know the potential through the actual, and only infer qualities by generalization from what we perceive in matter. All that I here insist upon is quality is one element of phenomena, and fact, action, actuality is another (PEIRCE, C.P. 1.419).

But what is this difference or what are its vectors?

6. From the interactive semiosis to the mediatization of the bodies

When communication exceeds the linear dimension that is registered in the scope of the technique understood in its performance and transmissive efficiency, we observe that it is concretized by the way in which, assuming the potentialities of the technical characteristics, or perhaps despite them, it develops as mediatization of the social and public sphere.

However, this vector is also the agent of language itself which, at the height of its social dimension, surpasses the previous visibility demanded by the exclusive characteristic of communicative experience that characterizes the public sphere to assume that semiosis of the tactile and sensitive quality between bodies which confers, to that public, its definitive and inalienable environmental, thinkable, and political dimension.

A technically mediated semiosis that, adhering to the dialogue of singularities in complicity, overcomes simple enunciative and mediatized linearity, to produce and reproduce itself publicly in a radical meta-mediatization of technique and, definitely, far from the illusory performative boastfulness, centered on the productive epiphany of the means. A realistic mediatization takes place, effectively, in the singularity common to all in the domains of public space and action, without being generalized. A heuristic mediatization, constructing a special epistemological place for contemporary communication and capable of leading us to the evidence of irregularity sponsored by qualities of feelings, as exclusive testimonies of the present time and distant from the contiguity of habits and/or norms of conduct, while vigilant as emotional and cognitive continuity (PEIRCE, cp. 5, 395).

Let us turn back to the hypothesis that guided this work: we highlight the epistemological difference that we can find between “media processes” and “communicative processes” and, as a hypothesis, the possibility of considering, among them, a viable inversion of the respective growth of semiosis and their continuous re-significances.

Under the aegis of this inversion, the dialogical relationship that characterizes meta-mediatization is an agent of a peculiar relationship between bodies and minds, marked by the globalized and planetary dimension of public space. Although derived from the pure quality of

feelings, that relationship is adherent to the ontogenesis of experience and exchange, although dominated by irregular sensations and without determinations of goals or aims to be achieved.

This indeterminacy turns that relationship not adherent to a subjective emotional, on the contrary, it is plural and collective, insofar as it is prepared to the alert of a heuristic cognition that can be shared. The perception of this subjectivation without emotional subjectivities is indispensable, so that the continuous apprehension of the reality lived by minds and bodies is possible in the mediatization of public and collective exchange; there lies a broaden alterity of the individuation in meta-individuality, available to the experience, although without predictability of its occurrences, according to the continuous inference of the semiosis under the tutelage of the feelings quality, and adherent to the category of phenomenal firstness, proposed by Peirce (C.P. 1.305).

In this mediatization of confluence between spaces, times, minds, and bodies, another epistemology arises and needs to consider the cognitive heuristics offered in the unpredictability of public and collective environmental interactions. There are announcements of interactive semiosis processes that sponsor another knowledge of that cognitive confluence, responsible for the social dimension of construction and discovery of the meta-individual self (COLAPIETRO, 2014, 88). This interactive mediatization can be the author of a non-expansive social transformation, if considered from the quantitative point of view, but qualitatively ponderable as a processual and irregular semiosis, author of another living body in an indeterminate mediatization process.

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Circulation as value: the posthumous life of images transformed into symbols

*Ana Paula da Rosa*¹

Abstract: This work proposes to discuss circulation as a relation of value in which the process of meaning, therefore semiosis, is manifested. For this, we mobilize two emblematic images as an empirical case: the photograph of the boy Aylan Kurdi and the image produced by TV Chape about the celebration of Chapecoense's soccer players due to the team's qualification for the final of the South American Cup, widely publicized after the tragic air crash which killed 71 people in Colombia. Based on the hypothesis that circulation is a value relation (ROSA, 2016), we ask: what is the processuality that allows the image to configure itself into a symbol from its circulation? Does the

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image of the “dead body” accentuate its possibility of becoming fixed as a belief? To try to answer these questions, we will mobilize here, in addition to empirical analysis, the concepts of circulation (FAUSTO NETO, ROSA, BRAGA, FERREIRA), semiosis and symbol (PEIRCE, KAMPER) as well as totemism (ROSA, CASSIRER, DURKHEIM), among others.

Keywords: image, mediatization, journalism.

1. The context of image in a mediatization scene

The word image has already received countless meanings, and all of them seem only to emphasize its incompleteness. Sometimes we use the term as a figure representing something, or the optical reproduction of an object resulting from the reflection or refraction of the luminous rays emanating from it. We could say, then, that we absorb the information that comes to our eyes as images. However, can we treat the images only in their capture dimension? Naturally, we experience an immersion of images, especially of the mental ones. These images remain with us even when we close our eyes, what Italo Calvino (1997) says is the ability of ‘seeing with eyes closed’. Mental images may never materialize, but they form our imaginary. Edgar Morin (1997) understands the imaginary as being a structure that is, at the same time, an antagonistic and an articulator of the real.

Without entering into the debate of what is this real, we want to emphasize here that, alongside the invisible (endogenous) images, we have the material ones, which we externalize. Material images, such as the journalistic, for example, attribute a kind of concreteness to ideas, facts, and events. However, multiple concerns cross the relationship between endogenous and exogenous images; thus, a material image can become integrated into

the iconographic repertoire of the individual, constituting an immaterial image. On the other hand, endogenous images can also be outsourced, often from subjects' productions or evoked through publications such as journalism or art. If images are creative acts from a socialized imagination, we can understand that such productions are cultural texts that we articulate based on recognized and shared codes. This leads us to consider that the imaginary is a product of the culture; it is constituted of mental images and, mainly, of the technical² ones too.

In this scene of blending of the technical and mental images, the processes of mediatization take place, configuring a new ambiance (GOMES, 2017) that transforms social practices based on social, semiological and technical protocols. In this ambiance, producers and recipients act as co-managers of culture, implying new ways of thinking, seeing, producing, and sharing images. It is important to highlight what we mean by mediatization in this work. In our view, based on Ferreira (2007), mediatization is the articulation between social and media processes that takes place within the scope of media *dispositifs*. The *dispositifs* are points of intersection and, in the case of images, are fundamental, since they are produced, shared and replicated in spaces linked to media institutions, but also to social actors. The material image depends on the apparatus³ for its execution and also the *dispositif* or the medium for its visibility.

We believe that mediatization transforms the way we understand communication, because this historical process, which develops with the evolution of man, is accentuated in the twentieth century, with the expansion of

2 In this work we adopt the term technical images based on Vilém Flusser.

3 We consider here that access to *dispositifs*, such as cameras, camcorders, and cell phones, already indicates an intensification of mediatization, since we mobilize such objects for the circulation of the images that we produce.

opportunities for access to the media, apparatus, and *dispositifs*. In addition, media culture, once restricted to traditional and consolidated media, expands and permeates the social fabric. This leads us to observe that the mastery of media logic, which implies its uses, practices and even appropriations (PROULX, 2014), is propitiated by technologies and a proactive posture of the individual, derivative of the current social context that instigates interactions. However, it is worth to highlight that the society is still in the process of mediatization, in the words of José Luiz Braga, since there is no finalization of the process; on the contrary, it increasingly expands, generating approximations and distances; accesses and non-accesses; balance and discrepancies; more offering of images, more repetition of a small number of images; proliferation, and restriction.

These dyads are especially provocative, and, taking them as a horizon, we begin this article from the perspective that mediatization is, in essence, a complexification of social relations and, consequently, of the derivative meaning production. If, on the one hand, the social actors ascend to the means, on the other hand, the traditional media, aimed here at the journalistic, seek to realize a kind of seal of the visible. This dispute is essential to understand the supply and circulation of meanings from the images that surround us. The assumption here advocated is that photographs and videos call for deep structures of the social, activating the inner images. When they are presented in the circulatory scene, passing through a process of valorization, these images become autonomous, starting to constitute themselves in the events, in such a way that the reference becomes the socialized image.

Given the above, this work proposes to discuss circulation as a relation of value that allows the dynamization of the process of meaning, therefore, semiosis. To do so, we mobilized two emblematic images as an empirical case: the photograph of the boy Aylan Kurdi and the

image produced by TV Chape, about the celebration of Chapecoense's soccer players before the qualification for the final of the South American Cup, widely publicized after the tragic accident which killed 71 people in Colombia. Based on the hypothesis that circulation is a value relation (ROSA, 2016b), we ask: **what is the processuality that allows the image to configure itself in a symbol from its circulation? Does the image of the 'dead body' accentuate its possibility of becoming fixed as a belief?** To try to answer these questions, we will mobilize here, in addition to the empirical analysis, the concepts of circulation, semiosis, and symbol, as well as totemism based on theoretical contributions such as Ferreira, Fausto Neto, Peirce, Baitello Jr., Kamper, among others.

2. Circulation as value: invigorating the semiosis

To speak of circulation involves stressing the roles of production and recognition, which we consider as foundational elements of the communicational process. For Verón (2004) the whole process of production of meaning, then the semiosis, is carried out involving these instances, and what occurs between one and another can be understood as circulation. However, this invisible moment in time, outwardly irrecoverable, is central to the studies on mediatization and communication because it helps us understand meaning in its activity and dynamism, especially regarding images. Catapulted to the circulation space, they are elaborated, reworked, replicated, and receive new meanings. This reveals an intense work done by language, by *dispositifs*, but especially by the valorization between the communicative instances that blend.

In this respect, there is an intricate interactional game where, for Fausto Neto (2013, p. 47), "technology, instead of producing widening distances between produc-

ers and receivers, tries to shorten them, gathering them now in the form of contacts". These contacts generate discursive couplings, modifying the production of meaning. Such contacts and couplings are what interests us here, since we consider it possible to identify in the marks of materialities, such as photographs and videos, traces of the movements of circulation. In the case of the Syrian boy, we sought to redo the paths and activations between the publication of the first images of the boy and the images broadcasted in 2016, on the web, on the same theme and which determined the circularity of the first image. In the Chapecoense's case, the Club produced the video in an institutional way; and it began to be divulged in multiple *dispositifs* due to the accident, coming to receive an imitation as a homage in Colombia. Thus, we can retrieve its visibility path. The focus here is to check in the traces the production of meaning, therefore what A. J. Greimas and J. Courtés (2012, p.447) mean by semiosis. For the authors, semiosis is

the operation which, by setting up a relation of reciprocal presupposition between the form of expression and content – or between signifier and meaning – produces signs: in this sense, any act of language, for example, implies a semiosis.

In spite of the differentiated perspectives in semiotic terms, Charles Sanders Peirce, emphasizes that the triad sign-interpretant-object⁴ only reaches the meaning when updated in the semiotic process.

A sign, or representamen, is something which stands to somebody for something

4 The triad sign-interpretant-object can be understood as a relation between: sign (representamen) which is what represents something to someone. The interpretant is the second created sign, in the person's mind, therefore, the reference. The thing represented is the object. These definitions can be seen in TEIXEIRA COELHO NETO, 2001.

in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the *ground* of the representation⁵ (PEIRCE, 1931-1966, p. 228).

Semiosis, here, refers to this mental creation, therefore, to a form of meaning. Each interpretation, however, allows for a multiplicity of connections, which suggests semiosis as being infinite, always incomplete, since a given sign, in turn, converts itself into another sign, operating the interpretation of a precedent sign. This circularity is what Eco (1995, p. 198) means by semiosis. “This continuous circularity is the normal condition of signification and even allows communicative processes to use signs to mention things and states of the world”.

From this, our perception is that circulation is, essentially, the dynamicity of semiosis, once every relation between production and recognition results from a mental creation based on previous signs. On circulation, specifically, our aim is that, despite the intensification of the divergences between the instances at play, it is evident a possibility of forming links through techno-discursive practices. These links do not imply the unification of the production of meaning, which would be impossible in view of the fact that semiosis is infinite, but the perception that there are questions of social pertinence shared by both the production and the reception that carry forward the interactional flow, producing what Braga (2012) calls circuits.

5 Available at <http://courses.logos.it/EN/2_20.html>. Accessed on November 8, 2018.

The images of the boy Aylan Kurdi or Chapecoense's images constitute interactive circuits, since, with each new publication, we perform other elaborations, tensions, confirmations. In this respect, it becomes crucial for us the idea that circulation constitutes a space of value attribution. Obviously, it is not a physical space, isolated and autonomous, but a process of recognition of value, because images only follow new circuits if we perceive them as meaningful and relevant.

In this way, we understand that there is a game for the constitution of the visible that considers the fact that, in mediatization, both production and recognition are able to develop enunciative practices using media *dispositifs*. The photograph of the boy appears, it is inserted in journalistic *dispositifs*, and made available on the web, it is now replicated in social actors' *dispositifs* and increases its forms of access, re-entry. Even the questioner publications of the first image confirm its strength. In the case of Chapecoense's video, after the accident the audiovisual product that was made available on the web is inserted in journalistic spaces, appropriated by social actors and shared in numerous *dispositifs*, giving it a power of impregnation before other images, including those of the place of the accident. Thus, we consider that this path, between the instances of appearance – valorization in interaction – replication, promotes the image autonomization in relation to the event itself since we make references related to the image and not to it.

We can say, then, that this is not the crisis of immigration, the accident victimizing dozens of people, but the transformation of the boy or the players into a symbolic image, an emblem. The symbolic construction is apparently effective in two aspects: a) this image summons up a deep social bond that mobilizes endogenous images present on the collective imaginary, and b) based on the intense valorization made by both journalistic institutions

and social actors through interactions, the image perpetuates in new inscriptions in the circulation, including the production of new images that reiterate the first ones.

Therefore, it is not only the materials that are reiterated but the images “activate circulation and find a space where production and recognition are in equal conditions to endorse or reject these images, even if coexisting with the multiple discrepancies” (ROSA, 2016b). In this scene, the two links in the communication process blend to determine what we can see.

3. The symbol: tensions between reiteration and valorization

Symbolic construction or the transformation of images into a symbol of events is not a new process, but it is possible to verify that this process has also been crossed by mediatization, especially by intra and inter-media movements of circulation. The intramedia circulation is the one performed only within the limits of the *dispositif*, while the intermedia circulation provides multiple relations, back and forth, between several different *dispositifs*, journalistic or not. Carlón (2016) speaks of the intra-systems and inter-systems, the first is performed within a single system, like the massive one, for example, and the latter, anchored in the relation between systems, like the broadcast and the digital ones. In this work, we make an approximation between these two concepts, considering that the circulation, especially the intermedia, also activates an intersystem processuality, since the flow produced from a matrix image propagates both in journalistic spaces and in individual mediated subjects. Beyond this aspect, the symbolic construction today, undeniably goes through the access of the subjects to the media space. This implies that, for many years, traditional media has defined (or has attempted to define) what we should see

and consider as symbolic since it held the configuration of the arguments under their power. In this work, we make an approximation between these two concepts, considering that the circulation, especially the intermedia, also activates an intersystem processuality, since the flow produced from a matrix image propagates both in journalistic spaces and in individual mediated subjects.

In a society in the process of mediatization, we share this power, although not in the same proportions, between journalistic institutions, social actors and non-mediated institutions. According to Carlón (2012, p. 177), mobilizing Scolari (2008), it is necessary to distinguish in the ambiance of the digital the socio-technical statute and the consequences on the production of meaning, since the subjects can operate the *dispositifs*. This aspect is important to the discussion about the symbol because it refers to an object we denote due to an association of ideas, which demands a social convention. In addition, Peirce also argues that the symbol depends on a habit, convention, or natural disposition. We return to these aspects here to reinforce our idea that now we constitute the symbol in the circulation, that is, by the relation between production and recognition, which together value certain images.

In this way, an image that was chosen by the media, through the various criteria that we have already mentioned, is only elevated to the category of the symbol of the event, to the point of constituting it, through movements of intermedia circulation (valorization), that is, through processes that we transform by the production, consumption, reinscription in diverse media devices and that result in the alteration of the circulation space. Thus, the symbolic force is in direct link to the logic that is employed to make the images endure in time, beyond the events to which they refer. We dismembered this logic in six

visible steps within the distribution process:
APPEARANCE / OFFERING – DELETING /
DISAPPEARANCE – REAPPEARING – REPLI-
CATION – RESTRICTION – TOTEMIZATION
(ROSA, 2012, p. 288).

It is worth noticing that repeating an image does not mean that it gets transformed into a symbol. In addition to the images in 'echo', the creation of the symbol necessarily passes through a kind of restriction. This is a result of the replication because, when an image is overly inscribed in circulation, the reference ceases to be the event and becomes the previously mediated image itself; it, then, constitutes itself in the phenomenon of media self-referentiality and in what we call social phagia (ROSA, 2016a). It means, therefore, that an image is elevated to the category of a symbol when, through its valorization, and consequent replication or consumption, in journalistic and, mainly, in individual actor's *dispositifs*, it restricts the access of other existing images to the media space. Thus, it results, as a consequence, in the restriction of the interpretation and the existence of other images. It is precisely this self-referential image that becomes a symbol and, in these cases, a totem.

According to Durkheim (1996), the structure of society is mediated and ideally conditioned, totemism being the external projection of certain internal social bonds since the totem is "a sign through which an object is labeled as meaningful." Here, we understand that the signs labeled as significant are the images themselves, those that enact the social from the moment the facts are transformed into a media event and, later on, become part of the media processes, generating multiple interactions.

In other words, the symbol is the creation of a third in and by the field set up in the circulation process. This third mentioned here refers to Peirce's triad (2003), in which a symbol demands certain convention. This con-

vention takes place within the scope of media *dispositifs* through a joint construction, in interaction or in circuits, taking into account socio-anthropological values that are already part of the culture. It should be of notice, however, the fact that, when we consider the symbol to be a third, it does not necessarily mean that it is limited to its sign condition. That is, we understand that the symbol transcends the sign, it not only wants to represent something but also to activate mental structures. In this sense, Baitello Jr. (2005) emphasizes that the symbol is formed by two structures: a) the support, the images, that extends beyond the material (it may be the trace, the auditory, performative, or the visual image) and b) the inherent meaning of complex elaborations woven over time. In view of these settings, we can now look at the symbol status that images get and that is part of the corpus of this article.

Our first case concerns the photograph of the Syrian boy Aylan Kurdi that was produced by the photographer Nulifer Demir in 2015. The body of the three-year-old child has been found at the Bodrum Beach, Turkey, after the ship, in which he was with his family, had shipwrecked. The image that translates the outcome of the crossing to Europe was considered one of the most viewed in the world. In the Google search engine, there are more than 500 thousand pages on the subject, most of them with the replication of Kurdi's photo. The photograph of the child by the sea (Figure 1), face-turned to water, became a symbol of the Syrian tragedy. Not only a symbol in the conception of common sense but effectively from the moment it began to restrict the access of other images or to be linked as an emblem or decal over other videos and photographs that refer to the situation of the immigration crisis.



Figure 01 – The photograph that has established itself as the symbol of the immigration crisis. Source: Image by Nilufer Demir / Reuters available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/02/shocking-image-of-drowned-syrian-boy-shows-tragic-plight-of-refugees>

This restriction occurs, on the one hand, by the range of the image offered in multiple *dispositifs* of journalistic institutions, but also on the spaces of media subjects that published the photograph, even in closes, on their blogs, Facebook pages, and other spaces. It is evident that after the dissemination of the image, still on the web, even before the first journalistic reports, a process of valorization in the circulation had been activated, that is, new circuits have been generated from the moment the image became accessible. But what did stimulate the social phagia? We can say that one of the central aspects of this image is the emotional involvement that it demands. We can go sound through political issues, but at the sight of a drowned child, social bonds and immaterial images are summoned. Aylan Kurdi condenses all Syrian children, on the one hand, and, on the other, the right to childhood.

This generates an idea of belonging, even though the reality is apparently distant.

It implies, therefore, the perception that Aylan Kurdi's photograph becomes symbolic because it traverses both the intra and the inter-media circulation, as well as the inter-system relationship. Simultaneously, the valorization process carried out in both production and recognition results in a proliferation of circuits that, in most cases, do not stress the image but refer to it. The meaning of Aylan Kurdi's photograph is armored, although attempts of rupture occur, as in the case of the French newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*. Such attempts, however, are rejected because they question the first image, but this one persists in time precisely because it transcends the object it represents, demanding mental structures already rooted in the imaginary.

Semiosis in this case, specifically, manifests to produce meanings since we are before a sensitive matter that is transformed into a discourse. Such a meaning is under constant elaboration, reworked over time, especially when new images involving immigration or Syrian conflicts are present. As an example, we can take the photographs of Omran Daqneesh, five years old, located in Aleppo between wreckage of a building in Syria. The photo montage (Figure 2) was produced with published images available in journalistic *dispositifs* and amplified on social media of mediatized actors who complicated the meaning, since they have brought together, in the same frame, two distinct but overlapping images. In addition, the verbal text 'Options for Syrian children: staying or fleeing' mobilizes the notion of shock, that is, from the bosom of our freedom, we are exposed to a lack of alternatives, which indirectly puts us at the center of a debate on co-responsibility.

OPÇÕES PARA AS CRIANÇAS SÍRIAS



Figure 02 – Image produced from the photo montage of social actors. Source: Facebook. Available at: <https://pt.br.facebook.com/quebrandootabu/>

The circuit, however, is not only closed with the connection between these two cases. The eight-year-old girl Aya was also promoted to circulation through her image, produced in a hospital in Syria by activists. The video of the injured child looking for her father was automatically attached to Aylan Kurdi's image, that, although not reproduced, adheres to the subsequent facts as verbal text and immaterial image. This leads us to consider that the symbolic force is bound, to a certain extent, to the power of becoming fixed that this image possesses, mainly because of the logic used for its valorization.

In this same sense, we start to observe the second case that composes the corpus of this article. The video of

TV Chape alluding to the commemoration of the qualification for the final of the South American Cup. The images were produced a few days before the plane crash with the soccer team delegation in Bolivia. After the confirmation of 71 deaths (among players, technical staff and journalists) on November 29, Chapecoense's video, which previously had an internal bias, was only the recording of the celebration, became widely publicized both in spaces of actors as in broadcast media. However, it was the non-media institution, Clube Chapecoense, that activated the interactive circuits from the moment it turned the video available for circulation with the claim that "this should be the last image of our warriors". It has been broadcast in TV programs such as *Fátima Bernardes*, *Globo Esporte*, *Fantástico*, *Esporte Fantástico*, *Cidade Alerta*, and *Brasil Urgente*, among others. On YouTube, yet, it is possible to find countless posts from social actors who have reproduced Chapecoense's images on their channels. In these posts, there are comments like "there will be a game of heroes in the sky".

The video of the athletes in celebration also became a symbol because it began to represent the event itself, the actors themselves present. Obviously, in this case, many images of the place of the accident, moments before the plane crash, the collective funeral and burial were broadcast, but the images of the happy athletes were added on TV reports, generating a proliferation of shares on social networks. Then, it is not about denying the existence of other images but immortalizing the soccer players as heroes through a unanimous reiteration. This reiteration is an example of the social phagia and also of the media phagia⁶ because in this event one referred to the other.

6 The media phagia, according to Rosa (2016a), is one in which journalistic media institutions use the content produced by social actors or non-media institutions, but which are adequate according to the framework of journalism.

It happens that this unison, therefore, this convention established by the process of valorization of these images, has also occurred in multiple *dispositifs*, from the non-media institution to social actors intermediately and inter-systems. In this way, the consolidation of the athletes as warriors, heroes of the country, prevents opposing or tensioning constructions such as those that claim that it was opportunism, including of journalistic institutions for the audience, since before the tragedy the club from Santa Catarina, Brazil, had no national visibility. In addition to traditional journalism, attention has been drawn to the posts of portal *Catraca Livre*, a humor news site that covered the event with headlines such as “Soccer players doing selfie” and “10 photos of people on their last day of life”. The portal’s authors have been harshly criticized because the images of joy and celebration have been used in another way, trying to break with the eternity of the heroes. These alternative productions were prevented from circulating, vetoed by comments from social actors such as “In homage to the deceased in the accident of the Chapecoense and their relatives, I reject the *Catraca Livre*”. This reinforces the idea that the meaning of Chapecoense’s image has been armored, as well as that of Aylan Kurdi, to steady the first image. This transcends the object it represents and appeals to the deep social bonds; therefore, configuring itself into symbol and totem.

With regard to semiosis, in this case, we have found that circulation also potentializes or stimulates the production of meanings, since the play between production and recognition is a consequence of a mental creation based on previous signs. The definition of the athletes as heroes refers to the country of football, the lack of national heroes, the pain of loss; these elements also generate a belonging. They were players of a club, but that, from their death, are collectively immortalized. It is noteworthy that, just as in the case of the Chapecoense’s accident, in which

other previous accidents with football teams have been remembered, the image of the athletes' celebration before the final of the South American Cup presents a symbolic force, which fixes the image in the collective imaginary, from the valuation strategies that have been used.

To ratify the power of this image, the club Atlético Nacional de Medellín with which Chapecoense would dispute the final of the cup, reproduced the same scene after the victory over Club Deportivo Los Millonarios, on December 03, 2016, in homage to the Brazilian players. The tribute (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PYxQIAf7eQ> and on other channels) translates the media self-reference to the first image, now imitational.

4. Final considerations: who lives longer, men or symbols?

The cases we are examining in this article have points in common: both are figurativeness of tragedies; their images had been substantially inserted into circulation, both intra, and inter-media, as well as articulating systems such as the broadcast and that of mediatized social actors. From our point of view that circulation is a relation of value attribution, it is evident that both production and recognition enable exchanges, establish points of contact from the moment they co-produce the social meaning together. Aylan Kurdi's images or the commemoration of Chapecoense's athletes are made accessible, in different configurations, but both are valued, derivating circuits, always in terms of interactions.

Journalistic photography or the recorded video are elaborated, today, for the *agencement* of new flows in circulation. That is, it is already part of the logic of the production itself that the image finds a space of dispute, circulation, where it will be valued by social actors and journalistic institutions on media *dispositifs* that they use

and share. Aylan Kurdi's image was made to be available and distributed by news agencies. On the other hand, Chapecoense's video is the result of a work of the club, what demonstrates the mastery of the logic of mediatization during the tragedy. In both situations, the first image acquires an ample potential of visibility, determining its proliferation.

Returning to the initial question: what processuality does allow that the image be configured in a symbol from its circulation? The answer is not so simple, but we can infer that the image only becomes a symbol when it is valued. After being chosen through several factors, among them the quality of the image, the emotional appeal, and the capacity to activate endogenous images, it is perceivable that the symbol of an event is configured since the moment in which strategies of production, consumption, in various media *dispositifs*, do derivate from its permanence in circulation. Thus, the image appears and is offered, being revalued immediately in the interaction, in the dialogue between journalistic institutions and social actors. This image belongs to the sphere of the media, being replicated in circularity, even if it is next to texts that present other meanings. This relation of an eternal presence, even before the material absence, leads to a restriction of other images, which coexist, but which, because of their rupture character, are denied.

We consider here that this restriction leads to totem-images, therefore, to the impediment of competitive images, since the former emanate a social bond, links of belonging, just as the totem of the primitive tribes also carried it. It is not a matter of considering these symbolic images as religious or a form of cult, but, to some extent, they have a value of exposure that sacralizes them. Both images, that of the boy and that of Chapecoense's team, become self-referential, that is, the remission is made to the autonomous images and not to the facts themselves.

We observe the establishment of a social convention around the image, manifested in the scope of media *dispositifs*. This imaginary convention, however, intensifies semiosis, since it allows new connections and meanings because semiosis is infinite.

