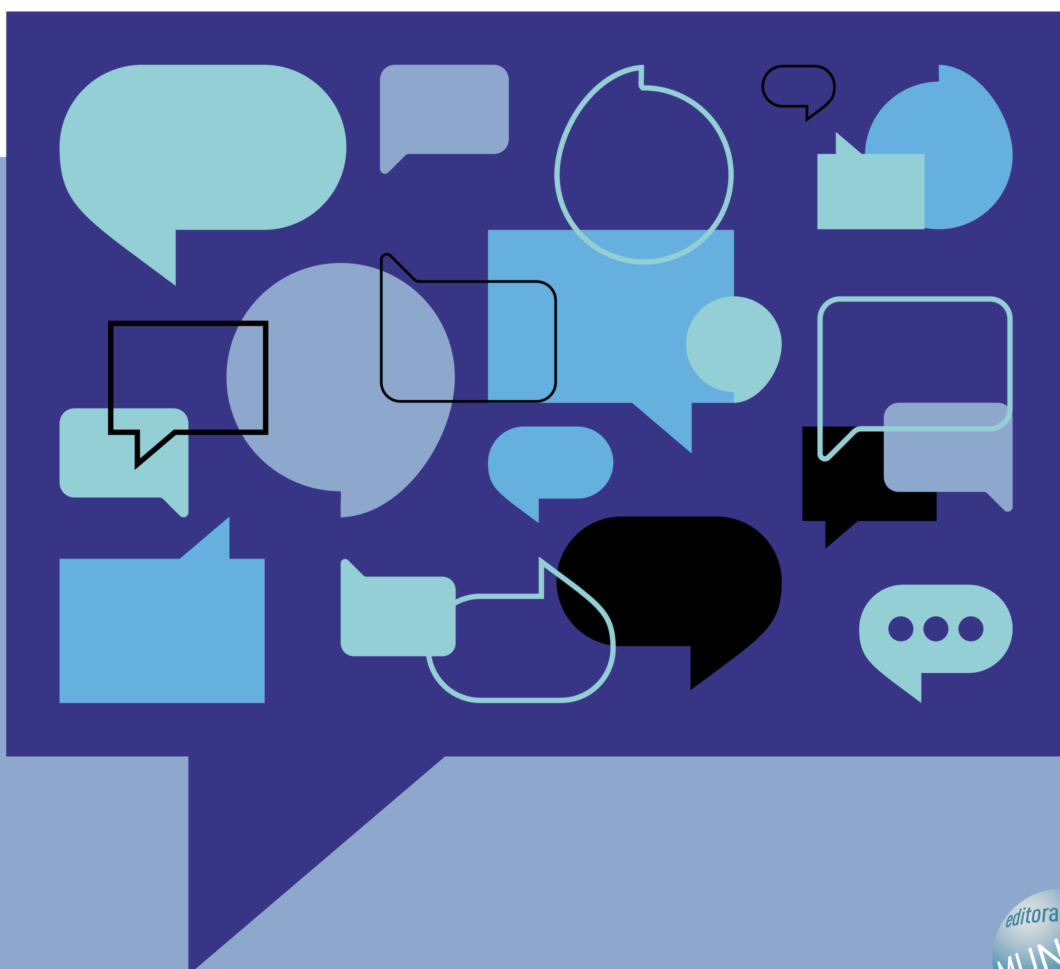
Gustavo Cardoso

Networked Communication

People are the Message



editora MUNDOS SOCIAIS

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People are the Message

Gustavo Cardoso

NETWORKED COMMUNICATION

PEOPLE ARE THE MESSAGE

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Gustavo Cardoso
Networked Communication. People are the Message

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For Catarina Albergaria

Communication is intention
Communication is the voluntary transmission of ideas,
So that someone will interpret them

Umberto Eco

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Acknowledgements

This book is the product of the inspiration and intellectual challenge of conversations and meetings held, as well as the readings or translations of the works of four intellectuals that have profoundly marked myself and the sociology of communication in recent decades: Roger Silverstone, Umberto Eco, José Manuel Paquete de Oliveira, and Manuel Castells. All of their contributions have made it so that the discussion, criticism, and synthesis of what communication is in our daily lives could be translated into the pages that make up this book.

This book is thus both the product of multiple readings and research as well as the conversations held with Manuel Castells over two decades between Barcelona and Lisbon and Paris and Oxford. It is also the product of conversations with Roger Silverstone in a restaurant in Milan and e-mail exchanges about communication and fado music, as well as the meetings with President of the Portuguese republic Jorge Sampaio at the Palace of Belém in Lisbon.

Likewise, this book is the result of the friendship and conversations about daily life and communication that have been maintained over almost three decades with José Manuel Paquete de Oliveira at our mutual institution, the ISCTE, in Lisbon.

Finally, it is also the product of two brief conversations with Umberto Eco. The first conversation was held in the shadow of a cloister near Santa Maria della Salute in Venice between the beginning of a conference on privacy and a private dinner in the arsenal. The second conversation was one held through an e-mail exchange, the theme of which was serendipity and the cover of the book by Umberto Eco with the same name. The cover of that book was based on “The Temptations of Saint Anthony” by Hieronymus Bosch, a painting exhibited at the Museum of Ancient Art of Lisbon, of which we also discovered a copy at the Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP).

Serendipity, the act of discovering things by chance, in this case pleasant things, also defines the starting point of this book, as, when I did a Google search during the first lockdown brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic in March

2020, I came across a conference by Eco on YouTube, given in 2014 at the Festival della Communicazione di Camogli with the title "Hard and Soft Communication."

The subsequent online discovery of a summary in PDF format with two pages of notes for the same conference was the starting point for the transcription of the video and the publication of this posthumous lesson in the online journal Observatorio (OBS*).

At this conference, Eco referred to what he called "the communication of communication" in a brief and concise passage, the questioning of which gave rise to this book.

The following pages are dedicated to the interpretation and decoding of what the communication of communication can be, that is, how our way of communicating is shaping our institutions, how mediation has shaped our communication, and how the networks have transformed mass communication into networked communication and mass culture into a mediatized culture, creating through this process a new media system and a new communication paradigm in which we, the people, are the message.

Understanding the contemporary communicative phenomenon is fundamental, not only for understanding society and our daily lives but also for questioning the institutions we need to create to live the life we desire.

Gustavo Cardoso

Prologue: a mediated world

The fascination with information as a concept, as in the past with information technology has resulted in a loss of the notion of the social relevance of questioning current communication and how it has implications for shaping everyday life. The analysis followed in this book seeks to remind the reader that it is not through information but rather through communication that the central axes that define and redefine the modes of organization of power, production, and experience are formed, since relations between individuals, groups, peoples, organizations, and states are accomplished with and by communication.

This book searches to provide an answer to the question: what is the communication and culture of the network society? The tentative answer provided is that the contemporary mode of communication is "networked communication", replacing the "mass communication" mode, and that "mediatized culture" is the common socially perceived cultural feature of our everyday life, succeeding to the previous social perception of living in a "mass culture".

The central argument of the book is that in our mode of networked communication, the distinctive communicational practice is the "communication of communication" and that the new communicational paradigm, in which our communication is built, is based on the idea that "people are the message".

This is a book on networked communication and the phenomenon of the communication of communication, that is, when the communicative act focuses on what another has previously communicated. In the words of Umberto Eco (2021), the communication of communication is a very new phenomenon, but it is also a traditional phenomenon in interpersonal communication, typified when someone tells someone else something, and then that person tells the next person, and so on. The reason for this novelty pointed out by Eco lies in the fact that communication today is mostly mediated, both in what is communicated and in what is communicated about what has already been communicated. Thus, the communication of communication is a very new phenomenon in the long history of communication, but it is also the product of the confirmation of mediation's predominance in communication, that is, of networked communication.

Taking as its starting point that people are the message, and not the medium, in this mediated world, this book explores the consequences of the premise that we live in a more humane society than ever before and is a contribution to thinking about how human agency has expanded rather than diminished in terms of possibilities for action through the domestication of communication and its modalities. In fact, it is argued that the contemporary mediated world is increasingly the product of human choices, and its effects, however unevenly distributed, can be witnessed in the sensation of continued crisis in communication, or the perception that things no longer work as they used to in the past, the systematic manifestation of communicational disorders, and the erosion of institutions and social categories shaped in the previous context of industrial and mass society.

In the network society, our everyday life is built around networked communication and lived through an augmented experience given the amount of information and symbolic forms exceeding our human capacity of absorption and attention.

The central effect of a mediated world is the emergence of a new communicational phenomenon — the communication of communication — that is enabled and amplified by our societies mode of communication: networked communication. Not only is the communication of public figures communicated by and disseminated by conventional and new media, but the domestication of the internet, as well as network society and the culture it promotes, have also brought about the generalization of mediated communication that has ordinary people as mediators. They communicate through digital platforms or other media by commenting on or sharing the communication of others, and in this process of "communication of communication" they edit and change the meaning or form of the mediated message they have previously received from others.

Communication is here assumed to be an eminently social, and therefore human, act, and as a total social phenomenon, it refocuses the study of communication and its effects on people and not on technologies, be they the internet, artificial intelligence, algorithmic mediation, or traditional or conventional media. In this way, communication deconstructs common biases in public discourse that denote strong or soft modes of technological determinism that shape representations of technology, media, and their effects on various spheres of the social, namely concerning power, culture, and everyday experience.

The study communication as a total social phenomenon, entails a methodological approach to mediation that combines different traditions in their complementarities. The production of meaning (or the meaning produced) by the participants individually or collectively articulated in a network of communicative interaction that, in turn, produces recognition and culture requires not only an analysis of the semiotic field of the message and its content, but also a cumulative analysis of the contributions of the practices and representations of all the social actors involved in the production, classification, distribution, sharing, and consumption, as well as the study of the media and mediation systems that disseminate them. Because, when communication occurs, it promotes the diffusion of culture through the Subject's recognition of the information provided, creating representations and values about a given reality. Mediated

communication can thus generate culture, but it also stimulates the generation of data originating from the communicative process among third parties, typically mediation platforms. Communicative data generation thus gives rise to representations and values concerning those involved in the communicative process in a scenario of "datafication of communication". Communication is no longer just about the sent and perceived message by both sender and receiver, but also the data produced in such communication.

In this framework, new technologies are not placed outside the social sphere; on the contrary, it is assumed that, within an emerging sociology of algorithmic mediation, the technologies of the "fourth industrial revolution" are socially, politically, and economically configured and constitute themselves as total social phenomena and not only technological ones.

It is also within this understanding that the sociological study of communication proposed by this book can be seen as one of the master keys to understanding the contemporary world and the transformation of its institutional axes, for example, capitalism and the political sphere. The chapters that constitute this book also propose that the financial component of capitalism is eminently communicational and mediatized, as is contemporary political populism, and that one cannot think of the economic, political, and cultural spheres without the impact of networked communication and the practices of "communication of communication."

The book is organized in three chapters and a conclusion in order to try to access the influence of networked communication in our everyday communication. The first chapter discusses why the idea that the "media is not the message" is at the core of the sociological study of mediation. The chapter is divided into three sections, being the first one focused on the discussion of what are the "sociosemiotics of mediation". The analysis developed is centered on a sociological approach to the social processes of communication, considering it as the product of the syncretic articulation of the contributions of the four major sociological paradigms of social communication, thus giving rise to a sociosemiotic approach to mediation. A sociosemiotic approach to mediation focuses on both the hard and soft aspects of communication and their interactions; that is, on the one hand, this approach relies on the analysis of the communicative interactions built by the social appropriation of the "medium/ channel/ network", or the hard dimension, constituted by the technology that ensures transmission and allows for mediation to take a central role between the actors in the communicative process, such as the sender and receiver, and on the other hand, also extends its focus to the soft dimension of communication, or the relationship between the content of the message and the code(s) used in it.

The following section "Communicative erosion", addresses the institutionalization of networked communication, trying to understand, for society, the consequences of the erosion of three basic pillars of the former mass media system's institutions: classification; consensus; and reserve.

The erosion of classification is here discussed as the gradual erosion of the perceived contextual dimension of communication. As a result of the emergence of the Internet and its social appropriation and dissemination of networked

communication, it is argued that we have been witnessing the dissemination of a new phenomenon, that of "algorithmic censorship". Such phenomenon is a product of the changes in gatekeeping functions that began to be performed by those who were previously only known as audiences. The participants in networked communication are, together with the platforms, the new actors of gatekeeping.

The main argument here is that the erosion of the former mass media gatekeeping processes, together with algorithmic concealment, implies an objective loss, since we are placed before random influences without knowing what they are, nor where they come from. The contemporary discussion on disinformation, fake news, informational pandemics, or artificial intelligence dangers is rooted precisely in this dimension of the loss of reference for the classification of the sender's authority and its contribution to the contextual dimension of communication.

In turn, the erosion of consensus addresses the consequences of the increasing role that mediation technologies and platforms play in building our political reality through communication. The erosion of the concept of democratic consensus is the product of the networks' false consensus, simultaneously allowed by a mediation that today encompasses much more non-news information than news information, and also by a different social representation of what the "informed individual" is, along with a greater social value ascribed to communication in its diversity to the detriment of news genre. However, the erosion of democratic consensus is also promoted by the political actors themselves, who experience the illusion and mistake of thinking that, if a communication item receives more shares or likes than one from their political opponent on social networks, an equivalent to voting is being reproduced, but without the actual action of voting.

The last section of the first chapter, addresses the erosion of the reserve arguing for the need to understand the phenomenon of datafication as essential to situating the transformations within the framework of the social reserve. The "datafication of communication" introduced profound changes in the processes of communication, surveillance, celebrity culture, and competitive classification that, in turn, contributed to cultural change in the way we position ourselves socially in the reserve. The contemporary individual communication practices are established in a social sharing of values regarding the reserve. Without the individual practice of mediation framed by a previous social acceptance of the "datafication of communication", it would not be possible to erode the individual reserve, socially reinforced by many millions on social networks and social media, and there would be no addition of a new element to the communicative process, viz. data.

The first chapter concludes with a discussion on the need for a sociology of algorithmic mediation. It is argued for the need to develop a next stage of sociological attention towards communication that focus itself on algorithmic mediation. The evolution of the social appropriation of communication and information technologies presents us with a social world that is increasingly populated by multiple screens, in which mediation takes place sustained in a process of network interaction. Individuals and organizations contribute to the institutionalization of screens

as a support in all mediated communicative forms, giving rise to the notion that everything is mediated through deep mediatization in a society that is simultaneously a network society and a "screen society". A contemporary sociology of mediation implies that screens, and the appropriations made of them and their content, must take into account the datafication of communication, the processes associated with said datafication, and the new actors in the communicative processes of mediation, namely the algorithms — understood at the same time not only as actors but also as instruments of dominance.

The object of a "Sociology of Algorithmic Mediation" is thus the study of the communicative practices of networked communication. That is, the networked practices of one-to-many mediated communication, reciprocal mediated communication, mass self-communication, mass communication and algorithmic closed communication.

The second chapter addresses the existing communicational crisis. This chapter is framed by the argument that the prolonged global crisis that emerged in 2008 is reflected in a change of paradigms in various areas of our lives and assumes the characteristics of a long-term structural crisis. Therefore, it was not and is not a crisis of merely an economic and financial nature—it also touches upon other dimensions, being one of such area's communication.

A communicational crisis is understood as the product of a change in the dominant mode of communication, in this specific case, the transition from the realm of mass communication to one of networked communication. The contemporary communicational crisis thus develops in a framework of interregnum in which an old media system has not yet died but in which a new media system has not yet been fully born.

The second chapter is divided into two sections, respectively: "augmented experience" and "networked communication". In the first section, dedicated to "augmented experience", it is argued that, within the framework of the network society, it is necessary to introduce a new concept, that of "augmented experience," into our analysis. Augmented experience allows us to grasp the characteristics of the formation of contemporary experience, which extends beyond just the use of news.

If the concept of augmented reality intended to convey a meaning associated with the technological use of different data overlays viewable on a given screen and associated with a given location in real time, the concept of "augmented experience" intends, in turn, to describe the contemporary social process of the construction of experience in different layers, mostly algorithmically mediated. The experience has established itself as an augmented experience, shaped by the combination of news and non-news information and permanently sustained by the multiple dimensions of the mediated construction of the experience. The augmented experience can thus be described as the contemporary social process of building the experience based on what is expressed and shared on social networks and social media, together with the circulation of news produced by journalists and opinions from editorial commentators, and with the use of search engines and

large language model chatbots to access diverse information in a network algorithmic integration of mediation.

Following the argument for the need of conceptualizing "augmented experience" in this chapter, we will approach how are power relations shaped through this augmented experience, and how are changes created within the previous media system, both in journalistic relations and in mass-media institutions themselves. To develop the analysis, this section has been divided into five distinctive points. First, we will address what is "Communicational capitalism", by trying to answer the following question: if our experience is an augmented experience, did the rupture and communicational change also foster an updating of capitalism? The argument presented here is that, in addition to the informational characterization of capitalism or the contribution of the dimension of surveillance and data to understanding contemporary capitalism, we must also consider another dimension of characterization: the role of networked communication in the formation of a financial capitalism of a communicational nature.

Augmented experience shapes value creation relationships through the same mechanisms that shape our remaining experience, giving a clearly communicational connotation to contemporary financial capitalism. The conditions created by business and financial journalism for a new dynamic of economic and financial commentary led to the creation a new type of celebrity — the business person — and are on the origin of a dynamic that tainted the space of social networks and social media, creating new patterns of economic and financial opinion by extending their sphere to non-specialists and for the institutionalization of a communicational capitalism associated with global financial markets.

Developing the argument on the existence of an ongoing communicational crisis, the analysis subsequently focuses on the process of "Novelization of the news". It is argued that the "Novelization of the news" is a new contemporary communicative phenomenon. The novelization of the news is an editorial strategy that tends to become the journalistic norm to prolong audience loyalty and build audience levels over extended periods. However, by normalizing the use of the novelization of the news as a daily practice, in the management of the relationship between the mass media and their audiences, phenomena of communicative disorders can also be reinforced. When the novelization of the news is applied to themes such as war, catastrophe, political scandal, or terrorist attacks, it can easily lead to the creation of a "news loop," a situation in which editorial control tends to seamlessly escape the decisions made in the newsroom. Also related to this phenomenon is the creation of a "political opinion" rather than a public opinion through media practice of over relying on the celebritization of opinion commentators, as opposed to building public opinion on the basis of dialog and debate that enables the presentation of different positions by multiple people. It is argued that political opinion in mass media is today essentially constructed through the practice of "diverbio", or the performative tough discussion between two or more different people that is regularly renewed in different news schedules.

For the discussion on the novelization of the news it is also key to discuss why information is no longer culturally perceived as news in our contemporary

societies. It is argued that there is a growing conceptual separation between the concept of the "informed citizen" and that of the "informed individual." The hypothesis put forward here is that citizens no longer conceive the practice of citizenship as being strictly related to receiving news but rather have extended it to other dimensions of information. Consequently, one can propose the following hypothesis: there are two ways of living our everyday lives through mediation, and our options make us privilege one and then sometimes the other, depending on our interests and context. The first, which can be identified as aligning with "communicational self-interest," corresponds to the preference for seeking information regarding the interest of a given individual but also of knowing what is going on and what matters to "their people," which may refer to their friends, family, or coworkers, as well as those who know of and share the same interests, tastes, and hobbies. A second way of living everyday life through mediation is aligned with "communicational belonging," corresponding to wanting to seek information regarding what a given individual is interested in knowing, but also what happens to those they do not know themselves and who may have something or nothing to do with them. It is argued that if we accept such an approach, that also implies discussing if the civilizational alliance between journalism and citizenship in the social imaginary was broken, or not, at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Having first focused on the economic and experience dimensions of a communicational crisis we will then proceed with our analysis into the power dimensions, by analyzing "celebrity politics "and its "communicational populism". We are, currently, moving towards the creation of a "political sphere" in networked communication. Such a political sphere, is the product of a politics designed to create political opinion centered on few stakeholders and where, rather than forming an public opinion, the circulation of opposing opinions are actively sought between different political commentators. The political sphere thus represents a breakdown of the public sphere, mostly occupied by political commentators from the most diverse ideological worlds and from the most diverse interest groups. For example, people who are certified by the mass media of radio, television, and newspapers as knowledgeable on political reality and who are given the time and/or space to carry out their personal-political interpretations on a regular basis.

The political sphere also has a hierarchy—a ranking of political opinion makers in which the top positions are assumed by "celebrity politicians," who manage to have mass-media spaces of opinion, both being news focuses themselves and, simultaneously, having access to spaces of opinion and amplifying their opinions through the use of social networks and social media for sharing them and manage current supporters and recruit potential fans.

Celebrity politics also features a communicational populism dimension. It is argued that communicational populism should be characterized as the practice or strategy pursued by the politician to reach citizens by dismissing the journalist as an intermediary or by reducing and even modifying the traditional role of journalism in the process of mediation between politicians and citizens. The disintermediation of journalism can occur directly or indirectly. When it occurs indirectly, the

politician favors the passing of their political message using opinion and commentary instead of through the news in the media. In turn, direct disintermediation is processed using social networks and social media. Nonetheless, communicational populism is not possible to pursue without building a relationship with mass media and journalism. Namely, because the role of celebrity-politician implies, first, the informal certification of the politician as belonging to the celebrity category through the appropriation of the role of political commentator in television news or other types of non-news programs.

Communicational populism goes hand in hand with the development of a third evolutionary stage of television: Uber-Television. Uber-Television is a product of the breakdown of the conditions of continuity that allowed for the relative temporal stability of Neo-Television. What characterizes Uber-Television is the assumption of an algorithmic cultural matrix, both in streaming, which is indeed algorithmic, and in non-streaming, where the algorithmization is simulated in their relationship with the audiences. Uber-Television strives to make us believe that we are choosing what we watch, even when the choice is made almost without our direct intervention or personal data.

The second chapter concludes with a discussion on what is networked communication and its social consequences. In this final section, it is argued that networked communication resulted in the emergence of a "networked mediation," fostering different patterns of organization of social interaction. In the mode of networked communication, mediation, media diets, the media matrix, and the media system reach a new level of significant transformation. These transformations are the product of the relationship between different forms of networked mediation, making mediation an integrated experience in which the use of different screens in different technologies is combined, from telephone to television, from newspaper to video games, from Internet to radio, and from cinema to mobile phone. This once again places participants, their practices, and their degrees of mediation literacy at the center of our individual and social attention.

Networked communication is the mode of communication of an informational and network society, and its communicative distinctiveness is based on three dimensions: (1) a communicative syncretism, (2) a multiform mediation, and (3) an individualized switching of message flows. Communicative syncretism results from the combination of access to the characteristics of different communicative forms. In turn, multiform mediation is enhanced by the articulation of different forms of mediation in a digital network of variable geometry. Finally, the individualized switching of message flows provides the possibility of constantly rescaling the reach of communicative choices negotiated between senders and receivers.

However, just as all modes of communication have an organizational centrality of communication, without which communication does not flow, in networked communication, the central role is assumed by the generalization of the practices of "the communication of communication". Communication of communication practices constitute the central node of networked communication and can be defined as the mediated sharing of content previously mediated, whether re-edited or not, by the participants in the communicative act. The communication of

communication is the practice that ensures the interconnection and switching of messages between different forms of communication. Just as the central characteristic of mass communication is its reach, the distinctiveness of networked communication lies in its multiform dimension and its ability to assume various configurations, allowing for flexibility in terms of reach, spaces, and times of communication.

The third, and final chapter, focuses on the communicative relation established between people, message and culture. The chapter argues for the need to foster discussion on the role of communication in the cultural change of societies and to question what the socially shared perception of culture is in the network society.

Mass communication was the communication mode that characterized industrialized societies. It also corresponded to a communicational paradigm based on the relationship between the medium and the message. Unlike in mass communication, mediation in networked communication is shaped to a large extent by individuals adopting the new social roles associated with the communication practices of sharing, producing, and classifying information, something that did not occur in mass communication and that could even be considered the opposite of the social role ascribed to audiences.

In networked communication, the role of the participant is not limited to the strict possibilities of participation that are assigned to them in a predefined environment. The participant's choices are multiple, of which there are so many, in fact, that they are socially represented as potentially infinite, even though they are not and are dependent on gatekeeping performed by either platform algorithms or mass-media editorial decisions. The participants in mediation are potentially all of us. As such, we can, because of our choices, take on different roles in the context of networked communication. Such roles can be defined based on the combination of different communication practices, which are established as pillars of the operation of the new media system. Participants in networked communication can be subdivided into differentiated segments that are configured multidimensionally and that correspond to different roles that promote "virality", "nodality", or "shareability". However, the acceptance of these roles, which depends solely on individual communicative choices, also implies the mastery of the communicative literacies associated with networked communication.

The third chapter is divided into six sections, respectively: Communication, autonomy, and culture; Sharing, production, and classification of experience; Individualized authenticity; Open production cultures; Cloud cultures; and Mediatized culture.

In the first section, "communication, autonomy, and culture" it is argued that the change in communicative practices also produces change in our representations regarding the three central relationships defining a society: production, power, and experience. By changing our representations about society, we also change our representations about what culture is and what characterizes our societies, that is, how culture manifests itself in our current time period and what makes this different from other historical contexts. If our way of thinking and

representing production, power, and experience in everyday life is changed by networked communication, then this change also has consequences for how production occurs and is expected to occur, and how power is exercised and expected to be exercised, as well as how experience is constructed and expected to be constructed.

Networked communication practices promote a new representation of lifeworld and of everyday life, respectively: a "networked lifeworld"; and "everyday life immersed in mediation." Such social representations, give rise to processes of interrelationship between social and cultural change and changes in mediation and communication. Networked communication, through mediatization processes, promotes representations of a mediatization of culture in everyday life and not only the creation of mediatized cultures.

Also, in this section it is discussed the relationship between increases in the level of autonomy and reflexivity of individuals. It is suggested that the way in which communication practices are appropriated in networked communication allows participants to be categorized according to three generic profiles: "networked paleo-communicators"; "networked proto-communicators"; and "networked communicators".

Networked communication practices provide the tools for a culture of individualization to materialize in individual projects of autonomy. In so doing, it also provides the tools for the organization of collective action and for the social sharing of representations. The relationship between communication and autonomy is closely linked to communication's ability to function as an instrument at the service of the individual, namely, to allow that person to assume a role as a Subject. In this analysis, it is also proposed the existence of three distinct autonomy profiles: "representations of autonomy,"; "unconsolidated practices of autonomy,"; and a "consolidated project of autonomy."

A "networked world" is the result of the reflexivity created by our communication practices, referring to the fact that, for the Subject, it has become increasingly noticeable that everyday life is organized in and as a network. Consequently, such a perception alters the representations regarding how the world is perceived in its organization and experience. The "mediated Subject" can be described as a networked individual who is able to construct themselves as a social actor—someone who defines their actions according to their values and interests, strengthening their autonomy and giving unity and meaning to the lived experience as a result of the full appropriation of communication and asserting themselves as a networked communicator who possesses a consolidated project of autonomy.

The second section focuses on sharing, production, and classification of experience. The departure point for the analysis in this section is that in networked communication, the sharer of the experience may also be the producer of the experience. The participants may assume, if they wish, the social roles of both "experience sharer" as well as "experience producer," namely when innovation is sought in the forms of mediation or in the content to be read, heard, or viewed by others. Mediation presupposes that information will reach individuals. In the network society, experience is associated with mediation, and mediation is associated

with the direct sharing of content by participants instead of only via the distribution of media organizations, as previously occurred. In this section it is argued that, in networked communication, the classification of the experience stems from individual contributions, but it also produces social representations regarding different content. The characteristics of networked communication transfer some of the validation responsibilities that were previously associated with institutions present in the mass-media system, such as schools, science, publishers, libraries, and bookstores, to the individual participant. In networked communication, the classification of the experience is a social process led by participants in communication, but it occurs in parallel with the classification and selection made by algorithms and content moderation and is triggered by a combination of the actions of artificial intelligence and human beings within the framework of search platforms, social networks and social media. Moreover, it is argued that this process of "individualization of classification" is faced with increasing difficulty given the association between the circulation of messages originating on search engines or a social network's feed and previous algorithmic choice. In networked communication, a great majority of shared content for individual classification is dependent on variables used for the prior classification of messages that are usually unknown to the participants. Therefore, the architecture of visibility associated with mass communication is followed by a specific architecture of visibility associated with networked communication. To a great extent, participants' representations of visibility are formed through the processes inherent in software and the algorithmic power underlying new forms of networked communication, namely those that occur within the framework of social networks and social media.

The third section focuses on the social construction of an "individualized authenticity". In this section it is argued that the "real versus false" distinction is central to debates about what it means to communicate in the network society, namely because it is around this opposition that the discussion of what constitutes *fake news* is centered—how disinformation is constructed and how relationships of deception or truth toward content, sources, and mediation are formed on social networks and social media. However, in the framework of networked communication, authenticity, or the distinction between what is false and true, is not as linear as what was encountered in the historical framework of mass communication.

The discussion addresses authenticity from two interrelated perspectives, respectively: authenticity in networked communication; and authenticity, disinformation and journalism.

The assessment of authenticity as truth, or "truthful authenticity", is not only dependent on the participants in networked communication; rather, the evaluation of communicative truth is also dependent on validation by human moderators or the use of the artificial intelligence of search engines or social media and social networking platforms. In networked communication, the negotiation of authenticity is characterized by being decidedly performative since it is based on an individual vision of authenticity constructed from both personal and mediated experience. It is the product of the facts experienced or taken from the viewpoint of

the "other" as well as of the opinions produced by "both," a negotiation in which the two sides of communication also base the content's authenticity on the social relationship established between the sender and receiver themselves.

Hence, the characterization of contemporary communicative authenticity as truth is compatible with an idea of negotiated and "individualized authenticity. The definition of authenticity in the context of mediation has thus become dependent on an individualized construction through a new equilibrium negotiated between different participants and with different sources for the negotiation of said authenticity. These sources are no longer dependent on corresponding to only those specialized and certified by the institutions of modernity. In networked communication, the challenge to authenticity arises from the fact that a wide area of communication contains all types of information, for which, in most cases, authenticity does not constitute an innate fact associated with its production. As such, authenticity depends on what the sender of the communication, the platform manager, and all the participants in this process consider to be authentic and not false. In this process, the social representation of authenticity has also changed.

Nonetheless, every interaction in networked communication exhibits the coexistence of messages whose code is based on either the authenticity of "journalistic truth" or authenticity negotiated on a case-by-case basis. In this section it is argued that the overlap of these two types of codes in the same mediated space-time results in the creation of a communicative conflict, one that is associated with questioning authenticity. Authenticity is the product of a truth constructed from the use of factuality and associated with journalism and science, in addition to another authenticity negotiated between the communicating participants. One might argue that, in networked communication, authenticity determination processes coexist on the basis of journalistic and scientific facts, along with processes that include evaluative and deductive analysis, and not merely factual analysis, in determining authenticity. In the first form, authenticity is the product of the scientific method, reinterpreted in the contemporary journalistic method, using "news as truth." In turn, in the second form, authenticity is the product of negotiation between participants in the communicative process. This negotiation is based on their values and social capital, but it also makes use of triangulation between multiple content. It is even possible to use those from journalistic and scientific factuality to validate a particular negotiating position on a certain communicated topic.

Therefore, in networked communication, authenticity is based on both individual interrogation and social negotiation between groups of individuals through communication. This coexistence generates the tensions that allow for the emergence of information disorders, for example, those that give rise to the sharing of disinformative content. If we assume that networked communication is based on a paradigm of message remixing, negotiated individualized authenticity, and content sharing, then it will also be possible to argue that information disorders constitute a potential by-product of networked communication itself.

Still focusing on cultural changes associated with networked communication, the chapter's section focusing on the rise of "open production cultures"

develops the argument that communication practices foster new cultural values around mediation, which in turn influence our representations regarding production and, consequently, our consumption, as well. The most significant of these new cultural values is openness. The cultural spread of the value of openness, accompanied by open production, has made it an integral part of all daily routines beyond communication.

In the industrial model of development, the representation of the status of a good, from the moment it was produced through its commercialization and later acquisition, was synonymous with a status that remained unchanged. Socially, the product was represented as final and the production as fixed. However, it is here argued, that in the informational model of development, the dynamics of social representation regarding the status of goods and services has changed. In the network society, the computer, the television, the mobile phone, and even the car, after its initial acquisition, continue to be in a process of evolution. In the informational model of development, digital content and services that possess a digital materiality are characterized by reprogrammability and homogenization, allowing them to be malleable and easily alterable. To do so, they can simply be reprogrammed through a new set of instructions. In the informational model of development, through software updates, the material/hardware is also always changing in its functions, giving rise to digitized products. Digitized products have a hybrid materiality and are products that combine digital and mechanical components with asymmetric resistance to change. As with software, digitized products are also unfinished, malleable, and ambivalent. Open production can thus be defined as the product of a culture of openness, which is the inheritor of a culture of scientific openness and is enhanced by networked communication. Open production is characterized by the adoption of remixing/mashup practices, permanent beta, or incomplete design, productive beta/update strategies, and a relationship with the final recipient based on openness in goods and services. After its production, a good or service continues to transform itself in a dynamic of open production, thus assuming a permanent matrix of change regarding its functional status and functionalities. Openness is a cultural value that is no longer solely a characteristic of mediation provided by the practices of networked communication, it evolved to define our representations regarding what production and consumption are in our daily lives. In this progression, mediation was objectified, and it acquired a new explanatory centrality because, in addition to characterizing communication, mediation has come to characterize production itself in general.

The third cultural dimension analysed in this chapter relates to the formation of "cloud cultures". The argument here presented is that, by having the material support for communication practices in the cloud, such as streaming, messaging, e-mail, and social networks and social media, cultural perceptions have also changed. In network society, we have witnessed a simultaneous cultural depreciation of the cultural value of ownership and an appreciation of valuing access.

The immersion of our everyday life in mediation, made possible by the cloud, has also promoted and generalized subscription practices for sectors of economic activity beyond communication and cultural goods. This was possible because the

model was culturally normalized through the adoption of subscription for access to digital materiality goods and services, reaching more and more individuals and thus gaining the social aura of a model that characterizes everyday economic relations and takes on the role of the economic model of our time, becoming popular in an increasing range of industries, products, and services. In the cloud, materiality is digital. However, through cloud manufacturing, the digital also gives rise to physical or hybrid materiality.

Cloud storage and the generalization of its acceptance has created a culture of valuing the cloud, making cloud culture one of the defining characteristics of networked communication. The culture of the network society was also shaped in this process. Digital ease in accessing the cloud has changed the way "having" something is culturally defined. From the association between "having" and ownership of a good or service, "having" something has started to be equated with both ownership and access. This occurred as a result of the social generalization of subscription practices or through relationships not mediated by monetary transactions—such as informal access to music, newspapers, and films. The fact that the possession of a good or service is no longer directly associated with its ownership also has a direct influence on the functioning of the contemporary capitalist model since, in the industrial model of development, capitalism was centered on a consumerism openly linked to the promotion of ownership of property, deeds to homes, and even the goods of daily life. Therefore, it can be argued that informational capitalism is based on the creation of value through the datafication of communication. It promotes consumption based on the subscription to access without abandoning the dynamics of property ownership. In the network society, we are thus seeing the promotion of capitalism that reinterprets the social adoption of a cloud culture, one that becomes a promoter of economic and cultural equivalence between the perceived benefits of access and ownership, in what could be labeled as "Netflix capitalism." This new evolution of informational capitalism replaces the centrality of permanent ownership for that of access to goods and services by ascribing it an identically socially shared value.

The third chapter closes by addressing the role of "mediatized culture" in the network society. In this final section it is argued that the social perception of culture is constructed through communicative interaction. This interaction always tends to highlight a single characteristic and its shared social understanding to the detriment of others that are equally important. Mass culture was the result of the association of the concept of culture with mediation and standardization, making mediation and standardization part of everyday life. The culture described as being of the masses came to be perceived of by society in general as the culture of everyday life. Thus, it came to be understood as synonymous with widespread access to standardized cultural goods through mediation.

In the search for a definition of cultural singularity that has arisen as a product of networked communication, it is important to remember that the defining feature of a culture is always its ability to reproduce itself through a stable framework of references capable of producing meaning and widespread acceptance. In the network society there is a socially shared perception that everyday life is

immersed in mediation. This implies that culture is formed in this immersion in the screens and through their domestication. Consequently, the unique trait, socially attributed to contemporary culture, is that of being a "mediatized culture." Mediatized culture produces an intensification of the characteristics of mass culture through the creation of information markets via hyper-segmentation on a global scale, permitted by the web, social networks, and social media, and in the process originating "mediatic culture". Simultaneously, mediatized culture also allows for the quasi-suppression of the temporal and spatial lags in production, as well as the distribution of content, creations, and performances promoting "culture-diffusing cultures" that are the product of communication and recognition.

Mediatized culture, as mass culture before it, is culturally capable of including everything and everyone, thus contributing to its self-perpetuation.

Mediatized culture can be defined as a syncretic culture that is the product of the action of individual Subjects, as well as of organizations, disseminating culture in different ways, through networked communication in a framework of a mediated everyday life, valuing the convergence between mediatic, cultivated, and phatic content, and based on a permanent reappropriation of themes and symbols of different cultures.

Mass culture has seen its hegemony and reproductive capacity challenged by the social appropriation of mediation by individual participants in communication. In this process of contestation and action, a new culture was formed, imbued with the capacity for cultural reproduction. The culture of our societies is associated with the influence of mediation. The Subject is a mediated Subject, societies are organized in a network by mediation, and everyday communication is networked in mediation. In this way, a mediatized culture is generated from such processes.

The overall conclusion of the book presents a synthetic interpretation of the findings and ideas which can be materialized in the concept of the "Communication of Communication". For a sociology that seeks to study algorithmic mediation, it is important to question not only what technologies we use but also how we domesticate them, and, consequently, to question what it means for us individually, collectively, and institutionally to be able, at any time, to be reachable and to access the cloud with all of its applications, information on the Web, social networks and social media, and entertainment content through multiple screens.

This book starts with the following three questions: what is the role of mediatization processes in our daily lives and in our perception of what culture is? When we are informed about everything at any time and can entertain ourselves in every way at any time and place, can mass culture still characterize our culture? How do power, production, and experience change when communication and culture change in our societies?

The conclusion addresses the hypothesis that the communicational paradigms centered on the relationships established between the medium and the message no longer hold explanatory capacity in the framework of a new mode of communication, a society unfolded by networked communication. Therefore, the

new communicative paradigm should be understood as having an explanatory dimension based on the dialectic established between people and the message.

The communicational paradigm associated with networked communication finds its distinctive singularity in the predominance of people over the channel/medium. This centrality of the networked individual, or the mediated Subject, in the process of communicating the message and in the production of the shared meaning can thus be translated into the idea that "people are the message."

People are the message because, in addition to the interpretation and decoding of messages having always depended on them, it is also now up to the mediated Subject to maintain the form and content of the message in networked communication, assuming a greater responsibility in the process of distributing messages through new social roles of classification of authenticity, production, and sharing, materializable in the practices of the communication of communication.

To question what communication is today is to question not only what mediation is but also which media system develops from mediation, as well as what kind of unavoidable tensions arise between the information technology industries, the financial industries, and the different social interests.

Today, faced with the dissemination and social appropriation of a different communication, that of networked communication, it is important not to repeat the same mistakes of the past. It is important not to confuse the social practices of communication with the professional practices associated with the small number of professionals and keepers of mediation channels.

This is a book about the need for a sociology of algorithmic mediation that explains why, in a mediatized culture, generated by networked communication, people are the message, and why their most distinctive feature lies in the communication of communication.

Chapter 1
The medium is not the message

It can perhaps be said that the identity of sociology studies focused on communication is rooted in the idea that the medium is not the message.

As Silverstone states, dissertating about the need for a sociology of screens, "the medium cannot be the message because, in McLuhan's philosophical-technological formulation, neither the medium nor the message assume the role of social products" (Silverstone, 1990; McLuhan 2001; Cardoso e Quintanilha, 2013).

As applied to the study of communication, sociology addresses the relationships between individuals. During the second half of the twentieth century, the study of mass communication was thus considered from the perspective of the distortion of communication through its supposed effects on individuals, examining communication as a primary social function (Oliveira, 2017). Starting from the study of communication between individuals, sociological studies of communication evolved toward a shared interest on the role of mass communication and later on the role played by mediation, and gradually sociology came to share a focus on what became known as a sociology of mediation (Silverstone, 2005).

Communication is the intentional placing of an idea in the mind of another so that it is interpreted through a word, gesture, sound, image, vibration, or feeling; sent and interpreted by the sender; and received and also interpreted by the receiver, both of whom are embedded in a common framework of culture and recognition (Eco, 2021; Oliveira, 2017).

Communication is, therefore, symbolic interaction, with the utilization of signals conducted in a planned, conscious, and associated way in terms of socialization processes. Communicating is an action that develops in a habitual and socially contextualized way, in which the meaning of symbols depends on the internalization of social rules by participants (Eco, 2021; Hepp, 2013).

Communication is fundamental to the human being: We are born in a world where communication already exists, we learn what this world is through communication, and all our actions are always accompanied by communicative action (Hepp, 2013; Habermas, 1984). Reality is constructed through communication; we

create our social world through multiple communicative processes (Hepp, 2013; Oliveira, 2017).

Mediation, in turn, designates how the communicative process takes place. Today, this occurs mostly, but not exclusively, in digital format and through screens. Mediation can thus be defined as the way in which mediated communication processes shape society and culture, as well as the relationships that participants, both individual and institutional, have with their environment and with each other through these mediations in a dynamic of mutual influence, not to be confused with the mere reception of mediated content (Martin-Barbero, 1993; Silverstone, 1999; 2005).

Mediation comprises the processes of transmission and reception, but it goes beyond them, as well. It entails the incorporation of an extended process, which involves the creation of meanings produced through mediation, while always bearing in mind the textual, historical, and anthropological context as well as involving actions and experience in the context of everyday life (Silverstone, 1999).

From the perspective of communication, mediation should be understood as a meeting point of diverse and conflicting forces. These forces, which are the product of different contexts and whose communicative interaction leads to differentiated social and cultural processes, have a role in structuring power relations in everyday life (Silverstone 1999; Martin-Barbero 1993; Ovens, 2016; Hepp, 2013). The study of mediation should thus be seen as a product of sociological interpretation while also employing methods and concepts of social anthropology, history, social psychology, and social semiotics from a framework perspective of mediation as total communication (Oliveira, 2017; Echo, 2018d; van Leeuwen, 2005; Silverstone, 2005).

When communication occurs, it promotes the diffusion of culture through the subject's recognition of the information provided, creating representations and values about a given reality. Mediated communication can thus generate culture, but it can also stimulate the generation of data originating from the communicative process among third parties, typically mediation platforms. Communicative data generation thus gives rise to representations and values concerning those involved in the communicative process in a scenario of datafication of communication.

The sociology of mediation does not arise from what a precipitated first reading could lead us to think. The sociology of mediation does not itself focus on the study of the technological process of mediation; therefore, it does not promote any theoretical proximity to McLuhan's (2001) philosophical-technological definition.

The sociology of mediation refers to the study of the role of the social in all the processes that are constructed around communication, understood as a social act and inserted into an institutional structure at a given historical and cultural moment. In this case, a network society is one in which mediation is omnipresent through multiple screens, shaping a mediatized society where the processes of transformation and change, rooted in mediation, are at work at all levels of social interaction, giving rise to a life lived in and by the media in a mediated self-creation in the context of an always on global connectivity (Castells, 2002; Deuze, 2007; 2009; 2011; Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

The network society is a mediatized society in which the processes of change are manifested through the extension, made possible by the media, of the natural limits of human communication, either through the substitution of social activities and social institutions or through their incorporation into various activities, until they become part of social and private life, endorsing a logic to which the actors and organizations of all sectors of society adjust themselves (Schulz, 2004).

Mediation introduces the possibility of the spatial-temporal and social decontextualization of communication into our societies (Giddens, 1990; Hepp, 2013) and results in the creation of permanently available forms of communication, transforming television communication first into a flow and then into a stream and enabling, through the Internet, access to any information or entertainment stored in the cloud from anywhere, even from unknown geographical locations (Williams, 2003; Eco, 2021; Cardoso, 2008; Amoore, 2018).

As Internet-based forms of mediated communication have become more mobile, enabled by mobile phones, the spaces of face-to-face communication and mediated communication have become increasingly merged. The traditional spatial bases of mediation, television, and computer screens at home, and those at work, were complemented by the "space" of mobility or space of flows (Castells, 2002), corresponding to the path between the spaces of home, work, school, and leisure (Silverstone, 1999). Television and computer screens are no longer the only screens available for accessing information and entertainment; rather, they exist alongside the mobile phone screen. In the same vein, the computer screen is no longer exclusively for work or school or for entertainment and games—it has become a gateway for information, as well, and it is even utilized as a means of accessing audiovisual entertainment such as series and films through streaming, therefore replacing the TV screen. The phone has also been domesticated as a multifunction screen, emulating everything that could be done on a screen (Colbjørnsen, 2021; Silverstone, 2005). The consequence of this domestication of screens is the multiplication of mediatization processes (Silverstone, 2005). In quantitative terms, social relations and institutions are ever more characterized by the use of processes of technologically mediated communication for their development and organization, giving rise to the mediatization of everyday life (Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

However, this transformation also manifests itself in a qualitative dimension. Thus, the way we communicate in a network society also reflects the technical changes that have taken place in the history of the media over the last five decades since the birth of the Internet. This reflection expresses itself through molding forces acting through the media, which exert a certain "pressure" on the way we communicate (Hepp, 2013).

The medium is not the message, but it contributes, on the basis of the type of communication it enables, to shaping the way we socially domesticate our environment and, consequently, how social relations and culture are built (Eco, 2018c). The profusion of multimedia and the audiovisual represents a certain "pressure" to make the visual dimension more predominant in communication, while television promotes a journalism of narratives and genres of communication built around concise exhibitions, short sentences, and the use of sound bites (Hepp,

2013). Conversely, the profusion of online writing exerts pressure for the multiplication of narrative formulas and diversified writings, and the mobile phone for the permanent contactability of individuals (Eco, 2021). It can be concluded that there are no direct effects on communication from the material technology associated with mediation, but there is indeed a shaping of communication through the processes of domestication and the subsequent social pressure resulting from these processes.

If, through mediation processes, the media constitute themselves as a mediating technology of communication, their social appropriation and domestication originate processes of interrelationship between the change in mediation and communication and sociocultural change (Livingstone, 2009; Couldry, 2012).

The object of mediation should therefore refer to the study of the communicative process's complexity, from the perspective of communication as a total phenomenon, defined as the study of the communicative relationship and social influence led by the network and created by the interactions between the productive system of messages, its direct and indirect producers, the messages themselves, and their content, recipients, and institutions (Oliveira, 2017).

Mediation seeks to describe the social process of communication; in contrast, mediatization theorizes about something quite different, seeking to capture the nature of the interrelationship between changes in mediated communication between humans and other social spheres (Hepp, 2013). Mediatization thus studies the result of the influence that mediation exerts on human relations in social, economic, political, and cultural daily life, presupposing the existence of mediation through communication and focusing on sociocultural change that results from a variety of specific mediations (Hepp, 2013). Specific mediation, occurring in a given contextual field, promotes a certain molding of communication, that influences how reality is constructed (Hepp, 2013).

Communication in a network society should be understood as a process of mediation, in which the social is built and materialized and where the production of a mediatization of the social, cultural, economic, political, and social expression occurs (Martin-Barbero 1993; Oliveira, 2017; Couldry, 2012; Hepp, 2013).

If the sociological study of communication is, today, essentially a study of mediation and the scope of mediatization, what was the path taken by the analysis of social practices and representations regarding communication up to this point, and how did they influence the proposal made here regarding the need for a sociology of algorithmic mediation?

We can begin to answer these questions by consulting the seminal work of Oliveira on communication and its social dimension (2017). According to that author, it is possible to identify four chronological phases in the evolution of sociological research on communication. The first phase, focused on the social dimension of communication, corresponds to the historical period between the end of the First World War and the post-Second World War, specifically the end of the 1940s. This first phase was spatially and culturally centered on the United States and focuses on the study of the social influence that the press and radio exerted on the collective dynamics of society. This was the time of Roosevelt's New Deal and the analysis of

the role of radio and the press in creating a collective feeling in the face of the Great Depression, the economic crisis of 1929-1932 (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2014; Oliveira, 2017).

The second phase, which still has a special emphasis on research from America, began in the 1950s and was dependent on the context of the Second World War and on propaganda and counterpropaganda between the Allies and the Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan). This was a moment of innovation in sociological research within the framework of the social dimension of communication, that is, what we have come to designate as "social communication," corresponding to the emergence of so-called communication research (Oliveira, 2017). In this fruitful period, the founding analyses of Lasswell (1960), Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1948); Lewin (1947); Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953); and, finally, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) emerged. In turn, the third chronological phase of media studies occurred between the end of the 1960s and the end of the 1970s in different countries, including the United States, France, Italy, Germany, and the United Kingdom, and it became spatially and culturally more heterogeneous. This was a phase markedly based on the search for innovation regarding theoretical-methodological options, where the debate concerned the role of cultural industries in mass culture, communication and its role in social and cultural conflicts, consumer society, and the role of media such as newspapers, television, and radio (Oliveira, 2017). Likewise, this was a period that corresponded to Marxist criticism, along with a renewed interest in the Frankfurt school's critical theory (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002).

Oliveira (2017) proposes adding a fourth phase to the three described above. This fourth phase of communication studies developed from the beginning of the 1980s, focusing on the analysis of social transformations framed by the occurrence of a "third industrial revolution" on the basis of information technologies.

In theoretical-analytical terms, this fourth phase on the social dimension of communication tends to be characterized by a discursive duality already identified by Eco, in which he describes not only the shared social positions but also academic and political discourse regarding the effects of mass communication on culture in the 1960s. In his analysis, Eco (2001) used the term "apocalyptic" to designate the discourse produced by social actors who assumed a perspective of rejection in the face of the perceived social change, and the term "integrated" for those who accepted change and opted for integration in the current cultural context (Eco, 1994; 2001). In the original meaning of Eco's analysis, the apocalyptics represented those who saw in the advent of mass media the end of "true" (or so-called refined) culture, an end that would occur as a result of the annulment of good taste, the return of the barbarian, the disintegration of order, and the reversal of history. On the other hand, the integrated were made up of all those who saw in it the opportunity for the cancelation of differences and inequalities, the time for popular sovereignty, the civilization of values, and the distribution of cultural goods, equally and by all, or even the possibility of full integration of all citizens in the status quo in the new media of the 1960s (television, experimentalism with cinema, and other forms of mediation) (Oliveira, 2017).

As Eco recalls (1994; 2001), scientific analysis and discourse is not immune to integrated and apocalyptic views, as this opposition can be taken as a central characteristic of scientific questioning regarding the social dimension of information in the context of communication. From the late 1980s, when analyzing scientific production in the context of sociology and other social sciences that had appropriated the sociological method, there are two discourses in opposition to each other in the theoretical approaches chosen to discuss and analyze the development of the "information society" (Webster, 2014). In that historical moment, in the broader framework of sociology and other social sciences, we find, on the one hand, an "integrative" theorization about the role of information in the face of change, which argues that society is experiencing a situation of radical paradigm change in its most diverse sectors, making it possible to speak about the emergence of a new type of society in which the role of information is considered as central to a new stage of more inclusive social evolution and a promoter of individual autonomy (Webster, 2014; Bell, 1996; Poster, 1995; Piore & Sabel, 1984; Castells, 2000).

On the other hand, another theorizing approach had developed regarding the role of information as if looked upon through the lens of a more apocalyptic nature by those who, while recognizing the social dynamics associated with the introduction of information technologies into daily life, approach the existence of new and positive dimensions with many reservations. These social scientists preferred to position themselves from an "apocalyptic" perspective to continue in the social dynamics previously noted, and saw in the social appropriation of information a trend toward the increase of contradictions existing in societies. For this group of social scientists, the alleged transformations associated with information technologies were, rather, evolutions within a previously established social, cultural, economic, and political framework, experiencing the same contradictions and types of inequalities (Webster, 2014; Schiller, 1996; Lipietz, 1994; Harvey, 1997; Giddens, 1997; Lyon, 1994; Garnham, 1986; Habermas, 1984; 1991; 1998).

The fourth wave of communication studies as a social phenomenon, in this case focused on information, is also characterized by the extent of the theoretical focus on the role of information in society, namely whether it is focused on changes in technology, economy, work, space, or culture.

The theoretical focus on the technological vision, which is shared by authors such as Tofler (1981), constitutes one of such dimensions and has a marked presence in political discourses reproduced in journalism, and it corresponds to the discourse centered on the potential benefits of advances in the areas of information processing, storage, transmission, and the convergence between telecommunications and information technology that leads to its direct application in all fields of social activity and consequent transformations. This is a discursive approach that is limited to the description of technological innovations and the consequent prediction of their possible implications in society. The idea of the "information society" arises in this discourse only linked to the realization of technological innovation and the quantification of the penetration of these technologies into the social.

In turn, a theoretical approach focused on the economic dimension of the "information society" is generally produced around the concept of the "information

economy," focusing on the approaches of the economic discipline that direct its studies in information and, consequently, its importance in wealth creation and development in our societies. One of the most distinct proposals for the economic approach to the information society is that of Porat (1978), who proposed a reformulation of the categorization that divides economic activity into industrial, services, and agriculture, suggesting a cataloguing of activities according to the existence of three new sectors: a primary information sector, a secondary information sector, and a non-information-producing sector.

According to Webster (2014), another theoretical focus results from thinking about the "information society" from the occupational, or work, point of view, and this has implied the view that it will only be possible to talk about the occurrence of a new type of society based on information when the number of information workers surpasses the number of people working in activities unrelated to it. Another author, Reich (1991), summarized this approach in the 1990s in his work The Work of Nations. He did so through an analysis of the changes that have occurred in American society, highlighting a view of the growing role of the percentage of workers that he calls "symbolic analysts," namely all those whose work involves a majority component of analysis and treatment of information and whose success depends on said analysis and treatment of information, such as the work conducted by architects, managers, lawyers, consultants, engineers, sociologists, doctors, etc.

Considering yet another theoretical focus, we find the spatial and organizational dimension of information, resulting from the study of so-called information networks and their impact on the social organization of time and space. Two authors who addressed these questions in complementary ways are Giddens (1997) and Castells (2000). Giddens draws our attention to the issue of the time and space compression and its implications for life in society, while Castells presents us with the duality between the space of flows and the space of places and the disparities, in terms of political and economic power, that this situation entails, as well as the impact of information networking on the organization of the social.

Finally, we can also refer to the theories that can be aggregated around the role of information in a cultural perspective, centered on social transformations associated with the quantity and quality of information and the forms of mediation associated with it (Webster, 2014).

The contemporary evolution of the fourth phase of the study of communication's social dimensions in the framework of sociology has become greatly influenced by the contributions of spatial-organizational and cultural approaches to the role of information. In the fourth phase of the social study of communication, we find ourselves in the field of analysis regarding the implications around quality, quantity, diffusion, interactivity, and mediation, in a field of study where numerous analyses are developed, including the perspective of the reflexivity of information proposed by Giddens (1997), the issues of control and surveillance of Foucault (1977) and Lyon (1994), and the new approaches around the concept of public sphere from Habermas (1984; 1991; 1998) but articulated around the central idea of a network society in Castells (2000).

Although information technologies have been the subject of abundant sociological research since the 1980s, it was only after the introduction of the Mosaic browser in 1993 and the massification of the World Wide Web (created by Tim Berners-Lee) that new innovative theoretical contributions in the field of communication sociology began to emerge. Among these, Castells' work The Network Society (2000) stands out, which shows that our societies are increasingly structured around a bipolar opposition between what the author designates as "Network" and "Self," that is, the ability to value the "Network" as a source of autonomy and construction of identity and meaning, and the "Self" as the meaning constructed on the basis of identities of resistance. These two centers of gravity form the axis of analysis. The opposition between "Network" versus "Self" is the result of what Castells calls the "revolution of information technologies" and is, in his view, the force behind the great transformations around the turn of the new millennium (Castells, 2000). Thus, the argument is that the innovations that information technologies have made available to us have created a set of possibilities for social appropriation, which is transforming our ways of life and society. The centrality around the analysis of information technologies does not mean that Castells defends the idea that these new forms and social processes emerge as direct consequences of technological change. In his view, technology does not determine society, nor does society determine in its entirety the evolution of technology. The logic that originated and drives the current mode of informational development and social change is defined by five characteristics that together form the information technologies paradigm: (1) information is both the raw material and the final product; (2) new technologies act on information and not on physical matter; (3) information is an integral part of all human activities, so these technologies are intertwined in all spheres of society; (4) information technologies promote a network logic, which allows one to deal with complexity and uncertainty, enabling the network topology to be implemented in all types of processes and organizations; and (5) flexibility, along with making most processes reversible, also has the ability to physically and functionally reconfigure and modify organizations and institutions when using the components of information technologies.

Castells' analytical contribution to the study of communication is largely based on his definition of the information technology paradigm, since the characteristics of this paradigm were inducers of strong tensions in the context of mass media communication through multiple visible changes in distribution and reception, even at the level of the production, classification, and sharing of messages, providing for their evolution to a new mode of communication.

If we define a mode of communication as a set of social practices that articulates groups and social actors on the basis of a media system (Mattelart, 1983), we can say that these four phases of communication studies had, as their central object, two distinct modes of communication. The mode of mass communication (Thompson, 1995) was the object of study of the first, second, and third phases of sociological studies of communication, while networked communication (Cardoso, 2009) is the object of study of the fourth phase of sociological studies of communication.

According to Mattelart, mass communication can be characterized through a systematization of the implicit and explicit schemes of social alliances that sustained it (1983). These schemes define the classes and their beneficiary groups, depriving others of the power to define their own identity and guiding priorities in how the creative resources of a given group, country, or region are channeled. These schemes establish the dominant references, that is, those that determine what a "legitimate" culture product of this mode of communication is. In the context of networked communication (Cardoso, 2009), the same analysis needs to be carried out, given that the tensions induced by the new technological paradigm are revealed in the changes in mediation technologies, which are a product of the way they are socially shaped by those who idealize, design, program, and furnish them. It should not be forgotten that social molding also depends, essentially, on how people domesticated and continue to domesticate these mediation technologies in an ongoing process (Silverstone et al., 1992).

The social shaping, or domestication, of digital media introduced a clear differentiation compared with previous mass mediated analogue media in that digital media are interactive, allow for the storage of content, are easy to replicate, allow for mobility, and vary in the number of people they can potentially reach. They also enable both simultaneous interaction between people and asynchronous interaction between messages, and they are characterized by their dimension of sociability. This influences both the relational development and the maintenance of relationships as well as the very development of self-representation, providing the material bases for social networks and social media that, through their formats, business models, and algorithms, shape our relational possibilities and, consequently, the relations of our daily professional and personal lives (Baym, 2010).

Although the contemporary dimension of the fourth phase of communication studies as a social phenomenon had already begun in the 1980s, it was only from the second half of the 1990s that a new challenge to communication research was put forward. This challenge lies, therefore, in the fact that the social dynamics of communicative appropriation, production, control, and distribution are based on a much more intense social permeability, not only through the Internet's being a network and thus reaching all social spheres, but also by the fact that it is a technology in which a significant portion of the participants are directly involved in key communicative functions and roles (Silverstone, 2006).

As Colombo (1993) recalls, the Internet is a technology that simultaneously induces centripetal and centrifugal forces, or rather, a technology of freedom and control (Castells, 2001). These characteristics, in addition to opening up different practices and possibilities of appropriation, also provide the ideal environment for the production of overly deterministic discourses adopted by people when they intend to discuss the social role of communication, culture, and mediation, positioning individuals as changed by the direct action of mediation technologies (Eco, 2021).

Although there is a recurring historical tendency to think about recently emerged communication technologies in a deterministic way—questioning what they do to us and whether this is good or bad—the social reality is different. People

adapt, innovate, and influence the determination of what technology is and will become (Silverstone et al., 1992; Baym, 2010; Von Hippel, 2016). We shape technology to suit our goals, we influence what creators design and innovate, and we ourselves give different uses to technologies, uses that their creators did not expect (Silverstone, 2006a).

However, the apocalyptic discourse identified by Eco (1994; 2001) in the 1960s was revived socially in the 1990s via potential concerns about whether mediation would impair the ability to hold face-to-face conversations, at that time with concerns about language degradation through the invention of new acronyms, new stenographic formulas, and emojis, and finally with the apprehension regarding the possibility of replacing meaningful family and community relationships with external, superficial ones (Castells, 2001). In turn, optimistic or integrative discourses (Eco, 1994; 2001) have reported the immense possibilities contained in Internet-based technology and its use, such as greater family proximity, a more committed citizenry, greater availability of resources, and more integrative social networks of the self in society over the last three decades.

The cyclical revival of opposition between the apocalyptic and integrated views against the backdrop of communication enables us to remember that the departure point for studying communication's social dimension is not to know what mediation causes but rather to know who is communicating, with what purpose, in what context, and with what expectations. These are the central questions for the definition of a fourth phase of sociological studies of communication.

The fourth phase of sociological studies of communication seeks answers to these questions to understand how a given mold of mediation occurs and, later, what potential influences this mold may contain for the perceived dimensions of mediatized daily life, where mediatization occurs, but varying between individuals, contexts, and ends.

As shown, the issues that currently arise in the investigation of the social dynamics of communication are due to more than a hundred years of research in communication. Drawing on Oliveira (2017), it is possible to structure the sociological paradigms regarding the study of social communication into four large sets organized according to their theoretical centrality to focus mostly on the receiver, the sender, the message, or the medium/channel/network. The first set of sociological paradigms regarding the study of communication corresponds to the approach of communication as a cultural expression and, consequently, as a social product. This is an approach that has a particular focus on the analysis of communication as a cultural phenomenon, be it mass culture or the cultural industry. This approach has a special focus on reception, seeking to study the social effects of communication and its functioning, with the objective of focusing on the issue of influence or on modifying people's behavior (Wolf, 1988; 2001; Oliveira, 2017; McQuail & Deuze, 2020).

The second set of sociological approaches to social communication focuses on communication itself, understood as an apparatus for the production and reproduction of ideological meanings and content within a given social framework and permeated by conditions and power relations. This is an approach centered on

the sender, that is, on who informs, who sends messages, who owns, who dominates the media, and who produces and reproduces reality (Wolf, 1988; 2001; Oliveira, 2017; McQuail & Deuze, 2020).

In turn, the third set of paradigms addresses the media as a language system from a linguistic-semiotic perspective. In this dimension, the dominant pole is the message, from the perspective of research focused on content as meanings and significant forms. In its most basic definition, a sign is anything that has meaning, and a signifier is the real form of the symbol, which can appear as words, images, sounds, etc. Meaning is the manifestation that is unleashed in the mind when one thinks of a symbol. Meanings are thus mental representations, and these are never purely individual but comprise "shared conceptual maps" (Hall, 1980), affording a common reference point that allows people to interpret and understand each other (Wolf, 1988; 2001; Oliveira, 2017; McQuail & Deuze, 2020).

Finally, there is the media approach centered on the medium/channel/network as a defining element of the results of the communication process. Thus, this is an approach focused on the intersection of the message/channel and the media, focusing on a media or instrumental conception of social communication (Wolf, 1988; 2001; Oliveira, 2017; McQuail & Deuze, 2020).

These four different paradigms also influence the questions that we continue to ask today. However, we should not forget that the "communication process only works in the complex articulation of its poles" (Oliveira, 2017) and that communication is always a total phenomenon, whether it is face-to-face communication, mass-mediated communication, or the use of social networks, social media, or messaging programs.

If our communication develops within a network society (Castells, 2000), the sociology of communication also needs to focus on a theoretical approach based on a "network of processes" (Oliveira, 2017); That is, sociology needs to reject one-dimensional views and know how to integrate and articulate theoretical contributions and diverse paradigms, because this is the only way to aim for an improved understanding and analysis of communicative phenomena in their entirety. If communication is a total phenomenon in its social scope, we also need to seek support through a network of processes, via the contributions of different scientific paradigms, to understand communicative phenomena fully.

The proposal here is to study communication as a total social phenomenon (Mauss, 1966) in a study that entails a methodological approach to mediation combining different traditions in their complementarities. Indeed, only such an approach allows for the analysis of the complex network interactions between processes of production, distribution, consumption, fruition, recognition, creation of meaning, and culture that have their own frameworks of practices and representations, ranging from those associated with the productive aspect to those of classification and verification, and from those of sharing and distribution to those of consumption and fruition.

The production of meaning (or the meaning produced) by the participants individually or collectively articulated in a network of communicative interaction that produces recognition and culture requires not only an analysis of the semiotic

field of the message and its content, but also a cumulative analysis of the contributions of the practices and representations of all the social actors involved in the production, classification, distribution, sharing, and consumption, as well as the study of the media and mediation systems that disseminate them.

The Sociosemiotics of mediation

The sociosemiotics of mediation is defined here as a theoretical and empirical approach based on a network of processes that combine the sociological analysis of social dynamics, built by senders and receivers, with the contributions of semiotic analysis on the social dimension of the message, and also with the study of social appropriations of mediation processes centered on the medium/channel/network.

Each historical era has its predominant genres and modes of representation in the framework of communication; ours has them in the news, talk shows, soap operas, and series. Each historical era also has different ways of communicating the unique dimension of each individual and does so today through music, blogs, messages, posts, memes, selfies, etc.

The genres and modes of representation and the ways of communicating our uniqueness share a common characteristic: mediation is predominant. Mediation is fundamental today to give meaning to the world around us and to our daily lives. It contributes to our search for order and for meaning in life, as well as being an essential mechanism in our constant struggle for control over the symbolic and the material, both in space and in time (Silverstone, 2005; Giddens 1999; Hjarvard, 2008; Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

The analysis developed here is based on a sociological approach to the social processes of communication, which is the product of the syncretic articulation of the contributions of the four major sociological paradigms of social communication, thus also giving rise to a sociosemiotic approach to mediation. A sociosemiotic approach focuses on both the hard and soft aspects of communication and their interactions (Eco, 2021); that is, on the one hand, this approach relies on the analysis of the communicative interactions built by the social appropriation of the medium/channel/network, or the hard dimension, constituted by the technology that ensures transmission and allows for mediation to take a central role between the actors in the communicative process, such as the sender and receiver, and on the other hand, also extends its focus to the soft dimension of communication, or the relationship between the content of the message and the code(s) used in it (Eco, 2021).

As Oliveira (2017) explains, the sociological relevance of the study of the medium/channel/network is rooted in the change in the traditional approach to communication processes that occurred in the early 1960s. Historically, the autonomization of the study of mass communication within the framework of sociology is a product of the interest that arose around the danger of totalitarian domination of the masses and the role of the media in those processes through their instrumentalization by politics, culture, and consumption in the 1930s and 1940s

(Lippman, 1920; Trudel, 2017). The traditional approach to communication thus focused on the attention given to "effects," the approach promoted by American communication research, and the result of the widespread adoption of the "who says what to whom with what effect" model by Lasswell (1960). McLuhan's (2001) contributions, with a focus on the problem of the channel, came to be added to this sociological heritage at the end of the 1960s.

The theories that inspired McLuhan's (2001) analysis of the medium, or "hard" aspect of communication (Eco, 2021), originally reside in the telegraphic model of Shannon and Weaver's (1949) communication theory, which is summarized as passing a message between a sender and a receiver using a channel on the basis of a common code. As Eco (2021) suggests, this is a model particularly designed to characterize the communication of very elementary messages, mediated through a mechanical transcription device such as the telegraph, and decoded through a simplified code such as Morse code (Briggs et al., 2020; Winston, 1998).

In Shannon and Weaver's communication model (1949) the channel was only the sender of the message and, thus, neutral. In contrast, McLuhan focused his analysis on the role of the sending channel, calling it the "media" or "medium," and declaring the nonexistence of neutrality of the channel. This proposal is based on McLuhan's (2001) interpretation of society according to a historical-technological classification contained in modes of expression; a vision inspired by Marx's modes of production (Oliveira, 2017). In his analysis, McLuhan resorts to four modes of expression typified through the temporal change occurring in the medium/channel/network. These four modes of expression are expressed chronologically as the pre-alphabetic age or period of the tribal era, the era of phonetic writing, the age of the press or "Gutenberg Galaxy," and, finally, the global era or the "Marconi Constellation," which marks the return to the tribe in a "Global Village" (Norden, 1969; McLuhan, 2001).

In formulating the expression "the medium is the message," McLuhan (2001) summarized his argument regarding the role of the medium/channel/network, according to which communication via the new electronic media of that time, radio and television, could make the recipients so dependent on the medium/channel/network that the message itself became irrelevant, since for them it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action (McLuhan, 2001).

From a sociological point of view, McLuhan's contribution to the study of communication is paradoxical. On the one hand, his contribution influenced the emergence of a new sociological relevance through his focus on the medium/channel/network, creating space for a set of questions regarding the social role of mediation. Specifically, opening a sphere for the subsequent discussion on the influence of the channel on the message led to the analytical need for separation between categories of influence and between the incidence regarding the "nature of the message" or the "content of the message," respectively (Eco, 2018d; 2021).

On the other hand, when questioning whether the "content" of any medium cannot "blind" us to the character of that medium, McLuhan (2001) opens the way for the need for another analysis, one that brings together both the semiotic and

sociological dimensions. The examination of the medium's characteristics allowed one to go beyond the unit of analysis of the "message" and combine it with the study of the practices and representations of senders and receivers in their daily lives. As a unit of analysis, the "message" in a newscast may not be only the news item itself but also the consequence of that viewing, which is equivalent to reading the "message" in its social dimension as well; For example, the social dimension of the message, understood as a possible change in the attitude of the public toward politics through the scheduling of news about political corruption, could potentially create a climate of distrust toward politicians and political institutions (Castells, 2013).

However, McLuhan (2001) also introduces some analytical distortions when using the concepts of "message" and "medium" to try to discuss the influence of communication on social dynamics. By suggesting that the medium is (or could be) any extension of ourselves, McLuhan assigns a conceptual equivalence between "medium/channel/network" and "code" (Eco, 2018d; 2021). Contrary to what McLuhan (2001) suggests, we cannot consider electric light and television as equivalent to each other, assuming both to be features of the medium/channel/network, since a medium/channel/network presupposes the existence of a common code that allows the communicative interaction between sender and receiver. If this code does not exist, such as in the case of electric light, then there is no place for the existence of a medium/channel/network, at least as a means of communication (Eco, 2018d, 2021).

Equally problematic is the theoretical synthesis that the "medium is the message" (McLuhan, 2001). McLuhan's position was criticized not only because of its ambiguity but also because of the different possible assertions of his formulation of the "medium is the message." These included proposing that the "form" of the message could be understood as the true "content" of the message; that the code, or the structure of a language, was the message; or moreover, that the channel itself was the message, something that implied that the physical environment chosen to carry the information is what determines the message (Eco, 2018a).

At the center of the sociological and semiotic criticism of McLuhan's analysis is the idea that transformation in the content of the message occurs not through the action of the channel, the medium/channel/network, but rather on the receiver's end. The message becomes what the receiver makes it become, adapting it on the basis of their reception codes, which may be different from those of the sender, observing that the information remains constant and independent of the channel through which it passes. So, the medium cannot be the message (Eco, 2021).

However, similar to Eco (2001; 2021), McLuhan understood that the medium/channel/network affects the nature of the message, even though affecting the "nature of the message" is different from affecting the "content of the message." In an approach that combines sociology and semiotics, it is possible to recognize the influence of the medium/channel/network on the nature of the message on television, on mobile phones, in e-mail, in social media posts, or on messaging apps, but not on the content of the message itself.

When it is said that the medium/channel/network affects the nature of the message, we are referring to, for example, the relationship between the political debate and the mediation carried out through the television screen. In the political debate, in most cases, the rule is that the public is not as interested in the content of the statements as in the almost circus-like confrontation between politicians (Eco, 2021). In this case, the medium/channel/network affects the nature of the message because it focuses the audience's attention on the discussion itself and not so much on the topics being debated. Another example can be found in the use of the mobile phone, since the possibility of permanent communication offered by the mobile phone promotes contact as a priority and not the communication of thoughts or urgent facts of life. The mobile phone affects the nature of the message as a medium/channel/network because it promotes phatic communication, associated with keeping "in touch." A third example is e-mail. In this case, the medium/channel/network affects the nature of the message because it imposes different times of action and reaction, accelerating them in comparison with the timeline associated with the paper letter (Eco, 2021). Finally, we can also talk about the exemplification of the writing of posts and Tweets on social networks and social media or in messages, and how the medium/channel/network affects the nature of the message. The nature of the message is affected because, just as face-to-face communication depends on the complementarity of the gesture or intonation of speech, mediated writing on screens also needs to add other communicative elements such as emojis. These iconographic forms of mood expression are used to avoid any misunderstanding of the message's context. The medium/channel/network also affects the nature of the message when our writing is limited by the number of characters a Tweet can have, and the writing itself thus must be reinvented using acronyms and new language codes, no longer due to the associated cost per word as in the telegram, but because of the limit of characters stipulated by the medium/channel/network, e.g., X/X/Twitter (Eco, 2021).

It is thus demonstrated that there are, in fact, contemporary technological changes that have enabled different social appropriations of the medium/channel/network, affecting the nature of the message. Similar appropriations also existed in earlier historical periods. Although radio and television allowed immediate broadcasting, they did not allow immediate response. In turn, the phone allowed instant action-reaction relations between the sender and the receiver, although until the appearance of the mobile phone in the 1990s, the phone only occupied a part of our daily lives. Likewise, it was only with the arrival of the Internet that the temporal relationship with the phone changed and assumed an immediate multimedia temporality in the form of a smartphone (Eco, 2021). These are just a few examples of how the hard dimension of communication, through the medium/channel/network, produced the soft dimension through its influence in the nature of the message (Eco, 2021).

The message depends on the relationship between the content of the message and the code, or the "software program," but the mediation, or mode of transportation of the message, can also interfere with the nature of the message and, consequently, influence the nature of its reception.

This focus on the relationship between the hard and soft aspects also introduces another dimension of components for the analysis of the communicative process, viz. the contextual dimension. In the hard approach of the communicative phenomenon, noise distorts the message and arises only as a product of technological failure, while in the soft approach, it must be borne in mind that the context can also promote distortion of the message; that is, in view of a given context, the recipient of a message may use alternative codes to decode it, thus using codes different from those intended by the sender. The focus on the hard and soft dimensions of mediation emphasizes that the codes are more dependent on a sharing of context between sender and receiver than on any one purported communicative universality dependent on the common interest of receiver and sender on a given theme.

The mastery of language and cultural corpus of different habitus (Bourdieu, 1989; 1993) and the set of prejudices anchored in common sense, as well as the identity rooted in religious, sports, or political beliefs all influence the existence of contexts not shared by the sender and the receiver and, as such, are prone to interpretations different from those intended by the sender of the message.

In a communicative context without recourse to mediation, code sharing was usually associated with dimensions of class or other dimensions of commonality, which allowed a set of codes to exist, as well as systems of belonging and values, which initially reduced the possibility of contextual noise in communication (Eco, 2018; 2018a; Wolf, 1993; Oliveira, 2017; McQuail & Deuze, 2020). The common context in interpersonal communication was taken for granted and, as such, was not seen as inducing communicative disruption. However, with the emergence of technologies that mediate mass communication, such as the press and radio and later television in the mid-twentieth century, the context became much more relevant in communication. Thus, the community, built on the basis of proximity and a sharing of values and belongings, was fragmented into a mass that could assume thousands, hundreds of thousands, or even tens of millions of people about whom the sender knew little and about whom the recipients had only some generic information (Thompson, 1995; 2005). This dimension became evident first with the profusion of written publications, radio channels, and television channels, but later increased with the web, social networks, and social media, reaching even greater levels of segmentation of social groups, and, consequently, greater levels of uncertainty regarding the variability of potential recipients. Therefore, instead of an imaginary clarity that is impossible to ensure in communication of a social nature, we should always assume the existence of irony, ununderstood allusions, or unshared rules of conversation that complicate the understanding of the message and are variables always present in the mediation process.

Social networks such as Facebook and its European, American, Chinese, and Russian-speaking derivatives, through their management of participants' personal data, seek to respond to the need for context sharing within the framework of contemporary mediated communication. They do so by offering a common code space to ensure that the shared message is understood by the different actors in the communicative process. By basing their operation on friendship and maintaining the development of friendship ties, social networks ensure a greater probability of

contextual communality (Murthy, 2018). Similar dynamics can also be found on social media, which are often misidentified as social networks, but which refer to mediation technologies designed as means of dissemination whose intention is to publish content to networks of recipients known and unknown to the author, such as X/Twitter and Instagram (Murthy, 2018). The fundamental difference between social networks and social media lies in the design of the latter, implying a mediation oriented toward an interactive multicasting diffusion to provide explicitly public content. Meanwhile, social networks such as Facebook and VKontakte involve two-way relationships with an expected level of privacy partially defined by the participants themselves in relation to their publications (Murthy, 2018).

However, not all social networks are identical in terms of communication; for example, the type of dominant mediation that shapes communication differs between social networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp. While one-to-many mediated communication predominates on Facebook, communication is of the mediated reciprocal type on WhatsApp (Cardoso, 2009; 2014; Hepp 2013; 2015). Although multicasting is also a feature of Facebook, particularly in its group tools, its central objective is to foster connections between "friends" by sharing various types of content to maintain ties between active and strong participants (Murthy, 2018).

In turn, social media such as X/Twitter and Instagram are designed to provide a mediation that produces mass self-communication (Castells, 2014). Social media are oriented toward the dissemination of publications, seeking the accumulation of more and more followers who are aware of the content published by users, and the creation of multiple networks related to the process (Murthy, 2011). Social media such as X/Twitter and Instagram are promoters of mass self-communication, with participants having profiles through which they disseminate public updates (Castells, 2013). However, this communication is not mutually bidirectional, because many times the participant cannot decide who receives their messages, representing a distinction from social networks (Murthy, 2018).

Thus, it can be argued that having a presence on social media depends on the existence of an audience, while having a profile on social networks depends on having "friends." Both forms of presence seek to provide communication with a shared context. However, the success of this contextualized communication depends on a characteristic present in both: the creation, by direct action of the users or by indirect construction of the algorithms, of a contextual communality that furnishes mediated communication with a common code.

Social networks and social media, despite providing context and inducing the conditions for the creation of a common code for communication, are businesses, and have as their ultimate objective profit in a capitalist context of accumulation and remuneration of their shareholders (Castells, 2002; Khurana, 2007). Therefore, the collection and processing of data, its association with profiles, and the creation of clusters of interest owing to the proximity of the shared values in the lived world result more from the need, of social networks and social media, to create profitability mechanisms through the segmentation of audiences into clusters for advertising, and less from any humanitarian objective of making

communication between peers more intelligible (Habermas, 1998, 2013; Thompson, 2012).

Mass communication and, subsequently, networked communication make it essential that the sociological study of the social phenomenon of communication focuses on the soft and hard dimensions of communication stemming from an inquiry into the phenomena of mediation (Silverstone, 2002; 2005). Only in this way can all contextual dimensions and code sharing be incorporated into the analysis of mediation that can differentiate the objective of the sender's messages from that of the recipient's messages (Thompson, 1995; Cardoso, 2009; Eco, 2021).

The centrality of mediation analysis in sociology is justified by Silverstone (2002; 2005), who attributes to it a fundamental place in everyday life. Mediation is the main vehicle to bring everything that is not "close" to us into our lives, i.e., those things that cannot be experienced, either objectively or subjectively, or seen or touched without mediation, whether on television, on the Internet, on social networks and social media, in newspapers, or on radio (Lash, 2018). Without mediation, there would be no mediatization processes that socially distinguish our contemporary daily lives from other historical moments (Deuze, 2009; 2011; 2020; Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Hjarvard, 2008).

Mediation involves three dimensions of the relationship between what is mediated and the individual themselves, that is, the participant (Silverstone, 2002; 2005): the temporal, the spatial, and the ethical.

Silverstone developed his analysis between participant and mediation, focusing on mass-mediated communication as practiced by newspapers as well as radio and television. However, it can be argued that these three dimensions have equal value and importance for the understanding of the other communicative processes within the framework of contemporary mediation, with those that have the web as their center as well as those that focus on social networks and social media.

For Silverstone, the temporal relationship in the context of mediation is associated with "interruption" (Silverstone, 2002; 2005), that is, the way mediation manifests itself in our daily routines, how it interrupts said routines when something relevant happens, and increasingly in our mediated lives when someone decides to contact us. In Silverstone's original sense, interruption could be exemplified in mediation when breaking news is communicated to us in the mass-media communicative context (Silverstone, 2002; 2005). However, in a society in which mediation becomes increasingly ubiquitous, daily routines become associated with mediation routines, and vice versa. In this context, the association of mediation with daily routines and their interruption are both created by those who produce content, journalists and non-journalists alike, as well as by those who manage the distribution and access processes, e.g., the media, social networks and social media, and other platforms. This association is also demonstrated by all of us: when we link our wake-up time to a smart device that uses Alexa or Siri; in the morning trip to the bathroom while listening to the radio or reading e-mails or WhatsApp and the newsfeeds of Facebook and other apps; or even when having breakfast while reading newspapers in PDF or watching the morning TV news programs, and so on.

Routines bring security and continuity, and when the routine is broken for reasons external to ourselves, we face change with doubt and with the assumption that we have to readapt to the novelty, whatever it may be (Silverstone, 2002; 2005).

However, at other times, it is we who decide to use mediation to break our routine, e.g., no longer writing in word processors but in a different window on our screen, reading newsfeeds from social networks, or talking to a friend or partner on WhatsApp.

In our daily lives in the twenty-first century, routines associated with mediation are broken both editorially and by our network of relationships. This interruption through mediation occurs when there is an important event that must be communicated to us, when someone else reaches out to us through the screen we are using, or when we ourselves decide to change mediation support, that is, the medium/channel/network, whether that be an app, a streaming platform, a mobile operating system, etc.

