

Between algorithmic dominance and political positioning

COMMUNICATION PROCESSES, AND thus the area of Communication studies, are affected either by emerging and insurgent technologies and media or by the reconfiguration of communication itself in its broadest sense, addressing ways of communicating and their impacts on society. In recent years, a phenomenon has received a lot of attention creating a profound disturbance in the way society communicates: the fake news. Currently, it is the rapid advance in the development of Artificial Intelligence that has been accompanied by several studies with different approaches, and it is no different among researchers in our area. In a way, political use has amalgamated these two communicational phenomena—fake news and Artificial Intelligence—and demanded new reflections and analyses. Between the two, the need to protect democracy is redoubled.

This attentive movement is reflected in the articles within the *Dossiê* section that open this issue of *MATRIZES*. We begin with an unpublished text by *Ciro Marcondes Filho* (revised by *Vitor Blotta*), which presents the theoretical and factual bases of the “Political Tragedies” project, which the full professor at the School of Communications and Arts at Universidade de São Paulo (ECA/USP) began in 2019 and was unfortunately interrupted with his death in November 2020. Entitled “Political tragedies: an issue of communication”, it deals with the problem of truth and reliable information by dialoguing with Nietzsche on how disinformation has been a political strategy since Nazism and the current ways of determining electoral behaviors from psychosocial engineering mechanisms that make use of fake news and the microtargeting techniques of digital platforms, as in the cases of the elections of Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro. As Marcondes Filho argues in this project, many of the current issues surrounding the relation between disinformation

and democracy must be addressed by theories and research in journalism and communication.

Then, in the article “National flags and political rhetoric: a semiotic comparison between Italy and Brazil,” Massimo Leone from the University of Turin presents a semiotic and sociocultural study of flags with a focus on the “semantic and symbolic complexity of flags in contemporary culture.” The final part of his article refers to the appropriation of this object by supporters of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and compares it to the use of the Italian flag by the Forza Italia movement of former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. As Ciro Marcondes Filho, Massimo Leone elaborates proposals to reverse the perverse effects produced by the misuse of communication.

Artificial Intelligence is directly addressed in two other articles in the *Dossiê* section. Lucia Santaella and Dora Kaufman present, in “Generative artificial intelligence as humans’ fourth narcissistic wound,” the hypothesis that the development of this technology has affected human self-esteem as in the three previous moments of similar impact on human self-love that were identified by Sigmund Freud. André Lemos, on the other hand, opts for a “pragmatic and non-anthropocentric neomaterialist” analysis and addresses, in his article “Digital errors, failures, and disruptions in generative AI hallucinations: Communication typology, premises, and epistemology” how the algorithmic hallucinations of Generative Artificial Intelligence systems can be of interest for studies on digital culture and the performance of digital media and for the observation of agencies impacted by disruptive events.

Between these two articles, Robin Celikates, professor at the Free University of Berlin, discusses the relation between democracy, the public sphere, and digital media activism as forms of protest and political confrontation in “Digital publics, digital constestation: a new structural change of the public sphere?”. Despite the individuality of each article in this *Dossiê*, the text of Celikates connects those of Santaella & Kaufman with that of Lemos, as well as these three to the previous ones by Marcondes Filho and Leone. The thread that binds them is spun by concerns regarding incipient phenomena and political impacts, thickened by the desire to ensure good communication practices. It is no different in the set of articles from the other sections of this issue, seeming to indicate a trend in studies of the area.

The *Entrevista* section of this issue features a conversation between Alejandro Grimson—professor at the Institute of Higher Social Studies (IDAES) at Universidad Nacional de San Martín (UNSAM) and researcher at the *Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas* (CONICET) of Argentina—and Veneza Mayora Ronsini. Considering the author’s robust

work on culture, its relationship with political and social processes, and his most recent book organized around the theme of the middle class, Ronsini highlights the importance of Grimson's contributions to studies of reception, consumption, and identity constructions.

The *Em Pauta* section begins with two texts that explore and problematize themes that stand out in the current field of communication studies. In "Surveillance capitalism and algorithmic struggles" authors Murilo Duarte Costa Corrêa and Giuseppe Cocco propose to note how critical perspectives in relation to algorithmic culture, sustained by the observation of the convergence between data extractivism and surveillance, tend to generate a certain intellectual immobility to advance in the debate on this topic of maximum urgency. Luiz Peres-Neto, in "Global South: a political agenda to understand communication?" explores the origins, development, and contradictions of the term, as well as its institutionalization in the field of communication studies and in relation to the context of the Global North, which is investigated from traces of the researcher's own personal trajectory.

Next, in "Contemporary advertising and Peircean semiotics: a methodological proposal", Bruno Pompeu and Silvio Koiti Sato reinforce the importance of Charles Sanders Peirce's legacy for the understanding of languages with a complex potential for the generation of meanings, as shown by the phenomenon of advertising, the communicative processes of which take place in an increasingly permeated way to everyday life. The section continues in the article "Journalistic objectivity and gender perspective: tensions and displacements" in which Jessica Gustafson and Daiane Bertassi bring a detailed analysis of the journalistic production of *Portal Catarinas* (from the southern region of Brazil) as a case study to discuss the possibility of the existence of a feminist objectivity in journalism and its implications in the processes of news construction.

Next, in "The theory of social representations and the theory of mediations: a methodological proposal to draw both theories closer to each other", authors Yhevelin Serrano Guerin, Ângela Cristina Trevisan Felippi, and Cidonea Machado Deponti explore the connections between the theories of Serge Moscovici and Jesús Martín-Barbero, proposing a methodological map to assist empirical research and the organization of data collected in socialization studies to highlight and improve the mediation processes in the constitution of social representations. These processes are investigated in the following text by Nilton Faria de Carvalho, "Bordering sonorities: fruition and rearticulations of pop music and popular music", which observes the games of mediations from the proposal of musical listening workshops held for high

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school students, promoting clashes between repertoires that constitute spaces of sharing for new processes of signification.

The next text, by Viviane Borelli and Diosana Frigo, resumes an object of perennial relevance. In “Circulations of meanings in news about pandemic deaths in Brazil”, the authors face the challenge of mapping the discursive heterogeneity around news coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil. The article highlights the identification of the complexity of communication flows as circuits of meanings from a carefully detailed report of the methodology applied for the collection and organization of the data.

The *Em Pauta* section closes with “The Monarchy of the North (1919) in the iconographic discourse of the *Ilustração Portuguesa*” by Jorge Pedro Sousa, Fátima Lopes Cardoso, and Celiana Azevedo. Exploring the only illustrated magazine of an important moment in the history of Portugal, the authors discuss the alignments between government power and the press by observing the intertwining between information and propaganda, which is very well supported by the presented rich visual material.

In the *Resenha* section, at the end of this issue, Jacqueline Ausier Domingues reveals to us the density of the book “*O mundo do avesso: verdade e política na era digital*,” by Letícia Cesarino. The importance of the work for contemporary studies of communication is well pointed out by the text, especially considering its relevance based on the analysis of the recent and troubled Brazilian sociopolitical conjuncture, whose foundations of democracy and science have their structures shaken by the influence of the dynamics of digital networks.

We hope that *MATRIZES* can once again be a channel of appreciation, dissemination, and reflection for research in our area. Have a great read! ■

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