In this scenario, we identify another similarity between the two cases analyzed here: the fact that both portray death, the dead body. Aylan Kurdi is the death in the image and through the image if we think that photography is the “rise of doubles and the fall of bodies”, as Debroy affirms. Chapecoense’s video tries to keep alive a dead body as if the double could avoid or postpone death. It is a question of thinking: does the image of the ‘dead body’ accentuate the possibility of becoming fixed as a belief? If we observe that the significant body, in both situations, was explored as a synthesis of the events and a visual metaphor, we can consider that death assumes a relevant status as a criterion of newsworthiness. There are children who can make the crossing to Europe, there are players who survived the accident, but their power as an image does not take effect. Do living bodies mean less than dead ones? Dietmar Kamper (2016) indicates that new imaging procedures have changed our relationship with the body; this is surely one of the reflexes of mediatization. The author (2016, p. 72) alerts the transformation of the body into an image of the body that denies this difference. “The imaginary thus produced ... replaces bodies in their reality and lets them become inexorably virtual. [...] Those who despise the body transformed into an image also mistreats the real bodies.”⁷

In this way, the images of the corpses, here, are the actual dead bodies per se. If we deny them, we will put into question the pain of the Syrian children or the families of the soccer players, but more than that, we will deny

7 From the original: “O imaginário assim produzido [...] substitui os corpos em sua realidade e deixa que eles se tornem inexoravelmente virtuais. [...] Aquele que despreza o corpo transformado em imagem maltrata também os corpos reais”.

our own condition. “Under the assumption of modernity, man is literally a producer in panic of images.”⁸ The panic mentioned by Kamper (2016, p. 74) is the impossibility of escaping from images as they nurture the imaginary. The great difference between the living and the dead body is that in the first case concrete times and places and the experience of feeling is needed. In the second, what we highlight is the distance. The dead body, as well as resorting to Christian imagery, is a model that penetrates perception. Thus, a dichotomy takes place: images of living bodies are produced to postpone death; images of the dead circulate to valorize life. There lies the challenge of the posthumous life of images transformed into symbols, which remain to wander on media spaces.

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8 From the original: “Sob o pressuposto da modernidade, o homem é literalmente um produtor em pânico de imagens.”

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THIRD PART – RELIGION AND MEDIATIZATION

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Medialization, post-neo-Protestant spirit, and ethics of “affective” capitalism

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Abstract: The post-neo-Protestant ethics that is evident in post-apartheid, post-Soviet, and post-Christian societies – but not only, is the ethics of neo-Protestantism that has been remodeled in the context of generalized relativism and the liquidity of institutions (Bauman, 2013) through the phenomenon of medialization (Bratosin, 2016). From these observations, this article hypothesizes that post-neo-Protestant ethics is based on behavior that, leaving little room for critical thinking (Paul; Binker, 1990; King, Kitchener, 1994; Fisher, Scriven, 1997), opens the way to the economy of affection. The article, to test this hypothesis, is based on a comparative approach between the communication strategies of faith in the public space and the new economic procedures of influence for-

matted by medialization as an interactive model of public communication. The analysis follows, in this way, a Weberian “inverted” view, the contribution of the sense coming from the religious with impact on the orientation of the economic activity.

Keywords: Affective capitalism. Communication of faith. Liquid society. Medialization. Post-neo-Protestant spirit.

Introduction

“The Protestant Ethics” formulated by Weber (WEBER, 1904, 1905) corresponds to the ethics of a Protestantism revisited in favor of the rationalism that Troeltsch (TROELTSCH, 1912) will call by the term “neo-Calvinism”. More accurately, the ethics about which Weber speaks is the one of a new Protestantism that starts its socio-political maturation at the beginning of the twentieth century, and which is in evident rupture with the “old Protestantism”, in Weber’s own terms: “The old Protestantism of Luther, Calvin, Knox, Voet had nothing to do with what we now call ‘progress’” (WEBER, 2013, p. 22). Therefore, when Comaroff and Comaroff in their “neo-Protestant ethics” perceive the signs of a new Protestant ethic and a new spirit of capitalism that make sense in the context of the globalization of the twenty-first century (COMAROFF, 2012, p. 77), they point, in fact, toward what we should call, and what I call, post-neo-Protestant ethics. This post-neo-Protestant ethics that is manifest in post-apartheid, post-Soviet, post-Christian societies – but not only, is the ethics of neo-Protestantism that has been remodeled in the context of generalized relativism and the liquidity of institutions (BAUMAN, 2013) through the phenomenon of medialization (BRATOSIN, 2016).

From these observations, I make the hypothesis that the post-neo-Protestant ethics is ethics founded on behavior that, leaving little room for critical thinking

(PAUL; BINKER, 1990; KING; KITCHENER, 1994; FISHER; SCRIVEN, 1997) opens the way to the economy of affection. In order to test this hypothesis, the article is based on a comparative approach between the communication strategies of faith in the public space and the new economic procedures of influence formatted by medialization as an interactive model of public communication. The analysis follows, in this way, a Weberian “inverted” view, the contribution of the sense coming from the religious with impact on the orientation of the economic activity. As for the return of the results, it will be done in two moments. At first, I will highlight the virtuality (LÉVY, 1995) of new emotional ethics in the symbolic places of the meaning production of the new evangelization in the conditions of a post-neo-Protestant instinctive reaction, induced by the media *dispositifs* used by the communication of faith. Then, in a second moment, I will discuss the socio-cultural and economic-political updates of the post-neo-Protestant ethical action in the processes of capitalization of emotions.

From the medialization of the faith adapted to the felt needs for virtualization (virtuality) of ethics of instinctive reaction

The neo-Protestant evangelization and the Catholics “new evangelization” have an obvious commonplace: the medialization of faith adapted to the felt needs. This empirical observation owes to the phenomenological community two evidences: a) neo-Protestant preaching that “wants to be a message to the heart [...] insists on the experiences and [...] wants to meet the needs felt by the listeners” (BOUTINON, 2012), and (b) the clear mobilization of the Vatican, which “sees a deep self-centered attention, focused only on individual needs” and develops a “culture of the ephemeral, the immediate, the appearance,

that is, a society incapable of having a memory and a future” – asks Catholics

to have the audacity to participate in the new Areopagus, learning to give an evangelical evaluation, finding the instruments and methods that can be heard in these places, which are also today the educational and knowledge heritage, preserved in the Christian tradition” (GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, 2012, 31-32).

The question, therefore, of distinguishing between the current neo-Protestant evangelization and the Catholic “new evangelization” is – at least in this perspective – not only useless, but methodologically counterproductive because, in the process of medialization, these two evangelizations become a single and common body as well as way trans-organizational, trans-confessional or even trans-religious to live the faith that I called post-neo-Protestantism (BRATOSIN, 2016, 416).

This new way of living the faith corresponds, according to the increasing evidence, to a new ethics adapted “to the measure” – in favor of the new technologies of information and communication – to “frame” through a particular questioning the instinctive reaction of Christians and religious structures in their current practices of communicating faith in the public space (BRATOSIN; TUDOR, 2015). To explain this process, I will first consider the principal symbolic places of the production of meaning of post-neo-Protestant evangelization and then return to the virtuality generated by the foundations of this ethics of instinctive reaction.

First, we note that in post-neo-Protestantism the kerygmatic testimony, through its medialization, is put at the service of the development of a collective intelligence, and the fact of sharing the Gospel on digital social networks becomes a form of sharing of prerogatives of the

Church, with all the people who make it live by faith or lack of faith, a kind of dissemination of institutional power where the ethical reference of preaching is the personal intuition of the Christian:

One day, an idea came to me that I could evangelize through Facebook because I could not really do it, even if, somehow, I do it in my work through catechism. My Facebook evangelism goes through regular Bible passages or songs I write about the daytime liturgy.

These passages are not chosen at random; I choose them because of the effect they have on me. I did not wonder if what I was doing was good or not; I was mainly following my intuition that it was necessary to do it without knowing why (PORÈS, 2016).

This Dominican model of digitalization of the kerygma is a post-neo-Protestant preaching lesson that rests on eight centuries of experience and illustrates one of the most complex and at the same time sensitive forms of dissemination of institutional power. That said, logically, in the age of medialization, instinctive responsiveness is the dominant paradigm of communicative action in our societies. In this context, we understand that digital preaching can only be an advance of the Church and not a disadvantage, and even less a supplement or replacement of the kerygma:

For a growing number of Christians, online church has become what TV preachers were to some Christians in the 70s and 80s who decided Sunday morning viewing at home was better than participating in a local church. Too tired or disengaged to go on Sunday? Just watch online. Watching an online church will become far less of a sup-

plement or replacement and far more of an advance into the lives of people who don't attend church at all. Churches will get innovative and more intentional about reaching out into their communities using digital options at a point of first contact with unchurched people. Think about it: everybody who wasn't in your church last Sunday is probably on Facebook. And everybody who wasn't in your church last Sunday is probably online. So go connect with them. More than ever in 2016, online church will begin to open a door into the lives of people who will never walk through yours (NIEUWHOF, 2016).

These examples, which can get multiplied, show that, in the post-neo-Protestantism, the content and form of preaching, as well as the physical presence of the Christian in an assemblage, are no longer decisive elements for the Christian's moral profile. The ability of instinctive responsiveness related to the use of new information and communication technologies shifts the decisive emphasis from ethical behavior to emotion management regarding the kerygma, since the "emotions express our assessment of a situation and they try to influence this situation by means that are socially available to us" (RIIS; WOODHEAD, 2010, p. 6).

A second main moment in which the neo-Protestant ethics take shape, under the "pressure" exerted by the instinctive reaction of Christians and the structures linked to the communication strategies of faith in the public space, is the digital articulation between the charismatic renewal that inflamed Christianity in the second half of the twentieth century and the development of social networks on the Internet. The instantaneous, and often viral, character of the medialization of the experience of individual or community faith induces manifestly influ-

ential behaviors through conviction forces to implement not only a way of living the faith but also an institutionally legitimate way of protecting oneself from the aggressiveness and the violence of the organizational functioning of the religious framework, in a clear decalage with the actuality of the inevitable social experience of the Christian of the twenty-first century. I will give, here, two of the most striking examples: “Brian Welch and Morgan Priest: these outlaw evangelists who transform us and challenge us” (LA RÉDACTION, 2016). As soon as Brian Welch interrogated the “fanatic” Christians who desperately try to cancel Hellfest¹, he gives an ethical answer:

Everyone, here, on Earth, has a choice. God gave everyone a choice to live the way they want to live! So, no one will change anything by trying to push people to live in a certain way. You cannot do that. You cannot change people. I would just say that if they get offended, they should not go there. Just stay away. Go do what you like! But do not [he imitates the people who scream] ‘I hate heavy metal! I hate what you do!’ Cause that gives the impression that Jesus is, Himself, like that. But he does not hate anyone; He hates the sin, He loves the person. I think, in this way, that the fanatics are completely wrong because everyone can choose, and they can do what they want out of their lives and their bodies, and everything (MARDIROSSIAN, 2016)².

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- 1 Heavy Metal Festival in Europe. Therefore, the reference to the term metal, in the quote below.
- 2 From the original: “Tout le monde ici sur terre a le choix. Dieu a donné à tous le choix de vivre comme ils veulent vivre! Donc personne ne changera rien en essayant de pousser les gens à vivre d’une certaine façon. Tu ne peux pas le faire. Tu ne peux pas changer les gens. Je dirais juste que, s’ils sont offensés, ils ne devraient juste pas venir là-bas. Simplement, restez à l’écart! Allez faire votre propre truc! Mais ne faites pas [il

Hence the Info Chrétienne's³ question-answer: "Today: Who can evangelize desperate young people in Gothic groups? Morgan Priest and his friends. Who can testify of God among the heavy metal bands in HellFest? Brian Welsh" (The Editor, 2016). In the post-neo-Protestant perspective, charismatic action does not correspond to a movement that responds to a need to renew the forms of isolation between the "walls" of the religious institution, whatever it may be. Charismatic post-neo-Protestant action is the expression of a spiritual current that partakes of the particular gifts of the Holy Spirit given for the common good (1 Corinthians 12: 7). It is the promoter of exchanges between irreconcilable personalities, "naturally" incompatible cultures, conflicting generations, and between practices that get excluded. It accommodates ethics to the instinctive reaction making "normal" the frequenting of who or what otherwise is not appropriate to attend. It is the firm ally, no matter what the price to pay, of the unstable, complex, and diversified "new normal". The post-neo-Protestant charismatic action revisits the sense of communion, taking the opposite path, that is, not the path that leads to the Church to find a community, but the one that parts of the Church to fulfill its mission elsewhere – site, blog, channel of digital TV, etc. – in the community of Christians of this "other place".

In fact, the medialization that liberates the drive reaction deviates the interest of the Christian of the Church as an institution or organization and concentrates it in the community as a network. The reason is simple. While the Church is a construction given to the Christian

imite des gens qui crient] 'Je déteste le metal! Je déteste ce que vous faites!' Car ça donne l'impression que Jésus est lui-même comme ça. Mais il ne déteste personne. Il déteste le péché, il aime la personne. Je pense donc que les fanatiques ont complètement tort, car tout le monde a le choix et ils peuvent faire ce qu'ils veulent de leur vie et de leur corps et tout" (Mardirossian, 2016).

3 Info Chrétienne is an interfaith media that aims to mobilize Christians.

in the more or less explicit condition that he obeys the rules of a dogmatic moral preexistence, in order to participate in communion – the communion of the saints –; the post-neo-Protestant community is a co-construction, done by the institution and by the Christian at the same time, according to the affective needs and emotional expectations, producing a pragmatic ethics of the medialized social ties:

One of the major challenges the Christian preacher faces in the digital culture is to call people from isolation and separation into community and communion. The preacher today has to make a case for why coming together as a community in a real physical place and time is good in and of itself. It is not a matter of merely addressing the “I am spiritual but not religious” trend but also of demonstrating the necessity of conscious and intentional participation in a proper Christian community that is right for each person. This is a great challenge, and it is one that is often difficult to resolve as knowledge, distance and time (to name only a few factors) get in the way. Often, I find all that I can do is point people in the right direction, ask for some help in the “com box” and above all, pray for them (COYNE, 2016).

The accomplishment of the Christian community in post-neo-Protestantism is a co-construction, assuredly because the means and materials, from the Christian and the institution, are constitutive, under the same title, of the Christian community, but it is also a co-construction because it is the product of a more or less tacitly for a “custom-made” validation of the religious sense of good and evil, which is not in rupture with the actuality of the social sense of ethical action of the man in movement. The

post-neo-Protestant Christian community is a co-imagined form of religious existence in order to institutionalize those changes whose rapidity is such that “classical” institutional structures cannot control them. It is a social space but at the same time a spiritual space in every sense of the term. It resembles a particular form of ethnoscape (APPADURAI, 2001) imagined “in order to preserve the stress inherent in very radical contact with other cultures, other climates, and other habits. This could be through a way of life [...] that allowed developing a faculty of establishing affective and effective relations with the people coming from different cultures, another through the communication tools”(LE BOUGNOULOSOPHE, 2007), and communion. In the post-neo-Protestant Christian community, communion is not only an experience but also a vision of faith shaped by media techniques that make possible and legitimate the instinctive reaction of the moving Christian.

The post-neo-Protestant view of faith is that of transmitting the emotions and curiosity of the human being who at one point in his/her life lived an evangelical experience of what is called “meeting God” or “not meeting God”. It is, more exactly, not the imaginary, but the emotional expression of the medialized acting of the instinctive reaction of each person, Christian or not, when considering his/her life project in relation to the spiritual, intellectual, and material mobilization in missionary activity. The dynamic of this vision is not that of the dispersion or diffusion of a religious message whose result cannot be different from the act of believing, but the attraction exerted by the certainty of experience, therefore, by the evident economy of the requirement to believe and all that this implies. As a consequence, the post-neo-Protestant view of faith generates and validates ethical behaviors that do not necessarily participate in the obedience or education of the sound practice of modesty and, still less, of virtuous experience, cultivating the nobility of discretion. Ethi-

cal behaviors, molded by the post-neo-Protestant view of faith, come into agreement with the pastoral demand to extend to each Christian, associating spiritual fervor and effective pragmatism. Behaviors are less concerned with theology than with the trans-disciplinarity of the communication sciences and with the management of diversity that composes the Christian community in a context of individualization of the cognitive experience of faith.

The INSTE (“Institute of Theology for Extension”) training program for Christian life, created in 1982 in Spain by an American teacher, and spread by the Open Bible Standard Churches Pentecostal Association, headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa, is one of the earliest examples that have since been seen in many other variations in various churches: “This program identifies five levels of communication, from shallow prefabricated communication to ‘total communication’ (the ideal level for any couple to reach’). The fourth level, the ‘communication of emotions’, is the one that must be reached among the coreligionists and the one who allows ‘the Word of God to leave a trail and change lives’”(VENDITTI, VENDITTI, 1996, p. 284). In their horizontal relations (between coreligionists) and vertical (with God), Christians are therefore invited to achieve a communicative ideal that includes the expression of the intimate emotions from which their personal salvation depends. This relational paradigm refers to a representation of the interpersonal and social relations that avoids the notion of objective conflict of interests and defends dialogue, transparent communication, as a means of resolving conflicts”(ibid., p. 251). The logic behind the post-neo-Protestant view of faith is that “the more the belief becomes individualized, the more it becomes homogeneous; the more the belief becomes homogeneous, the more the circulation of Christians accelerates; the more the circulation of Christians accelerates, the more ‘communitarian’ pressure gets reinforced” (HERVIEU-LÉGER, 2001,

p.87), in favor of “innovative, standard spiritual products” trans-confessional, adapted to the “massive development of communication that allows the planetary enlargement of games of mutual validation” (ibid., p. 93). In the deepest part of this argument lies the original sense of the fluidity of the post-neo-Protestant ethics because medialization is little structuring in itself, – “the request for validation of belief can then be directed to other, much more structuring forms of religious communality, in which the security of a code of shared sense can be found and proven collectively” (ibid., p. 93).

But the sensitive fluidity of the post-neo-Protestant ethics is reinforced by the very way in which the mission of the Christian and the post-neo-Protestant institution is conceived. This mission is based on acceptance of failure and on the promotion of learning. More precisely, the main missionary task of the Christian and of the entire post-neo-Protestant environment is not to provide lessons, but rather to learn, that is, to get moved. Hence the incisive character of the new evangelization which, therefore, remains relatively free from the “classical” or “traditional” practices of religious proselytism. The historical specificity of the post-neo-Protestant mission is in a reversal of meaning in the management of the faith with ethical consequences, often controversial according to the organizational cultures of religious institutions.

This specificity consists of a “letting go,” in a confidence given to the collective intelligence of a world where the “natural” medialization of what is affective and daily allows the religious institution to achieve its original mission without losing its characteristic, accepting the risk of dilution of its authority, since, in principle, this “let go” is favorable to it. As an example, let us note the confirmation of needs and the response given to the needs felt by the Church of England, a church that occupies an intermediary position between Catholicism and Protestantism:

The advent of social media has moved digital communications on from web based broadcast communications to two-way interactive dialogue. Churches, cathedrals, clergy and lay people across the country are using social media as a part of community building and growth strategies. Digital provides a growing opportunity for original, high quality digital content from the centre of the Church of England to enable social and digital communications across the church, enabling all to become digital evangelists in proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. [...] We will create a basis for digital apologetics, enabling individuals with the digital materials and resources to present their faith confidently (<<https://www.churchofengland.org/renewal-reform/evangelism-witness/digital-evangelism.aspx>>).

This observation shows that, more than anything else, the medialization of the symbolic places of production of a sense of faith – kerygma, charisma, community, communion, vision, mission – now irrevocably and in an assumed way, play the role of performative agent of transformation of these traditional places of today’s closed ethics in unlimited spaces, of virtualization of a post-neo-Protestant ethics of the instinctive reaction of Christians and implicitly responsible religious structures, aiming to deploy public communication strategies of faith. It is an ethics that, in the sense of the Fichtean drive (FICHTE, 1986), is a media expression of “nothingness”, which gives credibility to the faith, an ethics of mediatized reception of the factual encounter not only with the unpredictable but also the impossible, an ethics of the transformation, through the media, of the crisis of the religious institution into a personal religious crisis of the Christian. It is the incarnation of the post-neo-Protestant thought, which

places in the center of interest, not the social project, as neo-Protestantism before, but the emotions that can promote this project as a product of faith. According to this post-neo-Protestant thought, the functioning of the world – including economic – is neither rational nor irrational, but just emotional. Driven ontologically by the medialization of faith adapted to the needs felt, post-neo-Protestant morality induces a paradigm shift in the social production of the ethical sense, under the background of a media reconsideration of “the functionings ... of the relations between space practices and signifiers” (DE CERTEAU, 1990, p. 158): the “good” and the “just” correspond now to what is a) memorable, that is, to what is experience historically transformable in material traces, b) believable, that is, not necessarily to what is true, but to what is desirable as a compromise, and c) primordial, that is, to what can be ordered by a *sine qua non* exclusivity. More accurately, unlike the neo-Protestant “good” and “righteous” that were, in fact, fraternal appropriations of cognitive propositions, the post-neo-Protestant “good” and “fair” are constructive participation (BEAN; MERK, 2007) for interactive scenarios.

From the virtualization of the post-neo-Protestant ethics to the medialization of the spirit of “affective” capitalism

The virtualization of the post-neo-Protestant ethics, like any virtualization, requires an actualization, because “the virtual is like the complex problem, the knot of tendencies or forces that accompany a situation, an event, an object, or any entity and calls a process of resolution: the update [...] creation, invention of a form from a dynamic configuration of forces and purposes. Something different happens from the attribution of reality to a possible or a choice between a predetermined set: a pro-

duction of new qualities, a transformation of ideas, a true becoming that feeds, in turn, the virtual” (LEVY, 1998, p. 14-15). More precisely, the updating called by virtue of the post-neo-Protestant ethics in the field of twenty-first century economics feeds the medialization of the affective capitalism spirit” (HARDT, 1999; ILLOUZ, 2006; PRADA, 2006a) and takes shape in the main symbolic places of production of practical meanings by the “evangelists” of the post-neo-Protestant economic communication. It is facilitated by the fact that

affectivity points towards the virtuality of the world, its potential of being for the subject, for its own existence, by indicating to him/her that it is not a complete part of reality. It requires a permanent excess or exteriorisation of the individual, which must go beyond him/herself, proven by all of his/her inclinations for the others in the world or for things, by his/her propensity to love. It is a primordial point of connection between the outside and the inside, between individuality and sociability. Affective syntax, shared affection, is the elementary basis for real interaction between people. There is a profound dependency between affectivity and interactivity, in the depth of what “being in touch” means (PRADA, 2006b).

My analysis will address, in this chapter, this current process that we call ‘virtualization’ (of marketing, publicity, and public relations) regarding the memorable, credible, and primordial specific of the myth-religious thinking.

The interference between mercantile thinking and myth-religious thinking is not a novelty either as a social phenomenon or in terms of scientific studies. The “Two Treatises on Government,” published by John Locke in

1690, as well as the “Theory of Moral Sentiments,” signed in 1789 by Adam Smith, are striking illustrations of these interferences. What, however, is specific to these mutual interferences observed between the worlds of religion and economy in the late twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century is, on the one hand, the change from organizational identity toward the affective as an ontological component of the human being and, on the other hand, the fact that this displacement is provoked and carried out by a technological revolution, undoubtedly incomplete, but almost certainly irreversible, that is, the digitization. It is a valid specificity not only for the impressive number of multi or interdisciplinary studies but also for the trans-disciplinarity of results reported in the literature on the subject. Thus, texts such as “The Framework for Understanding the Relationships between Religions and Markets” (MITTELSTAEDT, 2002), “Religions of Modernity Relocating the Sacred to the Self and the Digital” (AUPERS; HOUTMAN, 2010), “Les marques sont-elles de postmodern relics? Regard sur les nouveaux objets sacrés” (DUFOUR, 2011), “Marketing Religion Online: The LDS Church’s SEO Efforts” (CHEN, 2011), “Media, Religion and the Marketplace in the Information Economy: Evidence from Singapore” (POON et al, 2012), are just some illustrative samples of this literature.

This specificity that oscillates between ideology and religion is a kind of answer in the form of a question and a question in the form of an answer. More precisely, from now on with marketing, publicity, public relations, and other forms of communication that a material or immaterial object can elicit, not only strategic communication places of organizations but also, and above all, the symbolic places derived from the generalized digitization and the “mediatization of everything” aimed to the liquid society conquered by the post-neo-Protestant ethics to medialize the spirit of an “affective” capitalism. This

is what is observable, for example, not only in marketing products but also in the own discourse of the marketing world about the marketing. In these discourses, emotion appears as the privileged place of the articulation between marketing and memory, a relationship that gets further reinforced in a digital context:

By leading the consumer to feel powerful emotions, a brand prints its name to iron and fire in the memory of its potential customers. [...] By always conveying the same emotion a brand goes even further because it associates itself in the consumer's spirit with the emotions felt. [...] Entering emotional marketing within your digital marketing strategy allows you to increase your traffic, your ability to engage, and your prominence. This was observed markedly in the context of blogs. Emotional article titles that touch the emotional string earn more shares on social networks than others, which: a) gives your brand web visibility, and b) generates traffic spikes on your site. The phenomenon is logical: netizens will not share content that left them indifferent. However, they will be interested in presenting to their own communities the content that let them enthusiastic or curious (DE VERGNETTE, 2016).

But emotional marketing does not present only privileged relationships with the memorable. In practice, it joins with the believable and the primordial to the point that professionals come to think of "promotion" in terms of "evangelization":

For many years, the concept of marketing in companies comes down to a classic formula called '4 P': Product + Price + Place + Promotion. Now with the revolutionary advent

of new technologies (Internet and social networks) and the growing role of relational and communication factors, great marketing thinkers are now talking about the formula called “4 E”. The young people who constitute the new generation of our companies are completely impregnated by this formula: ‘Product >>> Experience (what experience will I have?) Price >>> Exchange (I give and I receive!) Place >>> Everywhere (I do not care where it comes from!) Promotion >>> Evangelization (everyone is talking about it!)’ (Synergia PME Consulting Group, 2014). To think of ‘promotion’ as a kind of ‘evangelization’ is not an extension of ‘information and communication’ capitalism but a practical transformation of its ‘emotional’ functioning, a real change that goes beyond variations in content. It is a question of substituting fear and mistrust for a democratized operation of trust and joy in favor of the announcements of good news according to the founding model of the Gospel: ‘Do not be afraid, for I bring you good news, shall be a joy to all the people’ (Luke 2:10).

For advertising professionals, the penetration of the memorable, believable and primordial religious on the path of emotion is related to the very mission of the profession as a priestly commitment, says Stéphane Abitbol, founder and general manager of S’cape Event, which for three years was the agency of the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy:

Provoking emotion is an engagement of the S’cape Event agency in the corporate and institutional communications market with public sector expertise and protocol man-

agement knowledge for 15 years. We are an agency on a human scale, for large accounts, companies, ministries, public, and non-public nongovernmental organizations [...] Our job is to accompany our clients to make them live and carry their messages to their different targets, internal and external, playing with emotion, which is a powerful factor of memorization and is translated by the interest of the participant in each event. We make emotional communication around a strong moment by capitalizing upstream and downstream of the event. And our clients never stop encouraging us in our conviction that the meaning of our work is to provoke emotion (BAZILLER, 2015).

In fact, what today characterizes the production of advertising is the solid with which it can invest in a society fluidized by technology and especially by digital dematerialization. This solid of convenience, certainly, but solid even if it is not necessarily a question of technique but of the professionals' conviction, is reinforced by the ad recipient's experience:

Originally, advertising discourses could be summed up as follows: 'Buy my product, because it is the best.' Over time, the image has gained importance and this speech has been transformed to become: 'Buy my product because it is the coolest.' The importance of emotion and experience has further transformed the plot of discourse that could now be summed up: 'Buy my product because it offers the best experience'" (MILLET, 2015).