In turn, the spatial relationship is associated with the concept of "transcendence," that is, the ability of mediation to approach what is spatially distant from us through the representation of "non-experienced" reality in the first person (Silverstone, 2002; 2005). Mediation does this not only by covering a news event, but also when it gives us the possibility to communicate with others who live and work far away from us. The notion of spatial "transcendence," of our physical location, makes reference to the analysis of statements regarding the ability of mediation to address what McLuhan described as the Global Village (2001). Specifically, the innate ability of mediation to "eradicate" distance to provide new forms of global connectivity, overcoming geographical separation (Silverstone 2002; 2005). Mediation, in its various historical and daily manifestations, has always provided us with a representation of an event rather than its reality (Briggs et al., 2020). However, our daily life leads us to question whether the mediatization of our societies can also be translated into a broad social sharing of a representation of mediated reality (Couldry and Hepp, 2017). This representation can be verbalized by the acronym WYSIWYG—the idea that "what you see is what you get," that is, the hypothesis that mediated "representation" and "reality" are increasingly perceived by the participant as synonyms of the same, radicalizing "transcendence" to a new level. Transcendence no longer corresponds only to a representation of mass-media communication as a "Global Village" where everyone knows what is going on, as suggested by McLuhan and Powers (1989), but rather to a "Global WYSIWYG," in the sense that contemporary communication, through the omnipresence of mediation, translates into the construction of a social representation of the world as a space where ever-present mediation ceases to be perceived as such, naturalizing itself by promoting a global communicative empathy. When the face to face is relegated to only a few moments of social life while mediation characterizes all other communication, the latter ceases to be the exception and becomes the norm. Thus, through communication practices, a representation of global empathy is formed in which, through the mediated look of others and their films, photos, Tweets, posts, memes, etc., we see the same as their eyes see, without it being thought of as external or strange. The gaze of the other becomes our gaze, and

everything that is seen through the gaze of others is ours, creating a global communicative empathy. This empathy only tends to be questioned in extreme situations, such as personal or collective conflicts, in which the context and the code are perceived as incompatible between the message's sender and receiver.

Just as the concept of the Global Village didn't take into account the role played by gatekeeping processes, neither does the concept of Global WYSIWYG. Nevertheless, such representations are conceptually important given that they represent the social imagery of many participants in communication toward both mass communication and networked communication.

Finally, the ethical relationship arises, associated with the concept of "difference" (Silverstone, 2002; 2005), that is, the way the "other" is represented in mediation and how we understand it in our daily lives. An example arises associated with the emergence of mass-media channels originating outside the Western world that utilize the English language. For example, until the appearance of the television channel Al-Jazeera on Western screens, the "other," in this case the inhabitants of Muslim countries to which Al-Jazeera broadcasts in Arabic, were mainly, both in fiction and in the news, a product of the description based on the discourse produced by the Western media (Silverstone, 2002; 2005). Simply by existing and broadcasting news, these new channels, whether Al-Jazeera, Russian RT, or Chinese CCTV, show us that we can also be the "other," and that separation has two sides: the way we see others and the way others see us. In turn, social networks and social media have expanded this phenomenon, both in our newsfeeds and through the groups and pages we frequent, exposing us not only to the topics we like and the people we already know, but also to what causes us discomfort, reaction, disgust, or anger.

Social networks and social media show us, on the one hand, that which is closest to us, and on the other hand, amplify our exposure to the "other" that is different from us, since social networks and social media, in their operating model, are based on the ability to make us interact, or rather react, with the action of communicating. To this end, their algorithms both expose us to what occurs that is more similar to ourselves, and also challenge us with that which exacerbates the "difference" in relation to ourselves. Social networks and social media promote interaction, and sometimes the communicative response, or the interaction, is easier to promote when we are exposed to ideas or actions different from ours because it surprises us, questions us, and calls us to a communicative reaction. In their operation, social networks and social media thus expose us to the need to permanently make decisions regarding the proximity or remoteness of topics and people. However, the process of radicalization of the perception of difference and of the "other" present in the communication of social networks and social media has yet another consequence, namely the fact that we are increasingly confronted with the gaze of others on ourselves, e.g., when photos and videos about ourselves are shared by others or when our actions, appearance, and opinions are commented on by all those who are our audience on social media or our "friends" on social networks.

The context of contemporary mediation in the network society is one of exponential growth in terms of the amount of information available to each individual

and social class (Eco, 2007; 2021). In addition to the multiple television channels that exist, video streaming via different platforms has been added as a viewing option. Although the circulation figures of the printed press are decreasing, more and more digital projects are in permanent circulation, being born, dying, and being reborn in a different form. Informative radio, podcasts, and music streaming are growing in terms of both experiences and content. In addition, there is the mediated advertising on all screens and posters on the streets, plus the flyers sent by supermarkets and shops to our mailboxes at home and on our screens. We also have movie theaters, personal and institutional messages received by SMS, social networks, social media, and multiple apps with the different messaging programs, from the Western world's WhatsApp to the Chinese WeChat. The publication of paper books has, in almost all cases, a corresponding copy in digital format, and today, through the more classical publishers as well as vanity presses, more books have been published than ever before, certainly more than any one of us will be able to read in our short lives (Eco, 2011; 2021; Thompson, 2012; 2021).

As receivers, we thus now receive a daily amount of information that is incomparable to any other historical period. This amount of information exceeds our human capacity for absorption and attention. This produces a form of overwhelm, which varies in an uncontrollable way from individual to individual and according to social role (Eco, 2007; 2011; 2021), while at the same time bolstering an exponential increase in the storage of information. This is due to all communication being digitized, transmitted, recorded, multiplied, and archived in multiple copies, on physically nearby disks or in distant locations in the cloud, and in most cases, unbeknown to the sender and receiver (Amoore, 2018).

In our daily lives, we see an increase in what is produced and shared, as well as an increase in computational processing capacity, along with an inability of human processing in view of this exponential growth of information and, consequently, the increase in capacity for what is stored digitally, either with the intention of subsequent review or only for archiving.

As mediation multiplies and our daily lives are immersed in mediatization, we need the theoretical and methodological resources for a different approach to mediation to understand communication and the ways in which we interact with it. A sociosemiotic approach to mediation allows us to understand contemporary communicative dynamics and shed light on the object of social communication through the combination of the analysis of the communicative processes established between participants, in their different communicative social roles, and the contextual influence of sharing codes, values, and belonging regarding the reception of the message. This sociosemiotic approach to mediation, through the analysis of mediation processes and shaped by people's choices, can help us understand how it acts on the nature of messages and how "media diets" (Colombo & Aroldi, 2003) and "media matrices" (Meyrovitz, 1985) combine to produce a new social representation of authenticity and generate new distinctiveness in production and distribution, giving rise not only to a new media system (Hamelink & Nordenstreng, 1992), but also to new social representations that create a new mode of communication and a new culture capable of self-reproduction.

The mediation approach proposed here is an approach that analyzes communication as soft but analyzes the influence of hard communication on it as well. By calling this approach the sociosemiotics of mediation, we are declaring the centrality of not only the sociological approach to mediation but also the use of social semiotics, assuming that, through the social practice of mediation, representations of it are built and meanings are created regarding what it is to communicate in a network society (Silverstone, 2005; Eco, 2021; Van Leuwen, 2005; Castells 2000).

Communicative erosion

The generalization of a mode of networked communication (Cardoso, 2009) produced social dynamics that facilitated the erosion of social institutions based on the previous model of mass communication. These institutions, shaped by the mass communication of the twentieth century, are now experiencing, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a challenge promoted both by the change in communication practices and also by the change in the existing social representations regarding what a media system is or should be (Nordenstreng, 2007).

Faced with the institutionalization of a new way of communicating and on the basis of a sociosemiotic approach to mediation, it is important for the sociology of mediation to try to understand, for society as a whole, the consequences of the erosion of three basic pillars of the media system's institutions: classification mechanisms, democratic consensus, and social reserve.

In the following pages, we contextualize why these three institutional pillars are central to the sociological knowledge of communication, analyzing them from a sociosemiotic approach to mediation. This analysis begins with the changes in our communication practices and how they introduced changes in individual practices and social representations of our everyday life to be able to discuss what "networked communication" is and how it differs from the previous dominant model of mass communication.

The erosion of classification

In the framework of mass communication, the authority of the sender was easily recognized. The authority of the sender was associated with a limited and contained universe of mediation entities that managed print publications in newspapers, books, magazines, radio, cinema, and television channels. With the emergence of the Internet and the generalization of its social appropriation, the contextual aspects associated with the soft dimension of communication (Eco, 2021) gained further prominence.

Traditional content gatekeeping entities, such as publishers, media brands, libraries and their social actors, teachers, scientific experts, journalists, award-winning authors, etc., witnessed a strong erosion of their authority in the classification of mediated communication. This stems from the fact that large

digital search engine platforms, such as Google, social networks and social media such as Facebook and X/Twitter, and other platform retailers dedicated to publishing or software such as Amazon, Google, or Apple have introduced a new layer into the previous gatekeeping universe. This new layer, in many cases, is positioned prior to the performance of traditional gatekeeping, acting both in access to what is intended to be consumed as information, as well as in relation to whom it is intended to communicate with.

As a result of the emergence of the Internet and its social appropriation and dissemination of networked communication (Cardoso, 2009), there was a reformulation of traditional gatekeeping theory to accommodate the gatekeeping functions that began to be performed by those who were previously only known as audiences (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009; Shoemaker et al., 2006).

The concept of network gatekeeping thus arises to describe multiple levels of relationships and symmetries between actors who hold different levels of power and positions, and who exercise different curatorships over the content by filtering them, amplifying their reach, and feeding the collaborative or social filtering of the algorithms that reap these preferences (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Bruns, 2013).

The complexity that gatekeeping has achieved in the context of networked communication, when compared with that existing in mass communication, can be exemplified by the fact that in network gatekeeping processes we have to take into account five defining elements: the point of passage of information, the process used in gatekeeping, on whom gatekeeping is exercised, the means used to exercise gatekeeping, and who performs gatekeeping (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008).

Network gatekeeping thus translates the transformation from a static gatekeeping practice to a dynamic practice, which reflects a permanent negotiation between those who are facing this purported cost of admission and those who exercise such gatekeeping. Network gatekeeping thus recognizes the possibilities of a versatile and dynamic nature in the relationship between social actors, owing to the frequent, long-lasting, and direct exchanges between both parties and the increasing range of alternatives that exist for the circulation of information (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008).

A transformation in gatekeeping, as exemplified above, also represents a transformation in the systems of reputation and credibility. A relatively stable system of reputation and credibility based on media professionals and journalists as well as the different editors, and present in a limited number of media (Shoemaker et al., 1996; Shoemaker and Vos, 2009) and other institutions related to knowledge transmission, was replaced by a network gatekeeping system. This new gatekeeping system is open to the data produced by a multitude of participants through their individual choices when filtering, collaborating, sharing, and disseminating information, and which subsequently feeds a system of algorithms present in different search engines and social networks and social media. An example of network gatekeeping and new dynamics in action can be given through the operation of a social media platform such as Reddit, where social practices of voting, filtering, and commenting on existing content on the web are used to feed the highlights, allowing participants to create an impact through the datafication of

their choices, later measurable through algorithms (Bakshy et al., 2011, 2015; Watts & Dobbs, 2007; Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013).

Network gatekeeping is dynamic and is, consequently, constantly changing as a result of the balances constructed between those who exercise it and those who are the target of it. However, among all the present forms of network gatekeeping, there is also a common element—the increasing presence of algorithms. Thus, the generalized presence of algorithms is found to be associated with the processes and means used in gatekeeping, and it can be argued that what mainly differentiates gatekeeping in the framework of networked communication, when compared with that exercised in mass communication, is that it is algorithmic in its nature.

Filters are the face of gatekeeping and are traditionally part of our communicative experiences, providing a basis for communicative classification. In mass communication, this was associated with readership in the form of publishing companies of magazines and books, but also with musical listening practices through the presence of record companies, and the viewing of films or the playing of games available from their respective publishers and distributors. This is not to mention television viewing and radio listening, both of which depend not only on the channels' editorial filters and their program directors on television and radio but also on other communicative spheres such as churches, scientific institutions, archiving institutions and libraries, and so on.

Although in our daily lives we do not think of all the entities and people who have the social function of filtering and reorganizing knowledge and information, it has always been and still is their filters that construct the experience of our daily lives within the framework of mass communication and now networked communication (Eco, 2000; Lessig, 2004).

In the relationship between the filter and the participant in communication there is a restriction of individual intellectual freedom, but our access and that of the community to essential information is guaranteed. Access to information was thus the product of a social transaction through gatekeeping, with the classification processes taking place within a relatively stable institutional framework. However, with the development of the Internet, the matrix of gatekeeping relations between the institutional filters and the participant in communication has also changed. Consequently, the paradigms of reputation and credibility classification have changed, and the previous institutions have suffered processes of erosion in terms of their social role. Institutional filters were reduced first with the web and then with social networks and social media, and it became possible to communicate and select information without going through the traditional classification institutions and their filters, such as the ones carried out by state institutions, churches, teachers, librarians, doctors, opinion leaders, entrepreneurs, journalists, editors, etc. Conversely, the web, along with social networks and social media, has added new institutional filters to those already present in the context of mass communication, in terms of both news information and entertainment (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Cardoso, 2009).

Networked communication—the new mode of communication (Cardoso, 2009)—allowed for the introduction of new agents to classify the reputation and

credibility of the experience, such as search engines and socialization platforms in social networks and social media, or even at the level of the sale of products and services, as experienced in the permanent invitation to rate individual consumption experiences and share them with others. At the same time, this created the illusion of a democratization of classification, in which we would all be able to classify everything, giving rise to a new phenomenon of selection and classification called network gatekeeping (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008).

However, since the network is a generic feature, characterizing a predominant model of social organization (Castells, 2002), it does not allow us to highlight the qualitative element, truly singular, that differentiates the current classification process from that which occurred in the context of mass communication. The great change introduced in gatekeeping does not come from the network, but rather from its algorithmic dimension, so what distinguishes the formation of experience in our daily lives, compared with daily mass communication, is that it tends to be shaped by an algorithmic gatekeeping, that is, involved in an algorithmic experience (Lash, 2018).

The characterization of the processes of reputation and credibility classification of the experience as an algorithmic gatekeeping aims to highlight what differentiates this gatekeeping from other previous models. Namely, we are witnessing the generalization of individualization of classification by individual participants in networked communication. This individualization of classification is the product of the emergence of new tools for classifying the experience, such as search engines, socialization platforms in networks, social media, and the individualized rating systems present in the platformization associated with the distribution of goods and services. Algorithmic gatekeeping advances the erosion of gatekeeping's social role of traditional classifiers, created within the framework of mass communication, by giving rise to other institutional actors, such as platforms, and promoting new classification roles for participants through the use of their individual literacies (Jones-Jang et al., 2021).

The emergence of algorithmic gatekeeping introduces a new relational dynamic, constructed between platforms and participants, in the creation of a new classification structure of information. However, this occurred by overlooking the inequalities between each of us in a society based on a high segmentation of specialized knowledge and symbolic guarantees (Giddens, 1984; 1991).

In this new classification relationship between platform and participant, the former "becomes a judge" (Eco, 2021) and the latter jurors, defining, on the basis of their own individual but socially constructed criteria, "what is good and what is bad for themselves" (Eco, 2021). However, these individualized classification practices result in a multiplication of audiences and will only very rarely produce any "democratization of taste" (Eco, 2021).

The individualization of classification and the erosion of the social roles of traditional classification institutions can also contribute to the spreading of informative disorders of different types (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2018). Under a gatekeeping based in algorithms, the challenge to informative disorders is less efficient when compared with more traditional gatekeeping practices such as the ones associated, in the past, with the framework of mass communication.

In communication, experts without any specialization proliferate when there is no socially shared clarification regarding who has authority to perform it and what the basis is for assessing the sender's reputation and credibility. Therefore, the erosion of traditional approaches to classification of information can also give rise to communicative dysfunctionalities, for example, the strengthening of populism, by allowing the multiplication and spreading of different justifications, including the use of conspiracy theories, because they operate in a communicational environment where shared consensus on classification is absent or is simply just not possible to implement (Eco, 2021; Butter & Knight, 2020; Gruzd et al., 2021).

By giving platforms a new role in gatekeeping based in the search for optimization of profit as the result of the matching of the participant's intended topics and the aims of advertising clients, the speed of access to information and communication in our societies increased, while new problems were created.

As a consequence of replacing a specialized gatekeeping, in effect in mass communication and associated with communication brands and specialists in editing and research, with a system founded on the level of consumer satisfaction, the authority of the sender, in terms of reputation and credibility, becomes a variable not only far removed from most communication practices but also from the representations socially shared by the message's receiver.

Moreover, if the profusion of mediation in everyday life and in communicative practices makes many of us assume that the overall population is media literate, the need to discuss who classifies, or their reputation and credibility, as well as whether we have the knowledge necessary to individually exercise the classification of the sender and thus the content, is less present (Livingstone, 2008; Cardoso, 2014; Jones-Jang et al., 2021). This is perhaps because we have not sufficiently questioned the previous system of classification of the sender and of the content transmitted, created in the era of mass communication. This potential lack of questioning was rooted in two incorrect assumptions. The first was that the system based on the gatekeepers of school, journalism, library, publishers, and experts validated by universities was self-justified in terms of its social value, and not a product of a particular organization of a media system. One must acknowledge that a media system that comprises legal and economic dimensions as well as political and cultural determinants of all mediation forms, created in a given historical moment, is also the product of social negotiation. However, to negotiate socially, it is also necessary to institutionally assume that its formulation is a social construction, something that in the case of mass communication was absent from most of the considerations (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Nordenstreng, 2007). Thus, the lack of literacy concerning the media system itself, beyond the creation of gatekeeping in action in mass communication, might also explain why there has been a lack of focus on information classification by many contemporary approaches to literacy (Jones-Jang et al., 2021). For example, media literacy focuses on the ability of a citizen to access, analyze, and produce information for specific outcomes. In turn, news literacy focuses on the civic involvement of citizens and their ability to find, identify, and recognize news in order to evaluate and critically analyze it, as well as the ability to produce it, while digital literacy is related to how people are able to

constantly adapt to new technologies (Jones-Jang et al., 2021). In all these contemporary approaches to literacy, a focus on information classification is generally absent or underdeveloped as a central feature of concern.

The second premise, equally erroneous, is that failures connoted with contemporary disinformation are directly related to the lack of communicative literacy of citizens, rather than being an indirect consequence of various changes, such as changes in the way of communicating, changes in the level of institutionalized social dynamics in a new media system, which has new actors on the platforms, and changes in socially shared values different from those that supported the previous media system (Druick, 2026; Livingstone, 2003; 2004). As such, discussing the erosion of classification practices on the basis of the sender's authority, reputation, and credibility also implies discussing a new conception of literacy, which cannot take for granted the existence and universal sharing of a social value constructed around the classification of information.

The contemporary discussions on literacy will have to explain and debate the social value of the existence of classifiers such as platforms, along with the institutions of school, university, library, or journalism, among many others. At the same time, one must comprehend that it may be up to the individual participant in communication to classify the authority of the sender, that is, to define their reputation and credibility, although this must coexist in a communication environment where much of the classification will only remain possible if it is up to the institutions, both those constructed in the previous media system and the new ones in development from the previous one's transformation.

Literacy will have to be redefined as a concept in order to start referring to the ability to classify the authority of the sender's communication, and the content that they distribute, as the final way to not only be able to understand the credibility of the themes of the novel, the film, the streaming series, and the news but also to choose from different sources of information or decode fake news on social networks and social media, or even audios on WhatsApp that appeal to different types of social panics.

Literacy cannot be conceived merely as an instrumental competency to use the smartphone, to install and use apps, to write e-mails, to upload to YouTube, to write a Tweet, to reply on Facebook, to read and edit blogs, to browse and fill out forms, or even to read and deconstruct the news (Beyer et al., 2007; Syvertsen, 2004; Smith et al., 2017; Ytreberg et al., 2020).

However, if media, news, or digital literacies characterize the possibilities available to participants in communication, particularly in the field of production and distribution, there are also other types of literacy associated with communication. They are those that allow us to understand that not everyone has the same reputation and credibility in communication, and that when communicating, many have hidden political, economic, or cultural agendas (Tandoc Jr et al., 2021; Mcwhorter, 2019; Kahne et al., 2012).

Within the framework of the different approaches to literacy, only information literacy emphasizes the ability to navigate and locate information while also simultaneously evaluating through verification and ascertaining the reliability of

the information. This is because, unlike media and news literacies, which were built in relation to the mass-mediated media of mass communication, information literacy was defined and developed in relation to digital environments with an impact on the qualitative evaluation of information (Jones-Jang et al., 2021).

Literacy can be classified into two types: either centered on the traditional scholastic model of reading, writing, counting, typing, interpreting, installing apps, and searching; or following the pattern of the needs of an informational network society, specifically a society based on information and its communication, that is to say, on the ability to transform ideas into knowledge and their application in new contexts, products, and services. This understanding of the existence of a different type of literacy, such as the one epitomized by information literacy, is what today allows, simultaneously, for the mastery of the tools necessary for civic participation and the creation of wealth, communication, organization, mobility, access to information, and transformation of knowledge.

Since in networked communication almost all content exists in a digital format and almost every idea is communicated through mediation, there are no perceived exclusions of content from topics or agendas. There may be constraints in the interpretation and triangulation of communication and production of knowledge from different origins, but at first sight the participant does not perceive the existence of visible and socially institutionalized censorship implemented in the face of mediation, except, of course, in autocratic regimes that implement it outside of mediated spaces and, consequently, extend them to said spaces (Castells, 2014).

Nevertheless, it can be argued that the combination of weak dissemination of classification literacies, together with algorithmic gatekeeping facilitated by the platforms, whether intended for the presentation of search results or the management of social networks' newsfeeds, promotes a new type of "hidden censorship." Hidden censorship can be defined as something that, while not located in the headquarters of any particular source of power, results from the complex functioning of social control, and is the product of the interaction of groups that become censorious through the social relations established in the network of communication relations (Oliveira, 2017).

The concept of "hidden censorship," proposed by Oliveira (2017), is the result of the analysis of three authors: Gerbner (1961; 1969), Luckmann (1966; 1967), and Bobbio (1980). The conceptual starting point is the idea that, in most cases, social control is triggered through indirect, non-institutionalized methods. It is these hidden forces, which also have a place in the new mediation processes, that constitute "the hidden side of social phenomena" (Oliveira, 2017) and function as mechanisms for legitimizing social forms of producing conceptions relating to the world and life (Luckmann, 1967).

In democratic societies, a set of methods related to "invisible power" are produced, that is, methods of crypto-governance, which develop in parallel with methods related to "visible power" (Bobbio, 1980). The methods of "invisible power" establish a series of axes of power that interfere with the production of messages through their action concerning the substance of the information produced and using different types of "sanctions," from substantive to procedural to

administrative or logistical. Gerbner (1965) proposed a complex network of levels of control interconnected with the axes of power that influence decisions of endogenous or internal and exogenous or external origin in the media.

Oliveira's (2017) proposal regarding the existence of a "hidden censorship" was developed within the framework of mass communication and empirically applied to the study of television, radio, and newspapers. Hidden censorship in mass communication manifested itself through the production system (the productive system of messages and information), the semantic system (the mode of construction and presentation), or the denotative-connotative system (the processes and forms of reception, consumption, and recognition).

In the context of networked communication, one must also consider the existence of a fourth analytical dimension to be added to the previous three. This fourth dimension corresponds to the action focused on the mediation system, that is, the way in which the individual participant molds the distribution and sharing of messages and information, generating a new type of hidden censorship: "algorithmic censorship."

Algorithmic censorship is a product of algorithmic gatekeeping and is characterized by the widespread promotion of a new type of hidden censorship, which in this case is centered on the mediation system, expanding its action beyond the traditional systems of influence of censorship, that is, the production, semantic, and denotative-connotative systems.

In networked communication, hidden censorship manifests itself in the way distribution and sharing are shaped, namely through the action of search platforms, social networks, and social media, and their algorithms, also present in their different apps functioning as "black boxes" associated with the management of participants' communication within the networks. At the same time, because distribution and sharing incorporates individual actors in networked communication, new and different "censoring groups" also emerge among the participants themselves (Silverstone, 2005). In this case, they are made up of the participants themselves and their indirect intervention, as with the choices made in search engine results, or their direct role in the communicative process of distribution and sharing on social networks and social media and in the way this affects, or conditions, communicational and informational relations.

As the operation of the algorithms is also the result of our own choices and actions while using the platforms (Cardon, 2013; Pasquinelli, 2009; Bucher, 2012), our individual literacy influences what will or will not appear on the screens of other participants, as well. This role associated with new censoring groups is not just associated with the result of the participants' practices with search engines, in which their previous choices influence the results shown to third parties, without those who are "censoring" being aware of their social role, because what we share on social media and social networks also influences what others will find on their screens because the choices we make regarding shares, likes, and comments also play an indirect censoring role on the available communicative options of other participants.

Our communicative interactions on the different platforms feed the network algorithms themselves, making them privilege some information and

messages over others. Although this describes the normal functioning of the communicative process involving platforms and our role in it, it must also be highlighted that an indirect result of this hidden censorship dynamic is, for example, the power that our choices have on privileging information disorders to the detriment of other content. If our choices of interaction with content fall within information disorders, they will tend to gain a greater propensity to appear before third parties, either in mediated socialization networks or in searches. Hence, if our content choices are not also framed by information literacy that allows us to correctly identify authorship as uninformative, then our interactions in the network of communicational social relations will be much more prone to be inducers of misinformation.

Algorithmic concealment, as a result of algorithmic censorship, can be thought of as a new form of hidden censorship associated with networked communication practices, able to create imbalances between different types of messages, giving rise to a new type of "empty spaces," where content is not removed from the circulation of messages but instead favors the probability of certain messages coming to us more often than other content.

The central issue of this new type of hidden censorship in networked communication is that it cannot be solved easily, even by the platforms themselves, since they depend on the participants to ensure communication through distribution, that is, the virality of the messages.

In networked communication, messages may or may not turn into narratives, but they can only hope to become a narrative if they first go viral. Narratives can originate on the institutional circuit of mass-media journalistic communication or outside of it. A narrative is characterized by a given story, the retelling of the same story (re-edited and reproduced by multiple people), and a development of attitudes between those who communicate and those who the message communicates about, and in this process of interactions, the creation of a perception of factual coverage associated with the story, regardless of its actual factualness (Page, 2018). In networked communication, when a narrative goes viral, it starts from the immediate place of communication exchange and quickly reaches an exponential speed through the distribution and sharing carried out by participants, reaching an impact of global influence (Page, 2018; Marwick & Boyd, 2011).

However, a narrative can only achieve virality when the story itself already has a latent audience. It can thus be argued that the purpose of storytelling is to lead a potential audience to its definition and materialization, since an online shared narrative assumes that there is an imagined audience that precedes the narrative and shapes the form it takes (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). Hence, there is a search for virality as the ultimate goal of networked communication, particularly when one seeks to reach a large number of people. Viral agency occurs both on the part of those who deconstruct information, so as not to perpetuate misinformation, and on the part of those who contribute to its growth. Therefore, the communicative imbalances associated with information disorders can only be countered if the classification of messages is made possible through individual literacy, allowing for communication to transform the message into knowledge, becoming something

that allows agency, action, production, creation, and transmission oriented toward a non-misinformative communication.

The profusion of mediation in communicative opportunities allowed for the emergence of networked communication. However, without evaluating the classification of authorship within a given media system, and without clarifying how algorithmic gatekeeping practices work in terms of content, there can be no circulation of previous contextual information regarding ideological connotations and political or economic interests.

What information should be chosen to communicate? The information selected first and foremost by a given search engine? Or any other information in the search results? The information presented by one publication or another? From one site versus another? From a group or page on one social network, or from other groups or pages on another? From a given X/Twitter user, or from another one in a post? With comments or without them? From an answer from one generative artificial intelligence brand or another? Without the intervention of trusted classification institutions combined with individual information literacies, it is difficult to decide what information to rely on, making communication difficult or unreachable.

The gradual erosion of the perceived contextual dimension of communication coincides with an objective loss, since we are placed before random influences without knowing what they are, nor where they come from (Eco, 2021). The contemporary discussion on disinformation, fake news, informational pandemics, or artificial intelligence dangers (Collins, 2018; 2021) is rooted precisely in this dimension of the loss of reference for the classification of the sender's authority and its contribution to the contextual dimension of communication.

The erosion of consensus

Political life has long been viewed as being shaped by the interactions of the trinity made up of journalists, politicians, and citizens (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). However, it is important to recognize the growing role of a fourth element—that of mediation technologies and platforms and the important role they play in building our political reality through communication.

At the height of the historical period of mass communication's predominance, the cultural world was divided between producers and consumers, for example, between people who write books and people who read them (Eco, 2011; 2021). Information technologies in general, and the Internet in particular, have changed this status quo, making it possible for everyone to write about everything, and to distribute it by communicating with everyone through social networks and social media (Castells, 2001; 2002; Lessig, 2004; 2005; Murthy, 2018; Baym, 2010).

To understand why we discuss the existence of an erosion of democratic consensus and the contribution of networked communication to this, as well as the relevance of a sociological-semiotic approach to mediation for its analysis, it is

important to start by detailing the transformation of the social ideal of the "informed person" (Harley & Pedersen, 2019; Deli Carpini, 2000).

Firstly, it is important to state that the ideal of the "informed person" at the beginning of the twenty-first century is no longer based solely on the news. Cultural change in what is considered to be an "informed person" and the consequences of this are present at all levels. A good starting point for this is the economic and social analysis of Picard (2003; 2014), in which he proposes the major trends that are changing the face of mass-media communication in our societies. The abundance of channels, titles, and technologies that distribute the same content is one of these trends. A second trend emerges as a kind of response to the first: the fragmentation and polarization of the public's consumption, spreading over more and more channels, titles, and technologies. Also present in these trends is the development of portfolios incorporating several brands in the same company or mass-media group with the objective of designing business models that optimize profitability. Portfolios are developed because the revenue per unit of mass media information and entertainment sold is decreasing, thus making it difficult to limit oneself to only one form of mediation and from only one brand. Having a variety of products reduces the risk, by distributing it and thus obtaining economies of scale. At the same time, it appears that companies that own mass-media brands are increasingly less important businesses on the scale of large companies. Today, there are already few mass media companies among the 100 largest companies in the United States or among the 500 largest companies in the world. Finally, Picard (2006; 2013) suggests that there is a change in the balance of power between the producer and the consumer. A sign of this trend as generally demonstrated in mass-media companies is that, for every euro obtained through advertising, there are three euros of direct payments by the consumer. This is seen in abundant examples, such as pay television, streaming of different types, subscriptions to websites, etc.

However, a sixth tendency of an eminently cultural form can also be observed, i.e., that people today do not value access to the communication of the news, whether that be from television, radio, or newspapers, but rather communication as an overall phenomenon. This is not the same as saying that the news is not important; it remains just as important as in the past and continues to play a central role in our societies (Newman and Fletcher, 2018). What is taking place is a transition from a social world in which the idea of being informed about what was happening, from football to politics and culture, was central to the lives of citizens, to another world in which the cultural idea that the citizen must be informed to produce knowledge through communication is assumed to be of central importance.

If doubts remained about the social hierarchy between "news" and "information," it is enough to suppose that the slogans we adopted as central to our societies were those of "information" or "knowledge" societies (Webster, 2014). However, as always, slogans alone are not enough, because without practices and without changing representations, nothing changes. And change has indeed occurred, because the web, and later social networks and social media, have already become part of the daily lives of the majority of the population on a global scale (Kligler-Vilenchik, 2017; Newman & Fletcher, 2018).

Newspapers, television, and radio were and are heirs to the notion that it is important to know what is going on so as not to be caught off guard, and to be able to act accordingly while exercising our citizenship (Deli Carpini, 2000). However, the Internet is also heir to another tradition, more connected to scientific culture and in which it is fundamental to be informed to predict what may happen, namely that communicating produces knowledge about any topic, from the phenomena present today to the most eccentric tastes and more ethically doubtful interests, in order to understand and anticipate, to always keep one step ahead, and to utilize communication as a means for predicting and searching for strong meanings via weak signals (Mendonça, et al., 2012; Castells, 2001).

We are talking about ideal situations on the basis of theorization, that is, focusing on the essence of explaining a phenomenon (Lash, 2018). Therefore, when an individual reads, sees, or hears the news or consults information via a screen, they are not necessarily instilled with a reflective spirit in relation to these matters.

However, a different technology has emerged that has a different way of dealing with information and communication and has brought about changes that implied shifts in communication practices, which in turn, in some ways already noticeable and others not yet anticipated, will contribute to changing our social representations (Castells, 2002; Cardoso, 2009).

Furthering the analysis framework regarding the transformations fostered by the new paradigm of information technologies (Castells, 2002), we can affirm that the arrival of the Internet would not have so easily changed our way of perceiving the function of information and communication in our daily lives had the most present form of mediation in mass communication, television, not radically changed itself over recent decades. Television went from Paleo-Television, or television as a window to the world, to Neo-Television (Eco, 1990), namely a type of television that looks more inside itself and less to the outside world, seeking to establish an intimate relationship with its audience, and exploring the possibilities of entertainment. If this had not occurred, it would certainly have been more difficult for the social appropriation of the Internet to change our perceptions in the field of consensus as quickly as it did.

Although mobile phones have assumed a leading role as the most widespread individual technology on the planet, television is still one of the most socially widespread technologies, and its content is present in our daily lives on a global scale. However, Fagerjord and Kueng (2019) noted that the news has always occupied a relatively small portion of generalist television channels' broadcasting, that news channels are minority in the profusion of thematic channels, and that news formats have minimal representation in streaming catalogs. Despite this, the perception of the social value of the news was apparently greater in the past than it is today in contemporary societies.

The annual analysis carried out by Digital News Report (Newman et al., 2021) in more than 45 countries paints a picture in which the proportion of citizens who say they are very or extremely interested in the news has dropped by an average of five percentage points since 2016. The realities are diverse: for example, Spain and the United Kingdom show declines of 17 percentage points, in contrast

to 12 points in Italy and Australia, 8 in France and Japan, and little or no decline in countries such as Germany and the Netherlands. Likewise, in the United States, people who say they are very or extremely interested in the news decreased 11 percentage points in 2020 to only 55%. How can this decrease in interest be explained? Despite the news never being in the majority in television broadcasting time slots, newspapers never being the most widespread mass-media medium, and radio always having been more focused on music and entertainment than the news, the news has nevertheless been perceived as having high social value.

Something seems to have changed, and the hypothesis here is that, as a result of the diffusion and social appropriation of Internet-based technologies, the social value of the news has changed via the shift regarding the social ideal of what an informed person is. What, then, is the ideal of an "informed person" in the twenty-first century?

The suggestion put forward here is that the ideal of an "informed person" is a matter of an individual who knows how to communicate, and thus produce knowledge, from all the news items and forms of entertainment available via different media, with different depths of analysis, and who can and knows how to intersect with other more extensive informative analyses on different subjects; that is, an "informed person" is potentially an individual who knows and can watch the news and entertainment on different screens, simultaneously reading in their own and other, foreign languages about internal and international affairs. This is someone who can consult the older media, such as radio, television, and newspapers, exchange ideas with their friends on social networks and social media on these subjects, and consult what others have "posted" and shared on the same subject on social networks and social media such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Signal, Telegram, and other applications. Obviously, an "informed person" is one who usually informs themselves only about what interests them at a given moment, which could be a lot. In a network society, we communicate through the network and on the network, in a type of communication that traverses different forms of mediation in the search for information to communicate and produce knowledge with other members of our sociability networks.

The transition from mass communication to networked communication, through the provision of greater accessibility in communication, was seen to allow the potential emergence of a new culture of democracy (Jensen, 2005; 2013). However, informative and mediated overabundance introduces challenges to the concept of democratic consensus (Eco, 2021). Thus, the networked communication model results in an erosion of the importance of the pillar of journalism and thus of democratic consensus by producing a new socially shared ideal of an "informed person" through the practices and representations of the participants, which do not put the news at its center (Anderson, 2013; Umbricht & Esser, 2016; Winston, 2002; Christinans et al., 2009; Hanitzsch, 2019). This does not mean that people no longer have an interest in the definition of power, even if their opinion of politicians and political institutions has, for some decades, followed a downward path (Castells, 2013; Thompson, 2000; 2005).

However, the materialization of this interest now relies on information from forms of mediated communication other than the mass media associated with

journalism and the news. Consequently, the issue of the erosion of democratic consensus focuses on communication's role in the process of constructing such a consensus. In other words, if communication changes and so does the social value of the news, does the state of democratic consensus change?

The 2017 annual study led by the Oxford Reuters Institute (Newman and Fletcher, 2018), which focuses on 36 markets around the world, showed that on average, about one-third of respondents between the ages of 18 and 24 years stated that social networks and social media were their main source for reading the news, therefore being more important than television and newspapers combined. For most people, this means that platforms, namely Facebook, have come to play a central role in constructing the practices and representations of what the "informed individual" is, since this social network holds a dominant global position, with about three-quarters (70%) using it for any purpose and about half (47%) for the news. If we add WhatsApp to the field with Facebook, a total of 80% of people use a product owned by Facebook at least once a week, and 54% to access the news.

The use of social networks and social media for reading the news has doubled since 2013. In the United States it grew from 27% of the online population to 51% in five years, and in the United Kingdom from 20% to 41%. If Facebook dominates the social and messaging space with 80% accessing business services at least once a week, another platform dominates organic searches and searches in general, viz. Google, with rates of use as high as 90% or more in some countries.

It is therefore not possible to talk about what an "informed individual" is, nor about the social formation of this concept, without focusing our analysis on the contribution of the new communication institutions: the platforms.

A possible definition of platform is given by Nieborg and Van Dijck (2019): (re)programmable digital infrastructures that facilitate and shape personalized interactions between end users and complementary users, organized through systematic collection, algorithmic processing, monetization, and data circulation. In turn, Gillespie (2018) suggests that a platform can be characterized by hosting, organizing, and circulating social interactions or shared content without having produced or commissioned it from participants most of the time.

The entire set of social interactions, i.e., product exchanges of different materialities, on platforms, including information, takes place within an infrastructure for data processing intended for the provision of customer services, the distribution of advertising, and the generation of profit. In this process, there is some sort of moderation of participant communication and activities, especially relating to detection logistics and content review (Gillespie, 2018). Although this latter feature does not apply equally to all types of platforms, depending on the type of content and interactions that take place on them, it is a fundamental difference from the initial design of the World Wide Web, because unlike other open spaces of Internet-based mediation, social media and social networking platforms moderate through the removal and filtering of content and people, recommend content through their newsfeeds, trend lists, and personalized suggestions, and curate through highlights and offers (Gillespie, 2018).

Moderation, recommendation, and curation are three types of tools that are used by platforms to dynamically and constantly produce the environment for the

communicative exchanges carried out, as well as for each participant and the community as a whole. The definition of environment type can be established in ethical and legal dimensions connected to its flag standards, that is, where it is legally registered, and can be dictated by operational issues related to the level of profit it aims to reach through the level of interactions between participants, as well as exposure to advertising and data collection (Gillespie, 2018). The institutional prevalence of the role of platforms in contemporary communication has given rise to platformization phenomena in our daily lives, namely social processes of practice reorganization and cultural imagination around the social and cultural role of platforms in different economic sectors and spheres of life through their role in infrastructure, economic processes, and governance structures (Nieborg & Van Dijck, 2019).

The perceived influence of platforms has never been greater than it is today, as people are concerned about a set of phenomena where they play a central role, such as disinformation, polarization, filtering bubbles, echo chambers, or the erosion of the shared news agenda (Berry & Sobieraj, 2011; 2014; Hameleers & van der Meer, 2020).

The diversity of informative content such as the news and entertainment to which a participant can expect to be exposed is currently dependent on the search they perform and the personalization of the content recommendations assigned to them by platform algorithms (van Hoboken, 2012).

Facebook, for example, makes recommendations for certain friends, groups, and pages to follow that are similar to those that the participant already follows, while also not suggesting those people whom the algorithm determines they should not interact with or follow (Helberger, 2018). These recommendations also influence the crossover of the content to which a participant is algorithmically exposed later, since this also depends on who your friends are (Bakeshy et al., 2015).

Social networks and social media platforms, through their algorithms, design the organizational and architectural framework in which communicative interactions take place, as well as opportunities for exposure to and involvement with content (Helberger, 2018).

For a platform, the quality of an algorithm is measured according to its ability to meet previous tastes and interests and, at the same time, to seek to gradually extend them within a given pre-established standard. From the perspective of platforms, a good algorithm not only gives what is expected, but also helps to discover what you did not know you wanted to see (Schlosberg, 2018). Hence, a cross-sectional analysis of the results of the algorithms in use on most platforms makes it plausible that the impact of the algorithms is twofold: promoting fragmentation and rigidly maintaining the participants within ideological communities or communities of interest (Kelly et al., 2006; Kelly & Teevan, 2003; Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2010; Webster & Ksiazek, 2012; Schmidt et al., 2017; Schlosberg, 2018).

The role of platforms and their algorithms in rigidly maintaining participants on platforms within ideological communities or communities of interest is supported by Webster and Ksiazek (2012), who offer three arguments for why the public keeps their attention focused on a relatively small and cohesive group of

mass-media news brands on the networks: the quality, convenience, and curation associated with these brands. From the analysis of Webster and Ksiazek (2012), it can be inferred that, although research and recommendation algorithms vary in their design, their recommendations tend to essentially address that content perceived as more popular, thus directing participants to the same global content offerings.

In turn, Gentzkow and Shapiro (2010) concluded that homogeneous news diets are rare, so news consumers visit many different media, with ideological segregation on the Internet being low in absolute terms but higher than in most offline media, excluding the national press, and significantly lower than segregation in face-to-face interactions. Mass-media brands with greater market presence and that are politically moderate dominate the choices of news consumers, who tend to present heterogeneous but highly correlated tastes, giving preference to stories that are timely, well written, fun, and do not omit important facts (Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2010). Although these results apply to a media system where news sites are very different from each other, the data make it possible to relativize some of the concerns regarding the potential of network mediation to increase ideological polarization.

However, polarization and fragmentation trends, particularly when associated with social networks and social media, are also corroborated in the empirical research applied to 920 brands and the interactions with them carried out by 376 million Facebook users (Schmidt et al., 2017). In this study, it is concluded that, the more active a Facebook participant is, the more they tend to focus on a small number of news sources. The analysis of the most visited news pages that publish in English on Facebook revealed the existence of distinct community structures and a strong polarization conditioned by a tendency of users to limit their exposure to a relatively small number of news brands (Schmidt et al., 2017). Although there is a wide variety of diverse content in terms of heterogeneous news and narratives, there is a strong polarization of choices associated with the idea that, the greater the popularity of the medium, the greater the probability of attracting interactions (Schmnidt et al., 2017).

Platform monopolies and their intricate algorithms undoubtedly play a profound role in determining power in news agendas, both individually and overall (Schlosberg, 2018).

Polarization thus does not seem to arise as an inevitability associated with presence in social networks and social media. The defining central element, whether polarization exists or not, lies in the choice made by the participants on the basis of their routines and not so much on algorithmic recommendations. However, the greater the political, social, and media polarization of a given country, the greater the tendency toward a polarization of news consumption, both as a result of previous individual choices and those caused by algorithmic recommendations.

Phenomena such as the fragmentation, polarization, and rigid maintenance of individuals within ideological communities or communities of interest do not constitute a novelty in the historical framework of communication, as they are present in both mass communication and networked communication. There is

certainly a question of quantitative scale when we look at the role of platforms versus the role of television, but the central issue is not so much the existence of these phenomena as their real impact on the very functioning of the political system. Indeed, as Eco states, the democratic principle establishes that, to avoid "Bellum omnia omnes," or the war of all against all, a purely quantitative criterion is used: government by the majority (Eco, 2021).

Democracy is a not an absolute consensus but a majority one, or a consensus resulting from the quality of the arguments or ideas communicated. In other words, we also accept the potential error, in the face of some imaginary value system, that the majority may be wrong in the making of their choice. However, we accept the choice, right or wrong, because we accept the value of the quantity and not the quality of the opinions expressed (Eco, 2021).

Voting is the communication of an option before a set of ideas thus communicated, symbolized by a party or the face of a politician (Castells, 2013; Thompson, 2005). Voting in a democracy corresponds to a referendum of the communication and ideas transmitted through the individual choice of parties or people at a given time. Now that social networks and social media have expanded to almost all the populations in most developed countries, a simulacrum of this consensus process is generated, but this time without the action of voting. Social networks act as if a permanent referendum is being held through the communication of ideas about people, policies, parties, and the political system, but without the aforementioned process of voting, since a like or a share does not translate into a vote, nor does it occur in a representative universe of voters, but rather in a segment of participants.

Democratic consensus is associated with voting, but also with the communication that precedes voting and accompanies governance. This communicative process takes place in a public sphere that is based on obtaining agreements through reasoned communication and public justification (Lash, 2018; Habermas, 1984; 1998). The search for agreement is based on a communicative rationality, that is, a process of debate and dialog in which the claims made are tested in their rational justification as true, correct, or authentic. The rationality of communicative action is thus linked to the rationality of discourse; in it resides a way to counteract the plebiscite tendencies present in the public sphere. These are, namely, the professionalization of public relations management, the commercialization and personalization of political messages in communication between political elites and citizens, and the hybridization of message types such as "infotainment" (Habermas, 2013).

Examining mediation technologies and platforms within a public sphere implies also examining the rational communicative dimension. However, in the context of networked communication, it should also be borne in mind that emotions play a central role in communicative construction. For example, social media platforms such as Facebook have been developing emotional structures to direct users' emotions toward positivity and assume the management of users' emotions as an essential factor for their commercial success (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019).

The space of communication present in social networks and social media thus incorporates the dimensions of rationality and emotivity. Hence, the analysis of the

role of communication in the formation of democratic consensus should not look at emotionality and rationality as mutually exclusive, because in reality emotions are present in politics and journalism and are essential to a mediated politics (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019; Castells, 2013; Thompson, 2000; Peters, 2011).

Although the evaluation of emotion in political practice can also be seen as another potential component of plebiscite trends present in the public sphere, it is essential to question whether viewing politics as an imminently rational performance will not be more the result of social convenience rather than the real absence of multiple corporal and emotional subjectivities associated with political practice (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). In a society in which mediated communication expands from the mass-media dimension of television to personal and group messages through conversations on social networks and social media, emotion is present whenever politics is being communicated. Therefore, emotion must be considered when trying to understand the role of communication in everything that means being involved in, participating in, and making decisions about politics (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019).

If the formation of democratic consensus, through voting and mediated political communication, is based on communicative dimensions imbued with both rationality and emotivity, it is also important to assume that this interaction results in the multiplication of democratic consensus simulacra as well, for example, those embodied by the "online conversation" of posts, Tweets, shares, and likes on social networks and media. Although focusing on the current affairs of politics, from the themes and causes to the politicians and parties, these conversations, albeit quantifiable by the platforms, are of a qualitative and not quantitative nature, and cannot constitute a potential creator of new types of democratic consensus. The justification for this impossibility is relatively clear and simple: the communication associated with these consensus simulacra refers only to the participants who were part of this communication; there is no specific search in these conversations for any quantitative calculation of any purported majority of the population. Given that communication in social networks and social media develops in groups, on public pages, on profiles, or in threads, the segmentation of clusters in which communication develops is always the product of a compartmental "universe." In this "universe," there is no transposition of communication from an idea to a choice, not even in a simulacrum of the check mark made in the ballot box next to the symbol representing a party or the face of a person.

The likes and other interactions present in the consensus simulacrum on social networks and social media are not votes, so there is no place for a communication-forming democratic consensus. There is no possible comparison between likes and votes, because given the impossibility of knowing how many participants adhere to a certain way of thinking, and the impossibility of translating different ideas communicated into clear alternative choices, only a qualitative reaction can prevail (Eco, 2021).

However, the ideas communicated on social networks and social media have an effect on politics, so the "likes" do count, though only in a qualitative manner. What is said on social networks and social media, the perception of the prevalence

of the topics discussed there, and their virality all influence political communication and promote political reactions. This qualitative reaction to qualitative consensus also exhibits particular communicative traits, since the political discussion on social networks and social media is characterized by a rapid succession of ideas, mutual contradictions, irony, humor, heated responses, and a fascination stemming more from dispute or divergence than from debate (Eco, 2021).

The processes of surveying and permanent evaluation of political practice, which characterize network societies, materialize in a reflexivity that can be designated as "24/7 reflexivity" when associated with the new forms of mediation present in social networks and social media. The result of this process is the qualitative increase in the conditioning of political activity, which is manifested by influencing the very manner in which political activity is performed (Champagne, 1990; 2004; Habermas, 2013; Castells, 2013).

The formation of a democratic consensus, which is the product of a communication that seeks, ideally but without ever achieving it, the rationality of the debate and whose ultimate objective is the quantification of the vote, is accompanied by a permanent consensus simulacrum that privileges the qualitative over the quantitative character and that promotes the existence of an emotional communicative dimension over the exclusive one of communicative rationality.

The effects of the emergence of a new mode of networked communication and the role of emotion in communication on the democratic consensus are also addressed by Bude (2018) in his analysis of the "contactless contagion" and the formation of collective states of mind within the framework of networked communication.

The formation of audiences in the context of mediation has, since the beginning of mass communication, been the result of a social process of this "contactless contagion," that is, the sharing of similar ideas over arbitrary distances and the formation of groups based on shared states of mind (Tarde, 1991; Bude, 2018). The creation of different audiences thus corresponds to the formation of spaces of social states of mind, which are maintained through a constant flow of information that intensifies the social experience.

Historically, along with the generalization of literacy, audiences are the product of mass-mediated media that have assumed the role of a clustering vehicle for collective states of mind before very diverse social groups that seek actuality, emotionality, and visuality (Bude, 2018). Within the framework of networked communication, the empirical observation of statistics associated with likes, shares, and other interactions on social networks related to political themes suggests that the contributions with the greatest impact are those that defame, ridicule, accuse, and harm because they are those that most easily promote a dynamic of socialization that is simultaneously polarizing and intensifying (Bude, 2018; Cardoso et al., 2020). As opposed to the historical construction of collective states of mind through mass-mediated media, the one promoted through the use of social networks and social media essentially stems from the direct public addressing of themes and people and the affective dimension that accompanies this communication (Cardoso et al., 2020).

In networked communication, we live in a historical time where the formation of two different types of audiences coexists. On the one hand, there is the formation of an indirect audience through traditional mass-mediated media, and on the other hand, an direct audience that does not wait for the interpretation offered by mass-mediated media and that takes mediation into its own hands, building audiences through the sharing of content and messages (Bude, 2018). From this communicative dynamic, an underlying and deep state of permanent rebellion is born, constituting a public demonstration of opposition to established representatives of the public interest (Bude, 2018). Thus, there is one audience that speaks for itself, citizens seeking a simulacrum of direct politics, and another still centered on representative politics and their mediators, represented by journalists and politicians, those who publicly express the opinion of those who represent the citizens (Bude, 2018).

If in the dynamics of mass communication the power of the collective state of mind depended on access to information provided by the mediation of journalists and politicians, in networked communication the power of the collective state of mind, although continuing to be shaped by the news, essentially emerges from the mediation of exchange of opinions, and stabilizes itself through the repetition of those, or the re-editing of opinions and information that have achieved some form of virality.

However, the autonomy of the individual always intersects with the influence of different forms of mediation. Communicative autonomy can fail to be exercised because the participant perceives the public sphere as a field of threats in which one may lose face before third parties, giving rise to a spiral of silence where the prevailing collective states of mind result from the fear of individual isolation (Noelle-Neumann, 1974; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Bude, 2018). Alternatively, communicative autonomy can be exercised because participants perceive the public sphere as a domain of public consultation and mutual recognition (Habermas, 1984; 1991; 1998; Bude, 2018).

In the communicative relationship, the decisive factor always rests in the assessment that the individual makes about the state of mind of the majority (Bude, 2018). From this assessment, the decision to either choose to withdraw into a spiral of silence or join those willing to speak and to be seen is dependent. In networked communication, to speak, to be seen, and to help to shape the collective state of mind achieved through mediation can be carried out by their own hands on social networks and social media or, alternatively, by assuming the role of receiver of the information present in political commentary and the news of editorialized current affairs offered by the mass-mediated media and then by sharing those later on social networks and social media (Bude, 2018).

Political opinions present in social networks and social media do not seek, and thus do not translate, into a form of consensus as occurs in the quantitative voting system associated with democratic participation. However, this consensus simulacrum, which is the result of the dynamics of networked communication, can achieve even greater reach, not limited only to social networks and social media, since it is a media system in which communication flows in a network and where

the communication of communication (Eco, 2021) repeatedly assumes the character of a news source. Once an idea is communicated, it can circulate almost indefinitely in a temporally extended period. The examples are many and varied: from false news shared and disproved but that regularly reemerges, to the Tweets and posts of politicians transformed into news, or even in the small talk of anonymous citizens transposed into Tweets or in their equivalent shared on YouTube, Instagram, or WhatsApp, which although produced in a mode of outburst, risk creating opinion thanks to the sharing of this communication of communication by the mass media, as well (Cardoso et al., 2020; Broersma & Graham, 2012; Eco, 2021).

The false democratic consensus begins with opinions expressed on social networks and social media which, although a minority, may at any given moment seem to reflect the consensus of the majority. This is only because they are visible to a given group, regardless of their size, or because the analysis of the voices expressed in comments and shares shows a given trend, more expected for one side present in this communication than the other that choses to maintain silence on a given subject or person.

The erosion of the concept of democratic consensus is the product of the networks' false consensus, simultaneously allowed by a mediation that today encompasses much more non-news information than news information, and also by a different social representation of what the "informed individual" is, along with a greater social value ascribed to communication in its diversity to the detriment of news genre. However, the erosion of democratic consensus is also promoted by the political actors themselves, who experience the illusion and mistake of thinking that, if a communication item receives more shares or likes than one from their political opponent on social networks, an equivalent to voting is being reproduced, but without the actual action of voting.

The erosion of the reserve

To analyze the reserve as a relevant variable for the study of communication, we need to recall the mathematical communication model of Shannon and Weaver (1949) and its base elements of "sender-message-channel-receiver" and add, in addition to the dimension given by the "context-code" of the semiotic model, a new component generated by networked communication in a digital environment: that of the individual data generated and subsequently accumulated in the form of Big Data (Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Eco, 2021).

The data generated by networked communication (Cardoso, 2009) thus constitute another communicative dimension to be added to the content of the message. The data are also content, but content that is not directly discernible either by the sender or by the receiver, and only meaningful to the sole holder of the interpretative code, that is, the platforms that facilitate mediation in communication between the communicating participants and use the data associated with that communication to feed their algorithms. This is a fundamental point of differentiation because, although the sender and receiver do not have the data generated in

their communication, they are impacted by them. On the basis of the data produced by the communication, different options are generated by the platform algorithms for each sender and receiver involved. Thus, a "datafication of communication" is produced, in which the practices of individuals involved in mediated communication, and communication as an object, are transformed into digital, machine-readable, and quantifiable data for the purposes of aggregation and analysis and which subsequently feed the communicative context of individuals.

Understanding the phenomenon of datafication is essential to situating the transformations within the framework of the social reserve, since the datafication of communication introduced profound changes in the processes of communication, surveillance, celebrity culture, and competitive classification that contributed to cultural change in the way we position ourselves socially in the reserve.

Datafication is not merely a process related to communication, as it refers to the technological trends present in modern societies that, as a result of the generalization of mediation, transform many aspects of our daily lives into computerized data (Hintz et al., 2019).

It is based on the existence of tools capable of being fed by data as well as capable of learning from them and producing new data that feed processes and knowledge regarding behaviors in a logic of management, access, and production of Big Data (Kitchin, 2014). In turn, the concept of Big Data aggregates multiple and diverse characteristics associated with computation and communication, in both of which the presence of a huge volume of data, on the scale of terabytes and petabytes, is a common element, and which also refers to the large-scale data collection that depends on computational processing with the objective of extracting new knowledge or creating new forms of value (Mayer-Schonberger & Cukier, 2013). Although this concept is widely used to define Big Data, there are multiple understandings about what it refers to, in particular when we are situated outside the context of computer science, such as in media studies and communication sciences. Among the diversity of discursive approaches to the concept of Big Data, six characteristics are commonly referred to: the high speed of data creation, which occurs in real time; the variety of data present, both structured and unstructured; the exhaustiveness of the data, in the search to capture entire systems; the high granularity of the data, with the maximum detail and indexing; the relationality of the data, in the search for fields common to the basis that allows for their conjugation; and the flexibility of the data, as a result of their extensibility and scalability (Kitchin, 2014; Mayer-Schonberger & Cukier, 2013; Hey et al., 2009). The data constituted in Big Data, derived from curation and capture activities, are then computationally aggregated, combined, tabulated, and correlated to represent the populations, providing a method apparently intended to address uncertainty through logics and algorithmic calculation techniques that give meaning (Hey et al., 2009; Amoore and Piotukh, 2016).

However, many of these data do not necessarily concern the content of the communication, which is established between one or more senders and receivers, but rather the "metadata" or "data on data," which records where, when, and

between whom communication is exchanged, as well as for how long. The Big Data dataset has origins in both the data derived from the content of meaningful communication, established between individuals, and in metadata, that is, the by-products generated from this meaningful communication as well as from data produced by sensors and facial recognition software using movements, expressions, and emotions, thus significantly blurring the contours of what constitutes personal and public data (Kitchin 2014).

Datafication of communication is thus not merely a product of algorithmic technical capability, since the formation of datafication dynamics in communication, as in other dimensions of our daily lives, requires both an adequate technological dimension and the desire to quantify and record (Mayer-Schonberger & Cukier, 2013). Hence, along with the emergence of the datafication of communication comes dataism, which can be defined as a set of discourses and social representations based on an ideological component of datafication and rooted in a certain belief in particular forms of knowledge and social order (Van Djick, 2014). An example of the clear consequences of representations built around datafication of communication and dataism is present when, in the mediated communicative process on social networks and social media, participants promote forms of communicative optimization through which content producers make their posts algorithmically recognizable (Gillespie, 2014). This dynamic also gives rise to the emergence of a widespread anxiety regarding publication, with the expectation that sharing with peers will not be ignored by the algorithm, along with a regular impulse to check one's own posts on social networks and social media to see the number of likes or other reactions within short intervals of time, in a permanent dynamic of a competitive character (Bernard, 2019; Agger, 2012).

The datafication of communication also has direct impacts on our daily lives beyond the communicative processes. The acquisition of goods and services is now carried out using two types of currencies, the currency of our currency zone (euro, dollars, pounds, rubles, yen, yuan, etc.) and "data currency." Data currency is the product of the conversion of every communicative practice into a potential monetary transaction by indexing our communicative exchanges to the data we produce, which is then sold to third parties in euros, dollars, etc. That is, everything we do online, from conversations to purchases, generates data, and these individual data are the currency that we transfer to the platforms in exchange for all the services and products provided to us. This contractual relationship between participant and platform, translated into the service's rules of use that we accept by clicking on the app's terms of service, is apparently free, at least of financial charges, without the participant needing to make a payment in euros or any other currency. However, in reality, this contractual relationship does indeed have a cost, because we are "paying" the platforms with our individual data, i.e., the product of the communication generated by us on those same platforms. However, just as not all jobs are equal and not all individuals are paid the same salary, even when equal work occurs, it follows that not all individuals are worth the same in terms of their individual data. This is because the data of any given individual are potentially

convertible into a monetary value, whose value is fixed to the potential remuneration of the work of that individual or wealth.

In fact, platforms, by "offering" us access to services such as Google Gmail and Microsoft Outlook, or social networks such as Facebook and other messaging and social media platforms such as X/Twitter, are collecting, with our prior permission, data about everything we do there, including regarding the content we produce or share when communicating. They then use this as a basis for targeting advertising sold to third parties or to sell us their own paid services and products. The price of those services or of our data sold to advertisers is connected to the available information regarding our actual or potential spending or income profiles.

The datafication of communication is based on a surveillance infrastructure relying on the digitization and miniaturization of equipment and cameras, which promotes the permanent and extensive collection of data in all dimensions of mediated daily life, from the platforms we use to the Internet of Things (IoT) (Bunz & Meikle, 2018). Surveillance thus assumes the role of a socially distributed and normalized phenomenon, both on the part of the State's performance and through our individual domestication practices in the private spaces of homes, as well as by the entire panoply of commercial entities in their stores, factories, and services (Lyon, 1994; Bunz & Meikle, 2018; Lyon & Bauman, 2013; Lyon & Trottier, 2012).

Alongside this technological, social, cultural, and economic change of surveillance commodification, most online services and product sales have adopted a commercial model based on advertising and monetization of their customers' individual data, with their prior agreement, to optimize the segmentation of advertising. The datafication of communication has thus become the basis for the standardization of surveillance as an element of our daily lives. The datafication of communication becomes established as a facilitator of the institutionalization of a liquid surveillance (Lyon & Bauman, 2013). The concept of liquid modernity suggests that a central feature of present modernity is liquefaction; that is, that social forms melt faster than new social forms can be materialized (Bauman, 2000). The "liquid" dimension of modernity and its vigilance thus intend to emphasize the inability of contemporary social forms to maintain their form permanently or to solidify. Owing to their short validity period, contemporary social forms are unable to provide reference frameworks for human actions and temporarily extended life strategies. Surveillance, once apparently solid and fixed and linked to the space of places, became much more flexible and mobile, becoming an integral part of the space of flows (Castells, 2002), and infiltrating and spreading through many areas of life, such as communication, where it once did not even have a minimum margin of social acceptance (Lyon & Bauman, 2013).

The datafication of communication provides a standardization of surveillance by providing participants in the communication processes with the anticipation of what will happen, what they may need, and what they may want to see or read, through the use of digital algorithmic techniques and statistical reasoning. This anticipation translates into greater security in daily life obtained through digital and distance monitoring and tracking, in both space and time, of products,

information, capital, and people themselves on a global scale; That is, as a result of the social acceptance of datafication in the context of communication, the surveillance dynamics traditionally associated with the safety of people and goods is now transferred into spheres of daily life that deal with what they read, hear, see, buy, or use. Liquid surveillance proliferates in a context of discourses instilled with an ideology on the basis of dataism (Van Djick 2014) and datafication practices (Hintz et al., 2019) in communication and other dimensions of daily life that consequently lead to the institutionalization of algorithmic technologies to create detailed consumer profiles to serve present needs as well as anticipate future ones (Elmer, 2004). These forms of algorithmic profiles are based on permanent verification, monitoring, testing, evaluation, assessment, and judgments regarding the full range of roles we play in everyday life.

Liquid surveillance is thus also at the basis of the functioning of consumer societies. Given that consumption implies the seduction of consumers, without systematic personalized surveillance and on a massive scale, allowing for the continuous reconfiguration of individual identification, there can also be no companies with the characteristics of Amazon, Facebook, or Google (De Vries, 2010; Fuchs et al., 2012; Zuboff, 2019; Lyon & Bauman, 2013).

Liquid surveillance not only is characterized by a set of practices and technologies, but also involves the sharing of a set of values. On the one hand, the action of remote surveillance promotes "adiaphorization," that is, the separation between surveillance monitoring and the place and time of its incidence in a situation in which systems and processes move away from any consideration of morality (Lyon & Bauman, 2013). On the other hand, it promotes an appreciation of our datafied doppelganger to the detriment of our Self; that is, for multiple entities and institutions, our fragmented and reconstructed personal data, product of the datafication processes themselves, tend to be more reliable than the story told by the person themselves to third parties. The archiving of our fragmented data indexed in Big Data is not simply a record, as its algorithmic appropriation defines what is reportable and recoverable and also contributes to shaping the memory of the participants themselves and the profile that is presented to third parties (Jacobsen & Beer, 2021).

Communication datafication processes are also inducers of data inequalities, because as the details of our daily lives become more transparent to the organizations that monitor us, whether they are companies or the State, their own activities also tend to become less discernible to those who generate the data in their communication; namely, transparency is simultaneously increased for some and decreased for others (Lyon & Bauman, 2013).

However, communication datafication does not occur only when significant communication between the sender and receiver is established. It should be borne in mind that, along with meaningful communication, platforms promote the use of evaluation and classification as an almost second nature of current communication practices in mediated environments and have integrated them into most of the programs and services that constitute our mediated daily life (Bernard, 2019; Bolin, 2022). Participants in communicative processes are given the opportunity to

evaluate and classify all of their mediated social interactions. Invitations to evaluate and give a competitive rating are present in the apps we use, and whenever a service is provided to us, whether by Uber/UberEats, Booking, AirB&B, Amazon, etc., we are promptly invited to evaluate and classify the quality of the service we received, generating new data.

At the historical origin of the shifts in the social representation of the reserve, and the consequent social normalization of the processes of surveillance through datafication of communication and competitive classification, is the process of hybridization between journalistic genres and, later, between the news and entertainment centered on the social role of celebrities (Eco, 2007).

In the last thirty years, the hybridization that first occurred between journalistic genres and then between the news and entertainment has had one of its main expressions in the written press, through a change led by what is traditionally called the "pink press" (Turner 2004, 2010; Littler 2007; Eco, 2007) and which is embodied in a mass media business model built on celebritization. The "pink press," an integral part of the "celebrity-industrial complex" (Orth, 2004), is an evolution of publications initially built around the Hollywood Star System, characterized as publications containing gossip columns and magazines related to entertainment that offered personal details about actors and actresses, associated with public relations dynamics together with a direct relationship with fans through their club newsletters (Kurzman et al., 2007; Gamson, 1994; Barbas, 2001). The "pink press" publications were dedicated to the "famous," and focused their interest on actors and actresses, singers, monarchs in exile, and heirs and heiresses of fortunes, all of whom were voluntarily exposed to the observation of photographers and chroniclers (Street, 2004; Gabler, 2001). Readers of celebrity-centric publications knew that the events shown in the stories were often not factual but were rather the product of the opinion of those who wrote them. However, readers did not read these publications as news, or in the search for an authenticity originating in "fact-truth." What audiences sought in these publications was, above all, entertainment and not news in its most traditional definition (Eco, 2007; McQuail & Deuze, 2020; Marshall, 2014).

The emergence of the focus of news on "celebrities" thus results from its condition as an audience-creating journalistic product (Gabler, 2001; Barry, 2008). The narrative arc associated with the creation of celebrities focuses on a convincing personal story, in which their common characteristics are treated as extraordinary and their rise from triumph to triumph is narrated, overcoming challenges and all kinds of difficulties (Kurzman et al., 2007).

Celebrities, more than the product of journalism, are a product of capitalism, as they involve the commodification of reputation and the construction of audiences, corresponding to the commodification of mass-mediated media (Marshall, 2014; van de Rijt et al., 2013; Milner Jr., 2010; Kurzman et al., 2007) within the framework of a cultural industry (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944). Celebrity is thus a form of social status that "serves the interests of capitalism rather than defending economic niches that capitalism is destined to conquer" (Kurzman et al., 2007, p. 363). The generalist and reference press chose to become increasingly interested in social

events, spectacle, and gossip, thus changing its criteria as to what constituted news (Johansson, 2007; Murdock, 2010; Bird, 1998), owing to the evolution of the media system within the framework of mass communication, the result of the need to compete with television, and the necessity to fill a greater number of pages with stories. In this evolutionary dynamic in the written press, in the 1980s, publications began to compete with each other in a more aggressive way in the search for storytelling or the invention of stories around the most intimate moments of celebrities: their sexual relations and scandals, pregnancies and children, weight gain and loss, and struggles with drug and alcohol abuse (Kurzman et al., 2007; Johansson, 2007). This phenomenon of the written press's transformation can also be labeled as tabloidization, suggesting that stories about politics and civic issues have been replaced by content or by a form that privileges entertainment, emphasizing sensationalistic details of a sexual character, highlighting the scandalous, and focusing more on celebrities rather than on information designed to keep the public informed about government policies or social and cultural issues (Johansson, 2007; Esser, 1999; O'Neill, 2012). Tabloidization has the characteristic of focusing on "gossip," making it an informative reference subject with news value (McQuail & Deuze, 2020), targeting even those who were not their traditional targets, i.e., the reigning monarchs instead of the deposed, the acting religious and political leaders, presidents, scientists, etc. The social consequence of this communication practice, based on tabloidization, generated the social perception that becoming the object of "public scrutiny" within the framework of mediation was equivalent to acquiring the same social status as a famous actress, actor, or politician (Eco, 2007; Street, 2004; 2005; Marshall et al., 2006). This change constituted an important development because it altered the ethical relationship in mediation, introducing a new dynamic in the face of the social perception of the "other" (Silverstone, 2002; Marshall 2000; 2010; 2014). As Kurzman et al. (2007) point out, the news attention given to celebrities is organized around a paradox: their distinction from ordinary people is promoted while their flaws are simultaneously pointed out, portraying them as the ordinary people they are. The historical creation of a news market based on actual or groomed celebrities "suggests an obsessive fascination with celebrities that both honours them for their distinctiveness (…) and pretends to undermine their distinctiveness (…) to make them appear just like ordinary people" (Kurzman et al., 2007, p. 353).

A distinctive feature of celebrity news is its socially positive effect of revealing flaws, in opposition to the effect of social disapproval associated with the public knowledge of politicians' "sins" through the media (Thompson, 2005; Tumber & Waisbord, 2019). In the case of celebrities, the mediatization of their "scandals" only seems to reinforce the dynamics of their own celebritization (Steiner, 2019; Kurzman et al., 2007). By presenting the celebrities in the press according to the above narratives, a new social perception was created regarding the rewards at the level of social status as a product of public exposure, paving the way for the next stage in the process of eroding the social representation of the personal reserve.

The next stage appears when television begins to idealize entertainment programs in which the protagonists were no longer the ones who gossiped about

someone who was not present. In this process, there is a dissociation between what allows for the building of celebrity and the need to have previous attributes of beauty, talent, or individual achievements. Celebrity becomes a product of mediated practice, where they themselves voluntarily and publicly expose their lives so that they can become targets of "talk" (Eco, 2007; Turner, 2006; Langer, 1981; Driessens, 2013).

At the end of the twentieth century, having begun with professional artists, actors, singers, and athletes, the social appropriation of celebrity status spread to many other fields of action, including religion and politics, and even expanding to a "dark side" of the "celebritization system," which was associated with people who use crime as a means to achieve celebrity (Kurzman et al., 2007; Parnaby and Sacco, 2004; Stancato, 2003).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, this expansion intensified further, encompassing people outside the traditional spheres of celebrity recruitment and transforming Warhol's prophecy that "in fifteen minutes everyone will be famous" (Celeste, 2005) into a premonition capable of translating the social dynamics around participants into contemporary entertainment. Indeed, this was something Warhol himself paradoxically experienced with his 1980s MTV show "Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes" with an esthetic equally anticipatory of the face squares featured on the Zoom video chatting application.

The growing tabloidization of Neo-Television (Eco, 1990) produced a mediated proximity that was no longer primarily associated with what can be seen at public events—the traditional space of the news—to extend to what can be shown, with the prior agreement of the subject involved, of intimate events—those that occur in the sphere of "intimacy" or individual reserve.

The institutionalization of a "celebrity-industrial complex" (Orth, 2004) through mediation implies the alteration of the object of spatial transcendence (Silverstone, 2002). In this process of transformation and erosion of the reserve, mediated attention is no longer focused on those who were famous or the "star" on the basis of a criterion of news construction, but shifts to produce a popular subject, a celebrity, who is associated with popularization through entertainment. Contemporary celebrity culture has thus shifted its focus to people and things that are usually constructed, transitory, sensationalist, and often based on the visual dimension in association with tabloid culture. Celebrity qualification is no longer only associated with specific people but is constructed through a process (Turner, 2010). When the public begins to take an interest in a person owing to their personal life and their identity per se, rather than because of what the person has done or does, they cease to be mere public figures and become celebrities while also being public personae (Turner, 2004; Marshall, 2010). As Gabler (2001) suggests through an analysis of the definition of celebrity given by Boorstin (1961), a celebrity is a person who is known for their own popularity and is therefore a media construct as opposed to the classic view of fame that is obtained through achievements.

Through reality TV shows such as Endemol's Big Brother, we have been cultured to construct celebrities through permanent and ubiquitous surveillance as well as classification and evaluation through participation in the dramatic and

artificially prolonged decisions of television mediation in the formats of "popular factual television" (Hill, 2005). In these formats, real people carry out a performance, at least partially staged and associated with a given degree of dramatization that is previously defined, as well as employing sensationalism and the editing of current experiences to provide a higher degree of entertainment (Bernard, 2019). As Eco (1990) points out, this type of show was not part of our daily television life in the Paleo- or Neo-Television of the previous decades, only making its appearance in the late 1990s (Aroldi & Colombo, 2003). These programs' scripts have compelled the fusion, through the use of permanent observation with cameras and the gradual elimination of competitors by a participatory voting system, of two categories that were hitherto normally separated: complete surveillance and internal competition or evaluation and classification (Bernard, 2019).

Given the predominance of television culture in our societies (Oliveira, 1983), the success of reality TV programs' ratings contributed, through their role of socialization, to the gradual change of social standards in both surveillance and internal competition as well as individual reserve. Surveillance has come to be understood as a normal part of daily life, although with some obvious limits and bearing a positive representation, provided that it is associated with some form of reward, whether in personal terms such as popularity or in social ones through the perception of increased security. As Bernard (2019) contends, competitors on reality TV programs welcome public exposure through the presence of surveillance cameras, and their only motive for panic is the fear of being the next competitor to be eliminated. The profusion, acceptance, and social adoption of evaluation and classification associated with communicative processes constitute the expression of a "competitive individuality" that permeates our present (Nachtwey, cited in Bernard, 2019). The profusion of a "competitive individuality" is, for Nachtwey, a characteristic of our time—the result of the market and competitive mechanisms that are implemented in almost all spheres of society, and that also touch upon communication and mediation.

Popular factual television (Hill, 2005) created the conditions for programs to assume the condition of the evangelization of a new role model for social representation regarding the reserve, that is, "if 'someone' is exposed, anyone can do it" (Eco 2007). The social norm embraces the idea that the person who can show something more of themselves and whoever reduces their level of individual reserve can expect greater social recognition and thus greater celebritization. Reality television (Bernard, 2019), in which non-professional participants eagerly disseminate their innermost thoughts and experiences, has also created a shared public perception that almost everyone wants to be famous and that this is a positive thing (Kurzman et al., 2007). The mediation of mass communication through entertainment programs constructed a positive social representation for the adoption of a lower degree of individual reserve, simultaneously associating celebritization with a positive social attribute that could potentially be generalizable to any individual, provided that they have the opportunity to expose themselves to the social whole.

The third stage of the process of social erosion of the reserve comes with the Internet. The emergence of the web and then social networks and social media

reinforced this phenomenon of celebritization (Marshall, 2014), laying the groundwork for the construction of the concept of the "influencer" (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015; Abidin, 2018) on social networks and social media as another level of the "celebritization system." Although this type of celebrity of the networks tends to be less highly regarded and more publicly criticized, it is marketed as more easily achievable than the stardom associated with actors, singers, and athletes, effectively making fame seem accessible to ordinary people (Kurzman et al., 2007; Abidin, 2018). If television can only choose a select few for the exposure that allows for celebritization, driving the valuation of individual status, the network could theoretically allow for the exposure and obtaining of celebritization for an almost infinite number of people.

However, the association of microcelebrities with social networks and social media implies a new approach to the processes of celebritization, now centered on the production of unedited versions of "real" people with "real" issues (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015; Abidin, 2018). However, this unedited version of a "real" person implies that microcelebrities exert a popularity that combines a quantitative reach with a more in-depth qualitative manner as well (Marwick, 2015; Abidin, 2018). To be successful, the microcelebrity needs to curate a persona that is permanently perceived as authentic and interactive, and that behaves as a celebrity regardless of the size or state of the audience involved (Marwick & Boyd, 2011; Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015).

Microcelebrities were made possible by the emergence of social media platforms, but they are also a product of the profusion and acceptance of web cameras present in all digital devices, used with or without the purpose of making a profit, but lowering the reserve of private or semi-private places, feeding pages and personal profiles that reveal everything about "who you are" and "what you do, think, and believe," and constituting generalizable examples of the appropriation of the network for celebritization processes. With the arrival of social networks and social media into daily life and the introduction to the routine of mediation through these platforms, the invitation to share answers to the questions "What are you thinking about?" or "What are you doing?" assumed a central role in building the popularity and social status of celebrities, and of being a "social person" or aspiring to be a potential influencer (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015).

Throughout the twentieth century, the declining rate of celebrity status accelerated greatly. Although Hollywood used to cultivate and maintain movie stars for many years, sometimes decades, an analysis of practices in the last decades of the twenty-first century reveals that television and film stars can rise and fall from stardom in a short period (Kurzman et al., 2007; Milner, 2010). The appropriation of social networks and social media as a tool for the construction of individual celebritization helped to generalize, even more, the social perception that everyone can be famous, making the current celebrity status system even more permeable to the arrival of new participants and, consequently less stable, allowing a larger number of people to circulate through it (Milner, 2010). This evolution and acceleration became evident when comparing the "celetoids" (Rojek, 2001) of the beginning of the century with microcelebrities (Abidin, 2018). Fame is thus increasingly

associated with particular ways of living daily life that are capable of captivating an audience (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015; Hearn & Banet-Weiser, 2020). In the network society, celebrity status can thus be described as emerging rapidly but also decreasing at a similar speed—a "status on speed" (Kurzman et al., 2007, p. 363).

The alteration of the reserve's social perception is associated with the transformation of the temporal relationship of mediation (Silverstone, 2002). The change in the temporal relationship of mediation comes through new forms of social valorization concerning the interruption of our routines, no longer focused only on the public dimension but also including our personal relationship networks. If in the framework of mass media communication the interruption was associated with a relevant and public news event, in networked communication the interruption is associated with what is personally relevant, whether private or public. The empirical demonstration of the valorization of this "individualized interruption" in the routine associated with broad circuit communication can be found, for example, in the statements regarding the main reasons expressed by participants for using social networks, in which the desire to maintain contact with people who are distant stands out, and in which a substantial majority of the communication carried out has a phatic function (Cardoso & Lamy, 2011), since about four-fifths of social media users declare using them to be able to maintain contact with people who are far away or to find and maintain contact with people they have not seen for a long time (Cardoso et al., 2015). Regarding the topics discussed in this context and with whom, more than 80% of participants speak or share ideas on their social networks about personal subjects, emotions, feelings, or concerns, for example, the transmission of general information about the world to maintain a close relationship with their contacts, usually questions or comments such as "How are you?", "How is it going?", "Good morning!", "Today it seems like it will rain," and "It's sunny!", or the product of the new communicative dimensions of social networks, such as simply liking something or sharing a comment with an emoji. Regarding the reasons for use, sharing a novelty is one of the most common purposes of connecting to social networks (80%). Social networks and social media are thus a space in which phatic communication tends to prevail, although there is also room for other types of communicative appropriations.

The news media, through the "pink press," gave the first impetus to the transformation of the concept of celebrity, associating it with popularity rather than the feat of creating fame itself through actions such as acting, governance, construction, discovering something, being the highest scorer, receiving an award, etc. Entertainment, in turn, appropriated this practice and expanded it, presenting us with mediation as a space potentially open to the manufacture of popularity as a socially positive value. In a third historical moment, social networks and social media associated communication with "success" in terms of the celebritization the subject achieved through the virality of their publications and their number of friends; that is, the more "likes" or "shares" one receives in response to what one communicates, the more likely that the communication will reach more people. After all, this is an adaptation of the same dynamics of celebritization that was developed in television and transferred to social networks and social media. The very

business model of social networks is based both on advertising and on these same assumptions. It pays for the algorithm to allow for greater visibility of publications, creating greater social recognition for those who want to publish or share something. On social networks and social media, popularity, understood as being read or seen by the largest number of users, or "social popularity" is simultaneously fostered by the algorithmic dynamics of the platforms themselves, fostering communicative optimization practices while also maintaining its own social value.

Mediation in networked communication, by enabling individuals to achieve a broader individual reach for their own communication, promoted a social overvaluation regarding the idea of reaching higher numbers of people. In turn, this potential number depends on the ability to hold the attention of the "other," something that involves associating forms of mediation shared with others or regarding daily routines, such as belonging to a WhatsApp group, so that it is possible to create interruptions in routines and show something that makes the "other" pay attention to one's message. The purpose of communication on social networks and social media is to see, read, and hear, but also to be seen, read, or heard by the largest number of friends or the general population according to the objectives of each user's autonomy. When the goal of communication is to reach the greatest number of people searching for social popularity, knowing the values that the "other" shares is not as important as being able to reach them. The opinion of the "other" only assumes importance if it produces some kind of blocking of what is intended to be shared because it does not create interest or curiosity. To make the reach of the communicated message as wide as possible, that is, in order to give it virality, it is necessary to adopt a culture of reserve compatible with the current social and algorithmic norms on the platforms. Both have the value of reducing the extent of the space of the personal reserve in common. Individually, the production of content by participants on social networks is framed by the daily life of each participant and by the individual reality show that is their life. The material of production available to be shown and communicated to others is the ideas, practices, and representations of each participant.

The design of social networks and social media platforms, formalized algorithmically, is based on the fact that, the more content there is to be published, the more likely it is to maintain the attention of potential recipients, allow for the creation of a routine regarding their attention, foster greater potential to obtain virality regarding the number of shares, and consequently, create social popularity. In turn, as a result of the culture of celebritization and the social representations associated with mediation, this "material" is perceived as likely to engender more attention the smaller the individual reserve associated with the content. The virality obtained through public exposure and achieved by the posting of photographs of what is eaten, what is read, what is seen, who the person is with, and even the most intimate details of daily life on Instagram, X/Twitter, or Facebook are examples of a change in relation to the reserve and value based on greater individual exposure and, simultaneously, the social acceptance thereof (Eco, 2007; Marshall, 2006; Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015; Hearn & Banet-Weiser, 2020).

The change in social value of the personal reserve to a new level of a minimalist nature was legitimized by the increase in individual public exposure by newspapers and television, and then commercially appropriated by social networks and social media platforms, app creators, and app stores through the use of individual data produced by communication.

What was initially a change in communication through a social transformation of the concept of reserve, associating popularity with fame and, therefore, individual celebritization as something socially positive, has evolved to become an economic foundation and commercial basis of the network society. Without the datafication of communication, it would not be possible to erode the individual reserve on the scale seen today, as there would not be a transformation of the social representation of the concept of reserve that would allow us to show so much of ourselves, thereby transforming so much private data into the commercial property of third parties. Without access to these data, authorized by us to third parties, it would not have been possible for wholesalers of apps, the apps themselves, and multiple physical businesses to use such data commercially as a platform business model. As we can perceive, owing to the widespread acceptance of the policies and terms of use of the different applications and programs present on our mobile phones and other devices, our practices that define the type of individual reserve socially accepted for our data are directly associated with contemporary communication processes.

Without the current social acceptance, or rather individual reserve, implemented in the authorization of what data to share with third parties, there could be no day-to-day business practices based on datafication, dataism, social popularity and liquid surveillance. These individual communication practices are established in a social sharing of values regarding the reserve and arise as a result of the transformation of the mass communication model itself into networked communication. Therefore, without the individual practice of mediation framed by a previous social acceptance of communication datafication, it would not be possible to erode the individual reserve, socially reinforced by many millions on social networks and social media, and there would be no addition of a new element to the communicative process, viz. data. In addition to the sender, receiver, message, code, context, and channel/medium/network, the data produced by the sender and receiver in the communication of the message also constitute a new analytical dimension of communication processes.

The study of the process of the erosion of the reserve, through communicative action, is thus established in what should be the third focus of approaches to a sociology of communication with a sociosemiotic emphasis on mediation processes. Only the sociological analysis of mediation can provide us with the necessary knowledge regarding the extent of social changes that gave rise to a communication that generates data and, simultaneously, fosters monetization processes of said data, as well as a potential instrument of surveillance of the thoughts and emotions of the "other" by the different powers of control (Lyon & Bauman, 2013).

The sociology of algorithmic mediation

The sociology of social communication, from the perspective of mediation, implies that we seek to understand how communication processes change the social and cultural environments that support them, as well as the relationships that participants, both individual and institutional, establish among themselves (Silverstone, 2006). The sociology of mediation requires us to think of the technologies that foster mediation as the product of the totality of the social processes that lead to their idealization, production, reception, and consumption, as well as the role played by social practices and representations in domestication (Silverstone, 2006).

The medium is not the message (McLuhan, 2001), nor is the message the medium (Castells, 2002), nor is mediation the message (Marshall, 2000). This is because the message and the medium are social products, products of the processes of reception and consumption and the autonomy of the social subject in the face of technology. Hence, in the mainstay of the theoretical debate initiated, but not completed, by McLuhan (2001), it makes sense to say that, in networked communication, the message is the people.

The statement that "the message is the people" is another way of remembering that the social is a mediator of communication in a context in which networked communication (Cardoso, 2009) is implemented, incorporating mass communication itself (Thompson, 1995; McQuail & Deuze, 2020). Hence, it is a mode of communication in which individuals inevitably become participants since they have the needed literacies to act in any medium and upon any message, changing it, provided that this is their will.

The social capacity of agency and the construction of autonomy introduce us to a social reality in which technology is the product of constant interaction between it, institutions, communicative actions, representations, and practices of participants. Mediation is the result of these interactions, i.e., the product of choices and of the options that social Subjects have (Touraine, 2000; 2021). As such, the sociology of mediation is presented as the study of communicative processes in society, how culture is generated, how technologies and institutions change or not, how patterns of consumption and reception change or not, and how the Subject simultaneously assumes the social roles of consumer and producer in a society where the visions of the golden age of McLuhan's television screen have given way to a world of networked screens, provided by the social adoption and social transformation of what the word "network" socially stands for, simultaneously perceived as sign, signified and signifier of everyday life (Cardoso, 2013; Cardoso & Quintanilha, 2013).

The objective inherent to this analysis is to provide a reflection on the role of sociology in the study of communicative phenomena at the beginning of the twenty-first century, on the basis of the proposals for reflection initiated by Silverstone in the 1990s regarding screen sociology, and which culminated in his proposal to refocus the view of sociology of communication in a sociological approach to mediation (Silverstone, 1990; 2005). In doing so, we try to answer the double question that has accompanied sociological thinking since its origins: how

does the transforming role of the action of individuals on different facets of the social world, in this case communication, develop, and what advantages can this knowledge bring for different societal institutions?

Silverstone's (1990) proposal regarding the need for a sociology of screens stemmed from observing the central role of television in communicative processes in our societies, but also from what seemed to be the beginning of the presence of another screen in our homes, that of the computer. This perception of the need for a sociology that focused on the analysis of communicative processes through the common element of mediated communication—the screen—later gave way to the proposal for a sociology of mediation in Silverstone's analysis (2005), because in his opinion this was the common element in the different ways of communicating.

However, the evolution of the social appropriation of communication and information technologies presents us with a social world that is increasingly populated by multiple screens, in which mediation takes place sustained in a process of network interaction. Individuals and organizations contribute to the institutionalization of screens as a support in all mediated communicative forms, giving rise to the notion that everything is mediated (Deuze, 2011) through deep mediatization (Couldry & Hepp, 2017) in a society that is both a "network society" (Castells, 2002) and a "screen society" (Cardoso, 2013). From the phone to the TV, from the computer to the tablet, from the smartwatch to smart assistants such as Siri or Alexa, the physical element common to mediation is the screen. For the time being, there is still a lack of complete screen presence in the everyday in terms of newspaper and paper book readership. However, all the other heirs of mass communication, from radio to television, seem to emphasize the social appropriation of screens as a defining element of their communicative mediation.

If the sociology of mediation seems to be a label with the capacity to capture the centrality of the processes of contemporary institutional, technological, consumer, and reception mediation, the evolution of social choices relating to the appropriation of networked communication, promoted by the Internet, raises other questions that are not fully graspable by solely focusing on mediation. Hence, the proposal made here is to question the extent to which, beginning from the definition of the sociology of mediation, it will not be necessary to revisit the idea of a "sociology of screens" in an attempt to contextualize the object of sociological analysis with the communicative transformations of social networks and social media. Silverstone, in the article "De la sociología de la Televisión a la sociología de la pantalla. Bases para una reflexión global" (1990), stated that "television was changing," and was becoming the center of home entertainment and information systems. At a time characterized by the transition from a mass communication system to a model based on networked communication focused on mediation networks, in which different degrees of interactivity coexist, the social perception of audiences as a passive actor gave way to the concept of potential participants (Silverstone, 2005; 2006) ready to choose from a huge variety of mediation content and media. However, television is no longer seen as it was in the 1990s at the time of Silverstone's (1990) original analysis, but rather as a television of the "I," more diversified in content and individualized in choices, and based on a

near-generational division between a television of streaming content (Lobato, 2019) and a new incarnation of Neo-Television (Eco, 1990; Aroldi & Colombo, 2003), paving the way for the birth of an Uber-Television, algorithmically based both on its practices and on our representations toward it. Uber-Television is the result of a process of uberization applied to the relationship between the participant in communication and the purveyor of television content. Under such uberization, television changes its relationship with us, introducing the concept of individualization toward the viewer, trading the existence of publics and enablers of audiences for individual participants in the processes of communication. Simultaneously, the uberization of television arises from the idea that the satisfaction of information and entertainment needs is based, whenever possible, on the delivery of content at the request of the individual participant or, when not technologically possible, on the construction of a socially shared representation that television is always targeted at satisfying the wishes of the participant.

Television and its audiences are increasingly being disputed because of not only the sustained growth of other uses associated with the Internet but also the possibility of diversified forms of television program consumption, whether via open, paid, or pirate access (Castells & Cardoso, 2012). With the growth of Internet access and appropriation and the logic of multipurpose mediation systems, the television screen is now shared with other screens where the television narrative is also present, such as in the streaming services of major global producers like Disney, HBO, Amazon, or Netflix.

Television is no longer the only "dominant object, a screen that becomes the door to a world of opportunities" (Silverstone, 1990). Television has simply become one of several forms of content present on the screens of our communicative space, or only one of the possible extensions of mediation processes. Communicative social analysis thus can no longer be based on the universal support given to television. Therefore, to speak of the sociology of mediation is also to speak of a sociology of screens in its plural, multiple, and networked dimension. A sociology of mediation requires a commitment to think of screens not only as material objects—products of technology—but also as social and symbolic objects, focusing not only on a series of communication practices, but also on screens as part of the culture of housing, i.e., the private and domestic spheres (Silverstone, 1990), and its extension to a culture of mobility, i.e., work, school, and public spheres.

Another transformation resulting from this multiplication of screens was the loss of the centrality of culture and the private space associated with the household and the house. For Silverstone (1990), these were the spaces of choice for the study of screen sociology. However, the focus on the study of mediation processes and the role of screens is divided today between the spatial dimensions that frame social relations: home, work, and school and the spaces of mobility between them. In all these spaces, mediation takes place on the screens that we choose to look at or those that accompany us inside our pockets, bags, or briefcases.

The "sociology of the screen," as described by Silverstone, was a sociology that had its context of analysis in the family and in television, but it essentially evolved to become a "sociology of the screens," plural in spaces of global practices

and representations. The presence and centrality of screens in everyday life, in their multiple formats as we know them today, positions the sociological analysis of communication as the ability to read about and understand a social reality that is based on its appropriation by a "Subject" (Touraine, 2000), the participant, who produces communication, potentially changing the original message through active, participatory, interactive, and networked interaction.

As Monteiro (2019) suggests, contemporary mediation is based on screens. The common element among the omnipresence of images, information, data, or networks in our daily lives is the screen. Indeed, contemporary culture is a culture of screens. However, a screen does not correspond to any of the three features commonly associated with the networked communication in our daily lives, as it is neither a medium, format, nor platform (Acland, 2019). The screen thus appears as an intermediate manifestation that materializes the way we start to see and describe the differences and connections between the different forms of mediation provided by television, cinema, computers, telephones, and watches, and the content present in them (Acland, 2019).

In a communicative dimension, the term "screen" in its traditional connotations can no longer be equated to the traditional representation of window, frame, or mirror once associated with the television and the non-networked computer (Casetti, 2019). Over the last centuries, we have witnessed a teleological evolution of the screen that ultimately culminated in the contemporary screen. Accordingly, Manovich (2019) traces an evolution in three phases, corresponding to three types of screens, in its technological and mediation dimensions. The first phase of the screen corresponds to the classic painting screen, configured on canvas. In the second phase, the dynamic screen appears, first that of the cinema and later that of the television. Finally, the third phase corresponds to the computer screen in its different modes of portability and sizes, in which the participants themselves become actors in the communicative process of the screen, making a clean break from those of painting, photography, or analog cinema. Today, the screen also represents an empirical reality arising from the news or a fictional representation from series and films. The screen still appears as a space for interaction and construction of reality through the provision of data and information from each of the individual participants. However, functionally, the screen has increasingly become a space for communicative interaction a communicative screen for direct message exchange with others.

In the historical evolution of screens, digital screens are synonymous with giving images a changeable property and no longer having a relationship with physical space (Couchot, 2019). Throughout the teleological evolution of the screen and its purpose, objective, or aim, the screen, once a single window, has been replaced by the multitasking made possible by multiple windows, and the same screen can open spaces to be in two or more places at the same time, or in two or more modes of identity in a fractured and multitasking multiple space. Multitasking thus also becomes a cultural trait of the contemporary appropriation of screens, and multitasking can utilize a single multi-window screen or multiple screens (using in conjunction those of the computer, television, mobile phone, and

smartwatch) articulated in a network to perform multiple activities in near simultaneity (Friedberg, 2019).

After the computer, the smartphone represents a new stage in the evolution of the digital screen. Its distinctiveness stems from the fact that it is generally operated through applications, or apps, that allow the performance of specific and diverse mediated activities. Although the introduction of payment coupled with the use of these apps is not a novelty in the sphere of screens, as this is not very different from the introduction of pay television, there is another area where this novelty is absolute. The app, associated with the smartphone screen, and later the smartwatch, represents the expansion of the mediation market beyond devices and programs and extending to the domain of social behavior, as exemplified by the different service, social networking, and social media apps (Schneider, 2019). Screen mediation differs from mediation through other interfaces, and a basic understanding of the technological aspects of screens and the ideological, ecological, and cultural consequences of the development and distribution of screens remains beyond the knowledge shared by most participants in this mediation (Cubitt, 2019).

As a basis of mediation, the screen is predominant in two aspects: in the priority given to it by technological innovation and in its centrality to people's everyday life as a product of choices and mediation processes. This leads to an analysis of the screen as a synthesis of the object of study of the sociology of mediation in its component of communicative expression in a network of multiple viewing objects. The importance of the screen as an object of sociological analysis should then be considered in two ways. Firstly, and for the most obvious reason, there is a predicament associated with the increasing focus on screen-centric technologies. Secondly, one can speak of a trend toward the "screenization of mediation" processes and tools as a result of the sustained growth of the Internet-based technological model, as well as of the translation of traditional mass communication to networked communication (Cardoso, 2009). Technology is not only represented, but also dependent on the screen to be adapted to the house as well as wherever we happen to be, that is, wherever we are outside the hours spent in the context of the household. This technology is arranged in a multitude of screens, of which the mobile phone is the most common in terms of use and dissemination, supplanting in numbers other screens such as the television. The multitude of screens also highlights a culture based on networked screens where the essence of the technological product assumes not only an intermediary function in the construction of daily routines, but also an imperative of consumption based on the current and esthetic aspects of new offerings of services and products.

While for many decades technological innovations, e.g., the remote control, video recorder, and TV box, have focused on the TV screen, demonstrating the paradigm of TV screen dominance as a starting point for "technological convergence" (Silverstone, 2006), innovations in recent decades have focused on connecting screens to the Internet-based network, giving rise to a culture of convergence (Jenkins, 2004). This is a culture in which the interconnections between content, and no longer just technologies, converge as a result of communication that

interconnects and relates everything in the same space of digital flows in a network.

Silverstone said in 1990 that we had never been surrounded by so many screens before. In doing so, he referred to screens as multipurpose and multicontext interfaces, but at a time when networking between them was only imagined and not yet experienced and appropriated by millions of people in their daily lives. However, this conclusion of being surrounded referred to the multiplication of television screens in homes and computers in schools and businesses. The contemporary multiplication is of a different type, as screens have been developed and appropriated for different cultures of uses and spaces, extending to the screens of televisions, computers, mobile phones, and multiple other portable media players, such as smartwatches. Faced with the near omnipresence of the screen in our societies, the object of the contemporary study of the sociology of communication should thus be mediation centered on screens and articulated through networks, in which the participant can choose the content, alternately or sequentially, adapting it to formats with different technological media.

Silverstone (1990) proposed the centrality of the screen in communication, supported by three central analytical points: the central role of the screen in domestic culture, daily life, and the private sphere; the central role of the screen as a precursor and reference to technological development; and the screen's dual nature of consumer object and sender of meanings. Silverstone (1990) addresses the screen's predominance in terms of the legitimization of a symbolic and cultural power that finds meaning in the approximation of public and private cultures, in the fusion of information and entertainment, fantasy, and reality, and in the access to past and future in the desire to situate ourselves in the temporal dimension. The question posed to the study of communication and contemporary sociology is to discuss the extent to which they remain central today.

The dimensions listed above continue to have the analytical centrality that was conferred on them by Silverstone in the 1990s, but they need to be framed by the growing relationship between the Subject (Touraine, 2000)—the potential participant—in the production and distribution, regardless of whether the sphere is domestic or private, and the growth of new forms of mediation, especially the Internet and its different types of actors.

The sociology of mediation and screens focuses its attention on the processes of mediation and the plurality of screens articulated by communicative networks and supported by the Internet as a central element of individual choice and as an object where our aspirations are focused in terms of the social definition of technology, institutions, reception, consumption, and culture.

A sociology of mediation, focusing its analysis on a network society (Castells, 2002), therefore also has as its object two key components of the process of contemporary mediation: the algorithmic dimension and that of screens. A contemporary sociology of mediation implies that screens, and the appropriations made of them and their content, must take into account the datafication of communication, the processes associated with said datafication, and the new actors in the communicative processes of mediation, namely the algorithms.

Like the screen, an algorithm is more than its technical definition from the perspective of the study of mediation and communication. Namely, an algorithm is more than a set of technological prescriptions and automated logical instructions to process data performed by data engineers, mathematicians, and programmers, being created with the objective of solving a problem from an understanding of previous events and with the possibility of trying to predict future behaviors (Gran et al., 2020; Bucher, 2018; Hintz et al., 2019). Algorithms are also social products that incorporate the values, beliefs, and assumptions of those who design and program them. There is a materiality in the digital immateriality of the algorithm. This materiality is endowed by the values and assumptions embedded by its designers and programmers in the properties of the algorithm, enabling it to influence the social in different ways (Bucher, 2018). All spaces of mediated daily life are now influenced by algorithms, and in many countries, their influence is even felt in public policies through the way State functions are managed, e.g., social security or public security (Diakopoulos, 2015).

In the network society (Castells, 2002), algorithms are an integral part of our daily life mediated on screens and are constantly evolving through the improvement of their flexibility and responsiveness, fed by the data collected. Algorithms are present in all technological bases of mediation, from search engines to mass-mediated media and from music and film streaming services to different socialization platforms and artificial intelligence providers, shaping the ways in which we meet and know others and how we ourselves are represented and presented (Gran et al., 2020; Bucher, 2018).

Since algorithms are part of the mediation process that shapes communication, they also mean different things to different actors in communication. Depending on the different institutional and organizational contexts, algorithms are, in turn, both objects of social concern and task facilitators in the most varied domains, from social to work and education, or creators of invisible infrastructures for those who use the Internet and, consciously or unconsciously, follow their instructions (Bucher, 2018; Britt Gran et al., 2020).

Algorithms increasingly influence information and communication through content selection and communicative mediation, creating new needs in terms of algorithmic literacy (Swart, 2021). The datafication of communication, expressed by algorithmic means, shapes communication and reflexivity, becoming a matter of conditioning the Subject's agency, structuring public life, and sustaining democracy (Gran et al., 2020; Eslami et al., 2015; Beer, 2017; Diakopoulos, 2015; Gillespie, 2013; Gillespie & Seaver, 2016; Kitchin, 2017; Seaver, 2017; Wilson, 2017; Diakopoulos, 2015).

The mediation that characterizes screen-based networked communication is, to a large extent, an algorithmic type of mediation. Within the framework of an algorithmic life (Bucher, 2018), the answer to what characterizes this type of mediation also depends on the questions and answers regarding who or what is part of what is being articulated as an algorithm. Algorithms can constitute a source of power for those who develop, write, or own the proprietary rights to them, while for others, such as those who participate in the mediation generated by them,

algorithms can constitute "enigmatic technologies" (Pasquale, 2015). A society in which the values and prerogatives encoded in the rules of algorithm operation are not clearly discernible is a society that operates in a "black box" mode, where the authority resulting from the exercise of power tends to be increasingly expressed in an algorithmic way (Pasquale, 2015). Hence, discussing power within the framework of algorithmic mediation also implies the need to discuss the type of relationship between the agency of the Subjects and the participants (Silverstone, 2006) as well as the agency of the algorithm promoted by the owners and creators of the code embedded therein (Crang & Graham, 2007; Ziewitz, 2016; Kennedy, Poell, & van Dijk, 2015).

The mediation of algorithms is thus based both on technical functionalities, which are present in the definition of the mediation process established between senders and receivers, and on the dependence on an individual but socially shared algorithmic imaginary (Bucher, 2017; Meyrovitz, 1985).

Algorithmic mediation is a mediation that is not merely dependent on the technological dimension of the procedures for shaping communication, since it also depends on the representation that the individuals themselves form about it, as shown by both Silverstone through the concept of domestication (Silverstone, 2006a; Hartmann, 2006; Livingstone, 2007) and Eco by looking at the influence of the channel/medium/network on the nature of the message, although not on its content (Eco, 2018a; 2021). Both approaches are in line with the role played by the representations that the individual builds and how they shape the message through the interaction and transformation that creates communication (Touraine, 2000). Communication is thus also shaped by individually constructed and socially shared ways of thinking about what algorithms are, what they should be, and how they work.

The algorithm as a social product is the result of the way the social shapes it, the product of its design, and the permanent feedback of individual data that it collects. Likewise, it is the product of how it shapes the social through its original design and permanent feedback from the data of the social interactions that it monitors and collects. Hence, Bucher's proposal of the concept of programmed sociality implies reciprocity between machine and human, as well as the recognition that, regardless of how life is shaped, responsibility is shared (Bucher, 2018, p. 159). Algorithmic mediation is a new form of mediation that is always in permanent transformation owing to the agency and communication of the participants that feed the algorithms with data.

The screen is thus an object of mediation linked to other objects through technological networks and algorithms, but this material embodiment is also the product of social choice in the valorization of networks, screens, and algorithms. These should therefore be understood both as objects and as social and symbolic metaphors. The screen, the network, and the algorithm are, for the sociology of mediation, the focus of a series of communication practices, as well as part of the culture of households, work, school, and the physical space of flows (Castells, 2002), that is, of the private and domestic culture, but also of the culture of work, school, and leisure, defining both individual and group identity culture as a culture that,

originally rooted in mass culture, is evolving toward the furthering of a "mediatized culture."

The sociology of algorithmic mediation is the starting point for understanding how the routines and formulas of everyday life in the network society are formed and sustained, and how individual identity and ontological security are defined in space and time. Screens are a fundamental physical dimension. Therefore, they must be adapted as technological and design objects to the spaces in which we interact with them, such as the house, work, transportation, the street, etc. In turn, algorithms adapt and are adapted through our agency to the complex world of social differentiation and relations of authority, property, gender, age, etc.

It is in the social interaction between the screen as object, the algorithm, the space, and the Subject that both consumer and citizenship choices are defined through mediated communication. Through the mediation of screens and algorithms, we become aware of the options of choice, both in terms of the communication and information technologies available, as well as in the formats that can be accessed through them and the possible daily consumption options, whether by impulse or by choice. It is also from this same interaction that the classifications of experience take shape that allow us to refer to and position ourselves before a multitude of different types of choices, such as those relating to politics, culture, sports, religion, etc. It is the mediation of screens and algorithms that provide us with the routines that organize our daily lives at home, at school, at work, and in spaces and times of leisure. It is also the mediation of screens and algorithms that form the sphere of interactions in which the original message is changed, creating communication that destroys established social norms and constructs new ones, and in which order, change, creativity, and conformity are combined (Touraine, 2000).

As Silverstone (1990) stated, the sociological study of mediation requires concern for both technology and the processes of mediation, consumption, and regulation. The sociology of algorithmic mediation thus aims to analyze how technology is socially, politically, and economically configured in the search for understanding how the technological production and commercialization of algorithms and screens contribute to their social status as an object that, while having specific functions, also has meanings and social and cultural values. Mediation aims to understand their reconstruction and transformation through their consumption and use.

The sociology of algorithmic mediation also implies focusing our attention on mediation and consumption. Thinking about and analyzing screens and algorithms implies thinking about everything that precedes and occurs after connecting to or disconnecting from the object of mediation, including the choices and the consequences of their use in time and in space, such as the individual and family or work and school spaces, or in the moments and intermediate spaces between them.

Mediation, as an interaction between screens and networked algorithms, implies sociologically questioning the commitments made to the articulation between a shared public culture and individual cultures, between sharing and privacy, between reservation and openness, and between authenticity and falsehood. As Silverstone (1990) pointed out, making the news, issues, or episodes ours was what enabled us to enter a new public world with a bargaining chip—the

ability to discuss with others something that another person can also understand and express their opinion upon. It is through the mediation of algorithms and of screens that today we enjoy the classification that informs our personal experience regarding the multiple facets of the world that surrounds us, from near or far and in the different dimensions of distance. It is through the mediation of algorithms and of screens that we consume meanings and then negotiate, transform, and sometimes distribute them, producing the communication of knowledge and culture.

Finally, if we choose a sociological approach focused on algorithmic mediation, this also implies questioning how we produce content as organizations and individuals and what the consequences of our choices are for the society in which we live. What types of Subjects, agencies, freedoms, and control do we implement? How should social concepts such as ownership, production, or authenticity be redefined in the light of the multiplication of networked screens, a datafication of communication, and the mediation of algorithms and their content as generated in partnership between organizations and individuals?

Mediation is the stadium in which we, the participants, play the game. The game is communication, and as with all games, there are explicit rules. Success in this game is given by the possibility of effective communication taking place.

Since perfect communication without "noise" does not exist, nor can it exist given the imperfection of our human nature, the participants, given their role in the erosion of classification, consensus, and reserve, must engage in self-reflection for effective communication to be possible. This is because the Subject alternately assumes the roles of receiver and sender, and of consumer and producer of content and data, as well as the social functions of selection, classification, and sharing of information in networked communication.

However, there are also implicit rules that shape the "game" of communication, rules that often cannot be fully clarified to the Subject, as in the case of algorithms generated by platforms. Algorithms in our society are thus also actors of dominance of the most powerful over the weakest (Touraine, 2021), although they are also the target of domestication practices by the Subjects in search of autonomy (Siles et al., 2019). Algorithms are dominant actors because they are extensions of the thinking and programming of those who program them, instilling them with different degrees of "artificial autonomy" in the different relationships they are programmed to exercise. However, they are created and appropriated within the framework of dominant economic companies, which are oftentimes more important than many national states, such as Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft (GAFAM) and the new "to be" oligopolies increasing their store of artificial intelligence services, and which are configured as total actors that act in the economic, political, and cultural realms, in the latter case through mediation.

If modernity can be defined by three main elements, i.e., the transformation of the environment through our tools and knowledge, the ability of society to generate an image from its own creativity and self-awareness, and the conflicts between those who own and those who work (Touraine, 2021), algorithms must also be understood at the same time not only as actors but also as instruments of

dominance: actors because they have a certain degree of autonomy conferred by those who program them, and instruments of dominance because they act according to previous instructions placed at the service of their owners (and sometimes states) to increase their economic, political, and cultural power.

The study of communication is the study of total social phenomena in the sense attributed to Paquete de Oliveira (2017). Mediated communication is a social phenomenon, and its study, within the framework of a sociosemiotic approach, aims to understand it as a total social phenomenon (Mauss, 1968). The object of a "Sociology of Algorithmic Mediation" is thus the study of the communicative practices based in one-to-many mediated communication, algorithmic closed communication, reciprocal mediated communication (Hepp, 2013), mass self-communication (Castells, 2009), and mass communication (Thompson, 1995), whose interactions and interdependences can only be fully understood through the analytical lens of networked communication.

Chapter 2
Communicational crisis

Crisis is synonymous with rupture, but also with change. The prolonged global crisis that emerged in 2008 was not and is not a crisis of merely an economic and financial nature—it also touches upon other dimensions (Castells et al., 2012). Therefore, it can be designated as a structural crisis that is reflected in a change of paradigms in various areas of our lives and assumes the characteristics of a long-term structural crisis (Braudel, 1960).

In this crisis, there is a social perception that the great narratives of society that gave security to our lives are increasingly seen as ineffective and unable to fulfill these roles. Their individual capacity to generate a future of social mobility between generations has been disavowed.

In this structural crisis, our individual position depends, as Touraine (2000) suggests, on whether we intend to discover the Subject in ourselves and in others or whether we intend to kill said Subject. If our goal is to continue to live in open and democratic societies, in a world where each of us can build our own experience and guide our lives through respect and solidarity with others, it is essential to understand the processes that can lead us onto totally opposite paths, where the denial of individual subjectivity, morality, and physical integrity predominates (Wieviorka, 2012).

In our network society, people are now immersed in data shared on social networks and social media, on televisions, on radios, and in newspapers regarding the risks of poverty, the dissolution of the middle class, the increase in economic depressions, the consequences of the pandemic, and concerns regarding migration, terrorism, war, personal health, and corruption in politics and business, often leading to electoral abstention or the choice of populist options (Bude, 2018; Castells, 2013).

However, for Bude (2018), the central issue is to determine what these data mean and how to relate them to each other, in other words, what it means for people to be "worried" or afraid in the face of so many issues in our societies. Bude argues that our era is characterized both by the social role of networks (Castells, 2002) and by fear, which is the expression of a society perceived as being based on unstable foundations. This is the starting point for analyzing the social experience of fear in our societies, drawing a picture of a society marked by disturbing uncertainty,

contained fury, and silent resentment (Bude, 2018). This is true both for our close relationships and for the world of work, as well as for how we react to the relationship between politicians and bankers and individual members of societies (Bude, 2018). Contemporary fear is associated with a different perception from other previous social contexts, as it has less to do with a powerful "other" and more to do with the perception that there are a multitude of negative possibilities for us that we are forced to face in everyday life.

Freedom and autonomy are the flip side of the coin of fear (Castells, 2012). Fear is what fills the void created by not knowing or understanding the impact and meaning of a choice's options, being one of the great instigators of current new conflicts between countries, citizens, and companies, in addition to all the previous types of conflict. Where fear proliferates socially, evil has a fertile social terrain to take advantage of (Wieviorka, 2012).

However, evil cannot be understood as a supernatural force or an explanation for bad human fortune but rather as a manifestation of the social (Kilby, 2013). Hence, evil must be analyzed sociologically as a phenomenon in the search to explain its social, political, and cultural sources and to shed light on the processes through which contemporary forms of evil—global terrorism, racism, and generalized hatred for the "other"—are established (Wieviorka, 2012).

In other words, although the first and most visible symptom of the crisis that began in the first decade of the twenty-first century occurred along the financial and economic dimensions, the historical period in which we live is characterized by a crisis experienced along multiple dimensions (Bouin, 2017; Ontiveros, 2017; Castells et al., 2012). There are five central dimensions in particular that occur over a long period of time and along which change arises on different fronts, inducing both hope for improvement and fear that generates conflict and worse prospects for the future.

As we have seen, the first dimension of the crisis refers to the financial and economic dimensions, but the second of the five central dimensions of the long-term crisis occurs at the level of the loss of political legitimacy, which has crossed borders and political systems for several decades now (Castells, 2013; Beck, 2006; Thompson, 2000).

In turn, the third dimension is of an environmental nature: a visible crisis to which the news gives a significant amount of attention in terms of climate and environmental problems, social perception, and public policies aimed at risk containment associated with global warming (Tubiana & Lerin, 2020; Beck, 2010; Wimmer & Quandt, 2006).

The fourth dimension of the structural crisis at the beginning of the twenty-first century was health related—associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (Horton, 2021), which not only had, but continues to have, impacts far beyond health. This reinforces other crises, such as those of political and economic-financial legitimacy, and contributes ambivalently to the impacts of the environmental crisis. On the one hand, declines in industrial production, consumption, and transport have helped to alleviate the environmental crisis, but on the other hand, the reduction in the recycling of products and the increase in individual car traffic have

led to a worsening of environmental pollution (Muhammad et al., 2020; Patrício Silva et al., 2021).

However, there is a clear finding that the pandemic health crisis was also associated with an infodemic (Horton, 2021; Simon & Camargo, 2021; Gruzd et al., 2021). The definition of infodemic and its use precedes the last pandemic and is associated with both the September 11th terrorist attacks and the SARS epidemic of the early twenty-first century (Colombo, 2022). For Rothkopf (2003), infodemia refers to the emergence of facts mixed with fear, speculation, and rumors and rapidly amplified and transmitted worldwide by modern information technologies that affect daily life and economies as well as politics on a national and international scale. However, as Colombo (2022) points out, the definition of infodemic has been successively appropriated by the World Health Organization (WHO) during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular regarding the role played in the pandemic by social networks and social media in the dissemination of information, specifically focusing first on the excessive amount of information, which makes it difficult to identify the correct solution to the problem at hand. The existence of an environment saturated with information also constitutes an ideal space for the circulation of disinformation and rumors during a health emergency, hindering an effective public health response and creating confusion and distrust among people (WHO, 2020).

In the process of infodemia's conceptual social appropriation, an infocentric approach was initially adopted so that a more ecological approach could then be followed, being more complex both in the definition of the contextual conditions and in the identification of action and reaction strategies (Colombo, 2022). As the WHO itself recognizes, infodemia is the product of the contradictions inherent to the contemporary mode of communication, networked communication, which allows us to remain connected and informed. However, at the same time, it allows for the amplification of an infodemic, which continues to undermine the global response and jeopardize pandemic control measures (WHO, 2020a). The health crisis thus has implications for the upsurge of another dimension of the crisis—the communicational. This has been demonstrated in our daily lives for several years now.

The fifth dimension of this century's structural crisis is the communicational crisis that consists of the systematic manifestation of communication disorders. According to Dunn (1994), crisis can be understood as the diffuse awareness that certain practices may have to change drastically so that the central objectives can be sustained just as before.

The communicational crisis must be understood as the manifestation of radical changes in not only how information is produced, distributed, and consumed but also its institutional, legal, and cultural framework in different media systems that occur in the same temporal context and conform to a common standard in an attempt to achieve objectives that were once easily attainable but are no longer.

A communicational crisis should be understood as the product of a change in the dominant mode of communication, in this specific case, the transition from the realm of mass communication to one of networked communication.

When a mode of communication ceases to have a dominant dimension, as with mass communication, and is replaced by a new mode of communication, in

this case networked communication, the institutions created in the previous framework are no longer able to support the objectives for which they were designed. As a result, new practices and representations are needed that can sustain the social, economic, political, and cultural objectives outlined in the field of communication. This social process of affirmation is first accompanied by the slower or faster erosion of existing institutions, practices, and representations and, in parallel, by the search for their innovation through a process of trial and error in the pursuit of new tools to support old objectives, such as communicating, informing, and creating culture, as well as the furthering of social responsibility, profit, and income in a given professional and market environment around communication.

Since the beginning of the new century, we have been experiencing a crisis of a communicational nature that drives both communicative disorders and communicative innovation at the same time.

The communicational crisis is the product of changes in the mode of communication and how they were felt in the mediation system. As Taplin (2021) says, "We need to acknowledge that we are experiencing not just a political crisis, but a communication crisis." Taplin suggests that a central feature of the current communication framework is the fact that we have a media system that consciously promotes "untruths" in search of profit (Nordenstreng, 2007; Benkler et al., 2018).

The media system is no longer made up of only national media, calling into question the applicability of media system definitions in a restricted sense (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Santana-Pereira, 2016). In the framework of networked communication, the idea of a media system confined only to disparate countries or regions no longer makes sense. The traditional definition of the media system, associated with the era of mass communication, was conceived as a media network that interacts with, competes for, and cooperates to capture the attention of a specific group of people. This was in a given geographical area and within a given historical context, and the network served the same population, all of whom spoke the same language, had the same cultural codes, and acted under the same legal framework and before common political, economic, and social determinants.

In the context of networked communication, platforms such as YouTube, X/Twitter, or Facebook, among others, have a transnational reach and have become an integral part of our individual daily lives, constituting an intrinsic part of the communicative social phenomenon and also of our national media systems.

The arrival of such platforms transformed the different media systems since the platforms "just found that people were more likely to click on lies than the truth" (Tim Berners-Lee quoted in Larson, 2017). It must be remembered that X/Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube enabled more than 100 million people to be exposed to the conspiracy theories of "QAnon" until long after the 2020 U.S. elections (Bleakley, 2021; Hannah, 2021). This is in addition to the fact that the potential profits of the platforms, achieved in conjunction with COVID-19 anti-vaccine propaganda, could have generated revenues of about one billion dollars through the more than 31 million people who followed anti-vaccine groups on Facebook and the 17 million who did so on YouTube in the 2019-2020 period (Burki, 2020; Hart, 2021; Taplin, 2021).

If the platforms represent the recent dimension of furthering change and crisis within the media system, it is also necessary to point out that the communicational crisis addressed here manifested much earlier. The beginning of the crisis's manifestation in the communicative context occurred before even the great economic and financial crisis that began in 2008 (Castells et al., 2012).

When we look at the landscape of the media system, particularly in its business dimensions, indications of crisis seem to have been present for a long time and were portrayed in a trend that easily captured the media system's own journalistic attention from the moment the magazine The Economist released the cover of its August 24, 2006 edition, which featured the phrase "The future of newspapers: Who killed the newspaper?"

The idea of a crisis, or the "end of something as we knew it," seems to have captured the attention of all the mass-media actors in the media system over the past two decades; For example, the idea of a communicational crisis can be found in the publications of academic researchers of the phenomenon of mass media since at least the beginning of the twenty-first century, with multiple texts related to a possible end of television and its impact on the world (Katz, 2009). Even filmmakers from the last Hollywood Golden Age, such as Francis Ford Coppola, addressed the end of cinema in its traditional formats during the first decade of the new century (Pilkington, 2009). All of this occurred long before the pandemic, which started in 2019, closing movie theaters and making streaming platforms such as Netflix, Disney+, HBO Max, and Amazon Prime Video a regular presence at movie festivals and thus turning streaming platforms into a central element of movie viewing (Lobato, 2019).

Although cinema has not come to an end in terms of content, the ways in which movies and series are watched have changed through the emergence of Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, HBO Max, and Disney+, among others. All of these are companies that are involved in the production and distribution of professional content and that compete directly with cable and satellite television distribution.

Digital streaming services had begun the transformation of entertainment well before the 2019-2022 pandemic began, but the pandemic phenomenon drove this transformation to the point where, after the pandemic period, it turned into a global phenomenon touching on cinema, television, fiction, and even news formats such as documentaries. This global phenomenon began with Netflix, which had around 209 million subscribers worldwide at the end of 2021 and was already available in 198 countries. In turn, Amazon Prime Video had more than 200 million subscribers and was available in more than 200 countries, and Disney+ had about 103.6 million subscribers and was already available in 53 countries. Streaming platforms have chosen an interdisciplinary approach to the entertainment sector, as it is possible to find content such as series, movies, music, and games on them that are available for a global audience's immediate consumption via Internet streaming.[1] [2] [3]

Streaming is based on the premise that the user does not own the content they consume but rather simply has access to it. This innovation has also introduced changes in the audiovisual industry, in particular, in the presentation of content.

Streaming services tend to diverge from the traditional paradigm of television environment. Through the on-demand video catalog method, which contrasts with the scheduled programming of traditional television, streaming services present an approach that resembles an "all you can eat" system, giving their customers the choice of not only what but also how much to consume (Lobato, 2018; Colbjørnsen, Hui, & Solstad, 2021).

In addition to how the content is presented, streaming has also diverged from traditional television in the way that same content is curated. In contrast to "manual" program selection systems and their framing in set viewing schedules for the audience, streaming services use filter algorithms and recommendation systems based on data obtained through the choices made by their customers, thus presenting content depending on previous consumption. Through algorithmic recommendation systems, streaming platforms ensure that users have a more personalized experience, in which the "positioning of content does not happen by chance" (Farchy, Bideau, & Tallec, 2021).

Individual user data collection is a fundamental difference between traditional television distribution and television streaming. Although free-to-air television had at its disposal data regarding the general popularity of the content presented and cable already had access to data on the individual consumption of channels by households, it was not possible to monetize these data at the individual level. The traditional practice was to use conventional advertising media as a means of earning income for television.

For Internet streaming services, customer data can be used to recommend content related to consumer preferences, but also as a product in and of itself to be sold to different companies. While streaming services do not always use ads to monetize their platforms, user data may still be shared with third parties.

Streaming platforms have significant similarities not only with social networks and social media platforms but also with those of search engines, such as Google, and online sales, such as Amazon. Therefore, they function similarly to most big tech companies, which are governed by the principle of not revealing data about their algorithms and how they work. Streaming service providers tend not to reveal details regarding the modus operandi of their algorithms (Farchy, Bideau, & Tallec, 2021).

However, it is interesting to note that such "algorithmic secrecy" has not always been a common practice within the television industry. For example, Netflix, the most popular streaming platform globally, launched a contest in 2006 called the Netflix Prize, which aimed to have independent engineers develop an algorithm capable of predicting the ratings of films given by users (Hallinan & Striphas, 2016). Nowadays, this type of project is in clear opposition to current Netflix practices, demonstrating that closure and opacity are only an option but not an inevitability associated with the use of algorithms.

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1 Data obtained from https://s22.q4cdn.com/959853165/files/doc_financials/2021/q2/FINAL-Q2-21-Shareholder-Letter.pdf.

2 https://www.statista.com/statistics/829113/number-of-paying-amazon-prime-members/.

3 https://www.statista.com/statistics/1095372/disney-plus-number-of-subscribers-us/

However, we are not facing a horizon of uniform practices, because along with streaming strategies, we also see the emergence of new industries with different content strategies. These are strategies focused on repetition and monetization through advertising, such as those practiced by social networks and social media such as Facebook, Vine, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, Twitch, or YouTube.

Equally different are the strategies that have emerged within the social media entertainment (SME) proto-industries. These are industries resulting from the merger between the cultures of Hollywood, which are based on the entertainment content industries and on intellectual property, and the culture of Silicon Valley, which is based on technological experimentation, or permanent beta (Cunningham & Craig, 2019).

The SME proto-industries are fueled by the professionalization of content creators, who were regarded as amateurs until recently. In socially mediated entertainment, new entertainment and communication formats, including blogs, online gaming gameplay, and DIY dynamics are combined to develop potentially sustainable businesses on the basis of a significantly large number of followers that can span multiple platforms.

This is a process that can be broken down historically into two phases. The first corresponds to the emergence of centrally organized platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, or Twitch, which provide open access to share content and foster community. The second phase is marked by increased competition among second-generation platforms and increased cross-platform presence, providing access to various business models and revenue streams (Cunningham & Craig, 2019).

Although media competition in the audiovisual field can perhaps be seen as an opposition of cable film and television versus subscription video on demand (SVOD), the preponderant role of advertising-based video on demand (AVOD) in the audiovisual sector must not be forgotten. While it is possible to identify common principles between the social media entertainment sector and the audiovisual streaming sector, it is important to note that there are two clear and different business models regarding how to monetize content. The first model, SVOD, consists of offering a service through a monetary subscription that allows consumers to access a content catalog present on the platform (Lindstädt-Dreusicke & Budzinski, 2020). This is the model adopted by some of the biggest players in the audiovisual streaming industry, such as Netflix, Apple TV, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, HBO Max, etc. The second method, AVOD, consists of monetizing content on the basis of ads placed by the advertising industry. In the latter model, which is used by platforms such as YouTube as well as the vast majority of social media entertainment websites, participants do not have to pay a subscription fee. However, they are subject to constant interaction with advertisements (Budzinski et al., 2021; Evens et al., 2021).

Both SVOD and AVOD have contributed to the creation of the conditions necessary for the emergence of a crisis with traditional cable operators regarding models of entertainment production and non-algorithmic information. The adoption of algorithmic entertainment models by the new platforms meant that the television market had been fully transformed into a model of media competition, and with

the arrival of the social media entertainment platforms, multidimensional competition was introduced, which promotes ongoing competition between traditional media agents and various streaming services (SVOD and AVOD), creating the conditions for a crisis in incumbent mass-media companies (Jayakar & Park, 2020).

As seen from the previous analysis, the reasons that lead us to talk about a communicational crisis are diverse, and not all arise from their connection to the large-scale dissemination of the Internet. The origins of the communicational crisis can be found both in the arrival of the twenty-first century communication platforms as well as in a number of phenomena present in the late twentieth century (Zallo, 1994; López & Zallo, 1991).

Media companies began to fill a variety of roles in the media system owing to the processes of the concentration of power in the area of communication at the end of the twentieth century as well as through the establishment of large economic groups, first at the national level and then at the global one. At the same time, media companies have assumed various roles within society, including the role of economic actor in terms of the national economy, where they have substantial weight; the role of actors in the "tracking" of different powers, including economic ones; the role of "facilitator" to serve civil society; a more "radical" role in the questioning of the political system; and a "collaboration" role to serve the State and other institutions of power (Christians et al., 2009; Nordentreng, 2007; Djankov et al., 2003; Oliveira, 2017). The combination of different roles, with all their inherent contradictions, fostered multiple dynamics of transformation both at the organizational level and in organizational identity, as well as in the perception of audiences regarding the role of mass-media companies in society (Hanretty, 2014; Demers & Merskin, 2000; Freedman, 2014).

A second phenomenon, which may have contributed to the origin of the current communicational crisis, can be identified as "media finantialization" and corresponds to the transition of media companies hitherto unlisted on the stock exchange to a situation more comparable to those faced by non-media companies listed on financial markets. Media companies first became nationally listed and then assumed the role of global financial assets. As a result of these interconnected dynamics between media companies and financial markets, capital compensation requirements were created in the face of shareholder needs. On the one hand, this entry of media companies into the financial markets has given rise to a new system of weights and balances in the economic relations of those companies, through which they become more exposed to the dynamics of different social, political, and economic actors. On the other hand, media companies have become more subject to the market dynamics of crisis and fluctuation (Picard, 2008; Thomsen & Pedersen, 2000).

The trends described here for inclusion in public listing in the capital markets stemmed from the need for media companies to obtain funding for the high costs associated with mass media, in particular with television, because it has high operating costs associated with investment and technological management, but also with radio and newspapers. In turn, radio and newspapers, just as television, have high costs in terms of human resources, in both journalism and entertainment. As

such, their operation requires large investments from the financial system in the form of stock exchange offerings or bank financing to be remunerated by advertising sales (Storsul & Krumsvik, 2013; Anderson & Gabszewicz, 2006). The media system today, to a large extent, is made up of listed companies, with public television sector and news agency companies being a kind of exception that confirms the rule that news media are generally financed by the markets (Rantanen, 2021; Benson et al., 2018; Jukes, 2022).

The third contribution to the formation of a communicational crisis is also rooted in the evolution of national mass-media companies into transnational supply and marketing groups for most cultural goods, including journalism creating a dynamic of "content transnationalization" "; this was a movement that artificially caused "cross-pollination" between different types of journalistic identities and other cultural content (Deuze, 2005; Alencar & Kruikemeier, 2018; Lichtenstein & Koerth, 2020; Wonneberger et al. 2013; Atkinson, 2011). This gave rise to, on the one hand, a uniformity of offers and reduced diversity and, on the other, clashes between production cultures and audience cultures (Thussu, 2007; Wieten & Pantti, 2005; Edgerly & Vraga, 2019; Mellado & van Dalen, 2017; Arpan, 2011).

The standardization of mass-media markets on a global scale has resulted in an overvaluation of information consumption compared with the recognition produced by communication (Oliveira, 2017). The dynamics of "media market standardization" furthered the social devaluation of the processes that transform information into knowledge, also capable of being communicated and creating culture. There is thus a reversal of the order of priority regarding social valorization. The aim of most media entities is no longer to seek information to create recognition in the Subject nor to promote communication as a culture. We witnessed the creation of a mass-media market centered on the search for interactive information relations as well as on emotionality and not on the rationality necessary for the production of culture (Oliveira, 2017).

The multiple examples of television content based on the use of emotion and developed in the late twentieth century still continue to shape our understanding of the evolution from Paleo-Television to Neo-Television to a large extent (Eco, 1990). The central role of the pursuit of emotionality, to the detriment of rationality, can be explained more easily by recalling popular factual television programs such as Big Brother, or those of genres such as cooking, talent and singing contests, talk shows, and debates. All of these are programs that seek a narrative structure based on a mechanical interaction to provoke the maximum emotionality using the least possible information, as opposed to communicative interaction (Hill, 2005; Ouellette, 2016).

A fourth transformational dynamic of the media system and instigator of the communicational crisis is "media privatization" and can be found in the systematic transfer, by the State to mass media entrepreneurs, of traditional responsibilities regarding information, culture, education, and entertainment. In most situations, the State retains only the role of regulator to ensure compliance with (de)regulation rules and sometimes maintains a residual presence in radio, television, and news agencies (Oliveira, 2017). This corresponds to the end of the twentieth

century, a period in which advertising was synonymous with presence in mass media. The State's abandonment of communication is an introductory trend demonstrating the dynamics of change and, consequently, the distribution of revenues between different stakeholders and a readjustment of the powers in the sector (Doyle, 2011; Puppis, 2008; Iosifides, 1999; Fengler et al., 2015; Sparks, 2007; Freedman, 2003; 2012; Zallo, 1994; López & Zallo, 1991).

A fifth tendency driving change and crisis can be found in the conflictuality of the framework of power relations at work associated not only with journalism but also with cultural production in general. Throughout the last decades of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, the professional field of journalism saw an increase in the inequality of situations between journalists who are protected by the dynamics put in place by transnational groups and those protected by national groups. This "media inequality" also arises from the loss of professional autonomy in the context of journalistic institutions, owing to changes in the economic and labor frameworks, specific to both the mass-media sector and labor relations in general (Oliveira, 2017; Deuze & Witschge, 2018; Hartmann, 2009; Cohen 2015; Compton & Benedetti, 2010; Fast et al., 2016; Von Rimscha, 2015; Reinardy, 2011).

A sixth tendency that characterizes the environment in which change and crisis in communication manifest themselves is "media deficit" and can be found in the contradiction between the undeniable technological potential for communication and the limited capacity of the social, economic, and political structures to properly take advantage of them (Calabrese & Burgelman, 1999; Splichal, 1999; Wolton, 1999; Breton, 1994; Ferguson, 1990). Among the possibilities as expressed not only by politicians, activists, technological evangelists, and entrepreneurs but also through the reality of daily life, there was a strong contradiction dominated mainly by official or unofficial spokespersons and opinion makers from political parties or interest groups. This contradiction was visible through a democratic and communicative deficit of civil society in general, as well as through the predominance of business communication and communication via the major media (Oliveira, 2017; Tixier-Guichard & Chaize 1993; Miége & Bernard, 1997; 2000; Garnham, 1990).

The media system, in the temporal pre-social network and social media contexts, was closely associated with the search for large audiences, which, as a rule, were generated by increasing the number of screens as well as the different forms of mediation (Silverstone, 1999; Hill, 2005; Philo, 2008). Throughout the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, there was an encouragement to have a growing relationship with the media, in which everything that mattered in everyday life had to be on television and, to a lesser extent, on the radio and in newspapers (Dahlgren, 1995; Curran, 1991). To this end, a prominent Star System in television was constructed, creating the conditions, analyzed previously, for the creation of a system of fame also in television news, combining news anchors, commentators, and opinion makers in the areas of politics, economics, sports, and sometimes culture (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2016; Turner, 2006). In televised entertainment, this role was assumed by the actors and actresses

of series and soap operas and by the great entertainers of the morning, afternoon, and evening television shows.

However, this system needs constant growth and seeks to build an emotional, but not necessarily cognitive, relationship with mediation, and is therefore itself the origin of contradictions between what is communicated to audiences as desirable and what the public is actually allowed to exercise (Oliveira, 2017; Beckett & Deuze, 2016; Costera Meijer, 2001; Deuze, 2008; Ekdale et al., 2015).

In addition to the different dimensions of change and the bolstering of the communicational crisis, there is a new imbalance in the means and conditions in the global communication/information strategy from country to country and from region to region. Thus, a new singularly concentrated dominance in communication and culture arose, following the historical crisis of the Hollywood studios in the 1960s and 1970s, which cleared the way for the emergence of a multipolar world in cultural production that was divided between different cultural production centers and nationally based journalism, and in which a new singular dominance in communication and culture arose (Silver, 2007; Raboy, 1999; Hernan & McChesney, 1997; Dahlgren & Sparks, 1991; Willnat et al., 2013).

With the beginning of the new century, the singular dominance of the United States arose yet again, this time as "platform dominance", through communication-based platforms such as Google and Facebook, and later through platforms for the production and management of cultural content financing, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime (Gillespie, 2018; Lobato, 2018; 2019). However, this platform dominance of the United States also has internal consequences. The dynamics of the network economics, privileging the concentration of choices toward those networks where more people are already present, results in market concentration and the creation of monopolies or oligopolies that ensure singular domestic authority in addition to foreign dominance (Joskow, 2007).

In the context of a communicational crisis, journalism is clearly one of the most highly impacted dimensions. This impact is visible in different ways: from the level of transformations in relation to the work of the journalist to the very product of journalistic activity—the news.

The perception that there is an ongoing crisis in the different dimensions of communication is denoted by the cultural transversality of changes (Mattellart, 1983). The change and crisis in communication are also manifested in journalism, one of the most institutionalized and professionalized dimensions of communication. Although there are many types of journalism, represented by a panoply of journalistic cultures and operating in varied social contexts, they are all subject to the same forces relating to change and crisis (Hanitzsch et al., 2019; Van Der Haak et al., 2012; Beckett, 2010).

Together with the existence of cultural differences between media systems, there is a differentiation between journalistic cultures (Christians et al., 2009). Depending on the differences between journalistic practices and values, it is possible to propose a division of journalism into four types of culture: monitoring, advocacy, developmental, and collaborative (Hanitzsch et al., 2019). Monitorial journalistic cultures are associated with more economically developed countries and with

traditions of free mass media, where the values of accountability and transparency of individuals and institutions are publicly valued (Hanitzsch et al., 2019). In turn, advocative journalistic cultures are present in transitional democracies in a climate of ideological divide in which journalists adopt interventionist values and choose to become more involved in political struggles rather than deciding to distance themselves from them (Hanitzsch et al., 2019). The third cultural model of journalism is present in so-called developmental journalistic cultures, associated with imperfect democracies or hybrid regimes, in which relatively low levels of press freedom occur alongside high levels of legal and institutional uncertainty. Developmental cultures are thus characterized by journalism taking on a role as an active agent for social change within the framework of human and economic development (Hanitzsch et al., 2019). Finally, there are collaborative journalistic cultures, associated with authoritarian governments that foster limited political freedom and very low levels of press freedom. In this model, the exercise of journalism implies a relational partnership between the State and the media based on a shared commitment to mutually acceptable means and ends (Hanitzsch et al., 2019).

Precisely because each journalistic culture has followed different paths throughout the twentieth century, their responses to contemporary changes and crises in the context of communication also tend to show differences. These tend to differ depending on the various levels of press freedom, the presence or absence of democratic regimes, and the degree of socioeconomic development (Hanitzsch et al., 2019).

However, despite the ongoing changes and transformations in journalism, its ideological base matrix continues to be shared across cultures (Deuze, 2005; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001; Schudson, 2011; Gomes & Cardoso, 2018).

Most journalists claim to have autonomy in their journalistic practices, seeing the greatest social contribution of journalism as being centered on politics and its participation in the political process (Hanitzsch et al., 2019).

In most cases, the various types of journalism all share the definition that journalism refers to the institutionalized practice of regularly producing and disseminating information and comments, typically presented as truthful and sincere, to a dispersed, usually anonymous, audience so as to publicly include that audience in a discourse considered to be of public importance (Schudson, 2011). The social function of journalism is generally understood very broadly and focuses on the pursuit of communication, which corresponds to the social coordination of individuals and groups through shared symbols and meanings (Schudson, 2011).

The news creates expectations in the face of a common and shared world through the chronological dating of events that endorse a historical mentality and encourage a progressive sense of time rather than that of cyclical or recursive time (Schudson, 2011). Consequently, changes in the way journalism is practiced and the way news is produced can have a wider impact on the social whole. As Schudson argues, "in the age of the Internet, the study of journalism has become the study of society itself and of human consciousness, attention, memory, and imagination" (2011, p. 7).

Journalism and the news are not only processes of communication and information organization but also creators of audiences, and legitimizers of events and audiences themselves. This legitimacy, in turn, promotes a sense of sharing, equality, and uniformity in the face of reality, something that sustains democratic life itself (Schudson, 2011). Hence, changes in the journalistic institution have social impacts far beyond that.

Along with other dynamics of social erosion, journalism is experiencing a process of institucional erosion through the contemporary communicative crisis that has brought its hitherto quite clear institutional characteristics under social dispute.

On the one hand, news is becoming more fluid (Deuze, 2008). Although the twentieth century ended with the existence of a clearly defined and finalized news model, we are now witnessing the temporal coexistence of different news models that are in a permanent state of transformation.

The current state of the standard associated with the news format is undergoing erosion and is no longer associated with a closed and finished product that gives rise to a journalistic practice, as well as the corresponding expectation on the part of the public that it is subject to permanent updating. Fluidity is also present at the institutional level of journalism (Bauman, 2000) since journalism was once identified as a group practice, shared in newsrooms, while in recent decades this model has suffered several transformations. At the same time, journalistic practice is witnessing the multiplication of individual projects or projects of small groups of individuals collaborating with each other in a network and without prior institutionalization. In journalism, there is now space for the coexistence of a journalistic authority that promotes an authenticity anchored in individual practice with a collective institutional authority giving rise to an "individualization of journalism".

We also see erosion in the temporal dimension of journalism when the probability of a source publishing something before a journalist becomes reality. Erosion, as a social dynamic associated with change, is also present at the level of journalistic production and distribution. Collaborative processes now bring journalists and non-journalists together in the production of news, in the moderation of online comments on mass-media pages, and in the selection and distribution of news on social networks and media.

In contrast, the coexistence of spaces, particularly on social networks and social media, where news circulates alongside non-news results in the erosion of the support previously enjoyed by journalistic brands. The news is no longer associated with media affiliated with a clear trademark, such as a newspaper or a newscast, and has come to circulate piecemeal, in isolation as well as in conjunction with multiple other types of content shared in Tweets, social media posts, or blogs.

At the level of the organizational dimension of journalism, we are also witnessing a process of clear erosion, with a blurring of the boundaries between mass media for profit, public mass- media, and not-for-profit mass media that is visible at the level of financing models. Organizational erosion also occurs within journalistic organizations themselves. This is seen in particular in commercial journalistic

organizations where there is a growing erosion of the previously well-defined separation between newsrooms and marketing departments, which has implications for decisions about and on the production and distribution of content that is no longer exclusively news (Schudson, 2011).

Although the discussion regarding the existence of a communicational crisis tends to focus essentially on the changes in consumption and leisure habits introduced by the Internet in the field of mediation (Livingstone, 1999), we can argue that it would be of dubious effectiveness to focus this discussion solely on consumption and the appropriation of new information technologies. This is because, as already argued, the communicative phenomenon is a total social phenomenon, and mediation has other analytical aspects apart from consumption and reception, such as institutional and technological facets (Silverstone, 1999; Oliveira, 2017).

From the second half of the 1990s, owing to the widespread access and appropriation of the Internet, we witnessed an expected re-issuing of the classic certainty that, in communication, the new will kill the old (Eco, 2003). This was a reappropriation of an old idea, now focused on the idea of the death of the mass media as a result of the arrival of the Internet. However, the end result was the same as it had been for millennia before: just as the book did not kill oral tradition and the radio did not kill newspapers, television did not kill radio and the Internet did not kill mass media (Eco, 2003). Historically, the end result has always been that a new means of communication has never done away with the medium that came before it. It also appears that we have always seen the design of new roles for the old media within a new media system.

However, the idea that, at the turn of the twentieth century, the world of mediation "ceased to be what it was" does not cease to be a powerful characterization of what happened after the use of the Internet became widespread in our daily lives. It is possible to argue that there is a communicational crisis precisely because of all the diffuse transformations in the field of communication that are incorporated in this statement. More precisely, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we could be facing a moment of "communicational interregnum".

If we accept the existence of a communicational crisis, we must also assume that a given reality does not immediately overlap any other previous reality. Social transformation occurs, even with abrupt peaks, in a gradual way; before a new reality arises, there are times of interregnum (Gramsci, 1971; Colombo, 2018). The crisis, perceived as a time when "the old is dying and the new cannot be born" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 276) can be characterized as an interregnum, where the emergence of "a wide variety of morbid symptoms" occurs (Gramsci 1971, p. 276).

As suggested by Bauman (2012), with Gramsci, the concept of interregnum became associated with extraordinary or crisis situations. A crisis is perceived when a given current institutional framework loses its dominance and can no longer function. However, while a new institutional framework, designed according to recently arisen conditions, "is still at the designing stage, has not yet been fully assembled, or is not strong enough to be put in its place" (Bauman, 2012), we live in the interregnum.

The contemporary communicational crisis thus develops in a framework of interregnum in which an old media system has not yet died but in which a new

media system has not yet been born. The interregnum of the communicative type is a crisis not felt in the same way by all actors in the media system.

The recent decades in the field of mediation seem to be a time of crisis and loss of market value for many media companies and their shareholders (Tworek & Buschow, 2016).[4] However, at the same time, we see periods of prosperity and profit and increased market capitalization for platforms such as Facebook, Google, Apple, X/Twitter, and TikTok. This phenomenon is due either to the increase in the number of participants on such platforms, to the new appropriations for marketing their products and services, or to cutting costs such as the 2022-2023 job cuts[5] implemented across all leading platforms (Nieborg & Helmond, 2019; Haucap & Heimeshoff, 2013; Haenlein et al., 2020).

The change in a mode of communication has as much of an end, or of a crisis, as of creating something new, because it consists of disruptions from previous practices and representations with implications for the institutional renewal of the economy, our daily lives, and the power that the mediation provides to political, economic, and cultural actors in our societies.

To understand the crisis of the old and the emergence of the new, it is important to understand what is shared by both the innovations that have emerged in communication and the communicative disorders experienced, namely through an understanding of what "communicational capitalism" is or what the emergence of "celebrity politics" represents for communication, as well as what the novel aspects of news phenomena are and what the social perception of what an "informed individual" is today. The following pages seek to answer these questions by analyzing the changes in mass-mediated mediation and their implications for networked communication as a whole.

Augmented experience

If understanding communication today is essentially the study of the mediation of algorithms and screens, it is also necessary to reaffirm that mediation can only be understood by considering it as a social and not just technological phenomenon.

The production of technology is the result of social choices that lead to the idealization of innovation, the creation of a prototype, and all the social dynamics that influence this process from its inception to its commercialization (Winston, 1998; Briggs et al., 2020). Technology's function, what we do with it, and why we do it primarily pertain to the domestication options we attribute socially to technology (Silverstone, 2006; Bakardjieva & Smith, 2001; Morley, 2003; Leong, 2020; Sujon et al., 2018; Karlsen, 2020; Ask & Sørensen, 2019). Consequently, the domestication of the mobile phone makes it the multidimensional management

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4 Leading media companies in 2020, by revenue (in billions of euros), https://www.statista.com/statistics/272469/largest-media-companies-worldwide/.

5 https://www.forbes.com/sites/richardmcgahey/2023/01/31/tech-workers-will-find-new-jobs-but-layoffs-signal-growing-tensions/?sh=551838e17939.

tool of our daily lives (Bolin, 2010; de Reuver, 2016; Hartmann, 2013), just as the domestication of television made it a form of entertainment, complemented with access to what is happening via the news (Courtois et al., 2013; Dickinson et al., 2001; Silverstone, 1993), or even as the domestication of social networks was designed for the phatic function of maintaining connections with friends and acquaintances, constructing narratives of reality, or attempting to influence the attitudes and values of the "other" (Sarvas & Frohlich, 2011; Huang & Miao, 2020; Bertel, 2016).

The role of mediation is always to give us the context or general characteristics of an experience that is not lived in the first person (Silverstone, 1999). Mediation and the context associated with it shape and filter the experience of our daily reality. The mediated experience drives classification processes and practices on the basis of concepts, categories, and technologies that allow us to build an ontological security, producing a minimum order. The mediated experience thus creates daily routines capable of building and defending social distance and building and maintaining social connections (Silverstone, 1999). Representations, sometimes singular and at other times shared, provide us with the criteria and references to carry out individual and societal life and for the production, maintenance, and reproduction of common sense (Silverstone, 1999, p. 20).

Although discourse, present in mass-mediated mediation, was and is not a mainly scientific discourse, the socializing dimension of mass media in modernity has transformed common sense into a common sense tempered by scientific reason. Science is built through fundamental epistemological acts, such as rupture, construction, and verification, but it is through mediation that the world, including science, is presented and represented (Sousa Santos, 1989; Silverstone, 1999). Hence, the potential contradiction between common sense and science, which could be induced from Silverstone's reading of mediation's role in the production, maintenance, and reproduction of common sense, in reality does not manifest itself fully. It does not occur since the mass media themselves were also constituted as a fundamental element of the reflexivity project of modernity and, therefore, brought along with their mediated socialization the scientific narratives into everyday life, molding the collective common sense in the process (Silverstone, 1999; Thompson, 1995).

During the twentieth century, mass communication dominated our daily lives through newspapers, radio, and television, shaping and classifying our references (Silverstone, 1999).

Within the framework of mass communication, the subjective experience of an individual nature was shaped by previous activities and experiences also imbued with an objective experience in the framework of modern scientific knowledge. Consequently, common sense has become a product of both objective experience and subjective experience through a scientific socialization mediated by mass communication (Lash, 2018). Common sense, which for Silverstone (1999) is both an expression of and a precondition for experience, is a common sense shaped by scientific socialization processes during the twentieth century.

Experience is thus expressed by us through communicative and other actions, but it is also the product of our action on experience itself. From the nineteenth

century onward, the construction of our experience has been associated with the emergence of a mediated experience, first with newspapers and then with other mass media, that is not neutral, neither in its conditions nor in its consequences. However, this mediated experience is also not deterministic. Rather, it interacts with norms and classifications that resist time and the social (Silverstone, 1999).

Lash (2018) defines objective experience as corresponding to the emergence of an approach independent of any particular individual and, as such, is the basis of modern scientific knowledge. The objective experience is based on an explanation that stems from scientific causality. In turn, the subjective experience starts from an interpretation, that is, the production of meaning by a particular Subject (Lash, 2018).

Subjective and objective experiences have shaped our mediated experience since the nineteenth century, but a new type of experience, technological experience, must also be taken into account (Lash, 2018). Although mass communication was already a promoter of a new type of experience by combining the subjective and objective, a new technological experience only arises with the generalization of digital media from social networks and social media (Silverstone, 1999; Lash, 2018).

The technological experience is based on the data generated by the participants in mediated communication and by the sensors of the Internet of Things (IoT), both of which are based on algorithmic action. The connection of more and more objects and devices, including phones, cars, house lights, and surveillance cameras, to networks made it so that data creation is no longer associated only with people's actions online and is now also distributed among the use of "things."

The datafication has thus also become associated with these "things" that have the ability to read the environments into which they are integrated and to create information, translated into data, about what is happening around them. Things have become media, capable of both creating and communicating information (Bunz & Meikle, 2018).

Technological experience as proposed by Lash (2018) is thus an algorithmic-based experience, which develops within the framework of a technological surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019) and "communicational capitalism," promoting a power and ideology that operate through numbers in algorithms and no longer just on the basis of language and semiotics (Lash, 2018).

However, a technological and algorithmic experience is not free from the incorporation of values and culture by those who conceive and write them through the use of computer languages. As Eco (1994) suggests in an analysis of the religious culture underlying the imagination of the operating system's producers, the Mac, in its cultural genesis, would have the synthesis of a transposable Catholic foundation—everyone has the right to salvation—while MS-DOS would be Protestant, or even Calvinist, taking for granted the idea that not everyone can achieve salvation. In turn, Windows would represent an Anglican-style schism, approaching that of the Mac. Finally, the basic binary machine code formed of 0's and 1's would correspond to the Old Testament, having a Talmudic and cabalistic basis.

Between irony and criticism of technological determinism, Eco (1994) reminds us that, if communication and information technologies are at the center of

everyday life, our technological experience does not cease to incorporate, in our texts and contexts, the values and culture of those who conceive and use them. Our daily lives are influenced by the mediation designed by individuals and by their objective, subjective, and technological experiences, which are a product of the mediation of screens and algorithms.

The network society is thus a "society of algorithmic experience" that results not only from the way we experience and think but also as "things," that is, the machines we design, learn about, and think of. Our daily lives are also the result of the experience produced by said "things," the Internet of Things (IoT), within the framework of Big Data through the way they observe, record, perceive, and experience reality (Lash, 2018).

During the era characterized by mass communication, the mediation of experience was a role almost exclusively exercised by the news in its search for the building of an objective experience based on facts and tentative emulation of the scientific method procedures. Through mass-mediated mediation, the news constructed social reality through the mediation of experience, a mediation that led us to experiences that we did not undergo in the first person, whether of a sport, political, cultural, or economic nature, or even related to conflict, catastrophes, or moments of joy in a given community (Ytreberg, 2017).

However, in the current networked communication mode, the construction of social reality, although also mediated, is no longer exercised only through the news. In the same way that the "informed person" of the twenty-first century is not informed only through news, but also through the search for everything that allows them to be informed about the chosen theme, the construction of the social experience of reality through mediation also goes beyond the news (Hartley & Pedersen, 2019; Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2018).

The sharing of a socially constructed reality, i.e., our everyday life, in a network society has in the news a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to shape it.

Within the framework of the network society, it is necessary to introduce a new concept, that of "augmented experience," into our daily analysis. Augmented experience allows us to grasp the characteristics of the formation of contemporary experience, which extends beyond just the use of news.

If the concept of "augmented reality" intended to convey a meaning associated with the technological use of different data overlays viewable on a given screen and associated with a given location in real time (Claudell & Mizell, 1992; Verhoeff, 2019), the concept of "augmented experience" intends, in turn, to describe the contemporary social process of the construction of experience in different layers, mostly algorithmically mediated.

Augmented experience occurs as a product of the articulation of non-mediated personal experience with all the different layers of mediation in a networked integration, originating not only in sharing content on social networks and social media, from the opinions produced by commentators to the news produced by journalists and broadcasted and published in mass media but also from the use of search engines to access every type of available information and their interaction with the data originating in all those processes.

Augmented experience is the result of the social interaction in everyday life between the subjective, objective, and technological experience.

When something such as mediation associated with experience is already so deeply ingrained in social practices, the deconstruction of its central role as an element of our everyday life seems at first unnecessary and very obvious, but at the same time it is indeed necessary because it is so devoid of individual criticism. In the same way that Eco (2018) challenged us as to the need for a semiotic guerrilla on communication, something that would allow the public to discuss and deconstruct a film after viewing it in a movie theater in the 1960s, today it is necessary to individually reappropriate the experience created through mediation to critically deconstruct it and to be able to uncover its limitations as well as its potential positive and negative effects on our everyday life.

In a world immersed in mediation, only the individual deconstruction of this process will allow us to increase our individual autonomy and shared projects (Livingstone, 2009; Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

What then is "augmented experience"? All of us rely on augmented experience and are able to exemplify it in our everyday life. In the case of the author who writes these pages, augmented experience processes can be exemplified using the conversation held several years ago with a former Canadian minister at the Davos annual meeting of the World Economic Forum as a starting point. In that conversation, the former minister told me that, in his opinion, it was always "suicide for a politician to mess with teachers and their unions." Without agreeing or disagreeing with his opinion, recalling this conversation allows us to demonstrate, in an easy way, how we construct our representations through augmented experience when faced with a given subject in contemporary society.

The choice of an example regarding education and its main actors, teachers, places us before a profession in which each of us has an opinion constructed through first-person subjective experience in conjunction with a mediated experience. This happens because, as we have all been (or are) students, we have a representation constructed simultaneously through individual examples of teachers and through generalizations of teachers as a whole (Bourdieu, 1993; 1999; 2005). Hence, it is not only possible but also easy for almost all of us to have an opinion about and discuss whether teachers are well paid, whether they are lacking anything, whether they teach well, etc.

Our experience toward teachers and teaching is built directly by our first-person subjective experience from when we were students and also when some of us as parents of students experienced events along the educational path of our children that produced contradictory feelings: sometimes in support of the work of teachers and sometimes in the form of a complaint about that same work.

Everything described above constructs, from individual subjective first-person experiences, a given view of the "teacher" as a profession, "teachers" as a social group, and education itself as a public policy and pillar of social dynamics. However, this is only the first-person subjective contribution to the experience itself. To this can also be added all the experiences that we do not experience directly, those that we "experience" through the objective mediation of the news

facts that we read, hear, and see, that is, experiences that produce a mediated experience. This is the description of how the construction of experience of mass communication and mass media took place throughout the twentieth century.

However, at the beginning of the new millennium and in the framework of the network society and networked communication, the mediated experience regarding a given situation is constructed differently.

Contemporary experience is still the product of the combination of first-person opinions and the mediated experience we have via the objective experience at the core of news, but it is also increasingly the product of the subjectivity of opinions embedded in professional commentary that reaches us through the mass media. However, these mass media sources also feed the subjective individual opinions shared on social networks and social media. Once subjective individual opinions are shared, either in Facebook comments and posts, videos on YouTube, or Tweets, they sometimes return to us later in the form of news. This "networked reflexivity" process in turn feeds, for example, our Google searches. It thus gives rise to a permanent cycle of combinations allowed by mediation in a circuit that is seeming endless—or at least that will last as long as there is interest on the part of the different social actors in sustaining it.

Today, the process of creating the experience is a non-finite cycle of networked communication characterized by a communication practice of a mainly mediated nature through the sharing of original or remixed content in permanent feedback. This in turn gives rise to a social process of the construction of an augmented experience, characterized by being the product of a mashup of objective, subjective, and technological experiences of an algorithmic nature.

However, the existence of this social phenomenon does not mean that the process of constructing an augmented experience is produced in the same qualitative and quantitative way for all subjects and actors involved.

The widely generalized practice of the communication of communication (Eco, 2021), or the sharing of mediated communication already produced by others, will sometimes achieve a viral dimension. Sustaining virality through the communication of communication, in which one communicates through sharing what has already been received from others, requires a preexisting interest in the issue being communicated. Just as the passage from prototype to invention necessitates a supervening social need (Winston, 1998), so virality necessitates the preexistence of a "supervening social interest." Communicative virality stems from the preexisting interest of large groups of actors with an interest in an issue and the ability to share the content featuring said issue many times to reach a sufficient degree of virality.

In a networked communication mode, where all types of mediation are interlinked, the preexistence of a supervening social interest, allowing for potential viral content, tends to be associated not just with the themes that, traditionally, journalism covers the most but also with the social groups that editorial practices highlight as having potential for celebritization.

To illustrate these potential differences in achieving content virality, let us return to the case of teachers, asking the following question: What differentiates our

construction of augmented experience regarding different social groups such as teachers, politicians, or football players in our daily lives? The immediate answer is visibility because, to allow for the existence of a supervening social interest, one given social group has to be known, and knowledge of "something" or "someone" is influenced by the content already available, which in turn tends to influence its sharing potential and the production of new or remixed content.

First, it can be argued that the preexistence of a supervening social interest about a professional group might be related to, among other variables, whether or not there are celebrities within such a group. So, for example, if mass-media editorial celebritization choices tend to privilege certain social groups over others, making them more prone to popularization in the context of celebritization, then it is likely that we will also see different dynamics in terms of content virality. For example, in the Portuguese mass-media system, the analysis of television commentators and newspaper op-ed columns shows us that teachers and researchers are almost absent, and political journalists and politicians with previous executive experience in government tend to be in the majority (Pinto-Martinho et al., 2019; 2021).

We are led to recognize that there is a clear trend in mass-media editorial choices, one which tends to value certain professional classes to the detriment of others, shaping the potential celebritization of professionals from some social groups to the detriment of others and, therefore, creating different dynamics that might influence the preexistence of a supervening social interest and fuel virality on social networks and social media.

The mass media editorial choices in the Portuguese case study underrepresent some social and professional groups, such as teachers, in detriment of others, creating different access paths to potential celebritization and virality, demonstrating, in addition, how the formation of an augmented experience might be influenced by diversified social dynamics.

Second, the construction of celebrities' individual and group identity might constitute another variable that influences the formation of supervening social interest. For example, in mass media sports commentary regarding football (soccer), commentators are associated with an identified and publicly communicated identity of belonging. This identity is produced, in the Portuguese case, by the public affirmation, either by the participant or editorially, of supporting a given football club, such as Benfica, Porto, or Sporting, and also by the criticism from other commentators supporting the opposing football clubs.

In turn, in political commentary in mass media, the identity of belonging is less emphasized either editorially or by the commentators themselves. The participants producing opinions are not publicly presented, nor do they present themselves as militants of a Portuguese political party or supporters of a given political orientation, whether left wing, right wing, or of any political militancy. In political opinion, identity tends to be constructed through discourse by declaring opposition to something, be it members of the current government, a given party, the leader of another party, the left-wing or right-wing deputies, other political commentators, etc. In contrast, in football, participants almost always defend a given club and are therefore in favor of "someone or something."

These different mass media approaches for celebrity-identity building based either on "supporting" or "opposing" someone or something are also associated with different dynamics on the sharing of those mass media content on social networks. For example, on social networks, the generalization of social representation regarding the elements of a given social group being "all the same" is more associated with content focusing on celebrity politicians than on celebrity football players. In terms of the latter, opinions are expressed, sometimes using bad language, but almost always with a special focus on one or several players in particular and not in regard to the sharing of generalizations about a given professional class, as in the case of politicians.

The generalization, or lack thereof, of specific attributes to a whole professional or social group, or even social class, might also constitute an attribute for different degrees of supervening social interest and, therefore, influence content virality conditions. This is because the more generalizations there are about a given professional class, the more comments and interactions there are on social networks. In turn, generalizations about a given professional class are more associated with content produced by mass-media commentators that build their celebrity identify as opposing "something or someone" rather than positioning themselves in favor of "something or someone."

The comparison between different professional groups and their different celebritization and viral potential constitutes one, among other, possible examples that the formation of augmented experience is not only individually but also socially constructed either by objective or subjective experience, but always under an algorithmically based experience.

Augmented experience is influenced by the existence of many specific previous factors associated with mediation, among those, for example, the presence of celebrities within a given professional category and how belonging to a given identity is constructed by those celebrities. To create an augmented experience shared by a large number of people in the context of algorithmic mediation in the network society, preconditions of text and context are necessary and will tend to be different depending on whether the experience refers to people, situations, groups, etc.

The transition from a mode of mass communication to a mode of networked communication, where mediation gains new contours, promotes a domestication of screens and algorithms, which, in turn, encourages practices of communication of communication (Eco, 2021), creating the space necessary to shape an augmented experience. The use of search engines and social networks and social media plays a central role in this process. Simultaneously, the experience of mediation in everyday life is slowly becoming something no longer based only on the news. Nevertheless, the news is at the core of the process of the popularization of an individual who, eventually, may become a celebrity, political or otherwise, and is also still a product of the greater or lesser polarization around a given issue (Tucker et al., 2018).

The experience has established itself as an augmented experience, shaped by the combination of news and non-news information and permanently sustained by the multiple dimensions of the mediated construction of the experience.

In the current communicative interregnum, the experience is no longer constructed without the use of social networks and social media and the sharing of news and opinions on them, nor without individual searches on Google, Bing, or other search engines, supported on generative artificial intelligence or not, which are socially shared via algorithms that produce data by recording our previous searches and shape the future results of others' new searches.

The augmented experience can thus be described as the contemporary social process of building the experience on the basis of what is expressed and shared on social networks and social media, with the circulation of news produced by journalists and opinions from editorial commentators, and with the use of search engines and large language model chatbots to access diverse information in a network algorithmic integration of mediation.

The word "crisis" is, etymologically, an end to something and a change to something else. Therefore, to understand this communicational crisis in which the old, mass-media system is no longer able to achieve certain objectives while the new one has yet to emerge or develop fully, it is important to understand what is ending, what is being replaced, and the durability of the visible change, since we witness both transient changes, which are creators only of a communicative interregnum, and lasting changes, which are producers of real novelty. This is the analysis that becomes necessary to understand the reach of such a rupture and the transformative potential of the current communicational crisis.

In the following pages, we will analyze how three types of social actors—women and men in journalism, politics, and business—explore the rupture in the current communicative interregnum and shape the change in the new configurations of mediation.

In a sociosemiotic approach to mediation, understanding change corresponds to asking, in the context of their belonging to economic and political institutions, how these social actors shape said change. How are power relations shaped in this process, and how are changes created within the previous media system, both in journalistic relations and in mass-media institutions themselves? And finally, there is also the question of whether it is possible to imagine such changes promoting just a mere reconfiguration of the inherited mass-media framework, since mediation already is networked, and all technologies and uses of mediation seem to be articulated with each other in these networks.

Communicational capitalism

If our experience is an augmented experience, did the rupture and communicational change also foster an updating of capitalism?

This question already has some answers, namely in the work of Castells (2002) on the informational dimension of capitalism, or in that of Zuboff on the emergence of surveillance capitalism (2019) and their focus on the value dynamics of data under what could be designated as data capitalism (Bolin, 2022). However, the argument presented here is that, in addition to the informational

characterization of capitalism or the contribution of the dimension of surveillance and data to understanding contemporary capitalism, we must also consider another dimension of characterization: the role of networked communication in the formation of a financial capitalism of a communicational nature.

For Castells (2002), informational capitalism refers to the centrality assumed by the new technological conditions in the economy, which allow for the processing of information, its sharing, and its ownership in the production process. According to Castells (2002), capitalism is informational because, in the current economy type, productivity depends on the production, processing, and application of information in the productive process of goods and services.

In turn, for Zuboff (2019), surveillance capitalism claims the mediated experience of an individual and private nature instead of claiming that of labor (or land or wealth) for market dynamics, as industrial capitalism once did. This type of experience is translated into individual data that assume the character of an intangible exchange of goods in the global market, with their invention linked to Google's practices and their refinement, to Facebook.

As a new basis for the dynamics of advertising in its digital network incarnation, surveillance capitalism embodies a new logic of accumulation (Zuboff, 2019). As a result of its success, this type of capitalism can no longer be associated with an individualized platform or company such as Alphabet or Meta (Zuboff, 2019). Surveillance capitalism has spread to all economic sectors, and its success is giving rise to an economic order increasingly based on the surveillance that now extends over a wide and varied range of products and services, including mass-media communication and journalism.

The power associated with this new capitalist dynamic is defined by Zuboff (2019) as "instrumentarianism," the instrumentation and instrumentalization of human behavior for the purposes of modification, prediction, monetization, and control.

Instrumentation refers to the computational omnipresence that, acting in the global network architecture, monitors, computes, and seeks to modify behaviors (Zuboff, 2019). In turn, instrumentalization refers to the commodification of social relations, seeking to transform them into raw materials for their own production (Zuboff, 2019). Surveillance capital overlaps with all other long-standing reciprocities present in market democracies (Zuboff, 2019).

What do we talk about when we talk about "communicational capitalism"? To answer this question, let us look at an illustrative example, that is, an event that, at the time, defined the world mass-media agenda for almost two weeks. This event did not occur in an economic, cultural, or political center of power but rather in Thailand, a country more associated in our collective imagination with an exotic vacation or the film The Beach starring Leonardo di Caprio. In 2018, a group of young Thai people trapped in a cave were rescued.[6] Those who followed this odyssey on different screens through mass media, social networks, and social media

6 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tham_Luang_cave_rescue.

saw highly specialized divers pushing the use of diving equipment to the limit in an extreme situation that also involved one of the richest men in the world at the time, Space X and Tesla owner Elon Musk, who proposed the use of a mini submarine for the rescue.[7]

Today when a businessperson such as Musk speaks or acts publicly, such an action has an immediate financial translation in the financial networks, usually through the valuation or devaluation of assets in the markets. This happens even when what is said has no immediate correspondence to a given stock of a market-listed company. Examples of this are when the technology referred to cannot be used because it is not the most appropriate, as was the case with Musk's mini submarine; when it is still only a future objective, as with his Neuralink technology; when he expresses personal opinions about cryptocurrencies; when he wants to buy X/Twitter, and later actually buys it; or when he provides access to the Internet via satellite in support of the Ukrainian government in the war against Putin's Russia or when he proposes a peace plan for the war. [8] [9] [10] [11][12]

In the network society, when a businessperson with public recognition makes a statement, whether on television or on social networks and social media, it creates a social value with an impact on a given financial value.

Surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019) is based on the datafication of communication, but contemporary capitalism is, in its financial dimension, also a capitalism of a communicational nature.

To advance this debate, we can also recall an incident that occurred in the context of football, which in the network society also follows the same capitalist rules as everything else (Storm & Solberg, 2018; Brewer, 2019; Gaustad, 2000). This is an incident concerning the Portuguese football player and celebrity Cristiano Ronaldo and his transfer to Juventus, a football club owned by the Agnelli family, who are also owners of the car manufacturer FIAT.

When Ronaldo's transfer to Juventus was announced, it subsequently led to the announcement of a strike by FIAT workers.[13] Why? Because when companies have ownership of different sectors of activity and all of them are also listed on the stock exchange, one can have (in)direct impacts on the others. When investing in one sector, it can be argued that there will be an impact on management decisions over workers' wages or investment in another, or that in this case that happened because Cristiano Ronaldo's football transfer introduced the prospect of a higher profitability than investing in the auto industry. Such an argument can at least be made

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7 https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/10/world/asia/elon-musk-thailand-cave-submarine.html.

8 https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/jan/20/elon-musk-brain-chip-firm-neuralink-lines-up-clinical-trials-in-humans.

9 https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/how-tweets-by-teslas-elon-musk-have-moved-markets-2021-11-08/.

10 https://www.cnbc.com/2022/06/21/elon-musk-says-3-issues-need-to-be-resolved-before-twitter-deal-closes.html.

11 https://www.politico.com/news/2022/06/09/elon-musk-spacex-starlink-ukraine-00038039.