In this way, the logic of post-neo-Protestant ethics induces new rationality in decision-making in "affective" capitalism. It is no longer the actual quality of the product

that is determinant in decision-making but the quality of the experience that the decision-maker himself may experience, thanks to the advertised product, to the point that even receiving the ad will not escape zapping, if it is not considered a ritual that encompasses the senses, and plunges the recipient into an experience at the borders of pure mysticism. It is not insignificant to say that some agencies present themselves as “an agency of emotional communication, (which) conceives and executes operations and media communication support where the emotional dimension allow the memorization of the messages that wish to convey the marks and the companies, because emotional memory is the most powerful (ACHAK, 2016, ap. BIRIBIN).

In the area of public relations, the reflexive and virtual discourse of the post-neo-Protestant ethics appears, however, even more illustrative as to the effective power of emotional memory. Here, memory, the credible and the primordial merge into what is now called “emotional intelligence” (GOLEMAN, 2006):

If you take a sample of the best public relations professionals in the business, they all have one thing in common – emotional intelligence. The ability to perceive the emotions of others and make wise judgments makes the difference between a good and great professional (FLETCHER, 2012).

But emotional intelligence is not a simple passive criterion that distinguishes between good and excellent professionals in public relations. Indeed, the near-wide-spread use of new media in the field of public relations, which opens the technical pathway to the virtualization

of the post-neo-Protestant ethics, shows that emotional intelligence plays a primordial active role on two levels:

1) in the cultural adequacy of public relations to the content made available to the public through social media – “With the growing demands of clients and the media that never sleeps, EQ begins to take a more prominent and significant role in the Public Relations (PR) Industry. Clients are engrossed in their social media presence and how they appear to the public” (Eastwest, 2016) – and 2) in the technological transformation of public relations, given the process of digitalization of emotion that public relations can no longer despise⁴.

The use of social media in public relations is not an end in itself of the “affective” capitalism, much less a capitalist media solution to the virtualization of the post-neo-Protestant ethics. No, the medialization of the spirit of “affective” capitalism is not the passive product of the process of producing meaning through the media. Nor is it a simple mechanics of communication techniques, reported in economic reports on the availability of media content. It is fundamentally the economic algorithm that shapes or informs the contents of the media in the spatiotemporal and digital context of virtualization of the post-neo-Protestant ethics. More precisely, the mediatization of the “affective” capitalism as an update of the virtuality of post-Protestant ethics.

it is not content to reconstitute resources
or to put a form at the disposal of a mecha-

4 “Computer science and emotions are two notions that have nothing in common. However, the relationships created by these two concepts are numerous. The realization and interpretation of emotional signals by the machine. The consideration of the emotional variations of the user. The simulation of emotions in the machine. We are moving towards an ever deeper understanding between man and machine. It is in this sense that the work of an information architect is directed, the facilitation of the use of technologies by human beings. This work includes the variations of the emotions and the consideration of the differences (HERTZOG; BULET-HERBAULT, 2014).

nism of realization. No: the update invents a form. It creates radically new information. We have an efficient causality on the side of the update because the worker, the sculptor, the demiurge if he/she is living and thinking, is never reduced to a mere performer: he/she interprets, improvises, solves problems. The temporality of the update is that of the process. In addition to the inclination of entropy, and its upstream feedback (potentialization), the creative time of the update draws a story, it gives the reader an adventure of meaning, constantly put back into play (HOUDOY, 2008).

This story is one of the most powerful and widespread post-neo-Protestant myths, constructed at the confluence of two adventures of the memorable, credible, and primordial sense – ontologically speaking – of the economy of the twenty-first century: participatory religious marriage uniting the ethics of emancipated and ennobled hackers, thanks to their conversion to Christianity (SPADARO, 2012), and the ethics of journalistic emotion enslaved and dishonored for its pious obedience to the laws of the market (CHAR, 2005).

Conclusion

Through the medialization of faith adapted to the needs felt, the post-neo-Protestantism asserts itself as a movement of not only religious but also socio-economic thinking that turns its back on the gospel of prosperity to promote the emotional experience in the common historicity of the daily event not as a promise but as a lifestyle based on the immediate and personal experience of emotions. The medialization of the faith adapted to the felt needs, therefore, necessarily activates, by the nature of its substance, a virtualization of the ethics of the instinctive reaction, that is, of the post-neo-Protestant ethics.

This virtualization has three main consequences with socio-economic orientation. First, it unleashes and accompanies the displacement in the capitalist spirit of the performative role “that is central, persistent, and distinctive in the character of an organization” (ALBERT; WHETTEN, 1985; CHÉDOTELE, 2004), that is, the organizational identity towards the affection as an ontological component of the human being in favor of the digitization.

The second consequence of the virtualization of the post-neo-Protestant ethic of the instinctive reaction is that in its sequence it brings to the capitalist spirit a reversion of the sense of the symbolic efficiency in the exercise of economic power, since, henceforth, it is no longer the religion that welcomes the symbolism of capitalism, but, on the contrary, it is the capitalism that takes advantage of the symbolic places of religion. Finally, the third main consequence of this virtualization is strategic in nature because it marks the capitalist spirit for the soteriological sense of Christianity, whose manifestation is the fact that in order to achieve economic objectives it is no longer a matter of putting man at the center of the socioeconomic activity but to put oneself in the man’s place emotionally in search of spiritual and material fulfillment. In the logic of the very principle of virtualization, all these consequences contribute to the medicalization of the spirit of the “affective” capitalism.

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Mediatization, North, and South: Highlights and outlines in Brazilian and Anglo-Saxon Research¹

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Abstract: The concept of mediatization gains increasing importance as a theoretical-methodological operator in Communication research. However, the objects or processes referred by it seem to be objects of dissent. From a bibliographical examination, two aspects of this diversity are explored, focusing on the definitions formulated

1 The genesis of this text deserves a comment. Since its inception in 2010, it has been the subject of partial publications, in modified versions and in different formats. It has been revised, changed, had its premises discussed in events and presentations. It has been thought and rewritten several times. This is its first post in the full version. The defining moment for its elaboration in the present form was the opportunity to participate in the I International Seminar on Mediatization and Social Practices, held in December 2016 at Unisinos, one of the main academic production spaces on the notion of mediatization. I thank professors Ana Paula da Rosa, José Luiz Braga, Antonio Fausto Neto, Pedro Gilberto Gomes, and Jairo Ferreira for the invitation, welcome and productive dialogue at that and other times.

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in Anglo-Saxon academic space punctuated by intersections with the Brazilian production: (a) the genealogy of the concept indicates a wide range of uses since its origin; (b) the contemporary divergence between the centrality of the medium and the process of relations. Finally, we suggest that (c) this diversity may be an indicator of the vitality of the concept.

Keywords: Communication Theory. Mediatization. Epistemology. Concepts.

Introduction

The concept of mediatization has been the subject of growing research within media and communication research. From the beginning of the year 2000, there is a concern with several aspects of the concept, whether in the epistemological discussion of its foundations, operations and limits, such as the works of Sodré (2004; 2006), Braga (2007; 2010), Fausto Neto (2010), and Ferreira (2008; 2010); as well as in its interfaces and methodological intersections with empirical objects and processes, for example, by Gomes (2006, 2008, 2010a, 2017), Gasparetto (2011), Borelli (2008), and Martino (2012a; 2012b; 2016).

There is a Research Group registered at Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) committed to the studies of the theme at Unisinos – responsible for a considerable part of the production on the subject, in particular monographic titles dedicated to the topic – (Fausto Neto, Gomes, Braga, and Ferreira, 2008; Fausto Neto, Ferreira, Braga, and Gomes, 2010). Finally, we observed that the Book *Compós 2012* was dedicated to the intersections between mediations and mediatization – according to Mattos, Janotti, and Jacks (2012).

This trend seems to be a set in the international arena, among which are the discussions of Hepp (2012), Hjarvard (2013) or the collection organized by Lundby

(2009) for the debate of the concept, operationalized in works such as Cottle (2006), and Couldry (2008).

The growth in these discussions seems to be accompanied by a progressive expansion of objects and processes referred to by this concept, as well as the diversity of uses that, in certain moments, require close observation of spaces of experience covered by it.

Diversity, if understood as an indicator of the vitality of the concept, does not cease to constitute a theoretical-epistemological problem insofar as the multiplicity of conceptions and the diversity of aspects implies, ultimately, a definite dilution of its limits and boundaries, responsible for the analytical capacity of a concept.

In this chapter, we attempt to point out some of the definitions and operations of the mediatization concept as it appears in the works of Anglo-Saxon and Brazilian researchers. The method is a critical revision of the bibliography, highlighting the main elements that allow observing the dimensions attributed to the concept – or, in other words, the processes and objects delimited by it.

The choice of a *corpus* tensioning the production spheres elapses from the possibility of thinking of opening dialogue, not of a comparison or frontiers, to think about the uses of the concept. We seek here to observe some of its employs in other academic universes with a view to eventual perspectives of articulation/counterpoint at other moments – a comparative analysis of uses would exceed the limits of this text.

It is not a complete inventory of uses, which would require a monographic study of breath, but to understand possible central definitions that allow the operationalization of the concept in the area. Likewise, we do not seek a definition of mediatization, but some of its possible descriptions articulated within an epistemological perspective responsible for the operationalization of researches in the present and in the future.

The spirit is broadly of dialogue, trying to put into conversation conceptions of the term, and not to establish a “correct” definition, something in contradiction with the presented political-epistemological premises. The search is for the intersection and delimitation between terms to delineate some uses of the concept, not to plaster it into a predetermined definition.

There is also no pretense of originality, since the epistemological discussion of the mediatization concept has been carried out, among other authors, by Krotz (2009), Schott (2009), Braga (2010), Fausto Neto (2006), and Finnemann (2011), Gomes (2017), among others.

The text was divided into three parts. In the first one, we seek a brief contextualization of the appropriations of the concept. Next, we try to punctuate some moments of its genealogy, highlighting the diversity of employs and uses, to do, in the last part, a discussion of some of its conceptions.

The context of appropriation

Although the word “mediatization” and its correlates can be found in the literature of the area of Communication in Brazil, at least since the collection published by Moraes (2006); its operationalization as an analytical concept seems to have occurred also based upon Sodré’s work (2004) (2010), and the works of Unisinos researchers represented in the collections of Fausto Neto, Braga, Ferreira, and Gomes (2010), and Ferreira, Gomes, Braga, and Fausto Neto (2010), as well as dozens of articles.

It is possible to identify a passage from the word to the concept in these works, especially from the moment in which the notion of mediatization becomes a problematization in its tensions with other concepts of the area, especially the idea of “mediations”, with which it is related especially in Anglo-Saxon literature on the subject. How-

ever, it is worth noting the preliminary observation that the use of the concept in a relatively restricted sense, in the absence of a greater problematization, as synonymous with “presence of the media” or “presence in the media” remains one of the most frequent uses.

Something similar seems to happen in international texts.

Seeking here to be restricted to the Anglo-Saxon research universe, with specific references to other traditions, the term “mediatization” is not frequent in the theoretical works of the area. Even Compendiums of Communication Theory such as Severin and Tankard (2001) and McQuail (2005) do not mention the subject, which, however, attains entries both in the Communication Dictionary of Abercrombie and Longhurst (2007), and Chandler and Munday (2011). Titles strictly dedicated to the subject appear from the second half of the 2000 decade with the collection of Lundby (2009) and the monographic works of Hepp (2012) and Hjarvard (2013) – in the latter case, developed from his preliminary texts (Hjarvard, 2008a, 2008b). In analytical terms, it is, therefore, a concept that is under relatively recent theoretical-epistemological scrutiny, so that the points of fluctuation found in the specificity of its definition can be partially credited, with due exceptions, to the moment of its appropriation in the area of Communication.

It is worth remembering, in this sense, following Lundby (2009) and Livingstone (2009), that, like several other concepts in the area, the notion of mediatization originates in another research space – in this case, registered uses are in the area of Politics and even of Law. In the first case, the perspective of a “mediatization” seems to have originated from the Napoleonic invasion of the Germanic principalities, when the lands belonging to the dethroned aristocracy underwent a new administrative division. In the second case, the perspective is understood as

“mediation”, referring to what could get comprehended as intermediation in the relation of conflicts. Thus, although the word media is in the radical of both “mediation” and “mediatization”, its genealogical uses do not find a possible convergence – on the contrary, they show considerable diversity in the specification of their possible origins.

The word, however, seems to have a somewhat broader pedigree. It is worth mentioning some specific moments of its use, especially in the doctrine of the area of Communication.

It is worth noticing that there is considerable ambiguity in the use of the concepts of “mediation” and “mediatization” in Anglo-Saxon research, both being sometimes even understood as interchangeable. It is also possible to observe the attribution of the same sense to one, or to another, as can be seen in works such as Lundby (2009), Coudry (2008), Livingstone (2009), and Martino (2013), what is defined by one author as “mediatization” is thought by another as “mediation”.

Even in the mentioned reference works, Abercrombie and Lunghurst (2007), and Chandler and Munday (2011), the meanings are divergent, the definition of “mediation” being used by the first closest to the perspective of “mediatization”. These perspectives suggest that the progressive use of the word as an analytical concept in the area of Communication seems to have also increased the concern with the definition of its epistemological borders.

An additional distinction to be made is that the constant articulation in the Anglo-Saxon studies between the concepts of “mediation” and “mediatization” refers, to some extent, to the fact that in both cases there seems to be at play some kind of “media action” in the constitution of changes not only in institutions or punctual spaces, but more important social processes, not always with the necessary indication of the distinctions between them. In this way, the semantic proximity reflects a conceptual indefinition.

In the Brazilian research universe, however, this type of perspective is not found, since the concept of “mediation” is not usually associated with the Anglo-Saxon correlate “mediation”, but especially with the Castilian “mediaciones” as presented in the work of Martín-Barbero (1987). In this way, the irruption of the term “mediatization” does not seem to have been immediately problematized by the perspective of “mediation”, but rather by a publication aimed at this intersection organized by Matos, Janotti, and Jack (2012).

Diversity of origin

Thus, it is possible to suggest that the use of the term “mediatization” has been characterized by variety, applying, with some problem, in a considerable number of works. This variety can also be read, in a way, as indicative of some difficulty in specifying the particular field of its use. It is worth pointing out some of these moments of use mainly to accentuate their diversity, without, however, claiming to elaborate a critical genealogy of the concept – a broader development can get found in Hjarvard (2013) or Martino (2013).

A starting point can be thought of in the use made by Baudrillard (1996). In the context of an analysis of the predominance of the image as a central element of the establishment of social relations, defining itself as one of the chief instances of simulation of reality, the French author characterizes this phenomenon as the “mediatization” of society. It should be of notice that Baudrillard does not seek to operationalize the concept or problematize it; rather, he seems to use the notion of mediatization to refer to the emergence of a society characterized by the ubiquity of media images scattered from the various basis. In this case, he analyzes photography, but his scope gets extended in later works to other media, especially televi-

sion – in the constitution not of a “culture of the image”, but mainly of a culture of the simulacrum.

The real, in his perspective, disappears before what he calls “mediatized information”, responsible for the sign construction of a “reality” that gets largely unleashed to what could be understood as “real” in the strict sense of the term. The relationship between the reality of mediated information and what would be the “real world” is not one of continuity but of rupture: mediated information does not represent the real, but defines something similar to it – a simulacrum. Thus, the “mediatization” referred to by him does not seem to be based on the analytical concern with the concept, but rather as a reference to the activity of the media understood in its technical rather than institutional dimension.

In a distinct understanding, in his Theory of Communicative Action, Habermas (1989) explores the notion of mediatization from a sociological point of view, such as the interference, or intersection, of the elements of what he calls the “system” in the “world of life”. The world of life seen as an instance of meaning production in which subjects are immersed in the course of their daily lives exists in continuous articulation with the apparatus of *dispositifs* called by the German thinker as the “system”, a space of bureaucratic-normative regulation of activities in their various dimensions. The presence of the system in the world of life is characterized by Habermas as “mediatization”, without special references to the media.

John P. Thompson (1995), in “Media and Modernity,” seems to work in still another direction by mentioning the perspective of a progressively “medialized” society. In his analysis of the sociological bias of the relationship between the emergence and expansion of the media on the one hand, and modern society on the other, Thompson is faced with the need to show how mediated information becomes fundamental in sharing by the citizens, for the

formation of the contemporary way of life based on the exchange of information.

Between media and processes: the bridge of mediatization

In an introduction to a special issue of Communications magazine, Hepp, Hjarvard, and Lundby (2010) highlight some premises and sources of the concept of mediatization as used in their research. In an initial definition, they point out that it is a question of thinking about the long interrelationship between changes in the media and cultural, and social changes.

At first glance, the search for this kind of equivalence tends to echo some perspectives of the centrality of the media as agents of social change; as observed for example in the works of McLuhan (1995) or Meyrowitz (1999) – this latter cited by the authors – or within the perspective of the “effects” of the media in society from their contexts of change in a long American empirical tradition. These two perspectives, in the view of the authors, fail to realize the transformation of one of its main characteristics.

However, Hepp, Hjarvard, and Lundby (2010, p.223) seek to contextualize the limits of these two contributions in the understanding of the media from a basic premise of the concept of mediatization: “the media are no longer ‘out’ of society, exerting some kind of specific influence or effect on culture, and, therefore, on individuals”. In their judgment, in a “media-saturated” contemporary society the media are “within society, part of the very fabric of culture.”

The concept of mediatization is particularly articulated to overcome a certain duality between “media” and “society” present in some research traditions in the Area. We understand that in a society in which media are ubiquitous in their various forms and *dispositifs*, several

languages and semiotic codes, broad corporate and institutional configurations, it is no longer possible to speak about the relationship between the “media and society”, but about a process of the “mediatization of society”.

In other words, the concept of mediatization seeks to eliminate the epistemological premise of a gap between “media” and “society” by replacing the intersections and/or articulations between isolated spaces by the transformation of media, individuals, and institutions understood as part of a whole of which it is not possible to separate one of the parts.

In a text on the problems of personal narrative in digital environments, Couldry discusses the relations between the concepts of “mediation” and “mediatization” in the search to delimit the differences between the field of experience covered by these two concepts. The initial perception is that there are direct interrelationships between both concepts, with limits not always defined. His proposition aims to verify the possibilities of operation of each of them, as well as the limits of their articulation, as concepts, with other spaces of reality.

There are at least two elements to be highlighted in their distinction from concepts, their relative extent, and the relevance of media presence in the constitution/articulation of social processes. The main difference established, therefore, does not refer to the perspective of “mediations” in Martín-Barbero’s (1997) sense – cited by Couldry (2008), however – but to a notion of “mediation” as the interaction between social processes and media processes or, in a more precise perspective, the interaction of media processes within social processes – for a detailed analysis see Livingstone (2009).

Just as a complement, once the analysis of the uses of “mediation” escapes the focus of this text, Couldry (2008) highlights this term as being the reference to the emergence of institutions and media companies as

elements responsible for circulation, on a large scale, of symbols and concepts within society – a “mediated” society stands out for the space occupied by the media, in institutional terms, as the elaboration of the symbolic processes in the social fabric – “mediation” in its Anglo-Saxon employment.

At this point, we do not talk about any social or institutional transformation that can be directly credited to the media, as in the case of the concept of “mediatization”, in a direction similar to that of Strömback (2008). More than opposites, concepts are thought of as alternatives in the understanding of certain phenomena, with areas of overlap as well as of intersection.

Couldry would define mediatization as having its focus on the “transformative logic or a mechanism understood as responsible for altering (“mediatizing”) particular processes, objects, and fields”. It is a “distinct and consistent transformation” only understood if thought of in terms of a “wider social and cultural transformation from the means operating from a single source and with a common direction”. That is a transformation of society through the media, from a perspective that echoes both Meyer (2002) and Hjarvard (2013).

The process of mediatization is, thus, linked to the perspective of both traditional and digital media, as well as those responsible for bringing about transformations in the operational logic of other social instances adapted to the media processes. This adaptation elapses, for Couldry (2008), the expansion of media across all spaces of contemporary life from their capacity for replication, not only of content but also of their electronic-digital *dispositifs*.

The ubiquity of electronic screens, mobile devices, and mediated interactions is nothing more than a symptom of mediatization that, far from being dependent on the media and devices, takes place at a time when relational processes are altered as a result of these *dispositifs*.

Mediatization of politics or religion, in the sense understood by these authors, is related to the changes and the partial transformations of these spaces for their adaptation to the media logic of the production of the representations. It is not possible, explains Couldry (2008, p. 376), that “politicians make politics without appearing in the media, or that social manifestations happen without some presence in the media”.

Some of the uses of the observed mediatization concept seem to underline this presence, not only highlighting the articulations of the media in the social processual ambience but in some cases, strongly suggesting that the media is directly responsible for some of its transformations, besides occupying a prominent place in the social space. This, apparently, relegates to the background the other possible variables involved in the transformation processes.

The concept of mediatization, from this perspective, is operationalized in methodological terms from the examination of the institutional changes associated with the intersection of the media with other areas and/or institutions, such as politics and parties, or religion and religious denominations.

Both Couldry (2008) and Strömback (2008, p.232) do not fail to note that, taken to its ultimate consequences, the use of the mediatization concept could slip into the perspective of “media effects” in society when, the author’s view highlights the direction of the processes, not the notion of “effects”. It is worth noting that, although mediatization is thought of in terms of macro levels, as it is observed in the statements of “mediatization of politics” or “mediatization of religion”, its occurrence seems to happen, in fact, in the establishment of media *dispositifs* as a regime of institutional and / or even personal reorganization (Couldry, 2008, Hjarvard, 2013).

Moreover, in another perspective, the notion of mediatization does not only refer to institutional changes

but can also be seen in the context of social agency. Simon Cottle (2006), in the study of what he calls “mediated rituals”, identifies them as an instance of observation of the process of mediatization as construction of meanings from the construction of the exceptional events responsible for aggregating around a considerable number of people united by “solidarity” and – here Cottle deliberately echoes Durkheim – of participation at that particular moment.

Another of these perspectives is developed by Strömback (2008) when working on the mediatization of politics from a four-phase linear model. Assuming that “all experiences, from the micro-level of identity to the macro-level of politics and society, are mediated and mediatized in an increasing way”, he seeks to identify the constituent elements of this process. With its own *modus operandi*, politics does not dispense of the media in establishing its public visibility.

The effective possibility of any kind of information taken outside its immediate spaces of elaboration – parliaments, offices, parties – implies some element of communication responsible for overcoming interpersonal communication. The link with the media, whose nature or definition in itself is not explicit, becomes fundamental to the relationship with society, resulting in a coupling in which the contacts get made from the interface of two different logic: logic of the media and logic of politics, the author emphasizes partially appropriating from Meyer (2002).

The analysis of the mediatization of politics, in this case, seeks to take into account not what would be the “relationship” between the media and politics, let alone the “effects” of the media in politics, but to what degree do reciprocal transformations take place in both instances. from the intersection of logic and processes.

This is verified in four dimensions. In Strömback’s view (2008, p. 234), it is a matter of observing (1) to what

extent the media are the main source of information for society; 2) the extent to which the media are independent of political institutions; (3) how much media content is governed by the logic of politics or by its own logic, and (4) to what degree political actors obey their inherent logic or get bound by media logic.

The media thus characterized stand out as a space for the production and dissemination of the information circulating in society, and it is the primary element of the construction of meanings, representations, and understandings of the social world, around which other institutions gravitate and articulate. In addition, a determined linearity of the process gets highlighted since, as the mediatization process is inherent in the contemporary society, the methodological operationalization articulates itself in the direction of verifying to what degree this process is happening in the scope of politics, in a major or minor mediatization.

The same linear meaning, in historical perspective, is proposed by Finnemann (2011). Using what he calls different “media matrices”, the author identifies the process of mediatization as due, or at least linked, to the media intertwined with the social in various historical moments, characterized by the cut generated by the change in the media matrix – a predominantly oral matrix to the digital media matrix.

Couldry (2008) notes a series of limits in this concept of mediatization, especially for giving the media the responsibility for personal, institutional and social transformations that are not always related to them. In the same way, there is the prospect of a definite technological determinism on the horizon at the moment when we seek, in the media, the agents of the transformations that would not necessarily occur in other social contexts.

Despite these caveats, the explanatory potential of the mediatization concept is pointed out in the sense of in-

dicating different processes, such as the homogenization of different cultural processes directed in forms or formats proper for media representation, as can be deduced from the analysis of mediatization of politics, or religion – according to the specific studies of Hjarvard (2013), Strömback (2008), and Meyer (2002), for example.

Conceptual appropriation

The definition of a concept seems to depend on both its genesis and its uses. The epistemological validity of a concept presents semantic fluctuation points derived, albeit partially, from its use as a word capable of synthetically define the components of a particular clipping of the dynamics of reality. In this way, the definition of theoretical concepts can also be observed in the scrutiny of its uses, formulations and, eventually, methodological operations.

The semantic polyvalence of central concepts in the Communication area, for example, suggests that the examination of its epistemological validity passes at some point at the observance of the uses made, and the instances of consecration of these uses – which, of course, does not seek to reduce but rather only to emphasize this aspect also understood as the verification of the modalities of using a concept, for purposes of clipping (Martino, 2009; 2012b; 2016). The explanatory articulation capacity of a concept can also be verified in the use, as well as disputes over the semantic and phenomenal field covered by it.

The research in Communication presents itself as a space of discursive formations quite diverse in what concerns the establishment of consensuses around its basic components, and the introduction of other analytical elements does not seem to escape this diversity (Braga, 2010). It is questionable to what extent this can be interpreted as an index of the epistemological vitality of the area or as an indication of the absence of central el-

ements considered valid by what could be a majority of researchers.

The very concept of “communication” or “theory/theories of communication” is the subject of intense debate in the area, allowing to glimpse something similar in relation to other concepts eventually incorporated by the area. Therefore, the comparison of the definitions and uses of the mediatization concept seeks to highlight possible epistemological variables in the differences, allowing not only a better comprehension of the concept, but also observing the radius of its articulations with the media phenomena, and, more broadly, social phenomena.

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39-53.

Mediatization, spirituality, and Internet¹

Pedro Gilberto Gomes

Abstract: The article reflects on the reality of mediatization in today's world and its relation to spirituality. Ways to experience spirituality for the faithful use of social networks, especially the Internet. We ask whether the Churches are conscious of moving into a new ambiance, with important consequences for the development of a spiritual identity. We do not question how Churches use the Internet, but what kind of spirituality is born from the indiscriminate use of social networks.

We conclude by saying that the incidence and consequences of this epochal change in the life of Churches and their relationship with the faithful still need to be measured. On the part of the Churches, it is necessary that they focus on the subject and place in the agenda of their reflections the reality of technologies and the digital networks.

Keywords: Mediatization. Spirituality. Digital networks.

1 Text presented at the International Seminar on Mediatization, carried out by the Post-Graduate Program in Communication Sciences at Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, at the panel on Mediatization and religion.

With the digital technologies, humanity has made a qualitative leap, causing a phenomenon that we identify as the mediatization of society, which constitutes a new way of being in the world. We are in a new ambiance, where mediatization is a model and an activity of operation of social intelligibility.

With the advent of digital technology, these inter-relations became complex and expanded, creating this new ambiance. The human communication process is enhanced in contemporary society by the sophistication of its electronic means. In this way, the communication inter-relationships, as well as the media processes, take place in the cultural melting pot of mediatization. The reality of society in mediatization overcomes and encompasses the particular dynamics that it engenders to communicate. The social environment is modified. The background screen, the framework within which social dynamics interact, is generated by the assumption of digital reality. Digital virtuality, in this way, structures a new way of being in the world. The society in mediatization, from this perspective, reflects and builds the cultural melting pot where the various social processes take place. It is an ambiance, a new way of being in the world, as we have said, that characterizes the human community today. Inter-relationships receive a semantic charge that places them in a radically new dimension, qualitatively distinct from the way of being in society until then. Communication and society imbricate in the production of meaning to articulate in this melting pot of culture that results from the emergence and extreme technological development.