12 https://www.bbc.com/news/business-63126550.

13 https://www.bbc.com/news/business-44807281.

regarding the short-term aspect, in that as long as a celebrity player such as Ronaldo is physically fit to play in high-level competitions, their value may be momentarily higher than that of an automotive brand.

What happened with Ronaldo, recounted here, is another example of the communicational dimension of capitalism, though in this case there is a mutual gain, such that both sides win: Ronaldo's CR7 brand increased in value in the markets and the Agnelli family became the owner not only of Juventus but also of the contract with Ronaldo.[14] Some years later, when it was announced that Ronaldo would become a player for Manchester United, the shares of the club rose to a gain of 212 million pounds, and when the very same player gave an interview in 2022 stating that he felt betrayed by Manchester United, stocks rose 15% amid announcements being made on the future sale of Manchester United by the current owners of the team.[15]

However, in the global framework of communicational capitalism, there are always losers. In the former case, the losers were the FIAT workers. The norm in communicational capitalism is that there are always those who gain nothing from being part of a news story, as in the case of the Thai boys who were rescued from the cave, the FIAT workers, or the Manchester United fans.

What explains the rise of communicational capitalism? In capitalism, the exercise of economic power is not limited to a certain institutional domain in the economic and financial fabric. Power also depends on the ability to influence through strategies and techniques of power and a discursive structure, which seek the social internalization of the predominant economic values (Scott, 2008). In contemporary capitalism, power also depends on the visibility given to the expertise of economic specialists by the communication apparatus of a given society, whether they are academics, experts from information management companies, businesspeople, or simply specialized journalists.

Economic power depends on legitimacy, which in turn depends on accepting a given pattern of dominance as being right, correct, justified, or valid (Held, 1989; Scott, 2008). In the network society, authoritarian dominance (Giddens, 1979), that is, the internalization of predominant economic cultural values and the identification with those who occupy the top positions in terms of these values.

In the period between the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the beginning of the twenty-first century, we can identify a set of combined phenomena that gave rise in turn to a transformation in the way mass media focusing on business news functioned. These phenomena were the simultaneous emergence of global information media such as CNN, the emergence of global financial networks, and the dissemination of online business practices through the Internet (Castells, 2002). During that period, the business media, mainly in the context of television and the

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14 https://www.businessinsider.com/juventus-fc-stock-has-doubled-in-the-cristiano-ronaldo-era-and-its-probably-only-the-beginning-2018-9.

15 https://news.sky.com/story/manchester-united-owners-to-explore-sale-as-glazers-seek-new-investment-12753359.

written press, changed their nature, hitherto centered on the distribution of economic news, and added a new expert feature to their portfolio: financial opinion and commentary.

Just as entertainment has celebrity systems or Hollywood its star system, business media brands also developed what can be labeled as an "analyst system" at the end of the twentieth century (Kurzman et al., 2007; Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2016).

The construct of a proto-system built around commentators was already in place in business news but with different configurations, gravitating mainly around academics and economists from the private sector as well as some public officials from national banking, insurance, and national statistics institutions and regulators (Hope, 2010). The mass-media model for communicating economic activity relied heavily on the analysis of national statistical indicators, trade balances, economic growth, and employment, usually produced by government institutions.

After the crisis of the 1970s, deregulation processes were triggered to improve labor productivity and the profitability of capital (Castells, 2002; Khurana, 2007). Deregulation had a strong impact on capitalism, shifting much of the power that managers held to shareholders, giving rise to a profound transformation of the relationships between executives, companies, and shareholders (Khurana, 2007). In turn, this transformation in power relations led to the development of a new type of economic and corporate model of investment capitalism and the emergence of a new Wall Street system (Gowan, 2009), a system in which investment banking ceased to issue only loans, exercise fund management, and carry out trading on behalf of clients. This system also undertook proprietary trading activities of financial and other assets, financing the activities of the purchase and sale of financial derivatives or goods by third parties in order to manage price differentials, for example, through hedge funds, private equity groups, and special investment mechanisms.

Under the umbrella of this model of deregulation based on investment capitalism, the generalist and business media began to integrate expert commentators oriented more toward the analysis of the global financial environment into their panels. In so doing, business media brands have contributed to the legitimization of an economic system on the basis of a given financial elite that consists of bankers, traders, investors, brokers, etc.

In this new model, analyses have increasingly focused on individual opinions and the real-time interpretation of data from financial markets. This evolution resulted in the emergence of an interdependent system in which the data analysis produced by the variations in the financial networks informed decisions on what to buy or sell, creating constant realignments of commercial decisions in the markets on the basis of the analysis of the opinion expressed in the business media.

Journalistic practice in the economic and financial fields is also the product of the very same globalization and financing processes of the economy of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, materialized in mass-media brands specialized in economics and finance (Hope, 2010).

However, business and financial journalism has always been based on a singularity that can be summarized in three characteristics that differentiate it from

other thematic forms of journalism, such as sports journalism or cultural journalism. The main distinguishing feature of financial and economic journalism is that it relies much more on input from external experts to set its agenda than on contributions from journalists themselves. Although the use of experts for commentary is a general feature of journalistic practice, in financial journalism the nature of said expertise is different in several respects (Doyle, 2006). Unlike other types of journalism, the creation of news value in financial journalism is more dependent on the opinion and interpretation from financial analysts and experts and on corporate public relations releases than in other fields of journalism (Lee, 2012; Doyle, 2006; Tambini, 2010). Hence, the authenticity and effectiveness of financial journalism is also questioned by different societal actors. On the one hand, the excessive dependence on sources such as elites and specialized knowledge of the financial sector is questionable (Davis, 2000; Knowles et al., 2017; Strauß, 2019). On the other hand, the fact that the financial advisors invited onto journalistic programs or to produce op-ed comments tend to make more recommendations in terms of buying rather than selling financial assets is also questionable (Lee, 2012). Consequently, these guests contribute directly to the rise of financial assets, even when there are direct interests in the financial assets they comment on (Lee, 2012; Doyle, 2006; Pollock & Rindova, 2003).

The uniqueness of communication in financial journalism, particularly in the areas of television and online, in which the image predominates over the text, also stems from the existence of a distinctive language and imagery compared with other types of journalism. This is due to the process of dematerialization of finances through the market transition to the digital field (Lemghalef, 2010), because given that financial markets have become the product of a greater number of actors, a more volatile price dynamic has been created. This is a dynamic that can be equated to a real-time spectacle or sporting event that is simultaneously driving scrutiny and permanent attention and that is created from the rise and fall of prices (Clark et al., 2004; Craig, 1999). Therefore, the business-centered journalistic narrative tends to reaffirm a given view of a speculative nature associated with financial markets rather than providing a reflection on the reasons for their failures (Lee, 2012). Financial news also makes greater use of infographics and statistics for this reason (Lee, 2012), since it needs to shape the relational dimension within a historical and evolutionary context, as well as presenting a visible representation of abstract concepts such as unemployment rates, debt growth, interest rate increases, economic growth, etc.

The association between market movements, their graphical representation, and the need to give visibility to abstract concepts justifies, particularly on television and online, the appearance of parallels in the narratives used by financial journalism and television entertainment programs (Clark et al., 2004), namely the use of celebrity journalists and the adoption of theatrical and emotional values exemplified in the way audiences are thought of and challenged—that is to say, an approach that mainly considers the audience as made up of amateur investors. These types of audiences would be seeking instant gratification, though it is of an autonomous, calculating, and rational character and is primarily motivated by

self-interest (Greenfield & Williams, 2007; Hirsto, 2011). In this type of approach to audiences, they are thought of as publics wanting to know more about the economy and, therefore, would need the support of journalists and the experts to advise them to be able to make quick financial decisions (Lee, 2012).

An additional feature that differentiates financial and business journalism from other types of journalism is that financial markets are the product of the information flows generated by market participants. As a result, financial and business journalism also contributes to representations and values that are not neutral to the functioning of the markets (Thompson, 2013).

Financial journalism is not able to establish itself as a neutral observer since its ability to create news value, agenda setting, and gatekeeping also influences the formation of value in financial markets. Mass-media communication shapes markets precisely because it shapes the financial industry (Clark et al., 2004; Lee, 2012). The industry's financial decisions have incorporated social representations regarding the role of communication in shaping the value of financial products. Consequently, this implied the acceptance of a new mass-media rhetoric by the financial industry.

Mass media reflect what occurs in financial markets and, at the same time, what constitutes them (Strauß, 2018; Knorr, Cetina, & Bruegger, 2002). The formation of markets occurs either through news or through economic or financial commentary as well as through the mechanism of the economic ideology dominant in each historical time period (Lee, 2012; 2014).

As the characteristics previously pointed out suggest, the formation of news value in financial and business journalism has an impact on the formation of value of financial assets, and the emphasis on what is considered newsworthy differs from that practiced in other types of specialized journalistic publications.

Both news and commentary attention in the business and financial area focuses, disproportionately, on a small core of large companies and recognized brands as well as on a set of topics recognizable by the public as the traditional journalistic focus (Doyle, 2006). Alongside this concentration, financial and business journalism, in a few financial and economic institutions, has evolved to emphasize highly personalized news narratives owing to the prominence given to managers historically (Saporito, 1999; Dreier, 1982). This trend is the result of the will of both CEOs and contemporary communicational dynamics that values the presence of celebrities in communication.

Within the framework of business strategy, managers of large companies and their brands began to notice that the symbolic capital associated with their media presence increased their bargaining power and reputation in the eyes of investment bankers and financial analysts (Saporito, 1999; Dreier, 1982; Bourdieu, 1989; 1993; 2005). In turn, these same investment bankers and financial analysts acted as the main sources of financial news and, consequently, as points of contact with valuation in financial markets (Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2013; Graf-Vlachy et al., 2020).

The personalization and celebritization of the managers of large companies through financial and economic news also resulted in a shaping of the news on the basis of border narratives. In these narratives, centered on the dramas and personal struggles of top managers, it becomes difficult to understand whether one is

watching financial news under the pretext of their role as celebrities, or vice versa (Doyle, 2006).

The personalization of financial journalism in financial and economic news has "contaminated" non-financial journalism by bringing managers into non-financial news spaces. This practice, combined with the trend of the valorization of celebrities in the news, has created a dynamic of financialization of celebrities, whether they be a businessman or a businesswoman. This "celebrity financialization" allows for the generation of a new attribute for those types of news and first-person comments—they become a new type of asset, capable of influencing the specific value of other assets, corporate or financial.

In the process of the financialization of news and commentary about economic-financial celebrities, all related content has the potential to influence the market value of companies' assets. The news and commentary have an impact on financial values, provided that it is associated with the names of managers or with the products and brands that said businessperson owns or manages. When referring to the clearly communicative nature of contemporary financial capitalism, we are referring to the fact that all media references to a given celebrity manager or branded celebrity, such as football players, even when they have nothing to do with the financial and economic spheres, have an impact on market value.

At the same time, we have been witnessing another communicative business dynamic that is also shaping contemporary financial capitalism. This is the valuation of financial assets, options, and futures associated with the sharing of personal business opinions through one-to-many mediated communication and mass self-communication (Castells, 2007) on social networks or social media platforms.

An example of this trend can be given through what happened with the r/WallStreetBets subreddit.[16] In short, GameStop had announced in April 2020 that it intended to close 450 of its last 550 stores in the United States in anticipation of potential bankruptcy due to the growth of the online gaming sales market. As a result of this announcement, various Wall Street investment funds bet on the end of the company through short selling—borrowing shares at a given rate, selling them preferably at a high price, then buying them back, ideally at a lower price, and finally returning them. Such practices may allow an individual to make a lot of money, but the problem with short selling is that money is lost if stocks go up, and the losses would be potentially endless if stocks continue to go up.

In the r/WallStreetBets subreddit, which described itself as if "4chan[17] had found a Bloomberg Terminal[18]," a participant in 2020 contended that GameStop was undervalued by the market. For some time, the idea that appeared on the networks that r/WallStreetBets would take over GameStop was shared among the participants as if it were a joke. However, a few months later, a movement driven by

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16 16https://www.businessinsider.com/wallstreetbets-fastest-growing-subreddit-hits-58-million-users-2021-1.

17 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4chan

18 https://www.bloomberg.com/professional/solution/bloomberg-terminal/.

the nostalgia of those who used to buy games at GameStop appeared on Reddit and decided to try to counter or postpone this bankruptcy.

At the end of January 2021, in just six days, the subReddit movement grew to such an extent that it led to the massive purchase of GameStop shares. Using an app called Robinhood, which allowed for free transactions in the purchase of shares, the value of the shares increased: in only one day, GameStop shares rose by 69%. The outcome was the cessation of GameStop share trading, as well as that of others such as AMC, BlackBerry, and Nokia, and the loss of considerable amounts by some and gains by others according to the dynamics of the stock exchanges and the functioning of capitalism.

We know that, in the current context of the network society, exchanges have started to operate 24 hours a day, circulating investments between time zones and financial markets (Castells, 2002). Therefore, the reporting of information is almost simultaneous with the investments made and the profits obtained.

In the same way that pharmacy schedules and home and job advertisements ceased to be part of print media content and began to be available only as online content, the evolution of stock exchange quotations also ceased to be a driver of news production and almost stopped being part of the current generalist mass media (Pickard, 2011; Pickard & Williams, 2014; Pew Research Center, 2015; Cornia et al., 2020). The newsworthiness of the financial markets' evolution has thus become essentially associated with the online economic and financial niches, in which the narrative is dominated by "analysis," that is, through the use of commentary, sometimes in interview format. The journalistic factuality associated with the mass-media brand thus becomes a pretext for the profusion of specialized opinion. This is sometimes accompanied by news that largely has as its function the establishment of analysis and the justification of the presence of expert guests.

The description above shows us the evolution of the role of mass communication in the formation of markets in a capitalist economy. However, an occupation of the online space by non-specialized financial analysis commentary was also witnessed as networked communication became adopted by more and more people. The generalization of networked communication practices allowed for multiple participants to assume the role of financial analysts without going through the scrutiny of recognition, which is a necessary condition for being put on the guest lists of business television channels to comment on the markets. That which is seen on social networks and social media thus mimics the processes and practices of financial analysts in the mass media, but with other actors, in this case non-experts and non-celebrity commentators (Antweiler & Frank, 2004).

In the context of mass communication, journalistic business brands were given the role of gatekeepers, in terms of access to communication relevant to the markets, through invitations to managers, analysts, and financial experts to comment on a given news item or to express their prospective analysis of the evolution of assets or of the markets themselves (Yan et al., 2015).

The financial journalism associated with mass-media brands functioned as a "regulator" of information relevant to the markets, to which the masses of investors had access. This dynamic made it possible to manage information considered

potentially disruptive, ensuring a relative stability of the markets, but obviously without an effective possibility of containing serious disruptions in them (Yan et al., 2015).

In the context of mass communication, mass media was the means, par excellence, to distribute economic and financial news that could influence financial investments made on the stock exchange. By undertaking and institutionalizing this role, mass media became a driver of financial valuation and devaluation in the stock exchanges, creating expectations of adherence to or rejection of given brands, and opening or closing opportunities for investment and recruitment, even without having to provide news regarding the value of companies and simply by issuing an opinion on their activity (Graf-Vlachy et al., 2020; Zheludev et al., 2014).

However, by opening up an ever-increasing space for commentary on economic and financial news, business media has allowed financial opinion to increasingly occupy a space formerly reserved just for commentary regarding fluctuations and forecasts based on the price charges in the markets. In a second phase, business media opened spaces for the creation of a star system made of business celebrities in which there was space for news about the lives of businesspeople. They were thus given the role of celebrities, making "celebritization" an intangible asset that was indirectly financially capitalizable.

At the same time, non-specialized opinions of an economic and financial nature were also gaining space in the networks in a dynamic of imitation, as exemplified by the example of r/WallStreetBets detailed above, and namely through mass self-communication on X/Twitter to Reddit, the one-to-many communication of Facebook, or reciprocal mediated communication (Hepp, 2013) via WhatsApp (Bollen et al., 2011; Liu et al. 2014; Trilling et al., 2017).

If the evolution of information technologies has allowed unimaginable speeds for the submission of orders and counter-orders of purchase and sale in the markets, with differences of milliseconds or even smaller units of time, then the evolution of the media system has made news on non-economic-financial issues news of economic-financial interest. In so doing, this has created the conditions for the generalization of the expression of non-specialized opinions on financial issues. The consequences of these two dynamics are, namely, that the acts and words associated with businesspeople, which are the product of their celebrity status, have become intangible assets that are liable to indirect stock market valuation, and that social networks and social media, through the sharing of non-specialized financial opinions, are moving toward their institutionalization as organized investment spaces. On the basis of these two changes, new communication-based processes of value creation were designed.

In our daily lives, the media system is formed by a set of companies with stock market value, including Meta, Alphabet, and the set of national and global media and entertainment groups associated with streaming. However, the media system is, in and of itself, also a central part in the value construction of all other sectors of activity, products, and services and current, past, and future brands (Strycharz et al., 2018; Damstra & Boukes, 2021).

In the current model of informational capitalism, surveillance allows for the collection of individual data, in addition to the traditional categories of labor, land,

or wealth, as an intangible exchange of goods in the global market, promoting a new logic of accumulation (Castells, 2002; Zuboff, 2019), one can likewise suggest that value creation in financial markets today is essentially based on the communicative dimensions of news and opinion.

Value creation in the markets takes place through news about economic or financial facts or other aspects, such as the daily life and opinion of businesspeople, as well as the result of the opinions of experts broadcasted and those of non-specialists shared on social networks and social media, through mass-media brands, and via everything else that is searched on search engines or through artificial intelligence bots and shared with us in newsfeeds or forwarded to our contacts in messaging applications. In turn, all these communicative interactions influence human decisions, whether they are pre-programmed in the purchase and sale algorithms or decided in the moment.

Contemporary capitalism is eminently informational in its productive dimension, but it is communicational in its financial one. The production of added value in goods and services is based on information and is therefore informational, and it also introduces a new logic of accumulation on the basis of individual data, processing individual information that influences both the information necessary for production and that which is necessary for the publicity of these same goods and services (Castells, 2002; Zuboff, 2019).

However, capitalism is not only economic but also financial. In this last dimension, it is immensely communicational. The formation of market value is demonstrated not only in the news produced in the context of mass-media journalism but also through the novelty that is shown in the creation of value on the basis of non-economic and non-financial news as well as through commentary and opinion from different origins, multiplying what until recently was contained in the journalistic and opinion mass-media spheres and opening it up to the broad space of social networks and social media.

Communicational capitalism refers to a market system in which the media system is the central piece in the value creation of all other current, past, and future sectors of activity, products, services, and brands.

Business and financial journalism, in its attempt to adapt to the emergence of this new mode of networked communication, has expanded the use of expert opinion to the limit and extended the economic-financial realm of news beyond its traditional space, focusing it on the daily lives of social actors in the business world and creating a new type of celebrity: the businessperson.

The expansion of opinion into new spaces and the thematic extension in economic-financial news created a dynamic that tainted the space of social networks and social media, creating new patterns of economic and financial opinion by extending their sphere to non-specialists. The conditions were thus created for a new dynamic of economic and financial commentary and for the institutionalization of a communicational capitalism associated with global financial markets.

Our communication gives shape to daily life through the mediation of experience, but augmented experience also shapes value creation relationships through the same mechanisms that shape our remaining experience, giving a clearly communicational connotation to contemporary financial capitalism.

Novelization of the news

Can the news continue to be the same in a new media system, the product of a new mode of networked communication, in which experience is built through an augmented experience, adding to the mass media, social networks and social media, searches, and messaging? More directly, is it possible to maintain the same relationship of public interest in the news, retaining the same news value and journalistic hierarchy in terms of the issues? Can journalism adapt to a new everyday life of mediation?

There are several ways to start trying to answer these questions. However, we can begin by referring to the view of Lippman (1922) on the role played by routine journalism and the consequent existence of a "brake" on innovation associated with the professional culture of journalism.

Hetherington's analyses, following the observations made 60 years earlier by Lippmann (1922), seem to confirm this characteristic of "limited diversity" journalism (Hetherington, 1985) as visible in the stable consensus in the representations of journalists about what is likely to interest an audience. This theorization about the "limited diversity" of representations arises from the finding of the existence of news values accepted and generalized within the journalistic profession and visible in its news production.

News value establishes the attributes that a journalistic event has, which allows it to be more than news, transforming it into an interesting story for a given audience (McQuail & Deuze, 2020). Galtung and Ruge (1965) made the first clear empirical observation regarding the existence of news factors that influenced the selection of news that could be converted into stories, indicating three main types of factors that play a role in this choice: factors related to organizational dynamics, factors related to the theme, and sociocultural factors.

For example, they also identify a tendency for more widely reported events and stories to conform better organizationally, in terms of the time available and preexisting selection mechanisms, as well as diffusion. On the one hand, these conditions favor the most recent events that occurred geographically closer to the newsroom, but also depending on the availability of credible sources to step in and comment on such events. On the other hand, journalistic preference also expresses itself through the preferential choice of news events that fit the public's anticipated expectations, that is, the way the present is anchored in the past news that audiences are accustomed to, which allows journalists to take advantage of an already familiar interpretative framework.

A first reading of these theories might lead us to predict little chance of identifying changes in the daily news shaped via mass communication or by the arrival of the web and social networks and social media.

However, although the existence of news values has been considered in sociological research on communication, the factors that influence them are not constant, as Hardcup and O'Neill (2017) demonstrate in their discussion of a set of contemporary news values. According to this analysis, the probability of events becoming news increases with the number of categories they include. The set of 15

categories associated with an event is given as: (1) the degree of exclusivity of the stories generated, (2) the dimension of negativity, as in bad news, (3) its association with conflict, (4) the surprise generated by its unusual and unexpected dimension, (5) the relevance associated with an audiovisual component that allows it to be illustrated, (6) its degree of shareability and ability to generate interactions on social networks and social media, (7) its dimension of entertainment using soft stories, (8) its ongoing drama, associated with breaking news and last-minute updates, (9) its follow-up and re-updating of stories, (10) the focus of the story on power elites, (11) its relevance owing to the dimension of perceived influence in relation to groups, countries, etc., (12) the magnitude associated with the story in terms of the number of people involved or the potential impact, (13) the focus on celebrities and the stories of people who are already famous, (14) the degree of association with good news in stories with particularly positive tones, and (15) the alignment with the news organization's agenda itself, whether it be ideological, commercial, or related to a specific campaign.

However, there is no deterministic value associated with news values (Hardcup & O'Neill, 2017). These criteria can therefore be challenged, either on the basis of practical considerations, such as the availability of resources and time, or on the basis of subjective influences of a sociocultural, ideological, and organizational nature, acting on journalists and through their perception of the type of audience for which they are producing the news. These observations show that, in the framework of new ways of communicating, there is also room for new news values, such as those associated with shareability. Therefore, there is a change in news creation, either through changes in the way of communicating, which promote a transformation in journalism that is also visible in changes in news values, or in new forms of journalism, such as networked journalism (Beckett, 2010; Van der Haak et al., 2012).

The relationship between journalists and their audiences is an indirect but interactive communicative relationship. It is indirect because the ideas that journalists have about their imagined publics may affect newsworthiness but are not communicated to their audiences directly. The public is aware of what journalists think, not because it is communicated to them or because they inquire about what journalists choose but rather because they read, listen to, and watch the news and learn which topics and stories have more news value to journalists and their editors. For their part, the public also indirectly communicates which news has the most news value to them through the audiences created through the news itself (MacGregor, 2007; Whipple & Shermak, 2018; Artemas et al., 2018). This relationship is, in part, described by agenda-setting theory, which states that the definition of the news agenda presumes that the public takes note of the most relevant aspects of the news present in mass media, observes what is emphasized and what receives greater emphasis in the mass media news distribution, and then shapes these priorities of interest in their personal schedules in a similar way (McCombs, 1972).

A definition of agenda setting such as the one above implies that the increase in the quantitative presence or qualitative relevance of an issue or story in the mass media influences the relevance given to this issue or problem among the public

(Lichter, 2017). Hence, there is a symbiotic communicative but indirect relationship between the newsroom and the audience, self-sustained in a cycle that is not expected to be finite.

The audience is a consequence of what they are exposed to. If audiences read, see, or hear, the news value does not need to change, because audiences are equivalent to monetary inflows for subscriptions paid or advertising sold and, in a market economy, where people are is where advertising is, ensuring the viability of journalistic brands (Pickard & Williams, 2014).

However, neither the agenda-setting theory nor its subsequent criticisms and contributions, nor even the analysis of the factors that define news values, discuss the limits of journalistic production and the factors that influence this limit (McCombs et al., 2014; Wanta & Tarasevich, 2019; Kim et al., 2002).

When the variable of "news values limits" is introduced here, it refers to the moment when a news value ceases to sustain a relationship with the public, losing value among audiences and breaking the communication in the interactive cycle existing between journalists and audiences.

Usually, when signs of a problem arise in the relationship established between journalism and audiences, which is visible in the loss of audience for a brand, the search for a solution tends to emphasize management and editorial issues, specifically the need to review the strategy of the organization of the newsroom or the media brand (Kung, 2011; 2012; 2016).

However, if a loss, or a temporarily prolonged plateau, in the interest of the general population in the news arises, we may be confronted with the manifestation of the limit of a certain journalism-public relationship model, a possible sign of communicational crisis.

For example, Ytre-Arne and Moe (2018) identify a tendency to decrease the use of the news, and the perception of the value of following it, in their study carried out among some Norwegian citizens. One possible hypothesis is that this decrease in access and change in the perception of interest in the news could be a result of digitalization processes combined with the new technological possibilities offered by the emergence of mediation on a mobile screen and the screen as an aggregator of information from different sources, as well as the profusion of journalistic paywalls.

Although much is said about the decline in the circulation figures of print newspapers or the variation in television and radio audiences, these changes in consumption and fruition practices should not only be understood as a manifestation of a given context but also as individual signs of contextual problems (Kung, 2016; Pickard & Williams, 2014).

A different question relates to the existence, or lack thereof, of interdisciplinary and structural dimensions in the media system; For example, in the Portuguese case, one can observe that, between 2015 and 2021, the interest of the population in the news remained stable at values not exceeding 64.5% (Cardoso et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2021). On average, 5% of people were not interested in the news, while the remaining 30% showed only some interest. Values such as these indicate a stable or mature audience ecosystem, which also does not have a notable appetite

for increased interest in the news. Portugal is a case of interest because it has the second highest confidence level in the news, but just like the other countries studied, it has seen annual decreases in interest in the news or increases in the practice of avoiding the news (Newman et al., 2021; 2022).

Where, then, could the reason for this trend for lessening interest of the general population in the news lie? Are news values the product of a contemporary journalism that is unable not only to maintain existing audience figures but also to generate new audiences? This question could be asked in another way, namely whether it is possible to reconcile mass-mediated news production with the need to innovate and grow new publics to replace eroding ones.

A possible attempt at an answer may begin with a reminder of the famous phrase from Lampedusa's book Il Gatopardo and from Visconti's film: "If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change" (Gilmour, 1991). This phrase can serve to characterize the phenomenon here dubbed "novelization of the news."

Novelization of the news manifests itself in agenda setting and appears as a weak signal of a greater problem in this interregnum of "rupture" and "transformation" in the framework of mediation (Mendonça et al., 2012).

Novelization of the news can be defined as a contemporary communicative phenomenon, one which is the product of news value choices and journalistic agenda setting but also of a less changeable dimension in journalistic practice: the hierarchy of news values.

Looking at the past and comparing it with the present is not an easy exercise. In fact, there is no profession that makes regular use of this practice, and even historians are not overly concerned about constructing bridges with the present on a regular basis. Our social dynamics tends to make us focus our attention on what is happening and what is going to happen, and journalism both contributes to this practice and is sustained by it. We are always more concerned with the "now" and the "future" than with what has already happened. Perhaps the only exception to this in the news is items concerning current gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates or the rate of unemployment, which we always tend to compare with past values.

The examples that we will use below to support the emergence of novelization practices in the news and their description are based on the Portuguese reality and the Portuguese media system.

The Portuguese media system is a polarized pluralist system, and although this classification has been criticized and even updated over the years, Portugal can still be characterized as the least polarized of the polarized pluralist media systems of southern Europe (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; 2010; Traquina, 2010; Santana-Pereira, 2012; Álvares & Damásio, 2013). Portugal thus has a media system that is quite distinct from liberal systems, associated with the UK or US systems, or democratic corporate systems, typical of Scandinavian countries and Western Europe (Santana-Pereira, 2016). Although the Portuguese mass-media system is characterized by a vastly underdeveloped market, Portuguese journalist professionalization is at the same level as the European average (Santana-Pereira, 2016). For all of these reasons, the hypothesis put forward is that current practices of news novelization discussed in terms of the

Portuguese case will also be able to be identified in other countries that share the same classification in the system of Hallin and Mancini (2004).

When analyzing the totality of the news from any summery August in Portugal, emphasizing print and online newspapers, as well as radio and television channels and their online presence in subsequent years, the hallmark of repetition emerges as a striking feature. In the news, the same three themes almost always appear: fires, football, and car accidents (Cardoso et al., 2018). Two of them, viz. fires and car accidents, are ominous themes in our everyday life that are focused on death and destruction, while the third, football, can be thought of as a subject of social catharsis (Eco, 1984). Naturally, the conclusions presented here seem to contain little novelty. Indeed, the news is reported because it happens. Although there is also news featuring "untruths," in most cases the news "is reported" journalistically because it refers to facts that have occurred.

However, we also know that something going from "happening" to becoming news is dependent on more than mere factuality. The news is formed based on newsworthiness criteria, and the contemporary newsworthiness criteria are increasingly associated with the same dynamics that one finds on social networks and social media, following a dynamic of virality (Berger & Milkman, 2012).

The contemporary newsworthiness criteria are dependent on the perceived probability of something being clicked on or shared on social networks and social media and, simultaneously, on its ability to sustain print audiences, listeners, and viewers. The higher this probability, the more likely something is to turn into news: from "potential news" to "published news." Although this is a norm of contemporary journalistic editorial practice, it is worth remembering that "we" are permanently constructed as the public (Markham, 2020) since audiences never just exist—they are created by those who communicate, both on paper and in digital format (Oliveira, 2017). The process of creation of publics, with both inclusion and exclusion as features, always opens up new possibilities that clear the way for unintended results (Markham, 2020).

However, most contemporary mass media, driven by a decrease in their advertising revenues, the lack of generational renewal of older audiences, and little resources for self-investment, still do not seem to actively seek the creation of new audiences for news (Küng, 2016).

Experimentation through content innovation techniques aimed at experiencing multiple facts from different origins and driving the creation of new audiences for new news topics rarely seems to occur in the current mass-media landscape. Instead, the mass media tend to mainly seek a well-tested formula associated with facts that, when transformed into news, already have a history demonstrating their ability to achieve virality on social networks and social media and to maintain the attention of press, radio, and television audiences (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Guadagnoet al., 2013).

To try to characterize and clarify the model of newsworthiness practiced in this contemporary communicative interregnum a bit more, one can consider the concept of Carnival, since this holiday and other equivalent holidays in different cultures are unique moments in everyday life. These types of moments are times

when it becomes possible to reverse the norms and create a period in which the inversion of social roles and the associated practices is not only expected but, more importantly, accepted (Testa, 2017).

In the field of mass-media communication of the news, it is as if Carnival never even occurs. The news year is standardized temporally, with no space to change roles or hierarchies, maintaining the same uniformity and pattern of what is potentially news. For example, in Portugal, football is always considered more newsworthy than anything else, except in the few summer months of some years when there is no football (Cardoso et al., 2018). Even crime news, including the most heinous, rarely dethrones football or any other sport, whose cultural practice is dominant in a given culture and society.

The challenge here is to return, for a moment, to any week during the year that corresponds to Carnival—better yet, a week in which Women's Day, on March 8th, and Carnival are both celebrated at the same time in Portugal. That week, like many others before it and like those in multiple countries, will be marked by mourning for the deaths caused by gender-based violence and news of more deaths of women at the hands of men.

Even in the face of deaths in high numbers, the emphasis on violence against women, their murder, and the related court decisions will not usually be even the second most prominent news issue of the week. Femicide and gender violence will receive less news attention than is given to men's football, its players, its games, and sometimes even hackers connected to it, as in the case of the Rui Pinto Football Leaks scandal involving European and world football institutions (Cardoso et al., 2018).[19]

In this description of a time period and the news belonging to it, there is obviously a news item, such as the murder of women or gender violence, which by its repetition in the news is socially constructed as a problem of epidemic proportions (Bermúdez & Meléndez-Domínguez, 2020). However, although an important issue, it will rarely achieve a higher place in the hierarchy of newsworthiness than the prominence given to football. Why does this happen? One possible answer is that the social representation that exists within the media system and in its mass-media dimension has designed an informal hierarchy of news as well as predominant, pre-established practices that tend not to be questioned by journalism. The hypothesis stated here is that such newsworthiness criteria are not questioned because their origin relates to a hierarchical dimension of structuring newsworthiness (Bourdieu, 1989; 2005).

This hierarchy of newsworthiness establishes a source of symbolic capital for the journalistic profession, which is the product of a "design" implemented in the old mass-media system. This design always achieved good results in terms of audiences. It is the "common sense of writing" transposable to the phrase: "it is what people want to read, see, and hear." The apparent immutability of the news item hierarchy will thus be another aspect that characterizes the current communicative interregnum, associated with the crisis in the context of news production.

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19 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Football_Leaks.

However, another question then becomes necessary: If news value is susceptible to change, what then is preventing change from occurring at the news hierarchy level? The answer may be that it is easier for journalism to change the conditions of that which generates news value, that is, the reason why something is chosen to be news, than to change, once chosen, a thematic hierarchical scale created through representations of value based on the symbolic capital of the journalistic profession.

On the basis of the approach to social practice from Bourdieu (1999; 2005), one can say that practice is a product of the interaction between capital and habitus developed in a given field, in this case the journalistic field. Habitus provides the expectations, conceptions, and ideals of the community of a specific field with specific interests (Bourdieu, 1998). As with other habitus, the habitus associated with journalism is formed from diverse contributions, which are identifiable by considering those derived from the structuring characteristics of the exercise of research journalism, editorial practice, and other illustrative dimensions of the journalistic field (Schultz, 2007). These are identity based and differentiate between journalistic practices in the written press, television, and radio.

Bourdieu (1998) also differentiates between multiple types of capital, including economic capital associated with the monetary dimension, cultural capital based on class and resources associated with knowledge, social capital associated with the relations between different actors, and symbolic capital associated with prestige and recognition. However, by developing journalism and its practice in the context of communication, symbolic capital, here more than in other fields, plays a central role in building its power before society, groups, and classes.

Symbolic capital arises from the recognition that social actors enjoy. Hence, the power of journalism is the product of the symbolic capital that its audiences recognize. In the context of journalism, symbolic capital depends to a large extent not only on peer relations, developed in the field of journalism as a profession, but also on the representations created before their publics, measured in audiences. However, journalism fears losing its symbolic capital as well as its power if too much of its structural framework is altered (Bourdieu, 2005).

In the case of journalism, the thematic news hierarchy exercises a structuring and stable role in the recognition by third parties of what journalism is. Consequently, it can be deduced that it is easier to change that which depends solely on journalistic decision-making, that is, news value, than something that comes from the way in which the journalist believes their profession and practice are perceived through the audiences' gaze, that is, changing their news thematic hierarchy.

For journalism, the alteration of the news thematic hierarchy constitutes a potential danger because it can diminish its symbolic capital among their existing audiences. This alteration in the news thematic hierarchy can generate misunderstanding and displeasure among the public and, ultimately, lead to a loss of audience numbers.

However, potential inaction in the face of the news hierarchy's alteration also conditions the opportunity to create new publics that ultimately will constitute new audiences, who need a combination of new news value criteria and new agendas of thematic news hierarchies to be formed.

In addition to the central role attributed to the routine in social theory and the relevance of the concept of habitus, most individuals recognize the importance of reflexivity in their everyday life (Archer, 2010). However, Archer (2010) demonstrates that the relevance of habitus, anchored in an empirical approach, began to diminish at the end of the twentieth century. Given the major changes in the structures of advanced capitalist democracies, known sets of norms have proven increasingly incapable of providing guidance for people's lives. Therefore, the use of reflexivity becomes imperative for the intermediation between habitus and culture (Giddens, 1991; Archer, 2010).

To innovate and create new audiences, journalism needs to meet the trends that value reflexivity as the guiding principle of action in society. Therefore, journalism needs to promote the reflexivity that mediates between the structure of the journalistic habitus, which reinforces and is reinforced by editorial practices, and the professional culture of journalism, which is the product of the intersection between university culture, journalistic practice, and the cultural representation of journalism in society.

To continue this analysis of the difficulty of changing thematic news hierarchies and creating new publics for new audiences in contemporary mass-media journalism, let us return to football, an issue that seems paradigmatic, given its hierarchy in newsworthiness and its ability to retain audiences.

One might remember news about fans of the French football club Marseille violently attacking the club's sports facilities in France in 2020. However, that was not an original event but rather a copy of a similar event that happened two years before.[20] The football club Sporting Clube de Portugal (SCP) had a similar episode in 2018, as well,[21] which fostered a strong newsworthiness with high audience numbers and network virality for several weeks in Portugal. The "Crisis in SCP" issue, which referred to members of one of the club's organized fan groups attacking the club's players and technical staff, as well as the role that the club president could have played in this, was ubiquitous on television, in newspapers, on the radio, and on social networks and social media for almost four months, a period that preceded the dismissal of its president through a vote by the football club's members.

The justification for the newsworthiness of these facts under the agenda-setting theory seems obvious: it was news relating to football, so it was important because there were publics previously willing to give attention to it, thus it would generate audiences (McCombs, 1976). However, the news event became addictive, repetitive, and obsessive, occupying screens and television broadcasting times every day for a long period of time, in particular on 24/7 news channels in Portugal, and going viral on social networks and social media.

This example represents only one among many cases in different countries and mass-media contexts of similar dynamics concerning thematic journalistic

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20 https://www.france24.com/en/france/20210131-marseille-postpones-match-after-fans-violently-attack-training-ground.

21 https://www.theguardian.com/football/2018/may/15/sporting-lisbon-intruders-training-attack-players-staff.

repetition, which has frequently appeared to be associated with the everyday life of newsrooms and that warrants further study as a contemporary phenomenon of communication.

What is observed in the everyday life of many newsrooms is the editorial line of maintaining the focus of attention on a single issue for long periods of time, which, in turn, sustains a dynamic of public fixation through television viewing and commentary and sharing on social networks and social media. With such trends, communication assumes a state of sublimation through repetition, in which we witness the freezing of the news agenda, blocking the possibility of diversified programming and preventing the regular thematic flow of the news.

What is described above as "novelization of the news" should not be confused with a media event as normally conceived, because media events during a given period fixate attention as well as news agendas (Ytreberg, 2009; 2017; Dayan & Katz, 1992; Couldry & Hepp, 2018).

For Dayan and Katz (1992), a media event must possess a set of characteristics: to be broadcast on live television, to be an interruption of everyday life and part of the routine of daily broadcasting, to be planned and scheduled for broadcast in a timely manner, and to be watched by a wider audience. Media events are, socially and culturally, associated with the idea that watching them is something that should not be missed, producing an integrative dynamic in society.

Although Dayan and Katz's initial proposal privileged ceremonial-type events such as world sporting competitions, historical moments for humanity, or coronations, inaugurations, and state funerals, events such as the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center in New York have led to a widening of this scope to include nonceremonial and unplanned events such as the live coverage of wars, catastrophes, and terrorist attacks by mass media and social networks and social media (Silverstone, 2004).

The novelization of the news, the journalistic communicative phenomenon that we aim to describe and analyze here, seeks to explain the practice of turning non-media events into media events through specific editorial decisions, which has become widespread in the mass-media context.

Unlike the media event, the editorial process that strives to simulate media events does not seek to resort to live broadcasting, although nothing prohibits it from starting with it and resorting to live broadcasts over the duration of the process. Media event simulation does not normally correspond to an event of a ceremonial or planned nature but rather is designed according to any event on the agenda.

Such construction of a novelization of news, or news that follows a serial drama such as narrative, occurs when an editorial attempt is made to maintain a preexisting audience at a high level for a period longer than would traditionally be associated with pre-scheduled media events.

The process of creating a novelization of news is achieved through the adoption of a new news narrative genre, which is inspired by the transposition of the narrative models associated with entertainment, namely soap operas and their extensive number of episodes. Newsworthiness thus resorts to a journalistic narrative that seeks to prolong the narrative time of a factual news item through stories and characters

parallel to the main protagonists. As in a soap opera or long-running series, a fishbone narrative structure is used, with a central story and multiple parallel stories that always relate in some way to the central protagonists (Damásio & Paixão da Costa, 2020; Slade, 1997; Butler, 1986; Chalaby, 2016; Buonanno, 2009).

The narrative associated with the phenomenon of the novelization of news thus seeks first to identify a main story in order to associate it with a preexisting audience. The example chosen here of the public interested in football seeks to create a schedule by identifying a main figure, in this case the president of the SCP football club, from among the supporters and opponents.

In the novelization of the news, which allows for the creation of the news serial drama/soap opera narrative, it is necessary to identify a network of parallel stories involving third parties that occupy the television, social network, and social media narrative space. The "event" that gives rise to the novelization of news, unlike the original media event, extends in time without a definitive end date and is closer to the dynamics of war, catastrophe, and terrorist attacks, although never treated journalistically as if it were such an event (Dayan & Katz, 1992).

The novelization of the news is an editorial tool that seeks to simulate a media event without the "event" originally being so, by giving it repeated editorial attention, taken to the extreme of occupying, with disproportionate proportion, the available television news schedule. To keep attention focused and audience levels high and stable, complementarity to news is given by the recurrent use of opinions and commentary related to the chosen issue. Likewise, content originating from social networks and social media is also used to occupy the journalistic news space, in the dynamics of the communication of communication, where what is published outside the framework of news and journalism influences journalism in terms of the issues and the news. Finally, to regularly remind the audiences, the focus of the novelization of the news is also highlighted repeatedly on the front pages of the printed press or the opening stories of broadcasts on 24/7 news channels or radio news; by doing so, the editors demonstrate how all other ongoing stories are of less interest to the public, further reinforcing the centrality of the chosen issue.

The strategic objective of such a deliberate editorial choice to give exaggerated protagonism to a particular story is to extend the duration of a given audience's high level of attention by creating an indefinite period of time until its end. This in turn allows for the shaping of a media event where it would not have previously existed, as well as for the imposition of an editorial timeline. The end of the event is not known when its newsworthiness begins, but its end is also not dependent on the decisions of the protagonists; rather, the end of the news narrative is managed by the newsroom itself. Hence, this sublime thematic repetition produced by the novelization of the news only ends when audience levels begin to decrease in a consistent temporal trend.

The phenomenon of the novelization of the news arises as a strategy to create audiences and solve problems relating to the lack of them in the traditional mass media. Consequently, it should be understood as a type of communicational disorder, the product of a communicative crisis manifested in the loss, or greater difficulty, of the creation of audiences by different mass-media actors.

In an attempt to obtain more viewers, processes of media attention saturation are created. Within the framework of networked communication, these make use of all the dimensions of mediation, including creating dynamics of feedback between newsrooms and audiences, respectively, and sometimes using journalism or sometimes commenting on social networks and social media.

Through both the viewing and repeated sharing of the issue chosen by editors, audiences end up living in a state of momentary "addiction," and journalism takes on an effect of thematic "innuendo" almost close to obsession. Only a new issue with a strong dynamic of interest to other audiences or of general public interest, that is, a real media event such as a war, a natural catastrophe, a competition, an inauguration, or a funeral, appears to be capable of breaking this induced state of mind.

The phenomenon portrayed here, called the novelization of the news, must be analyzed from two perspectives: that of audiences on screens, and that of journalistic newsrooms. This is an experience shared by both actors, the receivers as well as the senders. Indeed, focused as they are on a given issue, they cannot help but present, see, read, listen, comment, share, and repeat it.

In the face of this phenomenon, the question that a sociology of algorithmic mediation must seek to answer is whether the reasons that create this repetitive focus are the same for audiences and newsrooms. The answer will probably be "no."

The newsroom maintains thematic repetition because it deems the issue as capable of generating attention, thus keeping audiences captivated and resulting in greater revenues. For the newsroom, there is no repetition of the issue as long as the angle of the story is altered and there are different sides to focus the commentary on. Even if there are no new factual developments, the state of newsworthiness can remain as long as it remains possible to obtain new images or comments with different views, from the same or different people on the same story, thus maintaining stable audience levels.

In turn, as if they were following the episodes of a fictional novel, news audiences look forward to the unfolding of the story and to knowing its ending. Therefore, they accept the repetition, which they know is occurring, in the expectation that something will happen in the evolution toward the final outcome. The changing images, journalists, and commentators on screen represent for the audience the same thing as the parallel stories for those who follow the main plot of a novela or series. This is something that must be tolerated to reach the desired end, or conclusion, of the story.

In the context of the process of the novelization of the news, the differences between audiences and newsrooms are also portrayed as the completion of the process of the relationship for the issue at hand. For audiences, it is difficult to finalize the repetition since, in situations such as this or similar ones, all news sources tend to maintain mediated everyday life immersed in the same "storyline." Mimicry processes are adopted in different media brands and their newsrooms, using the same strategies for the construction of their share of audience gain as through the sharing of the imagined audience available. In such situations, the process of the novelization of the news associated with a chosen issue can only end if the audience, in its individual dimension articulated in a network, decides that saturation

has occurred, abandons the news mediation, and seeks another node available in the mediated network of screens. However, this new node will usually not be news focused but rather entertainment focused, whether by streaming series, reading, WhatsApp conversations, or the like, because even on social networks and social media, the interaction between the algorithms of newsfeeds and the pages of television and radio channels as well as the written press is responsible for sustaining the same focus on the news topic currently being novelized in mass media. Since all mass media tend to choose the same thematic focus at the same time and also tend to abandon it in the same time interval, it will be in these other, non-news nodes of the communicative network that a new focus of attention can be found by those who make up the public constitutive of audiences.

In turn, in the case of newsrooms, the end of news novelization is not seen as a justifiable option since the only thing that can justify it is audience fatigue. Only when audience data allow for the perception of sustained breaks of attention can an editorial justification arise to finish a chosen issue and give structure to the simulation of a media event provided by news novelization. Until this seminal moment, the probability of such an occurrence is seen as reduced because the public is always imagined by the newsroom as available and waiting for the conclusion of the story, no matter when and how it is executed. What we have just described and analyzed can be defined as a novelization of news practice that, in a way, prevents meaningful communication from flowing and progressing since, if the novel is not created, it cannot be experienced.

When we prefer the safety of the routine known in the newsroom rather than creating a new routine, we are transported to the domain of a communicational crisis—in this case, in the sphere of news production. Without innovation in the news or the regular introduction of new issues, there are no new publics and, consequently, no new audiences for the news. If there is a breakdown of audiences in the news and one does not choose to innovate but, instead, chooses to repeat issues and stories to maximize preexisting audiences, a hierarchy of news according to its ability to generate audiences is maintained. There is thus a greater propensity for communicational disorders, as illustrated here by the novelization of the news.

The novelization of the news described here is an editorial strategy that tends to become the journalistic norm in an attempt to prolong audience loyalty and build audience levels over extended periods. However, by normalizing the use of the novelization of the news as a daily practice in the management of the relationship between the mass media and their audiences, phenomena of communicative disorder can also be reinforced. In particular, when the novelization of the news is applied to themes such as war, catastrophe, political scandal, or terrorist attacks, it can easily lead to the creation of a "news loop," a situation in which editorial control tends to seamlessly escape the decisions made in the newsroom.

A news loop may occur more easily in networked communication than in mass communication. Television is no longer isolated from other forms of mediation, being sustained, but also sustaining, a wider communicative mediation network.

A news loop occurs when a "network feedback" phenomenon takes root in everyday communication. Feedback, as a cybernetic phenomenon, is defined by

Ashby (1956) as the circularity of action, that is, a response within a system (molecule, cell, organism, or population) that influences the continuous activity or productivity of that system. Feedback occurs when the output of a system is rerouted as input as part of a cause-and-effect chain that forms a circuit or loop. In the context of networked communication, network feedback occurs when the narrative of a given novelization of the news sustains and is simultaneously sustained by a permanent dynamic of "communication of communication" (Eco, 2021).

In networked communication, a news loop occurs when, as a result of the practice of the edited sharing of content, whether produced by others or not, the same news topic overlaps with all the others for a relatively long period of time. In a news loop, a socially shared representation is formed between journalists, commentators, and the multiple participants in the communication process regarding the inevitability of continuing to focus on the same issue.

Although news loops can arise in connection with different news topics, they tend to emerge more often in connection with political themes editorialized in journalistic coverage, such as wars, catastrophes, political scandal, or terrorist attacks. This is because the editorialization of political topics regularly resorts to celebrity commentators and the promotion of narratives based on the search for "diverbio" (Eco, 2021), that is, the search for a performative tough discussion rather than an option for debate.

In networked communication, owing to their need to create audiences, mass media tend to encourage the creation of a "political opinion" rather than a public opinion (Lippmann, 1922) through their practice of relying on the celebritization of opinion commentators, as opposed to building public opinion on the basis of dialog and debate that enables the presentation of different positions by multiple people. Political opinion is essentially constructed through the diverbio, or the performative tough discussion between two or more different people that is regularly renewed in different news schedules.

In the context of networked communication, information coverage is carried out using any type of information circulating on the network, including comments on social media, and no longer solely the news. Networked communication provides a space where everyone can potentially participate in the production, receipt, and sharing of content. Consequently, a communicative space is created in which participants are interpellated on different screens by the shared videos, images, and comments on social networks and social media, in addition to journalistic coverage and opinions from commentators invited by the mass media.

In networked communication, such interpellation is sometimes direct, e.g., in the form of comments shared on one's social networks and social media newsfeeds, or indirect, through broadcasted opinions and mass-media news. However, in both cases, the content of the interpellation leads, or intends to lead, the participant in the communication to adopt a position on the theme addressed (Eldridge, 2000; Philo, 1999; Philo & McLaughlin, 1995; Philo, 2004).

In networked communication regarding the coverage of emotionally disruptive events such as wars, disasters, terrorism, or political contention of different sorts, the interpellation of the participant is no longer limited to merely forming a

personal opinion. This is because, in a mimicry of reality television voting processes and online ratings, the participants in the communicative process are also persuaded to make a public statement of opinion regarding the events, namely through likes, emojis, the sharing of posts, or even a written or video comment.

On the one hand, the dynamics of networked communication compel the participant, through content shared on social networks and social media, to take public positions in favor of one side of a dispute or the other. On the other hand, in limited situations, such as emotionally disruptive events, like the coverage of a war, there is an public encouragement toward "in absentia diverbio" in mass media. Such labeling thus seeks to describe a situation in which one of the sides necessary for the discussion has no on-screen presence. Usually, the absent side is the one that is the object of criticism of most television commentators and which gathers less support in the opinions expressed in social media and social networks. This is not a phenomenon of editorial censorship by the mass media—on the contrary, the mass media would even prefer to have someone who defended the side that is largely considered by the public to be the aggressor in a war, thus identifying them as an enemy because the use of diverbio strategies tends to create larger audiences and greater interest.

However, in a kind of threshold situation such as a war, the necessary existence of a prior duality of positions between the parties, which allows for dialog and debate, is almost impossible for the available commentators to fulfill. This is because, the one's expressing minority views prefer to adopt an exit approach instead of voicing their positions (Hirschman, 1974). In the limit, comment is only available from those commentators who defend one side of the contention—the one that is perceived as aligned with the majority of public opinion and that allows for the transformation of the public into audiences through the alignment between the commentators' positions and those of the audience.

In a context of mass media that promote diverbio as a strategy for building audiences, the coverage of a situation of war, such as the Russo-Ukrainian war that began in 2022, can be presented as a paradigmatic threshold situation for explaining the formation of a news loop through network feedback processes.

At the outbreak of the war, the news on the ground was reported by journalists mainly present in Ukrainian cities and usually at some distance from the fighting between the Russian and Ukrainian military forces. Journalistic coverage, in anticipation of the war taking place for an indefinite and potentially extended time, sought to manage the audiences in advance, resorting, as a rule, to a narrative structure based on the novelization of the news. To this end, a "celebrity politics" model was employed, utilizing political commentators who could express opinions that try to make sense of the lack of information in the field of conflict. At the same time, on social networks and social media, the sharing of videos of the fighting, as well as of the flight and death of civilians, began to abound. Thus, in the first days of the conflict, we saw videos and unedited images of what was happening on the ground appear on social networks and social media. Facebook, Instagram, and X/Twitter were inundated with reports of Ukrainian victims of Russian attacks or with accounts of what was happening, from the mobile phones of Ukrainian soldiers.

However, the first set of videos and photos regarding the Russo-Ukrainian war, shared on social networks and social media, did not lead to the creation of a clear positioning of public opinion on the conflict. This is because, although the mobilization in support of Ukraine began very early on in countries such as those of the European Union or NATO member states, the majority of participants were still stunned by the outbreak of a new war involving a superpower in Europe—unprecedented since the role of NATO in the 1999 Kosovo war (Webber, 2009).

At first, more than the journalistic coverage available, it was the material that circulated on social networks and social media that offered the most readily available and easily accessible information, both for those who commented professionally in the mass media and for journalists on the ground in Ukraine or in the newsroom, as well as for the different participants in networked communication.

As journalistic time went by, the opinion expressed in the mass media was based on an informative routine relying on the presentation of and commentary on information originating on social networks and social media, complemented by journalistic pieces produced by different mass-media brands with a presence in the theater of operations or in other Ukrainian cities. In turn, all this information that became mass-media information also sustained and framed the opinions expressed by the participants on social networks and social media, serving as a justification for the subsequent sharing of all such information through journalistic re-editing of shared content and that ended up completing a full circle, in turn influencing the mass media. In the context of networked communication and war, information is, the majority of times, validated by its circulation, i.e., having already been seen by others on another screen, rather than critical analysis by the participant or journalist.

In the coverage of an emotionally disruptive event such as a war, the space for the public expression of a position that seeks to deconstruct the narratives on both sides of the dispute faces increased difficulties. Anyone who intends to criticize the positions of either side must also defend their own position of narrative deconstruction against the criticisms made simultaneously by the two sides in the conflict. War exacerbates the narrative observed in the use of diverbio strategies by mass media, tending to almost nullify the possibility of critical intervention beyond the "pro versus against" duality.

By resorting to diverbio strategies, the novelization of the news model itself tends to remove space for the public deconstruction of narratives on the part of those who do not intend to position themselves on either side of the diverbio and seek debate instead.

In the informative coverage of a conflict such as the Russo-Ukrainian war, the widespread use of communication of communication practices, with the consequent information feedback from all to all, create a phenomenon of network feedback, which in turn leads to a news loop, making it very difficult for the editorial management itself to introduce any other issue into their journalistic programming.

If the novelization of the news is an instrument for managing mass-media audiences, then when a news loop occurs, it is editorial autonomy itself that loses the ability to manage the relationship with them. News loops give rise to a common

and socially shared representation between journalists, commentators, and the multiple participants in communication, making it more difficult for journalists, as isolated actors within the network, to control such phenomena. As long as feedback manifests in a network, news and opinion from the mass media are also established as new entries on social networks and social media, leading to a molding of sharable content available. This is content that, in turn, can be and is rerouted as new entries into the mass media, thus forming a cause-and-effect circuit that has no foreseeable end and adopts the shape of a loop.

The identification of the emergence of news loop phenomena in the framework of networked communication has practical consequences for this analysis. It demonstrates that strategies to deal with the crisis of mass media audiences may also have negative side effects, as they imply a partial loss of journalistic control over the news agenda itself.

The detection of news loop phenomena in networked communication also illustrates the real danger that, in very particular but real situations such as war, communication of communication practices can homogenize the narrative regarding a given theme, allowing for one narrative to overlap all others that are potentially challenging, and to become perceived as a "fair" narrative that mobilizes public opinion and, consequently, leverages itself as unique.

If, in the case of the Russo-Ukrainian war, the adoption of a narrative creates a virtuous news loop in support of the Ukrainian resistance to the Russian invasion, one cannot rule out other types of potential communicational disorders in the future, in which such phenomena could be repeated with a similar homogenization of narratives, but this time being harmful to democracy.

Communication of communication practices can create an environment that is more conducive to sharing disinformation in times of war, with the ability to promote network feedback, namely through the creation of a news dynamic that also has the potential for the emergence of more journalistic errors, given the need to occupy narrative spaces created by the novelization of the news, and in real time.

The norm of newsworthiness is associated with the perception of an issue's importance in the communicative pattern in mass media. However, when critical editorial thinking is not established regarding what the limit to news repetition is, one may fall into the trap of news repetition through novelization. This novelization ensures the capture of previously built audiences in the short term but does not support the creation of new publics capable of becoming new audiences, thus halting experimentation and undermining the social and economic sustainability of news in the media system in the medium term.

The novelization of the news can thus be defined as a communicative phenomenon associated with journalistic mass-media communication and a product of news value editorial choices, journalistic agenda, and the immutability of the news value hierarchy.

As has become clear, a communicative crisis is also demonstrated by the inability of the mass media to generate new audiences by not making space for new thematic hierarchies and by privileging, alternatively, already tested and successful formulas for audience creation through the novelization of the news.

Information is not news

Another dimension of communicative change, which also constitutes another dimension of crisis in the context of communication, is associated with the change in the relationship of interest established by citizens in the face of journalism.

During the period of mass communication's predominance, we witnessed a relationship built around journalism and citizenship, which assumed that citizens sought out news to remain informed. However, with the dissemination of networked communication practices, the representations regarding social responsibility seem to have changed regarding the social role of the news.

During the twentieth century, the notion of the "informed individual" was closely associated with the idea of the "informed citizen" and was based on consultation of the news in order to be able to exercise citizenship in an informed way. However, the change in communication practices that has occurred in recent decades and the change of representations regarding information and knowledge also produced a growing conceptual separation between the concept of the "informed citizen" and that of the "informed individual." This has broadened the relationship between information and everyday life. Traditionally linked to the exercise of political power, the notion of being informed has extended to a multitude of other spheres.

The definition of the "informed citizen" refers to a person who can exercise political power in an enlightened manner, assuming that most people are political generalists, not experts. This means that those who know one aspect of politics tend to be able to become aware of others (Delli Carpini, 2000).

However, in Delli Carpini's (2000) view, this knowledge was only associated with receiving news through newspapers, radio, and television (Kligler-Vilenchik, 2017; Bennett et al., 2010). Born in the era of mass communication, the ideal of the "informed citizen" has long been established as a normative basis for associating news and the practice of citizenship (Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2018).

The hypothesis put forward here is that citizens no longer conceive the practice of citizenship as being strictly related to receiving news but rather have extended it to other dimensions of information. The contemporary socially valued definition of the ideal of someone "informed" must be understood as still formed through access to the news but also incorporating all the remaining information that might interest a given individual, as well.

The assumption that the process of creating an "informed citizen" has changed also implies that there may be a need for a refresh of the concept itself. This is namely because the new context of mediation, including the presence of the web and social networks and social media, can be both a blessing and a curse for the "informed citizen"—a blessing because citizens who are politically interested and motivated can take advantage of new tools to access primary sources, check facts, and network with other citizens to collect information, but a curse for many others since the amount of information available actually increases knowledge gaps, making it easier for less interested citizens to become less informed as well (Prior, 2005; Thorson, 2012; Kligler-Vilenchik, 2017).

Over recent decades, informed citizenship has been reimagined in the face of new forms of mediation. For example, Jenkins (2006), influenced by Lévy (2005), suggests that, in a participatory culture, the notion of the "informed citizen" can give way to a model of collective intelligence, in which a network of citizens can pool their knowledge and collectively reach a level of information that exceeds the capacity of the individual members. In a different vein, but following similar questioning, Bennett et al. (2009) argue that the information culture associated with the web and social networks and social media leads to a different set of perceptions regarding the relationship between citizenship and knowledge. Given the changing characteristics of information authority, credibility, production, consumption, and sharing (Bennett et al., 2009), these changes are especially noticeable in younger generations' citizenship activities, which are based on a desire for self-fulfillment and personal expression and no longer solely on the sense of duty traditionally associated with the value of keeping abreast of the news (Bennett et al., 2009; Couldry et al., 2010).

Keeping up with the news, as we have seen, lies at the center of the construction of the concept of the "informed citizen." However, the practice associated with remaining aware of the news is more complex than one might initially be led to believe. As Hartley and Pedersen (2019) explain, it is possible to identify at least three narratives built around this ideal of seeking to keep up with the news (Couldry et al., 2010) in the informational practices of Danish citizens. In particular, it is possible to isolate a narrative of involvement in which the news emerges as a means of fulfilling a moral obligation to vote and create partisan involvement. In a second narrative, keeping up with the news is associated with the social expectation of the citizen to stay informed in order to participate socially, adopt a position, and be able to debate. Finally, there is yet a third narrative associated with keeping abreast of the news through a genuine interest and a desire to critically understand reality, be able to evaluate it, and be able to build a personal opinion regarding it.

In turn, Ytre-Arne and Moe (2018) find that there is not a place for using only news-centric narratives as a way to stay informed. In their analysis, it is proven that there is a formation of mediation profiles less focused on the use of news. In the particular case of Norway, the existence of a profile no longer associated with news alerts on a given issue, but rather focused on self-declared interests by individuals and following issues that are important to them, was identified. In this case, although the news may have constituted one type of available information, if it did not offer given news coverage on a particular theme, the individual would seek more information from other sources before forming an opinion. Thus, this search was carried out through the use of search engines, identifying and exploring all the information that could be found on a given theme (Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2018).

While still addressing the contemporary evolution of citizenship and its relationship with information in general as well as with the news, Schudson (2011) suggests that perhaps the concept of the "informed citizen" as an individual who seeks and gathers information should be replaced by the concept of the "monitorial citizen." The rationale behind this proposal is based on the observation of citizens' communication practices, in which the use of the news is perceived as only part of

the whole relationship with information. The "monitorial citizen" could thus be established as a more appropriate definition by capturing the essence of citizens' activities in modern societies and referring to the individual who supervises or watches and who can therefore participate in the action of multitasking when faced with information and the need to remain vigilant (Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2018).

Bearing this in mind, the central question that must accompany us is whether the traditional view that links the news to being informed still corresponds to a widespread view among citizens.

The hypothesis considered here is that the emergence of a new social ideal, that of the "informed individual," was promoted by the profusion of different forms of mediation combined with an idea of economic development based on information in a society that is network organized and whose social goal is for each individual to be able to produce knowledge individually (Castells, 2002; Webster, 2014; Rodrigues, 2002; Reich, 1991). The ideal of the "informed individual" contains in itself the ideal of the "informed citizen" but encompasses multiple other dimensions and expands the social role of being informed to all areas of individuals' everyday life.

The emergence of the social ideal of the "informed individual" is thus closely associated with sharing an ideology of an information and knowledge society in contemporary societies (Webster, 2014), in which the repository of available information and the associated economic value would produce new learning and training dynamics, leading to new professions within the framework of information and the formation of a knowledge economy (Reich, 1991; Rodrigues, 2002).

Within a network society based on a mediated everyday life, it is possible to identify the communication practices that materialize and shape the social representation of what it is to be an "informed individual." These practices correspond to those that are more widespread among the population and that support a communication that integrates and articulates different contributions of mediation within a logic of diversity and complementarity, including access to the news but going beyond it to the field of entertainment and including both generic and specialized information (Cardoso et al., 2015).

Access and the ability to find the intended information is framed by what Groot Kormelink and Costera Meijer (2014) call "checking practices," or the routine cycles associated with the practice of visiting the same websites or using the same apps whenever one has a free moment or when an interruption in a task arises, usually using a specific type of screen—that of the phone.

In contemporary society, mediation tends to favor the use of the most widespread screen among the population, that of the mobile phone.[22] The mobile phone screen acts as the mediation element that shapes mediatization, appearing as a tool to access information but also as a tool for communication and the micromanagement of daily life (Thorhauge, 2016). The diverse communication practices that we develop through the screen of a mobile phone include, among others, searching

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22 https://www.statista.com/statistics/330695/number-of-smartphone-users-worldwide/.

using a search engine and, consequently, searching for videos, as well; going through the newsfeeds of social networks; exchanging messages in messaging programs, whether they be WhatsApp, Telegram, WeChat, or others; consulting news through apps, on social media pages, or via the websites of mass media brands; and finally, consulting public information archives, generative AI, and Wikipedia entries and all the pages that may meet the individual's information needs.

All the practices described above can put us in touch with news produced by journalism, but they always give us much more than news. This informative whole, which also includes the information that can be accessed through entertainment platforms, such as those with documentaries and talk shows, can thus construct the "informed individual," which one may define as a person able to find and access information of interest to them or information that one must access to act in an informed way in the different dimensions of everyday life.

The construction of the informed character of an individual corresponds to the sphere of literacies associated with the exercise of the most widespread practices in society that sustain a communication that integrates and articulates the different contributions of mediation in a network in a logic of diversity and complementarity.

Thus, the condition of being "informed" is no longer just a support for the exercise of citizenship, becoming instead a condition for life in the network society in a context of the profusion of mediation and the mediatization of everyday life.

The emergence and shared social acceptance of what an informed individual is also poses a practical challenge to journalism by going beyond the dimension of political-participatory citizenship, because if people assume that they cannot be informed only through the news, then journalism must compete with other information sources and resources. Faced with this competition, journalism has two alternatives: it can either leave its practices unchanged, ignoring the competition from searches launched by individuals and thus losing the capacity to occupy the time and space of mediation, or alternatively, it can embrace experimentation and change its practices, trying to satisfy the new informational needs of individuals and society.

Despite the cultural change fostered by our practices, which made being informed today synonymous with "finding" what interests us and no longer with just "knowing what is going on" or what the news provides, journalism remains an integral part of our everyday life as a product of the permanent incorrect answer to the question, "What is important for people to know?" We know that it will never be possible to find the correct answer to this question, namely because the news—in particular the highlights—are only attempts, which are never fully achieved, to try to answer the question, as well as to create and maintain audiences.

As Oliveira (2017) suggests, journalism is traditionally established and developed on the basis of its own public's ability to "imagine." However, the definition and corresponding characterization of the public, or of the wider publics, is no longer based on an aprioristic and theoretical definition created by journalists. The knowledge of what a given public is has increasingly evolved into an empirical practice that allows one to effectively understand which type of individuals

constitute a public and no longer just "what one thinks they are" (Oliveira, 2017). The public is first idealized by any given content producer, but it only materializes itself as an audience when the content is available and finds readers, viewers, or listeners, who can, in turn, be measured and analyzed. Therefore, the public doesn't exist until it is idealized, just as audiences don't exist unless measured.

The public is not an abstract reality; on the contrary, it is a concrete one (Esquenazi, 2002). Both social networking and social media platforms, through the practices of datafication of communication, and media or telecommunications operators with access to TV subscriber set-top boxes can produce data and analysis lists regarding the behavior of individuals. These analyses are carried out with the intention of, on the one hand, predicting behaviors, and on the other hand, reinforcing the current ideology found in companies, which is based on the idea that, if something is read, heard, or seen by many, then the editorial-corporate strategy is valid, and a defined audience does in fact "exist" for a given type of news, post/Tweet, content, format, or program.

To this end, the "datafication of audiences" constitutes an updated version of what was commonly called the dictatorship of audiences (Bourdon & Ribke, 2016), based on the theory that there is a model audience or target audience because at the individual level the data do not lie (van Dijck, 2014; Ségur, 2015).

However, the perception that there is always a homogeneity in the public built by marketing strategies is a limiting view (Pozzato, 1992), namely because it is a generalist, simplistic, and reductive logic that leads to the acceptance of the belief in the absolute predictive veracity of profiling (Favaretto et al., 2019). This is a conception that, more than presenting a portrait of reality, promotes a vision of reality that serves to reassure shareholders and markets by guaranteeing the inevitable predictability of the public's behaviors. In this view, the construction of individualized data profiles and model data profiles for given sets of publics constitutes more an instrument to sell advertising than as a clear sociocultural identifier of the diversity and homogeneity to be found in the media public (Oliveira, 2017).

The journalistic "product," however much it designs a model of its public or a set of individual profiles, is always consumed heterogeneously in a framework of permanent movement and change. In short, there is no model for the public or model profiles for news based on previously collected data, because the public does not "exist" but rather is always being created by those that produce contents, journalistic or others. The success of journalism and its interest for individuals are not dependent on a given model of their expected public or on model profiles built on polls, audiometry measurements, or segmenting algorithms produced from data obtained when reading, hearing, or viewing the news. Rather, the success of journalism depends on its ability to incorporate something relevant to the people that make up its "public" and that allows it to create its "audiences" (Oliveira, 2017).

Journalism is, for market reasons, asked to "guess," and subsequently produce, only what may interest people, always on the assumption that people like to know what is going on (Couldry et al., 2010). This results in a lot of news about what we might be interested in; about people who share something with us; about partisan, sporting, religious, geographical, etc., memberships and interests; and

also about those who share less with us in terms of identity or valued references. However, when imagining its public, journalism has always positioned itself before the constructed idea of an everyday life that values "belonging" (Meyrowitz, 1985; Silverstone, 2002).

Prior to the widespread use of the Internet, a communicative orientation toward "self-interest" was, in most cases, outside of the context of mediation and was focused on non-mediated relationships of proximity established with friends, school and work colleagues, neighbors, etc. These relationships were constructed through meetings during leisure time with friends, in cafes, in shared moments during breaks at school and work, etc.

Journalism has traditionally dealt with fact-based news, which does not come from this daily life of proximity and may matter to the individual and their network of relationships, that is, their friends; family; coworkers; those who share their interests, tastes, and hobbies; and those that we today "designate" as "friends" on social networks, but who are different because we share only weak ties with them (Granovetter, 1973).

Until a few decades ago, on no screen, apparatus, sheet of paper, or spreadsheet were there reports of events in which attention was focused on what is happening "with you" or "your people," with the exception of totalitarian regimes and their reports on everyone's daily lives produced by security officials. However, with the birth of the web and then the emergence of social networks and social media, a set of changes took such "reports" about "we" and "our" to the space of mediated communication (Sujon et al., 2018).

The observation of changes in contemporary mediation and communication practices allows one to propose the following hypothesis: there are two ways of living our daily lives through mediation, and our options make us privilege one and then sometimes the other, depending on our interests and context. The first way to position ourselves in the face of mediation and everyday life, which can be identified as aligning with "communicational self-interest," corresponds to the preference for seeking information regarding the interest of a given individual but also of knowing what is going on and what matters to "their people," which may refer to their friends, family, or coworkers, as well as those who know of and share the same interests, tastes, and hobbies.

A second way of living everyday life through mediation is aligned with "communicational belonging," corresponding to wanting to seek information regarding what a given individual is interested in knowing, but also what happens to those they do not know themselves and who may have something or nothing to do with them.

An individual who favors mediation aligned with a broader "communicational belonging" is, owing to its characteristics of objectives, much more associated with wanting to keep abreast of the news in a generalist perspective and dictated by the different mass media agendas (Couldry et al., 2010). In turn, an individual who favors "communicational self-interest," supported by self-declared interests and issues that are very important to them, will be less likely to try to keep up with the news (Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2018). The ideal of the informed individual, with

whom we seek to identify ourselves socially in the network society, is the product of both the interest in information and the search for it to serve one's communicational self-interest and communicational belonging.

Journalism, to maintain its centrality in the face of the construction of the informed individual, needs to pay equal attention to these two communicative alignments, because news and journalism can, and must, as they have always done, reinvent themselves in terms of their newsworthiness criteria and seek to realign themselves with the contemporary notion of being informed; That is, finding information "about what matters" to a given individual and not just finding news to "know what is going on" must be a priority.

Perhaps the first step in this realignment is to stop attempting to replace the obsession of trying to "guess" what news people want with a new certainty in which it is possible to "know" what news people want, simply by having access to the different algorithmic metrics of social networks, social media, or to web pages' navigation.

Such a refusal to turn such codified information into absolute and unequivocal indicators of what people like and look for in the news using the platforms or the journalistic companies' own systems thus becomes increasingly necessary to maintain the role of journalism in the construction of the social ideal of the informed person and, at the same time, of democratic consensus. Being newsworthy implies having an element of surprise, and in general, the public likes being surprised.

If journalism only gives us what we already know to like, why should we pay more attention to it than to what comes to us through our acquaintances or what we ourselves already know how to look for? We must not, therefore, neglect the innovative ability to create "inadvertent audiences" through an "architecture of serendipity." This is an advantage of the editorial journalism of mass media in contrast to an algorithmically automated journalism (Caswell & Do¨rr, 2018; Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2018; Sunstein, 2007; Esser et al., 2012). The journalistic architecture of serendipity emerges as a justification for the social utility of journalism, regardless of whether it seeks to respond to the public's search for belonging or self-interest.

Serendipity is what makes it possible to legitimize journalists as intermediaries of general interest in a hyper-fragmented system of mediation, allowing for the offering of news concerning things that the recipient did not know existed and, consequently, for which they would not look and which would not be offered to them automatically, because they cannot be predicted algorithmically.

In networked communication, for journalism to retain the same centrality in the construction of the informed individual that it enjoyed in mass communication, it must be understood as both an instrument that allows for maintaining the routine of news interest and an instrument to surprise and disrupt news routines. Hence, journalism must manage its human resources while relying on the diversity provided by many different people to produce news for many other people, such as audiences formed by the aggregation of similar profiles and not just the predefined general "target public."

People can only like what they are offered; what is not yet known can be neither loved nor hated. Hence, if we do not introduce a disrupting element on the

basis of a refusal to produce and distribute news for a "personal profile" to counter an "automated journalism," we will be in the process of repositioning the media, without even realizing it, in the contemporary equivalent of the past connections established between newspapers, radios, televisions, and given ideologies and parties (Ricolfi, 1997). In our contemporary times, the difference is simply that we are in the presence of newspapers, radios, and televisions aligned with what a "target individual" wants to hear, read, and see, and no longer for an imagined given "target public."

Journalism needs to combat a potential nano-segmentation of its public, but it also needs to build organizational identities as well as its own brands that are clearly perceived by the public as different and directed toward a demand that privileges both the search for communicational belonging and communicational self-interest.

To overcome this other dimension of the communicational crisis—that of representations in the face of interest in the news and which manifests itself in the gap between news and everyday life—new publics need to be created. However, to create these publics, the news also needs to be made in a different way because information is no longer just news, and the news needs to find new justifications to generate interest and new publics able to discover it.

If the representation of the concept of the informed citizen has changed in our society through communication practices, this is another contribution to the communicational crisis experienced specifically in the context of mass media. This is namely because journalism flourished throughout the twentieth century and became anchored in the vision, shared by industrial societies, that the ideal of citizenship was based on the "informed citizen," a citizen who sought news and was consequently informed about the world in which they lived.

With the arrival of the Internet and the development of the network society, the citizen who is informed becomes the one who critically seeks, from a place of enlightenment, the information they need, no longer only in the mass media associated with journalism and news producers but also in the information networks hosted by the large global Internet network, in which they are also an active participant. Thus, the civilizational alliance between journalism and citizenship in the social imaginary was broken at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Gomes & Cardoso, 2018).

The perception of breaking ties is now noticeable to everyone, but the news continues to be produced, sought, read, seen, and heard, and it continued to be just as necessary as before. Therefore, if information is not news, then perhaps we need to ask ourselves whether it will not be possible to make the information we seek new news, both to achieve communicational belonging and to satisfy communicational self-interest.

Celebrity politics

Celebrity politics emerges as another form of the manifestation of change in the context of how journalistic mass media works, providing another example of communicational crisis and the need to understand and address it.

Celebrity politics is the product of two dynamics: political populism, expressed through populist discourse and practices, and celebritization, associated with the entry of politicians into the celebrity-industrial complex, making the art of politics an art of performance and of being a celebrity (Orth, 2004; de Vreese et al., 2018; Street, 2019).

The historical relationship between mediated communication and politics is essentially a relationship between political power and citizens through mass-media mediation with the aim of creating public opinion, which takes on the status of a link between the public space and the private space.

As Habermas (1998) suggests, the evolution of public social life is what allows for the characterization of the concept of public opinion, utilizing it to legitimize political power itself (Oliveira, 2017).

The traditional construction of public opinion within the framework of mass-media mediation takes into account the construction of a mediated politics, along with the mediatization of politics (Stro¨mba¨ck, 2008). Mediated politics refers to a relational framework between media and politics, in which the former became the most important source of information and means of communication between politicians and citizens. In turn, the mediatization of politics should be understood as the process of development of the mass media's increasing influence, both on people and on political institutions (Stro¨mba¨ck, 2008; Asp & Esaiasson, 1996).

Citizens' involvement in politics is strongly associated with the attention given to and the use of mediated communication (Norris, 2000; Pasek et al., 2006; Castells, 2013). The corollary of this relationship between politics and mediation is obvious: if citizens experience politics through mediation, then politics and politicians have to resort to mediation as a political tool.

The fact that mediated communication simultaneously plays such an important role in the relationship between politicians and voters leads to the acceptance and internalization of the rules of mediation in politics and the consequent symbolic interactions, gains, and surrenders of power. This relational process between politics and mediation evolved through four consecutive historical phases until it led to a state of permanent electoral campaign (Strömbäck, 2008). In the first phase, mass media acted only as a mediator between politicians and citizens for political ideas and information of a political nature. In the second and third phases, the autonomy of the mass media in the face of politics increased, and in turn, the dependence of politics on mass media increased. In the fourth phase, characterized by mediated reality becoming more significant than reality itself, there is social experimentation in the search for a new balance between politics and society (Strömbäck, 2008; Meyer, 2002).

This chronology of the relationship between mediation and politics describes a process of colonization of one social domain by another, in this case, that of politics by mass media (Meyer, 2002). However, this analysis also serves as a starting point for understanding the mass-media crisis and the transformation introduced by networked communication through the new role of mediation brought on by social networks and social media, which allows for the construction of celebrity politics.

Politicians, having found a referent of relationship and social roles attributed to the different mass media and the forms of access to them, sought to dominate the specific rules of social networks and social media and of digital mediation in general. This quest is a matter of ensuring not only political access to networks but also communication codes that allow for an increased reach for a political message and, eventually, a reduction of its dependence on journalistic mediation.

Historically, in the mass-media framework, television and radio assumed a social role in terms of the legitimization of political power, while the written press was responsible for legitimizing social power, guaranteeing the freedom of expression of opinion for the different groups in a given social formation (Oliveira, 2017). However, with the emergence of the mediation of social networks and social media, there was an evolution in the social roles of mediation's different media. Politics transitioned from a mass-media-driven paradigm to a new paradigm of networked politics associated with controlled interactivity (Stromer-Galley et al., 2021; Rossini et al., 2021).

In this new paradigm of networked politics, efforts are increasingly directed toward finding and using supporters who have sufficient celebrity status that their reputation and influence can be used to mobilize potential voters. Alongside this use of supporters, networked politics also makes use of communication datafication for the production and management of automated micro-segmentation for use in advertising and digital political campaigns.

On the citizens' side, in turn, there is a social perception that a promise of greater citizen participation and a return of greater autonomy to politics, through the arrival of social networks and social media, has not been fully realized, because at the same time, there has been a new institutional normalization of politics.

On the one hand, the institutional normalization of politics was fostered by traditional mass media in response to the threat of journalistic disintermediation presented by the new digital mediation of social networks and social media. On the other hand, this normalization also arises from the very inability of party politics to reconceptualize themselves around the possibilities offered by new mediation practices (Vaccari, 2008; Bentivegna, 2006).

This combination of different trends defined the type of appropriation of screen-based algorithmic mediation and produced the current networked political mediatization, thus introducing changes in political communication and creating greater visibility, but also giving rise to less control by citizens, politicians, and journalists (Stro¨mba¨ck, 2008; Meyer, 2002). These changes can be better understood by looking at them as occurring in two complementary dimensions: one horizontal, which consists of the relations between political elites and journalists, and one vertical, which explains the interactions between elites, journalists, and citizens (Brants & Voltmer, 2011).

In networked politics, the mediation provided by television, newspapers, and radio has changed from its traditional social role. The three forms of mass mediation have thus started to rely mostly on the fostering of agenda-setting issues using political commentary, whether carried out by politicians or journalists, and no longer resort only to the news. Consequently, published opinion, traditionally

associated with the written press as a legitimizer of social power, has seen its social role transformed.

In the field of television, networked politics is characterized by an expansion in the sphere of commentary recruitment by incorporating elected politicians in executive or legislative office as well as potential candidates for such positions. This dynamic creates the singularity of being able to be the focus of the news and simultaneously a producer of opinion of the very same news, or to be both the content of the "message" and the "sender" on the same screen, thus engaging audiences with a multiplicity of attributes regarding the role of the politician themselves.

Meanwhile, newspapers, in particular online newspapers, now constitute a space for the production of political opinion and no longer of public opinion. The political opinion they convey replicates the dynamics of television programming but also creates topics for television and radio debate in a process that occurs with the ultimate aim of sustaining its subsequent sharing on social networks and social media via the personal pages of mass-media commentators or through public and private groups on social networks, for example, Facebook or WhatsApp, among others.

In networked politics, social media platforms such as X/Twitter take on a new social role as diffusers of the disintermediation of journalism; for example, X/Twitter and Instagram, as well as TikTok, become spaces where different actors of political communication, from journalists to politicians and commentators, re-edit all the content produced and distributed on television and in the newspapers together with their personal opinions in order to remix and share them to reach as many participants as possible.

Social networks and social media introduce a new political economy of communication, where social networks such as Facebook serve to reach the general public and where social media such as X/Twitter are aimed at a more specialized audience, for example, those interested in politics. This audience is made up of not only politicians, commentators, and journalists but also all those who, not being able to or not intending to follow this professionalization, share the same codes and political communicative contexts as the main actors of this process.

In networked politics, it is in the mediation network, which articulates mass media and social networks and social media, that a political opinion is formed in which political power seeks its legitimacy, abandoning the legitimacy traditionally attributed to public opinion in mass communication (Habermas, 1998; Oliveira, 2017).

If television, radio, newspapers, and social networks and social media are the nodes of the mediation network, what kind of political actors arise as central actors in this networked politics?

In most countries, the range of central actors in network-mediated politics consists of the combination of active politicians together with first-level militants without executive positions, journalists, editors, and directors of mass-media organizations. The latter usually comment via media brands in which they are not affiliated with the newsroom. In addition, a large number of commentators,

constituted by specialists, whether academic or not, are involved, as well as a whole set of lesser-known participants either with opinion columns in online newspapers or with Facebook groups and personal pages with increasing number of followers, likes, and shares, and X/Twitter accounts with large numbers of followers and Retweets, as well.

In networked politics, we witness the multiplication of published political opinion, both by opinion makers and by all those who generally think they have something to communicate regarding politics and politicians. If Allport (1937) warned of the need not to confuse public opinion with the public presentation of an opinion, or more concretely the need to distinguish "public opinion" from "published opinion," then in the network society it is also necessary to introduce a distinction between "public opinion" and "political opinion." This is due to the exponential multiplication of commentators, both in the space of mass media and on social networks and social media, because this has the result of inhibiting the reach of the message itself through the creation of a circularity in opinion.