Consequently, more than a stage in evolution, it means a qualitative leap that establishes the wholly new in history. The result of this movement creates an ambiance (which we call a society in mediatization) that creates for the people a new way of being in the world, whereby means are no longer used as enabling instruments of per-

sonal relationships but are part of social and individual self-comprehension.

Individual and collective identity is built from interaction with the media. The person is not an “I” who uses instruments as an extension of his/her body², but an individual who understands himself/herself as a being who values his/her relationships and connections through technological instruments of communication.

Society in process of mediatization is broader, more comprehensive than the communication dynamics carried out so far in the so-called media society. It is not only communication that gets powered, that is, it is not only the possibilities of communication, by extremely sophisticated technological means, which characterize the current context but the technological sophistication, widely used by people from a very young age, which creates a new ambiance that ultimately determines the way of being, thinking, and acting in society. To this ambiance matrix, we call society in mediatization³. Mediatization encompasses two simultaneous and dialectical movements. On the one hand, it is the fruit and consequence of the relationships, inter-relationships, connections, and inter-connections of society’s use of the communication media and instruments, enhanced by digital technology. On the other hand, it means a new social ambiance that strongly influences these same relations, inter-relationships, connections, and interconnections that construct contempo-

2 McLUHAN, Marshall. *Os meios de Comunicação como extensões do homem*. São Paulo: Cultrix, 1969.

3 In several works, we carry out this identification: GOMES, Pedro Gilberto. *Tópicos de teoria da comunicação*. 2. ed. São Leopoldo: Editora Unisinos, 2004; Id. *A filosofia e a ética da comunicação no processo de midiatização da sociedade*. 2. ed. São Leopoldo: Editora Unisinos, 2006; Id. *Da igreja eletrônica à sociedade em midiatização*. São Paulo: Paulinas, 2010; FAXINA Elson; GOMES, Pedro Gilberto. *Midiatização: um novo modo de ser e viver em sociedade*. São Paulo: Paulinas, 2016; GOMES, Pedro Gilberto. *Dos meios à midiatização: um conceito em evolução*. São Leopoldo: Editora Unisinos, 2017. (Coleção Focus).

rary society. Society is in mediatization. The human being is in mediatization. This today is a new way of being in the world, and we underline it. This is the cultural substratum in which the various social groups in the world move. Society erected in these movements is a society in process of mediatization⁴.

Religion and the new ambiance

Within this new context, we have witnessed a most common situation: the media fields appropriation by the religious space, and the displacement of the traditional room temples into an open and multi-dimensional field. Both ministers and their acolytes, as well as the faithful, take on roles and attitudes different from those that were lived in the tradition of the Churches.

The former assumes new forms of relationships with the community. In a way, the content and the anointing are subordinated to the image, to the gestures, to what appears. Nonverbal language, postures, the way of looking and speaking are imposed from the logic of the means.

On the part of the faithful, this reality seems to have its explanation in the modern disenchantment with the traditional forms of the Historical Churches. Their cults and actions lose space in the heart of the contemporary man.

New ways are created to reach him. If people do not come to the temple, the temple goes to them. However, this shift from the center to the margin via media processes has its price. It is necessary to make concessions to the standards of behavior dictated by the media, both in terms of the logic of message production and in what concerns the consumption of cultural goods, in this case, religious cultural.

4 These ideas were taken from the book: GOMES 2017 (bilingual edition, English/Portuguese).

Consumption is individual and solitary. The community is in the background. How, then, to show engagement? Through the consumption of advertised products and alms for the program to remain on the air. A new Church is created: universal and virtual. The temples are the homes themselves; the pulpits are the television sets⁵.

In this case, only those who are capable of consuming are faithful to this Church. The important thing within the religious market is to announce the good news to all. In the pluralistic society, with increasingly fierce market disputes, religion has become a large Persian market for religious goods.

Religions turn to the electronic media to meet this challenge. Churches and communities use profusely social networks, the new technological *dispositifs*. The important thing is the belief that these means are instruments for the spread of the good news to all⁶. However, such technological *dispositifs* are only a small part, the tip of the iceberg, of a new world, shaped by the process of the mediatization of society.

They express an epochal change with the creation of media bios. It is a new communicational ecology; virtual bios, that gives rise to a new ambiance.

The case of the relationship between spirituality and internet

The entrance of the Churches into the world of new technological *dispositifs* makes certain activities that were carried out in the Church to be also available today on the

5 See GOMES, 2010.

6 In the early 2000s, the Vatican was thinking of developing the Lumen 2000 project, whose goal was to present to Christ, on its 2000th anniversary, a new, Christianized world. Needless to emphasize that the project did not thrive.

Internet. From this, we wonder: what kind of spirituality is being created, gestated? We do not think of the Church as an institution, but rather of the religious experience, of the spirituality as a whole that is a fundamental symbolic production in the life of man.

Within this perspective, we insert the question of spirituality on the Internet. There are several websites of organizations, Catholic or not, that use the Internet as a space of interaction, the congregation of people. These institutions, for example, consider the Internet as an important means of passing their message and remaining within the realm of the media society.

Religiousness is important. However, when religious institutions make massive use of these new *dispositifs*, we must ask ourselves what kind of religiosity, spirituality, is arising from this process. What difference does it make between lighting a candle for Father Reus⁷ on a website or going to the sanctuary? That is the question and a challenge that Churches must respond to.

It is this context of mediatization that is bringing challenges for all, both the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the faithful and researchers of the relationship between media and religion. So, we should not ask how an institution uses a portal to foster spirituality. It does not matter. The question should be: in doing so, what form of spirituality is getting formed?

All institutions have realized the potential embedded in digital media and are using the Internet. But they are merely putting in the portals the transcription of what they have been doing. Even if they realize the importance of these means to spread their message and promote their actions, they do not ask themselves – and that is the major challenge – if, by transposing their millennial actions to a relationship site, they are creating a new form of spiritual-

7 A Jesuit priest, who died with fame as a saint, whose tomb, next to the Santuário do Sagrado Coração de Jesus, in São Leopoldo, RS, attracts thousands of people every weekend.

ity independent of their desire, or a different way of doing and living religion.

Question: would a child who, from a young age, develop his/her religious awareness of spirituality via Internet have the same religious experience as a child who takes part in the catechism, who goes to temples with his/her parents? Are these the same or different ways of doing religion? Or of having spirituality? We do not state that one is good, and the other is bad. We point out the existence of two levels of difference. What kind of spirituality does emerge from a portal? This goes beyond its content.

McLuhan had already said in the 1960s: what changes people's behavior is not the content of television, but the simple fact of watching it. In the experience of spirituality, this reality is what religious institutions are not realizing because, for them, the message has always been important. Everything that helps taking the message to a broad number of people is good. So, the message changes.

The instrument is not completely neutral. If we question more deeply beyond the instrument, we will realize that, regardless of the content, the fact that it enters into the relationship is already creating a new kind of religion, of spirituality because even religiosity is not unequivocal.

This new reality demands something else and makes us consider that, regardless of the extreme left or extreme right message, the simple fact that the person gets related via portals is already creating a form of spirituality or a different way of seeing religion. This is what should be questioned. These are the challenges and perspectives.

Conclusion

Finally, we can affirm with Spadaro⁸ that the network is an ambiance that changes the:

8 Antônio Spadaro, Jesuit, director of the *Civiltà Cattolica* magazine, from Rome, in a lecture at the Seminar on Media and Religion, in the

Ability to exist
 Ability to seek God
 Ability to listen
 Ability to donate
 Ability to testify
 Ability to think together
 Ability to be together

Spadaro says that social networks do not express a set of individuals but of relations between individuals. The key-concept is not a matter of presence on the network anymore but of connection. It is not enough to be on the network; we need connection⁹. For him,

together, all social networking platforms are a potential aid to relationships, but also a threat. The problem is that the connection and sharing on the Net do not identify with the 'encounter', which is a very challenging experience at the relationship level¹⁰.

The impact and consequences of this epochal change in the life of Churches and their relationship with the faithful still need to be measured. On the part of the Churches, it is necessary that they focus on the subject and place on the agenda of their reflections the reality of technologies and the digital networks. At the moment, to paraphrase a 2002 paper¹¹, the Church that is not aware of this reality takes the risk of being swallowed up by a dimension that surpasses it. The enigma is for all those

Post-Graduate Program in Communication Sciences at Unisinos, in 2012. The results were published in e-book: VV. AA. *Mídias e religiões: a comunicação e a fé em sociedades em midiatização*. São Leopoldo: Casa Leiria, 2013.

9 According to *ibid.*, p. 30.

10 *Ibid.*

11 GOMES, Pedro Gilberto. "Decipher me or I will devour you..." about evangelization and the media from the point of view of communication. *Perspectiva Teológica*, n. 34, p. 335-350, 2002

who have a mission to work with evangelization on social networks.

If not properly deciphered, it will devour those who dare to challenge it, plunging it into the whirlwind crushing of so many idols and stars of the past.¹²

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12 *Ibid.*, p. 350.

**FOURTH PART –
INSTITUTIONS AND
MEDIATIZATION**

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The Janus face of digital connectivity: The transformation of social dependencies

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Abstract: The experience of digital connectivity has a Janus face: Online media empower the individual to communicate and act beyond his or her immediate social space, but such media also create new forms of dependencies due to the increased presence in everyday social life of institutionalized demands from, for instance, the workplace and the market. Building upon theoretical insights from media dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001), critical theory (Habermas, 1989), symbolic interactionism (Goffman, 1971), and theories of social network media (Dijck, 2013), I specify how digital connectivity involves a restructuring of social interdependencies. The ambiguous experience of increased connectivity reflects a wider process of mediatization in which instrumental rationalities become present and influential in life-world settings. The theoretical arguments are illustrated by results from a survey of media dependency in Denmark.

Keywords: connectivity, dependency, digital, individual, mediatization, virtualization

“Turn. Me. Off.” demands the headline on the front page of the prestigious German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*. The newspaper introduces its main story concerning increasing self-criticism about people’s media-saturated lives with the following sub-heading: “Ever-more people want to free themselves from their smartphones. They long to be unreachable” (*Die Zeit*, 2015). The newspaper headline alludes to the hit 1981 electronic song by the German band Kraftwerk, ‘Computerliebe’ (‘Computer-love’), with its refrain of “turn me on, turn me off” (“Schalt mich ein, schalt mich aus”). In this song, Kraftwerk envisions not only computers and humans becoming emotionally attached to one another but also the deepest of all human feelings – love – becoming programmable, making the most intimate social relationship dependent on digital technology. Despite the clear message of the title, the picture accompanying the story in *Die Zeit* underscores the ambiguous feelings connected with dependency on digital technology: In the picture, a young woman dives into the splashing water of a smartphone screen, evoking the attraction of boundless movement, a free swim in the internet ocean of information. The text says ‘turn me off’, but the picture says ‘turn me on’.



Figure 1. Frontpage of *Die Zeit*. July 16, 2015. The headline (“Turn. Me. Off.”) and the picture seem to reflect different opinions about the attraction of connection.

The downsides of ubiquitous media and the problems of always being connected are beginning to enter public discussions in a variety of social contexts. Discussions about the influence of digital and online media, for example, increasingly address concerns about its negative effects on teaching and learning due to the pervasive presence of computers and internet in the classroom; the problem of employees having their leisure time invaded by work-related communication; and the inability of individuals to avoid surveillance by both private companies and public authorities. A growing market for self-help advice has emerged concerning how to disconnect from the media or at least reduce the time spent on television, social media, or computer gaming. An analysis of such self-help guides suggests that, as a response to what are experienced as invasive media, strategies of ‘reverse domestication’ are promoted to allow individuals and fami-

lies to keep the media at a conscious distance and thereby reduce or change the influence of media in everyday contexts (Karlsen and Syvertsen, 2016). For many people, however, disconnection is not a real option since the online media have become institutionalized as indispensable to people's work and family lives as well as integrated into the fabric of larger institutions such as politics and public administration. In particular, as Morozov (2017) argues, the people working in the expanding and often-precarious 'gig economy' of part-time, flexible jobs, such as the drivers for the Uber taxi company, cannot really afford to disconnect since their jobs are built upon a digital infrastructure that compels them to be connected or miss the next slice of income.

In this article, I will address the transformative nature of digital connections and in particular examine the tensions between experiences of increased individual autonomy and new forms of dependencies on systemic and institutional powers. Both these experiences are real and reflect the dual, Janus-faced character of increased connectivity. Interactive and online media allow the individual to communicate and act beyond the immediate social space and its local constraints and obligations, but these media also create and relay new forms of dependency due to both the structural characteristics of the media themselves and the ways in which digital media relay an integration and continuous presence of institutionalized demands, for instance from the workplace and the market. From the perspective of mediatization theory (Hjarvard, 2013), the political, social, and cultural implications of ubiquitous media cannot simply be addressed from the point of view of 'mediation', i.e. individuals' communicative encounters by and through various media. By drawing attention to the processes of 'mediatization', we emphasize how online media are implicated in social and cultural *change* and through these changes come to *con-*

dition – though not determine – the ways in which people may or may not communicate and interact with each other. Following this perspective, I will focus on media’s role in *restructuring social interdependencies*.

The integration of digital and online media into ever-more social and cultural spheres represents an *intensified mediatization* that not only allows for ‘more’ digital interaction but also restructures the social conditions under which we interact. As Dijck (2013) has pointed out in her study of social network media, such media not only communicate social relationships but also produce new forms of sociality. The new forms of networked relationships and social interactions involve a change of social dependencies between the individual, the wider community, and the media. To examine these changing forms of interdependency, I will draw upon existing media dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; Jung, 2017) and seek to integrate it into the overall sociological framework of mediatization theory. The discussion will predominantly be of a theoretical nature, but I will also include a few findings from an empirical survey study of people’s experiences of how media may interfere with existing social frameworks and restructure dependencies in their daily lives.

Media and social dependency

Mediatization theory has from the very outset addressed questions concerning dependency since the very concept implies that social and cultural fields become intertwined with and dependent upon various media. In my own writings, the increasing dependency of culture and society on the media and their logics are at the very heart of the definition of mediatization (Hjarvard, 2013: 17). The media’s development into a semi-independent institutional domain in society – governed by its own technological, aesthetic, and institutional logics – and other institutions’

growing dependency on media's communicative resources have made other institutional domains dependent on the logics of the media, including both 'big' institutions, such as political institutions, and 'small' institutions, such as the family. Dependency is rarely a one-way street but is most often a reciprocal, dual, or many-sided relationship through which social entities are tied to each other within a web of obligations and exchanges, drawing upon each other's resources in the course of daily interaction. For instance, when political institutions become mediatized, the consequence may not only be a growing dependency of politics on the media, such as political actors increasingly relying on media resources to communicate with their constituencies, but also a dependency of media on political institutions, such as journalists being dependent on politicians as political sources. The influence of mediatization processes on the dependencies between various institutions should not be understood as a zero-sum game in which domains such as politics or the family simply lose autonomy as they become dependent on the media. As, for instance, Aelst et al. (2014) and Donges and Jarren (2014) have argued, the logics of media do not necessarily directly oppose the logics of other institutional domains but may be overlapping. It is, furthermore, necessary to distinguish between various entities and layers within each domain since the restructuring of dependencies may influence the institutional domain as a whole and the various organizations and individuals within the domain in dissimilar ways (Hjarvard, 2017b). For instance, children and teenagers may, as part of their growing dependency on mobile media, experience both a growing independency in relation to their parents and an increasing dependency in relation to their peer networks.

The notion of 'dependency' often involves normative and critical evaluations of relationships. This is clearly the case for 'dependency theory' in the social sciences,

which addresses unequal relationships between center and periphery, i.e. Western domination and exploitation of developing countries (e.g. Frank, 1967). Analyses of the influence of new media often invest dependency with explicit or implicit normative implications regarding both people and media. Particularly in her later writings, Turkle (2011) laments the hollowness of the social ties we cultivate through online media: “We talk about ‘spending’ hours on e-mail, but we, too, are being spent [...] The ties we form through the Internet are not, in the end, the ties that bind. But they are the ties that preoccupy” (Turkle, 2011: 280). For Turkle (2011), a key problem with the social relationships formed through online media is precisely that they release people from the strong ties, the lasting social interdependencies that underlie true relationship. At the other end of this normative spectrum we find Rainee and Wellman (2014), who celebrate the individual’s ability to free himself from the “bounded cocoon” of local and strong social ties. The internet and interactive mobile media provide a new social operating system that fosters a new form of ‘networked individualism’ based on much weaker ties: “The turn towards a network operating system has been built on flexible connectivity between individuals and the ability to trust one another across distances and groups without requiring the cohesive force of the tribe to punish transgressions” (Rainee and Wellman, 2014: 57). Networked individualism allows the individual to break free from existing dependencies, and the possibilities are limited only by the individual’s own ability to maneuver in the extended network.

The problem with both these conflicting positions is that their normative or critical approach is based on a perspective that takes as its departure the individual’s encounter with the network. We instead need a holistic perspective that allows us to examine mutual dependencies as structural properties of interlocking networks of media,

individuals, and social institutions. Only from such a holistic, structural, and relational perspective is it possible to assess the full implications of the restructuring of social dependencies through the growing influence of media. Both Turkle (2011) and Rainee and Wellman (2014) highlight important aspects of current developments, but their individualistic perspectives do not allow them to consider how the experiences of either hollowness or individual freedom may be circumscribed by the web of relationships and dependencies that various media carry with them. Without such a structural perspective, we can easily get caught up in the old dichotomy between strong media effects versus strong audience effects, now instead projected onto the era of digital and network media. Turkle (2011) tends to echo the idea of strong media effects in the sense that digital media are said to erode the individual's ability to sustain strong and meaningful social ties. Rainee and Wellman (2014) reassert the paradigm of powerful audiences in the era of new media by stressing new media users' abilities to use the social operating system of digital networks for their own purposes. For Turkle (2011), the digital media are too powerful, while for Rainee and Wellman (2014) the media empower the already competent individual user.

Within media and communication studies, so-called 'media dependency theory' (Ball-Rokeach, 1985) has sought to develop "an ecological approach to understanding individuals' dependency relations to media in the context of individual, organizational, and societal-levels relations and changes" (Jung, 2017: 5). Media dependency theory was initially developed out of dissatisfaction with ideas of both strong media effects and strong audience effects, for instance use and gratification research (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976). Neither media nor media users are inherently weak or strong, but they are circumscribed by power dependency relations at micro, meso, and macro levels of society. Following this ecological or holistic approach, the

media's influence on an individual's knowledge, opinions, or behavior should be considered in light of the individual's dependencies on the set of media available to him or her. However, dependency on various media is not only configured by the media but also by the wider set of relationships within which individuals, organizations, and media are embedded in various institutional contexts. According to media dependency theory, the media constitute an information system within society ('information' understood in a broad sense, also involving entertainment, etc.), and the individual's dependency on various media is a result of the various goals that the individual pursues due to his or her position in the overall social structure. The various media represent information resources upon which individuals may be dependent for the pursuit of different social goals, but because of individuals' different social positions, these goals and dependencies are not uniform. Dependency on the media as an information resource is different for a teenager in a low-income suburban neighborhood than for a middle-aged investment banker in the city center. Furthermore, dependencies on the media are subject to contingent circumstances, for instance situations of social insecurity or individual experiences of informational ambiguity. Media dependency theory posits that, in general, the higher degree of insecurity or ambiguity, the more individuals will become dependent on the media as an information system.

Media dependency theory was originally developed to conceptualize the interdependencies of individuals, media, and society in the era of mass media, and the theoretical framework has subsequently been reformulated into a 'communication infrastructure theory' in light of the profound changes resulting from the emergence of the internet and mobile media. This framework preserves the original idea of an ecological approach that integrates micro, meso, and macro interdependencies between social entities at various levels at the same time as it takes

into account that the new media environment not only constitutes an information system but also affords an infrastructure for communicative action for all social actors, individuals, and organizations (Rokeach et al., 2001). The infrastructure both enables and constrains communicative action on the part of individuals and organizations, and the various actors' dependency on this infrastructure is reflected in their degree and types of connectedness within the overall digital media environment (Jung et al., 2012; Jung, 2017).

Media dependency theory differs from mediatization theory by retaining focus on mediation processes. The holistic sociological framework is developed to better account for the ways in which various media condition communicative action. This is also a concern of mediatization theory, but the latter combines it with a strong interest in media's role in processes of social and cultural change. From the perspective of mediatization theory, media dependency theory provides an important insight in its emphasis on the multilevel and reciprocal character of dependency relationships. Dependencies on the media are not solely – and in some cases not even predominantly – a product of the media themselves but are equally an outcome of the multilayered interdependencies between individuals, organizations, media, and social institutions. It is through these interdependencies that various media come to appear relevant, necessary, and sometimes unavoidable for pursuing social goals and fulfilling cultural obligations (Hjarvard, 2017a). In light of this, I suggest, mediatization may also involve processes by which media relay dependencies to other social institutions. Various online media may relay the virtual presence of institutional demands to new social settings at the same time as they weaken the salience of demands of the offline social encounters through which individuals pass in the course of their daily lives.

Virtualization of institutional domains and social interaction

An important consequence of the integration of media into ever-more aspects of social and cultural life is the virtualization of both institutional domains and situated social interaction (Hjarvard, 2013: 33ff). In both cases, these changes involve a restructuring of dependencies between individuals, media, and social domains. At the level of institutional domains (such as politics, family, industry, and education), the presence of online media creates a new social geography by which the boundaries of the institution become permeable and less tied to physical space. Obvious examples are families divided by migrant labor, who continue emotional, social, and financial interactions across countries and continents through the use of online media (Miller and Madianou, 2012) and the spread of distance work to private households (Perrons, 2003). In both examples, online media become a crucial resource for conducting daily life and thereby imply increased dependence on the media, but the examples also demonstrate a wider restructuring of the dependencies involved in these processes. In the case of divided migrant families, the media may provide a social technology to ensure family cohesion, yet the entire social situation of dispersed migrant families involves new social arrangements, liberties, and dependencies concerning child rearing, sex, citizenship, leisure time, etc. In the case of distance work performed in the household, the restructuring may involve changing work-life balances, new conditions for child rearing, etc.

By making possible new forms of social organization, digital media act as a catalyst for wider social transformations, of which increased dependency on the media is only one component. Media are a necessary but insufficient condition for the restructuring of interdependencies. They may initiate changes, but the subsequent develop-

ment and anchoring of alternative forms of social organization depend on the interplay between the involved networks of social actors at micro, meso, and macro levels of society. The consequence of mediatization is a growing dependency on the media and their various logics, but this dependency may also relay dependencies with work, distant family members, etc. – or in some cases loosen dependencies with other social contexts.

The virtualization of institutions and social interaction does not render physical space superfluous. Instead, a blending of physical and virtual spaces is taking place. Institutions typically retain a dominant physical location for their main activities, such as the home for the family institution, the parliament for the political institution, the school for the educational institution, and the factory or office for the work institution. However, the boundaries of institutions become fuzzy and less tied to physical space when media allow individuals and groups to ‘perform’ family, education, work, and politics in various virtual settings. The ‘blending’ of virtual and physical spaces follows all four dimensions of mediatization identified by Schulz (2004): extension, substitution, amalgamation, and accommodation. As the examples of migrant families and distance work exemplify, media clearly extend the reach of institutionalized practices beyond the boundaries of physical locations, and some of the practices hitherto bound to specific localities may be substituted by new virtual practices. At the same time, new virtual practices amalgamate with older, physically bound practices, and the new and the old accommodate to each other. For instance, in the institutional domain of learning and teaching, the development of ‘flipped classroom’ pedagogies exemplifies a combined amalgamation and accommodation between online and offline activities: Students may prepare themselves at home by watching online lectures, reading books, and taking notes, while in the physical classroom they engage in

work that to some extent resembles earlier preparatory homework such as problem solving and group work. The presence of media in both the home and the classroom allows old and new teaching practices to blend in new ways.

This blending of boundaries is not only present at an institutional level but is also discernible in daily life's continual flow of situated social interactions. At this micro level of society, the blending of physical location and virtual connections puts pressure on the most crucial condition of successful social interaction: the ability of individuals to agree on the present definition of the social situation. According to Goffman's (1971) analysis of the face-to-face encounter, participants' interaction is guided by a shared interpretation of the social situation at hand. The interpretation is typically cued by the types of people involved, the locality, and the physical layout, including the available 'props' that we may be used during interaction. An encounter between close friends in a bar with glasses and playing cards at the table thus suggests a completely different definition of the situation than does an encounter between fellow students and a teacher in a classroom with a blackboard and chalk. People may tacitly negotiate the details of the situation (for instance degrees of formality), and the particulars may change over the course of the encounter. As Goffman's (1971) studies demonstrate in minute detail, participants need to agree on the definition of the social situation, otherwise the interaction will fail, and misunderstandings and frustration will occur.

With growing virtual interconnectedness, the ability to reach agreement about the social situation between people in a face-to-face encounter becomes more fragile, not least because the balance between the individual's and the group's ability to commit to and define the present social situation is tipped in favor of the individual. When each of the participants has other social situations available online, they are tempted to judge the present

location-bound situation against other, potentially more interesting or important situations and can opt out of the present situation in favor of online interactions. This is not only because people may individually choose to direct their attention towards other scenes but also because online media make them available to others outside the present location. They may, for instance, be called, posted, or e-mailed by spouses, children, employees, or advertisers. In this way, interconnectedness relays dependencies from one context to another, both in terms of obligations to observe communicative politeness rules (e.g. demands of responding quickly to incoming requests) and to have social commitments towards others (e.g. demands of attending to issues related to family members, tasks at work, etc.). In her study of financial traders' use of computers for work, Knorr Cetina (2014) suggests that a new type of situation has emerged. The pervasive presence of computer screens "transforms the face-to-face situation into a synthetic situation" (Knorr Cetina, 2014: 39). By 'synthetic', she means that face-to-face interaction is transformed and augmented by intelligent and interactive media at the same time as social interaction becomes directed towards and accountable to non-present others, both distant other humans and technological systems.

The changing conditions of social situations are not only a result of the virtual world intruding upon the physical face-to-face encounter. The extensive virtual availability of the outside world from almost every location and every institutional setting allows the individual to actively engage with and 'surf' through a myriad of social situations. In addition, digital media can augment social interaction through the constant presence of available information online: The interactional space becomes intelligent, allowing the individual to interact in a more informed manner with both distant others and those physically present. This provides the basis for the experience

of individual empowerment. For instance, when at work, you may also choose to chat with your children, conduct banking affairs, and in general seek information from everywhere merely by touching a screen. At the micro level of social interaction, this pervasive connectivity is often experienced as an increased pressure on attention. The individual's attention becomes divided between various social situations, online and offline, and the group's ability to get everyone to comply with an overriding definition of the social situation is weakened. For the individual, commitment to and definition of the social situation increasingly appears to be a matter of choice since he or she may decide to opt out of the present situation and instead engage in available situations online. From the individual's perspective, this may seem like empowerment, but since this choice is principally available to all, the outcome is not necessarily in anyone's interest. Because everyone may end up dividing their attention, everybody may experience a loss of attentiveness and commitment to the social situations with which they are engaging.

Experiencing media dependencies

Up to this point, I have discussed changing dependencies at a theoretical level, but I will now try to illustrate empirically how some of these changes are experienced by focusing on how the growing presence of various online media is experienced as a disturbance of the daily conduct of social interaction. The data will illustrate how social rules and norms for social interaction are currently under pressure due to the growing connectivity and restructuring of dependencies. These empirical results are based on a survey conducted among 1510 respondents. The survey was been carried out in collaboration with YouGov, and the respondents were sampled through YouGov's panel. The survey was conducted online (CAWI) in

the period of August 28 – September 8, 2015. The data are weighted on the dimensions of age, gender, and geography on the basis of the overall population statistics from Statistics Denmark in order to be a representative sample of Danes aged 18-74 years.