In the search for a permanent contradictory dialog to increase online attention and distribution through virality, either opinion space or algorithmic emphasis are made available by mass media and platforms to commentators from the most diverse ideological worlds and from the most different interest groups (Oliveira, 2017). However, the final result of this apparent democraticity, obtained through the exponential increase of voices, may be only a spiral of silence manifested in a new way (Noelle-Neumann, 1974), in which the decision of an individual to remove their voice from the public space is not dependent on being on the side of the winners, but rather on the inability to understand who is competing with whom.

The multiplication ad infinitum of the diversity of voices and the contradictions between them is essentially sustained by the diverbio rather than the debate or the search for the construction of a democratic consensus. Thus, more than the creation of a public opinion, the result obtained is the construction of a sphere of opinion between opinion makers, encouraged through a micro- and meso-segmentation of audiences and not intended to be exercised by or addressed to an extended public.

Instead of creating a public sphere that is the product of mass-media communication and where the most diverse opinions circulate (Habermas, 1984; 1991), we seem to be moving toward a "political sphere" in networked communication that is the product of a politics designed to create political opinion and where, rather than forming an opinion, opposing opinions are sought between different political commentators.

Communication may not lead to communication in the sense that there must be receipt of information, recognition, and consequently, production of culture for it to exist (Oliveira, 2017).

In the communicative dimension, a political sphere is opposed to the underlying logic of a public sphere. A political sphere presents itself as inhibiting the reach of the message through the creation of a circular opinion dynamics, which are associated with the privileging of a permanent contradictory dialog to increase the distribution of a given type of content through virality and thereby guarantee an audience.

The political sphere is thus characterized by the search for opposing opinions of a small number of people framed by the mass media and of an "algorithmical elite" promoted by the platforms. Those are given time, space, or attention to carry out their personal-political interpretations on a regular basis (Bengtsson, 2015).

The credibility of commentators in the political sphere is largely shaped by the framework of the mass media, which supports the commentator in obtaining a hierarchically superior position over other more anonymous journalists or academics (Bengtsson, 2015). In Scandinavia or Portugal, internal knowledge of the intricacies of politics is a prerequisite for political commentary exercise. This is seen in the fact that political commentators usually had a previous career in politics or were political journalists, consultants, advisors, or in rare cases, academics (Bengtsson, 2015).

The use of the term "political commentator" varies in the scope of the group of commentators to which it refers. For some, it applies to all experts outside the newsroom who are able to practice political journalism, be they former spin-doctors, advisors to ministers, academics, polling experts, etc. (Hopmann & Strömbäck, 2010; Bengtsson, 2015). In turn, other authors limit the term to a smaller group of people trained in journalism and who often appear in journalistic media, or a small group of highly visible politicians who make a living by offering political opinions and predictions in the elite national mass media (Alterman, 1999; Bro, 2012). In networked politics, the characterization of political commentators has increasingly risen in number and diversity, becoming closer to the views of Hopmann and Strömbäck (2010) and Bengtsson (2015).

The political sphere thus represents a breakdown of the public sphere, mostly occupied by political commentators from the most diverse ideological worlds and from the most diverse interest groups. For example, people who are certified by the mass media of radio, television, and newspapers as knowledgeable on political reality and who are given the time and/or space to carry out their personal-political interpretations on a regular basis.

The political sphere also has a hierarchy—a ranking of political opinion makers in which the top positions are assumed by "celebrity politicians," who manage to have mass-media spaces of opinion, both being news focuses themselves and, simultaneously, having access to spaces of opinion. Such presence also enables them to more easily create ways in which to make their presence go viral on social networks and social media by way of communication of communication practices.

Simply capturing and maintaining visual or auditory attention is the main objective of the mass-media communication market (McQuail e Deuze, 2020). This communicative objective relates directly to meeting the economic objective of obtaining revenue, fulfilling the function of intermediary between audiences and advertisers, commodifying attention, and proceeding to monetization through audience building.

Mass-media marketing strategies aim to obtain the maximum attention for their products, in the form of series, films, documentaries, the news, etc., through the maximization of attention by achieving a good share of attention (Turow, 2009). These attention strategies, similar to those used by Hollywood with their star system for actors and actresses, also gave rise to "celebrity systems" in mass media

(Kurzman, 2007). This system of mass-media celebrities is based on actors and actresses, but also on journalists, TV anchors, and the commentators associated with the various formats that are transmitted. The mass media use them as invitees to interviews, news events, photography sessions, guest appearances, pages on websites, social media, and social networks, all of them designed to boost the public's attention and build audiences.

In mass-media market dynamics, the fact that someone is well known can be as important as the content itself since, of course, that produces attention, as well. The celebrity politician is thus just another addition to the already long list of celebrity statuses, now reaching many more spheres of action (Kurzman et al., 2007).

The mediatization of relationships between politicians and journalists, on the one hand, and the decentralization of relationships between politicians and citizens as well as between journalists and the public, on the other, make political communication not only more focused on candidates but also more image oriented, being more polarized, seeking more sensationalism, and becoming less organized around issues and ideologies (Brants & Voltemer, 2011). This precisely provides the ideal conditions for the development of celebrity politics through the emergence of celebrity politicians.

In celebrity politics, an idea-centered politics gives place to a person-centered politics on the basis of characters and their roles. As in the world of spectacle, there is also a personalization of power in politics, and consequently, politics becomes more of a spectacle, more easily transforming the political sphere into a playful scene or a theater of illusion (Schwartzenberg, 1977), in which the triumph of media logic over political logic also finds its expression in the actions of daily political life, as if it were a horse race (Woodard, 1993; Graber, 1976; Sigelman & Bullock, 1991).

The characterization of networked political practice points to the rise of a policy centered on the politician's characters and roles in which, as in a show, there is a personalization of power, opening the ideal space for the production of political celebrities (Castells, 2014).

In the framework of networked politics, it can be said that the "celebrity politician" is based on both the use of mass media mediation to gain popularity or fame among the general public and the complementary use given by the mediation of social networks and social media to gain supporters, structure campaigns, and mobilize the general public (Stromer-Galley et al., 2021). Celebrity politics is also based on the practice of mass-media political commentary for the general public and on the appropriation of social networks and social media to mobilize supporters.

Celebrity politics is a political practice that, by providing the public with news about the politician, makes them popular, allowing them to vie for power in elections. This also makes politicians popular because they can comment on the news and on other politicians. This definition of celebrity politician originated in the model of democratic consensus, which was created at the time of mass-media communication's dominance and which, in the context of the current rupture and communicational change, experiences new formulations and roles for different social actors within the framework of politics. Mass-media experimentation promotes the celebrity politician because it is rooted in the exploration of the need to

simultaneously maintain the mass-media audiences of television and radio as well as the circulation figures of newspapers, and expand them by achieving virality on social networks and social media, which are the central mechanisms for creating economic value for mass media and platforms, whether they be Google with YouTube, Facebook, X/Twitter, TikTok, or others in the Chinese and Russian linguistic and cultural domains.

Celebrity politics is the exercise of a networked politics whose actors are politicians elevated to the social status of celebrities, being characterized by the combination of news about the politician with the mass-media opinion issued by the politician themselves as well as the use of social networks and social media to share them and manage current supporters and recruit potential fans (Stromer-Galley et al., 2021).

At this point in the analysis, there are also two caveats to be made. Firstly, although personalization is a trait of celebrity politics, this does not mean that party structures and other additional political personalities are not equally central to the construction of communication power (Castells, 2007; 2013). Secondly, a model is always a construction that focuses on what is central to its operation, its unique characteristics. However, politics can, and continues to be, performed without a complete integration of the different nodes of the political mediation network. Therefore, when the articulation of the different mediation networks, shapeable for political appropriation, does not occur, there is no maximization of the power of communication in access to political power on the part of these political actors, and thus the conditions necessary for the full exercise of a celebrity politics do not materialize.

However, even if full use of the networks available to the politician is not exercised, we are always in the framework of networked politics that may or may not be a celebrity politics. That being said, the political practice that best maximizes political mediatization is that which adopts the processes of celebritization as its basis.

Celebrity politics is the answer given in the framework of networked communication for how to construct mediated politics once the old way of exercising politics in mass communication no longer allows for the same results to be achieved, in terms of both attention and audiences as well as politicians' fame and the conduct of political practice. In particular, this was because there have been several changes as a result not only of the changing relationship between citizens and the news but also in the field of journalistic narratives, which witnessed the changes in the communicative formulas that remained relatively stable during the duration of mass communication but that no longer work in the same way in the context of networked communication.

However, the adoption of a celebrity politics, based on a mashup of the news, political commentary, and an exercise of generalist opinion by celebrity politicians, is not without its problems—it can even contribute to the creation of new dimensions of communicational disorders.

Specifically, celebrity politics can foster conditions that are more conducive to creating an environment favorable to disinformation. This is because, on the one

hand, the high quantitative weight of television commentary and opinions shared on social networks and social media in the face of the news can create the perception that the news and said opinions have the same value in terms of credibility, and that all opinions, regardless of their origin, have similar credibility to the factual news. On the other hand, by giving elected politicians and frontline party activists the role no longer only of news actors but also of news commentators, erosion occurs at the border existing between the journalistic genres of commentary and the news. This becomes relevant in the context of disinformation as a possible justification for the difficulty of unraveling "fact" from "opinion" when participants on social networks face disinformation in the apparent form of either news or opinion. As Timóteo-Alvarez (2006) suggests, we live in an "intelligent society" in which there is distributed knowledge but where, although it is known that lying is part of politics and that advertising distorts, there is still wide social ignorance about who does it and how information is manipulated to confuse or to create misinformation (Timóteo-Alvarez, 2006).

Communicational populism

As more and more of the news has come to focus more on what goes better or worse in political strategies and the public performances of politicians, and less on the ideas and policy underlying political practice, the characteristics necessary for the development of the "celebrity politician" category as a character element of a networked politics (Valentino et al., 2001) have become aligned more easily.

In the current context of communicational crisis, networked communication has produced new actors in the spheres of business, specifically celebrity businesspeople, and celebrity politics, as a manifestation of the current communicative interruption, and has also given way to the institutionalization of a new type of politician: the celebrity politician.

The celebrity politician is a concept that can be looked at from more than one angle (Wheeler, 2013); For example, West and Orman (2003) proposed to look at celebrity politicians according to the origins of this celebritization, including in this classification all those who could have a political role via their fame, such as celebrities, lobbyists, and elected candidates. However, this proposal relies on the a priori presumption of a negative involvement of celebrities in politics and the attention given to them by the news (Street, 2019).

In turn, Street (2004) proposed a categorization of celebrity politicians according to the nature of their involvement in politics. One can be a celebrity politician either because one has an aspiration to engage in politics or is a politician who has adopted celebrity techniques in their career, or simply by being a celebrity who aspired neither to a position nor to any political responsibility but who has nonetheless become involved in politics.

Seeking to combine the sphere of celebrity creation with the nature of its relationship to politics, Marsh et al. (2010) proposed a typology of five celebrity-politician profiles: (1) the advocate of causes, (2) the activist, (3) the celebrity politician from outside

of politics, (4) the celebrity politician who begins in politics, and (5) the politician who promotes themselves by making use of the celebrity status of others.

The dimension of political performativity associated with the celebrity politician can also offer distinctive characteristics since the representations associated with a given celebrity are also shaped by the conventions we associate with their creation, which genre the celebritization originated in, or where the celebrity gained fame, that is, on a reality show or via television commentary, cinema, music, etc. (Ribke, 2015; Watts, 2020; Arthurs & Shaw, 2016).

Performative genres thus act as processes of proximity between the celebrity and their audience (Street, 2019), in this case between the celebrity politician and their fans in their political fandom (Van Zoonen, 2005).

The mediatization of politics both brings new actors to politics and implies that politicians take on new roles, coinciding with the way the media system is shaped and how the role of the politician in building mass-media audiences or virality on social networks and social media is observed within the system.

Politicians are thus encouraged to take on roles that allow for permanent media visibility, but within the framework designed in the media system. Within the framework of networked communication, the media system's design favors politicians' use of the role of commentator and producer of opinion on television, radio, newspapers, pages or groups on Facebook or similar social networks, or social media such as X/Twitter, Instagram, or TikTok.

The media system, in its current structure, favors giving space and a voice to political actors who assume the role of commentators and opinion producers but who are also available to undertake the construction of personas with characteristics associated with being a celebrity politician (Street, 2004; Marsh et al., 2010).

However, a politician does not become a celebrity politician just by will alone. The role of celebrity-politician implies, first, the informal certification of the politician as belonging to the celebrity category through the appropriation of the role of political commentator.

The informal certification of a politician as a celebrity politician represents one of mass-media journalism's responses to the communicational crisis—or at least to the way it is perceived. In particular, the informal certification of politicians as celebrities emerges as a possible answer to questions such as how to maintain the centrality of news in everyday life for audiences, and how the role of journalism in politics can be maintained by countering journalistic disintermediation within the reach of politicians through social networks and social media.

However, the informal certification of politicians as celebrities is less of an innovation than the assumption of an already old dynamic, as pointed out by Eco in regard to the transition from Paleo-Television to Neo-Television through the adoption of reality TV (Eco, 2018c). As Eco suggests, Paleo-Television was made for all viewers, and talked about ministerial openings and ensured that the public only learned innocent things, even at the cost of telling a lie. Subsequently, as a result of the multiplication of channels and the access of private ownership of television channels, an era of Neo-Television began (Eco, 2018c).

The main feature of Neo-Television was that it talked less and less about the outside world and focused on talking about itself, that is, television itself and the contact it made with its publics. On Neo-Television, it did not matter so much what was said or what was talked about since the public could decide with the remote control when to "let" the television talk and when to switch to another channel. Thus, to deal with this transfer of power into the hands of the viewer, Neo-Television began to try to retain the viewer by bringing them "inside" the broadcast itself: sometimes using specialist commentary to get the viewer to identify with their views; other times with the use of studio audiences, which led the viewer to imagine the possibility of being able to be present during the broadcast, as well as in the same studio that they were seeing on the screen—or yet still with the use of the vox populi to hear what people in the street thought and then broadcast it. Given the above, Neo-Television also gives a special role to the live filming of a given event at a venue, to which the imagination of the audiences is intended to be transported as if they were at the event itself.

When created, Neo-Television was based on a search for a self-reflexive dimension that seeks to remind audiences at all times during the broadcast that reality can only reach us through mediation and not in any other way.

If Paleo-Television had the objective of describing reality by taking on the role of neutrality as a vehicle for the facts, Neo-Television had the objective of revealing its own presence by constantly displaying it as a mechanism for the production of facts. Historically, television has evolved from a mirror of reality to a producer of reality (Eco, 2018c). In this process, the original dichotomy that composed its founding matrix was established by a division between information programs, which must tell the truth anchored in facts and news, and fiction programs, which must entertain the public, but this has now become eroded.

Television information programs increasingly allowed themselves to take on an entertainment role. In this process, television itself began to construct events, as well, instead of its own version of events, through framing, cutting, and selecting reality and then discussing elements of interest. The result of this process of creating events was the entry onto the scene of reality programs, which sought to emphasize the presence of television and produce strategic effects of spontaneity. According to Eco (2018c), this is how Neo-Television has continued to evolve and has striven to emphasize the televised communicative act, rather than the discourse and its content.

However, as proposed by Eco (2018c), this continuous evolution is threatened by the emergence of streaming, whether on YouTube, Netflix, or Twitch, resulting in a redesign of the relationship between television and younger audiences, as well those approaching middle age (Evens et al., 2021; Spilker & Colbjørnsen, 2020; Podara et al., 2021). As a result, there is also a reallocation of advertising that, though traditionally allotted to Neo-Television, is now directed toward social networks, social media, and search engines, thus altering the flow of traditional advertising revenues and creating a crisis in the television sector (Nielsen et al., 2016).

Both of these situations demonstrate how the relationship between Neo-Television and audiences has been subject to intense pressure. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Neo-Television is undergoing a process of uberization due

to the conversion of its traditional flow of content, such as series, documentaries, comedy programs, talk shows, and even sports, to an on-demand offering available at the request of the participants (Hallinan & Striphas, 2016). This uberization is fostered not only by the new streaming platforms, which have appropriated part of the offerings of traditional television, but also by incumbent television broadcasters themselves, which by creating streaming platforms of its own, seek to respond to changing audience practices in an attempt to reconstruct their public and audiences (Budzinski et al., 2021; Colbjørnsen et al., 2021).

What we see on television is the beginning of a third evolutionary stage of television: Uber- Television. Uber-Television is a product of the breakdown of the conditions of continuity that allowed for the relative temporal stability of Neo-Television. Television begins to operate at the request of audiences, in particular in fictional dimensions, which also partly include reality programs. Uber-Television is a television that aims to be imagined as a catalog from which we can make selections. It thus includes both television that is broadcast through streaming platforms such as Netflix and the remaining mass-media television options such as cable, satellite, and free-to-air channels, some of which had begun as Paleo-Television while others formed during the age of Neo-Television (Caseti & Odin, 1990).

What characterizes Uber-Television is the assumption of an algorithmic cultural matrix, both in streaming, which is indeed algorithmic, and in non-streaming, where the algorithmization is simulated in their relation with the audiences.

Uber-Television strives to make us believe that we are choosing what we watch, even when the choice is made completely without our intervention. Television no longer tries to make us believe in its being a vehicle of facts in a neutral matrix, as Paleo-Television did, nor in its essence of fact-producing apparatus, as Neo-Television did. Instead, it aims to present itself as an instrument for the extension of our individual choice.

As a whole, contemporary television itself assumes the role of an instrument that fulfills our desires and which provides a choice tailored to its public. Uber-Television is a television that wishes to show us the dominance of algorithmic choice to satisfy our information needs, able to take the events to us and no longer us to the events. Therefore, it presents itself before its audiences as unavoidable in everyday life. In the relationship that Uber-Television seeks to create with its audiences, we are led to believe that we are asking to see the facts we are watching. It is precisely this idea that television shows us what we want to watch that has formed the basis for the strategy for the revitalization of television audiences and advertising during the last decade.

In the framework of networked communication, Uber-Television arises as a means for television to recover some of its power to create attention, in part lost over the last decade to social networks and social media. Uber-Television also promotes a separation of fiction from the rest of television entertainment and, in so doing, has produced new television dynamics. On Uber-Television, the offering of fiction in television streaming is increased, while at the same time fiction audiences in mass-media television are reduced. In turn, this trend highlights the similarities between the remaining non-fiction entertainment, present on non-streaming television, and televised news information even more, since both

chose to appropriate similar strategies in the search for a representation for ourselves (Hill, 2005; Schudson, 2018). This is why the remaining formats of television entertainment, such as contests, reality shows, live sports, talk shows, and news programs, increasingly share common dynamics, namely sharing the use of an increasing number of guests. These guests are cultivated in the context of television as a creator of celebrities and of the generalization of live broadcasts in news, the later having the function of creating the new narrative that television leads audiences to the facts that personally interest the viewer, while abandoning the old television narrative that television shows all the facts that are important so that people know what is going on.

In Uber-Television, as we have seen, there is an algorithmization of fiction and a simulation of the algorithm for the remaining genres of entertainment and for the news information dimension. As discussed above, the algorithmic simulation is either produced by resorting to the use of guests for commentary and opinions and the proliferation of live broadcasts. It is precisely in this context of the uberization of television that we can situate the emergence of an informal process of celebrity-politician certification centered on television.

The mass-media certification of the politician as a celebrity politician usually occurs when the politician has already made, through their own initiative, attempts to express political opinion through commentary on social networks and social media and, more or less regularly, via some mass-media brands.

The politician is already a face or a name with some familiarity in the minds of audiences. Though they do not yet have the degree of familiarity that implies being the object of some adulation, they might have some fans, and more importantly for the creation of audiences, they might have the potential to generate criticism from said audiences.

For politicians, having the potential to be loved and criticized simultaneously is a characteristic that allows them to generate mass-media audiences as well as virality on social networks and social media.

Finally, the potential for certification as a celebrity politician by mass-media brands increases with a politician's ability to simplify ideas in their speech. Such simplification of the discourse establishes a central domain for politicians both to be able to adapt their discourse to the communicative rules present in television and to allow the message to have characteristics of "media coherence", which ensure that its main idea might remain perceptible when shared in the different communicative forms present in networked communication.

A politician's celebrity certification is a process, not a factual confirmation. It evolves over time, owing to the good results their commentary demonstrates in the creation of mass-media audiences and the viral construction of audiences on social networks and social media. Certification is thus associated with the degree of attention received, measured in terms of the time that the politician enjoys in television and radio broadcasts, the number of people influenced on the different screens and networks, the regularity of the maintenance of mass-media audiences at a high level, and the regularity and quantity of invitations they receive from mass-media brands to comment.

Most importantly, the celebrity politician who is constructed by the mass media is also ranked by it, and different politicians are ranked on the basis of their capacity to produce audiences. In the case of television, this ranking is produced by the social division promoted by television editorialization among three types of political commentators.

Thus, to a higher degree in the editorial ranking, we have what can be called "signed commentary," where there is no contradictory response, only a politician making comments to a journalist who might also ask some questions. In descending order, we find the "regular commentators," those who are frequently present on screens and, secondarily, the "guest commentators," those who are intermittently challenged editorially to give their opinion.

The hierarchy of political commentary is also complemented by a hierarchy of media, where television occupies first place and the written press second, thanks to the visibility and viralitythat can be achieved through sharing on social networks and social media, and finally, radio.

The politician normally begins their career as a guest commentator on television, in newspapers, or on the radio and, as a product of the dynamics inherent in the mass-media celebrity-industrial complex itself, then evolves into a celebrity politician being provided with the possibility to become a regular commentator, and if successful in such a role, they might aspire to one day have a signed commentary. The politician will thus start their mass-media relationship with audiences in the role of a guest, commenting on the news in a journalistic broadcast or in an opinion column, and this commentary may be not only of a political and economic nature but also related to culture or sports.

The next stage of evolution occurs when the politician abandons this guest status to become a regular commentator, entitled to a space with a regular presence in the press headlines, television programs, or radio broadcasts. At that moment, the political commentator becomes a part of the group of people, along with TV anchors, actors, entertainers, and others, that the mass-media brands informally certify as celebrities through the massive amount of mediated attention devoted to them.

The final stage of celebrity politician is reached when mass-media attention catapults them beyond the spaces of commentary that are strictly related to politics, economy, culture, or sports news, to opinion in the broad sense. At that moment, the politician starts to express opinions about everything that is pertinent to them or that establishes something as editorially of interest to the mass-media brands whenever they need to obtain an opinion. The celebrity politician thus abandons the merely informative spaces and starts to move between them and the entertainment spaces, achieving a regular presence on morning talk shows or afternoon or nighttime television and radio programs. They also become a habitual presence at events, parties, and celebrations promoted by mass-media brands.

As can be seen, the creation of celebrity politicians is the result of the need for a response from the mass media to maintain their centrality in the intermediation between politics and citizens.

However, celebrity politicians do not focus their attention only on mass-media brands. On the contrary, they actively seek to make use of

disintermediation dynamics in the face of journalism, endeavoring to talk directly to citizens using posts on social networks and social media that might then be picked up by mass media, giving rise to news and, by doing so, fostering the creation of a cycle of communication of communication (Eco, 2021). Once communication on the networks has begun, and after entering the mass-media brand circuit and obtaining the informal certification as a celebrity from them, it becomes easier to obtain the formal certification that is given or sold by social media and social networking platforms. Certification thus fosters certification.

It should also be noted that political practice can be initiated on the networks, although a high level of social recognition can be reached only when the politician obtains an invitation from a mass-media brand to comment.

In the formal certification developed by social media and social networks, the politician's personal account or profile is designated as "verified," identifying the politician as truly being that person and not an imposter. This therefore allows everything that is done using mass-media brands to also be shared on social networks and social media, and vice versa, allowing for virality of content and thus sustaining the politician's communication practices, which allows them to begin the process as an original source of news creation.

The creation of a political image of the celebrity politician is an element that characterizes the current political context of mediatization and aims to generate, maintain, and strengthen favorable perceptions among the members of the different audiences that a politician intends to reach (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019).

Another element of the characterization of the celebrity politician, besides commentators' rankings and certification by social media and social networks, is the type of political image to be constructed. Searching for a political narrative simplicity as a way to enhance emotional and intellectual accessibility, a celebrity politician aims to shape the perception of different political segments of the public (Bennett, 2016).

This simplicity, as an emotional and intellectual instrument, is particularly well adapted to the mass-media coverage of events. However, it is also present in the basic matrix of populist content, which seeks simple but untrue explanations for reality (Esser, 2008; Cammaerts, 2020). Meanwhile, simplicity also allows the construction of the political image to remain coherent when content is shared across the different platforms offered by networked mediation.

However, political image is not limited to the use of the instrument of communicative simplicity and simple explanations. Political image is also an offshoot of other fundamental elements in social relations and politics, namely the perceived credibility of the politician. In turn, it is also associated with other variables such as honesty, intelligence, sympathy, sincerity, trust, and leadership. The creation of a political image thus depends on the construction and circulation of simplified narratives that make use of an imminently visual rhetoric, normally constructed from videos and images but also complemented with text and perceived credibility (Eberl et al., 2017; Esser, 2008; Lalancette & Raynauld, 2017).

The celebrity politician is a product not only of two processes but also of a given context (Street, 2019). The processes that shape their emergence are the

mediatization and personalization of politics (Esser & Stromback, 2014; Hjarvard, 2013; Langer, 2012; Ribke, 2015), both of which occur in the same historical context—that of the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first—and are characterized by the rise of populist politics, in both content and discourse as well as in the performative and communicative dimensions (Kefford et al., 2021; Moffitt & Tormey, 2014).

If contemporary politics can be defined as a celebrity politics and if the media system more easily seeks and promotes celebrity politicians, can populism also be seen as a consequence of the current communicational crisis?

To try to analyze the relationship between communicational crisis and populism, the Portuguese political system from the last decade provides a clarifying paradigmatic example. This is because Portugal has experienced a lack of relevant populist parties for a long period of time, unlike other European nations, even during the context of the serious economic crisis that began in 2008, which provided fertile ground for the advent of populist parties in several other countries (Santana-Pereira & Cancela, 2020; Salgado, 2019).

However, this exceptional situation came to an end in 2019 with the election of André Ventura as the first representative of the far-right populist party Chega (Heyne & Manucci, 2021). Later, in the early elections of 2022, the Chega party achieved a share of the vote that allowed it to become the third largest political force in the Portuguese parliament.

When analyzing the relationship between the communicational crisis and populism, it should be mentioned that populism is not limited to the use of a discourse with inherently populist content.

Populism is also a communication style based on a certain type of performativity, which may or may not be accompanied by a political message with populist content. When we refer to populism, we are discussing its communicative dimension in addition to the adoption of a given political content of a populist nature.

Communicational populism thus refers to how a politician chooses a given populist style of performance and selection of the stages for mediation, as well as how the relationship with the audience is established (Moffitt, 2016).

The hypothesis proposed here is that Portugal emerges as a case study where the success of populist political parties manifested itself later in comparison with other countries. The reason for this late manifestation is related to the occupation of mass-media space by politicians utilizing a populist communicative performativity but without populist content, a situation resulting from the 2016 election, and 2021 reelection, of Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa as the President of the Portuguese Republic.

This Portuguese political example thus provides an interesting example of how, in networked communication, communicational populism is closely linked to the emergence of a celebrity politics, which in turn is fueled by celebrity politicians and in which the communicative performativity of populism can act to limit the reach of populist content.

The Portuguese case study allows the identification of two examples of celebrity politicians, one of whom, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, does not have a discourse of populist content and the other of whom, André Ventura, does indeed adopt it,

but both of whom guide their political action by resorting to a communicational populism (De Vreese et al., 2018).

The first example discussed here is that of Ventura, leader of the Chega party. He is a politician with a far-right populist discourse who, throughout his career as a politician, became a regular commentator in sports and in politics, and has directly explored all the nodes of mediation networks at his disposal, from television to social networks and social media, to convey his message (Serrano, 2020).

He built his celebritization by using opinion and television commentary, but later focused his attention on sharing news about himself on social networks and about his opinions in the first person on social media, notably X/Twitter, connecting all his communication to a clearly populist political content (Serrano, 2020).

In turn, the second case analyzed here is that of Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, a center-right Portuguese politician who, throughout the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, shaped his mass-media presence through the use of opinion, first in the written press, then on radio, and finally on television with an airtime of signed commentary.

Although Rebelo de Sousa subsequently carried out some innovative appropriations in the indirect use of social networks and social media, to be discussed below, he is a politician who focused his activity on constructing his role as a celebrity in the space of political commentary on television. He reached the highest level of Portuguese politics when he was elected as President of the Republic in 2019, thanks to the recognition he obtained through mass-media commentary (Figueiras, 2019; Lopes & Botelho, 2019; Lopes & Espírito Santo, 2019; Lopes, 2017).

However, Rebelo de Sousa always refused to use populist political content throughout his political career and as a commentator, instead adopting practices that can clearly be framed as communicational populism (Moffitt, 2016).

If the style of performance, the selection of mediation stages, and the shaping of their relationship with their audiences are defining elements of the practice of communicational populism by a politician, then it is also important to understand how each politician defines themselves and the extent to which there are similarities in the way their styles are constructed and communicated (Street, 2019; Alexander, 2011; Corner, 2018; Rai, 2015; Moffitt & Tormey, 2013).

On the basis of the current analysis and in the light of the duality proposed by Wood et al. (2016) between what one may call "everyday" celebrity politicians and "superstar" celebrity politicians, one can try to associate both of these analyzed Portuguese politicians with these profiles.

While the proposals of West and Orman (2003), Street (2004; 2019), and Marsh et al. (2010) focus essentially on the categorization of political practice and the origins of those in politics, all of them are dependent on the object of study of political science. However, the proposal of Matthew Wood et al. (2016) offers a definition focused on communicative categories, in particular the most privileged media platform, the marketing techniques, and its performative role.

Thus, for Wood et al. (2016), the "superstar" category essentially refers to the celebrity politician who focuses on broadcasting, that is, having a habitual presence on television programs, choosing to construct their public identity through

interviews in staged environments as a marketing technique, and seeking to play an exceptional role as a strong and decisive leader in performativity, as opposed to the ordinary citizen, who is perceived as "weaker," "more emotional," or "more vulnerable."

In turn, the "everyday" category (Wood et al., 2016) essentially refers to the celebrity politician who chooses to make use of mediation on social networks and social media such as Facebook or X/Twitter. However, they also do not disregard the possibility of making use of content inspired by reality TV. They choose spontaneity as a marketing technique for the construction of their public-facing identity, engaging in apparently ad hoc visits and acting in a friendly and open manner during interviews. Celebrity politicians in this category regularly make "gaffes" as a way to increase their appeal and to choose an authentic role in performativity. This is something that seeks to show the "politician" as an inevitably flawed individual and gives them an "authentic" quality, in contrast to other, more reserved politicians (Wood et al., 2016).

However, as will be verified regarding the two Portuguese politicians under analysis, in performativity the oppositions between "strong and decisive leader," associated with the "superstar" category, and "authentic," associated with the celebrity politician of the "everyday" category, seem to function as mutually exclusive. In contrast, the other categories function in complementarity rather than in opposition to each other, promoting hybrid appropriations. Hence, instead of trying to define mutually exclusive categories, it seems equally interesting to attempt to identify factors that celebrity politicians have in common. If this is achieved, we will most likely find them in their appropriation (or lack thereof) of communicational populism.

Populism is not merely a political phenomenon; it is also a communicational phenomenon (McQuail & Deuze, 2020), and it refers not only to the political message's content but also to the style of communication employed (De Vreese et al., 2018; Moffitt, 2016), although normally there is an indistinct relationship between populist dimensions, content, and communication, as if the adoption of one implies the use of the other. In fact, as shown by the Portuguese and other cases, it is possible to identify a communicational populism where the populist political content is absent. For example, as governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger adopted a populist communicational style but did not do so in content (O'Sullivan, 2021); thus, he was a celebrity politician who practiced communicational populism but who did not present a discourse of populist content (Street, 2019). Boris Johnson is another example of a celebrity politician who adopted both communicative and populist-based content, in the case of Brexit. However, once he was in the government, he adopted other political positions that were not so clearly populist in content, although he did not abandon communicational populism at his level of choices regarding the style of performance, the selection of mediation stages, and the shaping of relationships with audiences (Street, 2019). In turn, both Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky arise as two examples of celebrity politicians with a populist discourse and the practice of communicational populism. Even more than Trump, Zelensky is a paradigmatic example of the appropriation of populism in content and communication, namely because he first assumed the role of President of

Ukraine on the fictional TV series Servant of the People and later created a party of the same name and proceeded to be elected as President of Ukraine in 2019.

Zelensky began his career as part of the talent programs that cover the entire geographical area of Russian-speaking pop culture, becoming a television celebrity through the presentation of a series of live shows, television contests, and comedy sketches that were increasingly centered on politics (Kaminskij, 2022). Starting in 2015, he starred in the aforementioned popular TV series as a teacher who is unexpectedly elected as President of Ukraine (Kushnir, 2022; Peña, 2021). The plot of this series, lasting three seasons and 51 episodes, was the basis for Zelensky's access to the candidacy for the Presidency of Ukraine. It focused on the adventures of a history teacher, played by Zelensky, who one day makes a speech to his students about the mismanagement of their school, the corrupt political class in Ukraine, and the future of a society that values mathematics more than history. Students film the speech on their phones and put the video on YouTube, where it then goes viral. His students begin a campaign to raise funds to nominate their history teacher for the upcoming presidential election and, after some time, the character wakes up as Ukraine's newly elected president.

The narrative of a normal and decent citizen who rises to the highest position of public trust in a democracy generated a chain reaction among audiences, creating a fertile environment for the author and main protagonist of the series, Zelensky, to become formally involved in politics (Kaminskij, 2022).

When Zelensky, through a year-end televised message, officially announced his candidacy for the presidential election in December 2018, the public perception among political experts was still that it was only a public relations stunt associated with a marketing campaign in anticipation of the premiere of the next season of the series.

The third season of Servant of the People, which unlike previous seasons had only three episodes, was released on March 27, just three days before the first round of elections on March 31, with the clear intention of acting as a tool for the election campaign. The day after the third and final episode of the series came out, Zelensky won the first round of the presidential election with 30% voter support. The series thus transcended the world of fiction and entered real politics, emerging as a paradigmatic reversal of what was called the culture of real virtuality (Castells, 2002). If the culture of real virtuality is the product of the penetration of a real character into a fictional narrative, here we see the reverse, with fiction entering reality through the real candidacy of a fictional candidate.

Although his initial training as a celebrity politician did not come from opinion news, Zelensky's election is both a paradigmatic example of celebrity politics and an exception that confirms the rules that act in the creation of celebrity politicians. As with Donald Trump, television entertainment played a central role in Zelensky's formation as a celebrity politician. However, while Donald Trump participated, between 2011 and 2015, in both reality television programs such as The Apprentice and as a political commentator on the information program Fox & Friends, Zelensky presents an original path in his formation as a celebrity politician. In his case, there was no role played by television political commentary. On the

contrary, it was political fiction that, over the course of three seasons of the fiction television series, made it possible for him to publicly express his political opinion which, moreover, was nothing more than giving a media voice to the perspectives of the common views of the Ukrainian population.

Both during the periods of Russian pre-invasion and invasion, as well as during the period of electoral campaigning, Zelensky adopted a clear practice of communicational populism. Populist discourse was essentially visible during the election campaign period, structuring its positions around an attack on the Ukrainian political elites, seen as the cause of Ukraine's problems.

Zelensky's use of communicational populism can be exemplified through one of the most bizarre moments of the 2019 election campaign—the televised presidential debate between Petro Poroshenko and Zelensky, the two winners of the first round of the election.

The debate took place two days before the second round of the election, seeking to compare Zelensky's campaign with the parallel narrative of a fourth "season" of the series the Servant of the People, having staged it as if it were a political mega show (Horbyk, 2020).

During the election campaign, Zelensky used the strategy of avoiding participating in a debate until he decided to go on the offensive, posting a video in a dynamic and challenging style in which he invited his opponent to a debate, establishing the conditions that it be carried out in the stadium where the video was being filmed and with the Ukrainian people in attendance in the stands (Horbyk, 2020).

During the debate, in which each candidate stood on either side of a stage built in the stadium as if they were the goal posts of a football match, Zelensky made use of multiple populist approaches in content and communicative form, employing his final question time to, in the style of stand-up comedy, put forth a series of questions one after the other that were allegedly submitted by ordinary Ukrainians on the web. He ended the debate by kneeling before the audience in the stadium as a sign of respect and inviting his opponent to do the same (Horbyk, 2020).

Zelensky's anti-status-quo campaign for the Ukrainian presidency focused on criticizing the corruption of the Ukrainian political system and the high polarization of society, appealed to Russian-speaking regions, and was held almost entirely online, without public speeches, rallies, or press conferences (Peña, 2021; Horbyk, 2020).

The final vote showed a choice in which Ukrainian voters turned their backs on a right-wing and elitist populism led by Ukrainian "intellectuals" and status quo politicians in favor of an egalitarian populism provided by mass media through fiction (Kaminskij, 2022).

However, his campaign is also an example of the successful use of networked communication for political purposes. Zelensky relied on the celebritization he obtained in television entertainment to complete his message, along with the use of Instagram and Facebook, seeking in them a journalistic disintermediation to gain direct access to voters through their screens. Instagram was his social media of choice, on which he posted many videos that were positioned as not clearly political,

avoiding any strong and well-defined promises and concentrating instead on ridiculing his opponent according to the narrative created in the series Servant of the People (Horbyk, 2020). Zelensky was absent from the mass media news mediation but not from the mass media entertainment mediation, as demonstrated by the third season of Servant of the People released in the last days of the first round of the election or the debate in the Olympic stadium.

Zelensky's victory was created on the basis of the use of a narrative sustained through different platforms. Television was his starting point for the construction of a transmedia narrative, but this time applied to politics and not merely to fiction (Jenkins, 2011; Horbik, 2020).

The Servant of the People series represents the starting point of the process in which integral elements of fiction are systematically dispersed through multiple distribution channels with the objective of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience, giving rise to a transmedia narrative of political objectives (Jenkins, 2011). Each of the media involved, both before and during the election period, made a unique contribution to the unfolding of history, in this case, in the candidacy for the Presidency of Ukraine, immersing the audience in a typically emotional narrative of fiction that eroded and unbalanced the role of rational deliberation associated with the traditional coverage of political battles.

The case study of Zelensky's election, as an example of the simultaneous appropriation of populist content and populist communication practices, demonstrates how celebrity politics can also follow the same logics of social media entertainment (Cunningham & Craig, 2019) and be based on the use of political fiction inspired by the values of liberal democracy as well as on the management dynamics of social networks and media born in Silicon Valley, anchored, simultaneously, by innovative narrative techniques originating in Hollywood. In the specific example of Zelensky, the Russian-speaking ukrainian public's deeply rooted nostalgia for Soviet entertainment and intellectual culture also played a role (Kaminskij, 2022).

In the dimension of content, populism is characterized by political actors seeking to use references directly centered on citizens, fostering opposition between the people versus elites or among the people versus certain minority groups in society (De Vreese et al., 2018). In its communicational dimension, populism should be understood as the search, through communication, for proximity to the ordinary citizen through an active search for journalistic disintermediation. Communicational populism is characterized by seeking to reach citizens by dismissing the journalist as an intermediary or by reducing and even modifying the traditional role of journalism in the process of mediation between politicians and citizens.

The disintermediation of journalism can occur directly or indirectly. When it occurs indirectly, the politician favors the passing of their political message through the use of opinion and commentary instead of through the news in the media. In turn, direct disintermediation is processed through the use of social networks and social media (De Vreese et al., 2018).

Within the framework of communicational populism, direct disintermediation can also assume that the celebrity politician will partake in the practice of

sharing the news published about themselves in the media on social networks and social media after the fact. This news is shared, regardless of its positive or negative dimension, as a way of galvanizing supporters by celebrating good news or by the viral sharing of criticism and rejection of the journalist's work when it points to criticism of the politician.

The analysis of Portuguese politician André Ventura's path provides a significant example of celebrity politics centered in the extreme right's clearly populist discourse, although it also adopts practices of communicational populism. Ventura is thus an example of the role played by mass-media brands in the informal certification of a celebrity politician.

Ventura experienced the beginning of celebritization through access to the Portuguese mass-media space as a football commentator on television in 2016. Later, he was successively the candidate for mayor of the Loures Municipality in the urban area of the capital Lisbon, representing the Social Democratic Party (PSD), a center-right party of conservative and popular orientation. There, he gained mass-media attention thanks to his populist-content political proposals against ethnic minorities, later being elected as the founder of the new extremist right-wing populist party Chega to the Portuguese Parliament, Assembleia da República, as a representative in 2019 and presenting himself as a presidential candidate in 2021, using mass media and social media and social networks communication to publish his populist declarations and legislative proposals.

In the short period of only five years between 2016 and 2021, the political image of Ventura was constructed through a populist communicational practice and the judicious choice of populist content—always imbued with a confrontational, emotional, sensationalist, and simplifying logic of reality—using the media formats of television and the press to reach a high level of political celebrity, first in sports commentary in defense of the football club Sport Lisboa e Benfica, the largest Portuguese club in terms of number of supporters, and later as leader of the Chega party, implementing a rhetoric in defense of those he called the "good Portuguese" against the "other" Portuguese.

His combative stance "against everything and against everyone," those he points to as part of the elite, increased his fan base on Facebook. As a celebrity politician, Ventura's base of followers on social networks and social media appears to be immediately associated with the initial stage of creating fame and popularity in association with football commentary, which grew solidly and increased exponentially with his election to the Assembly as a representative of the Chega party in October 2019.

Ventura's media exposure via television commentary was followed chronologically by extensive news coverage associated with his controversial candidacy for the Loures City Council and his populist statements about the Roma community. He enjoyed high media exposure, and subsequently, it was the Facebook pages and groups linked to him and to Chega that sustained this media celebritization. These pages and groups have registered a solid growth in followers over the years, to a large extent sustained by news from the mass-media brands that was shared there, usually characterized as critical news by Ventura himself.

As with other politicians, there is also a symmetrical benefit associated with Ventura between the objectives of the politician (e.g., gaining support and votes) and those of mass-media communication (e.g., gaining audiences and publicity), in this case being particularly visible on Facebook.

The virality of Ventura's comments have boosted the growth of his mass of followers on his party's Facebook pages, but it has also fostered the content's "virality" on the Facebook pages of the mass-media brands of television, radio, and press that cover his activities and statements.

Mass-media mediation benefits from the "virality" associated with Ventura, especially regarding controversial content such as the proposal for chemical castration of pedophiles or the introduction of the death penalty in Portugal. In turn, this same virality has led the mass media to update their marketing strategies through the recycling of news content that has already had success in the past, republishing past content as featured news and thus increasing the virality of Ventura's controversial phrases and proposals.

Mass-media brands, whose economic model on social networks and social media depends on clicks and advertising associated with their news and opinion columns, have generalized the practices of recycling headlines that had already generated virality in the past, giving rise to news items being shared by pages and groups associated with the Chega party and its leader. This phenomenon has been especially visible since 2019, and even includes the republication of news items by mass-media brands from 2017 and 2018, which at the time of their original publication had more limited visibility.

In the context of social networks, where the most controversial content tends to generate more interactions, Ventura's populist discourse has served as a driver of quantitative metrics, which have often served in turn as a measure of success for those who post about it.

Ventura's visibility on Facebook has thus enabled the development and growth of a political communication platform centered on his official page and the Chega party page, which over time has become much more relevant, in terms of reach on Facebook, than the pages of the mass-media brands that have published news about this politician. Thus, the intermediation of mass-media brands on Facebook has lost political relevance over time because Ventura exercises his role of celebrity politician on his own, speaking directly to his followers. This was demonstrated during the 2021 presidential campaign, with the news that was shared by Ventura's Facebook page having the highest recorded number of interactions (Palma et al., 2021). As a result of his combination of populist themes and the journalistic disintermediation of communicational populism, Ventura managed to go from a mass-media celebrity associated with football commentary to the populist leader of the third largest Portuguese party in a very short time.

However, when analyzing the communication practice of another celebrity politician, Rebelo de Sousa, during the five years of media exposure that correspond to his first term as the President of the Portuguese Republic (2016-2021), it is possible to observe a populist communicational performativity, as well, but one that does not resort to populist content. It can be seen how his past as a political

commentator shaped the way mass-media brands built the political narrative of his mandate (Figueiras, 2019; Lopes & Botelho, 2019; Lopes & Espírito Santo, 2019; Lopes, 2017).

However, in these analyses, it is also possible to understand how the former political commentator shaped his own presidential communication practice through television mediation and an innovative appropriation of social networks and social media to create a new practice of political communication on the basis of communicational populism.

Throughout his early years as President of the Republic, Rebelo de Sousa's political communication was based on a journalistic disintermediation populist communicational strategy favoring three instruments: the active search for the celebritization of the office of the President of the Republic, the management of the political agenda as if it were a format of televised reality, and the creation of an informal mechanism for distribution of presidential individual endorsements through selfies on social networks and social media.

The office of President of the Republic of Portugal is a one-person position, with a woman or a man being elected to the office, so the power is constitutionally endorsed and resides in only one person. The Presidency of the Republic, as a political institution, is held by the President of the Republic.

Referring to the person in the office of the "President of the Republic" just by their name instead of their title and family name is not a custom that is commonly practiced in mass-media journalist discourse during a politician's first term in office. Usually, journalists refer to the politician who is currently president by the title "President" followed by their name and family name, such as "President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa" or "President Rebelo de Sousa." Thus, a politician is introduced using the title and first and last names to emphasize their position as President of the Republic. With the President of the Republic Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, the opposite happened, both by media choice and political will.

Even on social networks and social media, it is extremely difficult to find a reference to politician Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa as "President of the Republic." Rather, his first name, "Marcelo," is the most widely used. The same is also true in political commentary, whether it be on television, in writing, or on the radio, with the choice being "Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa" or his first name, "Marcelo."

This practice derives from both the prior media visibility of the politician and the fact that the political communication strategy of Rebelo de Sousa, as President, is aimed at the promotion of journalistic disintermediation. Such a strategy is sought through a communicational performance that allows him to sometimes communicate as if he still maintains his role as a former television commentator and he is not the current President of the Republic.

As a political commentator, the politician Rebelo de Sousa was asked to comment on news items or took the initiative himself to comment on all the topics and issues that he chose, and as President of the Republic, he has continued the same practice. The politician, as President of the Republic, is available to talk about all the social, cultural, political, sports, and economic issues that he deems relevant. At the same time, journalists have maintained the practice of asking his opinion about

everything, as if he were still the former commentator. The ultimate example of this dynamic arose when Rebelo de Sousa, as President of the Republic, called directly to the newsrooms of television or talk shows to express his opinions live on air regarding current issues, or decided to talk to the presenters or anchors themselves.

These practices, both of Rebelo de Sousa as well as those editorially sanctioned by mass-media brands, are presented as a formula to maintain celebrity politician status, even though Rebelo de Sousa could no longer comment on the news in the studio because he had become President of the Republic.

The continuity of the dynamic of commentary, initiated outside the presidential office and continued there, celebritizes the politician as well as the position that the politician holds. In turn, this dynamic allows for the maintenance of their status as a celebrity politician and their high ratings in the polls, as well as offering high audience levels to mass-media brands, all at the same time. This happens both through the news and in live streaming where, before journalists, the celebrity politician presents their opinion on almost all the current news. Thus, regardless of whether their opinions are relevant to political actuality, they shape it.

A second dimension of Rebelo de Sousa's political communication practice has to do with the management of his daily political agenda as if it were a format for reality television. A reality show is a television format where the action takes place in an enclosed space with a plot that emphasizes the personal characteristics of the participants to the point of meeting our social stereotypes and allowing us to access what is normally the sphere of the subjects' intimate reserve. In the same way, Rebelo de Sousa's presidential agenda is managed as if it were a reality television format.

The physical space is the Belém Palace, the residence and workplace of the President of Portugal. Television audiences are "invited" to enter, for example, through the televised political commentary program recorded there, in which the President of the Republic is the special guest. Likewise, interviews are filmed and broadcast there. On a daily basis, the media attention given to the activity of the president's public agenda causes the public to be permanently "invited" to imagine the president doing something from his office, whether that is making a phone call to a morning TV show with high ratings or simply carrying out everyday, routine tasks such as going out to events and returning to the palace.

Unlike previous presidents, it is not the political interest of their agenda that determines journalistic coverage of Rebelo de Sousa; rather, it is the editorial perception that what the president does is always of interest to the population because he is a celebrity politician. This editorial perception, of course, also meets the need of audiences for mass-media brands.

The media following the presidential agenda approaches the "voyeurism" associated with reality television programs in such a way that even what is not covered by journalistic coverage becomes the target of journalistic attention. For example, a visit by Rebelo de Sousa, without live news coverage, to a socially depressed area near the portuguese capital, such as the Bairro da Jamaica, was at the time presented as an "extra" part of his activity.[23] Even though it was not broadcasted, when the President met with people labeled by some on social media as "criminals," there was criticism after this visit from the police regarding the visit itself,

which, in turn, gave rise to a news story where audiences were invited to imagine the previously made visit, of which there was no video record. This left audiences with the feeling of having missed something important from this political "reality show." This is because Rebelo de Sousa manages a daily presidential agenda that almost always is televised, so the absence of such images gives rise to a feeling of loss among the public.

Decisions regarding both the private and public agendas of the President of the Republic are made by his office, with the public decisions being shared with journalists and the private ones remaining confidential. This contributes to the persistence of the socially shared myth that the presidency is a "one-man show," or rather that Rebelo de Sousa organizes everything himself and decides everything himself, something which, in turn, is another element of proximity between the methods of political management and the formats of reality television programs. In these formats, the viewer is led to think that there is no plot ruling the participants' actions, when in reality this idea of the absence of a plot constitutes an essential part of the design and success of the plot itself (Hill, 2005).

Finally, the third communicational instrument of Rebelo de Sousa's presidency is the result of the adoption of a practice brought about by the public themselves. Before the covid pandemic, in the period of 2016-2020, given his dimension as a celebrity politician, President Rebelo de Sousa was the object of repeated requests for selfies by citizens during his travels throughout the country and while visiting Portuguese communities abroad. The journalistic editorialization of these individual requests, later translated into news regarding the incidents, resulted in new citizens approaching Rebelo de Sousa to obtain a photo or selfie with him, which they then shared with friends on social networks and social media. The constant repetition of this practice led almost to its institutionalization, bringing it closer to the presidential mechanism of granting a formal presidential endorsement.[24]

Through his personal practice, Rebelo de Sousa created a new form of symbolic endorsement attribution, now granting it to individual or groups of citizens instead of events via his presence in selfies taken using their mobile phones to be shared on social networks and social media with their friends and the wider population.

Although the most common formula for presence on social networks and social media is usually publication by the politician themselves, as exemplified in the case of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's use of Instagram (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019), Rebelo de Sousa's practice of selfies shows that there are other, more unique ways to establish and reinforce both an emotional (or pathos) as well

23 https://www.dn.pt/poder/marcelo-visitou-o-bairro-da-jamaica-e-deu-um-beijo-a-mae-de-hortencio-10533940.html.

24 Presidential endorsement is a symbolic instrument that the President of the Republic can grant to events that they consider relevant and likely to gain public prominence, which are normally allocated independently of whether the president is able to appear in person at them.

as rational (or logos) connection with citizens (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019).

During his first term, President Rebelo de Sousa did not have personal accounts on social networks and social media, or at least, not ones that were active. Thus, within the framework of celebrity politics, the communication practice of selfies with Rebelo de Sousa has a double logic. On the one hand, what we can call "Belém on TV," or the presence of the president's agenda on television, serves the purpose of emotionally and rationally linking him to older generations, or those who grew up with television (Colombo & Aroldi, 2003).[25]25 On the other hand, the communication practice of selfies is intended to create emotional and rational bonds with generations that have and continue to grow up with social networks and social media and the Internet.

These selfies thus establish an updated version of the symbolic mechanism of the president's granting of "high endorsement" as an expression of interest regarding the importance of a given event, now incorporated into the practice and idea that all the places where the President of the Republic travels to are important and that all those he encounters deserve to be symbolically highlighted as important, as well.

The presidential selfies constitute a symbolic distinction that can be generalized to all Portuguese citizens who come into contact with the president, unlike the decorations of orders of merit and military, which can only be awarded in special cases. Since social networks and social media are spaces to share things with friends, sharing gives a much greater communicative reach than the number of people the president can aspire to "touch" in person. Thus, despite not having an active presidential account on either social networks or social media, Rebelo de Sousa "is" on social networks and social media. His image is shared by millions, giving it a dynamic of virality and the popularity necessary to maintain the role of "celebrity politician" on social networks and social media.

However, communicational strategies are not without their dangers, as suggested by the President of the Republic's response to the criticism of the police regarding his selfie in the Boavista neighborhood: "I am President of all Portuguese citizens, when I walk on the street in contact with the Portuguese people I do not ask for criminal, fiscal, or moral records to talk to them or take selfies, I do it with everyone."[26]

At the celebrations for the Day of Portugal and Portuguese Communities in Boston in 2018, President Rebelo de Sousa defended the notion that the only way to combat populism is to be close to the people. The argument he put forward can be summarized by the idea that the adoption of a practice of communicational populism is the best way to combat politicians who propagate populist political content.[27] At the very least, that is what can be concluded from an analysis of his

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25 The Belém Palace in Lisbon, Portugal, is the residence and official place of work of the President of the Portuguese Republic.

26 https://sol.sapo.pt/artigo/645195/marcelo-responde-a-criticas-qu quando-ando-pela-rua-nao-peco-o-cadastro-criminal-para-falar-ou-tirar-selfies.

27 https://www.publico.pt/2018/06/11/politica/noticia/marcelo-nos-eua-o-verairo presidente-do-povo-da-receita-contra-o-populismo-1834067.

political communication here, which seems to demonstrate the success of communicational populism as a way to maximize, simultaneously, the objectives of political communication, such as election rates and popularity; those of social networks and social media brands, such as virality; and those of mass-media brands, such as audience levels.

Rebelo de Sousa's discourse and communication practice seem to demonstrate that communicational populism seems to have worked well for his goal of containing the creation and success of populist political forces in Portugal over an extended period—from 2016 to 2019.

Mass-media mediation uses politics in the same way as it does reality programs. It values a "celebrity politics," certifying "celebrity politicians" in the same way that it certifies celebrities on reality shows. This is a symbiotic relationship from which both parties profit: Mass-media brands profit from increasing television audiences and virality on social networks and social media, while the politician profits by becoming more popular and thus expanding their potential electoral base. However, the relationship will only succeed if the politician functions according to the rules of media celebritization and if both the politician and the mass-media brands assume that being a "celebrity" is something socially positive. The politician should be available to show "something more" of their life, in an attempt to reduce the distance of individual reserve, although it cannot be as reduced as that of any another citizen. For example, this "something more" can be exemplified by the television coverage from the night of the Portuguese presidential election in January 2021 and the coverage of then-candidate Rebelo de Sousa's arrival at his home in a suburban area of Lisbon. After voting, at approximately 7:30 p.m., he was filmed getting out of his car with his jacket on his arm and luggage in hand and entering his house, all the while answering questions from journalists. Among other information that constituted live news, audiences were informed by Rebelo de Sousa himself that his dinner, on the night of his reelection, would be a steak with fried eggs, chips, and rice, a traditional Portuguese dish. A different but equally demonstrative episode involved Ventura's pet rabbit, who had the honor of posing for a photo shoot. Both of these episodes show that everything related to the everyday life of celebrity politicians becomes news. Everything is appropriate for the space of politics, giving rise to a practice of celebrity politics.

These two "celebrity politicians," viz. Rebelo de Sousa and Ventura, are examples of a top position in the ranking of political commentary and, at the same time, of an exception. This is because both are politicians who, after long periods of practicing political opinion commentary on mass media, started to hold elected positions and ceased to occupy regular commentary spaces on television. Despite this, they still managed to carry out an opinion-based politics, contributing to the creation of a political sphere to the detriment of a public sphere (Habermas, 1998). They do so as a result of the celebritization previously achieved, either through the commentary associated with the daily news, which journalists ask them for, as is the case with the President of the Republic Rebelo de Sousa, or through sharing news on social networks and social media, as is the case with Ventura, the leader of the populist Chega party.

In the analysis of this phenomenon of political celebritization, we are faced with two spheres of mediation: that of the mass media, and that of social networks and social media. Both are part of a networked political practice that enables the creation of "celebrity politicians" and promotes a "celebrity politics" on the basis of a "policy of opinion."

Both are a manifestation of dynamics associated with a communicational interregnum in which mass media seek to maintain audiences, shaping politicians in the image of other members of its celebrity system, and in which politicians accept these rules to obtain more votes through popularization.

Celebrity politics is a product of the demand for mass-media brands to guarantee audiences and virality in the networks, forming celebrity politicians, but then, in turn, celebrity politicians appropriate the use of communicational populism to ensure greater effectiveness of mediated communication in a context of networked communication. This is a proven way to enhance their audiences on mass media and their virality on social networks and social media.

In the framework of networked communication, it seems clear that, for politicians to reach out to citizens and have solid chances of winning an electoral dispute, it becomes necessary to build a profile of political celebrity during a given period of time. This opens up their access to mass media, which in turn allows for the certification of the politician on social networks and social media. Likewise, it seems clear that communicative performativity, which seems to ensure better results, is associated with a communicational populism, as it is the one that best enhances the resources of networked communication and allows for an overlap of objectives between those outlined by mass-media brands, social networks and social media, and politicians. However, this communicational populism does not necessarily have to adopt populist content; indeed, it can only be fully realized through a populist communication style in which populist content is absent.

The proliferation of celebrity politics, the creation of celebrity politicians, and the widespread adoption of communicational populism do not solely translate into the problems identified above regarding the success and development of political populism, because as Paquete de Oliveira says, those who benefit from a conquered hegemony attain the role of silencer for the rest (Paquete de Oliveira, 2017)

With the adoption by celebrity politicians of the journalistic disintermediation offered by communicational populism and observing, at the same time, their acceptance and editorial encouragement by the mass media, the emergence of new communicative disorders within the framework of formation of public opinion and the potential scope of a public sphere is also enhanced (Habermas, 1989).

Public opinion can be seen as an infrastructure historically contextualized by different measurement instruments, media, and conceptions of public opinion (Herbst, 2001). According to this definition, public opinion is the meaning shared by individuals. It is measured through polls and surveys and then communicated publicly through newspaper, radio, and television, giving rise, in turn, to a shared perception of the symbolic space where this opinion is formed: the public sphere.

The public sphere also has a historical evolution rooted in the social context in which it is perceived by its potential participants. For Habermas (1989), the public

sphere that arose in the decades prior to the French Revolution constitutes an ideal type and could be described as the product of the critical debate among audiences comprising an interested and engaged elite. Individual opinion was thus formed through listening to and participating in the conversation. At the same time, it was influenced by the reading of policy treaties, letters, novels, and plays and disseminated through these media and through interpersonal contact between members of the public. In turn, the formation of public opinion in the Information Age can also be described as a standard ideal in which infrastructure is the product of public debate, potentially including the whole of society as well as its diversity, in which individual opinion is formed through access to reading, listening to, and watching the news and other information. It is disseminated through the sharing of information, whether edited or not, to incorporate personal opinions and is intended to once again sustain communication of communication practices on social networks and social media.

Updating Herbst's (2001) proposal, "networked public sphere" could be defined as the product of public opinion from the beginning of the twenty-first century, consisting of the shared meaning by a group of individuals who assume the social role of participants in communication and whose opinions are shaped through the practice of different forms of communication that are contained in networked communication. This is measured through polls and surveys and then communicated through newspaper, radio, and television, as well as on social networks and social media.

However, the analysis of the practices and dynamics of maximizing audiences fostered by mass media enhances the transformation of this ideal of the networked public sphere into a simulacrum of itself. What we are witnessing in the network society has more of a resemblance to the creation of what one may call a networked "political sphere" than a networked public sphere.

The political sphere is made up of all those who comment and produce opinion, informally certified by the mass media through the publication of opinions in online and paper newspapers, television commentary, and radio and then shared by those brands on social networks and social media. The simulacrum of the public sphere, led by the creation of a political sphere and mobilized by the mass media, is based on the mediatization of the communication practice of the diverbio of ideas, to the detriment of the use of the debate of ideas.

The mass-media opinion is communicated by the mass media as being "the opinion that counts," namely utilizing the argument that it is an opinion that can reach a wide range of publics in the form of audiences or viral content when associated with a mass-media brand, but also using the argument that it is a "higher-quality opinion" because it is selected editorially or because it is executed by journalists and, as such, is in a superior hierarchical position compared with other types of opinion existing in networked communication.

The mass-media narrative regarding the conveyed opinion in and of itself creates a representation of public opinion as dependent on opinion originating in the mass media through a journalistic gatekeeping. As such, it is informally certifiable as having the conditions necessary to ensure virality on social media and

social networks. This is despite the fact that what motivates mass-media brands is not the creation of public opinion but rather the maintenance of audiences to ensure their economic viability. However, the indirect result of their actions is a limitation of the potential of the contemporary public sphere.

By limiting the dynamics associated with the formation of contemporary public opinion, especially those that are not the product of radio, television, and newspapers, the broad symbolic space that characterizes a networked public sphere is renewed to become a more contained symbolic space managed by mass media.

The creation of a political sphere, which results in the containment of the development of a wider public sphere as well as the establishment of a "political opinion" that subverts the basic conditions for the existence of a public opinion, is thus encouraged by the mass media and political practice since public opinion can only thrive if the communicational conditions privilege the search for convergence of opinions and formation of consensus on the same topic, a clear expression of the different judgments regarding said topic, and the participation of a large number of individuals in this creation (Rieffel, 2005).

Networked communication

Phenomena such as augmented experience, communicational capitalism, the novelization of the news, the new social ideal of an informed person, a political sphere based on celebrity politics, and the widespread adoption of a communicational populism are some examples of the communicative disorders that are perceived as the product of a communicational crisis.

However, these are just some of the most important manifestations and the attempts to respond to it, since many more manifestations of communicative disorders have emerged at the center of our daily attention or from research over the past few decades. Examples of this proliferation of communicative disorders can be found in phenomena such as tabloidization, filter bubbles, clickbait, algorithmic radicalization, social bots, astroturfing, context stripping, no-fly zones, infotainment, horse race journalism, rumor cascades, hit-and-run communication, explicit bias, deviancy amplification spirals, sensationalism, narrative fallacies, false balances, or cherry picking (McQuail & Deuze, 2020), and mainly refer to the different attempts to deal with crisis manifestations that mostly occur in the context of mass-media communication. Such attempts were usually unsuccessful and created more problems than those they were originally trying to solve.

Communicational crisis is associated with the emergence of a new communication mode that characterizes our network societies and materializes in networked communication, and that replaced the previous dominant mediation of mass communication (Cardoso, 2009).

The understanding of the connections established between media and society has varied throughout history. On the one hand, there are concepts regarding this relationship that assume the existence of cause-effect dynamics, such as the idea that the mass media created a mass society. This can be seen, for example, in the

idea produced by the "apocalyptics" (Eco, 2001), who establish almost direct links between a given form of communication and mediation, or mass media, and the processes of the social massification and cultural homogenization experienced since the 1960s (Ortoleva, 2004; Aroldi & Colombo, 2003).

On the other hand, deterministic theories such as traditional Marxism suggest that mass communication is the expression of an authoritarianism produced by the reduced power of control over technical development in the sphere of mediation (Poster, 1999). A similar view was present in technocultural discourse at the end of the twentieth century (Robbins, 1999), namely via the proposal for the reading of such relationships through the opposition between interactive media and passive media. Among the new media such as the Internet and the historical media that chronologically preceded the mass-mediated media, such as television, radio, or newspapers (Robbins, 1999).

Another distinct approach to the relationship between media and society is taken by those who suggest that the media express, through both their structure and their content, the very nature of the society in which they are generated (Poster 1995; McLuhan, 2001). Authors such as Poster (1995) suggest the existence of three chronological phases that characterize an "information mode." These phases coexist chronologically without one replacing the other and are thus the product of the way symbolic exchanges occur. In this sense, we have a chronology of information modes: the first characterized by oral mediation, the second by writing, and later, the third by the electronic (Poster, 1995). In the approach to information modes, each of these three stages had a different relationship between language and society, idea and action, or "I" and "other" (Poster, 1995). In the nineteenth century, the written press played a fundamental role in the formation of the notion of the independent and rational subject through a public sphere of debate, creating the basis for the democracies of the twentieth century (Habermas, 1991). In turn, the emergence of the Internet fostered a multiple, decentralized, and disseminated subject (Poster, 1995), similar in its foundations to the reading proposed by McLuhan (2001), in which the media are a form of expression of the society in which they are generated (McLuhan, 2001). Also, according to McLuhan (2001), there is not one single model of society corresponding to all mass media but rather two distinct models. The first is based on the model of the written press, to which the cinema was later added and then, to some extent, the radio, as well. In this first model, there was a clear division of roles and a strong hierarchical order (McLuhan, 2001). In turn, a second model that arose with television was reinforced with the subsequent forms of electronic communication based on computerization and automation. This was a horizontal system with strong interactive relationships (McLuhan, 2001).

The analyses of Poster (1995) and McLuhan (2001) focus on a view based on the media's non-neutrality, an idea that technologically different media are the result of the society in which they arise and that, through their use, they promote differentiated sociocultural realities.

A third approach to the relations between society and media argues for the need to reconsider and question the real scope of the effects associated with

mass communication, emphasizing that both audiences and media participants produce a filtering of message reception in the relationships they establish with and by mediation technology (Wolf, 2001; Ortoleva, 2004). Following such questioning, Lévy (2005) contrasts the logic of effects with a logic of influences. For Lévy (2005), the relationship between technology and society is centered on the notion of influence as opposed to impact or effect. The action of any form of technology, including the media, cannot be considered as separate from culture since it interacts with culture, which influences the birth of technology, receives it in its metaphorical embrace, and modifies it as a result of permanent social interactions (Fornas et al., 2007).

Considering these three explicit approaches regarding the role of interaction between society and media, the positioning that prevails in this book's analysis seeks to elaborate a synthesis of these different contributions and to build a sociosemiotic approach to mediation, but without any deterministic approach to the role of technology (Castells, 2002).

The synthesis presented here seeks to respond to what communication in the network society is adding, i.e., the contributions of the sociology of communication and semiotics in the construction of a sociosemiotic approach to mediation.

For example, trying to understand the relationship between society and media does not appear to be a feasible task if we do not make use of sociological concepts such as reflexivity (Giddens, 1991). Therefore, reflexivity, afforded by information and communication technologies, is a fundamental element in the individual decision-making process of everyday construction. In the same way, sociological concepts such as agency (Giddens, 1979) or autonomy (Castells, 2012) show us that it will not only be through technological development and scientific innovation that we can somehow control or define what the future will be. The future of any society is opaque and problematic since we know that what we communicate among us also contributes to the formation of these scenarios. The future of any society has a problematic and reflexive dimension (Giddens, 1999; Kaivo-Oja et al., 2003; Mendonça et al., 2012).

In trying to typify the relational processes between communication and society, we can argue that it is essentially a two-way relationship. On the one hand, communication enables different models of social organization, but on the other, there are supervening social needs that give rise to new forms of mediation and communication (Castells, 2002; Winston, 1998).

If we assume the existence of a permanent interaction between mediation, facilitated by the media, and society through a reflexive process of interdependence, we can also talk about the existence of a historical correspondence between modes of communication and models of social organization.

Authors such as Giddens (1999) and Castells (2000) draw attention to the fact that many of the changes that have occurred over the last decades are a consequence of the networking of different computer technologies, although economic globalization represents a fundamental explanatory feature for the transformation of contemporary societies. Globalization cannot be seen only as an economic phenomenon but also as a communicational phenomenon (Giddens, 1999; Lull, 2007),

since economic globalization is the result of an interesting relationship between the market and democracy, largely made possible by communication and mediation.

When we live in societies where the news has become virtually instantaneous and where the multi-diversity of contexts, content, and forms of communicative mediation is the rule, we have to accept that globalization is also synonymous with change in communication systems (Sparks, 2007; Mazzoleni et al., 2004; Tremaine, 2007; McPhail, 2005; Silverstone, 2006; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

The recognition of the existence of social processes of mediation (Thompson, 1995) and mediatization (Hepp, 2013) allows us to conclude that communication shapes social relations and is also shaped by them.

Historically, it is possible to identify three communicative forms that precede the widespread dissemination of the Internet: (1) face-to-face interaction, (2) mediated interaction through media, and (3) near-interaction mediated through media (Thompson, 1995). With the emergence of the Internet, it is possible to add a fourth communicative form characterized by the interaction between humans and intelligent or interactive systems (Hepp, 2013).

If it is possible to identify communicative forms that were in use at different historical moments, it is also possible to discuss the possibility of characterizing how communication is organized, defined by the way participants make use of it. This is the search for answers regarding who uses communication, for what, to what end, when, and how.

If communicative forms change and if societies evolve in their organization, so too, the way communication is organized is transformed. It is therefore possible to conclude that societies are also capable of being characterized through their "modes of communication" (Wolton, 1999; Castells, 2006; Cardoso, 2006).

This interest in understanding the way communication is organized in different societies results from the fact that the change from one mode of communication to another transforms the everyday life of the population. At the same time, it alters the economic, social, political, and cultural structures of life itself (Lash & Lurry, 2007).

Historically, there have been three communicative forms that can be organized into modes of communication (Ortoleva, 2004). Networked communication is the product of a fourth cycle of social affirmation of communication methods and is the mode of communication characteristic of network societies (Castells, 2002; Cardoso, 2009).

Networked communication was thus established as the fourth manifestation of communication modes throughout history. The previous modes of communication are chronologically situated in three different cycles of social affirmation and correspond to: (1) unmediated interpersonal communication, (2) one-to-many unmediated communication, and (3) mediated mass communication (Ortoleva, 2004).

Networked communication is thus the product of forms of social appropriation resulting from the domestication of technological evolution, which made it possible to develop reciprocal mediated communication (Hepp, 2013), one-to-many mediation, mass self-communication (Castells, 2013) and closed alrorithmic communication. Consequently, networked communication resulted in the emergence

of a "networked mediation," fostering different patterns of organization of social interaction.

In the network society, social actors combine communication practices using the different forms of mediation available, both algorithmic and non-algorithmic. These forms of mediation, almost entirely available via different screens, are used in an attempt to achieve the objectives set by the participants in the communication.

Networked communication does not reinforce the unique and isolated use of a given form of specific mediation but rather a mediation that combines different screen technologies, disrupting their isolated use. This is a mediation that seeks the social appropriation of communication and results from the diversity of screens subject to social appropriation. These screens, both diversified and combined, depend on the objectives of the participant in that mediation.

In networked communication, there is no predetermined hierarchy of associated technologies nor subordination to the most recent one. The media, in their specific form of mediation, represent a single way of organizing communication in which there is mutual articulation via networks, built on the dialectic of objectives between those who appropriate them and those who generate the conditions for this appropriation. From this articulation, a new media system emerges that is socially appropriated, shaped, and domesticated on the basis of the individual choices of the participants in the communication. These choices are shared socially among their participants in the form of representations regarding what uses are associated with which mediation practices, giving rise to a media matrix (Meyrowitz, 1985).

In turn, the forms of mediation's daily use also reveal the existence of social practices that are interdisciplinary in different media (Aroldi & Colombo, 2003). We thus share among ourselves common social functions attributed to mediation through diversified media diets. Before deciding whether to use this or that medium and its corresponding forms of mediation, it first must be decided what is wanted and what the purpose is, and then the available form of mediation that best serves said purpose must be chosen.

Mediation is not the product of isolated media—we do not only listen to radio, read newspapers, send messages, talk on the phone, watch television, watch streaming services, surf the web, use social networks and social media, etc. The practice of mediation is an articulation, or rather a networking of different forms of mediation, provided by different screens and incorporated into different technologies in everyday life. These are associated with a process of permanent rupture, reflexivity, and change of communication practices at home, at work, at school, and in the mobility between spaces (Cardoso, 2007; Castells, 2007; Colombo, 2003; Caron & Caronia, 2007).

The mediation network representing the mode of networked communication is not the mere result of available technologies. The network results from a form of social organization, created by the choices of those who use these mediation technologies.

In a networked communication ecosystem, networked mediation is the product of media diets created according to what we want to communicate, giving rise to a socially shared media matrix that shapes a given media system (Silverstone, 2006; Colombo & Aroldi, 2003; Meyrowitz, 1985; Ortoleva, 2004).

In the mode of networked communication, mediation, media diets, the media matrix, and the media system reach a new level of significant transformation. These transformations are the product of the relationship between different forms of networked mediation, making mediation an integrated experience in which the use of different screens in different technologies is combined, from telephone to television, from newspaper to video games, from Internet to radio, and from cinema to mobile phone. This once again places participants, their practices, and their degrees of mediation literacy at the center of our individual and social attention (Livingstone, 2008; Cardoso, 2009).

Networked communication is not just a new mode of communication since its novelty focuses on its ability to articulate the previous modes of communication into a new mode incorporating its different values. This incorporation allows for the networked articulation of different ways of communicating, whose interaction shapes a new communicative way of organizing communication.

Networked communication is the mode of communication of the network society—a mode of communication in which mass communication, mass self-communication, one-to-many mediated communication, reciprocal mediated communication, and closed algorithmic communication are articulated and organized into a communicative network.

Networked communication integrates mass self-communication practices (Castells, 2013) through communicative articulation and communicative interaction of blog publishing platforms, video sharing platforms such as YouTube, and broadcasting social media or multimedia broadcasting media such as X/Twitter, TikTok, or Instagram (Castells, 2013).

In the case of mass self-communication, as Castells (2013) explains, communication follows the principles of mass communication but also serves to fulfill the objective of sharing information about one's personal life. Mass self-communication is a form of mass communication because it potentially reaches a global online audience, and it is also self-communication because it is self-directed in the creation and sending of the message, self-chosen in the reception of the message, and self-defined in terms of the formation of the communicative space (Castells, 2013; McQuail & Deuze, 2020).

The large extent of content distribution and reception, the lags between the sender's time of production and the moment of consumption by the receiver, and the sender's lack of knowledge of the size of the final audience are characteristics that were already available technologically in the past, but only for use by mass media organizations such as television stations, radio channels, and newspapers (Thompson, 1995). Now, they have also become available to individuals.

However, in mass self-communication, there is another series of characteristics that are no longer shared with mass communication (McQuai & Deuze, 2020), these being: (1) the abandonment of standardization and commodification of content, (2) relationships that are no longer predominantly related to the market and that change the unidirectional flow of communication, (3) situations when the asymmetric relationship between the sender and receiver is canceled, (4) anonymity ceases to prevail, and (5) impersonality is abandoned in relation to the audiences.

Mass self-communication is directly associated with the communication practices available for individual appropriation by participants on the platforms, notably the platforms that present themselves as social media (Diraj, 2018). This is seen in examples such as those that emulate the characteristics of television, as in the case of YouTube channels; printed publications, as in the case of blogs; radio, as in the case of podcasts; or the "takes" from news agencies, as in the case of X/Twitter, TikTok, or Instagram.

Networked communication also integrates the practices of reciprocal mediated communication (Hepp, 2013), which are nothing more than the introduction of a new multimedia level in mediated interpersonal communication, already offered by the telephone in the twentieth century. Reciprocal mediated communication is a personally mediated communication that occurs between two people but that can be extended to a greater number. However, the characteristics of communicative simultaneity determine that the number of people involved has to be greatly reduced. For example, reciprocal mediated communication is carried out through WhatsApp, Telegram, WeChat, Skype, or the multiple other apps that are available in the Google Play, Apple App, or other online stores, and that combine the multi-mediality of voice, video, text, emoticons, and photography in conversations, thus offering the participants the possibility of overcoming the communicative distance between two, or more, individuals in different geographical contexts. This is the communication made possible by messaging programs used most often through apps on our phones, and it is an evolution of mediated voice communication that accompanied individuals during the previous century, first on landlines in rooms and in offices and then on mobile phones in pockets and bags.

Networked communication also integrates practices of one-to-many mediated communication, which lie at the basis of the concept of social networks such as Facebook or other, Russian or Chinese social networks. This is a communication where everyone knows who the potential participants are but where the interaction tends not to be simultaneous.

One-to-many communication is a communicative mode that has been encountered for millennia in our societies and is present in classrooms, concert halls, arenas, and rallies. Its main feature lies in the fact that a social actor assumes the role of sender before a group or crowd and in which the speaker has only a rough notion of the magnitude of said group or crowd. Sometimes the speaker knows the very faces of all the participants, as occurs in a classroom, but other times, the speaker knows only the limit of the space that contains the group, as in a stadium or theater. Historically, this is a communication that produces an essentially non-mediated experience, since all participants in the communication share the same space and time. In this case, the communication tends to flow in only one direction: from the sender to the receivers. When the receiver assumes the role of sender, this usually occurs because the sender invites the receiver to comment.

As a chronological evolution of this previous mode of communication, one-to-many mediated communication is an integral part of the practices that give shape to the mode of networked communication, corresponding not only to the introduction of multimedia mediation in the communicative relationship of "one to many"

but also serving as a basis for the drawing of the paradigm of the most widespread social networks, such as Facebook, the Russian-speaking VKontakte, and others.

While social networks offer many functionalities, their communication practices are essentially founded on one-to-many communication. The logic of identifying who can receive what is communicated, the listing of picture squares representing faces of friends, and the newsfeed theoretically reaching all their friends with a single post are characteristics that refer to the sharing of mediated space and time in which the social actor assumes the role of sender before a group, in this case their "friends," to communicate something to them, inviting them to interact by leaving comments in the form of posts.

"Closed algorithmic communication" practices are also a type of communication practice present in networked communication. Closed algorithmic communication is a virtualized mediated communication (Hepp, 2013). In closed algorithmic communication, communicative interaction takes place in communicative systems created for a given purpose, in which the main objective is not meaningful communication between participants but rather communication in any other dimension. Its main characteristic is the limitation on when and how such communication can take place. This may happen between humans or between humans and generative AI bots, such as ChatGTP, Bard, or others, programmed for certain types of communication (Collins, 2021). Closed algorithmic communication is associated, for example, with communication between players in video games and conversations in artificial intelligence mode using bots (Hepp, 2013). Closed algorithmic communication varies greatly in the degree of communicative freedom that is offered to participants. Thus, it varies between an almost infinite number of combined hypotheses, from the conversation between players in a video game to the simulacrum of significative communication offered by ChatGPT and other forms of artificial intelligence to the extreme thematic limitation of any given virtual help desk. The latter is usually associated with the decision trees of conversation with bots. This is characteristic of the most common artificial intelligence deployment typified as the approach to the "how can I help you" model present on multiple company web pages.

Networked communication is also the space where the communication practices of mass communication associated with television, newspapers, and radio are integrated (Thompson, 1995; Mcquail & Deuze, 2020).

Networked communication is the mode of communication of an informational and network society, and its communicative distinctiveness is based on three dimensions: (1) a communicative syncretism, (2) a multiform mediation, and (3) an individualized switching of message flows.

Communicative syncretism results from the combination of access to the characteristics of different communicative forms. In turn, multiform mediation is enhanced by the articulation of different forms of mediation in a digital network of variable geometry. Finally, the individualized switching of message flows provides the possibility of constantly rescaling the reach of communicative choices negotiated between senders and receivers.

Communicative syncretism, multiform mediation, and individualized switching allow the sender to reach the number of individuals they want, be that few or

many, in real or deferred time, acting in close or distant spaces, using the mediation processes that are available and that are combinable with each other, that is, mass communication, mass self-communication, reciprocal mediated communication, one-to-many mediated communication, and algorithmic communication in the different combinations intended and negotiated between sender and receiver.

However, just as all modes of communication have an organizational centrality of communication, without which communication does not flow, in networked communication, the central role is assumed by the generalization of the practices of "the communication of communication" (Eco, 2021).

Communication of communication practices are the central node of networked communication and can be defined as the mediated sharing of content previously mediated, whether re-edited or not, by the participants in the communicative act. The communication of communication is the practice that ensures the interconnection and switching of messages between different forms of communication.

Just as the central characteristic of mass communication is its reach, the distinctiveness of networked communication lies in its multiform dimension and its ability to assume various configurations, allowing for flexibility in terms of reach, spaces, and times of communication.

Through the communication of communication, networked communication articulates all the different communication practices in a new integrative communication mode, one that is characterized by openness to experimentation and, as such, produces its reconfiguration and evolution, shaping a new type of communication mode that does not "kill" the previous mass communication mode (Chaffee & Metzger, 2001) but rather integrates and articulates it, creating new communication dynamics.

Chapter 3
People, message, and culture

In the late 1960s, McLuhan argued that "the medium is the message" (2001), meaning that any and all media foster behaviors and create psychological connections and changes in the individuals who receive them, regardless of the content transmitted. In turn, decades later, Castells characterized the organizational relationship of the twenty-first century media as being based on "the message is the medium" (2005), meaning that the mediation form is chosen by the sender according to the message they want to transmit. Therefore, it is possible to choose the media that best suits the message and the audience for which it is intended. The choice can thus be geared toward a given cable TV channel, a given social networking platform, or a certain group within them, etc.

In the world of abundant television and radio channels, groups and pages on social networks, Tweets, apps, and websites, the centrality of the medium/channel is replaced by the centrality of mediation, which is associated with the message that is intended to be conveyed (Castells, 2005), which in turn must go to where its recipient audience is located.

However, the change was not limited to shifting the focus from the distinctivity between media and message, since according to Eco (2001), we were also witnessing a historical time when the medium precedes the message.

For Eco, the distinctivity in communication at the beginning of the twentieth century focuses more on the medium/channel than on the message transmitted thereon. Technological acceleration, via the multiplication of the number of channels, produced new forms of mediation for which a message did not yet exist. The medium/channel came into being before any manifestation of a supervening social need for available content for it (Winston, 1998).

An example of the dynamics identified by Eco can be found in the operating model of online app stores, such as Google Play or the Apple App Store, in which new apps appear every day whose dissemination dynamics are based on a process of trial and error in the search for acceptance with audiences, or rather, a search for a message.

In most cases, the apps are distributed in a freemium model, initially without having to pay a monetary amount because the participant "pays" for the use of the app by providing their personal data at no charge to the app's creators. The success of an app depends on its acceptance with participants, which, in turn, is dependent on the domestication process, carried out by themselves, as well. This is a process associated with the "match" between the representations imagined for the uses of the app and the potential practices and content that are actually offered through the app (Silverstone, 2006a).

The social shaping of the use of apps and the domestication of their communicative purpose depends, in part, on the participant who uses it, and not only on who markets or mediates the business relationship—for example, the app store owners Apple or Google. This is not only an economic but also a cultural challenge since most new communication channels are presented to potential audiences as active experimentation processes of learning by doing or creating mediation environments via the participants, and no longer exclusively via production or intermediary companies.

Since the late 1960s, the discussion of what characterizes communication has centered on a dialectical relationship between "medium" and "message" (Eco, 2021).

However, this theoretical formulation originated in a context of communication practices shaped within the framework of mass communication. Hence, as a result of the transformations described throughout this book, it is important to question whether a dialectic originating in a context of mass communication mediation still remains useful or if, on the contrary, it became established as an interpretative fragility within the framework of a world of practices associated with networked communication.

Can the previous communicative paradigms constructed during the golden age of mass communication continue to explain the distinctivity of the contemporary communicative reality? Is it necessary to propose a new paradigm that synthesizes the singularity of the contemporary way of communicating?

In networked communication, the centrality assumed by participants shifts the explanatory dialectic of communication's singularity from the relationship between "medium" and "message" to the relationship between "people," the participants, and the "message." This stems from the formation of new social roles associated with new networked communication practices. In the context of the structural crisis in the beginning of the twenty-first century, those roles promote a new relationship between the autonomy of the Subject (Touraine, 2000; 2021) and mediated communication, creating in addition the conditions for the social representations regarding both the system and the lifeworld to be questioned (Habermas, 1998).

In the network society, the new communication practices of everyday life shape new social roles associated with the communication practices of sharing, production, and classification of information. In turn, these practices of sharing, production, and classification of information shape our social representations, creating the basis for the social perception of the emergence of a new dominant culture

centered on the role of mediation. The perception that the distinctivity of culture lies in its being a mass culture (Eco, 1994; 2001) is gradually eroded, giving way to the emergence of a mediatized culture.

Communication expresses the culture of a particular society and is thus a social product of the culture of this society. However, communication is also a creator of knowledge and, therefore, a phenomenon that produces culture (Oliveira, 2017).

Through our daily communication practices, we produce individual but socially shared representations of what the culture of our time is, that is, a mediatized culture.

In networked communication, talking about culture implies talking about mediation, that is, the technologies that create mediation and the way we domesticate them (Silverstone, 2006a).

The media are a technology that provides a way of repeating a task, in this case, for the purposes of communicating. As such, they tend to be perceived either as external to us or as extensions of us (McLuhan, 2001; Eco, 2021).

However, more important than this debate is to emphasize that technologies are the product of human action. Technology is a social product whose adoption is dependent on multiple social variables, including the perception of a previous social need.

Technology arises to solve something, establishing itself as a solution to a supervening social problem. As such, the success of its adoption also depends on the social perception of its need (Winston, 1998), as in all previous periods of change and disruption associated with communicational crises. In addition, the dynamics of communication changes, which produced networked communication, can be witnessed through a series of transformations, from changes in communication practices and representations to the emergence of new social roles in communication and in the different cultures of autonomy that promote the emergence of the Subject (Winston, 1998; Abbate, 1999; Eco, 2003; Briggs et al., 2020; Touraine, 2000; 2021).

The past three decades are full of examples of changes and ruptures that constitute a communicational crisis, and which can be found in multiple examples in the sphere of communication. We have seen abrupt declines in the sale of print newspapers in many developed countries, while there has also been exponential growth in social network and social media membership.

The last three decades have also been a time of proliferation of television and film content sharing through both legal and unauthorized streaming, while YouTube and TikTok have gained a growing role in entertainment and information. In contrast and as a result of these changes, the transition from advertising associated with brands in mass-media communication to advertising associated with personal content production and sharing on social networks and social media has also been observed.

All of this also has contributed to the transition from one broadcasting system based on TV, radio, and newspaper companies to another type of distribution system in which it is the platforms and participants that ensure the sharing of content on social networks and social media. Thus, we have seen the emergence of the

coexistence of news content produced by journalists along with other informative content created by self-certified specialists.

In this process, phatic communication, hitherto understood as "elevator conversations," has gained new spaces in everyday life, such as on social networks and social media. Likewise, the proliferation of social networks and social media in our everyday life has been accompanied by waves of disinformation associated first with elections and electoral disputes, then with the COVID-19 pandemic, and finally with wars, such as that between Russia and Ukraine, and, indirectly, with both their allies.

This change in communication took place in terms of not only the content but also the actors in the communicative process, because journalistic disintermediation gained momentum by being adopted by politicians resorting to mass self-communication in the framework of networked communication.

At the same time, there has been a strengthening of journalistic mediation in the form of fact-checking, along with the creation of new professional roles in communication, such as those of the YouTuber and the influencer. These are based on the processes of the celebritization and innovation of the celebrity system originally created by mass-media communication. All of this is also influenced by dynamics of openness—the result of the widespread dissemination of open-access, open-source, and open-science practices along with the search for new formats for the monetization of news, entertainment, and information, among many other examples.

These changes lead to questioning regarding the main characteristics associated with communication practices in the production, distribution, and reception of mediation.

The perceived communicational change points toward a prolific path of empirical analysis and theoretical questions regarding how to define a new networked communicational paradigm. However, it also stresses the need to foster discussion on the role of communication in the cultural change of societies and to question what the socially shared perception of culture is in the network society.

The role of communication and information in social, economic, and cultural changes has been analyzed for at least a century by multiple authors (Webster, 2014; Eco, 2001; Mattelart, 1983; Thompson, 1995; Ortoleva, 2004; Bell, 1996; Touraine, 2021; Poster, 1995; Castells, 2002).

During the twentieth century, television, radio, and newspapers became known as mass media, shaping a media system and giving rise to the communication mode of mass communication (Thompson, 1995; McQuail & Deuze, 2020; Ortoleva, 2004; Chaffee & Metzger, 2001).

Mass communication was the communication mode that characterized industrialized societies. It also corresponded to a communicational paradigm based on the relationship between the medium and the message.

Mass communication developed within an industrial mode of development (Castells, 2002) and in a society characterized as that of late modernity by Giddens (1991).

As with the emergence of newspapers, radio, and television, the birth of the Internet in 1969 and its long evolutionary path over the last several decades have also produced clear changes in our social and communicational environments (Castells, 2009; Colombo, 1993; Silverstone, 2006; Lash, 2007; Hesmondahlgh, 2007; Varnelis, 2008).

The social appropriation of the Internet as a communication and information technology has produced a new social construct: the network society (Castells, 2002). This is a society in which the network organizational structure is perceived by most social actors as influencing and shaping all dimensions of human activity, from the exercise of power to the classification of experience and the formation of culture (Castells, 2002).

In the network society, the development based on the role of information, which was fostered by the interaction of information infrastructures for the production of information and knowledge, gave rise to a mode of informational development (Castells, 2002; Himanen, 2006). This was, in turn, based on a context of communicative mediation's proliferation. This mode of informational development provided the generalization of new social communication practices, giving rise to a mode of networked communication.

Given its syncretic characteristics, the process of the social assimilation of the networked communicational mode was relatively rapid. This syncretic integrative process was also based on the widespread social adoption of new forms of mediation for the realization of communication practices that were hitherto unmediated, although some, such as one-to-many communication, have long been socially established (Ortoleva, 2004). More than replacing the previous mode of mass communication with a new one, what was observed socially was the transformation and integration of this and other previous modes of communication into networked communication.

Networked communication presents a set of characteristics, namely communicative syncretism, multiform mediation, and individualized exchange, which have produced a new social actor, the participant (Silverstone, 2006), central to the definition of the singularity of this mode of communication.

The concept of participant is a product of the contextual evolution of communication practices that had previously given rise to concepts and that sought to define the receiver's relationship individually or collectively with the sender. Some examples of prior concepts are the audience, associated with mass media, or the user, associated with the use of information technologies (McQuail & Deuze, 2020).

Unlike in mass communication, mediation in networked communication is shaped to a large extent by individuals adopting the new social roles associated with the communication practices of sharing, producing, and classifying information, something that did not occur in mass communication and that could even be considered the opposite of the social role ascribed to audiences. In networked communication, the role of the participant is not limited to the strict possibilities of participation that are assigned to them in a predefined environment. For example, in mass communication only a binary option was presented for the individual: they could become part of an audience of a given channel or print publication or not, or

the user of information technologies could use the technological tools available to them to perform the tasks allowed by the software or not. In turn, the participant in networked communication has the possibility of choices beyond the binary. The participant's choices are multiple, of which there are so many, in fact, that they are socially represented as potentially infinite, even though in reality they are not and are dependent on gatekeeping performed by either platform algorithms or mass-media editorial decisions.

In networked communication, the participant exercises their communicative autonomy through the communication practices of sharing, production, and classification of information. Hence, the participant should be able to construct an individual representation of the possibilities at their disposal as potentially unlimited. As the possibilities are so many and so diverse, they will never be experienced by an individual in their entirety. As such, it is possible to simulate the idea of the existence of unlimited choice.

Being a participant in mediated communication confers possibilities for choice beyond the binary dimension characteristic of the social role of audience. The participant is given the alternative of participating or not, while also being given a choice regarding how to participate. Therefore, from the outset, being a participant constitutes a greater possibility of communicative autonomy, understood here as the ability to achieve the objectives proposed by the individual through communication. Communicative autonomy is possessed when, through the design of a personalized communicative option, it is possible to achieve a given objective (Touraine, 2021).

The range of communicative functions associated with the roles of the sharing, production, and classification of information is as diverse as the context in which communication takes place and can, for example, be described using the so-called 90-9-1 principle (van Mierlo, 2014) or other similar approaches to rules that seek to describe the various roles that participants can take on in communication (Nielson, 2007; Himelboim & Golan, 2019).

As Wales states, until 2006, Wikipedia was largely written and maintained by a small core of dedicated publishers: not "(...) more than 50% of all publications are made by only [0].7% of users (...) 524 people (...) about 1,400 people, as of 2006, that is, 2%, made 73.4% of all publications" (cited in Swartz, 2006; Nieder & van Dijck, 2010).

In turn, in the production of open-source software, structures for the division of functions among participants can also be found. Thus, the division of roles among participants involved in software production communities is divided among the 1% of participants who take part in the creation of new software projects; the 5-10% of participants who edit the source code of the applications they use, thus contributing to the whole; and the rest, who only use the software produced by the other participants but without contributing to it (Ducheneaut, 2005; Cheng & Guo. 2019; von Hippel & Lakhani, 2000; von Hippel, 2016; Mockus et al., 2000; Koch & Schneider, 2002).

Another example in communication, this time describing participation in network politics, is the 2021 presidential elections in Portugal, where it was

possible to determine how the functions of participants in Facebook groups were divided. Thus, in the case of participants who supported the far-right populist party Chega on Facebook, less than 1% of the 100,000 members of these groups were responsible for almost all the publications made in them (Palma et al., 2021). The remaining 99% of participants were responsible for sharing the content (Palma et al., 2021).

The different examples mentioned here demonstrate that communicative autonomy, associated with networked communication, allows for a diversity of communicative functions available to participants.

However, there are also regularities present in communicative functions (van Mierlo, 2014); for example, regularities can be found in the fact that some participants assume the search for virality within their communicative networks. The "viral participants" have both the qualifications and the motivation to develop original contributions in the communication sphere in common, sometimes even designing or contributing to the mediation design of the medium/channel in which the content flows. This small group of viral participants can be defined as those whose function is the design, who collaborate in the production of something that did not exist previously, defining and creating it through an innovative process that can generate virality (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Guadagno et al., 2013). This is a function that can be taken on individually or collectively, and such options depend on whether the sharing of common objectives of communicative autonomy occurs (Castells et al., 2003; Cardoso et al., 2005). This can be seen, for example, in memes or similar cultural units. The production of memes is individual, shared online in the form of jokes, images, or quotes (Dawkins, 2006; Shifman, 2013). However, the collective distribution of memes comes from a common impulse based on the sharing of the same social world (Iloh, 2021; Moody-Ramirez & Church, 2019; Meyer, 2021).

Regularities can also be found in the identification of another set of participants who assume functions that could be described as managerial, namely the management of network nodes. In this case, it is the "nodal participants" who ensure the nodality of communication. Nodal participants make up the group of individuals whose function it is to carry out the creation of meeting spaces and the definition of the design of communicative paths in participatory networks through the management of mediation channels such as apps, websites, groups on social networks, and so on.

Finally, regularities can also be identified by the existence of another group consisting of "sharing participants." This is the largest group, whose participants are responsible for ensuring the distribution and circulation of communication via sharing, although they do not innovate, neither in mediation nor in content, and also do not manage the different links or nodes of mediation. The sharing participants who share publications have the function of shaping the content through its circulation in the new media system associated with networked communication.

The participants in mediation are potentially all of us. As such, we can, as a result of our choices, take on different roles in the context of networked communication. Such roles can be defined on the basis of the combination of different

communication practices, which are established as pillars of the operation of the new media system.

Participants in networked communication can be subdivided into differentiated segments that are configured multidimensionally and that correspond to different roles that promote virality, nodality, or shareability.

However, the acceptance of these roles, which depends solely on individual communicative choices, also implies the mastery of the communicative literacies associated with networked communication.

Communication, autonomy, and culture

In a world built around global communication networks, participants have at their disposal a broad set of communication practices that they can make use of. These communication practices produce diversified communicative forms, which have in common the ability to change the way we look at what surrounds us: our representations.

The change in communicative practices also produces change in our representations regarding the three central relationships defining a society: those among production, power, and experience (Castells, 2002). By changing our representations about society, we also change our representations about what culture is and what characterizes our societies, that is, how culture manifests itself in our current time period and what makes this different from other historical contexts.

If our way of thinking and representing production, power, and experience in everyday life is changed by networked communication, then this change also has consequences for how production occurs and is expected to occur, and how power is exercised and expected to be exercised, as well as how experience is constructed and expected to be constructed.

Networked communication practices promote a representation of a "networked lifeworld" and of "everyday life immersed in mediation," giving rise to processes of interrelationship between social and cultural change and changes in mediation and communication.

Networks based on Internet protocols have changed the way we communicate and multiplied the ways in which we can relate to each other. As discussed already, networks that comprise mass media, social networks, and social media enable different types of social and communicative interaction, such as the mass self-communication that characterizes social media communication. Examples of this are X/Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube. In these social media, participants adopt practices that were, until recently, only possible in the context of mass communication (Castells, 2013; Cardoso, 2014). In turn, communication practices of mediation developed on social networks such as Facebook design one-to-many mediated communication, which is characterized by the previous knowledge of the people the participant chooses to be part of their communicative interaction circle. In messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, we are faced with a framework of

reciprocal mediated communication practices (Hepp, 2013), in which two-way communication essentially occurs between two or more people in a group.

In networks, our moments of leisure or management of family or personal daily life now occur in new spaces of closed algorithmic communication. Playing an online video game has also become a potential moment of communication in which we share instructions with our team and insults with the opposing one, trying to defocus opponents, etc. In turn, the management of small or large household chores and the organization of family or personal time have also begun to pass through closed algorithmic communication, for example, when we interact with chatbots that are based on AI to get information from the electricity company that supplies our home, to order something from the supermarket, to make appointments with the barber or hairdresser, or to ask for text contributions from AI to help with homework, prepare a speech, or just have fun with the answers received from ChatGPT or other generative AI.

Finally, mass communication, the last of the five communicative dimensions that make up networked communication, has not been erased or removed from our communication practices. It has simply evolved into a new continuity.

In the case of television, mass communication is now defined by the appropriation of multimedia network environments that continue to provide a wide range of audiences while at the same time allowing practices such as social television (Selva, 2016), which involves simultaneous viewing of and commenting on television, with participants engaging in these activities together, whether they be acquaintances or mere strangers interconnected via various digital screens.

Contemporary television, or Uber-Television, focuses on building an algorithmic-like fulfillment, which can be directly algorithmic or can try to simulate algorithmic practices without making direct use of them. Uber-Television thus works via the search for interaction with the participants, offering them choices aimed at being perceived as the "right" ones for each individual.

The distinctive uniqueness of networked communication involves its ability to gather and articulate a whole set of different communication practices, characteristics of previous modes of communication, and new practices, granting them new features in a multimedia environment (Cardoso, 2009).

Networks based on Internet protocols have connected all mediated communication practices, enabling a connection between what the mass media publish and what participants publish, comment, or share on the web and on social networks and social media. Moreover, they also allow for the creation and sustaining of relationships with a much larger number of people with either similar or different autonomy projects.

In networked communication, participants make communication a total practice (Oliveira, 2017). This is because participants have the ability to create and share messages as well as to change them if they do not approve of them or understand that they need to be adapted to sustain their own autonomy objectives.

As autonomous beings able to access mediation tools, individuals have begun to assume the role of participants in networked communication, taking part in

the construction of relationships of power, production, and experience through mediation (Castells, 2012).

Power relations in society are always defined through communication (Castells, 2013). Communication is power because communication is intention—the intention to put an idea in the other's mind (Eco, 2021).

In the network society, as in previous forms of social organization, power is constructed by influencing the public mind, however that may be. Relationships of power are constructed and exercised through the management of communicative processes and also through their alteration by social actors aiming at social change (Castells, 2013). Hence, power is increasingly shared, albeit unevenly. On the one hand, power originates from individual communicative processes that stem from individual participants or that are organized around individuals' shared objectives. On the other hand, power also originates in communicative processes dominated by platforms or mass media organizations associated with journalism, entertainment, and information.

Mass communication and mass media have always promoted the exercise of power through socialization and the integration of the individual into already existing institutions in society. They have done so by providing pre-prepared options for choices to be made, that is, those conveyed by mass media gatekeeping, independent of these choices having to do, for example, with what type of families make up society so that one can decide which to choose from, what jobs society offers and what educational path to choose to reach them, what political options exist so that one can choose which to vote for, or what cultural expressions are available to experience. (Genner & Süss, 2017).

However, the understanding of the real power of mediation is not linear, since several schools of thought have conceptualized the power mediation paradigms in different ways (Freedman, 2015). This nonlinearity is exemplified by the coexistence of multiple approaches to the relationship between media and power, including: the consensual paradigm, centered on the balance between the state and the market; the so-called chaos paradigm, which underscores the multidimensional nature of power flows; being the subject of debate by the control paradigm, which in turn identifies the existence of democratic deficits as a product of private property and state coordination; and proposals from the contradiction paradigm, which although it assumes that the mass media are mostly linked to vested interests, considers that they are also not immune to social change promoted by society (Freedman, 2015).

Although there are different approaches to the power of mediation, there seems to be agreement on the fact that the mass media embody certain values and perspectives on society, economy, politics, and culture because they were a locus of power (Freedman, 2015). Hence, all the different approaches to media power coincide in that access to mass media, in order to express points of view, stemmed from a gatekeeping process enacted by the mass media themselves.

In mass communication, being able to express an opinion publicly implied compatibility with mass-media editorialization criteria (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Hopmann & Strömbäck, 2010; Bengtsson, 2015). Given the characteristics of the

editorialization and gatekeeping processes, mass media have always been, and will tend to be, more guardians of certain institutionalized values and beliefs than their challengers (Genner & Süss, 2017).

On the contrary, in networked communication, the empirical analysis regarding practices carried out on social networks and social media (Castells, 2013), produced by the multiplication of actors and the individual uniqueness of each participant and associated with the social processes of the sharing, production, and classification of information, more easily enhances the challenge to preexisting values, beliefs, and even social institutions.

Networked communication, by promoting the communicative process, also promotes the use of mediation as an organizational instrument for participants. Specifically, networked communication provides organizational tools to those who think alike and share compatible projects of autonomy (Castells, 2012; Cardoso et al., 2017). This combination of communicative and organizational dimensions, present in particular on social networks and social media, creates the material conditions for a potential affirmation of individual or collective autonomy , enhancing the ability to think and act according to one's own criteria, values, and efforts (Castells et al., 2003).

In the network society, communication practices adopted by participants do not solely shape individual representations of communication, because if communication is at the basis of the construction of relationships that are established between individuals in the spheres of production, power, and experience in everyday life, then their representations, constructed through digital communication, also have the potential to influence representations of all other spheres of digital and non-digital relationships relating to production, power, and experience. For example, the subscription models in the streaming of series and videos find parallels in the subscription models for the use of automobiles, otherwise known as leasing (Lyyra & Koskinen, 2016; Jarrahi, 2015).

The economic relationship model of subscription for digital and non-digital products is similar, but the propensity for the individual to make use of it for both is cultural. It is rooted in individual and social cultural representations regarding the valuation of the subscription model for different goods (Colbjørnsen, 2021).

Comparing cars with movies may seem extreme. However, it fulfills its role of making us question whether the way we view our daily communication practices can influence the way we look at production practices and relationships outside the digital communicative sphere.

If the communication practices and the representations built on them promote a change of values and beliefs of individuals in various everyday life domains, we can argue that we are changing the culture of our societies through the changes in our communication (Cardoso, 2012).

Networked communication, through mediatization processes, promotes representations of a mediatization of culture in everyday life and not only the creation of mediatized cultures (Hepp, 2013).

The network society is characterized by a substantial increase in the level of autonomy and reflexivity of individuals in all cultural and geographical contexts (Castells et al., 2003; Cardoso et al., 2005).

However, given the multifaceted nature of social life, one must first consider that such capacities are not evident homogeneously in the various domains of individual and collective life, because not all participants are in equal conditions to develop social practices guided by a proactive reflexivity (Castells et al., 2003; Cardoso et al., 2005; Cardoso, 2006).

The communication practices that can potentially extend the representations beyond communication in the strict sense, shaping the culture of societies themselves, can be identified from the analysis of a series of processes. These include, but are not limited to, the consumption of shared content in a digital environment and its production in the context of the network (Castells, 2002; Castells et al., 2003; Cardoso et al., 2005; Cardoso, 2006; Castells & Himanen, 2003; Newman et al., 2021).

The way in which communication practices are appropriated in networked communication allows participants to be categorized according to three generic profiles: networked paleo-communicators, networked proto-communicators, and networked communicators (Cardoso et al., 2015).

Networked paleo-communicators correspond to the group of participants characterized by traces of distance and retraction in relation to the possibilities of networked communication. Among networked paleo-communicators, the most widespread communication practice corresponds to reciprocal mediated communication (Hepp, 2013), evident both in the frequency of use of messaging programs and the use of e-mail, as well as in the type of use that is made of the mobile phone, which is almost exclusively intended for making calls and sending messages through apps.

For networked paleo-communicators, the production and distribution of online content is very infrequent, as is their limited access to and enjoyment of content shared on social networks and social media.

In turn, networked proto-communicators correspond to a profile of participants with a much more complex and articulated range of communication practices. Proto-communicators are characterized by the flexible use of different spheres of networked mediation, configured according to the participant's own interests. This is typically a profile associated with participants who incorporate the use of the Internet into their daily routines, participating in communication practices that go beyond those of reciprocal mediated nature, such as the one-to-many mediated communication practices found on social networks.

Less common, but still somewhat significant, is when networked proto-communicators engage in mass self-communication practices, such as those that occur on social media such as YouTube, blogs, or X/Twitter (Castells, 2013).

The production and sharing of online content among the participants of this profile essentially involve the publication of posts on social networks, although comments made relating to the news in the media also appear.

In the sphere of experience classification, networked proto-communicators stand out for their participation in the evaluation or rating of products and

services. Networked proto-communication practices are also characterized by the regular consumption of shared content.

In turn, the profile associated with the networked communicator shapes the complete appropriation of the possibilities available through networked communication. Networked communicators carry out a set of communication practices that are visibly more diversified and more complete when exploring the possibilities of the different forms of production, classification, and content sharing. This is the profile with the greatest involvement in all types of communication practices, engaging prominently in the production of online content and even in their appropriation for social mobilization or support for causes.

Networked communicators have integrated Internet access into their everyday life and benefit from the different types of interaction made possible by mediation on networks. In this profile, the use of mass self-communication practices is added to the reciprocal and one-to-many mediated communication practices, since the use of blogs or X/Twitter is quite common.

Networked communicators are also those that access content the most from mass media. The ways in which networked communicators use mobile phones also reflect very different uses and involve the combination of different communicative and playful features.

Networked communicators, in addition to consuming content that is shared on the network, make wide use of free software and are characterized by being producers and sharers of content and information on the Internet.

The networked communicator profile consists of individuals who regularly upload files to the cloud, post content on social networks, comment on news, and classify and evaluate products and services by participating in ratings or evaluations. In addition to the content sharing aspect, a significant part of this profile is as a producer of meaning and experience on the network. Networked communicators edit content or contribute articles, opinion texts, photos, or videos of their own for different communicative contexts that range from online news to diverse information resources.

In their communication, networked communicators are also notable for: the use of comments, made on social networks and social media; political practices mediated toward state institutions or others; expressions of opinion in the form of online protests; or even their habit of petition signing. This therefore reveals a clear integration between communication practices made possible by mediation and the definition of projects of individual or collective autonomy (Castells et al., 2003; Castells, 2012).

Networked communication practices provide the tools for a culture of individualization to materialize in individual projects of autonomy. In so doing, they also provide the tools for the organization of collective action and for the social sharing of representations (Meyrovitz, 1985; Colombo & Aroldi, 2003). This explains the interest in analyzing the relationship between the appropriation of networked communication and its potential in the construction of individual autonomy (Castells, 2012; Cardoso et al., 2005; 2015).

The relationship between communication and autonomy is closely linked to communication's ability to function as an instrument at the service of the individual, namely to allow that person to assume a role as a Subject (Touraine, 2000).

By strengthening individual autonomy and challenging different forms of domination, an individual is established as a Subject with agency who has the ability to obtain the resources necessary for the exercise of power, which allows them to realize their individual potential (Touraine, 2000; Wieviorka, 2012; Giddens, 1984).

Individualization emerges as a central social process in a late modernity characterized by self-reflexive individuals who produce representations about themselves to develop a self-identity (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 2006). Individualization allows the transformation of human identity to cease to be understood as a given and be understood as a construction. This is a permanent task, leading to a "de jure autonomy," independent of the simultaneous establishment of "de facto autonomy" (Bauman, 2000, 2012).

Individualization by itself does not promote individualism; indeed, the opposite is true since individual projects do not necessarily have to seek only individual well-being. Individual projects may also be targeted at collective action, or even at achieving shared ideals, such as climate preservation or the creation of some kind of community (Castells, 2012).

Individualization is a cultural trend that emphasizes the individual's projects as a fundamental guiding principle of their behavior (Castells, 2012; Giddens, 1991; Beck, 2006). Therefore, individualization creates the conditions for the potential emergence of autonomous societies comprising individuals who know that their institutions and laws are the products of their work, tasks, and action. Thereby, institutions can be challenged and changed (Castoriadis, 2010).

As a result of the individualization processes, the individual is considered, by themselves and by others, to be solely responsible for their personal and social condition, one which promotes the dimensions of producer and active performer of identity, integrating the events of the outside world into a continuous story about themselves (Giddens, 1991).

In this conceptual framework, an individual has autonomy when they are able to consciously change their own life. Being autonomous is, therefore, being conscious of what holds us back, what shapes us, and what needs to be done to change. Autonomy can thus refer to both individual and collective actors, focusing on the ability of a social actor to become a Subject (Touraine, 2000; 2021). This construction is carried out by defining the action of the self around projects built according to the values and interests of the individual. They can be built individually or collectively with other Subjects but independently of the institutions of society (Touraine, 2000; 2021).

Through networked communication, the Subject organizes their action and acts together with other Subjects. Communication, through network mediation, enables the mechanisms for experimenting with new forms of social organization and individual and institutional interconnections, whereby the groups that

traditionally involved individuals are replaced by diffuse social networks (Wellman, 2002).

In this process, the boundaries of our networks of sociability become more permeable. Interactions multiply, connections are established between multiple different networks, and hierarchical structures tend to be simultaneously more horizontal and more complex (Wellman, 2002; Wellman et al., 2019).

The social life of individuals in the network society allows for the creation and personal management of networked capital. This capital is the product of the way people contact, interact, and obtain resources from one another (Wellman, 2002; Wellman et al., 2019).

Our environment of proximity has become based on fragmented, nuanced, and personalized social networks in which opportunity, uncertainty, and autonomy become the rule. Hence, paradoxically, the cultural process of individualization also ends up promoting new forms of social action.

As shown, the processes of individualization and autonomy are thus conceptually interconnected through networked communication (Cardoso et al., 2015; Castells, 2012).

The conceptual potential of a bridge between individualization and autonomy can be proven through the interconnection of individual efforts to change institutional or other frameworks. This can be observed through the analysis of Portuguese and Catalan societies and the relationship established in them between networked communication and the processes of autonomy (Castells et al., 2003; Cardoso et al., 2005; 2015), specifically through the analysis of the results of the Portuguese sample, which allow for the identification of different relationships between communication and autonomy and a differentiation in the ability of different individuals to enhance this relationship as Subjects (Touraine, 2000; 2021).

In the period between 2003 and 2013, two in-depth studies were carried out concerning the transition to the network society in Portuguese society (Cardoso et al., 2005; 2015). The analysis of a decade of evolution in Portuguese society allowed for the construction of a typology of the relationship between individuals, individual autonomy, and communication. In this analysis, three profiles become distinct: a first profile that brings together individuals with "representations of autonomy," a second profile that describes those who have "unconsolidated practices of autonomy," and finally, a third profile that brings together all those who manifest a "consolidated project of autonomy."

Individuals who have a developing relationship with autonomy can be described as being part of a characterizable profile and having individual representations of autonomy. They live in an everyday life where there is still a process of designing a project of autonomy in the face of a set of objectives.

Individuals with individual representations of autonomy are distinguished by having almost zero presence in social mobilization practices and by having few practices of citizenship and civic participation. However, the vast majority of individuals with this profile believe that citizens have the ability to influence the world and, to a significant extent, think that they themselves can contribute to positive social change.

Individuals with individual representations of autonomy value intelligence and the effort to triumph in life and show some capacity for individual problem solving, as well as the desire to develop professional independence. Nevertheless, this is the profile that least develops practices of individual autonomy. Thus, this group is far from the actual practices but with values and representations that reveal the potential development of future projects of autonomy.

In turn, individuals who have unconsolidated practices of personal autonomy are particularly characterized by their concern for the dimensions of self-sustainability in daily life. This can be seen in particular in their choice to prepare meals to take to work, to make or maintain their own clothing, to carry out repairs at home, and to raise animals and plant vegetables for individual or household consumption.

However, individuals with unconsolidated practices of personal autonomy are those who least wish to develop autonomous professional projects. In addition, they are the only ones out of the three profiles who believe that contacts, connections, and luck are more important for success in life than intelligence or effort itself. In the same sense, they do not consider that they can contribute to positive social change. The majority have a weak individual ability to solve problems and achieve objectives. However, most of them believe that citizens can influence the world, developing practices of citizenship and civic participation, for the most part, without the use of mediation.

The third profile identified corresponds to individuals with a consolidated project of personal autonomy. This is a profile characterized by the existence of a more complete and balanced autonomy project between the various aspects of autonomy, in particular with regard to citizenship and civic participation practices, representations of capacity for change, and attitudes toward life.

Individuals associated with the consolidated project profile of autonomy are those who show a special interest in working independently, and a considerable fraction of them do so. Virtually all individuals belonging to this profile believe in citizens' ability to influence the world together. This is also the profile that most participates in protest actions, that most develops practices of citizenship and civic participation, and that most believes in their own contribution to positive social change.

Individuals possessing a consolidated project of autonomy believe in the elements inherent to the individual themselves in order to be successful in life. The majority of them show individual capacity to solve problems and achieve objectives and demonstrate some interest in self-improvement, and they are the group that seeks out health information the most.

In terms of the relationship between communication practices and autonomy projects, participants with networked communication practices are also those individuals who present the highest percentage of consolidated projects of personal autonomy.

Although the consolidated project of autonomy profile cannot be fully determined by communication practices, nor vice versa, the social profile of the Subjects

clearly indicates the existence of a relationship between certain social conditions and a particular set of values and attitudes.

The consolidated project of autonomy profile also corresponds to individuals with better levels of education and greater familiarity with information technologies, who seem to favor a better knowledge of the potential of networked communication as well as the codes associated with it.

By analyzing the relationship between the three profiles of autonomy and the three profiles of relationship with networked communication, it is possible to confirm that individuals with individual representations of personal autonomy are the ones who most trust the news provided by the media, such as television, radio, and newspapers, and who most present a weaker critical position compared with the other two profiles of autonomy.

In terms of communication practices, participants who have unconsolidated practices of personal autonomy are also those who least trust information from the mass media. They are, at the same time, those who are found to be furthest from mediated communication practices, whether that be mass media or social media. In terms of communication practices, individuals who have unconsolidated practices of personal autonomy correspond to a greater number of individuals with networked paleo-communication practices.

Individuals with a consolidated project of personal autonomy, in turn, correspond to the profile that has the most contact with all mass media. However, this relationship is characterized by moderately relying on them and adopting an intermediate position regarding the trustworthiness of the news.

Individuals who are framed in a profile of networked communicators thus find in it instruments to achieve their specific needs and objectives of autonomy through communication.

This analysis of the relationship between communication and autonomy allows for the conclusion that it goes beyond different intensities concerning the use of mediated communication practices, since there are different uses of communication according to the Subjects' different autonomy goals.

Thus, it can be argued that networked communication emerges as an instrument that provides individual autonomy, and simultaneously acts as a privileged means of disseminating ideas to other individuals to promote the completion of common projects of networked autonomy (Castells et al., 2003; Cardoso et al., 2005; 2015).

Networked communication provides the tools that enable the materialization of cultural representations built around individualization in concrete practices of autonomy. The more comprehensive the adoption of networked communication practices, the easier it will be for individuals to shape their projects of autonomy individually or in collaboration with people with similar interests (Castells, 2012; Cardoso & Jacobetty, 2012).

The demonstration that communication practices provide the tools for the implementation of individual projects of autonomy allows for the argument that communication, by facilitating collective action in autonomy, can produce cultural

representations that are shared between the different participants in these processes. These, in turn, are amenable to broader social sharing.

Examples of a process of cultural construction through networked communication can be found in the relationship established between participants in the practices and representations of the relationships of production, namely through sharing of cultural assets, access to and use of the cloud for file storage, or even their position regarding change and innovation in the use of software and hardware (Cardoso et al., 2005; 2015).

Participants who have a networked communicator profile are the ones who use file storage in cloud hosting services the most. In addition, they are those who have the clearest representation of what they are doing and the most confidence in the safety of this type of service. Networked communicators are also the ones that most value the possibility of accessing their files online anywhere (Cardoso et al., 2005; 2015).

Likewise, regarding the relationship that participants have with digital cultural goods, networked communicators are also the ones who enjoy them the most and who are most shown to be supporters of informal unpaid access to books, music, and films as an alternative to buying them.

However, regarding one particular point, there is an overlap among all the profiles of networked communication practices: their preference for regular access to digital cultural goods over acquisition and permanent ownership of them.

This appreciation for access through paid subscription or non-paid, informal access to digital cultural goods rather than their acquisition and ownership is a trait that is generalizable to all the participants in networked communication, manifesting itself in both digital and non-digital goods and services and going beyond its mere application to the framework of the cultural goods themselves.

The majority of participants in the paleo-communicator, proto-communicator, and networked communicator profiles share an equal social representation regarding the value of access to goods and services instead of their acquisition and ownership.

In terms of the representations constructed by the participants regarding sharing, individuals classified as networked communicators stand out when compared with the other two profiles, since these participants present the highest percentage of concordance in using shared content and resorting to content sharing, regardless of whether such sharing is considered legal (Castells & Cardoso, 2012; Burkart & Schwarz, 2015; Lobato & Julian, 2012).

It is also the networked communicators who are most in favor of broader freedom when it comes to sharing. In the opposite position, there are participants with networked paleo-communication practices, who before making use of or sharing digital content, ask themselves whether this practice is legal or not. It is also the networked paleo-communicators who, despite defending the freedom to share content, report a higher percentage of agreement with policies to increase control over informal sharing.

Positive and socially assumed representations regarding the sharing of digital goods and the value of access instead of acquisition and ownership are the

starting points for the argument regarding the existence of a wide social valorization of a "mediatized culture" in our societies that is fostered by networked communication practices.

In terms of both valuing sharing and valuing access, the participants who develop practices of sharing the most and who choose cloud storage the most are also those who value them the most, corresponding communicatively to the profile of networked communicators.

The majority of participants adopt a very positive position regarding the digital sharing of content, such as music, videos, or books, as a daily activity. In this same index of representations in relation to sharing, there is also majority agreement regarding individuals' not questioning the legal status of the content that is shared beforehand. For most participants, sharing is thus a practice already institutionalized in everyday life.

In the framework of representations regarding production associated with networked communication, individual representations regarding the role of innovation and technological change in everyday life are also present. These representations allow an analysis of the degree of social appreciation for practices of openness in production, specifically regarding coproduction by the participants and the acceptance of the cultural idea that software is never finalized but is rather in a permanent state of evolution, that is, a permanent beta state (Von Hippel, 2016).

The participants' attitudes toward the openness of production are mostly positive, portraying a positive representation of the need for changes in hardware and software. This positive representation is manifested through agreement with the current dynamics of the near-constant updating of the software of technological communication equipment. This likewise appears to be in agreement with the valuing of software's ability to be individually customized, as well as positive attitudes toward what is new technologically. All of these attitudes are accompanied by positive representations. However, positivity is always more prevalent among participants associated with the networked communicator profile than the other two profiles.

The analysis of the previous examples allows for the argument that the representations formed in the framework of networked communication and the relationship established with the mediation of goods and services, such as hardware and software or digital goods and services, are not exhausted in the spheres of cultural goods and communication technology.

The representations constructed through communication in relation to production contribute to the creation of a symbolically structured space of broader meanings in which our everyday life is also constructed.

The representations analyzed above, namely those regarding openness, access, and sharing, have a common focus on the relationships of production (Castells, 2002). However, the experience, or our actions upon ourselves (Castells, 2002), is also shaped by networked communication.

To understand the scope of the transformative role of networked communication in experience, it is necessary to recall that, in recent decades, there have been

two major cultural transformations in the social representations of our everyday life, viz. the association between (1) "network" and social change and (2) "screen" and communicational change (Silverstone, 1990; Castells, 2002; Cardoso, 2013).

If the communicative practices developed in everyday life immersed in mediation produce a permanent reflexivity about what life in the network society is, then the screens that already mediate the networked experience have also become part of the non-mediated experience. For example, when we set up a meeting at a cafe through a call made on a smartphone and need to let the person know that we will arrive before or after the agreed-upon time, we update them through messages. These messages notify the person of the delay or the advancement of the arrival time, but even when we are seated face-to-face at the table, the conversation will, many times, be sustained via the use of the very same screen that allowed for the original arrangement of the encounter. The screen might be used to show a friend's video or post that suddenly becomes central to the conversation, to see the time that a film is showing to choose which movie theater to go to or when to watch it on Netflix, to satisfy curiosity regarding the result of a football or other sports match or the ongoing war and the rise of supermarket prices, and so on—all the things that might constitute a conversation. We thus experience a change not only in the way our world is lived but also in how it is perceived socially.

The perception of change goes beyond a "media life" (Deuze, 2009; 2011). Change is perceived socially as a "networked lifeworld" in which life is lived "through" the mediation of the screen and "in" a networked world. This is a world in which the screen shapes the experiences and expressions of everyday life and where the network interconnects all the aspects of contemporary life, simultaneously supporting it materially and symbolically.

The networked lifeworld refers to the symbolically structured space of meanings, taken by us as guaranteed, in which cultural traditions, social interaction, and personal identity are sustained and reproduced (Thompson, 2012, pp. 61-62; Habermas, 1984; 1989; 1991; 1998).

The networked lifeworld thus refers to the ways of coordinating consensual actions that we construct within the framework of the network society (Castells, 2002). In a system organized in a network, the shared social representation of the lifeworld (Habermas, 1984) is also perceived as a networked lifeworld.

A networked world is the result of the reflexivity created by our communication practices, referring to the fact that, for the Subject, it has become increasingly noticeable that everyday life is organized in and as a network (Castells, 2002). Consequently, such a perception alters the representations regarding how the world is perceived in its organization and experience.

In the historical context prior to the contemporary era, before the framing of an Information Age (Castells, 2002), the "network" sign, as well as its signified and its signifier, were anchored in a social representation of the "network" as a physical object, for example, the fishing net or the spider web, or as a communicative process that defined the set of close personal relationships established with friends, family, neighbors, or coworkers.

With the emergence of information and communication technologies that materialized on the computer and mobile phone and their widespread social adoption, our social representation of "network" has expanded beyond the relations of proximity or mere object.

However, until the emergence of social networks and social media promoted by the contemporary platforms of Meta, YouTube, TikTok, or X/Twitter, we did not have a sign, nor signified or signifier, to stand as able to represent the lifeworld as "networked." This only occurred when, through the domestication of social networks and social media and their institutionalization in our everyday life, it became possible to create the conditions for a socially shared representation of a networked lifeworld with the product of individual communication practices carried out by the "networked Subject."

When a paradigm shift in social organization occurs, as is the case of the network social organization, after its theoretical identification a separation is still maintained between what is argued by theorization and the representations shared by the population regarding their lived reality. Subsequently, this separation evolves to an approximation between the representations of the lived and the theorization produced about what is lived.

The process of social acceptance of social theory itself emulates, albeit partially, the distinct phases of academic acceptance of important scientific discoveries: first they are completely ignored, then they are violently attacked, and finally they are set aside as well known (Tegmark, 2007).

The process of social juxtaposition between theory and individual perception evolves as social practices are generalized among the population through the creation of "bridges" between the representations that the social experience produces and the representations that the theory advocates.

In the specific case of theorizing about a network society, the "bridge" was created by the generalization of the use of social networks and social media in everyday life, provided by the generalization of both computer and mobile phone technology in screen mediation.

Therefore, only after the spread of the use of networks on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, Weibo, VKontakte, WeChat, and WhatsApp, through screens that mediate communication, did it become possible to establish the "bridges" between the lived experience in everyday life and the theorization about everyday life, thus creating a broad social representation that the "world is lived in a network." Only at that moment, already based on a previously accepted social convention, did the social sharing of a symbol become widespread: the "network" became a sign, assuming the signified and significant of "networked everyday life." The network seen and experienced through the mediation presented on screens came to be understood as representing socially that which "is in the place of something else," in this case, a space symbolically structured and organized as "networked everyday life."

Social networks and social media, as a result of their visual dimension and through the use of facial images of the people with whom we relate, together with the management of our social networks through platforms, established themselves

in the icon of meaning and in the sign of a symbolically structured and organized networked world. Through the use of social networks and social media, we have materialized the networks that build our lives on our screens. This perception changed our subjectivity, making us aware of our condition as networked individuals who are also in a world that is symbolically structured and organized as a network.

The use of mediation in a mode of networked communication is today a fundamental tool in the processes of reproduction, sustainability, and social change. Through mediation networks, many citizens experience the possibility of publicly affirming their individual and collective right to become free players, to be able to establish themselves as Subjects. Using their creative freedom against previous social statutes or social roles, they are able to change their environment and thus strengthen their autonomy (Touraine, 2000; 2021).

In a networked world, individuals do not only act in a network; they think of and perceive their actions as being in a network, as well. This can be exemplified by the emergence of different social movements combined with cultural innovation and brought about by a culture associated with mediation and disseminated by mediation, along with appeals to morality or justice, the affirmation of democracy, and the non-violent challenge of various forms of dominance (Wieviorka, 2012; Castells, 2012; Cardoso & Jacobetty, 2012).

The analysis of the relationship between communication profiles and autonomy profiles allows for the establishment of the hypothesis that, the greater the adoption of networked communication practices, the more likely the incorporation of positive representations associated with a culture that values mediation. Consequently, the relationship between mediation and the shaping of the social, economic, and political, as well as the emergence of a mediatized culture, is also greater, thus shaping the individual representation of each of us as a networked individual and "mediated Subject" (Touraine, 2000; Pleyers, 2006; Welman et al., 2019).

The "mediated Subject" can be described as a networked individual who is able to construct themselves as a social actor—someone who defines their actions according to their values and interests, strengthening their autonomy and giving unity and meaning to the lived experience as a result of the full appropriation of communication and asserting themselves as a networked communicator who possesses a consolidated project of autonomy.

The social perception of a networked lifeworld and the emergence of a mediated Subject also have as a consequence a potential change in the shared framework of symbolic meanings associated with central dimensions in our everyday life.

However, for a change in the shared framework of symbolic meanings to occur, it is also necessary to question the very system that we inherit and that surrounds us in a given historical context.

Thompson (2012) suggests that we can define system (Habermas, 1984) as a self-regulatory order of action, purposely rational, in which actions are coordinated by certain non-linguistic mechanisms or media, such as money or bureaucracy. For example, in the case of the markets, money replaces the presence of an intense

communicative action. In turn, bureaucracy replaces the presence of a communicative action in the case of institutionalized power of the State.

In the network society, both the system and non-linguistic media are increasingly organized into networks (Castells, 2002). The system therefore corresponds to a set of predefined situations, or modes of social coordination, in which the requirements associated with a certain communicative action are relaxed within legal and previously specified limits (Habermas, 1984; 1989; 1991; 1998).

The questioning of the system is only possible in the context of a strong manifestation of identity crises in our societies (Habermas, 1989; Thompson, 2012; Castells et al., 2012) because it is only when an identity crisis occurs that it is possible to open a space for the formation of new cultural practices and dynamics that manifest a different way of thinking about reality and give meaning to the lifeworld.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, for at least two decades, the lack of confidence in the system anchored in the trust in banks and markets crossed the border of the financial sphere to contaminate the economic sphere. This was accompanied by an almost institutionalized crisis of confidence in political systems. In addition to these crises and in a cycle of feedback to and from them, we witnessed the lack of confidence in the environmental management of climate change, distrust in health management systems associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and distrust produced by the inability to avoid the use of war as an extension of policy, as shown by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and further conflicts.

The financial crisis that started in 2008 and that was prolonged by these multiple crisis dimensions has a structural dynamic.

The hypothesis put forward here is that such a dynamic has laid the groundwork for one of those historical moments in which we arrive at a generalization of the social perception that the system's narratives, which framed the formation of a given meaning in the lifeworld, have lost strength. When this happens, a crisis of structural confidence is introduced into the system. Throughout this period, the emergence of a communicational crisis was also witnessed, pointing to the interruption between the old and new modes of communication, that is, between mass communication and networked communication (Castells et al., 2012; Castells et al., 2017; Cardoso & Jacobetty, 2012).

The succession of crises at the beginning of the twenty-first century, which fostered strong social disruption, acted as a catalyst for the emergence of an identity crisis in which individuals perceived their collective identity as questioned (Thompson, 2012). When this happened, a space was opened for questioning the narratives coming from the system itself. This questioning arose through the adoption of new practices that enhanced strong cultural changes in the symbolic meaning attributed to structuring dimensions of our daily lives, namely those that most directly help structure the relationships among power, production, and experience (Castells, 2002).

In the context of this contemporary identity crisis, the potential change of symbolic meanings arises through the broad social sharing of networked communication practices, the creation of networked projects of autonomy, and the construction of a mediatized culture—one that values the use of mediation and the

social perception of its role. This culture, although it is a product of the way we communicate, influences our social representations far beyond the communicative sphere and spreads to all the dimensions of our everyday life.

The expression of a different way of thinking about relationships within a system and the changes in meanings that give significance to the networked world have their origin in the alteration of the social representations that we have created in our everyday life through the communication practices associated with power, production, and experience.

As a result of new socially shared representations of power, production, and experience, the formation of a networked cultural capital was brought about, establishing the point of fusion between individual and collective resources as diverse as information, knowledge, entertainment, material help, financial help, alliances, emotional support, and even a feeling of being connected (Wellman, 2002).

However, the generation of networked cultural capital and its contribution to individual autonomy also depend on the individualized communication practices of the Subject as well as their socially shared representations (Meyrovitz, 1985; Colombo & Aroldi, 2003).

Communication in the network society is immersed in mediation, but the participants are the ones who shape this networked mediation. In effect, we the participants are the network; that is, in networked communication, there are no previously defined paths for a message to go through; there are only potential nodes for connection, their receivers (previously identifiable or imagined), and the possible paths of the network that connect them through the communication of communication (Eco, 2021).

It is we who design the paths of communication as a result of the communicative functions we assume in the search for virality, nodality, and sharing through our communication practices. Through us, the participants, the use of technology that ensures communication is shaped on a model based on mediation, in which people and organizations share the same mediated communication practices and in which people assume new functions and social roles in the context of communication. The distinctivity of the model lies in them and in their communication practices, shaping the messages and the mediation itself.

Networks are, therefore, the product of our choices regarding communicating, publishing, sharing, and forming paths, which in turn shape the networks. The networks are thus simply defined by the paths taken by the messages.

In the sense of the human construction of this network through our choices of messages and receivers, we construct ourselves socially as *Homo retiarius* (literally, "network man" in Latin). In the network society, we constitute a networked humanity through our reflexivity and communication practices.

The networked lifeworld is a space of meanings symbolically structured through our networked communication practices. The world for the mediated Subject is perceived as organized in a network and reproduced in cultural experience, social interaction, and personal identity in an everyday life immersed in mediation. This thus defines the social habitat of the networked humanity and *Homo retiarius*.

The social perception of a networked lifeworld immersed in the mediation of everyday life provided by screens created the conditions for the formation of a culture that values mediation and is nourished through networked experience—a mediatized culture.

Sharing, production, and classification of experience

Experience is that which permits us to situate ourselves before what surrounds us, whether it be the product of nature or of human action (Silverstone, 1999).

Direct experience in the first person is limited to what we have contact with, that is, what we know because we witness it. However, in a globalized world, where our lives are dependent on the actions and decisions of third parties and people with whom we do not have contact or will indeed have contact, mediation is what provides us with the majority of our experience.

Mediation presupposes that information will reach individuals. In the network society, experience is associated with mediation, and mediation is associated with the direct sharing of content by participants instead of only via the distribution of media organizations, as previously occurred.

In networked communication, social sharing practices are the product of not only the individual choices of participants but also the institutional dynamics of an economic, business, and political nature resulting from the historical context experienced by them. Thus, sharing models, which form the media system associated with networked communication, have also been shaped by the public dissemination of Netscape's first browser and the openness of its source code in the framework of open-source movements and for commercial outsourcing practices, by production and financial offshoring practices, and by the culture underlying the algorithms of search technologies, social networks, and social media, originally fostered by Google and Yahoo! and later by Facebook. This is not to mention the combination of digital, mobility, and individualized access to digital screens, as well as the combination of Walmart's typical physical commerce model and Amazon's online commerce model (Taplin, 2006; 2006a; 2007; Eco, 2007; Silverstone, 2006; Castells & Cardoso, 2006; Castells et al., 2012).

In the framework of networked communication, sharing emerges as a complex but contradictory set of practices and meanings through which we can interpret and make sense of contemporary daily life. It is also one of the normative parameters through which we evaluate the way we live in the network society (Nicholas, 2017; Castells, 2002).

Although, culturally, sharing takes on mostly positive connotations, such as equality, abnegation, unselfishness, or giving, it is important to unpack the conceptual separation between sharing as distribution and sharing as communication (John, 2013).

Sharing as distribution refers to the goal of giving something to others. This something may be both tangible and intangible. As such, it can take the form of a link, a post, or a digital photo.

In turn, sharing as communication refers to the different actions associated with the production of communication and takes the form of the expression of individual meaning through the production of spoken words, written texts, sound, or video. This is the case, for example, when referring to the sharing of feelings or emotions, which are socially associated with the assumption of the existence of reciprocal communication practices (Illouz, 2008). Consequently, sharing, whether characterizable as distribution or communication, develops within a framework of networked communication and changes occurring in the communication practices that characterized mass communication (Thompson, 1995; Cardoso, 2009).

Sharing as distribution occurs in a dimension of prosumption (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). Sharing is thus driven by the mutual collapse of the separation between consumption and production practices, giving rise to a new individualized dynamic, which finds its fit in the practices that occur on social networks and social media, but also expanding on other platforms such as eBay, Amazon, or Yelp in the form of ratings, advice, rankings, etc. (Benkler, 2006; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010).

Sharing practices as distribution can also be characterized as a product of a participatory culture with practices such as spreadability (Jenkins et al., 2009), as well as the dissemination of memes (Shifman, 2013).

Although participatory culture has its roots in the mass-media subcultures already present throughout the twentieth century (Jenkins et al., 2009), the widespread use of the web has given it broad cultural visibility, and social networks and social media have provided the tools necessary for its social dissemination. Regardless of whether one speaks of disseminable media or memes, the practice of posting a video on YouTube or distributing the link to a clip from the same platform can and should be defined as sharing (John, 2013).

In the context of Internet culture, there is a strong association between sharing and the technological basis of computing itself (Castells, 2001); examples extend from time-sharing computer processing practices to network file sharing (John, 2013). Therefore, the association between the concept of sharing and the cultural genesis behind the creation of social networks and social media as central spaces of mediation in networked communication should come as no surprise.

Sharing on social networks and social media is based on the distribution of digital content in the form of links, photos, videos, or sound files, as well as the communication of moods through status updates on Facebook or in Tweets, and through Instagram posts and TikTok videos and other examples of the use of mass self-communication and one-to-many mediated communication for sharing and communicating opinions about events, an individual's location, or any other aspect of everyday life (John, 2013; Lalancette, & Raynauld, 2019; Haenlein et al., 2020; Murthy, 2018; Sujon et al., 2018).

According to Nicholas (2017), sharing ignites the digital, the emotional, and the economic simultaneously and, in so doing, captures and constructs our contemporary life.

One can thus argue that network-mediated sharing becomes a structure of feeling (Williams, 1977), or the particular quality of social experience and relationship identifiable in the affective elements of consciousness and relationships,

historically distinct from others, that give meaning to a certain generation or time period (Williams, 1977).

The emergence of a social dynamic of "network-mediated sharing" represents an expansion of public space to the detriment of private space, also giving rise to a sharing economy (Nicholas, 2017).

However, this economic dynamic of sharing is not to be confused with an economic dimension of gratuity. By extending public access to the hitherto personal, this also means paying for access to the space where sharing is possible, although most of the time, such payment occurs indirectly only through personal data (Nicholas, 2017).

A sharing economy is strongly associated with peer-mediated and digitally mediated production and refers to all sharing interactions that do not involve money for those who contribute to sharing and are not motivated by money but rather by the pleasure associated with what they do.

Therefore, the economic dynamics of sharing must be understood culturally as acting to strengthen social ties and the community (Nicholas, 2017; Himanen et al., 2001).

Being cognizant of the aforementioned, network-mediated sharing can be defined as a communicative act that is the product of the individualization of the sharing of experience, involving both the communication of states of mind and the distribution of digital content.

Although individual sharing on social networks and social media as well as mass-media organizational distribution are characteristics of the current media system, this does not mean that the objective of the media system does not continue to be the search for the attention of others as well as to become part of their routines.

The new media system, which is being developed by means of networked communication, continues to be based on the same market dimension that was already characteristic of mass communication. The common element of mediation, whether in mass communication or networked communication, is to try to reach the greatest number of potential participants in communication. This is present in the streaming strategies of video platforms, which range from those released for binge watching to those released weekly; in television news, which starts by announcing what type of news will be in the broadcast later so as not to lose the public's attention; or even in the search for virality for content on social networks and social media.

However, networked communication, both in the search for virality or receivers' loyalty to content, regardless of whether it be news, information, entertainment, or mere phatic communication, does not depend only on the participants' sharing.

The search for virality by participants and the loyalty of mass-media audiences are also dependent on the algorithms developed by the platforms, which are designed to base their operation and management of network relationships on the existence of participants who take on the social role of sharing the mediated experience on the network.

Individual sharing is thus a fundamental dimension of the new media system based on networked communication, specifically because it allows for the largest number of people to be reached. Consequently, advertising becomes increasingly directed at participants on social networks and social media, who, along with their subscriptions of streaming and other platformed content, remain to a large extent the financial underpinning of the new media system built around networked communication.

The distinctivity of distribution in networked communication occurs owing to the emergence of new actors in distribution. The distribution no longer depends only on mass-media organizations but also on the individual willingness of participants to take part in the communication flow.

The consequences of this change are multiple for both the formation and the functioning of the media system, although some are more visible than others; for example, the centrality of sharing by the participant in the media system justifies the actions taken by different platforms to combat the automation of fake profiles on social networks and social media.

This is not only because platforms specifically want to control the spread of hate speech or disinformation but also because bots do not "see" advertising and thus do not produce real sociodemographic data that are algorithmically sellable to third parties. More importantly, bots do not configure the future possibility of buying advertised products and services. Within the larger spectre of the social economy of advertising, bots as profiles are therefore doubly negative for the strategies of the platforms that manage social networks and social media.

In networked communication, the regular functioning of the media system depends on being able to entice the participant to become involved in the content sharing routine. Without this free individual decision to share, the system does not produce enough disseminability for the content circulating in it, thus reducing the scope of communication and its communicative efficiency and efficacy, both in the sphere of citizenship and of consumption.

Current social networks and social media are the most common example of a social function of sharing, in which the new media system supports an important portion of the flow of meaningful communication.

On social networks and social media, a phatic communicative function predominates. The content is produced and shared to keep the ties of social relationship active. This is the case for memes, videos, photos, or even the sharing of newspapers in PDF format in closed groups on messaging apps.

In most cases, sharing has no direct business purpose for the participant even though the data produced in this communication are the commercial property of the platforms themselves and, therefore, subject to subsequent monetization.

However, in networked communication, distribution also continues to be ensured by distribution organizations, both old and new. This is specifically in regard to content produced by mass-media news or entertainment organizations. There are also new organizational players, such as telecommunications companies that are providers of cable or satellite access to television channels and television content, and the platforms of video and music streaming brands such as Apple,

Spotify, YouTube, Netflix, HBO, Amazon Prime, Disney, Amazon, and other wholesalers and retailers of physical goods (Fagerjord & Kueng, 2019).

In contemporary distribution, the rule seems to be that, for each organization that distributes content through a paid subscription, there is always a share of participants who take on a social role as unauthorized sharers of paid content.

This distribution through sharing is also carried out in a way that is not included in the official distribution of organizational structures. This set of informal sharing practices can be designated as "piracy cultures" (Castells & Cardoso, 2012).

The choice of the "piracy" designation arises from the fact that, traditionally, we look at the television, radio, newspaper, games, and music industries from a perspective that identifies access to such content as solely associated with payment for copies, whether this be linked to a subscription or be supported indirectly economically through advertisements or a "freemium" business model.

Cultural and news content, as well as how people interact with it, is classified from a given thought and value system, which sees the content and its distribution channels only as a product of commercial relations between companies and individuals in a contractual relationship with previously agreed-upon rights and obligations.

However, the reality described by numerous empirical analyses deconstructs this definition. This is because the role of sharing participants on social networks and social media does not constitute, for the most part, a commercial relationship, as witnessed by the existence of an increasing number of participants in the construction of communication-sharing relationships outside these institutionalized sets (Burkart & Anderson Schwarz, 2015; Mattelart, 2012).

The historical origin of online piracy cultures can be found in the domestication of peer-to-peer (P2P) networks as spaces for content sharing, with the sharing of music or film collections diversified on a global scale (Cardoso et al., 2012; Lobato & Thomas, 2012). This was because, at first, before the popularization of paid streaming according to the "Netflix business model," most of the available films and series offered were not centered on a paid distribution model (Spilker & Colbjørnsen, 2020; Lobato, 2019; McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2016).

P2P networks, and later streaming technologies, both anchored in multiple participants, developed an informal sharing market in more or less organized networks, offering products of varying quality.

Subsequently, there was a decrease in unauthorized sharing practices with the construction of a formal market based on subscription streaming, namely regarding the arrival of Netflix, Apple Music, Spotify, and other content offerings in films, series, and music (Lobato, 2019; Aversa et al., 2019).

However, simultaneously with the multiplication of paid streaming offerings, a renewed dynamic of sharing by participants emerged, this time not only through the sharing among friends of each other's passwords for access to paid streaming but also through the boosting of platforms sharing the very same subscription content for free, with both practices originating in the lack of elasticity for

demand for paid content and in a demonstration of the deep social roots of piracy cultures (Spilker & Colbjørnsen, 2020).

The evolutionary dynamics of piracy cultures thus constitute a defining feature of the relationships constructed between the participants in communication in which supply and demand relationships are established. These relationships, more than episodic, are configured as structural and characterize the current stage of the media system in which content follows two parallel dynamics of distribution: a formal system ,paid for monetarily or using data, the "pay or data model", and an informal system, not paid for by the user but potentially also generating data and advertising revenue for those who organize the informal sharing, the "data only model".

The new media system is thus characterized by the emergence of a new social role for participants in networked communication, that of "experience sharer." This is a social role that everyone, as participants in a communication network, will perform to different degrees and at different times since it forms the basis of networked communication and embodies the communication of communication (Eco, 2021) as a distinctive element of this communication mode.

In networked communication, the sharer of the experience may also be the producer of the experience. The participants may assume, if they wish, the social roles of both experience sharer as well as "experience producer," namely when innovation is sought in the forms of mediation or in the content to be read, heard, or viewed by others.

After being transformed into innovation or spin-off products, creativity is the main source of wealth creation in today's society for companies as well as for countries (Benkler, 2007; Castells, 2005). For citizens in general, creative innovation has also gained a new centrality in everyday life owing to the change in work ethic in our societies. The work ethic of industrial societies was forged from the Protestant ethic (Weber, 2001), centered on work as an obligation, but in the new social environment of informational societies (Castells, 2002), it has evolved into a hacker ethic, now focused on work as a means of personal fulfillment through pleasure (Himanen et al., 2001; Brown Jr., 2008). In the hacker work ethic, creativity is presented as a free transit for happiness at work, or rather, to do what one likes.

For example, a manifestation of hacker ethic in our daily lives is clearly visible in the process of constructing social representations around school progression, which, in many societies, is centered around the value given to what is most appreciated and what, consequently, the individual will accomplish most in the future (Kirsi Tirri, 2017; Kuusisto et al., 2017).

Culturally, there is a hacker ethic that, in education systems, frames the dynamics of choice for students in compulsory education regarding their progression to higher education levels. In particular, it is the social dissemination of a hacker ethic that helps explain the drive of the family and educational institutions in the search for which area of study or higher education course would best suit the personal aspirations and autonomy goals of a given student.

It can be argued, of course, that the hacker ethic is not yet fully disseminated in a homogeneous way throughout the population of our societies, given that the

organizational culture of many entities does not yet fully reflect it. However, it will already be present in most professions that focus on the use of information, particularly among the symbolic analysts who take on tasks related to the different exercises of power in our societies, including those that are economic, cultural, technological, educational, and political as well as those related to security and defense (Reich, 1991).

The hacker ethic is an ethic associated with work as a creation, intrinsically linked to the social appropriation of information and communication technologies with the specific purpose of creating something (Himanen et al., 2001). Such creation can be associated with the ability of a doctor to reverse the progress of a disease, a jurist to present arguments to obtain the acquittal of a defendant, a graphic designer to produce a logo design or a programmer to create an app, an artist to create a song, or a financial expert to manage a diversified portfolio with profits, as well as an archaeologist to make a discovery, a chef to cook a successful new dish with new flavors and ingredients, a teacher to teach students with differentiating pedagogical methods, a mechanic to find a technical solution for automobile problems in a workshop, and so on.

Likewise, it is possible to find a hacker ethic associated with other forms of work that are less institutionalized so far, such as producing videos as a YouTuber, working as a freelance journalist, being an Instagram influencer, making podcasts or organizing conversations on an audio-based social network, managing a group of neighbors on Facebook, producing memes, or proposing the creation of an emoji (Brown Jr., 2008).

All the activities listed above are based on the democratization of access to digital production tools. Progressively, communication participants have been seen as innovators in mediation supported by these same digital production tools, not only because of the spread of the Internet and its technological basis on open-source software, but also because of the dissemination of screen-based mediation technologies (Castells, 2005). Like all human activities, creativity in production and the sharing of the product are now shaped to a greater or lesser extent by access to the technological tools of basic digital production. Such is the case with the smartphone with its camera and Internet access (Ritzer, 2014).

In about three decades, our societies have gone from home-centered social dynamics with a single TV screen and a family landline phone to the proliferation of screens in the home and the presence of the screen on the smartphone. This screen is present inside and outside the home and is a part of the daily life of each member of the household (Silverstone, 1990; 1993; 2005).

In turn, the experimentation of the use of social networks and social media is also responsible for changing social representations regarding what creative innovation and shareable production are.

This is namely because it allowed many millions of people to become broadcasters in communication, making their messages known to others through a multitude of content (Tremayne, 2007; Bobkowski, 2015; An et al., 2014).

However, different people have different degrees of creativity. Therefore, the creation of something new, or the act of innovating, has to be understood as a

dialectical process carried out between participants in communication who have unequal power and influence. This process occurs in a market and considers the patterns of the historical context of consumption and use.

The domestication of media technologies, for example, SMS or file sharing software (P2P), has gained a mythical aura in the context of innovation process analysis in the field of communication. They have been flagged as signs of a radical change in the way innovation occurs and are thus an example of rebalancing the way technologists, designers, marketers, market analysts, and investors interact with the consumer (Silverstone, 2006).

The mobile phone industry, noting the use of SMS messages by young people, incorporated this knowledge into new mobile phones and the services they offer (Colombo, 2004; Silverstone, 2006; Von Hippel, 2016). The consequence came quickly: the participant began to be looked at by the industry as a trendsetter: an active innovation tester (Verdegem & Marez, 2011) or a leading user (Von Hippel, 2016).

Innovation processes were thus less confined to organizational environments because the success of a product or service began to be measured through the result of its launch test. More product models have been made available on the market, with their choice and consumption being monitored in order to redefine which should be improved and which discontinued, a dynamic that, in turn, can also be found on social networks and social media and in the processes of virality of the shares associated with the production of content (Larsson, 2018; Castillo et al., 2014).

Along with a traditional creative model based on the work developed and led by organizations, another model also emerges. It is the product of mediation introduced by networked communication in which the virality of creation is the result of a mostly individual process, dependent on the objectives of autonomy of an individual or group of individuals. It may or may not have a commercial purpose, but it always makes use of social networks and social media for dissemination and acceptance testing (Colombo, 2001; Bruns, 2012; Von Hippel, 2016).

When the participant in the communication creates or innovates, they cease to be a final consumer and place themselves at the center of the productive value chain itself (Von Hippel, 2016; Slot & Frissen, 2008). The participant, who was erstwhile a mere enjoyer of mediation technology and its content, thus becomes a coparticipant in their creation.

The individualization of the production of experience turns all participants in communication into potential producers of experience together with other participating Subjects (Bruns, 2006; Bruns & Schmidt, 2011).

In a participant-centered approach to mediation, such as the one seen in the current media system, innovation and creativity depend on the ability of participants to organize networks on platforms or to combine platforms and other spaces of formal or informal mediation. This ability to create networks aims to allow production to reach other participants and to create experience through sharing.

However, this generation of networks depends, to a large extent, on the individual's ability to create and open spaces of attention and their ability to create

virality with the potential to generate interactions and create expectations of their extended temporal durability through the tools that are available on the platforms and that are based on individual creativity (Lee & Ma, 2012; Wischnewski et al., 2021).

Everyone can communicate on the networks, but even though we may have our content shared by other participants, the temporal continuity of virality always depends on the development of a sufficiently broad network of participants to take advantage of the dynamics of network growth provided by the algorithms.

In social media jargon, virality refers to the ability to leverage the creation made by friends or other unknow participants, get likes, or generate shares, that is, that which feeds algorithms and can extend the reach of communication to more people (Himelboim & Golan, 2019; Berger & Milkman, 2012).

The creation of something by the participant, be it a meme, a news item, or a communicative object of entertainment or information, is always associated with the potential to reach as many participants as possible.

This creation of the participant has inherent the desire to be able to shape the experience of as many "other(s)" as possible, i.e., to become an experience producer through their friends or the members of a group or page on Facebook or another social network, the number of Retweets on X/Twitter or any other social media, and so on.

The transition from a space of finite mediation, that of mass-media mediation, to a space of almost infinite possibilities as to the creation of new forms of mediation and messages, that of networked communication, raises multiple questions about how to orient ourselves in the face of the wide range of options available.

To deal with this quantitative and qualitative problem, a perspective of mutual help in classification governed the emergence of the first pre-massified Internet search services, which were quickly appropriated from a commercial perspective, as illustrated by the paths of Yahoo! in the United States and other examples such as Sapo in Portugal. Both were projects created in the university environment and later established as central elements of the economy, with high-value acquisitions and high stock market valuations (Miller, 2000; Seymour et al., 2011).

In view of the exponential growth of the content available on the Internet, the classification portal model quickly became obsolete, owing to not only its difficulty in updating but also its inability to maintain itself commercially, having given way to different search engines based on algorithms, such as Altavista and later Google or Bing (Van Couvering, 2008). These algorithms based their classification on the previous choices made in the search engine by individuals with similar behavioral and sociodemographic profiles as well as by another set of unknown variables, creating an algorithmic black box which we use on a daily basis (Diaz, 2008; Martey, 2008; Zimmer, 2008).

However, if the issue of access to large amounts of information, impossible to be fully known by the participant, was apparently solved by the emergence of the search engine and its widespread adoption as a tool, then the issue of information quality classification has persisted and indeed remains an open question (Spink & Zimmer, 2008).

The strategies of "information decimation" suggested by Eco (Coppock, 1995) and implemented by search engines continue to leave the participant with the final decision regarding the quality of the information presented.

As such, search engines and other algorithmically based tools, such as generative artificial intelligence Q&A interfaces, are largely ineffective when faced with a differentiated world of information in which the direct knowledge of each individual and logical analysis in the face of the multiplicity of subjects are not humanly possible and, consequently, not replicable by any given AI (Eco, 2021).

Within the framework of the models of social organization that preceded the network society, the process of access to information was mostly defined as obeying a dynamic of "gatekeeping" (Shoemaker et al., 2001).

In this reading, gatekeeping was defined as the process by which mass media controlled the flow of information, determining what was retained. This, in turn, structured how the messages were selected and how the information was shaped until it reached its intended audience (Shoemaker, 1991).

Although the original theorization of gatekeeping, developed by Lewin (1951), focused on interpersonal communication, its explanatory appropriation essentially occurred in the field of mass communication and its journalistic model (White, 1950).

In the field of communication and journalism, gatekeeping has thrived as an explanatory theory of information selection (Nahon, 2008), namely by providing a table of questions on how individual accountability for the selection of journalistic information occurs and questioning how journalistic choices are formed and the role of the routines of newsrooms, the options of organizational structuring of the media, the institutional integration of mass media in society at the economic and political level, and ideologies and culture when it comes to selectivity (Nahon, 2008; Shoemaker et al., 2001).

However, the theorization of gatekeeping also helps to explain how, within the framework of mass communication, the issue of information quality has been addressed socially.

In mass communication, the available information can be assembled into three large groups depending on its social role dimension. The first group is made up of the news and has the social role of introducing reflexivity into daily life on the basis of what happens around us. The second covers different forms of entertainment with the role of allowing leisure, structuring cultural offerings, and acting as a vehicle for their dissemination. Finally, the third group, in the knowledge category, has the role of supporting social progress through scientific and technological progress.

Although not all information was produced within the framework of the mass media, it circulated and was mostly distributed through them, although this is, of course, a theoretical simplification.

However, this simplification helps to conceptualize how a process of certifying the quality of information was constructed, existing in the social and temporal framework in which mass communication characterized our way of communicating.

In this certifying process, we find both mass-media institutions and scientific organizations. Mass-media institutions, with their production and distribution of the news and entertainment and with their selection criteria based on gatekeeping processes and their practice, gave rise to a set of social representations regarding the quality of information.

The processes of information selection from the mass media defined the criteria of the quality of information, both in the news and in entertainment as well as in the production of the social representations about what was understood as "quality," thus fostering a definition of quality associated with cultural goods through the institutionalized critique of cinema, theater, television, books, etc.

Simultaneously, scientific organizations produced knowledge through higher educational institutions and their national research systems.

Knowledge was disseminated through educational systems, encompassing all levels of education, but also by publishers and distributors of books—knowledge's media of choice. Another set of social institutions were also added to the previous one, to which functions of formal and social memory preservation were attributed through the management of available knowledge collections, such as libraries and other information repositories (Fentress & Wickham, 1992; Eco, 2003; 2011).

All these organizations, along with the mass media, took on the role of institutional classifiers and information selectors, consequently also using gatekeeping practices that may be structured at the individual, group, organizational, institutional, ideological, and cultural level (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009; Nahon, 2008).

With the erosion of the social predominance of the mass communication mode and its gradual substitution by the networked communication mode, there was a radical change in the context of the processes of classification and selection of information. This is because the appropriation of the Internet had created new possibilities as well as new communicative needs, enhancing the dynamics of individualization of classification and questioning the institutional stability of classification and selection of information inherited from mass communication. This resulted in a need to further develop the discussion regarding the classification of experience in networked communication, as well.

Although we are faced with a new networked communication mode, the theories of reception developed in the framework of mass-media studies are valuable starting points for the study of the individualization of classification processes since, as in the case of television and in the use of search engines or generative AI, the individual positioning of the different social actors, in view of the reception of information, is not uncritical and acts in order to select or reject it.

As in mass-media communication, individual affective, cultural, or social filters limit the potential influence of the information presented, acting through the effects of the relativization of exposure through selectivity, perception, and memorization of each subject toward the message received.

Although we should always consider that, even in a network society, mass media continue to be great supporters of the public word, ensuring the public

visibility of the plurality of opinions, it is also necessary to pay attention to the existence of numerous other social configurations (Rieffel, 2005; Elias, 2001).

In addition to the reification of the power of mass-media mediation, we simultaneously find the social world of the network of relationships of individuals and groups (Oliveira, 2017), present both in unmediated face-to-face communication as well as in the sphere mediated by social networking and social media platforms and messaging.

Mediation presents us with experience, while people's interpretation of social reality is also formed from other intellectual and social contexts promoted by individuals and groups.

This can be exemplified by the analysis of voting decisions in elections, whose results are not only the product of the political campaigns presented via different media but also affected by other variables with a strong influence on electoral choices, such as the positioning of the Subject toward the economy, society, their religion, and their family, among others (Berelson et al., 1944).

Similar dynamics can be found in studies on communication, information, and war, such as the 2014 conflict in Ukraine triggered by Russia's annexation of Crimea (Szostek, 2018). In this context, neither the Ukrainian participants who sympathized with Russia's strategic narrative nor the Ukrainians who sympathized with the unaligned Ukrainian narrative or with the Western narrative in 2014 were naive, and they were, to varying degrees, not prevented from having access to high-quality journalism (Szostek, 2018). Their positions at the time, either more in favor of the Ukrainian government or endorsing Russia's justifications, took into account the importance of their personal and social connections with Russia. The rhetoric associated with this conflict favored, on the one hand, a fiercely anti-Russian Ukrainian narrative and, on the other hand, a misinformative Russian narrative toward the Ukrainian government. Both narratives acted on the perceptions of participants (Szostek, 2018).

In the face of this situation, both narratives were read by the participants through the existence, or lack thereof, of personal and social connections to Russia. When these connections existed, the perception of Russian disinformation was not sufficient to quash Ukrainian criticism of Russia, which was seen as unreasonable and as having been exaggerated by placing the emphasis on ties with Russia as deeply undesirable. This example shows that it is therefore not possible to attribute the attitudes of the participants only to the interaction between the misleading content of the Russian media and their naivety (Szostek, 2018).

By formulating the hypothesis that participants in television, newspaper, radio, social networks, and social media communication are always vulnerable, we are also framing the recipients of communication as overly naive individuals, without critical thinking skills or access to good-quality journalism. However, empirically, this is not confirmed. There are no information logics of direct effects that overlap with other social and cultural variables and act automatically on the participants in communication (Hall, 1980; Philo, 2008; Szostek, 2018).

The belief in mediated experience can be significantly mitigated by personal experiences and access to alternative reports with origins in first-person experience and mediated or face-to-face communicative experiences.

For example, Hall (1980) establishes three types of situations regarding how messages can be decoded by participants in communication. The first is the dominant hegemonic type, referring to a situation in which the participant decodes the message in the same terms as it was encoded. In this perspective, the message received is understood as normal, natural, and taken for granted.

The term "hegemonic," suggested by Hall (1980), implies the occurrence of the legitimization of a dominant perspective (Philo, 2008). However, it must not be assumed that the production of content in contested areas of social and political life is limited only to the development and reproduction of hegemonic perspectives, since there is always some room for alternative reporting circulating on social networks and social media as well as within the journalistic space of mass-media communication.

The second type of situation regarding decoding corresponds to a negotiated position (Hall, 1980), which contains a mixture of elements of adaptation and opposition. In negotiated decoding, participants can accept the hegemonic point of view at a general level but at the same time seek to find the exception according to their own beliefs or individual behavior (Philo, 2008).

Finally, decoding arises as a clear opposition to the text in the third type of situation (Hall, 1980). In this last case, the participant decodes the message in a wholly contrary manner, reshaping it from an alternative reference frame to that received through mediation.

In networked communication, the decoding and individual classification of experience is dependent on a set of variables similar to those employed in mass-media communication (Hall, 1980; Philo, 1999). It is thus possible to list the role of four different dimensions in the action of message validation: (1) the direct experience of the participant, (2) the use of logic by the participant, (3) the individual and group value systems of the participants, and (4) the representations of the participants in view of the credibility of the entity that establishes itself as the perceived vehicle for information sharing (Philo, 1999).

In networked communication, the role played by direct experience in the validation and individual classification of messages depends to a greater or lesser extend on direct knowledge—the reality of the message's content that the participant in the communication has in view.

When there is direct, unmediated first-person contact of the participant with the source of the information, or even spatial proximity to the origin of the information that forms the basis of the message, as a rule it is questioned more often than when there is no direct experience with the content.

In turn, logic's role in the validation and classification in networked communication refers to the participant's perception of the existence of a contradiction inherent to the content, which can trigger a rejection of the message. This contradiction results not from proximity to the content of the message but rather from prior

knowledge acquired by the participant about the content now received, a product of successive exposure to messages with contradictory content.

The third dimension identified by Philo (1999) was originally focused on the role played by group and individual value systems in classification and validation. In the context of networked communication, this brings us to situations such as those in which the content of a message presents itself as distant from the personal convictions of a given participant. In this case, the participant's value system acts as a limiting barrier to classification and validation.

Finally, we have the credibility regarding the vehicle perceived as the source of the message. This is the representation formed regarding how the validation and classification of the message is perceived.

In networked communication, as opposed to the context of mass communication, the source vehicle no longer refers only to mass-media brands, since there is a twofold process of credibility formation: first, in the light of the origin of the message, but then regarding those who share the message on social networks and social media. Unlike the role played by value systems in classification and validation, credibility is the product of previously constructed relationships through sharing content with people and institutions and receiving it from them. A product of communication practices, this individualized representation of credibility is constructed through a process of permanent evaluation of the communication carried out by people and brands.

In networked communication, participants do not occupy their own culturally closed space. They are always simultaneously in contact with other previously known participants as well as with new ones. Sometimes they are aware, and other times unaware, of the values and definitions offered by other participants in the networked communicative process. Participants are thus impelled to question and construct meaning with every given text they come across and decide whether to share it (Philo, 2008), as all participants are also potential producers and distributors of content. When a participant shares content on social networks and social media, they subsequently share their agreement or disagreement with a text's content and source credibility as well as with up to what point such content is aligned with the Subject's autonomy goals (Andersen & Søe, 2020). Moreover, if what was shared is in accordance with one's autonomy goals, then there is typically no alteration to the text of the message. On the contrary, if the content is perceived as non-aligned with the Subject's autonomy goals, then there is a high probability that, if shared, some comment will be added in a re-editing and remixing of the initial text. Individual and collective autonomy goals play a central role in message decoding and on the sustainability of the message's original content.

The participants, by sharing something that was not produced by them, also communicate their position on what is being shared.

In contemporaneity, we are far from a society of homogenized or one-dimensional consciences, as observed by Marcuse (2003). This is because, although the texts may always have a meaning that is manifold, permeable, and open to multiple interpretations, it is important to recognize that, in a communication of syncretic characteristics, such as networked communication, journalism and

mass-media commentary continue to have a strong effect on the credibility of the origin of the message as perceived by the participants, even when it circulates on social networks and social media.

However, the power of mass-media journalism, while real, is not absolute, nor does it exist in isolation in the network society, in which multiple forms of mediation coexist. From this it is important to remember that there is a huge cognitive gap between the participants' valuing of both news and opinion produced by commentary in mass media and the existence of the effective conditioning of public opinion. This gap is produced by decoding processes and also by another set of constraints discussed below (Hall, 1980).

In networked communication, as in mass communication, a cognitive gap in the relationship with mass media is associated with social, economic, cultural, mental, and political factors existing among the few opinion-issuing participants certified by mass media and the context of the potential receiving participants (Oliveira, 2017).

This cognitive gap is increased by an extremely fluid, dispersed, heterogeneous, contradictory, and diffuse context of message sharing, specifically in the opinion of the written press and television commentators, and abundantly expressed and disseminated via its circulation on social networks and social media (Pinto-Martinho et al., 2021).

In networked communication, mediation does not act as a single force. The communicative reality is more confusing and contradictory. Although there is a powerful interaction between messages originating from journalistic editorialized contexts of production, encompassing both news and commentary, broader contextual assumptions are also manifested. These are assumptions that we all share through socialization with family and friends, and they are also rooted in the communication shared on social networks and social media.

Therefore, if mass media presents us with a possible view of experience that is always filtered through our representations and values and that is socially inherited, constructed from our experiences of different social contexts, individual interactions, and sharing on social networks and social media, which constitute our everyday life, then an individualization of the classification arises in the framework of networked mediation. Together with mass-media organizations and platforms, participants are content producers as well as distributors and thus also, by default, always "experience classifiers."

The participant is an individual classifier both for themselves and for others, in particular when deciding which texts to share or when to review pages and content, assign ratings to brands, etc.

In networked communication, we are no longer faced with a communication domain in which the sources of mediated communication are only mass-media brands. Rather, another approach to communication is taking shape, one in which brands, whatever their origin and together with individual participants who are close or socially distant, take on the status of shareable sources. This communicative domain is also one in which the mediated message takes on content that is no

longer mostly limited to the news but also includes other types of information, entertainment, phatic communication, etc.

In networked communication, the participant needs to permanently build upon their representations regarding the origin of the messages they come across, and in the attempt to assign a rating to the content, they then have to decide whether or not to share it.

In the role of experience classifier, the participant questions who the sender is and decides on a case-by-case basis whether it is someone already known from previous communicative interactions. The participant does this framed by previous practices or immediate analysis. When this happens, they try to validate the content through the use of direct knowledge of reality, the use of logic, and their systems of individual and group values and occasionally through cross-checking them against their personal knowledge of the scientific and journalistic factual fields, or even through seeking to become fluent in this very same knowledge so as to be able to form a classifying opinion.

However, the participant's individual classifying action does not guarantee any degree of overall reliability with regard to the shared content. Therefore, it is only through an exponential proliferation of classification's repetition of the same content by many more participants that standards of some reliability can be created. Expecting to successfully apply "Linus's Law" (Raymond, 2000 [1997]) to the classification of experience, a social reproduction of the classification is sought through the action of a large number of participants on the same content and through the repeated sharing of their classification.