As becomes evident in *Figure 2*, a considerable majority of the adult Danish population experiences that somebody in their closer circle of acquaintances has become *too dependent* on the use of one or more media. The survey also provides details about the media for which this is the case, and it is predominantly online media such as the mobile phone, internet, social media, and to some extent television that most people feel are responsible for this kind of overdependence. The widespread experience of being too dependent on various media may at a general level be said to confirm that media have restructured dependencies in everyday social life. However, the specific nature of these dependencies may involve different dimensions of both a psychological and sociological nature, and the space limitation of this predominantly theoretical essay prevents me from pursuing these dimensions in any detail. For instance, the personal, almost intimate relationship that many users develop with their mobile phone (Miller, 2014) bears witness to its social importance, but it may also entail separate psychological dimensions of dependency such as Fear of Missing Out, FoMO (Przybylsk et al., 2013). In line with the overall sociological perspective of this essay, I confine myself to a short explication of the problems of divided attention in social interaction on the basis of the results of this survey. *Figure 3* and *Figure 4* indicate that the presence of mobile phones and tablet computers during face-to-face interaction is often experienced as a problem, in the sense that people feel that other people and themselves are less present during the interaction. Almost half of the population often or very often experiences that other people are less present in a social situa-

tion, and 41% say it happens sometimes. When it comes to respondents' evaluations of their own presence, they experience it less often, but even here, 11% say it happens often, and 33% report it happens sometimes. The difference between the evaluation of other people's and one's own dependency on the media accords with the general third-person effect, stipulating that people generally think other people are more influenced by the media than they are themselves (White and Andsager, 2017).

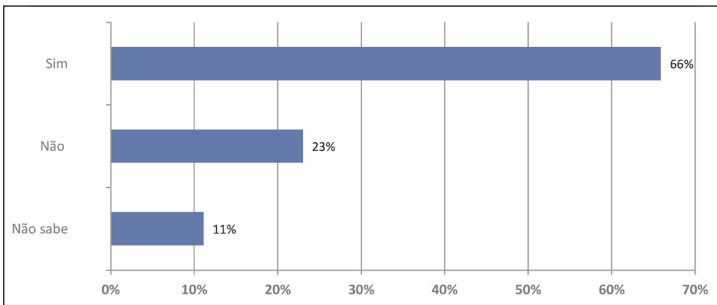


Figure 2. The widespread experience of other people being too dependent on various media. Question: “Do you know somebody in your closer circle of acquaintances who has become too dependent on the use of one or more media?” Base: Danish respondents aged 18-74 years. YouGov panel. N=1510.

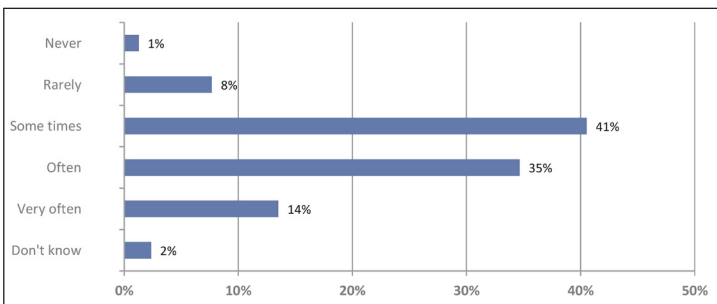


Figure 3. The experience of divided attention of other people. Question: “How often do you experience that mobile phones and tablet computers make people less present in the situation you are in?” Base: Danish respondents aged 18-74 years. YouGov panel. N=1510.

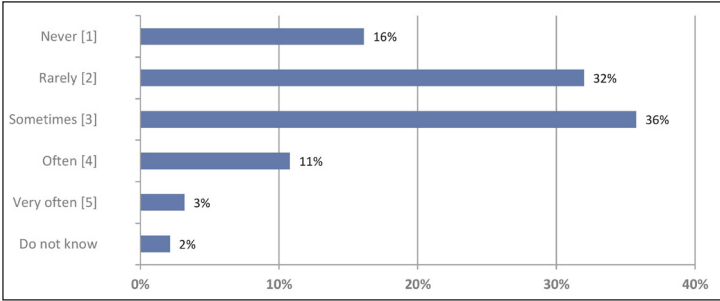


Figure 4. The experience of divided attention in your own behavior. Question: “How often do you experience that your own use of mobile phone or tablet computer makes you less present in the situation you are in?” Base: Danish respondents aged 18-74 years. YouGov panel. N=1510.

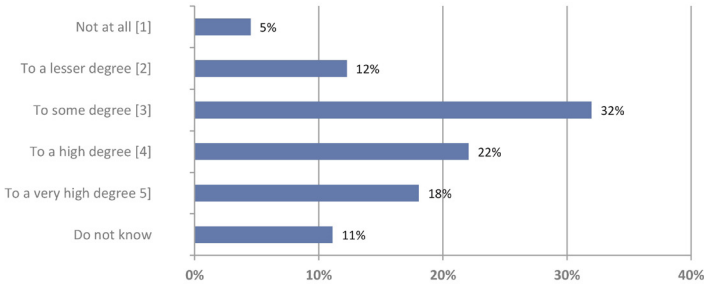


Figure 5. The necessity of having guidelines for the use of media in relation to work. Question: “To what degree do you think it is a good idea, if your workplace has guidelines for the use of media in relation to work (for example e-mail, internet, mobile phones)?” Base: Danish respondents aged 18-74 years who are or have been employed during the past year. YouGov panel. N=1070

The experience of both oneself and others as insufficiently present in face-to-face interaction due to the availability of online media may reflect that the informal social rules of negotiating the current social situation, including rules regarding the required presence and attention by participants, have come under pressure and have

not yet been sufficiently developed to manage ubiquitous online media. The survey also demonstrates that many people feel they need more formalized help to ensure that online media do not interfere unproductively in social interaction. When asked about the necessity of having guidelines stipulated for the use of media in relation to work (for example e-mail, internet, mobile phones), 40% of respondents reply that this would be a good idea to a high or very high degree. 32% think it is a good idea to some degree, 12% feel it is a good idea to a lesser degree, and just 5% think it is not a good idea at all. There may be many reasons for people wanting more formal guidelines for media use in connection to work, but it seems reasonable to suggest that people experience difficulties in demarcating the boundaries between work and other tasks, both in relation to ability to concentrate on work-related matters when they are supposed to be working and, conversely, being free of work when not present at the workplace. The increased technical connectivity and growing social interdependencies following the spread of online media are still in their early stages, and the necessary informal norms and formal rules for administering this new social landscape are not yet in place.

Intensified mediatization

The growing integration of various media into ever-more institutional contexts and into the situated interaction of daily life reflects an intensified form of mediatization. The era of mass media such as the press, radio, and television transformed public life and public institutions, particularly the political domain but also other cultural domains. The everyday flow of situated social interactions was clearly circumscribed and influenced by the presence of mass media, from the daily political interactions informed by news media to daily life's orientation towards

popular music, cinema, and broadcast entertainment. However, face-to-face micro social interactions were not permeated by technologies allowing every individual to interact with others not present in the physical location. This blending of physical and virtual worlds represents an intensified mediatization in which the 'life-world' of everyday life becomes more strongly connected to the 'system world' of various institutions, including the market (Habermas, 1989).

Dijck (2013) provides an interesting study that may elucidate how this interconnection between 'life-world' and 'system world' occurs through social media, although she does not herself make use of Habermas' categories. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become a taken-for-granted infrastructure for social interaction, and Dijck (2013) uses a historical study to trace how various social media have developed their operations by merging commercial and technological rationales with the users' norms of social interaction. Dijck and Poell (2013) label these operating principles as 'social media logics', consisting of programmability, popularity, connectivity, and datafication. These social media logics underlie new forms of online sociality in which systemic properties blend with life-world orientations:

Technological pressure from multiple platforms to select the most popular and most connected person or idea, is, in turn, reinforced by peer pressure in real life. Peer pressure has become a hybrid social and technological force; connections between people inform automated connections and vice versa (Dijck, 2013: 157).

The technological pressures are embedded in algorithms that not only augment already existing social motivations for individuals to seek the company of

others but are also designed to intensify this motivation and mold it to comply with systemic – including commercial – pressures to maximize the number of online interactions. Online media, including social media, allow for a reconfiguration of the relationship between system world and life-world in which interdependencies between various institutional contexts are spelled out in new and intensified ways. Dijck (2013) points to the interconnections between social media logics and norms of daily life, but as we have seen earlier, the processes of mediatization also relay new dependencies between the life-world and other institutional domains, not just to the media. In this manner, media make systemic structures and instrumental rationalities virtually present and important for communication in life-world encounters at the same time as the communicative life-world informs and becomes a resource – especially a data source – for the systemic parts of society. The digital footprint of life-world interactions becomes a valuable commodity that is sold and used for strategic purposes, such as product marketing and political campaigning.

The intensified mediatization of culture and society following the spread of digital and online media is often experienced as a Janus-faced development, simultaneously liberating for the individual and producing new forms of social dependency. These two aspects are not necessarily experienced equally by everyone. For some, individual opportunities seem to be the most prominent side of the story; for others, increased dependency seems to curtail the promise of the former. In order to sociologically understand these different experiences, we must move beyond both the paradigm of strong media effects and strong user effects by examining how media dependencies are embedded within a restructuration of social interdependencies between individuals, organizations, media, and different institutional domains.

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Between institution and organization

Muniz Sodré¹

Abstract: It is essential to us to distinguish between institution and organization in approaching the relationship between social institutions and mediatization. The intersubjectivity lived in the difference to the encodings operated by the media *dispositifs*. It means to clarify that mediatization is not a metaphor for a substantial totality, but the descriptive concept (as well as media is also a concept) of a process of qualitative changes in terms of the social configuration due to the articulation of electronic technology with human life. The virtual bios as biopower.

Keywords: Institution – Organization – Mediatization – Biopower

Introduction

In any correlation that can be done between institutional life and the ongoing mediatization in western

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techno-democracies, it seems strategic to take as a starting point a distinction that is not at all clear in the old sociological analysis of social functioning, that is, the distinction between organization and institutions.

It is generally assumed that both words indifferently designate the rules and the conduct for groups since they are recognized (what would not be the case for a criminal organization) in the process of social interaction. In this indifference, the banking organization may have the same degree of social recognition as an educational organization or institution. In the limit, however, the concept of the institution is reserved for a type of organization or regulation of conduits without strict purposes, in which the economic dimension does not prevail, for example. The institution defines a mode of regulation that ensures, in a lasting way, the transmission of an internally mandated knowledge. It is the case of the family, school, religion, army, etc., which are regulatory modes permeated and constituted by a multiplicity of forces and discourses, with pedagogical function, aimed at the member's agglutination.

In these regulatory behaviors, mediation is implied in all its semiotic and social complexity. Mediation is the act coming from any cognition, because it implies the transit or "communication" of the property from one element to another, by means of a third term. On this concept, the pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce addresses the essential issues of communication and representation in order to show how the mediating action of semiosis gets constituted. The latter is made possible by the *a priori* of a common, by the presupposition of a community dimension, inhabited by a quasi-mind, a kind of "community mind" or *commens*.

The pragmatist is theoretically concerned with the individualized process of linguistic communication. But by invoking the concept of community (reciprocal action

between agent and patient, therefore, communication as being-in-common, fusional bonding between one and another), it gives way for the expansion of its scope to the collective dimension, where attachment appears as the radicality of differentiation and rapprochement between human beings, and, hence, *the sensitive strategy that establishes the essence of the communicative process*, which John Dewey called “communal interaction.”

In the discursive circle of philosophy, this is a strongly outstanding concept of Hegel’s thought, which rejects a hypothesis of intuitive or immediate knowledge of things. Mediation is the activity originating from any cognition: the human being is necessarily mediated. What Hegel calls “real and true man” results from his interaction with others; therefore, the idea that man makes of himself (his ‘self’) depends on the mediation, which expresses the recognition of the other.

If we reinterpret this argumentation from a genealogical perspective of the constitution of the organized social group, we will arrive at the word “relationship”, denoting the connections in the spheres of production and exploration, held by groups within the same group or with other aggregations, which leads to the understanding of social as a totality or a system of relations. The social (*socius*) is a historical, modern notion developed in the context of judicial relations between subjects and diverse from what is implied in notions like *ritual* or *community*, in which predominates an intersubjective linkage generally disregarded by sociological analysis. However, it is from the cultural *linkage* or intertwining constitutive of the social being that arise the institutions capable of functioning as operators of human identity. The discourses, fictions, and myths of the foundation of the historical community that presides over identifications with the nation-state, with values (community, family, work, etc.), and the *ethos* or collective emotional atmosphere are binding.

The idea of the bond applied to the constitution of the psyche is also developed in psychoanalytic theory by the Argentinean Pichon-Rivière, who locates the material bases of the historicity of the individual within a *binding structure*, with internal and external bonding². In general, linking (unlike just relating) is much more than a mere interactive process, because it presupposes the social and existential insertion of the individual from the imaginary dimension (latent and manifest images) to the deliberations on the orientation behavior, that is, values.

The binding is properly *symbolic*, in the sense of a radical demand for the sharing of existence with the Other, therefore, within a deep logic of duties towards the *socius*, beyond any instrumental rationalism or any corporate functionality. To understand: men maintain, with each other, an existential bond, in turn, articulated with the social totality, which designs the space-time of a social formation. Mediation between the bond and society is operated by something like what Rethel called a “social synthesis³”, that is, a series of institutional functions that guide behaviors and attitudes. For him, the structures of socially necessary thought at one time are closely linked to the forms assumed by the social synthesis.

The knowledge of the institution is an idea, as linkage, and behavior. But it is trans-individual knowledge – so, for Marcel Mauss, the institution is a way of thinking and doing independent of the individual. At the strictly institutional level, the behavioral way of conduct has to do with the ontology of human ways of perceiving and doing something in the world. The acts of perceiving, feeling, thinking, knowing, striving, and doing imply bringing one-

2 According to PICHON-RIVIÈRE, Enrique. *Teoría del vínculo*. Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1979.

3 This concept is introduced by SOHN-RETHEL, Alfred. *Lavoro intellettuale e lavoro manuale – theory della sintesi sociale*. Milan: Feltrinelli Editore, 1979.

self to the encounter (“with”) of a common, which is the agglutinating center of the institution.

One of the notions sociologically compatible with this common is that of civil society that, as early as the mid-eighteenth century, the Scottish philosopher Adam Ferguson opposed to the concept of an isolated individual. The word ‘civil’ (derived from the Latin *civilis*, the genitive of the substantive *civis*, citizen) connotes the idea of the subject disengaged from a state function, more specifically, from a military obligation. The etymology is pertinent here, since the term maintains, in its historical reinterpretations, the tension of the difference between State and people. In Kant, the notion of civil society is amplified as the idea of a whole constitutionally constructed by a legitimate power (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) to guarantee the freedom of the subjects: a civil and political constitution (*pactum unionis civilis*) would build the ‘perfect civil society’.

In contrast, Hegel distinguishes State from civil society, assigning to the former a primacy of actions directed to universal interests and reserving to the second (that he also calls *systems of needs*) the place of actions committed to individual or private interests; the man of civil society is, thus, the same as the one of work or production and, therefore, engages in the political and cultural hegemony of its social group over the whole of society.

From this line of thought, critically pursued by Marx and Engels, Gramsci departed to reject the Hegelian distinction between State and civil society in favor of the idea of a totality – not in the Kantian way but in the Marxist, therefore, conflictual way – where class struggles unfold. In this “integral state” or “enlarged state”, however, he distinguishes between political society (source of actions submitted by state power to constitutional or legal control) of civil society, understood as the social basis of concrete forms of organization of visions of world, sociability,

and culture, where the struggles for hegemony, that is to say, by the consensual force of convincing or of ideological imposition, take place. In Gramsci's view, civil society is, par excellence, the space of political activity.

Outside the Marxist framework of class struggle, there are analysts who depoliticize the concept of *civil society*, transforming it into a kind of "third sector" that contemplates "smaller objects", driven only by state and market forces, such as Wolfe states: "Civil society has its attention turned to families, communities, voluntary organizations, unions, and spontaneous base movements – all these forms of social organization, defined by the fact that they are surrounded by even larger and more abstract institutions. The fundamental characteristic of civil society is that it is flexible, available and open to ordinary people, to everyday life"⁴.

That is, in the view of this American researcher, the civil society is the place of the predominance of institutions, conceived as logical figures of a territoriality related to the commitment of communities with their environment, active and responsible in relation to social rights – almost media, neutralizing social class oppositions effectively acting in the historical real of a social group. Ultimately, it is a place of balance between the obligations and the rights inherent in the institutional functioning of social relations.

In any case, however, there is at stake in civil society the institutionalization, understood as the social condition deriving from the *Constitution*, in the sense given

4 From the original: "A sociedade civil tem sua atenção voltada para famílias, comunidades, organizações voluntárias, sindicatos e movimentos de base espontâneos – todas essas modalidades de organização social, definidas pelo fato de que estão cercadas por instituições ainda maiores e mais abstratas. A característica fundamental da sociedade civil é que ela é flexível, disponível e aberta às pessoas comuns, à vida cotidiana". WOLFE, Alan. *Três caminhos para o desenvolvimento: mercado, estado e sociedade civil*. In: *A democracia como proposta*. Rio de Janeiro: IBASE, 1991, p. 36. (Coleção Democracia, v. 1).

to this word by the notorious German political thinker and jurist Carl Schmitt, that is, not the content of laws or norms (what he calls “constitutional law”) but the fundamental and sovereign political decision of the people in a democratic regime, of which it is a social, juridical, and political reflection⁵.

On the other hand, the encounter with the common aim of the institution has so far had an ontology of perception and knowledge dependent on a matrix of thought (Platonic and Aristotelian) that defines being as presence and the real as any ‘first substance’ or every ‘individual’ that is represented in an individualized way. At the same time, the individual has a body, which makes any and all ontological thinking an ontology of the body, whether it is manifested by faculties of sensible or intelligible apprehension. Within that scope, a thought or an action is as bodily as an object.

An *organization*, in its turn, is defined by the regulation of objective and common purposes but circumscribed on the production of goods and services – thus, it is essentially limited to the productive sector –, although there are *voluntary organizations* (trade unions, political parties, non-governmental organizations, etc.) aimed at the defense of group interests. The organization is also trans-individual but, unlike the institution, it arises from a rational deliberation on the part of an individual or a group, in contrast to the spontaneous or communitarian genesis of the institution, which develops at the organic core of the *historical element*. The organization is primarily articulated because it has *power to do* (an extrinsic dimension, inverse to the intrinsic one of knowledge) but it only leads to its contractual acceptance and not to the internalization of its rules of operation. This does not mean that both regulatory modes are completely sepa-

5 According to SCHMITT, Carl. *Teoría de la Constitución*. Madrid: Editorial de Derecho Privado. 1934.

rate or contain no common elements (e.g., knowledge is also power), but the sociological difference is made by the prevalence of the characteristics listed.

The prevalent media in the public space (*mainstream media* or corporate media) is organizational in all the variation of its technological modalities. Of course, it has its specificity, which makes it different from other active organizations in the productive field of social life. It recognizes the functioning of corporate media through the articulation between techniques and contents related to public information, entertainment and cultural diffusion. It is the same as saying “editing” in the broad sense: the media edits, in stable productive conditions (public, temporal serialization, implicit semiotic negotiations), materials inherent to the symbolic dimension; that is, the dimension in which primordially the *subjectivization* of human beings takes place.

It is not, therefore, the strictly technical meaning of editing, but rather the comprehensiveness of a *dispositif* in which specific relations of knowledge and power intersect in a sphere of meaning separate from the traditional processes of institutionalization. In this term (philosophical extraction made from current meanings in the legal, technological and military spheres), the characteristics of institution and organization are united because it lends itself conceptually to both the imposition of forms (power) and the interiorization of emotions (feelings, beliefs, knowledge). Foucault manages “*dispositif*” as a far-reaching strategic resource to investigate the logic of the *historical element* – institutions, power relations, subjectivization processes – in its organizational concreteness, bypassing the macro-rationality of “universals” (entities such as Law, State, Power, etc.).

The media is one among other *dispositifs*, some of which are as old as the history of man. But it can be summarized as a *socio-technical dispositif*, if not as a tech-

nological form of appropriation of the traditional mechanisms of the symbolic production. In it, the ancient rites, narratives, and customs characteristic of particular communities, as well as instrumental to the regime of visibility/invisibility adopted by the hegemonic classes, are partially and progressively replaced by a semiotic universe increasingly concentrated and controlled by the media forms of the *public sphere*.

There it *establishes*, in an organizational way, what sociology recognizes as a *cultural field*, a space for the production and distribution of cultural products, but also for scenarios of struggle for the symbolic domination, that is, for the power to impose representations, lifestyles, and perspectives, giving visibility to determined fractions of social class. The canonical expression *cultural industry*, proposed by the Frankfurt School (Adorno and Horkheimer), corresponds to the notion of a transnational monopoly of this field by organizations increasingly symbiotic or transparent to traditional institutions, but away from the scope of any cultural transivities between people and Nation, eventually present in mobilizations of what could be called “national-popular culture”. Long before Adorno, in the mid-nineteenth century, the writer Gustave Flaubert had launched the expression “industrial culture” (in the novel *Bouvard and Pécuchet*) to refer, with a critical spirit, to the intransitive culture of the manuals.

But the cultural industry conceived by the Frankfurt School was already an incipient design of the globalized cartography of culture. The reality described half a century ago by this expression referred to the most visible tip of the iceberg (television, film, radio, magazines, records, etc.) whose shadow hung over the erudite nucleus of culture, whereas mediatization corresponds to all of this, with the addition of the barely visible part of the digital infrastructure, basically numerical. Images (in the broad sense, not just visual) produced by the media

began to channel individual representations, generating social and political effects, ideologically creating another type of common. Here, the organization takes the reins of hegemony.

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Institutions & Mediatization - a communicational view

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Abstract:

The article presents a perspective on relations between social institutions and mediatization. To this end, it proposes an angle to articulate the two terms: the communicational processes of society. Regarding the communicational phenomenon as a dynamic that generates institutions, it assumes social communication as broader than media processes. The article discusses characteristics of institution and media in this perspective. The process of mediatization is perceived according to five different angles. Stating that all are valid, it considers, however, that research driven by one or another point of view has different potential for knowledge development. It indicates, therefore, the most pertinent ones for the discovery of characteristics of mediatization in a communicational perspective.

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1. Introduction

The theme proposed for the participants of the 'Institutions and Mediatization' panel discussion implies an approach: what relations do we intend to emphasize between the two terms?

Sociology certainly looks at the latter from its perspective on the former and has offered relevant insights in this framework. In our viewpoint, however, to deepen the question we must add a third term: communication - that is the angle through which we want to observe both concepts and their relations.

Our interest about media - in the field of Communication studies - stems from perceiving them as institutions focused on processes expressly related to social communication. From the twentieth century onwards, media have shown a growing relevance in the organization of society, in which we perceive mutual incidences between media institutions and political, economic, social, cultural and educational issues.

In spite of this strong incidence of media logics, they are part of a broader and more diversified set of modes of the human communicational phenomenon. Knowledge of mediatization, as well as of social institutions, requires special attention to the communication processes that, in different ways, permeate these spheres of exercise and social apprehension.

In their social actions, human beings always exert interactions, whether to pursue their goals or simply to be in society. Human communication involves any and all process to articulate differences, aimed at coping with shared problems. One characteristic of those processes, perceived in my research activity, is that it articulates, at least, two elements:

- something that was already shared, which serves as a bridge to the articulation of otherness: established rules and logics;
- an interpretation and adjustment activity to take into account the circumstances of the specific situation of the world, the positions of the participants, the interactional problem at hand.

An inevitable consequence of this articulation is that the initially shared elements are modified, at the end of the interactional episodes, by the communication process itself. The rationale developed here relates to the specificity of the issues on which interactions turn as a way of facing them.

We assume, therefore, the communicational phenomenon as a first: all social participants - organizations, sectors of interest and individuals - are constantly involved in the generation of interactional logics and, by simple activation, in the transformation of social rules.

Our criterion of the relationship between institutions and mediatization comes from this premise.

2. Institutions

The term social institution refers to a set of socially shared (instituted) rules, with some stability over time, that organize social activities (behaviors, values, circulation of ideas and practices) according to the logics constituted in the process of institutionalization. Institutions enable and give meaning to social interactions that occur within it. Castoriadis considers that “real social relations” [...] get always *instituted*, not because they have a legal expression [...], but because they have been established as *universal, symbolized and sanctioned ways of doing* (1982, second emphasis added).

Institutions are not the origin of social rules; they are rather the result of the search for ways to face socially occurring problems. Precisely because they result of the always relative success of the game between goals and strategies, they become the realm and expression of these rules once developed - maintaining their legitimacy as long as the rules mostly fulfill their promises.

In this respect, the institution is seen, above all, from its symbolic dimension. We refer to the political institution, family, justice, education, citizenship. Each of these sets corresponds to the historically established collection of standardized ways of facing issues, as a criterion of belonging and validity of actions. Such a set of patterns does not necessarily get governed by explicit rules - but always corresponds to regular practices. Its composition, its legitimacy, its guiding validity have been historically developed by the tensions and responses found in social practice to solve the problems that manifest themselves.

We often use the term “media” to refer to the cultural industry. As Muniz Sodré suggested in our panel discussion on the subject, “institution” defines compulsorily internalized modes of social regulation, corresponding to cultural patterns that shape society - “the media” would be rather an *organization* than an *institution*. It is a relevant distinction. On the other hand, we must consider that social communication processes got instituted in the Western culture as a result of practices and regulations surrounding these organizations. And yet: social institutions are often developed and formalized by procedures of organizations operating their continuity. Organizations are part of Castoriadis’ “legal expression” - told not only by verbal norms but also by a material design and by operators. It is from this perspective that we can refer to the media-organization as a “media institution” which it embodies as the main agent.

Thus, the concept of social institution unfolds. On the one hand, it corresponds to the set of rules and standards articulated in a coherent system, which configures a realm of the social order - in which the relevant activities and behaviors are designed to exercise in cultural harmony. From the other angle, observed from the material and operational dimension, we call "institution" the organizations (public or private) that undertake, in social practice, the operations correlated to those orders and patterns of behavior. This is the material burden and the concrete action resulting from what gets instituted and ensures its maintenance - which justifies the extension of the word to refer to the operational element.

For the communicational perspective, language is also an institution. As Vincent Descombes states: "Language is not a technique of personal expression, nor a convention between two subjects, but a social institution" (1996, 280). This institution goes beyond the codified system of signs (the language itself) to cover, in a pragmatic perspective, the cultural patterns of language use, its referential activation, and also its actions in society.

Castoriadis, while maintaining the distinction between language and institution, observes its correlation: "We first find the symbolic, of course, in languages. But we also find it, to another degree and in another way, in institutions" (1982, p. 142). He further proposes that "[the] domain of the symbolism of institutions would not pose [...] problems essentially different from those of the domain of language (by abstracting [...] its material 'burden' - classes, weapons, objects, etc.)" (p. 153).

Although the "material burden" is not part of the language as a system of signs, in the perspective of interactional processes, languages must also get approached from the angle of their uses, institutional operators - and social invention.

3. Institutions & Communication

We have a verbal language that enables our communication. Given that the human species has been able to generate a code system as effective for highly diversified interactions, of course we communicate according to the logics of this system, or of each language in which this system is organized. Correlatively, the other social institutions are suppliers of their logics as an established ground (shared within a culture) for any communication effort that develops in its symbolic environment.

We can do this relationship between institutions and the process of communication: institutions build social spheres, with logics and historically established patterns that give form and articulation to the interactions that occur there. The imposing socio-cultural institutions are common references and are what the social participants share. Despite the differences between human beings, communication takes these patterns as a reference: in any environment and for all social objectives, we attend to the rules and logics of the institutions in which we get immersed.