The characteristics of networked communication transfer some of the validation responsibilities that were previously associated with institutions present in the mass-media system, such as schools, science, publishers, libraries, and bookstores, to the individual participant.

Moreover, this process of individualization of classification is faced with increasing difficulty given the association between the circulation of messages originating on search engines or a social network's feed and previous algorithmic choice. In networked communication, a great majority of shared content for individual classification is dependent on variables used for the prior classification of messages that are usually unknown to the participants.

The formation of the participant's imaginary in the face of unknown variables used by algorithms constitutes another contribution to creating a cognitive gap able to counter the existence of the effective conditioning of public opinion (Hall, 1980; Oliveira, 2017).

Far from being just the product of platforms' decision-making, the content resulting from the algorithmic choice for the questions put forward by participants to search engines, generative AI, or even the feeds of social media and social networks is also the product of a process sustained by the communicative interaction of the participants. Our representations of those interactions also shape them; for example, Facebook's algorithm tends to reward only the "right" type of sharing, giving certain types of posts more visibility than others. When we are aware of this possibility and choose to act in accordance with it, we are shaping our sharing practices

through the representations we have built, whether they are true or not (Bucher, 2012; Bucher, 2017).

Communication depends on visibility; there is no possibility of communication if there is no meeting point between senders and receivers. In turn, the classification of the experience is only possible if there is visibility.

If in networked communication the meeting point is provided by mediation, it is also true that the representations we build on visibility shape the way communication proceeds (Lewin, 1947; Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993).

The architecture of visibility associated with mass communication is followed by a specific architecture of visibility associated with networked communication (Thompson, 2005a).

To a great extent, participants' representations of visibility are formed through the processes inherent in software and the algorithmic power underlying new forms of networked communication, namely those that occur within the framework of social networks and social media (Bucher, 2012).

The construction of a "networked architecture of visibility" took place in a different way from that of mass communication because the participant has a central role in its design.

This is namely because participants' choices fuel the algorithms of Google searches and Facebook's news feed, among many other algorithmically based platforms. For example, the architecture of visibility associated with Google is dependent on its PageRank algorithm, while the architecture of visibility associated with Facebook is constructed using EdgeRank, the algorithm that structures the flow of information and communication in the news feed.

The operating structure of the Google and Facebook algorithms is associated with an object-driven communicative logic (Bucher, 2012). In the case of Facebook, the content associated with each participant, ranging from status updates to a given link or video that is shared, are considered "objects." In turn, each interaction of a participant, such as a "like" or a comment made with these "objects," will give rise to an "edge" (Kincaid, 2010).

The algorithm, based on the performance of the "objects" and the "edges" associated with them, creates an editorial dynamic that runs through the news feed of each participant on Facebook.

Regardless of the permanent updates of the algorithm that Facebook has carried out over time, three guiding variables of the selection seem to remain relatively stable: The visibility that each of the participants can find in their Facebook news feed is built from the variables of affinity, weight, and time (Kincaid, 2010; Bucher, 2012).

The affinity variable refers to the role taken on in the communicative relationship by the participants on Facebook, sometimes as sender and sometimes as receiver, and measures the amount and nature of interactions between participants on Facebook, which derive from the different forms of communication that occur there, from one-to-many mediated communication to the reciprocal mediated communication of private messages exchanged between Messenger participants.

All interactions occurring on Facebook are quantified: the higher their frequency, the higher the affinity score between participants. Consequently, each participant is more likely to see communications in their news feed coming from the other.

The second variable that defines Facebook's EdgeRank is based on the specific weight of communication. This variable associates different types of interactions, such as likes and comments, with different weights that confer degrees of importance to the type of communication established.

The final variable is that of time, which implies the conferral of greater appreciation to the most recent "edge" in a chronological fashion within the framework of the algorithm.

EdgeRank is thus calculated on the basis of these three variables, determining what indicates that certain content as relevant and thus which content appears in a given participant's news feed on the social network (Kincaid, 2010).

The construction of EdgeRank values those participants who communicate and interact the most. Hence, at the basis of the algorithm design, the same type of assumption that is also associated with the operating logics of some formats from the mass media appears to be present. This is principally seen in that which characterizes reality shows on television, which are based on a successful formula that values the association between less reserve, competitive individualization, and popularity, also a feature of Facebooks' EdgeRank (Hill, 2005; Deery, 2015; Bernard, 2019).

The central role of the participant in defining a visibility architecture associated with algorithmic mediation can also be exemplified through Google's PageRank analysis.

While EdgeRank plays a central role in Facebook's communicative visibility processes, PageRank has become the most important source of visibility on the web today (Pasquinelli, 2009; Hargittai, 2007; Hellsten et al., 2006; Introna & Nissenbaum, 2000).

Although there are clear differences, there are also some similarities in the operating logics of these two algorithms (Cardon, 2013).

While Google's PageRank focuses on links between objects, Facebook's EdgeRank classifies objects according to subjective assessments associated with the affinity between people.

However, both algorithms give a central role in their data feed to the choices made by participants throughout their use of Google search and Facebook communication.

Google's PageRank algorithm was historically centered on the principle of the authority recognized in a given piece of information (Cardon, 2013). The more links that referenced a given webpage, the higher the value of that page in the search results.

However, this principle has been slowly replaced by another: the principle of effectiveness (Cardon, 2013). This principle values and hierarchizes choices according to what the algorithm has learned previously from the behavior of one or more participants.

Google and PageRank are thus essentially a product of "machine learning" practices because multiple parameters contribute to the calculation of the PageRank of a given web page. Machine learning techniques calibrate the final value of these variables according to what Google has already collected regarding the previous practices of the same participant, combining all of this with what is already known about the links chosen by other participants for the same, or similar, search requests (Granka, 2010).

The implicit feedback process associated with Google's PageRank algorithm is not solely focused on averaging the results that are most frequently clicked by all participants who have emitted this query (Huffman & Hochster, 2007; Joachims et al., 2007, Granka, 2010).

The optimization of the PageRank algorithm, through implicit feedback, is also associated with the choices made by the participants according to the time spent consulting the web pages selected by them (Radlinski et al., 2008; White & Morris, 2007).

Finally, the PageRank algorithm is also sustained by the standards of reformulation of searches carried out by the participants. The monitoring of these reformulation patterns occurs when PageRank is fed by the subsequent choices that are refined until the participant chooses a definitive page (Kelly & Teevan, 2003).

This makes the cognitive gap (Hall, 1980) associated with the participant's classification process even more complex since the platforms also create previous monitoring systems that act on the credibility of content and sources. Said systems sometimes certify some senders but other times veto other senders and their content (Gillespie, 2018; 2020; Cotter et al., 2022). Moreover, these processes also include the use of human curators for the evaluation of information and identification of disinformation.

Both prior monitoring and curation produce data, which are also used to calibrate both EdgeRank and PageRank. However, these rules are not clearly recognizable to the participants and give rise to algorithmic black boxes (Christin, 2020; Crawford, 2016; Rieder, 2012; Paßmann & Asher, 2017).

The classification of the experience stems from individual contributions, but it also produces social representations regarding different content.

In networked communication, the classification of the experience is a social process led by participants in communication, but it occurs in parallel with the classification and selection made by algorithms and content moderation and is triggered by a combination of the actions of artificial intelligence and human beings within the framework of search platforms and social networks and social media (Myers West, 2018; Gillespie, 2020).

The classification of experience in networked communication takes place in an ever-changing communicative sphere, given that there is content on which participants act that is no longer available in the information flow at any given moment simply because the content was eliminated by the platforms themselves (Gillespie et al., 2020).

In the network society, the institutionalization of experience classification combines traits inherited from institutions that originated in mass communication;

the action of new communicative actors, that is, the platforms; and a process of individualization of classification generalized to all participants in communication, albeit all with different contributions and degrees of contribution.

These networked communication practices resulted in an individualization of the practices of production, sharing, and classification of experience. They also produce new individual and socially shared representations. Networked communication is the product of the culture shaping the network society, but communication also produces culture through the social sharing of values that define our everyday life.

Individualized authenticity

The discussion on authenticity in communication is highly complex, namely because the concept of authenticity has multiple communicative meanings. These meanings are organized into at least three, not entirely exclusive dimensions: (1) authenticity as ideal, (2) authenticity as originality, and (3) authenticity as truth.

First and foremost, authenticity can refer to a relationship of fidelity toward the inner self, as opposed to adjusting one's behavior to whatever the social norms may be (Syvertsen & Enli, 2020). In this case, authenticity is conceptualized as an ideal—an idealization, not something tangible or concrete—so being authentic is not necessarily something we can simply decide to be (Hurley, 2019).

In this approach to authenticity, the focus is on the different social roles we carry out in everyday life. This approach is centered on the discussion of the "Self" as an idealized performance (Goffman, 1959).

The identity of an individual is not something innate; it is not the product of birth or of socialization in the early years of life (Goffman, 1959). Rather, identity is formed by a set of performances idealized by individuals, sometimes unconsciously and other times consciously, to achieve a given goal.

Whereas for Goffman (1959) performance operates as a product of deliberate and conscious actions, for Foucault (1979) identities are performative. Identities do not presuppose unified or authentic first-person "Self" perspectives; identity is not understood as singular or even coherent (Hurley, 2019).

In the framework of mediation, the conceptualization of authenticity as an ideal promotes a series of questions, such as those concerning the differences between mediated communication and face-to-face communication, and whether authenticity is more of a possibility in one or the other (Cardoso, 1998; Syvertsen & Enli, 2020).

For example, with the emergence of mediation on social networks and social media and the multiplication of spaces in the construction of different representations of the "Self," this discussion was extended to the debate regarding representations constructed by our digital doubles or digital twins, i.e., the product of our data (Rettberg, 2014).

With networked communication, the analysis of authenticity perceived as an ideal attracted renewed interest in the context of the datafication of

communication. This is particularly in regard to authenticity on social networks and social media and the role of influencers since participants on Instagram can resort to using filters to change and transform their appearance, thus constructing esthetic representations of authenticity, which are in turn transposable to a marketing of idealized authenticities (Hurley, 2019).

The possibilities presented by social networks and social media allow participants to make use of features such as filters, emojis, audio, video, or subtitles and utilize them in the creation of their own idealized self-representations of authenticity (Hurley, 2019). The influencer can thus manage different versions of idealized authenticity, maintaining a common sense of identity through DIY practices (Abidin, 2018; Lévi-Strauss, 1968; Hurley, 2019; Cardoso, 1998).

Authenticity, perceived as an ideal, has also become one of the cultural grounds on which contemporary election campaigns are fought (Shane, 2018). Authenticity in politics results from interactions between politicians, the media, and the audience, and is thus a social construction centered on the perception of the degree to which politicians are faithful to themselves (Luebke & Engelmann, 2022).

Authenticity in politics therefore refers to a politician's ability to be authentic and to communicate in a true or real way (Schlegel et al., 2009; Lenton et al., 2016). However, authenticity has always been a variable associated with political discourse, specifically in the light of the promises that politicians make. The evolution of communication has also introduced new nuances into this relationship.

On the one hand, the editorial choices of mass-media brands have been focused on the authenticity of candidates and elected officials; this has been seen in the United States, specifically during the election period leading up to the 2016 presidential election and the end of Donald Trump's presidency term (Shane, 2018; Li & Su, 2020). On the other hand, the emergence of social networks and social media has given politics the possibility of resorting to new narratives, which were hitherto centered only on reality TV.

The authenticity of reality TV is based on the concept that there are public areas and private areas of identity building. In the former, the individual acts for others according to certain social norms and cultural expectations, while in the latter, behind the scenes, individuals can abandon their public persona. Reality TV supposedly shows us the behind the scenes, the authentic "Self," and not the "Self" of public performances.

As with reality TV, social media and social networks have allowed politicians to use mediation to rehearse the creation of an authenticity politics centered on the "Self," making the public persona the central element of an authentic personal experience narrative (Shane, 2018). Authenticity has thus emerged as the core of this new type of political communication.

However, political authenticity is also the product of the subjective assessment of participants and, at the same time, of voters in regard to this communication. Subjective assessment focuses on the degree to which they evaluate politicians as true to themselves (Enli & Rosenberg, 2018; Luebke, 2021; Luebke & Engelmann, 2022).

Participants assess authenticity as ideal on the basis of both predispositions and knowledge about the politician and their attitudes. This evaluation is constructed, to a large extent, on the basis of journalistic information (Luebke, 2021; Luebke & Engelmann, 2022).

The dimensions used to measure political authenticity can be structured according to three variables: coherence, simplicity, and immediacy (Luebke, 2021; Luebke & Engelmann, 2022). Coherence refers to the actions of the politician, that is, the extent to which similar actions occur in time and space and maintain their political views and narratives. In turn, simplicity refers to the perception transmitted by the politician regarding their imperfections and weaknesses. Simplicity is thus opposed to the notion of politics as an act of strategic calculation lacking real convictions. Finally, immediacy is associated with spontaneity and the ability of the politician to express what they think within a framework of appreciation for personal emotions and convictions (Luebke, 2021; Luebke & Engelmann, 2022).

A second perspective on the concept of authenticity is given by the approach of authenticity as originality. This approach is focused on authenticity as an attribute of the sphere of cultural creation, which is often considered to be absent, namely from the moment it was identified with a culture of mass production and cultural industry (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002).

For example, in the musical field, authenticity emerges as a differentiating attribute between the "mainstream" and the "underground" in musical subcultures. The former is understood as music produced for and consumed by the masses, while the latter promotes its identity as authentic, refusing a model of mass production and consumption for its music (Hare & Baker, 2017).

In the field of cultural production, the positioning toward authenticity is defined not only by producers and consumers but also by criticism, performed by film, television, music, or book critics. This criticism has traditionally been associated with the mass-media communication of newspapers, radio, and television, but more recently it has been increasingly replaced by blogs, podcasts, and the space of social networks and social media.

Criticism, constructed from both specialized journalism and analyses and contributions of fans, acts as a cultural mediator that helps to organize and interpret experience through mediation, generating cultural codes and circulating meanings centered on its authenticity in, or absence from, cultural production (Jenkins, 2006; Hare & Baker, 2017).

In the sense of authenticity as originality, simultaneously lost and coveted, authenticity also becomes a social and cultural asset that is economically translatable in the market and gives rise to innovative dynamics in advertising and marketing.

Authenticity as originality has become a central element of branding strategy design, particularly in the selling of products or political candidates and even in the offering of religious belonging (Banet-Weiser, 2012).

However, this dichotomy between the commercial, lacking originality, and the non-commercial, endowed with originality, is also criticized as being too simple. It is also the argument, based on a nostalgia for authenticity, that a given

culture of citizenship in the past had been replaced by a culture of contemporary consumption because, in the everyday life of most individuals, there is no space outside of consumption where resistance can be defined and exercised (Banet-Weiser, 2012). This resistance is built within the framework of the very parameters that define a consumer culture, which is more easily operationalized if we understand it as a branding culture (Banet-Weiser, 2012).

Authenticity as originality is not a specific quality inherent in certain cultural objects. Rather, it is attributed to them in a process of social construction in which a central role is played by the tastes, skills, knowledge, and practices, or habitus, the stable dispositions that guide individuals' perceptions, assessments, and actions (Bourdieu 1993; Weingartner et al., 2021).

Contemporary brand culture is then characterized by the erosion of boundaries between the authentic "Self" and the commodity "Self." This erosion is both expected and tolerated, characterizing the relationship between the individual and the brand as a search for the construction of an "authentic" or authenticity-inducing relationship through originality (Banet-Weiser, 2012).

From the point of view of brands, the use of authenticity is perceived as a central element of success because it contributes to the construction of a brand image as something unique and original (Becker et al., 2019). This unique dimension can be associated with a commitment to tradition and place as well as to integrity. Integrity is considered as any stylistic consistency that is internal to the organization and maintains sincerity as well as a commitment to quality, honesty, or the reduction of the commercial dimension of a good or service (Becker et al., 2019).

The concept of authenticity as originality can be understood as a central variable both for the organization of everyday life and for the self-realization of individuals (Banet-Weiser, 2012).

Although contemporary culture may contain elements of superficiality, either as a response or as an independent characteristic, the concept of authenticity seems to gain prominence in the network society (Banet-Weiser, 2012).

The three different interpretative layers of the concept of authenticity have authenticity as truth as its other central analytical dimension.

Authenticity as truth constitutes a central dimension of the analysis of the transformations of social and cultural representations as a result of communication in the network society.

Authenticity associated with mediation is analyzed as an attribute of communication, at the level both of the content and of the actors. This communication must be real, genuine, or true to have authenticity. In contrast, without authenticity, communication is not authentic; it is the communication of what is unreal, false, or untrue.

Historically, in studies on communication and mediation, the study of authenticity as truth has tended to divide its attention between three differentiated objects: the message, the source, and the distribution.

The analysis of the message and its credibility focuses on the authenticity of the information's content. In turn, the analysis of the source and its credibility is centered on the authenticity of who produces the information. Finally, the analysis

of who distributes the information tends to be centered on mass-media brands and their credibility, focusing the discussion on authenticity in the specific medium, or channel, through which messages are communicated (Enli & Rosenberg, 2018).

The "real versus false" distinction is central to debates about what it means to communicate in the network society (Eco, 2016; Syvertsen & Enli, 2020), namely because it is around this opposition that the discussion of what constitutes fake news is centered—how disinformation is constructed and how relationships of deception or truth toward content, sources, and mediation are formed on social networks and social media (Eco, 2016; Syvertsen & Enli, 2020; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2018).

However, as already discussed here regarding the classification of the experience, in the framework of networked communication, authenticity, or the distinction between what is false and true, is not as linear as what was encountered in the historical framework of mass communication.

Hence, the concept of mediated authenticity (Enli, 2015) offers a possible starting point for understanding the current process of authenticity's social construction, allowing for the traditional mass-media focus to extend to another that is centered on mediation in general but without losing sight of the notion that authenticity is a product of the coexistence between different representations of reality.

For Enli (2015), mediated authenticity arises from the technical possibilities allowed by mediation, originally anchored in the range of possibilities existing between small production adjustments, such as lighting and sound effects, and even the major post-production editing interventions, using multiple techniques, including Photoshop, to change and manipulate.

However, the proposal of the concept of mediated authenticity has been elaborated as a product of audiovisual mass media communication, and it can be argued that it contains the basis to be analytically extended to all other communicative dimensions encompassed in networked communication. Thus, it goes beyond its focus on organizations and extends to include individual participants in social networks and social media.

The authenticity mediated in networked communication also encompasses the same three dimensions already present in mass communication: the reliability, originality, and spontaneity of communication (Enli, 2015).

These three dimensions can be explained through three social dynamics established among the participants in communication: (1) the illusions of authenticity, (2) the contract of authenticity, and (3) the scandals/puzzles of authenticity (Enli, 2015).

Mediated communication is the producer of an experience of reality. This phenomenon can be captured through the concept of illusions of authenticity (Enli, 2015). Authenticity is constructed; it is not innate to communicative relationships. It depends on the negotiation that is established between the participants. Consequently, reality is the product of a mediated experience that does not depict authentic reality. It constructs an illusion of authenticity that accompanies communication.

However, for these illusions to be accepted as producers of experience, there must be a sharing of literacies, that is, a common understanding of what mediated communication is, how it works, which standards guide it, and which conventions may or may not be used in this communication (Enli, 2015).

In turn, this common understanding is reflected in the acceptance of a tacit agreement, sharing representations between those who produce communication, those who receive it, those who regulate it, and those who create the platformed space where networked mediated communication occurs.

However, when this tacit agreement is broken, usually through those who produce or have control over the platforms where the communication is distributed, noise—otherwise referred to as communication error—occurs, giving rise to what can be called a scandal of authenticity (Enli, 2015).

Examples of scandals of authenticity can be identified in the scandals associated with privacy issues on platforms or in the identification of corruption in mass-media journalistic practice, and so on. (Munn et al., 2019; Freedman, 2012).

In turn, the concept of puzzles of authenticity refers to the open permanent invitation that is made to participants in communication (Enli, 2015) since mediated communication—be it mass media or its extension to mass self-communication (Castells, 2012), reciprocal mediated communication (Hepp, 2013), closed algorithmic communication, or one-to-many mediated communication —works through a permanent invitation to solve the puzzle of authenticity.

In mass communication, as in networked communication, participants are permanently invited to identify and separate the dimensions that carry authenticity (i.e., the true ones) from the non-authentic dimensions (i.e., the false ones). Thus, participants are permanently involved in the production of meaning (Hall, 1980; Philo, 1999; Winston, 2002; Enli, 2015; Eco, 2018).

This is because, as Subjects, we are aware of the paradox of authenticity, and we know that, although reality is mediated and experience is constructed through it, communication is socially constructed, regardless of whether it is mass media, mass self-communication, reciprocal mediated communication, closed algorithmic communication, or one-to-many mediated communication from. This implies that it is sometimes manipulated and falsified. Thus, the paradox of authenticity arises.

In communication we seek authenticity, to the point that this can be identified as a dominant trend in contemporary culture. However, at the same time, we know that communication always has an element of manufacture and may even contain a bit of fabrication.

Authenticity in networked communication

Taking into account the multiplicity of informative stimuli present in the different messages that make up our communicative networking space, the participant in communicative processes permanently deals with the need to qualitatively assess

and evaluate the degree of authenticity, or truth, associated with any given information.

In daily communication, the participant, while turning to multiple forms of mediation, focuses their attention on validating authenticity mainly in the space of social networks and social media, since this is where the majority of their communicative activity is centered, encountering different types of messages in circulation. These messages are potentially associated with different degrees of authenticity, including those arising from mass self-communication, such as X/Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube; from one-to-many mediated communication, such as Facebook, Linkedin or VKontakte profiles and groups; through the messages created and shared in the reciprocal mediated communication of WhatsApp and Telegram messaging; the answers to our questions obtained in closed algorithmic communication provide by generative AI, such as Google's Bard or ChatGTP; and the mass communication excerpts from televisions, radios, and newspapers.

The classification of authenticity, in the search to ensure the truth in communication on social networks and social media, is thus produced from a set of subjective individual evaluations that are negotiated through communicative interaction. They are also subjected, a posteriori, to the quantitative rule of the largest number of "voices" or "eyeballs" that agree or disagree with the individual evaluation made. At times, the message is also targeted for an evaluative corrective action by the platforms to restore a given social representation of perceived authenticity (Gillespie, 2018).

The assessment of authenticity as truth, or "truthful authenticity", is thus not only dependent on the participants; rather, the evaluation of communicative truth is also dependent on validation by human moderators or the use of the artificial intelligence of search engines or social media and social networking platforms.

Authenticity, or truth, was a prior attribute in mass communication and was defined at the beginning of the communicative process with the message's entry into the channel/medium. Truth, which embodied authenticity, was ascertained before the content was shared and was the result of a widespread social representation regarding the perception of the degree of authenticity of the content. This content was usually accepted after its mass-media distribution without much debate, since the only mediated communication that circulated was that which had a previous editorial classification, whether from journalism, entertainment, or institutions of the scientific-educational system (Foucault, 1979).

Historically, each society in its own context assumed given types of discourse to be true, and therefore authentic, and also utilized mechanisms that allowed for what is authentic to be distinguished from what was false, giving rise to the creation of a regime of truth (Foucault, 1979; Colombo 2022).

In industrial societies of mass communication and culture, the political economy of truth was centered on scientific discourse. Consequently, journalistic discourse was also supported by its own interpretation of the scientific method.

The political economy of truth was established as a dynamic to support economic production and political power and was the subject of various forms of dissemination and consumption, both within the educational framework and in the

media system. Its production was carried out under the control of large political and economic machines, including the mass media, universities, and even the armed forces. At the same time, it was the subject of political debate and social confrontation (Foucault, 1979; Colombo 2022).

It was from this system that authenticity as truth was socially defined, regulated, and shared through a system of production, regulation, distribution, and communicative circulation procedures that reached the population at large through mass-media communication (Foucault, 1979; Colombo 2022).

As already noted, the situation in the network society has changed, in turn changing the system of production's procedures, regulation, distribution, and communicative circulation. In networked communication, prior classifications inherited from the system created within the framework of mass communication still exist. However, a dimension of a posteriori classifications is added to them. These come from partnerships between platforms and so-called fact-checking organizations, in reality heirs to journalistic practice and professional identity, or are automatized procedures based on algorithms, acting from the moment when any degree of virality is detected from sharing or when content is reported by any participant.

However, unlike mass communication, in networked communication the news is only a small part of the totality of messages that circulate and give rise to information in our everyday life.

There are no concrete data on the percentage of news in relation to total content and interactions with it on social networks or social media. However, the metaphorical arm wrestling between Facebook-Meta and the Australian government in 2021 centered on the payment of a fee by the social network to the owners of mass media companies allowed for some information on news percentage to surface to the public. In a press release comment made by Facebook-Meta itself, it was suggested that this figure corresponded to less than 5% of the total number of posts on the social network in Australia,[1] although it can be argued that the values publicly presented by Facebook-Meta in this dispute were undervalued by a strategic decision. In networked communication, content whose authenticity is based on a type of factual prior verification, such as the news, will tend to be in the minority, bearing in mind the potential relationship of content ranking between the news producers in number of journalists and acting brands involved in news productions and other forms of information production involving all the remaining participants in networked communication.

In networked communication, authenticity is mostly negotiated between the sender and receiver, because in most cases, both the exponential amount of content and the wide range of diversity in sources and brands do not allow for the application of a prior classification of authenticity similar to that associated with the news or scientific facts.

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1 https://about.fb.com/news/2021/02/changes-to-sharing-and-viewing-news-on-facebook-in-australia/.

In networked communication, the classification of authenticity must be exceedingly individual in nature. It is up to the participant to determine the degree of authenticity of the content they come across as a result of their individual search or sharing by third parties. This content is also mostly rooted in individualized views of reality or individual opinions expressed regarding facts.

As a result of algorithmic dynamics, the majority of the time that the participant encounters new informative content, it will be impossible for them to know the degree of compatibility between their autonomy projects and those of the participant that has acted as the sharer of such content. Therefore, they will read and infer degrees of similarity of autonomy projects between themselves and the experience sharer and or producer.

In the context of social networks, both the sender and the receiver are part of the same mediated relationship network in most cases, as they are individuals in a network with similar symbolic credibilities. The same cannot be said of the communicative relations developed on social media, such as X/Twitter or Instagram (Wellman et al., 2019).

Consequently, participants on social networks are in a shared relationship of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1993) in which authenticity will be conferred on the content of the messages through negotiation via a communicative performativity that is based on the exchange of written, visual, or audible comments.

In networked communication, the negotiation of authenticity is also characterized by being decidedly performative since it is based on an individual vision of authenticity constructed from both personal and mediated experience. It is the product of the facts experienced or taken from the viewpoint of the "other" as well as of the opinions produced by "both," a negotiation in which the two sides of communication also base the content's authenticity on the social relationship established between the sender and receiver themselves.

Hence, the characterization of contemporary communicative authenticity as truth is compatible with an idea of negotiated and individualized authenticity, specifically because authenticity stems from the sharing of given content in individualizable situations, something that forces participants to negotiate the puzzle of said content's authenticity. It is often not possible to make prior recourse to institutions that classify authenticity.

Within the framework of networked communication, the process of negotiation of authenticity as truth leads us to a reinterpretation of the theory regarding the interpersonal and personal influences traditionally associated with mass communication, now in light of the conceptual framework of networked communication (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Oliveira, 2017).

Thus, on the one hand, the results from the theorization of interpersonal influence play in favor of the decisive influence of institutions that traditionally produce facts understood as true, as in the case of journalism. It is also possible to argue that, in the negotiation of authenticity in the sphere of social networks and social media, personal relationships, groups of belonging, sets of interests, ideology, religion, and psychological affinities function as filters capable of interfering in this classification process.

In this context of negotiation, the news is no longer socially perceived as an undeniable or indisputable fact; "journalistic truth" is thus no longer accepted in the same way as it was in the past. It is no longer culturally perceived as something unquestionable socially.

Often, the authenticity of the news as a truth will be accepted by the individuals involved in the negotiation as just another social element for negotiation on a given topic. This element is accepted in the negotiation of authenticity for a given topic but does not guarantee a result regarding the truth in advance. When the news is previously accepted as a basis for solving the authenticity puzzle (Enli, 2015), then this very same acceptance, which is never absolute, is also always negotiated, assuming the existence of a mutual agreement between the sender and the receiver concerning the social value of the news.

There are also other consequences of the negotiation of authenticity in networked communication since, in a communication framework in which most of the information shared is neither news nor science related, the sharing of uninformed content also thrives.

The profusion and sharing of disinformative content are thus also associated with the generalization of the application of a model of negotiated authenticity to all types of content, including news produced journalistically and content that, in its form but not necessarily in the content itself, is assumed to be news and science related.

In the absence of institutions capable of proffering prior authenticity, individual positioning in the negotiation of authenticity classification will always depend on the literacy sphere, making it necessary to understand the need for prior critical analysis of all information, even when presented as coming from a scientific or "journalistic truth" or factuality.

The proliferation of content and communicative forms also results in the socially shared perception that, although it is possible to attribute authenticity to pieces of content, they are all the product of human action, even when addressing AI-produced content, given that said content is also based on sources originating in previous human action. All content is socially constructed, and therefore its authenticity is fallible.

The very public discussion surrounding news content has generated the social perception that the news is also a social construct, a product of the concept of objectivity because, as Winston suggests, the news cannot tell the truth. This is simply because truth is something unattainable (Winston in Quinn, 2007).

In journalism, there are elements of common sense and reasonableness that journalists can introduce. However, raising these elements and reasonableness to a definitive account of the world constitutes an ideology and assumes a socially divisive character (Winston in Quinn, 2007).

In the era of mass communication, authenticity based on "journalistic truth" depended on mass-mediated media with journalistic functions, working as if communication in its social dimension was monopolized by the communicative category of news, thus faced with a contradiction of the ideal of communication as a total social phenomenon (Oliveira, 2017).

In networked communication, news remains qualitatively important. The news plays a central role in everyday routines and democratic functioning. However, the news began to be socially perceived as corresponding to only one type of informative content among many others available through mediation.

The news is not the most common informative content in the mediated communicative flows of networked communication. However, there is still a broad social consensus regarding the acceptance of news as content with a high rank in the hierarchy in the sphere of authenticity.

In the era of networked communication, if there is a socially accepted representation around authenticity, it will be close to the idea that all messages can be false until proven otherwise from the outset.

To be able to say that a thing is wrong, false, or the result of falsification, a sense of what is right, true, or authentic must be understood, that is, that which has authenticity (Eco, 2019).

In networked communication, the classification of authenticity is determined, first of all, by demonstrating that something is not false. This is because the negotiation of authenticity implies knowing, in advance, what is authentic or having the ability to ascertain it in real time during the communicative performance.

However, in networked communication, as before in mass communication, knowing which institutions can guarantee that something is true, that something has authenticity, remains essential. It is also essential to understand the socially shared understanding regarding the validity of such classifications of authenticity.

Our historical relationship with authenticity is vastly marked by the news and journalism, something that relativized the social representation of the simultaneous existence of other mediated communicative dimensions of information in addition to the news. This is largely owing to the very dynamics of mass communication and mass culture in which, in the social imagination, information was synonymous with journalistic content. This relationship was built in opposition to the other large quantity of content derived from fiction, which embodied the other part of the mediated relationship with audiences.

However, with the generalization of mediation to multiple types of informative content other than the journalistic and the fictional, this situation has become more complex.

Within the framework of the network society, there are institutions inherited from mass communication and mass culture and new potential institutional actors, as well.

However, there is still no broad, socially shared perspective regarding the effective role of those institutions in guaranteeing what is understood as socially true, that is, the degree of authenticity of any particular content.

Although fact-checking entities have started on a path of attempting to institutionalize their social role as authenticity validators, they are still seen as too similar to mass-media journalists to be able to, as of now, occupy an undisputed place as authenticity certifiers of all types of information in the social imagination (Nyhan et al., 2020; Andersen and Søe, 2020).

For the time being, the attribution of authenticity as truth in content is an essentially individualized and negotiated process. We must also assume the probable hypothesis that authenticity as truth must be regarded as not being socially valued in the same way by all participants in all contexts. The perceived truthfulness of the content, when individually negotiated, may produce different results depending on the context of the communication. For example, communicative mediation, when associated with capitalist market content, has a common norm of greater economic valorization for authenticity. The markets consider the authentic, also referred to as the original, to be more valuable. As such, they attribute a higher economic value to it than that which is associated with subsequent copies (Bessy & Chateauraynaud, 2019).

However, in the face of exactly the same digital products, such as software, for example, one recipient may consider it to be perceived as authentic although others might consider it a copy, while another recipient may consider it unauthentic, although it is original. This is because both have a digital materiality. To make the analysis more complex, one can argue that, if one of the digital objects was a non-fungible token (NFT), this would not occur anymore, because that labeling would increase the social perception of authenticity in digital materiality and, consequently, its monetary value.

In turn, in the educational mediation associated with schooling contexts, the content communicated by teachers to students is also not always accepted without reserve as truth. This happens because sometimes the scientific content communicated is in contradiction to the personal convictions, of a religious or moral nature, of some of the students. However, for others within the same classroom, authenticity of a factual and scientific nature is accepted without any criticism at all (Berkman & Plutzer, 2010; Ssenyonjo, 2010).

In another sphere of mediation of everyday life, that of mediation in football, authenticity also has another type of social valorization. This is seen, for example, when a football match is watched on television and one team's player visibly crushes an opponent's foot and receives a red card. The ardent fan of the team whose player just crushed the opponent's foot rejects the authenticity of what they saw on the screen, even though both the replay and referee watching the replay footage confirm the incident without any doubt. This is because the fan of the team receiving the red card does not find a reflection of his love for the team in what happened. However, the fan of the team with the player with the crushed foot has no doubt as to what they saw on the very same screen being authentic and thus true (Wolfson, 2005; Balwant & Wos, 2014; Winand & Fergusson, 2018).

In mass communication, authenticity as truth was associated with institutions such as the media and universities. These institutions disseminated the facts, thus trying to reach the highest number of participants. This distribution of content arose with the certification of a previously verified factuality, which operates by checking that something is not fake in advance. To this end, it follows a set of socially accepted assumptions (Foucault, 1979; Eco, 2016).

However, in networked communication, authenticity is associated with an individually interpreted attribute in most communicative interactions, followed

by a decision as to whether to share the content and whether it should be remixed or passed on as received.

Authenticity is negotiated by the recipient of the communication in networks of different dimensions and configurations, focusing the interaction on a reflexivity that goes beyond factuality as a scientific or "journalistic truth."

The definition of authenticity in the context of mediation has thus become dependent on an individualized construction through a new equilibrium negotiated between different participants and with different sources for the negotiation of said authenticity. These sources are no longer dependent on corresponding to only those specialized and certified by the institutions of modernity, such as teachers of different levels of education, specialists from scientific institutions, librarians, book and music publishers, journalists, and cultural media critics.

In the network society, the sources available for the classification of authenticity have come to depend to a large extent on individual reflexivity notwithstanding the multiple sources that constitute the networks themselves, including web pages and content on platforms and apps, and that would later be negotiated in proximity networks or weak ties on social networks (Wellman et al., 2019).

Authenticity in mass communication was associated with what was communicated by journalists as well as by all those associated with the scientific paradigm, both sharing a common feature that ultimately set this apart from a participant who posts a post on Facebook, a Tweet on X/Twitter, or a photo on Instagram. This distinction was furnished by its ethical dimension (Paulussen et al., 2007; Franklin et al., 2005; Heinonen, 1999).

If a journalist says the opposite of what the facts and sources indicate, they would be lying, calling their ethics into question, just like a scientist who does not take scientific facts into account in reaching their conclusions.

However, when someone posts a Tweet that turns out to contain a falsehood, this is not a violation of ethics. Although it is a problem of truth, it is not necessarily one of ethics because something fake can be said without lying since one can believe what one is saying (Eco, 2019).

In mass communication, the communicative context of mediation limited the lie because there was a set of mechanisms that reduced the possibility that a journalist or scientist had to consciously communicate something false to society. Thus, falsehood was, in most cases, absent from mediation spaces. Consequently, mediation audiences were little exposed to content that allowed them to believe in something that was not true. Falsehood mostly referred to unmediated face-to-face communication, and the lie corresponded to the time and space of propaganda.

In mass culture, mediation was synonymous with mass-media communication, which was associated with journalistic organizations, either owned by private companies or performing public service on behalf of the states, all of which had authenticity control mechanisms in place, although it was also possible to use propaganda with the express intention of deception and conditioning behaviors. This was an attribute that was easily identifiable through the difference between the communication carried out by a given brand and by other mass-media brands. The propaganda that occurred was mostly associated with specific periods, such as

conflicts and wars, and was in part absent from the normal functioning of democracies, although it was a feature of everyday life in authoritarian regimes.

However, in networked communication, by potentially opening up the spheres of mediation to all individuals and organizations, new spaces, new methods, and new content have also been opened up in which we can encounter falsehood, even if it is not technically a lie, since whoever published something might actually believe what they are saying. The possibility of lies circulating freely has also been increased.

In networked communication, the challenge to authenticity arises from the fact that a wide area of communication contains all types of information, for which, in most cases, authenticity does not constitute an innate fact associated with its production. As such, authenticity depends on what the sender of the communication, the platform manager, and all the participants in this process consider to be authentic and not false.

Authenticity thus becomes a product of a communicative process in which the degree of authenticity of the object of communication, be it text, image, sound, or video, depends on symbolic negotiations between the participants in the communication (Enli, 2015).

The characteristic authenticity of networked communication, therefore, appears as individualized and can be better understood from a sociosemiotic view of mediation.

Thruthful authenticity must be understood as the product of negotiation between social actors who practice a modalization of communication (van Leeuwen, 2005).

The analysis of the construction of authenticity in networked communication should bear in mind that it is the individuals who produce content and practice communicative acts. They do so in a given social context characterized by a set of specific institutions. Authenticity is thus associated with both the content creation process as well as the reception negotiation process.

In their roles as sender and receiver, the participants in the communication seek, on the one hand, to represent the truth through the creation of content and, on the other hand, to negotiate the truth of this same content with the recipient, namely because most messages are not produced by those who share them and negotiate their acceptance as true messages.

In an approach to the sociosemiotics of mediation, authenticity as truth concerns questions of representation, that is, the extent to which something is perceived and accepted as factual by the recipient of the communication.

However, it is also a social issue, as the acceptance of something as truth depends on the social context of communicative negotiation. What for some is considered to be true is not necessarily regarded as such by others. Therefore, communicative negotiation is carried out in a given social context, and the result of the negotiation entails social consequences (van Leeuwen, 2005).

If authenticity is a social construct, this suggests that it can be based on the assertion advanced by a given authority in relation to a given text. This is seen in the case of religion, which imposes a view of the truth that is difficult to oppose

because the truth can only be the product of a consensus reached by dialog through negotiation between participants in communication.

That is why authenticity is, of course, linked to the issue of social control—because this control is based on the construction of the experience given by the representation of reality (Foucault, 1979; Silverstone, 1999; Castells, 2007).

Whoever controls the construction of representation has the ability to attempt to create a valid version of reality (van Leeuwen, 2005). However, there are no unique versions of reality; different versions in circulation always coexist in any given social context.

It is not possible to anticipate which version will assume authenticity through its social selection. What can be anticipated is that the valid version of truth tends to be, in most cases, the result of communicative interaction and social negotiation.

However, the mere fact that a given group of participants in the communication can contribute a version of the truth provides them with the possibility of exercising some form of social control (Foucault, 1979; Silverstone, 1999; Castells, 2007).

The result of sharing informative content, whether it be related to the news or not, as well as the communicative negotiation of authenticity, is always open. This is because authenticity, being a social product, can also promote cancel culture and has always been associated with ideological and religious conflicts (van Leeuwen, 2005; Wiewiorka, 2012; Touraine, 2021).

As a social construction negotiated by communication, authenticity assumes a social role since it allows for the creation of shared truths, which are the basis for the formation of social groups with common views and the ability to subsequently organize and participate in society,

hence the important role that journalism, as well as all the other various institutions created in the historical framework of mass communication, has in negotiating authenticity in everyday life. Those institutions are often associated with gatekeeping and the validation of messages in circulation, whether the messages are distributed in the form of fiction in books, films, and series; in the entertainment offered by music; or in the science present in books and scientific magazines.

However, in the context of networked communication, mediated message production has extended beyond organizations to assume an attribute of individual production. Consequently, the negotiation of authenticity has expanded into a much greater diversity of texts, video, sounds, and images that are framed socially as well as journalistically. In this process, the social representation of authenticity has also changed.

Authenticity has become socially perceived as a daily negotiation, no longer associated only with content such as news or other formats derived from journalistic practice. For example, authenticity has also come to be understood as an attribute of reality TV, namely regarding the perception of authenticity of television narratives as being true. The narrative of reality TV came to be assumed to be true. This authenticity is assumed by the public and perceived as drawn from real life. It is also likely to be extended by questioning the extent to which it is possible to find representations of the real world in dramas and novels, thus giving authenticity to fiction (Hill, 2005; Kaptan, 2021).

The extension of the negotiation of authenticity to fictional entertainment can, for example, be grasped by the perception of similarities between television representations and the "real world" by audiences (Kaptan, 2021). Hence, a faithful reconstruction, an exact and genuine reproduction, or a representation of an original can also be perceived as a narrative, a representation imbued with authenticity and truth (Kaptan, 2021). This is the case because authenticity is a social construction carried out according to the perceptions of the public regarding a given communication and depending on whether something is faithful to a given essence (Esser, 2020).

In mass communication, the answer to the question concerning the sender's authenticity was previously ensured by a set of socially shared representations regarding journalism or a mass-media brand. Consequently, the issue of the sender's authenticity was resolved a priori, as the question of the authenticity of the content was resolved for the same reasons.

In mass communication, the negotiation of authenticity mainly concentrated only on the different representations of the "truth" that were in circulation and which competed for social affirmation (Foucault, 1979), such as the different approaches made by various news channels or newspapers to the same fact associated with a topic or event.

In networked communication, authenticity has to be established through the verification of both the content as well as the sender's reliability. The measurement of reliability is, as always, provided by the combination of answers to the questions "What was said?" and "Who said it?"

In networked communication, the degree to which it is possible to assess what is represented as true or real by those who communicate it is more frequently sought than the absolute certainty as to its authenticity.

Participants, in their search for authenticity, do not seek to discern whether the communication is true or false at all; Rather, they ask: What is its status? What authority does it have? What reality does the message convey? What is the true value of the message in terms of factuality?

In networked communication, the relative value of truth or the credibility of statements expressed about the world is sought in order to assess the degree of authenticity (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

In networked communication, participants have to adopt a permanent practice of interrogation and negotiation because most communication does not have mass media as its source, in terms of both origin and content, as well as in terms of the different social representations pertaining to the origin and content already previously in circulation in the communicative network.

Authenticity in our everyday life, as in industrial societies, is a social construct. However, in the network society, the authenticity of text, image, and sound is also built through the permanent construction surrounding the perception of the sender's authenticity.

There is no index that acts as a consultable and stable repository of social representations of authenticity vis-à-vis those who produce or share something; such a thing is not possible. Although the producers of information are fewer than

the sharers of it, the sum total of both quantitatively approaches the space of participants in the communication itself.

Those who share and produce content, the senders, assume such a quantitative dimension that the prior and socially shared classification of their authenticity is impracticable. Hence, participants in networked communication choose to automatically introduce evaluative speculation as to the authenticity of any content in their communication practice. The participant in the communication, not having full evaluative capacity regarding diversified content, ideally tends to choose to try to assess the authenticity of the person who sends a given message, whether it was produced by them or just shared.

The assessment made regarding the authenticity of the sender is thus essentially centered on trying to discover the extent to which the person who issues or shares something is convinced about the authenticity of what they have communicated (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

In networked communication, in particular in the non-mass media dimensions of the network, final acceptance of authenticity is always negotiated. This negotiation can be a product of "self-negotiation", a questioning of the individual interpretations of the origin of given content, or negotiation carried out through communicative interaction, a "communicative negotiation" with all participants in the communication that allowed the given content to be reached.

The communicative interaction includes interacting both with those who publish or share something on social networks and social media and with those who comment on what is published there.

However, both individual questioning and communicative interaction, as processes that gauge the authenticity of the sender, will not configure identical and transversely identifiable practices in all communicative forms provided by networked communication.

Networked communication contains in itself multiple communicative dimensions. Therefore, the social construction of authenticity is not perceived in an identical way in all of them, as can be exemplified with the use of opposition on social networks and social media between the "stories" of ephemeral presence and the "posts" of continuous presence (Kreling et al., 2022).

Participants in networked communication define authenticity as a product of their practice, expressed in degrees of probability. While focusing their questioning on the sender, they also seek to understand the extent to which the particular content is viral, as virality is an indicator that many participants interacted with the given content. Consequently, although virality and authenticity cannot be directly correlated, the large number of participants involved introduces a factor of communicative comfort for the participant, giving rise to an indicator of probable authenticity, "viral authenticity". Given the public visibility of viral content, if there are no negative reviews published by many participants or fact-checkers, then the probability of its not being false becomes higher.

The individual search for understanding the degree of authenticity associated with a given communication is always influenced by the social representations of the receiver vis-à-vis the sender, but also vis-à-vis fellow receivers.

The mutual evaluation of participants, in view of what is considered real or true in the group or social groups of belonging, also influences the way in which the authenticity of communication is evaluated (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Individual criteria for assessing authenticity are socially created and negotiated. Therefore, authenticity can never be understood as absolute. The cultural formation of those involved in communication is linked to a given historical situation and to social structures and institutions. Hence, the relativity of the assessment of authenticity must be taken into account (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Individual assessments of authenticity depend on the aim of the communication, the objectives of the participants, the type of communication, and their cultural conventions. The individual determination of authenticity is always a question of representation that depends on the social and cultural contexts (van Leeuwen, 2005).

In turn, social representations of authenticity in the face of certain content are also formed on the basis of the individual sharing of authenticity previously carried out by other participants on social networks and social media.

Authenticity in networked communication is a search for "perceived authenticity". Consequently, it is anchored both in the identification of the degree of authenticity in reference to reality as a factual representation as well as in the face of the degree of authenticity in reference to the feeling anchored in values on the part of those carrying out the evaluation.

Perceived authenticity is not solely constructed in the face of the content that makes use of information anchored in factuality—authenticity is also constructed beyond factuality, using emotional realism to refer to elements, which can even be fictional, but which have a relationship with the reality lived by the participant (Ang, 2007; Kaptan, 2021).

Authenticity, disinformation, and journalism

Every interaction in networked communication exhibits a communication mode relying on the coexistence of messages whose code is based on either the authenticity of "journalistic truth" or authenticity negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

The overlap of these two types of codes in the same mediated space-time results in the creation of a communicative conflict, one that is associated with questioning authenticity. This is observed, for example, in the discussion around post-truth (Ross & Rivers, 2018), the "fake news" associated with Trump's political discourse (Rhodes, 2022), the moral panic around deepfakes (Egelhofer et al., 2020), or the infodemic associated with COVID-19 (Gruzd et al., 2021; Colombo, 2022).

Thus, one can observe the coexistence of two types of authenticity in the same space of communicative flows. Authenticity is the product of a truth constructed from the use of factuality and associated with journalism and science, in addition to another authenticity negotiated between the communicating participants.

This coexistence generates the tensions that allow for the emergence of information disorders, for example, those that give rise to the sharing of disinformative content (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2018).

If we assume that networked communication is based on a paradigm of message remixing, negotiated individualized authenticity, and content sharing, then it will also be possible to argue that information disorders constitute a potential by-product of networked communication itself.

This claim is not intended to normalize the existence of disinformation, but only to point out that communicating in a mode of networked communication occurs in a given conceptual framework that serves for both the individual production and dissemination of information communication as well as the contrary, viz. disinformative communication.

However, because contemporary communicative, mediation, and datafication processes promote individual communicative autonomy, and because it can be used for both evil and good, it is also important to bear in mind its socially destructuring consequences (Wieviorka, 2012; Touraine, 2021).

Firstly, it should be clarified that disinformation is neither a recent phenomenon nor associated exclusively with social networks and social media (Eco, 2016).

In their case study on disinformation in the United States, Benkler et al. (2018) argue that the current media system of the United States is actually the product of two very different media ecosystems: one that radicalizes those who participate in it, destabilizing their ability to unravel the truth from fiction and undermining their trust in institutions, and another that values professional journalism in mass media of reference, simultaneously facilitating spaces for activist mediation, questioning the agendas and narratives of the mass media themselves (Benkler et al., 2018).

The problems that were identified generically as disinformation, which occurred in recent years in the United States, have their origin over the last decades in the evolution of the television and radio spheres themselves, later joined by the Internet (Benkler et al., 2018). Thus, analytical attention to disinformation should focus on a structural level rather than on a contextual one. It should focus on the long-term dynamics between political institutions, economy, culture, and technology, and less on technological upheaval and the interactions among different media, thus seeking to avoid a bias of attention toward a single aspect of mediation or a single type of media platform (Benkler et al., 2018).

Secondly, despite an abundant discourse with assertions regarding the destabilizing impact of disinformation, the effects of technology on political systems, such as those of the Internet on democracy, cannot be resolutely affirmed. Equally scarce are empirical data on how disinformation influences people's ability to unravel truth from fiction (Benkler et al., 2018; Stardbird, 2019; Stardbird et al., 2019). However, research in the field of disinformation allows us to affirm that, however small the real influences of disinformation, they are still significant within the media system and the functioning of political, economic, and social institutions since exposure to disinformation can result in false beliefs, misinformed political judgments, polarization, and distortions in trust and credibility (Hameleers & van der

Meer, 2020; Hameleers et al., 2020; Pennycook et al., 2018); For example, deepfake videos can create doubts and even false perceptions about the factual state of reality and can impact on the assessments of specific political actors (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020; Dobber et al., 2020).

Although disinformation is a structural phenomenon that is present in all modes of communication, it has always been accompanied by the institutionalization of corrective mechanisms regarding its social influence (Eco, 2012).

For example, in its contemporary incarnation, disinformation develops alongside the institutionalization of fact-checking entities (Vraga et al., 2021; Hameleers & van der Meer, 2020; Nyhan et al., 2019; Thorson, 2016; Cook et al., 2017; Lewandowsky et al., 2012; Chen et al., 2020; Rovetta & Bhagavathula, 2020).

Thirdly, from a sociological point of view, it is important to draw a clear distinction between what is disinformation, or false information, and what are errors of perception or false beliefs since not all disinformation causes false beliefs (Southwell et al., 2018). Moreover, not all false beliefs cause disinformation. False beliefs do not necessarily arise because someone is spreading disinformation but rather because there is human bias in information processing as well as causal inference (Southwell et al., 2018).

The debate about the nature of disinformation is also a conceptual search for how to better define this concept in the light of existing practices and representations in society (Weeks & Gil de Zúñiga, 2019).

For some theoretical approaches, such as that of Wardle and Derakhshan (2018), disinformation is assumed to be part of a trinity of informational disorder types, along with misinformation and malinformation.

Disinformation, for example, is associated with conspiracy theories; it is deliberate and aims to cause harm to a person, group, organization, or country through false content (Butter & Knight, 2020). In turn, malinformation, associated with the deliberate skewing of contexts, is based on actual facts that are misrepresented and, also, used to cause harm to a person, organization, or country. Finally, misinformation is associated with the incorrect use of statistics, and although it is false, it is not intended to damage or create harm.

However, the sociological approach tends to consider premeditation too uncertain a variable to be measured empirically and thus not useful in the context of daily communication carried out by individuals without clear institutional affiliations, such as the majority of participants in networked communication.

With the aforementioned in mind, it is possible to define disinformation as a category of practices and content that encompasses all information that is manipulated or manufactured, notwithstanding whether its sphere of activity is political, economic, or social (Freelon & Wells, 2020; Bennett & Livingston, 2018; Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Cunha et al., 2018; Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019).

Although authenticity as truth is associated with journalistic content, the reason for this association is not a given; rather, it is the product of a permanent social negotiation throughout history.

If journalism is questioned socially about its ability to produce the authentic or the true, and if it is systematically accused of not presenting authenticity and of

referring to the false, then the association between truth and journalism will be called into question. Hence, the whole discussion regarding fake news contains in itself the creation of a potential widespread discrediting of journalism, as well as a weakening of its power (Li & Su, 2020).

During his campaign for the United States presidency, Donald Trump routinely accused major mass-media outlets of dishonesty and bias. He did so both in speeches and in interviews with journalists. At the same time, he encouraged debates and criticism on X/Twitter about fake news. After his election, he maintained the same type of conduct, regularly tweeting the same accusations and criticisms, and even creating the Fake News Awards, which he awarded to six mass-media brands. In so doing, his aim was always political: to build a smoke screen to cover his own false claims, thus seeking to be able to affirm that they were authentic (Li & Su, 2020; Nelson & Taneja, 2018; Miró-Llinares & Aguerri, 2021; Neo, 2022; McPhetres et al., 2021; Bakir & McStay, 2018).

However, the conditions for news to be considered false go beyond the mere political rhetoric used by politicians to weaponize it electorally and use it as a tool for political management of everyday life (Bakir & McStay, 2018; Damstra et al., 2021; Ross & Rivers, 2018).

The definition of what fake news is has also shown a historical evolution (Vargo et al., 2018; Tandoc et al., 2020). In a restricted view, fake news can be defined as false information disclosed in the format of news with the intention of deceiving or confusing (Neo, 2022; Tandoc et al., 2020).

However, broader definitions may, for example, define fake news as items that have no factual basis but are still presented as news (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

From an even more encompassing perspective, fake news can be defined as informative disorders that mimic the content of the news media in form but not in their organizational process or intention (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017; Tandoc et al., 2020; Corbu et al., 2020).

In the latter sense, there are six main characterizations of fake news: (1) news satire, (2) news parody, (3) news fabrication, (4) news manipulation, (5) advertising presented in the form of news, and (6) news with propagandistic content (Tandoc et al., 2017).

In turn, Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) list a set of criteria associated with the condition of being considered fake news. Thus, fake news can refer merely to news that is created as satire, which is intended to provide entertainment through ridicule and irony to generate social criticism but not to cause any harm. It can also be defined by the use of information to deceive intentionally through the selective disclosure of facts or information to frame a given theme or individual. It can also be associated with the creation of false intentional links through the use of headlines, images, or captions that do not confirm the content, to promote suggestions different from the factual data present in the news.

However, fake news may also arise from the use of false contexts (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017), thus referring to genuine content that is shared with false contextual information and associating it with the facts that a given contextual

framework supports through text, photo, or video. In this case, the contextual framework is not true and drives the reading of the facts toward a false narrative.

According to the same authors, still other forms of fake news include the manipulation, per se, of genuine photos, quotes, or facts to create a false image. In addition, content that is completely the product of idealization and manufacture with the aim of misinforming through deception is also fake news.

However, the falsehood may be included not only in the content as an isolated piece of news but also in the broader catalog of a website, in a group on a social network, or on individual or institutional social media accounts (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). In the latter examples, fake news seeks to deceive the public into thinking that a platform corresponds to a known and credible source by using a name, address, or design similar to a real and reliable brand. It is therefore impostor content—fake news under a fake cover imitating a genuine source.

Fake news, when constructed with the intention of deceiving (thus excluding irony and satire), may aim to obtain financial gain by using an approach similar to credible journalism.

In these situations, fake news seeks to maximize attention through clickbait or promote advertising through the dissemination of information to persuade a particular audience with economic, political, religious, or other objectives (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017; Vargo et al., 2018; Tandoc et al., 2018; Herrero-Diz et al., 2020; Neo, 2022).

In addition to its entry into political discourse and the social representation of what is understood as disinformation, the attention given to fake news can also be viewed through the concept of a critical incident for the journalistic field (Zelizer, 1992).

A critical incident is a fact that leads journalists to question their own journalistic practices, consequently fostering the questioning of authenticity as a synonym of truth and as an innate attribute of journalistic production.

The emergence of political, public, and journalistic discussion regarding fake news is equated with other events in the history of journalism, such as the Watergate scandal, the Kennedy assassination, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, or the attack on the World Trade Center because they all functioned as critical incidents (Zelizer, 1992; Tandoc et al., 2019).

Critical incidents are characterized by the fact that their centrality is shared by both journalists and their audiences. This sharing is what simultaneously allows for the internal criticism of journalism and the external questioning of these journalistic practices by the public (Tandoc et al., 2019).

However, in the network society characterized by networked communication, critical incidents in journalism have another social reach, since the production of information and its dissemination is not exclusive to journalism and mass-media brands.

The critical incident, associated with fake news, goes beyond the internal questioning of journalism and becomes a social questioning around the very concept of authenticity. What is authenticity, how is it built, what social norms and values is it associated with, and what are the limits that distinguish good

communication practices from those that are considered unacceptable and potentially threatening or harmful?

Fake news, as a critical incident in journalism, led to broad social questioning of the social consequences of the construction of authenticity in the network society. At the same time, it also gave way to social reflexivity regarding what authenticity is and how it is formed in communication.

Disinformation, also being communication, has one side associated with its production and the other with its consumption. On the one hand, we have a group of consumers of disinformation with intrinsic motivations for research and a search for information that reinforces stereotypes and choices of previous values. For example, this occurs in the case of sports or political belonging, where fans of a given club or supporters of a given political vision tend to seek trending, aligned, and inaccurate information in support of their beliefs and values (Peterson & Iyengar, 2020).

In an extreme position of seeking to reinforce the stereotypes and choices of preexisting values, deliberate consumption involving disinformation based on conspiracy theories also arises (Butter & Knight, 2020; Douglas et al., 2019),

On the other hand, we find a disinformative consumption without previous motivation, which is therefore associated with recommendation. The term "recommendation" as used here indicates the commercial practice of suggesting content published by third parties. Recommendation is associated with the economic dynamics of seeking mutual profit, for both the platforms and the entities that carry out their business there. This is the space of action of so-called clickbait, promoted by the "zero credibility" media (Munger, 2020), which targets those participants of social networks and social media who are less willing or even unable to verify the accuracy of their content, usually associated with low levels of information literacy (Jones-Jang, et al., 2021).

Zero credibility media are entities that do not seek to create credibility associated with their content but rather only to produce phenomena of simulated cascading credibility in which it is successive social recommendation that gives credibility to the narratives, thus giving them a simulation of authenticity that enables them to be shared through successive and increasingly sophisticated layers of consumers (Munger, 2020).

Cascading credibility phenomena are usually also associated with the use, to different degrees and with different levels of effectiveness and efficiency, of false profiles, both human and automated in the form of bots (Munger, 2020; Forelle et al., 2015; Keller & Klinger, 2019).

However, algorithms that promote clickbait and zero credibility media seeking third-party exposure to stereotypical, biased, and misinformative narratives are the same ones that provide targeted informational ad recommendations, quality news, and non-predatory recommendations.

Algorithms, like any technology, are not good or bad, but they are also not neutral (Castells, 2002); They are designed to act agnostically in the face of available content. This allows for a maximization of participant involvement through the use of content predicted to be interesting and rewarding for them (Abiteboul & Dowek,

2020; Obermeyer et al., 2019; Ali et al., 2019), as demonstrated by the institutionalization of a structured market for personalized advertisements that is based on algorithmically powered datafication. Where communication occurs, disinformation may occur, as demonstrated by the advertising markets' molding by disinformation strategies (Benkler et al., 2018).

In networked communication, the construction of social representations in terms of "authentic versus false" is a product of individualized authenticity assessment practices. The assessment of authenticity shall be carried out by the participants, who have to deal with multiple forms of content that are communicative: informative or disinformative, fake news or news, factual or fictional, etc. Hence, authenticity is perceived as socially constructed and negotiated in multiple cultural contexts, and not as an absolute value (van Leeuwen, 2005; Kaptan, 2021).

In networked communication, different criteria of authenticity coexist between different spheres of daily mediation. There are authenticity criteria based on a "journalistic truth" that is based on factuality and associated with journalism and science; For example, when the sharing of these occurs on social networks and social media, they are therefore communicated as holders of previously socially certified authenticity. However, there is also all other content, the authenticity of which is only acquired when communication between participants is established.

The idea of authenticity as representation and social negotiation clashes head-on with the factual authenticity of journalism, understood as a claim to provide a true representation of the world (Aitamurto et al., 2020).

In fact, both in mass communication and in networked communication, journalistic content continues to have broad social acceptance regarding its high degree of factual authenticity, regardless of whether it is associated with more traditional mass media brands.

However, in the network society, the social acceptance of journalism comes more from a socially shared routine than from the belief in an absolute value of authenticity socially conferred on journalistic norms.

Our networked lifeworld was founded on a set of socially transmitted values, which had in the news a foundation that allowed everyday life to benefit from ontological security by portraying events in a way that was intended to be comprehensive, realistic, and true (Silverstone, 1999; Aitamurto et al., 2020).

The journalist's practice of producing news presupposes the collection, organization, and dissemination of timely information and is based on a credibility of ethical precepts such as balance and justice. These principles give it, before the eyes of the Other, the attribute of authenticity (Singer, 2006).

By claiming to operate within these normative limits, journalism differs from other communication practices, such as those of personal opinion, publicity, and propaganda (Schudson, 2011; 2018).

In part, it is precisely the association of the factual with authenticity that has allowed journalism to be the central social actor in the representation of everyday life for a long time, filtering daily life through routines and institutions, obtaining information useful to the public, and questioning the various authorities and offering a current and reasoned reflection on the events, values, and needs of everyday

life, thus producing experience (Silverstone, 1999; Singer, 2006; Schudson, 2011; 2018).

Despite the political attacks on the news and its factual truthfulness, journalistic practice continues to generate confidence in the majority of the global population, maintaining journalistic content as a basis for the social comparability of all other content regarding the authenticity of the message, the source, and brands (Ross & Rivers, 2018; Newman et al., 2021).

However, despite this continuity, some changes are also occurring, namely because, in networked communication, most of the communicative content in circulation does not originate from journalists nor from mass-media brands.

In the network society, for every journalist, there are tens of millions of people who collect, organize, disseminate, and publish information that is not news but that partially fulfills the criteria of what makes something news.

At the same time, hundreds of millions of people post images of their everyday life or respond to the different variations of the question "What are you thinking?" that social networks and social media directly or implicitly show us upon opening their apps.

On the information-seeking side, hundreds of millions of other people ask Google, Bing, and generative AI questions, while many others choose to ask their friends questions via one of the many messaging apps.

Information and its opposite, disinformation, circulate on the web and on social networks and social media. Information and disinformation coexist in an environment populated by journalists, accredited fact-checkers, but also by all those who have an opinion and want to express it in order to be read, seen, or heard, scrutinize and publish information with the aim of informing the public about any act or word of a politician, state official, company employee, or cultural, sports, or economic celebrity (Singer, 2006; Holt, 2012).

In networked communication, the standard amount of information in circulation is no longer given by the journalistic content circulating, because this is exceeded, on a large scale, by the amount of non-journalistic communication that exists.

However, the qualitative standard, which provides the comparative basis for determining authenticity, continues to be associated socially with journalistic news. This occurs in most cases, no longer in almost all of them, because as already discussed, authenticity has come to be understood socially as a product of social representation. This means that there are also many participants in communication who do not attribute authenticity to journalistic production and who therefore take it as a negative reference or as a reference with a doubtful degree of authenticity.

This discreditability also derives from the existence of information that adopts the form and content model of the news without being news, assuming, therefore, a news falsehood and creating space for systematic social doubt regarding the degree of authenticity of the news.

However, in this process of discrediting the news, the role played by social exposure that is extended to forms of information other than the news, either in its form or in its content, should not be neglected.

If, as a result of the perception of the existence of disinformation, doubt about authenticity constitutes a recurring situation, then it is predictable that, in some cases and for certain participants, the news will also cease to be socially perceived as an exception in the sphere of truth, starting to be questioned, like all others, in terms of its authenticity.

Whereas journalistic authenticity still enjoys widespread social acceptance, the authenticity of other communicative forms circulating in the space of flows is socially constructed on a case-by-case basis.

In turn, in journalism itself there is a permanent struggle for authenticity as originality and not just as truth, seeking distinctivity through the journalist before other journalists (Deuze, 2007) on the one hand, and on the other, the perception of authenticity no longer being a distinction that can be permanently and socially associated with journalistic work, i.e., the news.

This is because, in particular, once the news is finalized and shared, it becomes potentially re-editable by third parties. Therefore, the news ceases to be controlled by those who produce it, i.e., the journalist, consequently opening the door to a questioning and negotiation of their authenticity in the framework of networked communication. If the content can be changed once it is shared, then prior confidence in the authenticity of the news can also be questioned by any participant in the communication process.

The authenticity of journalistic work thus ceases, in many situations, to be a given acquired by the recipients of the communication and instead becomes a target of permanent negotiation by all those who receive news via sharing on social networks and social media.

As in all other communicative forms of everyday life, it becomes increasingly common to find news pieces that are the target of negotiations to sustain their authenticity. Each communicative item is the target of an individualized negotiation process with the aim of obtaining a construction of the individual representation of its authenticity.

The communication of our daily lives is characterized by an individualized authenticity maintained in a "negotiation performance" in which one seeks to assess the authentic through communication, bearing in mind that this communication expresses the autonomy goals of each individual and therefore also expresses representations of personal authenticity.

When journalistic and science-based content enter the flow of sharing via networked communication, their authenticity has been previously certified. This occurs through a process of authenticity that focuses on factuality and occurs at the time of production. Therefore, it is matter of a process prior to its distribution.

However, when the authenticity of news or scientific content is subsequently negotiated by the participants in this communication, two types of situations may occur.

In the first, the symbolic value of such content is recognized and is not called into question. In the second, when the authenticity communicated is in conflict with the project of autonomy of the Subject, they may decide to adjust to the authenticity communicated or to call it into question. When this happens, the

participant can change the meaning of the news or scientific content using comments or various edits to change it, therefore remixing the message. If such a process is done consciously, a lie can therefore be created because what is authentic is known to the participant performing the content remixing (Eco, 2016).

When fake news is shared in communication, the same two dynamics are also demonstrated. However, if the symbolic value of fake news is not called into question by the Subject, the sharing of disinformation may achieve virality. This occurs because it is assumed that the authenticity of the content is ensured because it is presented in the form of news or science communication. Consequently, the individual shares it and thus produces a falsehood, but without lying because they do so inadvertently, without knowing the authentic (Eco, 2016).

The existence of an individualized authenticity does not necessarily mean that it will result in the emergence of information disorders. On the contrary, it simply means that individualized authenticity is neither negative nor positive, but it is also not neutral.

In modern culture, the authenticity of a communicative object was associated not only with the historical origin of that object but also with its authorial originality. This double articulation was the way to determine the privilege of a given communicative object over another object, such as in the case of a book (Eco, 2016).

Authenticity, associated with communicative objects, be they books or others, implied that they were analyzed, in terms of both their physical manifestation and content (Eco, 2016).

In modern culture, it was assumed that the document as a physical object was on paper, papyrus, etc.—i.e., a physical manifestation that could provide authentication to the traditional information that circulated as social memory, legends, myths, common sense, and so on, and not the contrary (Eco, 2003; 2011; 2016). Authenticity, in both origin and originality, was established by considering the communicative object itself to be the sign of its own origin (Eco, 2003; 2011; 2016).

However, in the Information Age, the relationship with origin and originality has changed because we live in an era of digital doubles in which copy-paste is a basic characteristic of all our communication.

In our everyday life, both communicative objects and their content rely on replicability. Unlike other moments in history, the existence of a double has nothing to do with creating deceit or falsifying in the digital context. Whatever the occurrence may be, it has the same practical value as another. Hence, any of these can assume the other, without calling into question their authenticity.

In digital communication, such as networked communication, it is the original sharing that allows for the certification of the type of origin associated with it and that permits the verification of the nature of its authenticity by association with the entity or person who originally shared it, as in the case of NFTs (Nadini et al., 2021).

If, between the modern age and contemporaneity, the representations of authenticity in terms of origin and originality have changed, then to gauge the changes in the representation of the authenticity, or truth, of the content, it is necessary to go back to an earlier historical period: the Middle Ages.

In the Middle Ages, the truth of the content—its authenticity—was associated with what was contained in the scriptures: the Old and New Testaments. However, to uncover the authentic, it was important to interpret them correctly (Eco, 2003; 2011; 2016). If, on the one hand, the correct interpretation of scripture was supposed to legitimize an institution—the Catholic Church—then it simultaneously gave rise to a paradox regarding the interpretative tradition itself, legitimized by the institution of the Church as the guardian of the correct interpretation, which decided whether its own interpretation was the correct one (Eco, 2016).

Consequently, the Middle Ages established itself as a producer of a collection of authoritative opinions and auctoritas, or authorities, which was manifested in quotes that, in turn, developed into authentic opinions. These thus became the authority over the authenticity, or truth, of any given content.

With the Protestant Reformation, there was a transformation in the formation of the certification of authenticity as truth. By seeking its own interpretations of Christianity, Protestantism encouraged people to adopt a greater individualization of their relationship with religion.

In contrast to Protestantism, Catholicism was a religion with a hierarchical structure in which the power of interpretation resided in the clergy. Consequently, Catholics were expected to abide by such interpretations and were generally not encouraged to interpret religious scriptures themselves (Weber, 2001).

The different value systems of these two religions, Catholicism and Protestantism, also resulted in different effects; For example, through the liberalization of authoritative opinion associated with the Protestant Reformation, greater individual freedom of interpretation of the scriptures emerged. This in turn gave rise to an individualization of interpretative auctoritas, hitherto centered on the church (Weber, 2001; Eco, 2016).

In modern culture, authenticity, or the existence of truth, is characterized by the affirmation of a new type of auctoritas: the scientific, which is based on science and its method and production.

In modernity, science asserted itself as a producer of a different type of truth, based on a factual authenticity, self-legitimized in its own scientific auctoritas, and that shaped and influenced journalistic practice, as well (Eco, 2016; Kuhn, 2012; Waisbord, 2018).

In journalism, authenticity is associated with a journalistic factuality that is based on a conceptualization of the existence of a "journalistic truth," which is the best approximation to factual authenticity, maintained until the moment of its public disclosure. Journalism does not seek "truth" in an absolute or philosophical sense (Gomes and Cardoso, 2018). "Journalistic truth" is the basis for the social perception of the existence of a factual authenticity that each news item contains, therefore constituting its authenticity matrix. Authenticity in the news is not built on a mere interpretation of the facts that have occurred. It is the product of journalism reinterpreting the scientific method.

In modernity, journalism's domestication of the scientific method and technology has led to the appropriation of the concept of scientific auctoritas, transmuting them into "journalistic truth." Authenticity in the news is thus the product of the

centrality that journalism grants to the search for, collection of, verification of, and comparison of informative data and their subsequent translation into a rigorous account of the facts ascertained and their significance, which, although valid at the time of disclosure, is susceptible to further evolution and deepening with time.

Journalistic practice develops in two different times: the current time and the time of the investigation. The time of the investigation implies a more in-depth practice than that which initially gives rise to the news. However, the eternal search for the "truth of the facts," or their authenticity, implies a refinement of information that later turns out to be inaccurate or false (Gomes & Cardoso, 2018).

As previously noted, what distinguishes journalism from other forms of information is the journalist's commitment to their rules and procedures, which produce scientific auctoritas that in turn certify the information provided. Context, interpretation, commentary, criticism, analysis, and debate are distinctive marks of journalism and are constructed on the foundations of rigor, exemption, and clarity on the basis of scientific auctoritas.

In journalism, the validation of information is achieved through compliance with a discipline of verification whose central instruments are the research and continuous examination of data and facts, the confrontation of different sources and testimonies, and, whenever possible, direct observation by the journalists themselves (Gomes & Cardoso, 2018).

Other, non-journalistic forms of information are not committed to the same rules of journalistic truth that lead to factual authenticity. Therefore, they do not have the same limitations regarding the inflation of events through sensationalism, the use of stereotypes, or the use of the disproportionately negative by omitting, distorting, or confusing. These other, non-journalistic forms of information are thus free to reproduce any representation of social reality, which can be more or less reliable according to their sources and objectives and depending on whether factual authenticity in journalism presupposes the transparency of its choices and practices as well as the scrutiny of the links, interests, and powers that support it. In other forms of information, this does not occur (Gomes & Cardoso, 2018). Information that does not come from journalism has no obligation to make the individual or collective interests or the powers behind them discernible.

The "journalistic truth" of the early twenty-first century, as a factually based authenticity, is a product of scientific rationality, which in turn, as an approach to defining truth, is a product of a given historical context: the Cold War. This is a time when science was at the heart of a consensus on progress. Consensus, however, is neither inherent nor eternal in societies since it results from certain social conditions.

In particular, the central role of science and the consensus on progress have been a historical product of the importance given to it by the defense sector and its relation to economic prosperity. In turn, the period of the Cold War was also a distinct point in time for journalism since it was a period in which the scarcity of mechanisms for the circulation of mediated information resulted in a social appreciation of journalism (Waisboard, 2018).

In the context of the Cold War, journalism assumed scientific auctoritas as the foundation of its practice and values, utilizing almost scientific methods in its search for "journalistic truth" (Waisboard, 2018). However, as a result of a certain weakening of the social position of experts and the politicization of science, there has been a change in the historical context of valuing science. This also led to an alteration of social representations regarding journalism and the news (Gauchat, 2012).

At the same time, as already mentioned, the contemporary historical period has seen the growth and expansion of the Internet, which altered the framework of information scarcity. Thus, a whole panoply of new structures for the production and dissemination of non-hierarchical knowledge on the basis of networks and information dissemination nodes has emerged (Castells, 2002).

This combination of different factors promoted the emergence of a new social representation of authenticity in which "journalistic truth" is only one of the forms of informative authenticity available, together with the negotiated construction of authenticity for other informative dimensions.

In the network society, authenticity is no longer a foregone conclusion; rather, it has come to be a negotiation. Authenticity has become a product of communicative performance that is repeated each time that the same message finds a new recipient. This negotiation produces an individualized authenticity since each communication established can have diverse origins, forms, and content. Consequently, it may give rise to different or similar conclusions regarding the authenticity of the same content.

Networked communication shares different types of information through the same forms of communicative mediation, on the same screens, and in the same digital format. The information associated with an authenticity with journalistic origin inhabits the same space of flows as non-journalistic information. The classification of authenticity thus ceases to be the product of a relationship between communication-producing organizations and information distributor organizations and becomes, in most cases, a communicative relationship between individual producers, distributors, classifiers, and recipients of information, mostly individuals possessing equal auctoritas, but sometimes also individuals with unequal social auctoritas.

In individualized authenticity, negotiation predominates, using arguments that derive from the symbolic capital of the different participants and feed their argumentative capacity to classify the authenticity of what is communicated (Bourdieu, 1989; 2003). In this communicative negotiation process, there is sometimes an appropriation of factual scientific or journalistic information to support arguments and positions.

However, the use of "journalistic truth," which is constructed on the basis of facts and follows a scientific model, does not, in itself, confer authenticity to the communication of the individual participant who makes use of it. This is only seen as another negotiating argument between the actors in the communication. The other participants can contradict it by using arguments that are based on different uses of factual or other information.

Recalling Weber's work Science as a Vocation (Weber et al., 2004), one might argue that in networked communication authenticity determination processes coexist on the basis of journalistic and scientific facts, along with processes that include evaluative and deductive analysis, and not merely factual analysis, in determining authenticity.

In the first form, authenticity is the product of the scientific method, reinterpreted in the contemporary journalistic method, using "news as truth." In turn, in the second form, authenticity is the product of negotiation between participants in the communicative process. This negotiation is based on their values and social capital, but it also makes use of triangulation between multiple content. It is even possible to use those from journalistic and scientific factuality to validate a particular negotiating position on a certain communicated topic.

In networked communication, authenticity is based on both individual interrogation and social negotiation between groups of individuals through communication.

Authenticity is individualized and depends on the participants' decision-making, which has to be determined for all content reported. However, authenticity is also individualized because it cannot depend on prior attributions of the generalization of authenticity by organizations or by social and professional groups.

Authenticity in a communicative negotiation process is produced through a permanent individual search to determine the degree of authenticity contained in the communication as well as the degree of accuracy of the representation produced therein when confronted with one's known reality, i.e., the first-person experience.

The cultural change induced by the individualization of authenticity implies a discussion about the very limits of reflexivity. In late modernity, the sources of reflexivity are not all identical in value—not all of them are based on a factually demonstrable authenticity.

All the arguments presented so far are intended to support the hypothesis that the social appropriation of networked communication has introduced not only a different way of communicating into our everyday life but also changes in social representations, resulting in a profound cultural impact.

Analyzing the formation of authenticity in communication also involves questioning how we culturally understand and define authenticity. By assuming the individualized and negotiatory nature of authenticity, we are also highlighting the central role of mediation in shaping the culture of the network society.

Open production cultures

Communication practices also foster new cultural values around mediation, which in turn influence our representations regarding production and, consequently, our consumption, as well. The most significant of these new cultural values is openness.

Networked communication is defined through its communicative syncretism, multiform mediation, and individualized switching. All these characteristics have in common a mediation made possible by information and communication technologies. Since such technologies are a product of science, networked communication's "kernel" is also imbued with and molded by an informational scientific culture.

Communication, in the way it is carried out and thought about today, is a communication of informational character. In proposing the concept of "informational," Castells (2002) seeks to draw a parallel with the distinction between "industry" and "industrial." An industrial society is not only a society in which industry exists but also a society in which the structures of industrial organization permeate all spheres of activity and everyday life. This influence began in the prevalent activities situated both in the economic system and in military technology but expanded until it reached the objects and habits of everyday life, shaping production, power, and experience through this process (Castells, 2002). In this sense, networked communication is also a communication with informational characteristics.

In networked communication, the technological basis that embodies mediation is the product of a contemporary informational science. This science is characterized by the appropriation of network features in their organizational, methodological, and dissemination practices, and is thus a science of our historical time and of the network society.

Having played a fundamental role in the construction of modernity, science is directly or indirectly present in most human activities and in the daily lives of individuals in different informational societies.

Informational science has openness as a central characteristic, as demonstrated by the development of contemporary scientific movements such as open source, open access, and open science (Cardoso et al., 2012). This openness was shaped through the models of openness already experienced in the design and creation of the Internet, since Internet culture is a culture associated with openness (Castells, 2001; Himanen et al., 2001).

Through the valuation of openness, informational science has culturally framed the development and experimentation of technology that gave rise to the material foundation of networked communication from which the processes of domestication of algorithmic mediation and networked screens by individuals in general unfolded.

In the network society, it is in informational science that the cultural bases and origins of much of the creative and innovation forces can be found, applied in the most diverse social spheres, including communication.

To talk about science in modern society is to talk about modern society in almost all its aspects (Ziman, 1996). So, to talk about the cultural value of openness as the basis of an informational- and openness-based science is to talk about the cultural valuation of openness in the network society.

We live in a social context based on reflexivity that is contingent on science and communication, a social context in which expert systems are of fundamental

importance (Giddens, 1991). There is therefore an almost global consensus, widespread in the various decision-making bodies, on the importance of scientific knowledge for economic and social development, as well as an awareness that scientific research creates new risks that require science to operate with greater transparency and in dialog with several other social institutions (Beck, 2006; 2010; Watson et al., 2003; Pidgeon, 2008). Consequently, the cultural dynamics that characterize science also frame and shape the manifestation of other cultural changes in society in general.

In recent decades, the practice and concept of a science based on openness has assumed a character of driving paradigmatic change in science, allowing for the characterization of contemporary science as an open science (Cardoso et al., 2012).

Understanding the cultural value of openness in science implies understanding first the relationship between informational science,

, and open access, and then the extent to which these dimensions of openness influenced our communication practices and later shaped our representations, giving rise to a culture that values openness in the various contexts of everyday life.

Open science is structured around the cultural value of openness. This openness is implemented along three main axes: (1) the sharing of research tools, (2) the sharing of data, and (3) the sharing of access in the form of publications.

This threefold dynamic of openness shapes science and gives rise to a science different from that practiced in previous moments of history; it is an open science based on the complete, clear, and timely publication of results. This fosters, to as great an extent as possible, a principle of limiting restrictions on intellectual property as well as radically increased transparency in the pre- and post-publication phases of data, activities, and decisions within research groups (Maurer, 2003).

This movement of openness in science, to a large extent, owes its existence to a precursor movement in the sphere of information technologies that advocated for the openness of computer program codes, viz. the open-source software movement. Its origin is associated with the challenge to the private appropriation of software code, initially written and freely exchanged between programmers.

The GNU Project, founded in 1983, and the Free Software Foundation, created in 1985, both by Richard Stallman (2002), were initiatives defining what would later be known as open source. These initiatives aimed to promote the rights to use, study, copy, modify, and redistribute software, and to access its source code. These ideas gained greater expression with the creation and the expansion of the use of the Linux operating system, an operating system that is similar to Unix whose kernel was written by Linus Torvalds (Himanen et al., 2001).

In 1997, in a text entitled "Release early, release often," which followed the idea of promoting openness in software, the militant of the open-source software movement, Eric S. Raymond, formulated what he called Linus's Law. This "law," which according to Raymond was the basis of Torvalds's thinking on collaborative software development, was founded on the idea that, with a large number of eyes on the same task, all bugs become potentially solvable and therefore trivial. As long as there is a sufficiently large base of beta testers and codevelopers, almost all computer problems can be quickly identified and the solution found (Raymond, 2000).

Although both free software and open source are open and free, this does not mean that you may not have to pay, since the cultural trait of freedom present in open source refers to its openness to transformation. Being open and free is more associated with the fact that its code can be changed by those who want to and know how to do it than with any predetermination for its commercialization at zero cost.

In turn, given its dimension of openness to transformation, open source also inspired another movement, that of open access. This movement is constituted by the will of the academic community to overcome the barriers to the development of free and open networks for the sharing of knowledge, which is essential for the realization of the ideals of a science based on openness (Albert & Kleinman, 2011).

Open access refers to free access to publications resulting from scientific production. These are normally scientific articles available through the Internet with the possibility of downloading, copying, reading, and using scientific information freely, quickly, and without charge.

In its restricted reading, open access refers to free access to scientific articles, calling into question the practices associated with price restrictions and permission to access scientific knowledge (Cardoso et al., 2009a; Thompson, 2005).

However, the logic of sharing that is fundamental to this movement and that aims to promote free access to formal scientific communication and academic and technical journals was quickly adapted by some scientists to other products of their work, thus starting to structure new processes of openness in scientific research in its various phases, from data to the results for publication (Herb, 2010).

Historically, the evolution of openness in science can be divided into two main stages: the Paleo-conceptual phase and the Neo-experimental phase. The movement toward openness in science has its origins in Ted Nelson's hypertext system, which emerged in the 1960s, and Michael Hart's Gutenberg Project from the early 1970s (Cardoso et al., 2009a). Thus, the Paleo-conceptual phase of openness in science has 1963 as its initial reference year with the emergence of Nelson's hypertext proposal, which went from the beginnings of the conceptual creation of the Internet in 1969 and extended until 1979, with the already-created Internet and its evolution to Usenet. Thus, it is characterized by the first experiences of digital network technology and the mutual influence that developments, both in science and in conceptual communication, were considered to have on each other (Cardoso et al., 2009a).