On the other hand, it is important to underline that the activation of these patterns, in the diversity of social circumstances, continuously stresses and modifies - in the short or long term - the instituted rules. We must also perceive a communication that *precedes* institutions. Merleau-Ponty makes the following proposition:

[...] what about the first speech of humanity? It did not rely on an already established language [...] The principle of communication was already given before it by the fact that man perceived another man in the world as part of the spectacle (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2007, p. 85).

An issue that arises from this proposition is about the genesis of language. We hypothesize that the human

being developed verbal language from a biological competence for interaction (BRAGA, 2015). Society exists only because human beings communicate - to affirm this corresponds to assuming that social communication is a dynamic that generates all social patterns and rules that at some point get considered established (BRAGA, 2010). Language and, through it, other institutions are developed based on the need and competence for communication.

Disposing of established institutions favors interaction - the communicational processes follow such logics, already elaborated. On the other hand, we must be attentive to communication as a “first” - to the invention of social patterns through human interaction. Society invents and develops its institutions from interactional processes directed towards the solution of its problems - practical and interpretive of the world.

In the article “O que a comunicação transforma?” (BRAGA, 2013), I have called these two modes of occurrence, respectively, “weak communication” and “strong communication”. In the first case, we would have the interactional processes that would merely activate whatever is already available, without significant stress on established modes and practices. In the second case, the interactional episodes stress, intentionally or not, the shared “ways of saying and acting”, trying and developing tactics against the usual. This may occur due to the unusual situations, by a critical attitude of the participants, due to the goals sought or even by a relative lack of knowledge of the cultural matrices.

The distinction between strong and weak communication is analytic, because in social reality one can perceive a diffused and continuous communicational action, now closer to the mere activation of rules, sometimes with some degree of tension - and not just two distinct and mutually exclusive modes. Somehow, interaction always activates available patterns, but it also produces potentially

deviations. Irrespective of any punctual creativity, in the long run, the most anodyne activations have the power to undermine and to mislead, by their interactional strategies, the most established rules.

4. Media

The mainstream media got organized throughout the twentieth century. In addition to the cultural industry establishing itself as an organization that operates institutionalized standards, it has directly developed socially and culturally articulated logics of action and interaction with specific implications in the comprehensive social system. Correlatively, it comes to get perceived as an autonomous institution - distinct from the others.

The main distinction is that the media institution has characteristic features to develop activities perceived as "communication": information about events; controversy, debate, agonistic; persuasion; symbolic exchanges; aesthetic fruition; narratives; opinion building; entertainment; learning... It is in this space that the Communication professions get developed.

At an early stage, audiovisual media appeared as if it were transparent ("a window into the world") - where the emphasis would be essentially on showing what is in reality, as if in a neutral way, only passing on the occurrences of society itself, giving generalized access and replacing the need for displacement. For a long time, too, it has also enjoyed an image of mere articulator of the other social fields (RODRIGUES, 1990).

To the extent of its independence as an institution, its own logics and distinct characteristics get confirmed as a specific social field, defined by the specialized operations of the communicational realm.

Unlike the media, different institutions have other defined objectives, which are not essentially focused on

communication, but on their main objectives: educational, public organization of society, security, social reproduction of reality, primary socialization, economic organization, legal regulation, religious order, citizenship, defense of democracy, production of scientific knowledge, artistic creation, etc. However, to carry out their procedures and meet their specific objectives, institutions and their organizations must be in constant interaction with the social environment - which means that the "communication" component is increasingly defined as central, in the course of the twentieth century.

For a certain period, media institutions had a great deal of hegemony over the activation and the ways of using interaction technologies - subjecting other institutions to audiovisual languages and to professional skills developed within the cultural industry. The mediatization process is what will modify these relationships.

5. Mediatization

A distinction must be made between "media" and "mediatization" - between an institutional complex and a process. When we adopt the word "mediatization", we are no longer talking only of media/cultural industry logics, but also of actions that unfold in the diffused social environment (in their various communicational actions) - by the increased activation of interactional technologies not necessarily ruled by cultural industry and its logics.

Corresponding to institutional emphases and modes of relationship to which attention is given, the term "mediatization" offers different aims and scope. We can use the expression, alternatively, for the following situations and objects:

- a) The media production itself, which puts the resulting products into circulation. The expression then involves the relations of the

products and processes of the media with their reception, overlapping with the effects of other social institutions (family, educational field, political field, etc.). Perhaps this would be the usual meaning of the word, in common sense - correlated to the simple fact that any subject is in the media.

- b) Themes of society that usually got addressed according to the logics of the different relevant institutions, which got dealt with according to frequent logics in media institutions. If in common sense directed actions of the media institutions towards society get emphasized, here we can already perceive more diffuse actions of the society itself, adopting “languages” and ways of perceiving the reality that until then were present in the media.
- c) As a kind of dynamization of the previous angle, the fact that the logics of media institutions will influence all social fields in a generalized way - leading to transformations in other institutions. This perspective is competently studied by Stig Hjarvard (2014).

In this third angle, what is perceived today is that the logics (rules, standards) of media institutions have an impact on the logics and practices of other institutions in that they offer an expanded potentiality (in quantitative and qualitative terms) to ensure modes of interaction in favor of the different institutional objectives. That is: the media become direct providers of “ways to communicate”. What media organizations have instituted becomes the “already shared” element, as a bridge to interactions in other domains.

Correlatively, part of this aspect is a kind of procedural submission of the other institutions and the social system in general. This, of course, stems from the set of spe-

cialized skills developed by the cultural industries in the twentieth century, that formed a professional body, from their production techniques, and from technology-related languages.

- d) We can also talk about mediatization referring to the redirection of new digital technologies to communicational actions - technologies transformed into media and communication devices. To the extent that actionable technologies (hardware and software) for interactive purposes become less costly, more manageable, without the need for professional teams, and more diversified in their possible activations, they no longer fit only in strictly instituted and systematized spaces. Here, digital potentialities made possible less formatted realms and, therefore, more open to social experimentation - both for technical applications and for interactional attempts.
- e) Finally, as the fifth point in this list, which is certainly not exhaustive, it is the fact that society starts to *develop its media processes, suitable for the activities of its specific interest*. These, as we pointed out before, are not primarily communicational, but are strongly related to the requirement of interacting with other institutions and fields, organized or not, of society. Such a social invention of interactional procedures can originate directly from the most diverse social institutions, from diffuse environments in society and even from individual actors, through behaviors not inscribed in institutionalized processes. Under these conditions, an experimental activity searching for suitable standards is inevitable.

The fourth and fifth points in some way reverse the focus given by the previous angle (third aspect). Instead of emphasizing the fact that the media influence other social institutions, they place greater emphasis on the initiatives of the other institutions. Different social fields unquestionably imitate and undergo the influence of the logics established by the media institutions, but also invent and develop other modes of interaction that trigger media technologies.

Beside this, what is experienced on social networks impacts on the more established media institutions themselves. At the same time, the ongoing experimentation on social networks has the potential to generate other less typical institutional environments. An interesting example is that of media monitoring organizations. Although they do not have a purpose defined as “professional” (so as do the great audiovisual media), they develop their activities and seek their objectives in close connection with expressly social communication processes, in social environment.

To do this, however, they must develop tactics, strategies, and rules stable enough to constitute their own logics of interaction, through the mediatization of various social activities. Not rarely, ad hoc media technologies get invented. In this case, the technology must meet the requirements of social communication, not the reverse - particularly regarding arrangements and attempts to activate the available software.

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We do not propose to consider just one of these relations between mediatization and institutions - as if the other alternatives were misleading. They all correspond to aspects that occur actually in a complex phenomenon and are relevant to the scrutiny of what takes place in the various circumstances.

Perceiving the difference between definitions and making choices between them results from the specific goal of knowledge. As we focus on one approach or another, we will do different research - and, therefore, we will find out differentiated aspects of reality.

Within my knowledge goals, it is especially important to develop the fourth and fifth points - which seem relevant in a communicational perspective on social mediatization. We also find that the very logics of the established media institution are substantially tensioned, today - as has been pointed out, for example, in the field of journalism, the strategies of television production, and the music industry. It is important to emphasize that this tension does not only arise from the technological development (as sometimes gets emphasized) but also, and particularly, from the social process changes, from the interactional expectations of the broader society, and from the logics that are directly there elaborated.

6. The problem of social interactions in the realm of mediatization

The interactional question we are focusing on, in the fourth and fifth perspectives above, is that all social institutions and individual actors have the possibility (at least potentially) of actively developing their own tactics of mediatized interaction - leading to a diffuse and disperse proliferation of interaction processes.

We can see, in this instance, two logics in mutual tension:

- the institutional "media logics" (from cultural industry), historically established throughout the twentieth century, are expanding due to the autonomy of the media institution and the social relevance of communication professionally mediated by media. As these are the most institutionalized logics established, they tend to be

adopted and obeyed by other institutions. It is an element already shared, which enables interaction.

- on the other hand, in the general social sphere, there are interactional problems not directly solved by those logics nor by the influence of the media on other institutions. In other words, the already shared is not enough - there are no established social codes, no interactional patterns. Such problems have as their starting point the specific objectives of the institutions, but also the imported logics themselves when they do not adjust or generate unforeseen results - leading to other tentative elaborations.

We can point out some of such processes, perceptible in our daily life, whatever the observed institutions:

- The interactional logics among social participants are no longer the same, in family, state, established professional fields, education, intellectual, academic or artistic environments. Even when we do not focus on directly mediatized interactions, the permeation of the participants in a culture of mediatization modifies their behavior and expectations.
- Given the availability of the diversified media processes, the usual interactional logics of different institutions with interlocutors (their audience, social environment, other institutions, clients, users, patients, etc.) do not work as before in this society.
- External social participants, usually not recognized as a legitimate part of a social field, acquire the possibility of speech and action incidence in previously controlled institutional circuits.
- Even more directly, *external participants generate alternative circuits*, in which they deal

with issues that previously got only dealt with in the circuits controlled by the logics of the given institution. Concrete examples appear daily – in psychology, in the educational field, in the family-care organization, in the broad field of politics.

- Thus, in an earlier situation (say pre-media or of mediatization restricted to cultural industry), different social institutions could dictate the rules of their own interaction with the environment - and select privileged interlocutors in the general environment, interacting with them according to their own rules. Now, this interaction partially escapes the control of the rules by the institution. It is necessary to interact (possibly in defensive mode) with all social sectors. A specialized social field may get challenged from any point in society, including areas without any recognized legitimacy.

As a consequence of the above points, we find that established media logics - historically developed through experimental processes in the field of the *media* - will not automatically be adequate for other institutions, non-media: for a simple matter of lack of code relevance, or due to incompatibility of inferential processes.

If at first, because of their media inexperience, institutions and social fields adopt the logics proposed by the already acknowledged media institutions, then specific experiments are made - directly related to the particular problems that develop in the specific framework of each institution.

Two angles of communicational action appear here: to follow established logics in the media institutions (the “already shared”) due to established practices, and to experiment and test *ad hoc* logics for each emergent problem due to new conditions.

The tension between these two logics is a relevant question in media research as a communicational issue of the present time, produced by distinct patterns of logics.

7. Conclusion

A relevant angle to research mediatization processes of society is to investigate these experiments, these tentative developments, in which all social institutions - and external sectors in tension with institutions - adopt, readjust, and invent new logics of interaction by activating contemporary media.

This corresponds to a double relationship between mediatization and institutions.

On the one hand, recognizing that interactional processes occur in institutionalized ambiances, the established rules, standards and social codes are the shared basis by which social communication develops. Considering the aspects of mediatized communication that proliferate in society, it is natural that the media institutions (which have developed as a social field professionalized in communication activities) have a particular incidence in the directions of mediatization.

On the other hand, in multiple instituted spaces, as well as in the diffuse space of common sense, experiments are triggered for the invention of codes and adjustments of rules to unforeseen situations. In this context, however established standards are known, the rules and ways of acting are much less defined or taken as necessary. Space is opened for the tentative, for the experimental, as the very necessity of the conditions of occurrence. It is in this space that the communicational incidence, always present, becomes more noticeable.

It is necessary to emphasize that the expression "experimentation" is not used in an evaluative sense (as if the mere fact of experimenting were more valuable than

just reiterating already tested procedures). It is only a descriptive requirement – in order to deepen the knowledge of this aspect of reality. Facing unusual situations - where neither established patterns nor entrenched cultural tendencies offer ready responses or established modes of interactional action - social participants find themselves in the contingency of trial-and-error, of more or less artful attempts that appear locally relevant (that is, for the specific goals of communication). The results depend on the circumstances, the present objectives, the tensions and previous sharing, the qualitative degree of *social inventiveness*.

In a situation like the present one - where technological development gets accelerated, in which the own media experience of the twentieth century has become quite widespread, in which there is evidence of a generalized perception of the prevalence of the communication-phenomenon in society, in which elements of tension, previously contained in more or less specialized circuits, are shown in co-presence, and exposed to general perception - it is natural that social experimentation becomes comprehensive and diversified.

It is relevant to research the communicational processes that manifest at this juncture - and that will provide a broadened perception of the logics of mediatization. Some arguments show the importance of such a research angle. In the realm of social mediatization, we can observe human communication directly in its process of transformation and creation of institutions. In this limit-situation, communication knowledge opens a front for research and contributions to social thinking. This will allow us to broaden our knowledge about the human communicational phenomenon itself since, more usually, we study “weak communication” - the one that develops mainly in the institutional spheres, following, without criticism, the established standards. In a praxiological perspective, me-

diatization is the space in which a critique of the media can manifest itself beyond what got already established. It is possible to criticize the institution's own referrals - activated in experimentation by institutions, by dispersed individual actors - eventually, against the prevailing institutions. This criticism is fundamental, because there lies, in maturation, what will characterize, in the future, the social institutions.

In these research angles, we must consider mediatization beyond the merely operational actions of different social fields - seeking to perceive in the set of activities that are associated to it an *instituting process* - which is relevant precisely because it entails strains on the standards of all established institutions (in different degrees and rhythms of transformation) and enables the generation of other arrangements, devices and institutions in the regulation of the interactions of society.

In summary, the adopted perspective proposes that the tendency to the mediatization of society corresponds to a search for interactional processes in a situation of rearrangements - which implies major and minor changes in all social institutions (including the media one), with possible repercussions in the ways these institutions get constituted, and in the attainable development of other institutional processes.

Researches that seek the specificities of the processes inherent to each institutional framework are necessary and productive for communicational studies.

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**FIFTH PART – MEANS,
DISPOSITIFS, AND
MEDIATIZATION**

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Narrative fiction and mediatization: on their relations

*Oscar Traversa*¹

Introduction: Narrativity and narrative fiction have had a long journey among the activities of Homo sapiens; it could almost be said that they have always been a part of their history. If they have been and still are present in their different works, they are also present in their unique developments, thus contributing to their ontogeny and identity. This double feature connects the individual actors with themselves and with the whole of social actors; at the same time, it gives place to the link with the resources which are produced by their fabric: the institutions. These resources are no other than the devices destined to allow for the externalizations of the mind in order to give way, in short, to discursive exchanges. These are inscribed, in the long term, on the process known as mediatization, which profits from the semiotic episodes resulting from the aptitudes of the species and the social developments artic-

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ulated by the technical procedures. This work consists of the introduction of a certain number of aspects, which are characteristic of the connections between narrativity and mediatization, with the purpose of giving room to a field of hypotheses with operational aims and abductive in nature, which refer to the curious phenomenon of mediatization, which entails both the change and the permanence of the attributes of the species, integrated to its works.

Keywords: Fiction; Narrativity; Mediatization; Ontogeny; Specificity.

Narrative fiction and mediatization: paths for an encounter

The analyses of the phenomena concerning the connections between fiction and mediatization -which emphasise their bond as determining or at least existing- in the long lasting history of the changes in the communication processes, are scarce and lack unity. Establishing the connections between those references entails a selection effort, since it is not the main reasons, but the approximate side comments, which justify the flaws in the references we will appeal to.

Thus, the approaches to narrative fiction and mediatization, in this text, will be only dealt with in approximation, diagonally we might say, characteristic of independent developments that have not been pointed as correspondent to this connection but which, nevertheless, are impossible to ignore since they constitute valuable previous contributions. Being thorough as regards these references is no easy task due to their dispersion; for the time being, we will only mention a few, and profit from their advancements in order to outline a temporary initial hypothesis with the aims of an abductive reasoning. On the other hand, we will resort to those who have specifically devoted their work to some of the terms we will

attempt to connect, either from functional or historical point of view.

We can find, on the one hand, the reflections on fiction and also narration without the former attribute, which has a long journey in the history of thought, whose existence in the Western world can be traced back to the Graeco-Roman culture. The other reflections, the ones on mediatisation, can only be traced back to a few years' time, in connection to a set of disciplines, with no definite boundaries: Communication Sciences, together with Anthropology and Semiotics. The concerns of the latter on this issue have existed for a bit more than half a century (LAPIERRE; ALVARACO 2014)². The set of these disciplines was preceded by Sociology, concerned specially for the "effects" of communication as from the 1920s, with the coming of the radio (LAZARFELD, 1958). The temporal asymmetry and the hidden worries have nonetheless been fruitful; some examples are philologists Havelock (1996) and McLuhan (1998), historians Williams (1992), Briggs and Burke (2002) and, among paleoanthropologists, Leroi-Gourham (1965).

Long-standing reflections on fiction, insofar as they were interested in classical languages or traditional cultures, glimpsed the connections between orality and writing, stressing the presence of poetic procedures without ignoring their insertion into complex narrative structures which demonstrate the relations between the great configurations of the oral and the written and their diverse possibilities, natural to the setting in the different situations where they can be found, resulting from the technical developments of writing (ZUMTHOR, 1987).

The historians stand separately, depending on their object, media studies on one side and literature

2 Lapierre and Alvarado have written an interesting review in which they evoke the 50 years of "Communications" magazine and which they dedicate to Eliseo Verón, without including any of his works, as responsible for the articulation of the French and the American thoughts in the field of semiotics.

studies on another; vicariously together with those who tend to move from one to another as required by their object, this is the case of those study the history of reading (CHARTIER; CAVALLO. 1997; DARTON, 2003).

Those who carried out the longest-dated observations, the paleoanthropologists, are oddly the ones who raised issues of great relevance when they studied iconic writings (in caves or instruments) they have faced the lack of written references and, therefore, their work -this they have stated out loud- stands in the field of tentative hypotheses.

So far, we have made reference to those concerned with writing and to the ones who have studied the long haul past. But is it necessary to add that, in shorter periods of time, given their recent appearance, the great technological findings of the 19th and 20th centuries have been only belatedly incorporated to the social sciences and usually not in a systematic manner, since the university organizations -the academic world in general- were reluctant to include photography, phonography, radio, cinema, and TV into their reflection universe (digitalization enjoyed the spaces earned by its predecessors), all of them, precisely, protagonists of the media and, consequently, of mediatization.

It is necessary to recognize that the term mediatization is the one which has added an element of ambiguity to these asymmetrical and scattered categories. Whereas the phenomenon in itself is evident since the unfolding of the media shows diverse relations with narrativity and since this is experienced by the whole of social actors, all of them are in one way or another (and have always been) fiction consumers. However, the questions about the reason for such "fatal junction," the ways it takes and its consequences are still scattered, recent issues. In Latin America, at least, the term mediatization itself in reference to an autonomous phenomenon dates back to 1985, was made

known in a conference delivered by Eliseo Verón at the University of Buenos Aires.

Even the period of time through which mediatization has been developed has given way to the fixation of heterogeneous criteria; certain authors came to believe that the mediatization phenomena were initiated (or incremented) with writing or the printing press, or in the 20th century (HJARVARD, 2008), a stance that is not shared by other researchers who connect the process of mediatization with the biological evolution of the species as an inherent dimension of the *H. Sapiens* (VERÓN, 2014), therefore extending it to the whole environment of hominization, which an evolutionist perspective would place in our present and future. The setting of this latter hypothesis as regards mediatization constitutes a space of abductive fruitfulness to assign narrative fiction an explanatory character in the development of long-lasting media phenomena, given its persistence. In this case the necessary compatibility of both stances has been noted -the short and the long lasting ones- and pointed out by Mariano Fernández (2014), which we gloss: the short and the long series should be only one, inclusive of both, giving each the relevant distinctive features both qualitative and quantitative in nature. This integration would allow for (and enable) the possibility of establishing the explanatory positions and hierarchies -we insist- surrounding a transversal phenomenon -as regards time and space- which cannot be separated from the development of the species: just as narrative fiction, more specifically, the role of the nucleus, the narrativity.

Fiction and narrative fiction as attributes: ontology

Concerning fiction, this is included within a group of notions that have been thoroughly discussed (mimesis,

simile, imitation) which have accompanied the necessary distinctions between representation and mimetic representation. Beyond the school debates there is agreement when considering fictional competencies as an inherent part of ontogenic development; they are performed in the mind, although Tomasello's warning (1999, p. 69-70) is correct, "the goal is not to decide whether a structure is or is not innate but to determine the processes that intervene in its development." These competencies, in complex ways, are activated from birth and they are a part of adulthood. During childhood, this activity is practiced on one's own or it is shared (with parents and friends), and therefore these basic competencies are part of others, which develop in multiple ways all through a person's life. These skills are part of the basic equipment of the mind of the *H. sapiens*, and as such they constitute an absolutely generalized procedure, which is evident in similar tales, both in nearby communities as in others with no contact at all. Such homogeneity is particularly noticeable in children's ludic activity (SCHAEFFER, 1999). This last one does not present variations, is practiced in a similar way regardless time and place, which more than proves its universality and bond to the uniqueness of the *H. sapiens*.

The constituent activity of fiction finds its continuation in adulthood in its integration as nucleus(es) of social organization, as a constant constituent feature of collective life, by means of different organizations, whether they are part of the decorum or institutional rites, and specially, discourse and legal structures, narrations, whether they are fictional or not, among others. All known cultures shape their individual or shared actions (knowledge and organization of the world and action guides) through myths, legends, traditions, aesthetic productions, etc., whether they are oral, written or through different means of exteriorizing the activity of the mind or collective activity (BRUNER, 1986): folktales, jokes, riddles, legends...

Tomasello (2008) noticed the twofold involvement of narrative resources: as a problem and as a solution. In very remote moments, the performatives of languages: in the practices of relationship, for example, to sustain themselves as such they must resolve indications or references of various types to guide collective action, making reference to more than one event and to the passing of time typical of obstacles in different temporalities and places (it is inevitable for this to give rise to narratives). It may be assumed that the differences inherent in such a situation entail -demand- univocal and stable solutions which, for simpler cases, could be solved by evanescent intonational solutions, which is a sound indication of unstable properties. The emergence of systematic phonetic-syntactic solutions to solve the difficulty of intellection, gives rise to an adaptively favorable change in the language system. If change “squares” -the stabilization of a modalization, for example- throughout history, it gives shape to the resources of a particular language that is perpetuated. Such a phenomenon allows us to show the evolutionary character of the language based on a systemic property (for that matter, rules of order as stable identifiers of different signals), a foundational property of the story, as the organizer of the narratives.

A long step further in narrative fiction, set in complex sequences, linked to daily practices, was as such not the object of social legitimacy in a homogeneous way since, at times, it was considered as a product of sectors with few cultural competencies, or deprecated for reasons of religious or political kind by its qualities of substance, according to its articulation with the beliefs and devices of power. It could be pointed out, then, that fiction as such, beyond its persistence in time and space, in both individual and social deployments, is subject to contingencies of circumstance, which form part of its very making. As an effect, the making of social collectives, as it emerges from

diverse pieces of evidence of a set of dimensions of highly differentiated characteristics, ranging from republican public life to secret societies. After examining both the cultures of the past and the present, Goody (1999) drew attention to opposite aspects of collective behavior, particularly with reference to representative art. Such absences can be segmentary, typical of an area of the production of meaning, the case of theater prohibition, for instance, or the rejection of written narratives (the novel), situations that show the diversity (and complexity) inherent in the processes of mediatization and its articulation with narrativity.

Heterogeneity of the fictional dispositifs and the construction of social collectives

It has been pointed out that all fictions share the same intentional structure: a common ludic simulation; that is to say, there is an agreement between the instances that produce them and the instances that recognize them. The type of construction through cognitive mimetic operators is also shared, which implies that its *materiality* entails some kind of possibility of recognition of the quality of the proposition or of the exhibition (an episode or event is modeled so that a distance is established with what actually exists or is produced). It also has a set of cognitive restrictions, which present relations of global analogy between the model it makes reference to and that which models it. The universe to which it refers has analogies with what is assumed or considered to be an actual “existing.” But these instances corresponding to fiction are distinguished by the way in which they allow us to access the universe in question, that is to say by the way or the ways in which the fictional universe constructs or gives rise to figures that foster the process of “mimetic immersion” (the way in which each one of us gives the repre-

sented world the qualities that supposedly correspond to another world).

That is to say, the modalities through which we access those worlds are realized through artifices that we can denominate, for the time being, *fictional dispositifs*, since they constitute playful imitations of what is lived, acted, perceived as place of occurrence of that which we call reality, whether it is present, past, future, near, or far. It is, therefore, important to recognize that “fiction possesses very different modes of being according to the symbolic foundation on which they are embodied: verbal story, theatre play, art of mime, radio fiction, comic strips, painting, sometimes photography, cinema, cartoons, installations (in visual arts), virtual reality systems. These differences are not mere formal differences” (SCHAEFFER, 1999, p. 243).

This differentiation is crucial, since it indicates that each of these modes tends to an economy differentiated from our perception and more broadly and restrictively to a position of our psyche, our body as a whole and a social relationship of differentiated consumption; when added, the three conditions give rise to a basic modality that regulates the production of meaning of a discursive category (METZ, 1973). Each of the components of this enumeration gives rise to different modes of immersion that suggest an irreducible fictional experience beyond which each of these works can account for the same story. Telling or being told an event is not the same as perceiving it in its actual development. The procedures we have listed have emerged at different times and far from each other as we have already mentioned. Their effective possibility of existence and setting in the world is associated with a set of conditions of production of very different kind: a set of them concerns the procedures that give rise to the configurations that we will call tentatively “Semantics” (rules of orality, rules of writing, grammar rules, rules of argumentative organization, rules of story sequencing,

etc.). Others, however, are closely related to their social installation, as processes that give rise to the organization of “employment groups”, a political act, a cinematographic function, such phenomena are included within the notion of *dispositifs* (TRAVERSA, 2001).

The dimension and characteristics of employment groups are regulated by technical procedures that involve social work (modeling an epigraphic inscription, producing a book, recording a television broadcast, sending an e-mail). The setting of these procedures gives rise to binding relationships that we will call “media events” (of variable dimension, time, and circumstances) which foster a phenomenon -crucial for *H. sapiens*- that when they are added and extended over time we call *mediatization*.

We say that it is crucial, since the evolution of the *H. sapiens* was from the very beginning linked to instrumental events (the production of tools for the fulfillment of trophic or shelter functions) that involved collective events of a relational nature that entail an indispensable communicational component (the incorporation into the symbolic procedures of the world of languages), from there to the present and also into the future, that phenomenon unfolds.

As has been discussed, this process is installed in the long term and each one of its moments has given rise to reflections of specialists who have pointed out the particularity of the object of their research, whether it is the iconography of a cavern or the passage from orality to writing, and, more closely, from the social impact of radio or the Internet.

Mediatization, fiction, and narrativity: is it possible to identify common aspects?

The extension of temporal and spatial boundaries helps us to think of the problem in its full extent. Even archaeologists, departing from the remains of imagery in

the caves of an antiquity that exceeds ten thousand years and much more, have made efforts to assign to certain iconic sequences the feature of fragments that make up a narrative. An important sign, then, is an indicator that it is possible for this dimension to have been integrated early in social practices, also leading to think that these same iconic organizations, possibly narrative in their nature, would be part of the amount of oral activity, patented with different procedures to those of previous moments.

It is not necessary to insist that the scriptural phenomena – six or seven millennia old-, find to the horizon of western culture their great culmination in Greece, seven or eight centuries before the beginning of our era; this is followed by the development of writing, for something more than twenty centuries, until the emergence of the printing press. This last moment, crucial for the extension of writing to society as a whole, whose consequences we continue to experience in our days, through its role in the Web through the productively active presence of its users, added to the fabulous documentary archive in which the applications of this resource have been constituted. I find that it speaks to us of a curious continuity in the apparent absolute discontinuity.

This interval of some millennia shows us an irregular but uninterrupted path that testifies to the presence of the association of narrativity and fiction, organized according to very different typological or generic modalities, which are in turn grouped together with various systems and uses in social practices, whether in the organization of life together, in religious practices or in the production and accumulation of knowledge.

From the crucial moment of the advent of the printing press, of which we are distanced by just over five hundred years, both writing and its substitutes, including the development of the press and electric or electronic

procedures, whether used to expand the sound or the images, have multiplied the resources for the discursive transit, giving rise to a growth of the complexity, both of the media universe and of the social universe where it is set.

In this long sequence we have evoked, each of its moments has some kind of articulation with narrativity, modeling heterogeneous relations with the fictional universe: if the illustration of the caves (LEROI-GOURHAM, 1965) has given rise to hypothetical constructions of a mode of articulation among these components, in our days narrative fiction -for that matter- is cast in the digital press, in small dragees -incorporated in different genres- and serially in specific productions, similar to the press briefings of the 19th century. Some distant and others nearby, encouraged by similar logics, even in terms of trade policies (THÉRENTY; VAILLANT, 2001; TRAVERSA, 2013).

How these issues have been considered and how they could be considered: a hypothesis

Although the concern with fiction and, more precisely, narrative fiction can be traced back to millennia, it is Barthes (1966) who will be concerned with pointing out the extent of this resource in our day; the scope of the narrative -as the spinal dimension of narrativity- entails many of the problems that have shaken directly or indirectly -said or unsaid- to the whole field of the so-called “sciences of man and society.” Effect, the latter, of its indissoluble traditions with social processes.

It is enough to transcribe a few lines of the opening text of the 8th issue of the “Communications” magazine, to notice the spirit with which Barthes dealt with the subject -“spirit of the time” perhaps-. He says:

the story can be transmitted by the articulated language, oral or written, by the image, fixed or mobile, by the gesture and by the ordered combination of all these substances. It is present in the myth, legend, fable, short story, novel, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, pantomime, painting (one can think of Saint Ursula de Carpaccio), the stained glass, the cinema, the comic strip, the journalistic chronicle, the conversation [...] the story is presented in all times and in all societies... (BARTHES, 1966).

The extent granted by Barthes, would surely be more extensive today, when fifty years have passed since the birth of that paragraph, half a century particularly active in terms of media phenomena of very different kinds, especially with reference to the status and presence of narrative fiction, on the one hand, and on the other, to the absolute novelty of the digitization processes and the Web, in terms of the unprecedented modes of access and constitution of collectives, along with gigantic quantitative and qualitative displacements of textual practices, especially the written or brief verbal practices and the photographic reversion to the private or the intimate, among other phenomena.

It may be pointed out that Barthes's enumeration, especially due to its diversity as to the subject of expression, opened an unprecedented chapter of discursive studies in the international arena; the Universities, for instance, opened their doors to previously neglected topics and practices, movies, TV, comics (despicable for many). However, a second aspect is crucial, giving rise to two singularities of analytical procedure rooted in and promoted by the same diversity, since they must address the unavoidable differences that the components of that repertoire entail. On the one hand, the requirement of *specificity* (METZ, 1972), a basic requirement of the studies of discursive configurations, especially when traditional

forms of writing support are overflowed, and another, relational, that pertains to *enunciation* (BENVENIST, 1974), which must deal with different procedures from those that gave rise to this notion, including heterogeneous hybridizations (weekly publications, cinema, different scenic modalities, public audiences with undetermined characteristics, etc.) (METZ, 1991; FISHER; VERÓN, 1999, among others). Both analytical requirements summon certain individuals that need them: “discursive materiality”, refers to the perceptive dimension that a discursiveness puts into play (visual, sonorous, combined) that defines the place of the body in the process; together with the universal “gap between production and recognition”, which is exacerbated and becomes evident in media processes, as technological complexity increases (VERÓN, 1986).

The abovementioned set of notions sum up the indispensable basic, *non-exclusive* instruments, to *approach* the connections between narrative fiction and mediatization, necessary to sketch “bridges”, usually referred to when talking about the interdiscipline, an issue which is easy to proclaim but difficult to practice. The warning that we have intended to introduce with the term “approach” is linked to the singularity of the problem in question, which demands in this domain the accomplishment of empirical advances, for instance the recourse to historical comparability of mediatization processes in different domains of the performance of dispositifs, both in their modes of emergency and in their development. It is necessary not to leave aside the path of the specific histories (writing, cinema, TV, etc.) that are full of historical knowledge (of technological or aesthetic references in the broad sense) and those concerning the social operation of the media and reading. Like dismiss the contributions of the experience of criticism, both that of sociological roots and that of artistic inspiration. Such components of these margins constitute a basic input in order to move forward in the

relationships we seek to elucidate; the succinct bouquet of notions we have brought into account, from the stimulus of the old-new enumeration of Barthes have helped us, together with the number of readings we have evoked throughout these pages, to formulate the following working hypothesis: ***narrative processes, whether fictional or not, selectively operate on mediatization based on their syntactic or semantic components, together with the techniques that characterize them (and their social or economic grounds, among others) so as to articulate the performances of individual social actors with groups, through dispositifs integrated by simple series (orality, writing, and others) or multiple series (TV, cinema, books and others), giving rise to the generalized articulation among social collectives.***

A first use that can be attributed to this hypothesis is to admit its *falsifiability*, either by the ways of the excess of the dimensions it pays attention to, but not by its defect. To our understanding, if on the one hand it includes individuals and institutions, in the same movement the set of their properties are put into play. That is to say: two asymmetric entities in terms of their relation to temporality: one limited in the duration of one life with its designs and appetites, the other indefinite in its duration and journeys. This simultaneous place of the body and the non-body is summoned throughout the *mediatization* path; a tension, in short, which always needs to be solved, for instance: the passionate instantaneity in a stroke of writing and the duration of a written testimony (or the writing itself). Each dispositif that integrates the long history of mediatization has resolved, in its own way, that tension.

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Mediatization processes: Agenda and challenges of research in the field of communication

Giovandro Marcus Ferreira

“The culture of the mass media is a religion, and it is very difficult to leave the sanctuary”

Harvey Cox

Abstract: This article aims to highlight some aspects of the study of mediatization processes from a perspective of agenda and challenges of research in the realm of communication. It is divided into two parts: on the one hand, through an *ad extra* movement, aiming to articulate communication theories present in the construction of social theories; and, on the other, an *ad intra* movement which revisits communication theories edified in the last decades, in a vision of accumulation that leads to the construction of a more autonomous knowledge, one that may be crowned in this endeavor in the pursuit of the elaboration of a mediatization theory.

Keywords: Mediatization processes; Communication theories; Social theories.

Introduction

Before starting my reflection, I would like to express my joy in sharing this work at Unisinos. Such joy has two more explicit bases I can detect. The first, more evident, to be part of a group that many colleagues at this university also do. To come here is a sensation of making visible a kind of invisible school that we have built since the beginning of the year 2000, which has worked on diverse subjects, including the mediatization processes, object of our meeting. This and other topics were shared by different groups – Brazilian and foreign – including CEPAD – Centro de Estudos e Pesquisa em Análise do Discurso Midiático, from Universidade Federal da Bahia, of which I am a member.

The second reason refers to the origins of this university, founded by religious Jesuits. The stance related to reflection on the mediatization processes demands some peculiarity as was in the past the missionary action with the mythical attitude of the Jesuits in China and Paraguay, who were able to sacrifice what was secondary and accidental, as cultural aspects, ideas, and traditional attitudes. Although the missionary adventures in China – by Ricci and other Jesuit missionaries – are often counted with more exaltation than exactness, it is noted, however, that when boldness is high, the risk grows in the same proportion. Surely, in other proportions, there is a similar relationship between boldness and the risks surrounding reflection on mediatization processes.

Our base problem strongly emphasizes that, within the construction of a mediatization theory, what we seek is to build, primarily, a social theory that has the media as a central element for thinking about culture and society, and not as a dependent variable as some theories of communication consider, such as functionalism. From this expectation, opportunities and challenges emerge and are

considered as we turn to the history of communication theories (ad intra movement) and to the rapprochement with the different contemporary social theories (ad extra movement) formulated over the last decades after sharp critique to the scientific empiricism.

From the studies on the processes of mediatization: a démarche towards sociocultural changes

It is always interesting to re-read when one is involved in the production of frontier knowledge – as is the case of research on mediation processes – the opening of the first chapter of Clifford Geertz’s book “The Interpretation of Cultures” when new ideas emerge accompanied by enormous challenges. Indeed, C. Geertz opens his book quoting Susanne Langer’s book ‘Philosophy in a New Key, according to which determined ideas are accompanied by solutions to different central problems, and they seem to solve all the core problems with the potential to clear their various areas of obscurity. However, with familiarity, related to other concepts we have already worked on, this new idea has no longer exaggerated popularity. And Geertz asks if this would not be the construction of scientific concepts, if not all, at least of many of them.

In the early 1980s, some ideas became very popular, emphasizing changes in society with substantial limits between the past and the future. The changes outlined were still deeply rooted in past references; and the “post” guided various analysis, such as the notion of post-modernity, post-industrial, among others, mobilizing social scientists and the humanities. Theorists of communication are also part of this search for a perspective that could provide a broader and more articulated analysis, leading to the implication of the media in this changing environment.

Traditionally, communication studies put communication theories in a confluent position with social theories, uplifting the latter to the condition of the bedrock of a possible theory and/or communicative model. The manuals of communication theories often have an organization in which they present theories and/or models of communication, maintaining the following itinerary: the starting point is the socio-historical context in which a theory and/or a communicative model emerges; then, a social theory is presented and works as a kind of theoretical framework, that will give support and coherence to the reading of the communication processes; thus, it is offered as a communication theory, and, more specifically, a communicative model. In this perspective, Francisco Rüdiger states that “communication theories are not autonomous intellectual constructions, they have arisen and developed with the progress of social theory [...]” (RÜDIGER, 1995, p.12).

As the construction of social theories was strongly marked by the domain of sociology, many have worked with communication theories as if they were a branch of sociology, a kind of sociology of communication. This scenario weakens its boundaries when the binomial ‘presentation – representation’ is losing meaning. The media are not limited to the function of representing reality, but they come to be considered constructors of realities because of the omnipresence of these means in the logic and social relations in contemporary societies. Social changes will reverberate on the construction of social discourse and, consequently, on the theory of social discourse, mainly because of the legitimacy bias in postmodernity or late modernity.

The crisis of legitimacy implies that no great report or narrative enjoys legitimacy in the social organism. The crisis of global ideologies is the fruit of a conflict of social discursiveness, that is, it goes back to the historical issue of the relationship between the way one communi-

cates and the social functioning (VERÓN, 1984). What is the implication of the media regarding the social organization of a given epoch? What are the implications of the media for the development and structuring of contemporary societies and their future? Does the crisis of legitimacy in contemporary democracies have to do with changes in the current media environment? These are some questions that guide the reflections of different approaches about mediatization.

The first discussions about mediatization in the early 1980s – more than 30 years ago – were aimed at articulating fragments of scattered analysis of sociocultural changes, highlighting the implication of the media. However, reflection on mediatization processes becomes more visible with the involvement of scholars from the USA and northern Europe in the mid-1990s. This reasoning is influenced, particularly, by sociological studies, an achievement outlined by the advent of mass culture in the preceding decades, in a perspective of building a new social theory or a mass culture theory, and, later, a social theory of mass communication. The perspective of the study of mediatization arises, then, in the dialogue with other concepts that came to characterize the changes in society, marked by its entry into a new stage of hyper-mediatization that results from the emergence of multimedia, an explosion provoked by hypertexts, which was also called globalization.

The reflection on mediatization processes since the 1980s will highlight, on the one hand, characteristics of the socio-historical changes, with the implication of the media, and, on the other hand, a theoretical-methodological attempt in a perspective of construction of a social theory. This path can be evidenced in four different perspectives:

1. The semi-anthropological perspective, which takes into account the long history, the changes since homo sapiens, taking as an emphasis the

most recent changes from modern society. This analytical perspective starts with the earliest stages of human semiosis, the exteriorization of mental processes, and is mostly marked by studies of semiotic origin (VERÓN, 2014).

2. The institutional perspective, which substantially highlights the number of recent studies, usually has a functionalist influence in the examination of media power concentration on different sectors of social life (politics, religion, education, etc.) along with the modernity and late modernity processes (LIVINGSTONE; LUNT, 2014).
3. The technological perspective, which emphasizes technological innovation in association with globalization, convergence or media integration in late modernity. This perspective is under influence of media theory, post-structuralist theories and highlights the notion of network society for the examination of digital transformations at the macro and micro-social level (LIVINGSTONE; LUNT, 2014).

The cultural perspective considers the historical changes in all forms of mediation, based on a socio-constructivist comprehension. There is the influence of such theorists as Raymond Williams and James Carey in an understanding that the media are strongly interwoven with culture, identities and belonging (LIVINGSTONE; LUNT, 2014).

The ambition of the media research is to understand the changes in the media and their implications at the macro-social level (social fields, institutions, etc.), as well as at the micro-social level, especially regarding changes of individuals. There is a pursuit of articulating the three levels of analysis (institutions – media, and individuals), aiming at the ordering of the mediatization field of study, which is marked, in its history, by bias and fragmentation.

From the studies on the processes of mediatization: a search for the construction of social theory

The approximation of the studies of mediatization processes to social theory may be helped, at first, by the reflection of Anthony Giddens and Jonathan Turner in the book *Teoria Social Hoje*, which covers the main tendencies and traditions of social theory. From the outset, they make a statement that helps us with the purpose of this article.

We do not consider the social theory to be the property of any discipline; since issues pertaining to social life and cultural products of human activity permeate the social sciences and the humanities (GIDDENS; TURNER, 1999, p. 7).

Later, these authors affirm that the important changes in the social theory of recent years were the capital motivation for the elaboration of that book, after a period of so-called “unified” science that came to have a general acceptance and a similarity between the logic of natural and social science. In this perspective, general science is guided by a single body of principles, where social scientists have the task of examining the logical foundations of natural science to then explain the nature of their resorting, often naively, of principles of the philosophy of natural science (GIDDENS, TURNER, 1999).

Questions about interpretation were avoided and rejected because, on the one hand, natural science is not considered an interpretive investment, and, on the other hand, the construction of concepts and theories was understood as deriving from direct empirical observations. However, changes occurred in preceding decades, with logical empiricism being strongly opposed by authors such as Kuhn, Lakatos, Hesse, and others. The “new phi-

losophy of science” emerges, then, and can be summarily presented:

[...] Summarizing in a general way this new conception, the idea that there can be no theory-free observations was ruled out, while the systems of deductible laws between them were no longer enthroned as the supreme ideal of scientific explanation. More importantly, science is viewed as an interpretive effort, so that problems such as meaning, communication, and translation become immediately relevant to scientific theories (GIDDENS, TURNER, 1999, p. 9).

These changes provoked a proliferation of different perspectives of theoretical thought, giving visibility to certain philosophical traditions until then without great expressions, such as hermeneutics (GADAMER; RICOEUR, etc.), critical theory, symbolic interactionism, post-structuralism, Bourdieu’s theory of social fields, as well as the return of structural functionalism, among other approaches. In these attempts, there were, from different theorists, the search for the reconceptualization of the nature of the action that migrates from the extreme of objectivism to another extreme, of subjectivism or voluntarism.

In this theoretical context, questions were also raised about the communicational doing, when Craig Calhoun interpellates communication theorists with the following questions:

What traits do better characterize the contemporary world? Among the substantial changes that have taken place in the global scenario, which are the more complete ones that define the present time? How can we go from the perplexity that these changes inspire for their intelligibility in large interpretive frameworks? What is changing in

the field of communication studies in terms of the analytical model with the shift in the media panorama? (CALHOUN, 2014, p. 1-6).

We can complete: would this change of media panorama be a beginning (prelude) of substantial changes in the conceptual scope, caused mainly by the advent of the internet and, then, by its different phases or unfoldings over the last few years? This and other issues may help to reinforce the construction of the communication field, from a more strategic and cohesive perspective, being even possible to advance towards an approximation in relation to the historical division that, for a long time, accompanies communication research between scientific universalism and the humanistic focus, through quantitative precision and interpretive depth. Questions may also contribute, in the domain of social theory, to the consolidation of concepts that are under construction under different analytical perspectives, as Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt indicate from different dimensions (LIVINGSTONE; LUNT, 2014).

Such a perspective can help the communication science theorists as to inquire about the place to be occupied by the communication studies within the human and social sciences. Probably the communicational processes analyzed from the contributions of the study of mediated semiosis (a search for elements for a possible mediatization theory) is an interesting domain to contemplate and respond, in part, to Craig Calhoun's provocations in search for a "Communication as a Social Science (and more)" (CALHOUN, 2012).

The opportunity to analyze the studies about the mediatization process becomes relevant as a result of a social logic that is marked by two distinct and articulated socio-historical processes – globalization and individualization. This may be a rich contribution when one observes, in the not so distant past, different disciplines, from the human and social sciences, steady in the studies of their

objects: the economy rooted in the *homo oeconomicus*, sociology guided by social oriented actions, psychology (including psychoanalysis) stuck in subjectivity, isolated linguistics in its speaking subject, and so on (VERÓN, 2013).

Working with the mediatization processes in a perspective of building a social theory may contribute in different ways to the enrichment of theoretical production in the communication field. In the first place, we can try to get out of the dual relation between a social theory and the communication theory, the latter being dependent on social theory, as the manuals of communication theories demonstrate. Secondly, the mediatization processes can be thought of at the macro-social level, in the institutions or as a metaprocess (COULDRY, 2014), and also at the micro-social level, in the reading or reflection about the individual in his or her social insertion.

Thirdly, we can also provide a relationship/confrontation between the mediatization theory and the social theories already constructed. The approximation, with other views about the social logic but distancing from the notion of media logic, can help to avoid tendencies that drag out the reflection on mediatization to a vision of causality, teleological or normative of the social processes.

In this respect, Norbert Elias can be used not only because of his analysis that contemplates both the long history and the perspective of the civilizing process (ELIAS, 1993a, 2011), but also when he warns about the modalities of scientific production. For example, in a comparison of his attitude during a long phone call: he had said something, and, on the other side of the line, someone had answered that he/she was not listening and asks him to speak louder (ELIAS, 1991). So, the phone call continues without advance in the conversation, and it probably is related to the scientific production in the communication field. This effort to seek scientificity from Elias part is an alert to the social sciences and humanities that often

reduce complex situations to a metaphysical, teleological or normative view (FERREIRA, 2006).

The metaphysical tendency seeks to substantiate treatises, notions, mental constructions without empirical verification, as transcendent beings. Elias uses as an example the myth of the autonomous individual before an external society. According to him, it is a myth; science has to combat it, not propagate as it is conducted by dichotomous entities (e.g. individual versus society) without the ability to differentiate between perception and the analyzed object. Elias has the obstinacy, according to Sergio Miceli, to empirically construct the description of structures of experience, always marked by the verification in the confrontation of objectified data (MICELI, 1999). In this perspective, Elias seeks to prevent the dragging effect that is provoked by determined notions in many social descriptions.

The metaphysical tendency presented by Elias may help some analysis of the mediatization process anchored in the notion of "media logic", as Nick Couldry had already warned. This notion, which appears in the late 1970s, is met with enormous success and acceptance, but without empirical consistency (COULDRY, 2014). Reviewing the notions that carry in their bulges the dragging effect in the analysis of mediatization processes poses as a high challenge towards the construction of social theory. (We will return to this notion later in this text).

The second tendency or aspect of the social sciences is teleological, which fixes an ordering of things, a goal in social, cultural, technological evolution, etc. Generally, there is an ordering towards good or evil, which in communication studies is observable in McLuhan's and Pierre Levy's reasoning about technological shift or evolution, of optimistic characteristic, or in Jean Baudrillard's view, marked by a technological nihilism. In mediatization studies, especially in the field of politics, there is also a trend when we seek to characterize, in some studies, destinies,

and changes in contemporary democracy, either, on the one hand, with the advent of a collaborative democracy, or, on the other, with the denunciation of the return of surveillance and/or authoritarian regimes.

The third tendency is the normative aspect or, as it was called by Norbert Elias, the normative hindrance, which puts social evolution under the aegis of ideal functions. In functionalism, the description was made under the view of functions and dysfunctions, according to the norm established by the researcher. To combat axiological polarity, derived from a bipolar vision supported by the researcher's values, Elias appeals to 'axiological neutrality', which, according to him, has been ventilated since the nineteenth century in sociological thinking.

As we have already pointed out (FERREIRA, 2006), one of Norbert Elias' goals in the book "Engajamento e distanciamento" is part of the debate that crosses social sciences about the knowledge dependence about society in relation to the researcher's judgments and engagements. He pleads for the objectification of the researcher's position, seeking an "emotional disenchantment", for a better separation of scientific knowledge from prejudices, affections (ELIAS, 1993).

Faced with these obstacles, Elias aims to discuss, equally, what drives scientific research, that is, the formulation of a problem. Basically, for Elias, the three main dead-locks of the social sciences took this knowledge domain to revolve around false problems. False problems, according to Elias, were created by several factors, in which he emphasizes logicism, causality, discontinuous thinking, and disciplinary slicing or decoupage (HEINICH, 1997).

Studies on mediatization processes: ad-intra and ad-extra movements towards social theory

In the ad-intra movement, taking as reference the communication studies, we will put two works of two prom-

inent theorists to help in the relationship between mediatization and social theory: Edgard Morin and John Thompson. Their main works regarding social or cultural theory have an interval of 33 years. Morin published "*L'esprit du temps. Essai sur la culture de masse*" in 1962 and John B. Thompson launched 'The media and modernity – the social theory of the media' in 1995. The context of the 1960s is marked by many socio-cultural transformations in Europe, with growing socio-cultural dynamics, especially from television. The 1990s saw the consolidation of the mass media and the announcement of a new stage of mediated semiosis, underlined by the presence of the internet.

Edgard Morin founded with Roland Barthes and George Friedmann the CECMAS – Centro de Estudos de Comunicação de Massa (Center for Studies of Mass Communication) in 1960 and launched the journal *Communication* in 1961. In the mass culture theory in the twentieth century (neurosis and necrosis), the author emphasizes the strong relationship between twentieth-century culture and the media, even if it is not an almost mechanical emanation of the media since they are universal channels of different cultures. However, mass culture has in its origin the media, but also the capitalist enterprise, according to the author. It is developed by and in the media according to the dictates of the history of modern society, characterized as industrial-capitalist-bourgeois, having a market open by techniques of mass diffusion, where also the cultural products were placed as goods under the aegis of supply and demand (MORIN, 1977a).

Inspired by the socio-cultural theories, from a macro-social perspective, Edgard Morin analyzes mass culture as the product of a dialectic between production and consumption; not losing sight of the richness and complexity of mass communication, he seeks to understand its implications and mechanisms, without turning it into a reducer of social life as the theorists of the Frankfurt School, and

especially Marcuse, have seen it. Morin's pursuits also included music, rock, television, etc., according to him, the new signs of the times.

He seeks the paradox: it is true that Hollywood was a company destined for profit, with the specialization and rationalization of the industrial world. He asks, then: "how is it possible that there are not only bad, mediocre films?" Here is the defense of the central paradox: production is obliged to appeal to creation. They can make films like they make automobiles, just doing them... But each film must have its singularity, its originality, its fascination (MORIN, 2016).

According to the author (MORIN, 1977), the changes that were brought by mass culture or the second process of industrialization, or the colonization of the spirit, transform different sectors of social life (work, religion, etc.), provoking the creation of new myths, until penetrating in private life in the culture of entertainment (fun), introducing leisure, the micro-universe in which the domestic interior is transformed, the importance of the automobile and tourism forging a modern individualism in the bourgeois frame marked by consumption, having the triad that leads to a concrete micro-utopia: house, television, and car (MORIN, 2016).

Mass culture today extends beyond the strict media field and involves the vast universe of consumption, leisure, as it also feeds the home micro-universe. It never reigns as an absolute master over media (MORIN, 2016).

And the author warns that more than manipulation, we must explore the relationship between the media and our imaginary. Communication is multidimensional and occurs in different concrete and complex situations. Therefore, according to Morin, it is not exhausted in the presumption of the effectiveness of the issuer (the study of effects). "The media remains a medium. The complexity of communication continues to face the challenge of understanding" (MORIN, 2003, p. 12).

John Thompson, in his book “The Media and Modernity – The Social Theory of the Media”, puts in the introduction the aim in an attempt to profile the changes and “the subsequent transformations in what I shall call the social organization of symbolic power” (THOMPSON, 1998, p. 11) and explore some of its consequences for the kind of world we live in today. He argues that the media are, intrinsically and complexly, part of modernity along with a number of other development processes (THOMPSON, 1998). The author emphasizes that the social theorists who worked on the development of modern societies did not treat the media with the due attention.

With rare exceptions, classical social thinkers did not attach a significant role in the development of the media. For them, the key to the social dynamics associated with the emergence of modern societies lays elsewhere: it consisted mainly of processes of rationalization and secularization, through which modern societies would gradually free themselves from the debris of the past (THOMAS, 1998, p. 13).

Thompson positions his study in a mutual perspective of the enrichment of social theory, on the one hand, and of communication research, on the other, placing media studies together with other disciplines involved in the theorizing of the emergence, development, and structuring of societies.

For Thompson, the development of the media implies the “re-elaboration of the symbolic character of social life”. In an appropriation of Clifford Geertz, the author cites it emphasizing that “man is an animal suspended in webs of meaning that he wove himself.” The media are related to the production, storage, and circulation of media products and languages and also imply, at another point, the individuals who receive and interpret them. Thus, in

addition to the aspects of the technological development of the media, this process is stimulating an increasingly mediated semiosis that has implications in the social world and in the relation of individuals to each other (THOMPSON, 1998, p. 19-20).

There are several attributes of the media in this process of change that are highlighted by Thompson: a persistence in time or fixation in symbolic form; a certain degree of reproduction or multiplication of symbolic forms; the possibility of spatiotemporal distance. All these attributes are involved in the commodification of symbolic forms, which go through the process of economic valorization, in which, like any commodity, one can distinguish another characteristic of communication, which is the public circulation of symbolic forms, available to a plurality of recipients or consumers. Circulation increasingly strengthens the presence and influence of the media in the social and individual world (THOMPSON, 1998).

Starting from the critique of the poor legacy left by different social theories, especially the structuralism, about the self, the subject, Thompson characterizes the ego (self) with a more reflexive and open nature in the relationship between individuals and experiences in the mediatized world. Individuals depend increasingly “of their very resources to construct a coherent identity for themselves”, when the process of self-formation is more dependent on the mediated symbolic materials, what provokes a weakening relationship with the aspects of the shared place, not its destruction.

The self is a symbolic project that the individual constructs actively. It is a project that the individual builds with symbolic materials that are available to him/her, materials that weave a coherent narrative of his/her own identity. This is a narrative that is changing over time, as new materials, new

experiences are coming into play and gradually redefining their identity in the course of their lives. Telling ourselves and others what we are is retelling the narratives – which are continually getting modified in this process – of how we got to where we are and where we are going from now on. We are all unofficial biographers of ourselves, for it is only by building a history, however vague that we do it, that we will be able to make sense of who we are and of the future we want (THOMPSON, 1998, p. 183-184).

The media offer mobility to innumerable travelers, sometimes immobile, allowing them to distance themselves from the immediate and local aspects of everyday life and, on the other hand, allowing “intimacy at a distance”. Finally, the development of modern societies has fostered a complex reordering of the spheres of experience, today much sharpened by the advent and development of the internet. However, we can retrieve theories and essays in the field of communication research to help us think of mediatization processes in the wake of social theory, as can be seen above, with contributions briefly presented from the works of Edgard Morin and John B. Thompson.

We can also accept the suggestions of Nick Couldry when he provokes us to think about the mediatization processes in their relation with social theories (*ad extra*), and the author emphasizes, in particular, the theories elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias. He articulates this approximation mediatization – social theory highlighting the deficit on each side and an eventual enrichment provoked by the rapprochement and friction between them.

According to Couldry, considering that communication processes transform social and cultural ambiances, and the participants’ relationships, at the individual or in-

stitutional level, such processes should be comprehended in a complex, non-linear, non-causal perspective. However, with the use of notions like “media logic”, adopted as a new “collective consciousness”, a term coined by David Altheide and Snow since 1979, the perspective of non-linear complexity seems to lose strength in favor of an active media that is expanding its logic in the different segments of society. According to the author, if social space was viewed as fields, the relationship between media and the different fields could have a more complex analysis, implying other logic beyond, of course, that of the media logic. He even questions this idea:

Do all media have a logic? Is it the same logic and, if not, what is the common trace that unites this logic into a global ‘media logic’? Does this problem become more acute with the proliferation of media? Do the new media, alternatively, acquire an entirely new media logic or do something remain constant when the media (as they intensively do these days) change over time (COULDRY, 2014, p. 269)?

The adoption of the mentioned term ‘media logic’ generates instability in the communication research about the mediatization processes, while a series of studies of other related areas cause doubts about certain affirmations engendered by this notion, especially when one has as a value the plurality of the social world, as is the case of Elias and Bourdieu’s studies (COULDRY, 2014). The approximation between the mediatization studies and social theory brings out, in a more evident way, the non-linear relation between the media and the social space.

On the other hand, Couldry follows the Friedrich Krotz’ footsteps on the bias that insists that mediatization is not only a specific and localized transformation process but a “metaprocess” that is substantial in the change of

communication as the basic practice of how people build the everyday social world. In this case, the social field theory, already attentive to the different logic of the specific fields, would also be attentive and enriched taking into account this multiple logic of the metaprocess in question (COULDRY, 2014).

At long last, all the challenges and study notes (agenda) highlighted throughout this article lead us to return to the invisible college discussed in the beginning because the different moments of the article are part of the studies and concerns of CEPAD members at Universidade Federal da Bahia. The mediatization processes are analyzed and tensioned towards a discussion around social theory, highlighting the aspects of circulation and also of enunciative operations in the search for articulation between macro and micro social that constitute the reflections of these complex processes under study.

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Genealogy of media and the materialization of mental experiences: perspectives to think about mediatization

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Abstract: In this chapter, starting from the epistemologies of mediatization, I develop the proposition that the genealogy of the media is one of the keys to formulating the concept of mediatization. The central hypothesis is that media are materializations of the mental experiences of the human species in semiological/technical/social artifacts available to the accesses, uses, practices, and appropriations in the public space. This hypothesis (convergent with VERÓN, 2014) defines mediatization as a process that is at the origin of the human species' differentiation from nature. I situate this process of innovation of the media – partially referred to by Flichy (1995, 2004) – in the framework of circulation, between imaginaries and achievements, suggesting that the mutation of the media,

in this hypothesis, is a reference for the analysis of cultural, economic, and political changes. I conclude by focusing on the current alterations of the network media (indexation, interaction, and artificial intelligence).

Keywords: Media. Dispositifs. Mediatization. Mental experience. Material signs.

Introduction

We begin this chapter by listing questions and propositions about mediatization, locating the place of the genealogy and logic of the media as a field of productive observation for the understanding of the media processes.

For a long time, I have been converging with the proposal that the media are semiological/technical/social. I like that order of words. There is nothing more first in terms of species differentiation than the semiological. But, unlike the other species, humans develop this incomparable ability to materialize what they semiologically imagine, from their unconscious sources to their cognitive operations, in techniques and technologies. The social is the crossing: from the imaginary to the achievements, through the operations, it only occurs with the condition of being potentially shared, in the uses, practices, and appropriations – configuring social *dispositifs* agents.

This process plays an important role in mediatization studies. Converging with Verón (2014), mediatization is, first of all, the materialization of mental experience on media. It characterizes, therefore, the anthropological genesis of the species. The fact that the reflexive (epistemological) maturation of the species has only become aware of this relation in the contemporary, from the achievements in media such as the book, newspaper, radio, television, and on the networks, only reveals a Marx's maxim: **man's anatomy is the key to the monkey's anatomy**. In other

words, the reflection on the means of interaction and communication is contemporary.

Through this reflective thread, our inference is that this is a process of circulation between the imaginary and the real to be observed. Material means have their genesis in our mental experience. Even technology, which is, above all, what is in the imagination. Its materialization only occurs with this requirement. Its achievement in terms of use depends on the operations that establish and propitiate it, and on the sharing of social imaginaries that characterize its genesis. Here, the process can be disruptive, regulatory, and adjunct to new social intelligibilities, driven by matrices that can be marked by the relationships between technology, semiosis, and the social.

The “second field of observation” of circulation is the social establishment of another type: that one designed by the accesses, usages, practices, and tentative appropriations by organized actors and collectives. This second important moment refers to a productive observation for inferences about the current processes of mediatization: how do actors access, use, practice and attempt to appropriate from the media, individually and/or collectively, configure them as social networks? Social networks predate the digital semiological/technical/social media network. The global media connection is contemporary. The construction of social networks has always accompanied us, while a biological life.

These semiological/technical/social networks constitute another field of observation of the investigations on mediatization and social processes, which can be directed to the following question: how do actors, institutions, and means in interaction construct a media event in their daily lives, where imaginary, clues, and interpretations are competing, in an interaction circuit, in an indeterminate, uncertain flow? This flow is a process that can be analyzed as a movement of means – technological,

semiotic and social. These processes, often micro, are (or are not) part of the agenda/social theme (which we discuss below), and explain, in materialities, representations and positions of actors and institutions about the ongoing history, in their infinite interactional situations. They are central, often, to move the agenda and themes in the public space.

Not always, intentional or not, this construction of themes in everyday life breaks out on the public scene, with enough force to produce diverse imbalances in the interactions between actors and other institutions. But there are times when this construction occupies a historical period, which invites us to identify another field of productive observation in the empirical investigations from the mediatization: how does society construct its social themes (for example: corruption, knowledge, racism, feminism; etc.) in the interactions between actors, institutions, and means?

This force (the power) of thematization and *agencement* of means, which is also not contemporary, is accompanied in history by the appropriations of the media by institutions and by groups that apply for institutions. We can even invert: the institution is a point of inflection that only accomplishes itself when appropriates the means in its own constitution, differentiating them with operations that surpass its representative genesis of movements. We exemplify: the legal institution develops, in history, when the norm happens to be the object of discourses resulting from specialized operations and differentiated in relation to other normative discourses observed in social interactions.

This process is endless, aiming at the reproduction of institutional places, simple or enlarged, the subversion of instituted powers, etc. (see, for example, the process in which neo-Pentecostal churches appropriated of the means to occupy an institutionalized space-power in the

religious field). Here, the question can be stated as: how do actors and institutions negotiate the media as a form of communicating with their audiences, building interaction circuits as a way to mediate celebrity positions, fans, agendas, and new places of experts (religious, gamers, etc.), seeking the construction of a space/institution as a force (power) in the interactions with both public and private space?

In the specificity opened by Verón, mediatization is investigated as a procedure that constructs schemas, operations, and systems about processes of production, reception, and circulation that are located in the nodes of social networks which activate new emotional meanings, new realities shown, new interpretations – opening, with this, intense flows of interactions and new emotions, realities, and interpretations. The importance of this perspective is the displacement of the research object: from contents and representations to autopoietic operations, schemes, and systems. It is in this approach that the question of mediatization as a process of recognition in the communicational perspective, in tension and interface with the social, the psychological, the anthropological; the struggle for well-being, freedom, and aesthetic expression; the battle the classifications: LGBTs; obesity; diseases; old age; etc.).

In addition to these remarkably empirical fields of observation, mediatization can be studied as environments and ambiances (GOMES, 2016). This perspective is more inferential, speculative, of constructing hypotheses that relate the media processes to the configurations of culture, economics, and politics. These hypotheses also are constructed by other lines of research in the field of communication (administrative perspectives and critical epistemologies) and in the social and language sciences. For example, it seems quite productive to think of the relevant transitions of the last century to this century (Nation-State, consumer society, connected individ-

ualism, bubbles of interactions, etc.) in their relations with the media processes, read by the epistemologies of mediatization.

Means and *dispositifs*

In this section, I return to the media question, reflecting on the importance of considering the genealogy of the means to think about mediatization and critical epistemologies. We start with three simple questions: What are means? What is the relationship between means and *dispositifs*? When are means and *dispositifs* media?

The never-ceasing process of the media innovation cycle, as we have said, refers to the circulation between the social imaginary present in mental experiences, their operations, and materializations. There is a question to be answered here: do all material means regard to mediatization? Our elaborating perspective suggests that it does not:

- a) only the means that activate interaction in the public space of visibility refer to mediatization. This insertion is not fixed, considering each medium.
- b) it is necessary to ponder the ubiquity: the means are media when differed in time and space. Here too, there is no fixed design, but it seems clear that the mobility of material, technical, and technological signs in time and space is accelerated by representations, constructed according to schemas, operations, and expert systems.
- c) on the other hand, the semiological/technical/social means of occupying territories are not media (although they are a means of communication: a house, a car, clothing, etc.).

The transit of what is territory (c) to what is ubiquitous passes through the representation and the expert systems that operate (through schemes and operations) on these representations, in the form of signs, languages, and discourses. It is this structured form (a potential symbolic power) that transforms them into media, with prospective access, and social uses in the space of public visibility.

The formulation is that material means are semiological/technical/social. This means that it is not only material techniques and technologies but also material and symbolic social signs that are updated in myths and rites around the value of the objects mediating interactions. Using Twitter, for example, refers not only to the utilization of technologies but, in an inseparable and simultaneous way, to the social languages, and rituals involved. The separation of technique and technology from these uses and interactions is, in this sense, one of the strongest contemporary ideologies, manifested in the strategies of “uses of technologies as means of communication.”

Though considering media in this triadic perspective, we agree with the proposition that there is no linearity and determination between means and uses. Uses are a field of possibilities and impossibilities.

The transit of accesses and uses to practices and appropriations is also the movement of the means to a place of *dispositifs*. In this sense, the concept of semiological/technical/social *dispositifs* refers to the means consolidated in social practices and appropriations. Many stay in the way, as we say. Others are incorporated into the practices and appropriations and then abandoned (the case of the payphones, which have had their uses scrapped with the advent of cell phones). Why do some media consolidate in terms of social practices and others do not? This question, in our view, is related to the innovation cycle. The answers do not refer to the functionalities and po-

tential operations, but especially to the cycle of imaginary and achievements. But this would have to be researched to set up a good hypothesis.

In this process, there is a detail that is the transition from practices to appropriations. There is, here too, a *dégradé*. The appropriations we consider to be of the highest intensity are those that take place in specialist production systems. Networks, for example, have been appropriated by several expert systems (which manifests themselves in the form of brands: Facebook, Instagram, etc.). But there are others, lower-intensity, middle-level appropriations that use specialist systems and their brands to customize specific uses to other brands (the page on Facebook to the service of another brand, for example). From a classical-discussion point of view, it is these specialist systems nominated as brands that constitute the new *dispositifs*, overcoming (integrating, denying, and renewing) the hegemonic *dispositifs* in the last century (print, radio, cinema, and television). The *dispositif*, when nominated, applies to the media institution and occupies a special place in relationships among other institutions, actors, and uses of the available *dispositifs* because they turn possible the differentiation of accesses, uses, practices, and potential appropriations, specifying the *dispositifs* at disposal. In this sense, we consider that there is a *dispositif* when there is a consolidated matrix, historically, of social use of the media, that configures social practices, which goes beyond institutional places and actors, specifically media or not. That is, the *dispositif* is not the form available: it must be inhabited by actors and institutions so that, in uses and practices, it exists. When this occurs, it is nominated, thus, gaining an anthropological demarcation.

The gap between the genealogy of the means and critical epistemologies

If we agree with the hypothesis that mediatization is the materialization of mental experience of the species,

passing through the social processes of accesses, uses, practices, and appropriations, configuring *dispositifs* that act as agents of these practices – in a circular process and of circulation between means and social practices – differentiated according to the positions of actors and institutions there is a question to be answered: why are mediatization studies contemporary with modern media? What in these means is specific regarding the long media history? One possible answer to investigate is the institutionalization of specialist systems, which constitute themselves as marks that designate the socially constructed media matrices (names of editorials, newspapers, radios, television, etc.).

As we have suggested, media matrices do not go without the curatorship of individuals, actors, and institutions – who imprint these matrices with specific editorial lines. In this sense, the study of means and *dispositifs* requires not only analysis of the schemes, operations, and expert systems that configure them, but also of the actors and institutions that guide them editorially, in interaction with the accesses, uses, practices, and appropriations, accomplished or tentative, by other individuals, actors, and institutions located in consumer positions, users, and, again, producers. It is a complex study that must be configured in empirical researches specified in cases. The following propositions are far from this place of empirical research. They are preliminary aphorisms, fragmented among themselves, with investigative potential, but still lacunar.

The first modern specialist matrix is printing, which becomes autonomous and institutionalized as a specific brand, in a production process that is managed by specialized operations and systems (industrial machines, manufactures, and crafts in articulated functionings). It refers to the modern book, the almanac, the newspaper, and the film, its publishers, production and distribution teams, ways of access through purchase, etc. In terms of

critical epistemologies, this period corresponds to ideological criticism, ranging from the discourse analysis suggested by Marx, in German Ideology, to the concept of the natural intellectual in Gramsci. It was, in a way, a golden age of critical thinking, which also became an editor. Not by chance, it was the historical period of the socialist revolutions. Content analysis, said discourse analysis by some, was a late administrative solution to this array of media and *dispositifs* – which we characterize as content media. At the core of the disputes, was the construction of the Nation-State.

The second great matrix of means and *dispositifs* refers to programming, which we characterize, preliminarily, on some axes: the contents consolidated as commodities are offered ‘gratuitously’ – they are financed in the sphere of production, advertising – as opposed to the place of goods of previous means; the possibility of access becomes continuous, full-time, inaugurating just-in-time connection, even if subordinated to programming. These new media, whose contents surpass the written language of the book, newspaper, and almanac, add the dimension of voice to the media semiosis (the language now becomes audio-writing-visual). The forms of contact widen, occupying the porosities of culture where writing did not reach, not only because of the illiteracy of the code but also by inferential difficulties of the culture in relation to the codified means. It was the period of Nazism’s rise (which modernized and stimulated the use of this matrix in the sphere of politics), and the emergence of administrative theories (which paradoxically return to content analysis as the center of an analytic that seeks to analyze discourse without ideological concerns). Critical theories accompanied this process, with a determined force, in its various versions. The apogee of criticism to this moment, it seems to us, is the concept of the society of the spectacle. It is the transit of the dispute of the Nation-State for the Consumer Society, that arrives until

the end of the last century. If it is true that this critique has not ‘overthrown’ capitalism, it has created correlations of forces sufficient to make it different, opening the correlative diversity to the ongoing cultural movements, articulated with epistemological investment, and investigations of (critical) cultural studies, that were more in dialogue with the civilizational processes.

At the turn of the century and in these 20 years of the millennium, the matrices are constantly changing: the indexing of content (library, Google, Netflix); the spaces of conversation-interactions (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.); negotiations of the interactions (Big Data). These mutations are, first and foremost, practical. The almost descriptive inference is that the new matrices – which integrate content production and organize production according to consumption times and grids – have reached the stage of *dispositifs* (as far as appropriating, marking, and defining practices in times and differed spaces). As practices, they have become new forms of building a new symbolic, including new ways of building sociability in the realm of politics. The speed of mutations is so rapid that the analyzes and critiques of contemporary media processes are always in “turtle steps” before what is mutant. In this sense, the crisis of civilizational references – linked by several social thinkers to the new media – does not, in our view, come from the matrices of the current means and *dispositifs* but, as before, from the gaps between critical approaches and disciplined social practices increasing hegemony *dispositifs*. In these hegemones, we emphasize the processes nominated as connected individualism, bubbles, and grazing networks.

The three media mutations in networks

If we consider that the historical process is innovation, a circulation between imaginaries and achievements,

from materialities to uses, from uses to practices, from practices to *dispositifs*, and that each innovated *dispositif* retroacts on previous logic, as many of the inherited *dispositifs* are preserved, we can infer the increasing complexity of social relations, from the perspective of mediatization. In this context, reflection on media in networks can only be an abstraction. From this section, we want to reflect on this perspective, from the abstraction of the complex context as a cognitive operation that allows us to identify, in the complexity of the media environment, some specific lines of force that refer to the current moment.

The transit provided by the indexing media in networks is the first of the great moments of the media mutations at the turn of this century. Indexing refers to content and schedules. In this sense, it provided a new universe of potential access, never experienced before, in the time and space of the means of content and programming. Individuals, actors, and institutions incorporate, in the use of a diversity of search systems, routines, schemes, and operations to their daily practices, in the world of work, private, entertainment, health, education, etc. These practices are diversified according to the objects sought, in temporality and spatiality that revolutionize processes of social interaction, putting in check the previous formats of related media and practices, which means the suspension of the validity of many *dispositifs* formerly agents of social relations. The indexing process continues, at an accelerated velocity, also because new contents and programming, previously available in other media, are offered on the networks, and expert catalog systems are increasingly powerful.

The library is planetary, but the mutations go beyond this imaginary of being a global village in terms of access to inherited and contemporary object signs. These mutations will respond to another important expectation: the interactions, which we place as the second main

alteration of networked media. What this imaginary demands is not only the interactions with the available objects but also with the individuals that access them, including in their positions-masks of social actors, located or not in institutions of their belonging. This imaginary – of desirable transactions with other individuals – takes place in the means of interaction. This mutation in the networked media goes from the e-mail to the media like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp. With this innovation, we complete a media phaneron, where we have the objects and the interactions, between us and with the objects, in a globalizing way.

The economy of this process is perverse and can be summarized in some lines of force: a) the connected individualism, a format that surpasses the society of consumption; b) disruptive processes in contradiction with the social forms of intelligibilities and regulations; c) regulations in the form of artificial intelligence media; d) appropriation of the gift of participation through cultural, economic, and political capitalizing systems.

In the scope of this chapter, we want to highlight the relationships between the first three items above. Connected individualism generates a new social process in which the distinction does not have as its object the search for notoriety in a social field structured in an institutional way but in circuits of interaction in which other individuals belonging to different fields and institutions participate. This “struggle for recognition,” being individualized, is different from that “strived” in the structured social fields – where system operations and regulations establish, within the scope of field conflicts, classification systems. The struggle for the preservation of authority within a social field is in tension with the conflicts that is configured in the pursuit of the specific media type of seal.

A new actor emerges there. The actor of the structured social fields (well observed in the last century by

Bourdieu) has its habitus defined in the interactions of his own field of belonging. Schemes and operations must converge with the self-reinforcement of the field. This actor “frees” himself from these constraints, to operate in another space where the schemes and operations of the field of belonging are residual before the plots and functioning that he mobilizes, already within a new discursive formation, that has other schemes and operations as a reference. Here the concept of interactive *dispositifs* and circuits gains relevance (BRAGA, 2011; 2012).

Some authors, with great pertinence, accentuate the contradictions that emerge there, especially between this place of the actor and the place of the individual (CARDON, 2015). On the one hand, lies the actor, operating on representations, through schemes and operations that manifest themselves in performances. On the other, the individual, unknown, whose signs of existence are not always evidenced or leaked. These contradictions are one of the central objects of a current process: the discovery of the individual that lies in the underworld of the actor is the focus of strong, disruptive, networked interactions. This contradiction is usually manifested in the relations between desires and behaviors, considering desire as an appeal toward the use and appropriation of any object-sign, and behavior as plots and functioning manifested as gestures of recognition compatible in social interactions, in which the impulse is regulated by morality, ethics, and aesthetics (going from the barbarian to the civilizing in various shades).

The robots

The third main mutation is the expert systems forged in artificial intelligence machines as a means of indexing and interacting. The action of indexation and interactions derive not from the means in the algorithm itself

but from the construction of expert segmentation and fragmentation systems of the global village into several types of affinities that articulate desired object-signs and desirable individuals, according to their profiles materialized in the actor form. In a new way of grazing, these technologies of self (Foucault) distribute society into tribes of access, consumption, uses, practices, and subordinate appropriations.

Robots are not current. They constitute one of the greatest imaginaries, a kind of utopia of technique and technology, of the species. Cybernetics is an important epistemological moment, in the modernity, of accomplishment of this imaginary. Artificial intelligence specifies this imaginary in systems languages and algorithms. Robots were incorporated for a few decades into the production of material object-signs (management of things of direct consumption, industrial, financial capital, etc.). The project has already been deployed, for more than half a century, in operations aimed at knowledge (specialist systems of health, education, etc.). In its genesis, the problem of interactions and language was already part of the system. What is new in this century is the coupling of these machines to the management of network interactions and indexing.

Disruptive processes are regulated, in part, restricting intelligibility to pockets of meaning, which are no longer defined by the matrices of hegemonic content and programming media from the last century. There we have some questions: is it possible to return to a matrix with an imagined determinant (the cultural industry, for example), to the monopoly of discourse that makes possible hegemonies, or does the very diversity of robotic expert systems tend to generate uncertainty and indeterminacy as a brand of contemporary and future processes? Are we in a crisis of hegemony of the media of content (book, newspaper, and audiovisual) and programming correlates (radio, television)? Are we only in a transition to new discursive equilibria (hence in an adaptive process) or is the gap be-

tween disruption and regulation tending to be a constant in media culture?

It is true that the ascending presence of artificial intelligence as an agency of specialized systems poses the possibility of new hegemonies in that it directs the interactions of actors and institutions to determined “discursive solutions.” But it is also true that there is a weakening of shared codes, insofar as those constructed by “mass culture” combined desires and behaviors around some values, norms, and discourses (even if they were deconstructed by criticism). Finally, the current process indicates the importance of observing the possibility that the bubbles of meaning, homophilia, incivilities, and intolerances between distinct sociosemiological groups generate, around values of alterity, innovative interactional and communicational processes, new values of alterity. Paradoxically, the consolidation of the media takes place as a symbolic force that manifests the shared practices of accesses, uses, and practices around the media – consolidating them not only as a media process but also as a communicational one.

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Pedro Gilberto Gomes (UNISINOS) – Full Professor at the Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos. He holds a degree in Philosophy from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (1973), a specialization in Theology from the Pontifícia Universidade de Santiago, a master’s degree in Communication Sciences from the Uni-

versidade de São Paulo (1987), and a Ph.D. in Communication Sciences from the Universidade de São Paulo (1991). He has experience in the area of Communication, with an emphasis in Journalism and Publishing, mainly in the following subjects: communication, Christian communication, communication, culture, and media. He is a member of the Council of Science, Technology, and Innovation of Rio Grande do Sul, a member of the Superior Council of CI-ENTEC of Rio Grande do Sul, and a member of the Superior Council of CETA / SENAI, and CNTL / Ceta / Senai. He is a member of the Superior Council of Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul – FAPERGS. He holds the position of Academic Pro-Rector at UNISINOS and is the editor of the same University.

Stefan Bratosin (Université Paul Valéry Montpellier) – Professor at Université Paul Valéry Montpellier (France), he has experience in the area of Sociology, with emphasis on Sociology of Communication and Information Technologies. He works mainly on the following subjects: media and religion, the public sphere, religious institutions, epistemology, and atheism. He is associated to the group of researchers of the Institute for Advanced Religious Studies and Communications Internetworking (IARSIC), which aims to facilitate interdisciplinary studies in theology, philosophy, and communication in the context of cultural changes of humanity. He is the editor of *Essachess – Journal for Communication Studies*.

Stig Hjarvard (University of Copenhagen) – Ph.D. Professor in the Department of Media, Cognition, and Communication at the University of Copenhagen, he coordinated different research projects, among them: *The Mediatization of Culture: The Challenge of New Media* (2011-2014); *Newspapers and Journalism in Transition* (2007-2010); *Nordic Research Network in Journalism Studies* (2009); *Media, Culture, and Society at NordMedia* (2008). He acts

in the following areas: mediatization (theory and analysis), media history; media and religion, media and globalization, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. He published the following works: “From Mediation to Mediatization: The Institutionalization of New Media”, together with A. Hepp and F. Krotz (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2014); “Mediatization and Cultural and Social Change: An Institutional Perspective” (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2014); “The Mediatization of Culture and Society” (London: Routledge, 2013).



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Two hundred researchers attended the International Seminar. It is organized in two levels. At the first level - the table panels - we seek a downward reflexive movement, with invited researchers from Brazil and abroad, and researchers linked to PPGCC-Unisinos, from the Mediatization and Social Processes Research Line. Another movement is upward. The Working Groups constituted from the public call for papers, which are selected as is described below.

The table panels are formed based on criteria. A criteria axis assures a balance between the participants of the PPGCC-Unisinos who research according to the line Mediatization and Social Processes, the national and international guests, also linked to this line, and the national and international guests external to this line, but who accept to discuss, in a critical and analytical way, about the themes suggested by the Seminar. Another axis of distribution follows the balance between national and international guests, from the South and from the North. The proposed schedule of table panels results from these criteria.

In the seminar held in 2016, there were five table panels with researchers from France (3), Denmark (1), Argentina (2), Brazil (4) and the organizers. The programming of the I Seminar and its structure are available at <http://www.midiaticom.org/programacao/>. In total there were 15 hours of debates at the five table panels.

Working Groups were formed from the submission of papers. There were submissions from 250 authors and 217 expanded abstracts. Of these, 188 works were selected. After registration, the Seminar had the participation of researchers, doctoral and master's students, and undergraduates, in the proportion suggested in this proposal, in a membership four times greater than that provided by the Organizing Committee. The works were selected by two reviewers, blindly, mobilizing for this purpose researchers, doctors, doctoral students, masters and master's students, who evaluated (in a group of more than three dozen referees) each one of the works submitted by colleagues with training in inferior level, with grading notes, which resulted in the approved works. These were, then, grouped by the Organizing Committee, successively, until reaching the 17 Working Groups of the event (<http://www.midiaticom.org/gts/>).

One of the central objectives of the International Seminar of Research on Mediatization and Social Processes is to reflect on the diversity of perspectives about the concept, putting at stake angulations from the North and South. This objective is consolidated in this book as well. In his assessment as Seminary Ombudsman, Stig Hjarvard highlighted this trait as a distinctive feature of Southern research:

The discussions about mediatization here in Brazil are developed in the perspective of semiotics, philosophy of communication and anthropology. In a Nordic and European context, this is very different. Many of the people involved in mediatization discussions come from media studies with a sociological orientation or cultural sociology, and many North Americans have a stronger empirical trend (HJARVARD, 2016).

This valuable insight, however, can be considered and enriched by the specific details of the discussion tables held. The chapters of this book evidence a multiplicity of approaches: “a concept, multiple voices” as says Pedro Gilberto Gomes, one of the authors. In this diversity, the inheritances of social and language theories are updated, in specific articulations, taken as a reference to think the media processes in an interlocution that has been defining this line of research. But this would be insufficient to define the suggested inferences. Semiotic approaches, for example, allow differentiated inferences, according to the perspectives of social theories with which they are articulated. Cleavages between what is communication and mediatization also fuel diversity, depending on the place of the media in the processes under analysis.