The evolution of openness associated with the scientific process has a parallel in the historical development of the Internet. Both were the product of the combination of a scientific culture of openness and libertarian cultures, resulting from the very context in which the Internet was developed in the late 1960s (Castells, 2001; 2002).

As a technology and product of the cultures and practices of its creators, the culture of the Internet is informational. It is a culture based on the libertarian cultures of those who designed and programmed the first Internet protocol suite (transmission control protocol/Internet protocol [TCP/IP protocols]), creating the foundation on which the Internet has evolved for more than five decades (Castells,

2001; Cerf, 2010). As the product of an open culture, the protocols that support and manage communication on the Internet are not the property of anyone; they are only managed by someone (Mueller, 2009; Chenou, 2014). Therefore, it is not surprising that much of the software that manages Internet communications is also not proprietary. It is thus not subject to copyright, nor is it the property of third parties; rather, it is based on open source and is free and open (Castells, 2005; Wasserman, 2011).

In turn, the Neo-experimental phase of openness in science is characterized by experimentation with the technological possibilities associated with information technologies. This experimentation was enabled by adopting a trial-and-error approach. This led to the development of software applications and their dissemination among large scientific audiences, encouraging online cooperation and large-scale work.

This second phase of openness in science, the Neo-experimental phase, began in the early 1980s and continued until the beginning of the new century. It is during this period in which several paradigmatic examples of the influence of the cultural value of openness in science emerged, for example, the emergence of the Linux operating system, the cooperation behind the Human Genome Project, or the generalization of open access academic journals.

Open science has influenced open scientific production and, in so doing, has also created new technological needs for openness that were supplied by the development, in parallel, of information technologies that enabled the sharing of research tools, data, and access to publications.

However, the cultural values of openness in science, incorporated into the design and production of information technologies, have not solely produced software solutions for scientific dissemination and cooperation. The same technologies, developed to meet scientific needs and embody openness, have been appropriated and expanded to allow the communication and organization of communication in all spheres of society.

Networked communication was shaped by our practices of appropriation of information technologies and their domestication, but it was based on technologies that arose from the social values of openness shared by the scientific community.

Although science is based on openness, this does not mean that scientific openness totally shapes all dimensions of technological production, even in information technologies and software. Thus, for example, the openness of the Internet is also an openness shaped by the motivations of its participants, who are sometimes producers as well as investors in platforms, participating in the capitalist system of global markets.

In the platforms that shape our networked communication, information is shared by the participants through the software created by those platforms. However, the ownership of the data, produced by the communication carried out there, has a hybrid ownership status. Although it is true that the participant can recover the information they produce on social networks and social media, it is equally true that it is also subject to monetization, as if it were the property of only the platforms themselves (Zittrain, 2009; Srnicek, 2017).

The Internet, as a material support for networked communication, is the product of the openness in science and the management of different levels of openness, defined either by actors in the market or by different forms of regulation (Margetts et al., 2021).

In terms of technology's openness, the Internet is the product of the coexistence of proprietary software and open-source software. The former is usually associated with some form of payment and management by companies, while the latter is usually associated with cooperative practices of openness mobilized by groups of participants or developed through publicly funded scientific research and made available as open source.

Networked communication is a communication based on a cultural value of openness of a scientific and informational origin. This openness, associated with networked communication, was disseminated and became widespread through the repetition of communication practices, finally achieving cultural omnipresence.

Openness, as a cultural trait that characterizes networked communication, can, for example, be exemplified by the emergence, production, and maintenance of Wikipedia (Anthony et al., 2007). Likewise, cultural values of openness influenced the emergence of the free culture movement associated with the circulation and distribution of cultural goods (Lessig, 2004; 2005). The cultural value of openness can also be considered to be associated with the formulations of the concept of digital common goods and the hacker work ethic (Benkler, 2006; Himanen et al., 2001).

In the network society, the cultural valuation of openness is closely associated with the dissemination of networked communication practices since it is through the social appropriation of networked communication practices that cultural representations are created.

Communicating in a given way implies accepting the valuation of certain practices to the detriment of others, as well as assuming the valuation of some cultural traits to the detriment of others when performing given practices.

However, for a value to be transformed into a socially shared convention, it is also necessary to have a generalized existence of certain dynamics at the level of social organization. Specifically, there should be a socialization of individual choices.

In the case of the cultural valuation of openness, the socialization of individual choices is fostered through the way in which the production and consumption of the digital materiality of goods is carried out in networked communication.

The practices of production and consumption shape the representations toward production and consumption, which in turn are likely to see their reach extended beyond applicability to mere digital materiality, coming to influence the very representations of production and consumption associated with physical materiality.

In the network society, it has become expected that "things," be they software or hardware, function following a logic of the cultural valuation of openness, which is materialized in communication practices and occurs wherever there is a screen or wherever it is possible to communicate through a screen.

Networked communication occurs mostly between people who are using a computer or a smartphone, but also increasingly through Internet of Things (IoT) sensors or communicative interactions involving artificial intelligence (AI), as in the case of chatbots in their different digital materiality incarnations.

Networked communication thus extends from people to things, for example, from the watch to the microwave, from the lamp to the doorbell, or from the vacuum cleaner to the television (Dutton, 2014; Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Bunz & Meikle, 2018).

In networked communication, production is based on a practice of remixing and mashup communication, which values and promotes a culture of openness associated with digital materiality goods and services, as well as the promotion of the contagion of social representations toward other dimensions of materiality.

From a communicational point of view, remixing can be defined as changing content from its original state by adding, removing, or changing parts. The fundamental concept of remixing is based on the act of using preexisting materials to create something new, according to the desires of each individual creator (Navas et al., 2014).

References to remixing often arise in association with music, books, video, or photography (Lessig, 2004; 2005). Consequently, in terms of public perception, this concept tends to be used to characterize how the production of cultural goods occurs (Fagerjord, 2010).

However, the scope of remixing practices in our societies is substantially greater since it is also associated with many other areas of our everyday life, including the exercise of product design and the design of communicative pedagogies. In these pedagogies, students are led to effectively filter information, remix it, and, after reconstitution practices, produce better communication (Flath et al, 2017; Dusenberry et al., 2015).

In turn, mashup, usually associated with music or video production, consists of the combination of multiple preexisting video or musical sources, without discernible relationships to each other, to create a video or song that unifies them into new content (Shiga, 2007).

However, as in the case of remixing, the use of a narrow definition of the term's scope tends to limit the understanding of the extent to which the mashup phenomenon has shaped productive practices and the cultural valuation of openness in society.

Mashup should be understood as a productive practice in a dual sense, referring to digital materiality content as well as physical materiality content. On the one hand, in the context of the development of cultural or other content of digital materiality, mashup refers to the combination of data or functionalities from two or more external sources to create a new product or service through an open interactive and re-combinatory process (Sonvilla-Weiss, 2010). On the other hand, mashup can also refer to the productive logic that orders the additive or cumulative practice of combining materials and their total sum into objects of physical materiality design (Sonvilla-Weiss, 2010).

Both remixing and mashup are production practices whose dimension of cultural valuation of openness shapes more than the simple perception of the concrete good or service they brought about, in particular because the cultural influence of remixing and mashup is not limited to production but includes a whole distribution circuit and its associated consumption. Thus, productive practices are capable of shaping expectations and representations in everyday life and consequently give rise to the creation of new cultural values.

For example, the culture built by the participants in the musical production involving mashup influences the production of audio editing software to join and combine music, producing new hybrid recordings. This same culture, by guiding the development of works, styles, and reputations, shaped the emergence of an infrastructure of "virtual studios," channels and groups in social networks and social media, dance clubs, and even an unofficial market for "underground" remixes (Shiga, 2007). The example chosen here relates to the music scene but can also be applied to the design of products and to multiple other types of material and digital products and services that surround us in everyday life.

Remixing and mashup constitute the appropriation and alteration of a given material to create something new; thus a comment on a news piece on a social network is both a post and a remix. A remixing might refer to a material or digital object within the wider context of the cultural valuation of openness through production.

A remixing should not only be understood as an action of material change of something preexisting, such as Sheppard Fairey's use of Barack Obama's photo for the "Hope" poster (Sturken & Banet-Weiser, 2010), but also as a reference to a change of perceived meaning of a text. An illustration of this is when someone shares a news story on Facebook after adding a written comment, one that may, for example, contradict the original journalistic title of the piece without changing the content of the text.

However, in a remix, there can also be a twofold change, both material and meaningful. For example, a change of meaning would occur when someone creates a meme by adding a phrase to an image of the movie character Zorro. In this meme, the image of Zorro is added to a text containing the masked vigilante complaining about the appropriation of the "Z" for Zorro by Russian tanks during the invasion of Ukraine.

The cultural valuation of openness in production is also manifested in the innovation and production processes carried out in the hardware and software that surround us in our daily lives. Although the designations of beta testing and updating are traditionally associated with the software industry, their influence in shaping our representations and values in the face of openness goes beyond the sphere of software to extend to the whole of everyday life.

Beta, named after the second letter of the Greek alphabet, originally corresponded to a phase of software development normally indicating that a software program is complete but that there is a high probability that it still contains several bugs, both known and unknown, which may have an impact on the speed or performance of the software and could cause data failure or loss. The beta versions of a

software are numbered below the 1.0 index, which represents the standard number for the first commercial version.

After the trial versions 0.5, 0.8, 0.9, 0.91, and 0.92, or the betas, the software that is expected to meet the goals of its creators is released (Dyson, 1997). However, the lifecycle of a software package does not end, since there are always changes that are being published, even after the release of version 1.1. Although the expectation is that, at some point, there will be a perfect version of a given software package, this in fact never occurs because, even after the rewrites that will bring about versions 2.0 and higher, and which are also the product of feedback from thousands of participants, version 2.1 will normally come out a few months later, and the process will continue in this manner, repeating the very same dynamics (Dyson, 1997).

In turn, updating refers to an act triggered by the participant when accepting the installation of the new version, which already contains a set of changes to the software or its data and is designed to update, correct, or improve its functionality, usability, or performance.

Updates change the way the software works by fixing bugs, changing features, and modifying the user interface (Vaniea & Rashidi, 2016). However, the relationships between those who produce and those who implement the update are not neutral and devoid of emotions.

Sometimes, changes to software are expected and therefore welcomed by the participant, but other times, since no supervening need is perceived, the update can be undesired because it questions the already-established routine, as in the case of the Spotify update in 2019 (Vaniea & Rashidi, 2016; Morreale & Eriksson, 2020).

The analysis of the social dynamics resulting from beta and updating practices have essentially focused on the processes of production organization (Neff & Stark, 2004). This is the case for the theorization of "permanent beta" or "incomplete design" (Garud et al., 2009). The concept of permanent beta focuses its attention on the potential innovation given by a formula that combines design with engineering and promotes a collaborative dimension (Neff & Stark, 2004), seeking to incorporate the user of the product into the development process itself. To this end, the aim is to merge the knowledge of the product's lay users with the expertise of the organization that produces the product, thereby encouraging the constant change and responsiveness of both groups. In this approach, the design process is considered to be continuous rather than having a determined end point. Each of the versions produced offers the opportunity to go back and incorporate features that were previously left out.

Permanent beta seeks to foster the creation of communities of practice in which experts with technical knowledge and users of the same product or service are gathered to design common objectives and a sustainability of this process (Wenger, 1998). The values of these two groups are negotiated through experimentation, so that they are partly incorporated into the design process and into the products themselves.

Permanent beta can be exemplified using the case of the Netscape browser's software, in which beta testers wanted to have firsthand access to what was new in

the software and the company needed their experience to help determine the quality of the software at a low cost (Neff & Stark, 2004). In this situation, both sought the correction of software bugs, sharing common goals related to specific interests.

Similar practices can be found in products other than software, for example, in the pharmaceutical industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the pandemic situation, the number of people who wanted to participate in clinical trials for vaccines increased. In this case, the motivation of beta testers was to obtain earlier access to vaccines, while pharmaceutical companies needed beta testers to assess their success and to continue the research process and advance past the prototype phase (Detoc, 2020).

In mass-media brands, it is also possible to see the appeal of beta testers' contributions. In this case, the participants want a certain news focus to be given to their topics of preference. Meanwhile, mass-media brands need participants to navigate the different screens on which the publication exists to be able to sell services and advertising so that the company can obtain revenues (Lewis & Westlund, 2015).

Permanent beta formulas manufacture products that are, in and of themselves, permanent negotiations between producers and consumers, giving rise to multiple versions of beta software and its subsequent multiple release versions and fixes (Neff & Stark, 2004).

The concept of "incomplete design" is another example of the social dynamics of openness that arise from beta and updating practices (Garud et al., 2009). The traditional scientific approach to product design, whether of goods or of services, focuses on the completeness of processes because it was thought that presenting something finalized is in itself an objective of production. This is because the finalization of the product is traditionally associated with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

However, there are other production and innovation environments that are characterized by continuous changes, posing challenges to this view (Garud et al., 2009). Software design and the design of digital content are examples of disputed territories confronted with a vision that is focused on the objective of production as completeness. Examples such as Linux and Wikipedia constitute two exemplary cases through which the argument regarding the virtues of an incomplete design as a paradigm of digital production can be explored (Himanen et al., 2001; Anthony, 2007).

Incomplete design sees the conception or production of a good or service as being in continuous evolution and always incomplete (Garud et al., 2009). At its origin, the approach based on incomplete design adopts the view that design or production is a process and thus, by definition, incomplete. Incomplete design rejects the traditional approach that considers incompleteness as a threat to the relationship with the recipient of the good or service. In incomplete design, the need to crystallize design as a means to an end is rejected. Instead, the value of fluidity is proposed, promoting a fusion between process and result and seeing in the latter both the conclusion and beginning simultaneously (Garud et al., 2009).

In incomplete design, the boundaries between who designs and implements the process and who receives that process make the division of tasks less well defined. Hence, the preferences expressed are naturally more heterogeneous, and the design objectives arise through an interaction (Garud et al., 2009).

As exemplified, the appropriation of beta and updating practices produces changes in production and innovation processes. Therefore, its transformative reach goes beyond the direct transformation of these processes, namely because they also act on the expectations of individuals. In so doing, they promote a positive social representation of openness and incompleteness as defining cultural features of contemporary everyday life in the network society.

In the industrial model of development, the representation of the status of a good, from the moment it was produced through its commercialization and later acquisition, was synonymous with a status that remained unchanged. In addition, the anticipation of a change in the status of a good was only associated with its obsolescence, its technical malfunction, or, possibly, with esthetic decisions by the consumer. Only in moments of repair or maintenance service was the need for the status of a good to undergo any change perceived.

The social representation of production was thus understood as the assimilation of different components with the aim of producing a final product. Socially, the product was represented as final and the production as fixed. Therefore, only products and services made available to an end consumer would be considered to be completed (Lyyra & Koskinen, 2016). Hence, there was no expectation that the products would partially or completely improve their condition, nor did they receive any new functionality after their acquisition (Lyyra & Koskinen, 2016).

However, in the informational model of development, the dynamics of social representation regarding the status of goods and services has changed. In the network society, the computer, the television, the mobile phone, and even the car, after its initial acquisition, continue to be in a process of evolution.

In the informational model of development, digital content and services that possess a digital materiality are characterized by reprogrammability and homogenization, allowing them to be malleable and easily alterable (Kallinikos et al, 2013). To do so, they can simply be reprogrammed through a new set of instructions (Henfridsson, 2014).

However, when talking about the digital dimension, one focuses not solely on digital services and applications but also on digitized products (Henfridsson et al., 2014), which are tangible and accumulate both digital and physical components in themselves (Henfridsson et al., 2014).

Digitized products have a hybrid materiality (Barrett et al., 2012) and are products that combine digital and mechanical components with asymmetric resistance to change (Barrett et al., 2012). As with software, digitized products are also unfinished, malleable, and ambivalent (Garud et al., 2008; Kallinikos et al., 2013, Zittrain, 2008).

In the network society, our representations regarding product and production assume openness as well as the possibility of permanent evolution and of a reconfiguration of their functional state and functionalities.

Through our practices, the processes of beta, updating, remixing, mashup, permanent beta, and incomplete design influence our representations of materiality and shape our expectations in the multiple dimensions of our everyday life.

Through software updates carried out within a societal informational context, the material/hardware is always changing in its functions. This finding is not intended to demonstrate that what is materially non-digital is the target of any physical variation; rather, it only attempts to state that the functions predefined at the date of a given good's manufacture can be changed through the updates that are carried out throughout its lifecycle.

Although this is more common for computers and mobile phones, it is also the case for many other technologies, such as cars, which are no longer unchanging in their functional dimension and can be considered to be products of hybrid materiality.

Car software upgrades occur regularly and have implications for their performance as a means of transportation, thus augmenting the traditional practices of altering only the complementary functionalities of the equipment, such as the sound environment or brightness in the car, which have always been transformable dimensions owing to the physical action of "tuning" the car that drivers sometimes carry out (Balkmar, 2012; Wiegand & Imschloss, 2021).

Products with hybrid materiality characteristics thus also assume characteristics of incompleteness, or characteristics of beta/updating (Garud, et al., 2008).

However, because culturally we are used to a material dichotomy as compared with a digital one, the incomplete nature of digitized products such as cars raises questions about who holds the power of modification. The manufacturer can now change the functionality of a digitized product without actively seeking approval from those who use that product. The updating of a good or service is not only a technical act but also an act of cultural sharing.

In a car, such as a Tesla, the update may occur without its owner even noticing. However, for the upgrade not to jeopardize the relationship between the manufacturer and the driver of the car, a symbolic negotiation between the parties, which is the result of an act of cultural sharing regarding the valuation of openness that enables the updating of the car from a distance, needs to have taken place beforehand.

The cultural dimension of sharing values between producer and consumer is fundamental since, when this does not happen, it is the business model itself that might be called into question, as can happen, for example, in the potential consumer rejection of the unblocking of functions through remote software when they involve subsequent payments (Wiegand & Imschloss, 2021).

In products with a hybrid materiality, such as automobiles, it is the material that limits the digital since; if it is through the digital that one can change, it is the physical that determines what can and cannot be changed (Jarrahi, 2015). The software must be in tune with the hardware characteristics as well as with the aspects of the physical environment that one seeks to model and manipulate.

In products with hybrid materiality, cultural representation regarding the product as a whole is shaped by digital materiality, which is itself perceived as open and likely to change repeatedly.

However, the valuation of openness is not only discernible in the appropriation of hybrid materiality, created by the incorporation of software in tangible products and digital services, nor is it only present in the performance of technology-based companies that provide products and services. The cultural valuation of openness is also demonstrable in the observation of the relationship established between the mediated Subject, that is, the one who lives through mediation and who is aware of its role in their everyday life, and the physical products themselves (Bar et al., 2016).

The processes of barroquization, creolization, and cannibalization seek to describe the relationship that is established between Subject and product (Bar et al., 2016). These are processes that socially reflect the cultural valuation of openness since, when the possibility of openness is not pre-associated with the materiality of the object, it is recreated by the action of the Subject. The processes of barroquization, creolization, and cannibalization represent remixing/mashup practices acting on both physical and digital materialities.

In the quest by a Subject to achieve a given objective, barroquization is the simplest way of acting on technology. Barroquization refers to the appropriation of a technology using possibilities of openness that the design itself has incorporated since its inception. This can refer to the incorporated characteristics of customization (Bar et al., 2016). Creolization, in turn, is a more in-depth form of technological and cultural appropriation. In creolization, the Subject not only transforms technology by creating openness where the creator did not think to include it but also goes beyond what the producer allows, recombining or reprogramming the technology because they value openness as an instrument to achieve their goal. Finally, cannibalization is the most extreme form of appropriation of openness by the Subject in technological transformation. The transformation produced by cannibalization challenges technology in its own product identity since it promotes changes in technology that subvert the device or service to invent new uses for it (Bar et al., 2016).

The appropriation of these processes is an example of a culture of openness practiced by a mediated Subject. This can be easily explained by using examples related to mobile phones and smartphones present in the daily lives of multiple societies and in multiple geographies (Bar et al., 2016).

For example, in barroquization, the Subject personalizes their phone by physically changing it, using covers and screen protectors or adding various decorations (Blom & Monk, 2003; Bar et al., 2016). However, barroquization does not stop at the physical device; it also includes digital services, such as through the use of ringtones or personal greetings in voice mail, etc. (Tossell et al., 2012; Bar et al., 2016).

As a higher degree of action by the Subject on the materiality, creolization involves the modification of the physical device itself, something that can happen either when the Subject disconnects components from their phone, such as the SIM

card, battery, or screen, and recombines them in different ways, or when they add them to other technologies (Bar et al., 2016). Developing countries present multiple examples of creolization, such as bicycles that charge phone batteries; putting a mobile phone at the service of multiple individuals, thus acting as a public telephone; and finally, in the commercial offering of charging spaces for mobile phones by using combinations of different automobile batteries, generators, and solar panels (Munro & Schiffer, 2019).

Cannibalization, by promoting the autonomization of objects' functionalities, operates in terms of both digital materiality and physical materiality. For example, in the case of the digital materiality of mobile phones, the construction of the autonomization of the object finds expression in its transformation into "digital lockers." In a digital locker, the Subject uses the storage capacity of the object to then share music and video content with others. In cannibalization, even off-network sharing mechanisms such as Bluetooth are used to communicate between objects with hybrid materiality (Bar et al., 2011; Kumar and Parikh, 2013). Thus, we can also identify practices that normally fall within the illegal or even criminal sphere, such as the unlocking of digital or physical hardware of mobile phones, the cloning of cards to redirect fees to another, unsuspecting subscriber, or even the use of mobile phones as explosive detonators for terrorist activities (Bar et al., 2016; Goggin, 2009; Amaral & Souza, 2013).

In the network society, there is a growing importance and visibility of open production practices. These, in turn, foster the dissemination of a culture that values openness in different dimensions of everyday life. Through culture, our representations are changed, not only in the face of production but also in the face of consumption. For example, when analyzing Apple's annual hardware presentation cycle in the form of the new iPhone each year, the influence of the culture of openness on production and its shaping of representations in the face of consumption can be observed.

The annual launch of a new generation of iPhone and the consumer appetite for them can be framed in a cultural logic of openness. This is an event in which hardware replacement is culturally equated to the installation of an update. The practice of upgrading an iPhone by purchasing new hardware has a cultural equivalent in regular software upgrades. The acquisition of a new mobile phone is equivalent to something intrinsic to the mediated experience, developed alongside the relationship with goods having digital materiality, such as software.

The annual presentation of a new iPhone is transformed from a pure act of marketing for presenting new products to a social routine of upgrading associated with a physical asset, the iPhone, which is carried out via a new purchase. An iPhone is thus represented as a product with hybrid materiality, always in a beta state and always waiting for its next update through the acquisition of the next physical model, which will also be in beta, in an infinite cycle of incompleteness in the relationship between the brand and the owner of the device.

However, this cultural equivalence between a hardware purchase and a software update is only possible because the valuation of mediation promotes a culture of openness in production.

The cultural spread of the value of openness, accompanied by open production, has made it an integral part of daily routines beyond communication. Open production can thus be defined as the product of a culture of openness, which is the inheritor of a culture of scientific openness and is enhanced by networked communication.

Open production is characterized by the adoption of remixing/mashup practices, productive beta/update strategies, and a relationship with the final recipient based on open source in goods and services. After its production, a good or service continues to transform itself in a dynamic of open production, thus assuming a permanent matrix of change in regard to its functional status and functionalities.

All the aforementioned structures regarding production and creation, from digital materiality to the hybrid and even the physical, are based on the cultural influence of openness. The origins of the cultural trait of openness toward production can be found in the evolution of the openness of science, establishing itself as an informational and open science and a characteristic of our moment in history. However, this is just one of the dynamics that shaped the creation of a culture of openness associated with production.

At the same time, in the wake of the Internet and along with the contributions of information science, cultures have shaped the openness of information technologies. Through its appropriation and domestication, networked communication has been domesticated as a communication that values openness in its practices, namely in communication and the production of cultural goods.

Communication practices, as always, create representations and expectations regarding the values that frame everyday life. In this case, they are related to production. In turn, the value of openness in digital production has contaminated the representations regarding production in general, making the value of openness one of the defining cultural traits of our everyday life in the network society.

Openness is a cultural value that is no longer solely a characteristic of mediation provided by the practices of networked communication, it evolved to define our representations regarding what production and consumption are in our daily lives.

In this progression, mediation was objectified, and it acquired a new explanatory centrality because, in addition to characterizing communication, mediation has come to characterize production itself in general.

The valuation of openness is directly related to the presence of mediation in our daily lives as well as to the way we perceive the production of cultural goods, such as videos, music, and software.

Likewise, the valuation of openness stems from our perception of ourselves as mediated Subjects communicating in a network and in a networked lifeworld immersed in the mediation of everyday life.

The culture of openness, initially associated with scientific production and the production of digital materiality content in communication, expanded its influence, acting in both hybrid and physical materialities and encompassing and framing all our daily routines.

Through their daily practices, the mediated Subject associates production in their representations with openness and the cultural valuation of mediation in the framework of a mediatized culture.

Cloud access cultures

Such changes in communicative practices also drive other cultural values, expressed in the way we increasingly value access rather than ownership of goods and services, something that can be described as the product of the generalization of economic subscription models in our daily lives, giving rise to a cloud culture.

We carry out web searches, update profiles on platforms, publish posts, share Tweets, watch videos on YouTube or Facebook, shop on Amazon, share files, and send messages via messaging apps in an environment of data processing and fast responses through multiple different platforms (Hogan, 2015).

What kind of infrastructure and technology is needed to store such large amounts of information?

The analysis of our contemporary communication practices shows us a communication that is based on applications and content of continuous flow. This favors a constant connection to decentralized databases in the cloud rather than local archiving and processing on hard drives in our information and communication technologies (Hogan, 2015).

Applications such as X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Gmail, WhatsApp, WeChat, or VKontakte, to name but a few among the many used in our daily lives, use cloud technologies as the basis for their services and as a means to store and share participant data. Such a widespread use of cloud computing practices has promoted the emergence of what can be called a "cloud culture."

In the same way that electricity is central to the definition and shaping of industrial society in its organizational form, cloud computing is central to defining and shaping what the Information Age and network society are (Castells, 2002; Aydin, 2021).

Cloud computing can be defined technically and culturally. Technically, cloud computing is a working model using computerized processing that allows access to applications and services regardless of time, space, and platform, and that functions through a huge infrastructure of geographically distributed data centers (Aydin, 2021). Cloud computing arises from the need to gain greater computing power to cope with increasingly demanding usage challenges.

However, since this model is built on previously existing technologies, such as virtualization and computing in high-performance networks and automation of data centers, it is not considered to represent a new technology. These technologies simply enable the scalability and management of a shared infrastructure (Venters & Whitley, 2012).

Historically, cloud computing has its origins in the 1960s, and it is associated with the development of computer utility software, which was in turn enabled by the birth of the Internet and the idea of computing as a public infrastructure,

similar to the telephone system (Amoore, 2018). Later, during the 1980s, a second contribution to the creation of cloud computing emerged, specifically through the application service provider (ASP), which came to be the basis of e-mail services, as seen, for example, in the emergence of Hotmail in the 1990s (Venters & Whitley, 2012).

The historical cycle of the cloud computing infrastructure is confirmed by the offering of Amazon Web Services' Elastic Compute Cloud, which has been available since 2006 and which, almost simultaneously, was followed by the offerings of Google and Microsoft via investment in extremely large data centers, in terms of both computing and storage capacity (Amoore, 2018).

The creation of an IT infrastructure industry has meant the transfer of the processing of individual computers and private data centers to large external public data centers, accessible via the Internet. Cloud computing is based on the existence of an infrastructure in which hardware, servers, storage, refrigeration, and power are provided as an integrated service, to which is added automated platforming with scalable switching, whose analytical data capacity is accessed in the cloud by participants through existing applications (Venters & Whitley, 2012; Amoore, 2018).

A division of the computational work of collection and processing takes place in cloud computing, in which the data produced by the applications are located in the cloud. The devices serve as a simple interface for sending data and accessing the result of processing performed remotely on this network infrastructure.

The interaction with computing and storage power, present in large infrastructures, can be carried out remotely by any participant in the communicative processes through the use of applications and an Internet connection using a personal computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone, or other form of mobile computing. Smart devices, which include sensors activated by the Internet of Things (IoT), are increasingly being added to these (Venters & Whitley, 2012; Aydin, 2021).

In turn, data storage occurs through the use of gigantic sets of servers in centers the size of football stadiums. The size and location of these data centers directly correlates with the growing digital demands of our everyday life (Hogan, 2015).

In cloud computing, technological emphasis is placed on providing access to scalable computing in which the customer pays for what they use. This computation is scalable, combined with a distributed computation in which multiple concurrent clients can share and combine their data and analytics.

The technical characteristics of cloud computing can be synthesized through five key dimensions: (1) self-service on demand, (2) access to an extended network, (3) resource pooling, (4) rapid elasticity, and (5) metered service (Aydin, 2021). Cloud computing is thus characterized by an adaptation of the service to the requests that are made of the infrastructure. Cloud computing is an on-demand self-service in which the available resources are automatically allocated to participant requests depending on the rate of use and the performance available in existing IT resources. In turn, these resources can be accessed through an extended network.

Cloud resources can be accessed through all kinds of existing devices and networks, without the need for dedicated mediation equipment or software. The existing resources are thus shared between multiple participants in communication according to a pooling logic. Included in this sharing are computer networks, servers, operating systems, databases, and computer software associated with different applications.

Pooling occurs through a dynamic of accelerated elasticity in which participants use resources only when they need them and release them to other participants when they finish using them.

Cloud computing is also optimized in economic terms, since the payment is associated with a service tailored to usage rather than a fixed amount (Aydin, 2021). Cloud computing thus involves the storage, processing, and distribution of data, applications, and services for individuals and organizations (Mosco, 2014).

In our everyday life, cloud infrastructure and computing are promoted by, and usually associated with, social media and social networking usage. However, another large fraction of their use also corresponds to personal cloud storage services (PCSS) (Ghaffari & Lagzian, 2018). In addition to sustaining our participation on multiple social media and social networking platforms, cloud computing promotes cloud services, such as those offered by Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive, and iCloud, which have reached a central presence in our daily lives by offering a set of advantages perceived as positive by the participants in the different communicative processes, in particular because they allow the participant to store and access data from any device, eliminating the need to update files scattered across different devices.

Cloud services also offer collaboration options for sharing files that enable multiple people to work on them simultaneously and, in case of data loss, allow them to be restored from the cloud (Ghaffari & Lagzian, 2018).

However, the importance of cloud computing stems from the fact that it goes beyond the provision of services since, with the development of cloud computing, a gradual replacement of traditional manufacturing methods with cloud manufacturing has also been witnessed (Zhao & Zhu, 2016). With the development of computing and the Internet, information manufacturing has become a standard in industrial production, first through the incorporation of consumption data, which shape the manufacture of products to meet the needs expressed by consumer demand, and then owing to cloud manufacturing, which transformed manufacturing itself.

Cloud manufacturing consists of the provision, through the cloud, of productive resources with various characteristics, enabling the virtualization of any type of manufacturing capabilities and resources, such as access to machines and tools. With cloud manufacturing, there is a shift in the production paradigm. The production of goods is now understood as a service because cloud manufacturing enables production to virtualize and deliver its high value-added production capabilities and resources at low cost and allows for the promotion and expansion of innovative approaches in textile or automotive production, or even in the

pharmaceutical industry via the development of customized therapies (Subramanian, 2012; Zhao & Zhu, 2016).

In the field of mass-media communication, cloud practices also have been applied and developed essentially through virtual newsrooms that are based on online collaborative software (OCS) such as Slack. This allows journalists to gather their knowledge, skills, and perspectives in the context of joint projects, whether they are in the same editorial office, as in the editorial offices of Al Jazeera, BuzzFeed, and The Guardian, or in geographically dispersed collaboratives, such as the collaborative "Panama Papers" project, which brought together journalists from 80 countries to examine more than 11 million documents (Bunce et al., 2018).

Cloud computing is, as a rule, geographically and spatially distant from those who make use of its services and technological possibilities. As Amoore (2018) points out, whenever one of the major global platforms, telecommunications providers, or computing companies establishes a data center in a foreign state, in an old bunker, or in a portable container, we are talking about a geography based on the spatial location of the data storage.

However, in addition to this physical geography anchored in real spaces, cloud computing also promotes a cultural geography. The cloud, as such, does not exist. Its territorialization is imagined and built by those who use it; thus, it is also a cultural product of our reflexivity, anchored in our communication practices. The cloud is a cultural representation of technologically possible practices.

The construction and idealization of a cloud geography is visible, for example, in discussions about the possibility of U.S. authorities accessing European citizens' data stored in U.S. data centers. It is also present in the response from the European Union (EU) to the development of a "European cloud," protective of European data, which provides the security of a jurisdiction within the EU (Amoore, 2018).

The idealization of a cloud geography can also be found in the decisions of the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT), the exchange management entity of the global financial system, which transferred its management of data in the cloud to an underground data center in Switzerland because it is considered, to a large extent, to be a neutral space. Other examples can also be identified, as in the case of the Canadian government having legislated what it called "data sovereignty": the legislative translation of the idea that domestic public data traffic should not leave Canadian territory (Amoore, 2018).

In all these examples originating from institutional debates, the cloud is understood as an abstraction capable of spatial location, materializable through data centers. The deterritorialized abstract cloud is thus reterritorialized through reflexivity practices as an intelligible and governable entity (Amoore, 2018).

The same processes of reflexivity found in institutional discourse and action also occur at the individual level. The cloud, when perceived as a set of data centers scattered and located spatially in an uncertain place, implies that the role of distance in individual daily life will be renegotiated to address the cloud as a social and cultural phenomenon (Hu, 2015; Abed & Chavan, 2019). Like all communicative practices, cloud computing also produces cultural change (Bunce et al., 2018).

Cloud geography does not exist independently because it is dependent on how the participants in the communication use it and the relationships that this technology facilitates (Harvey, 2006).

Cloud computing and its appropriation in different contexts create new power dynamics. This occurs through the very infrastructure of the space in which cloud computing is used and the participants' representations of it (Bunce, 2018).

However, the cultural construction of perceptions toward cloud computing does not occur only spatially but also temporally. Temporal dynamics play a central role in the construction of representations regarding cloud computing (Harvey, 2006), namely because it has a role in constructing the individual representation of the impact of mediation on productivity, in what can be lalled as "cloud time" defining the time spent working using the cloud and even the idea of "lost time"in reference to spending time in the cloud using Apps and loosing track of time (Bunce, 2018). In contrast, cloud computing also influences individual perceptions of the erosion of boundaries between leisure and personal time and work and professional time (Bunce, 2018).

Cloud computing, cloud technologies, and the cloud are, for many participants in communication, solely the product of daily interaction with their mobile phones and other screens. In this process, it is taken for granted, and achieved, that wherever we send our photos and documents, they will "return" to us when summoned by the click of the mouse or the touch of a screen. However, although the distributed nature of the cloud offers free services and promises freedom, it is still a culturally constructed space and, consequently, a geography of the extension of the world's power and politics beyond it (Hu, 2016).

The characteristics and functionalities of the "cloud" are not ends in themselves but rather the means through which capital accumulation and power management are processed, in this case by centralizing the ownership of the infrastructures of these processes in a small number of brands held by an even smaller number of individuals (Mosco, 2014).

The "cloud" thus evokes political questions and answers regarding the design of a "cloud policy" on how to deal with new threats and dangers, even though these technologies have been designed to mitigate such threats and dangers. The existence of increasing amounts of information, stored in multiple locations, and the need to analyze this huge amount of data have created a new dynamic in the communicative infrastructure. However, in addition to the technological possibilities made available by the data processed and produced in and by the cloud, threats and dangers to privacy, as well as to other dimensions of daily life, arise (Mosco, 2014).

The "cloud," like information technologies, is not clean and environmentally friendly since it involves large environmental impacts owing to the exaggerated energy consumption of the server farms where it is housed (Mosco, 2014).

Among the new threats and dangers associated with the "cloud," there is a special emphasis with regard to work in the Information Age because it is "cloud" technologies that drive and optimize revenue growth. This is also associated with the low costs of practices of externalizing and offshoring the creative and technical

work of symbolic analysts, practices that, in turn, encourage the creation of environments that are not conducive to the unionization of workers. Consequently, they facilitate the promotion of a new stage in the taylorization of work (Mosco, 2014). Therefore, those who own the property of the "cloud" and make use of such form the basis for a new combination of ownership concentration, data storage control, and individual work analysis tools—the dangerous combination capable of producing not only a systematic separation between knowledge and work but also new power imbalances (Reich, 1991; Mosco, 2014).

Although the analysis of data, carried out through algorithms, has helped us to solve real problems, as with the dissemination of information about epidemics, it has also allowed for the generalization of indiscriminate surveillance by particular states and oligopolies (Mosco, 2014).

Finally, the "cloud" also produces "cloudy data" (Munn et al., 2019). While cloud technology introduces new risks and dangers, it does not necessarily have to. Cloud technology, like all technologies, is a product of the social dimension and is shaped by it in uses and social appropriations, as it is devoid of any technological inevitability. Cloud technology is "cloudy" because it is not analytically generalizable in its political meanings and implications since different technological conceptions and political contexts produce different power relations and opportunities for social intervention (Munn et al., 2019). Consequently, different privacy architectures may originate from the same network computing practices and their social appropriation, since social change is also the product of the interaction between computational materiality and social practice (Munn et al., 2019).

Cloud computing, or the cloud, is the basis of the technological possibility of generalizing the storage and sharing of files in our daily lives and communication on social networks and social media. However, our daily lives are also immersed in the clouds' mediation through listening to millions of songs via Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube; watching series and movies via services such as Netflix, HBO, Amazon Prime, and Disney+; or reading millions of books through Kindle Unlimited (Colbjørnsen, 2021).

The cloud has made the emergence of distribution and business models based on streaming possible in the cultural industries, giving rise to streaming media services, the basic characteristic of which is the offering of a vast catalog of content made available through a subscription format (Colbjørnsen, 2021).

The current model of cultural production for subscribers is characterized by a model of curation focused on the provision of a proposal of particular value to those who subscribe to it and pay a fee for access to the collection of cultural goods, which provides unlimited access during the subscription period (Lotz, 2017; Colbjørnsen, 2021; Schuh et al., 2021).

Cloud technology has shaped the type of offering and the associated business model: upon a subscriber's request, the service sends the cultural good via the Internet to the device of said subscriber, and it is then erased after its fruition.

In the network society, a substantial part of cultural goods is permanently in the "cloud" in digital format. Outside of this, there is only one other cycle offered

by the very same streaming platforms, "downloading," characterized by the "sending-fruition-erasing" process of the cultural good.

Streaming differs from electronic selling, or e-selling, which is another model in which consumers pay a one-time fee to download a media file for permanent storage on a hard drive (Colbjørnsen, 2021).

In streaming, although vendors offer subsidiary capabilities that allow for pseudo-permanent access through download, such access is also associated with a maximum storage time, at the end of which it is deleted from the subscriber's account. Although this is currently associated with cultural goods such as music, films, and series, the subscription model has its origin in other spheres of communication, specifically those of mass media news brands and telecommunications companies.

Originally, in mass media news brands, customers periodically paid a fixed amount for the regular purchase of a newspaper or magazine. This amount was for a given time duration: a year, a month, a semester, etc. Subsequently, this model was adopted by telecommunications companies for their triple-play subscriptions (telephone, television, and Internet). Finally, the model was reappropriated by the cultural goods sector, including for music, cinema, and series.

Alongside the cultural sector, the subscription model has expanded simultaneously to multiple sectors, including software, food, health products, beauty products, and so on. Today, subscription refers to a practice taken on by a wide range of companies, which thereby seek to increase the predictability of their revenue streams (McCarthy et al., 2017). Unlike traditional product sales, in the subscription model, the customer does not take ownership of the good or service. The transaction performed is not equivalent to the customer assuming ownership of a good or service since, in the subscription, the customer, upon payment, is ensuring only the availability, use, or result of a given solution provided.

The subscription business model economically presupposes a permanent and lasting relationship between the supplier and the customer, supported by the flow and production of customer utilization data and intended to predict potential future failures and improve the performance of the business relationship, providing in return an optimization of resources (Schuh et al., 2021).

In turn, from the consumer's perspective, a subscription to a good or service implies frequent use, without which the value proposition is not as appealing nor encouraging for a large number of potential stakeholders (Ritter & Schanz, 2019).

In this subscription model, a change of supplier is relatively rare. This is why new customers tend to be offered subscription contracts with an initial period at lower prices than those on the market. Another reason why changes of supplier occur so rarely has to do with offering an initial free period, which aims to create an appetite for contracting and maintaining the service.

The subscription-based business model also tends to be characterized by loyalty mechanisms, which prevent the changing or cancellation of services for long periods of time through high costs or fees (Ritter & Schanz, 2019; Klopcic et al., 2020).

The immersion of our everyday life in mediation, made possible by the cloud, has promoted and generalized subscription practices for sectors of economic activity beyond communication and culture. This was possible because the model was culturally normalized through the adoption of subscription for access to digital materiality goods and services, reaching more and more individuals and thus gaining the social aura of a model that characterizes everyday economic relations and takes on the role of the economic model of our time, becoming popular in an increasing range of industries, products, and services (Kelly, 2022).

The network society is thus increasingly characterized by the rise of a subscription economy, which tends to socially value the rental of goods and services rather than their ownership (Kelly, 2022). This substitution arises as more than just an economic trend; it is assumed as a cultural change. This results from the advancement of a given economic logic associated with the efforts of different industries to assert greater control over products and services at all stages of the economic chain. The advancement of this economic logic results in a cultural trend that promotes a change from the social appreciation of permanence associated with property to the ephemerality associated with subscription (Kelly, 2022).

The cultural change from ownership to subscription cannot be dissociated from the cloud, whose technologically enables a specific set of practices and relationships with goods and services, promoting not only an appreciation of ephemerality but also new practices.

The everyday life being lived in the "cloud" and with the "cloud" fundamentally changes the way we share and store digital materials, as well as the way the management of the proliferation of digital material is carried out and the strategies and rituals used to organize, curate, or erase them (Horst et al., 2021). The cloud also promotes the emergence of different forms of digital work, for example, through the use of applications such as Zoom and Teams and the ways we share and store digital material (Horst et al., 2021).

All these practices, inherent in our everyday life, have focused our attention on the role that the different infrastructures developed around the "cloud" play in imagining, promoting, and inhibiting social and economic cultural changes in the network society.

The technological infrastructure that serves our individual daily lives at home, at work, and in leisure is built around the "cloud" and the processing, storage, and sharing capacity embedded in it. This goes hand in hand with the promotion of permanent accessibility through a range of different screens, thus shaping the ways we engage with and manage our digital data.

At the same time as the processes described here, an increase in the number of platforms and the necessary storage space is being observed, as well as the exponential increase in the number and size of files that our communication produces, whether that be text, photo, video, or audio files (Horst et al., 2021).

The cloud space is now the space in which communication is mediated, a space that spans from Google, Dropbox, and iCloud drives to the universe of games played on PlayStation, Xbox, or Steam and relayed via Twitch.

The cloud is also the space that corresponds to all available social networks and social media, including Facebook, X/Twitter, Instagram, WeChat, Telegram, and WhatsApp, and even VKontakte. In this networked cloud, a communication infrastructure is built where images, files, videos, texts, posts, and all of the information and data shared and produced by users are stored.

The cloud is the space in which the links that connect things and people are constructed and in which all kinds of relationships originate, whether they are relationships framed as sharing through exchanges/donations or as involving money. In the former type, the relationship is valued and based on the expectation of continuous reciprocity in time. In the latter, reciprocity does not exist and is replaced by money, which serves as an element of exchange for a service or good (Horst et al., 2021).

In the cloud, materiality is digital. However, through cloud manufacturing, the digital also gives rise to physical or hybrid materiality.

The exchanges and transactions produced in the cloud and by the cloud reflect different usage values, thus showing that social connections are also created through the underlying methods of exchange or transaction of goods and services, as well as how these practices change over time (Subramanian, 2012; Zhao & Zhu, 2016; Horst et al., 2021).

Without a technical and, consequently, technological construction, the cloud could not exist. In turn, technological decisions are also the product of certain economic, financial, and political contexts. However, the cloud is not just a technological, political, and economic-financial construction. It is also a social construct.

The cloud is the product of the practices of those who use it in a given context and also of the cultural representations constructed by the participants in the communicative processes that make use of it. These cultural representations permanently fuel their social, technological, political, and economic-financial definitions, resulting in their permanent transformation. This is demonstrated by the example of the ongoing evolution of the relationship between personal data and privacy in our societies, which is permanently shaped by negotiation between participants, platforms, businesses, and governments.

The adoption of cloud technologies by communication participants has created a positive cultural perception of subscription as an economic model. This creates a potential new market for businesses.

However, subscription seems to be a model whose success is not only rooted in the advantages it brings to companies; it also seems to be a model adapted to societies in which the profusion of social inequality manifests itself (Piketty, 2014) since, if the distribution of wealth in the network society tends to be concentrated in a smaller number of individuals and social mobility is perceived as decreasing, then younger people perceive a lower probability of achieving the financial means necessary for purchase. Thus, this also translates into a greater cultural valuation of the subscription. This valuation occurs as much in the choice between collecting vinyl LPs or accessing Apple Music as in the decision to own a car or use Uber, etc. (Perzanowski & Schultz, 2016).

The choice between ownership of a good or service versus the subscription to a good or service is based on both the wealth of the individual and their cultural perspective. However, such choices always have different consequences, and the case of the choice between "ownership versus subscription" is no exception. For example, subscription offers short-term advantages, while ownership has long-term advantages for individuals and society, particularly in terms of greater privacy, greater autonomy, and greater competition (Perzanowski & Schultz, 2016).

The advantages of ownership stem, for example, from the fact that subscription promotes loss of temporal reliability. Subscriptions in the field of cultural goods, whether music or audiovisual products, are based on licenses that make titles available for specific time intervals on specific platforms and that, at a given time, change to another platform and service. This dynamic of supply means that what is available today may no longer be available tomorrow and, for example, may be present only in another competing offer to which the individual did not previously subscribe.

In contrast, subscription also implies new balances of power between suppliers and consumers, thus giving rise to a transfer of control. For example, in a social context in which the norm is subscription rather than ownership of a cultural good, publishers may decide to remove a book, song, or film from their subscription service, leaving subscribers without access to it.

The open, permanently incomplete character of a product of hybrid or digital materiality and its connection to a cloud-based system have the potential to transfer some parts of the control historically exercised by the product's owner to its manufacturer.

The situation thus becomes even more complex when dealing with a device that is rented or leased and not owned, whether that device is an e-reader or a car.

In terms of products with digital materiality, the trend has been for the platform owner to try to increase their control, something that users may tend to experience in the future with goods having hybrid materiality, as well (Tilson et al., 2010; Eaton et al., 2015). Lack of ownership implies the potential loss of control over the type of uses and innovation that could be made of them (Perzanowski & Schultz, 2016).

However, since cloud-based technologies reduce the cost of individual monitoring and promote the production of data in communication, it is likely that an evolution of the current general restrictions on subscriptions to individualized restrictions will be seen. For example, it is likely that the allowed download time will evolve from uniform application times for everyone to individualized times.

It is thus possible to imagine a world in which individualized subscription relationships dictate, for example, the number of times a car can stop in the street to change passengers. This would be the indicator to be taken into account by the car manufacturer in determining when subscription should be understood as the use of the car for private use or as an Uber, thus implying a change in the subscription rules and therefore a new amount to be paid by the subscriber.

Following the same logic exemplifying the scope of subscription relationships' individualization, it is possible to imagine the price calculation algorithm proposing different subscriptions depending on the location of the subscriber's residence. We can anticipate that, in given geographies, when an individual dwells in a neighborhood considered upper class or lower class, we could see pricing tactics and geographical discrimination, that is, charging more where incomes are higher and less where, on average, they are lower (Perzanowski & Schultz, 2016).

A society in which most transactions are built around subscriptions is not only a society that tends to concentrate the wealth in the few but also one in which economic and financial power will be concentrated in a small core of oligopolies that provide the goods and services based on subscription.

The consequence of cloud technologies and the domestication of them that has been carried out is that a large portion of everyday objects are seeing their materiality altered. Examples in which physical materiality is being added to digital materiality include music, lamps, cars, kitchen robots, watches, and locks. When full transition of materiality is not possible, objects are complemented in their functions by sharing information in the form of data, which increases and conditions their functionality and transforms them into objects of hybrid materiality, combining the physical and the digital.

Our daily life is built on the interaction between spatial proximity to screens and spatial distance to data storage and processing on servers, in other words, in the cloud, and the replacement of data's physical proximity with physical distance has become widespread. In this process, we have also changed the way in which we culturally perceive the possession of digital data, whether that be personal communication in the form of the text messages we send, the movies we watch, or the music we listen to.

Therefore, whereas data storage started on local computer drives or by keeping it in close physical proximity and then later moved to USB drives, today the storage of individual data is increasingly shifting to data clouds, which are located remotely, far from our daily places of physical permanence, such as homes, offices, and schools (Ghaffari & Lagzian, 2018).

Communication has always been immaterial since communicating is transmitting an idea to the other (Eco, 2021). However, with the generalization of mediation in its digital form, all content associated with a given physical form, such as films on DVD, music on CD, or books and newspapers on paper, gradually dematerialized, gaining a digital materiality. Dematerialization occurred first in close proximity on computer hard drives and then farther away on cloud servers. In this process, our perception about what it is to have ownership or possess property has also undergone a cultural change.

In a cultural change regarding the perception of the social value of ownership, we moved from the need to associate ownership with seeing and physically touching where data were stored to assuming an ontological security based on a symbolic guarantee. This guarantee is that ownership based on physical proximity is equivalent to ownership in its digital form as long as the data can be accessed somewhere in the world. This shift is the product of a cultural change brought about

by the very nature of communication and the ability to shape it in a mode of networked communication.

Cloud storage and the generalization of its acceptance has created a culture of valuing the cloud, making cloud culture one of the defining characteristics of networked communication. The culture of the network society was also shaped in this process. Digital ease in accessing the cloud has changed the way "having" something is culturally defined. From the association between "having" and ownership of a good or service, "having" something has started to be equated with both ownership and access. This occurred as a result of the social generalization of subscription practices or through relationships not mediated by monetary transactions—such as informal access to music, newspapers, and films.

In recent decades, the shift of the storage of digital content on physical media, located in our homes, to dematerialization and storage of content in an undefined location, on the network in any cloud, has been observed. The cloud, which is assumed to be defined by a distant location, is not defined in advance in terms of our geographical knowledge in the majority of cases. Rather, it is a product of ontological security given by the continued practice of cultural acceptance and by not knowing where what is "ours" is located, whether that be data and goods produced by users, such as texts, spreadsheets, and presentations, or photos and videos. Consequently, in the economic framework of capitalism, we have started to socially allocate similar cultural value to the act of paying to "have" something, or owning it, and paying to have access to something, which we do not own.

The argument presented here is that, by having the material support for communication practices in the cloud, such as streaming, messaging, e-mail, and social networks and social media, cultural perceptions have also changed. In network society, we have witnessed a simultaneous cultural depreciation of the cultural value of ownership and an appreciation of valuing access.

If the digital goods were filed far away but could be accessed at any time, it then came to be perceived as equivalent to either owning the place where the files were stored or paying for access to said place.

Value is given by accessibility. If the accessibility of what is near, such as the hard drive, and what is far away, such as the cloud, is identical, then both become equivalent since what is paid for the ownership of the storage or for access to the storage through a monetary payment or payment in data is understood as having the same cultural value.

Similar reasoning can be applied to the entirety of streaming and subscription since, when monetary value or value in data is perceived as fair for a service or good, or when there is also a cultural perception of equal perceived value, the choice between ownership and access becomes possible in cultural and economic terms.

The logic chain described above is also the basis of the idea, defended by many participants, that they do not commit any illegality when sharing digital goods that they do not have ownership of since, if they can access them, it is because someone makes them available (Castells & Cardoso, 2012). So for them, the access

to such content and the use made of it is equivalent to the fulfillment of an exchange. Accessing an asset is tantamount to making use of the ownership of something.

Legal arguments that disassemble this argumentation can of course be introduced (Perzanowski & Schultz, 2016), but the reality of contemporary communication practices is based on storage on servers in the "cloud," and the practices of those who access services and digital goods in them is also associated with a cloud culture.

The storage, consumption, or fruition of content in the cloud may or may not constitute a legal act, but it is translated into a social practice sanctioned through a shared culture or widespread social acceptance. The culture of access in the cloud sustains so-called piracy as well as the willingness to pay for subscriptions to streaming music, series, and movies (Castells & Cardoso, 2012; Perzanowski & Schultz, 2016; Colbjørnsen, 2021).

The fact that the possession of a good or service is no longer directly associated with its ownership also has a direct influence on the functioning of the contemporary capitalist model since, in the industrial model of development, capitalism was centered on a consumerism openly linked to the promotion of ownership of property, deeds to homes, and even the goods of daily life (Castells, 2002; Rubin & Klumpp, 2012; Perzanowski & Schultz, 2016).

Informational capitalism is based on the creation of value through the datafication of communication. It promotes consumption based on the subscription to access without abandoning the dynamics of property ownership.

In the network society, we are thus seeing the promotion of capitalism that reinterprets the social adoption of a cloud culture, one that becomes a promoter of economic and cultural equivalence between the perceived benefits of access and ownership.

Informational capitalism could be labeled as "Netflix capitalism." It is a capitalism that seeks a generalization of the subscription model widely associated with cultural consumption practices on the basis of use of the Netflix platform as a paradigmatic example of a business model generalizable to every economic domain. This is an informational capitalism that seeks to extend to all areas of consumption, including the use of cars, houses, and other goods and services via the implementation of subscription models. This new evolution of informational capitalism replaces the centrality of permanent ownership for that of access to goods and services by ascribing it an identically socially shared value.

This is a trend that was already present before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the pandemic itself has prolonged its applicability by extending mediation to multiple other areas, from work to school, thus promoting a greater generalization of the acceptance of a culture of access to the cloud as both a cultural dimension that characterizes the everyday life lived in the network society and the product of networked communication.

Cloud access thus refers to the practices of access, consumption, and fruition of goods and services having digital or hybrid materiality, with storage and/or processing on servers in the cloud, and promotes a consistent cultural change in the

perception and cultural valuation of access, seeking to make it socially equivalent to the social representations of ownership.

Cloud access cultures thus give rise to an increase in use of the subscription model. This refers to the socially shared practice of utilizing services and material goods through their association with a business model that promotes the replacement of their permanent ownership with temporary access, employing the cultural perception of equivalence between ownership and access in the representation of their social value for economic purposes.

The alteration of our communicative representations is imbued with an ability to influence all human activities since all human action is, in some way, communication. Hence, a change in communication practices drives cultural changes with the possibility of exerting influence on multiple spheres of production, power, and experience in our daily lives.

Communication has a transformative dimension in the cultural characteristics of economic, political, and social relationships and is therefore a mobilizing force for the transformation of any dominant culture in a given historical context.

Mediatized culture

By adopting a sociosemiotic approach to mediation, a broad understanding of communication as mediation is obtained. Thus, it is possible to understand communication as a culture-producing circuit (Eco, 1994; Hepp, 2013; Oliveira, 2017).

If, as Hepp (2013) says, "culture" is understood as the sum of the different discursive formations and classification systems that produce meaning in everyday life, then it must also be accepted that culture is not just a product of the process of discourse formation or of the relationships between symbols and their meaning that give rise to classifications because, in a given social and historical context, it also depends on the representations that Subjects create regarding what they believe to be the unifying element in the culture of their everyday life.

Such representations regarding what is culturally unifying are created through communication. As such, regardless of what the theoretical hypothesis for the definition of the unique characteristics of a given culture is, the social perception of culture is constructed through communicative interaction. This interaction always tends to highlight a single characteristic and its shared social understanding to the detriment of others that are equally important.

An example of the role played by social representations in highlighting and defining one characteristic of culture, to the detriment of all others, can be found in the case of industrial societies and their mass culture.

Adorno and Horkheimer (2002) described the theoretical existence of a mass culture, characteristic of industrial societies, that was based on the diffusion of standardized and serial cultural products, thus replicating the dynamics of industrialization at the level of culture, industrializing it to shape a cultural industry. The cultural industry would thus be based on the constant reproduction of the same

genre, narrative, or staging of cultural goods. Innovation in cultural goods was achieved through the variation of predefined standards.

Mass culture is the designation that was proposed theoretically and which, although intensely discussed, was socially accepted. This is a cultural characteristic of a capitalist system of production, and the result of cultural production is materialized in cultural goods that assume the role of goods or merchandise, thus creating a cultural market and, consequently, a cultural consumption based on the standardization of products and forms of mediation, as well as on individual fruition (Miiller-Doohm, 2008; Hesmonghdalh, 2007; Hepp 2013; Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002).

The association of an industrial dynamic with the cultural organization and standardization of production, mediation, fruition, and even innovation processes thus institutionalized a cultural system that acted as a filter, giving rise to a standardized mass culture.

The conceptualization of mass culture is also constructed on the basis of opposition to other definitions of culture that precede it historically, in other words, the concepts of cultured or cultivated culture and popular culture.

However, although all the previous dimensions of culture characterization expressed here allowed, at the time of their operationalization, for the explanation, characterization, and clarification of what distinguished a given approach to culture in a given historical framework, the evolution of societies and their organizational models have made their empirical use and, consequently, their explanatory capacity difficult to operationalize.

This difficulty is rooted both in the social transformation of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as well as in the growing conceptual illusiveness of the terms used for their classification when confronted with the cultural reality of contemporary societies (Castells, 2002).

The concepts of cultured or cultivated, popular, and mass summon up an opposition between the high cultural capital associated with a "cultured" or "cultivated" culture, practiced by a small number of individuals, and the acceptance of cultural goods by a larger number, usually associated with popular culture and the homogenization of goods to be able to achieve broad acceptance.

Everything thus seems to revolve around a dialectic between a culture that can only be characterized by the oppositions between the large number of those accessing culture and those with a large cultural capital.

The combination of the two characteristics tends to be presented as non-compliant. However, this is an elusive incompatibility because, first of all, if popular culture is considered to be the set of practices, beliefs, and objects that incorporate the most widely shared meanings of a given society, then what types of goods and forms express it would also have to be defined. Therefore, not only would an exhaustive listing of forms of cultural expression that contain mediated content surely have to be included, but said list would also have to include the multiple practices of entertainment, leisure, fashion, and trends of highly diverse styles in different dimensions of everyday life, even branching out to include linguistic conventions, etc. (Parker, 2011).

This list would be so vast that there would undoubtedly be inconsistencies, namely when introducing that which distinguishes popular culture from cultured or cultivated culture. If the view that a popular culture would imply not being recognized in advance by any elite, "elite" being the term usually applied in reference to a small number of people as opposed to the masses, is adopted, then a first demonstration of the limit of an approach rooted in the number of people or goods in differentiating the uniqueness of the culture of a given type of society would be seen. This is because, if the distinction is centered on a small number of individuals, it would prevent popular culture from being considered the dominant culture of minorities, whether they be ethnic, social, religious, etc. Hence, the idea of cultured or cultivated culture has to be associated with itself and not only with a small number of individuals, as well as with the idea of cultural dominance of the many by a small group such as the elite (Parker, 2011).

The meanings of both dominance and small numbers do not find empirical adherence in the analysis of contemporary developments in the sphere of culture, namely because the production and the cultural consumption of goods coming from mass media and from new spheres of mediation coexist, thus taking on both traditional organizational models of a business or cooperative nature and models centered on the individualization articulated in a network that give rise to unpredictable results.

In the formation of contemporary culture, the coexistence of large organizations producing not only for multiple small market niches on a global scale but also for the global consumption of few cultural goods through the extreme use of blockbusters in cinema or streaming is seen. At the same time, we see isolated individuals making content for the masses using platforms such as YouTube, along with the cultural production from elites being consumed by the masses and mass products being consumed by elites (Jenkins, 2004; Oliveira, 2017).

Trying to produce a critique either of the idea of mass culture, popular culture, or cultured or cultivated culture, Jenkins (2004) suggests that perhaps the cultural singularity of the network society could be captured by the concept of a culture of convergence, a culture in which all opposites come together, creating the space for the intersection of all cultural forms, their audiences, and producers, and thus breaking down the separations between the quantitative of the masses and the elite or of high cultural capital and low cultural capital (Jenkins, 2004; Hesmondhalgh, 2007).

The idea of a culture of convergence arises from the realization that the traditional approach given to the role of convergence, based on the emergence of new technologies in which the media would increasingly converge, is not supported empirically (Cardoso, 2006). Instead of technological convergence based on the production of new technological patterns, new patterns of cultural production and consumption that, in turn, foster a culture of convergence are being observed (Jenkins, 2004).

Another critical approach to the explanatory capacity of a theorization of culture rooted in the quantitative of number and type of cultural goods or number of producers or recipients of a cultural good is given by Oliveira (2017). For this

author, the critical argument of mass culture is rooted in the idea that, with the emergence of television, the communicative phenomenon had become independent of the cultural phenomenon for the first time in history (Oliveira, 2017) since, if in the historical context of cinema and radio as present in everyday life, the theorization of culture as a mass culture was established, then with the emergence of television, public discussion tended to move away from the existence of an elite culture, popular culture, or mass culture, focusing on the need to understand whether the phenomenon of television created a phenomenon of television culture (Oliveira, 2017).

For Oliveira (2017), in societies of the late twentieth century, the discussion focused on the idea of cultural uniqueness given by the existence, or lack of, of a television culture capable of influencing various dimensions of the social, the economic, and the political, to the point of being able to constitute itself as a distinctive element of the culture of our societies.

Similar questioning can be found in Castells' (2001) analysis, this time on the role of cultural distinctiveness associated with the Internet. Castells (2001) analyzes and questions the culture of the Internet and its singularity in the cultural distinction of our societies.

Both in industrial society and in the network society, one of the curious effects most achieved by the mass media, and later by the Internet, was to subvert the existence of a mass audience, dividing it and constituting specific audience segments (Oliveira, 2017; Castells, 2001).

Even before the spread of the Internet, a multiplicity of television channels, publications, and radio stations were already in existence. This led to the emergence of mass media, imagined publics, and concrete audiences that were increasingly segmented, albeit within the framework of a communication and culture still designated as of the masses (Eco, 1994, 2001; Oliveira, 2017; Castells, 2002).

The evolution to hyper-segmentation, within the framework of, first, mass communication and, then, networked communication, has created an erosion of the explanatory capacity of the concept of mass culture, namely in its conceptual capacity both to continue to grasp the unique characteristics of the culture of our societies and to be able to capture and maintain the social imaginary of what culture is in the network society.

Although the emergence of television and the Internet has contributed to the erosion of the concept of mass culture, Internet culture (Castells, 2001) is not the culture of network society, nor was the culture of television the culture of industrial society (Eco, 2001; Oliveira, 2017).

Television in mass-media communication, while it can create shared social representations of what is distinctive in a culture, does not create cultures; rather, it limits itself to spreading cultural models to segments of the population, creating novelty among those who, until now, did not have access to them (Eco, 2001).

If there is one trait of the novelty associated with television and Internet cultures, it is that they have promoted socially shared representations that are no longer dependent on the traditional opposition between "cultured or cultivated culture" and "popular culture."

Society has moved from a mass culture associated with a social structure based on a small number of mass-media entities that produced and distributed messages to become a hyper-segmented social and media structure. As a consequence, culture, traditionally interpreted as an integrating system of the symbolic structures of regions or of a national whole, has suffered a disturbing imbalance in its encompassing dynamics.

In the final decades of the twentieth century and the first decades of the twenty-first century, we have witnessed the emergence of the affirmation of a new dialectic within culture, no longer rooted in the opposition between "cultured or cultivated culture" and "popular culture" but rather the dialectic at the origin of the formation of the concept of mass culture. The new opposition has moved its center to the cultural dialectics to be established between "mediatic culture" versus "cultivated culture" (Oliveira, 2017).

Mediatic culture can be defined as a product of the conversion of culture into information, as well as the transformation of information into industrial and commercial merchandise (Miége, 1997; 2000; Oliveira, 2017). The raw material of mediatic culture is the information that shapes what happens in the moment or that a number of people understand to be of interest to them. Mediatic culture are formed from the materialization of information in the news, in the commentary provided by mass media, and in the opinions expressed in the spaces of mediation on the web and on social networks and social media. Mediatic culture are thus cultures that produce social agenda setting and shape the space of competition for attention. This comes from different agendas in search of people's attention, seeking the construction of opinion and the creation of audiences in the attention market, regardless of the mediation space where they develop (Shaw & McCombs, 1972).

In turn, cultivated culture, or culture-diffusing cultures, are based on the pursuit to create communication and not just information. The raw material of culture-diffusing cultures, or cultivated culture, is cultural and communicative products, dissociated from the market of opinion building, audiences, or reach (Oliveira, 2017). Cultivated culture, or culture-diffusing cultures, are centered on communication since it is that which encourages the diffusion of culture through the participant's recognition of information. If the participant does not recognize the information received, there can be no dissemination or creation of culture.

Recognition, as an objective of the communicative process, presupposes, in turn, the sharing of a common perception of what happens, how it happens, and why it happens. The greater the dispersion in a complex and diffuse sociocultural context, the product of high social differentiation and stratification, the lower the possibility of recognition and, consequently, communicating, promoting the diffusion of culture (Oliveira, 2017).

The opposition between mediatic culture and cultivated culture lies precisely in the fact that the former place greater value on information and the latter on communication.

Television and Internet cultures have imprinted a new social and cultural order (Castells, 2002; Oliveira, 2017). They did so by first acting on a mass culture based on a dichotomy between popular culture and cultured culture and then by

allowing a multiplicity of mediatic culture and culture-diffusing cultures coexisting at the same historical time.

The fragmentation of supply described here in the traditional media—newspapers, radio, and television—further widened with the emergence of the Internet, rapidly multiplying the mediation entities present in "500 television channels" and continuing to an entity of "500 million apps" or billions of web pages, or of a "Facebook country" and other social media platforms (Castells, 2001).

Given the radicalization of channel segmentation and the transformation of experience associated with the mediation introduced by networked communication, does it still make sense to argue that culture-diffusing cultures and mediatic culture might describe the cultural singularity of everyday life in the network society?

Returning to the analysis of Jenkins (2004), a proposal of a culture based in convergence, is a product of different cultures of practices and also carries within it a set of opposites. The culture of convergence is a theoretical definition that is the product of the opposition between the dynamics promoted by the inheriting organizations of mediatic culture that originate from a context of mass communication, and those associated with the possibilities offered by the platforms, thus exploring the possibilities of the intersection between cultivated culture, or culture-diffusing cultures, and mediatic culture (Castells, 2001; Oliveira, 2017).

The culture of convergence (Jenkins, 2004) can thus be understood only as another possible theorization of contemporary culture. However, it has in itself the same contradictions that were already manifested before the generalization of networked communication but that, with this, became more extreme. Given its characteristics, the concept of a culture of convergence (Jenkins, 2004) constitutes, to a large extent, a possible characterization of new cultural dialectics. However, when trying to point out the distinctive cultural singularity of the network society, it still presents itself as the inheritor of a mass culture, thus illustrating only the radicalization of the fragmentation process already present in late mass culture. However, this still cannot identify a singularity that is sufficiently distinctive to definitively challenge the cultural reproduction capacity of mass culture (Eco, 1994).

The social generalization of any concept of "culture," as a lens through which a given society is understood, does not result solely from the explanatory capacity of a proposed theorization. Rather, the concept has to have the ability to reproduce in the individual imaginary an explanation compatible with the very representations of the Subject in the face of their lifeworld (Habermas, 1989; 1998; Thompson, 2012).

A scientifically produced concept only becomes a socially transmittable concept when it meets a set of individual perceptions about what gives meaning and purpose to the everyday life of individuals. The concept of mass culture, although previously defined theoretically (Adorno & Horkeimer, 2002), only gained breadth and recognition when it managed to be perceived as portraying individuals' own perceptions of what culture was. This only happened when the individual experience came to be formed, to a large extent, via mass communication in the everyday life of individuals. The concept of mass culture was thus socially fed by

the individual perception of the role of mass communication, represented by television, newspapers, and radio, in the daily lives of individuals. To be socially accepted, a social theory must be compatible with the everyday life experience of individuals.

The theorization of mass culture and the generalization of the understanding of its capacity to produce meaning and purpose, in the explanation of what is unique to twentieth-century culture, are fundamentally connected with the dissemination of mass media and its growing presence in everyday life for the majority of the population. This dissemination made it possible to associate "culture" in the social imaginary with the fruition of the mass media, as well as the abandonment of the exclusivity of school, books, and places of knowledge such as libraries, as a material illustration of the condition for the formation of a given culture. Thus, culture no longer became only associated with given spaces, such as theaters, cinemas, or museums; it was also understood as being present in the space of the house through the television screen, the daily communication of the press on the streets, listening to the radio, or going to the movies.

Mass culture is the result of the association of the concept of culture with mediation and standardization, making mediation and standardization part of everyday life. The culture described as being of the masses came to be perceived of by society in general as the culture of everyday life. Thus, it came to be understood as synonymous with widespread access to standardized cultural goods through mediation.

The concept of mass culture thus provided the definition of the space where the identity of each individual was built during the period of industrial social organization of the twentieth century.

Although the theoretical concept of mass culture drew attention to the role of mediation in the institutionalization of a cultural industry, the processes of reification around mass culture made the social perception of the population of industrial societies closer to the idea that what characterized everyday culture was a massification of access to cultural goods, typified in a given set of genres or narratives. The social construct of the concept of culture in industrial societies focused essentially on its mass dimension and standardization.

In turn, in industrial societies, mediation was only socially seen as the process through which the reach of distribution of cultural goods was shaped, as well as the process through which genres and narratives were shaped via the industrial dimension.

However, this was not a novelty arising from industrial society. Since the beginning of the modern era, a set of technical innovations in production and distribution, namely the press, had initiated a cultural transformation in terms of communication and interaction patterns, giving rise to a "mediazation of culture" (Thompson, 1995).

The social perception of singularity in the culture of industrial societies was thus not centered on mediation precisely because the processes of electrification in the codification of information regarding symbols offered by cinema, television, and radio were socially perceived as part of a given historical continuity initiated

by the written press. The cultural singularity of mass culture was based on the supply of cultural goods in a massified and decontextualized way, both temporally and spatially (Thompson, 1995).

The search to identify the singularity of the culture of contemporary network societies led, for example, to the suggestion that it is a culture of real virtuality (Castells, 2002), a culture whose singularity would lie in no longer being based on the construction of reality but on the virtualization of reality through mediation's different formats (Castells, 2002).

Contrary to what happened with the theorization around the concept of mass culture, there is still no broad theoretical consensus on what makes the culture of our time unique. However, what can be stated with some certainty is that this trait of perceived social singularity will not be the same as was socially appropriate for mass culture (Hepp, 2013).

From the point of view of theoretical and empirical analysis, there are different positions on the possibility of capturing cultural uniqueness in the context of a given society. For example, authors such as Hepp (2013) think that it is only possible to ascertain the existence of a plurality of different cultures that develop within the framework of mediation, and not any unitary logic between them. Hence, Hepp (2013) suggest, with cultures of mediatization, the use of the plural to characterize the culture of network society, namely because the use of the singular "culture" refers to the search for a concept that Hepp (2013) does not consider to be definable. This is because, from an empirical point of view, there is always a plurality of cultures producing a multitude of everyday life meanings (Hepp, 2013).

For Hepp (2013), there is no one "culture of mediatization" but rather many "cultures of mediatization," cultures whose main resources are mediated through the technical means of mediation. Thus, there are social, economic, and political manifestations resulting from mediatization. Everyday life, characterized by the profusion of this type of culture, is shaped by mediation.

Contemporary mediatization is manifested in all forms of the culture of everyday life, from popular culture to politics and religious worship and from national cultures to diasporas. Hence, it is difficult to approach it in the search for any form of unitary characterization, as it is too varied and diversified (Hepp, 2013).

However, the concept of cultures of mediatization does not appear as a closed theory. On the contrary, it seeks to emphasize the need to promote an empirically founded and critical theorization of the way our cultures are changing with the advance of mediatization (Hepp, 2013).

In the search for a definition of cultural singularity that has arisen as a product of networked communication, transforming the former mass culture into a new cultural paradigm, it is important to remember that the defining feature of a culture is always its ability to reproduce itself through a stable framework of references capable of producing meaning and widespread acceptance (Eco, 1994).

The search for traits of cultural uniqueness in contemporary societies should not focus solely on trying to empirically determine where and how the cultural dimension of the shaping of the media is superimposed over any other. The diversity of communicative forms and appropriations of mediation, as well as their

consequent manifestations of mediatization, makes this impossible, both today and in the past.

In fact, empirically we should not solely accept the existence of a plurality of cultures of mediatization, as historically we should also point to the need to stress the existence of cultures of mass communication in diversity and plurality along with the historical existence of a theory of "mass culture" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002), which, as a concept, captured the traits of singularity of the culture of industrial societies through a focus on the standardization of genres, narratives, and mass production.

The fundamental question that should guide the search for the traits of singularity of the culture of a network and informational society should therefore be similar to that which guided the process of interrogation and explanatory hypotheses in the framework of industrial society.

The question is whether it is possible to seek its existence in the social perception of the population in the face of what is considered to be unique in the culture of their time instead of trying to seek unique traits of a culture in the cultural content itself. This would allow us to put forward a hypothesis with broad social acceptance regarding what the culture of network society is.

To this end, it is important to turn to the search for understanding of the functioning of reification processes active in the sphere of cultural formation in our societies, in this way trying to answer how communication itself works in cultural production and what socially perceived characteristics arise.

If we consider our communication to be a networked communication, it would no longer be possible to explain any central concept for the characterization of what is unique in the culture produced in the network society only on the basis of a single form of mediation. To capture the uniqueness of culture in the network society, it is necessary to search for it in the totality of its networked mediation forms (Hepp, 2013; Oliveira, 2017).

On the one hand, there is an empirically and theoretically based perception that it is no longer possible to characterize the culture of our everyday life as a mass culture. If, on the other hand, the multiplicity of mediatization cultures is assumed as the product of the influence of mediation on social, economic, political, and cultural everyday life, then it is possible to hypothesize that the manifestation of multiple forms of culture has precisely the processes of mediation in common. It is thus possible to argue that the unique trait of our culture is the socially disseminated perception of the role of mediation in our everyday life.

Contemporary cultural production is ultimately possible because there is mediation. Mediation shapes the mediatization that manifests itself socially, economically, and politically, producing a specific type of culture.

Likewise, just as the lifeworld is socially perceived as a world experienced in a network and the Subject as a mediated Subject, mediation is that which facilitates the exercise of autonomy. There is also the socially shared perception that everyday life is immersed in mediation. This implies that culture is formed in this immersion in the screens and through their domestication. Consequently, the unique trait, socially attributed to contemporary culture, is that of being a "mediatized culture."

A mediatized culture is a culture that is produced by mediated communication and that has an influence on the production of mediatized relations in all spheres of everyday life.

While, in industrial society, mass culture was socially perceived as centered on the singularity of massification and standardization, relegating mediation to a typically instrumental dimension, in the network society, the unique cultural trait arises in the individual but socially shared perception that we experience an everyday life immersed in mediation, whose influence results in social, economic, political, and, consequently, cultural mediatization.

What, then, differentiates a mediatized culture from a mass culture? Firstly, mass culture is associated with mass communication within the framework of a mass society, the product of a model of industrial development, while a mediatized culture is associated with networked communication, the product of an informational development model of network society.

In a society based on an industrial model of development, the institutions of the media system, both those associated with production as well as those with all other forms of social appropriation, are shaped and organized according to the same principles. The common economic objective is to increase productivity through the use of more energy inputs to reach larger markets and with lower costs (Castells, 2002).

In an industrial society in which individuals are connected to each other through communication and, at the same time, are dispersed and spatially disconnected from each other, the media and communication systems also seek to reach the greatest number of individuals following industrial strategies (Lang & Lang, 2009).

If we distinguish between ideological connotations and the analytical use of the term “mass,” it is possible to focus on the more general and persistent effects of mass communication, namely, expanding the range of experience, an effect amplified by the ubiquity of the mass media (Lang & Lang, 2009).

Historically, in opposition to the definition of mass culture, we can find a culture requiring a time-consuming and comprehensive process of individual investment in obtaining cultural capital. This culture was characterized as a bearer of rich and subtle meanings and was not concurrent with the fruition occurring in a market framework.

Mass culture, the product of a mass-organized society, is a culture based on mass communication, in which one seeks to reach the largest number of recipients. From an economic perspective, mass culture is associated with a culture that can be enjoyed by the masses, that is, by large numbers, constituting an enlarged market. Hence, mass culture has often been connoted with the meaning of popular culture. As such, it is imbued with perpetuity and associated with the creation of a public capable of giving rise to large-scale audiences.

The novelty of mass culture, compared with previous cultural models, first resulted from not being a direct expression of people’s everyday life, and therefore being different from the concept of popular culture (Van Zoonen, 2007; Parker, 2011).

Unlike popular culture, the content, creations, and performances that constituted mass culture were received from other geographical places. Mass culture was based on a decontextualized space. Therefore, it had, and still has, a time and space lag in its production and distribution (Thompson, 1995; 2005a).

Secondly, mass culture was the result of the goal of building broad audiences, shared by creators and distributors of content to achieve economic viability obtained by the return on investment in a film, program, publication, disc, or book (Hesmondhalgh, 2007).

Mediatized culture has both similarities to and differences from mass culture since, just as networked communication is established by combining previous communication models and transforming them through mediation, mediatized culture is also the product of the articulation between the practices present in mass culture, associated with mass communication and popular culture practices, thus also allowing for the direct expression of people's everyday life in their cultural construction, namely through mass self-communication (Castells, 2012), reciprocal mediated communication (Hepp, 2013), and mediated one-to-many communication.

Mediatized culture produces an intensification of the characteristics of mass culture through the creation of information markets via hyper-segmentation on a global scale, permitted by the web, social networks, and social media, and in the process originating mediatic culture (Oliveira, 2017). Simultaneously, mediatized culture also allows for the quasi-suppression of the temporal and spatial lags in production, as well as the distribution of content, creations, and performances promoting culture-diffusing cultures that are the product of communication and recognition (Oliveira, 2017).

If the main features of mass culture can be described as based on the mediated diffusion of forms and content not derived from practices associated with tradition, then, as such, they are intended for mass consumption, formulated and mass produced, and homogenized and commercial (Mcquail & Deuze, 2020). In turn, the features of a mediatized culture can be found in a mediation that adopts a cultural syncretism, one that promotes the diffusion of formats and content, from the oldest to the most recent traditions and combining these formats and content with a permanent experimentation, hybridization, and remixing, promoting a range of consumption types that encompass a space ranging from massified to hyper-segmented. Mediatized culture's cultural content is formulated and produced by participating individuals and organizations in a logic of convergence (Jenkins, 2004), between homogenization and individualization and combining commercial objectives with personal and group autonomy objectives, able to give rise to a multiplication of mediatized cultures (Hepp, 2013).

Mediatized culture is thus based on the cultural values of open production and valuing access rather than ownership in consumption, in addition to an individualized authenticity in fruition.

The distinctivity associated with mediatized culture lies in the social perception of the role played by mediation in everyday life. Mediation is no longer understood solely as an instrument associated with the creation of television, radio,

cinema, books, and newspapers markets; rather, it has become a defining characteristic of communication and culture in and of itself. This is due to the fact that mediation has been extended to all spheres of communication and, in so doing, has achieved omnipresence in all spheres of everyday life. In the network society, people are participants in mediated communication, and by participating, shape culture and their own individual, but socially shared, representations of what culture is—a mediatized culture—because people value mediation.

Networked communication promotes its own dynamics of informational productivity, a form of networked organization of mediation, and a consensus on the representations associated with the social valuation of access, openness, and individualization of authenticity. There is a consensus surrounding these three dimensions in the form of social valuation through the ability to produce a framework of knowledge, beliefs, moral codes, and shared customs, and even to shape the law, configuring a change in our individual and social representations.

Mediatized culture, as mass culture before it, is culturally capable of including everything and everyone, thus contributing to its self-perpetuation (Eco, 1994). As Eco (1994) reflects, for a culture to emerge and survive, said culture must be able to recognize and criticize itself. It is assumed, therefore, that the emergence of a new culture and its broader social acceptance is associated not only with the emergence of new forms of cultural distribution but also with new ways of communicating the defining traits of this culture, which allow them to be socially reproduced.

In the cultural model proposed by Eco (1994), culture is transformed through criticism of the previous dominant cultural model and critical recognition of the emergence of a counterculture, thus establishing itself as a culture that can replace the previous dominant culture. However, the idea of dominant culture has no relation here to any cultural elite but rather with the fact that social representations, which give meaning to everyday life, share a certain dominant vision, which in turn will also be replaced in a new cycle of social affirmation at some point in the future.

The emergence of a new culture depends on the social recognition of a given counterculture. This counterculture, which can only assume centrality in substitution when those who transform the culture in which they live also become consciously critical of what they are doing, crafts a theory of deviation from the current dominant cultural model and thus offers a model that can become self-sustaining (Eco, 1994).

The hypothesis put forward here is that we are facing a new dominant model: mediatized culture. Mediatized culture first emerged as a counterculture with the diffusion of mediation offered by the Internet and has slowly asserted itself as a potential substitute for the previous mass culture. Mediatized culture positioned itself as a challenger of mass culture through the dissemination of networked communication practices that have called into question the communicative hegemony of mass communication through the slow social erosion of the validity of the concept of mass culture as an explanation of cultural construction in everyday life.

Mediatized culture is the product of a society in which networked organization dominates the practices, and in which our everyday life is immersed in mediation and the intersection of old and new forms of mediation takes place.

Mediatized culture is where the power of the institutional producer and the power of the participant producer interact in unpredictable ways through communication; it is also where the institutional powers of classification, distribution, and mass media production simultaneously oppose and complement the sharing, production, and classification carried out by individual participants in communicative processes.

Mediatized culture is the product of the unpredictability of the communicative power of producers, sharers, and classifiers in the mediation processes, which gives rise to well-defined and distinct cultural traits in distribution, production, and classification from those that shaped the previous mass cultural model.

Mediatized culture is therefore able to offer a self-sustaining and replicable model in which its participants are consciously critical of their practices and before which it is possible to craft a theory of deviation from the previous dominant model.

Mediatized culture can be defined as a syncretic culture that is the product of the action of individual Subjects, as well as of organizations, disseminating culture in different ways, through networked communication in a framework of a mediated everyday life, valuing the convergence between mediatic, cultivated, and phatic content, and based on a permanent reappropriation of themes and symbols of different cultures.

Mediatized culture is constituted as a semiosis, a process of signification and production of meanings, both in the sphere of information and its market as well as in cultural and communicational goods dissociated from the information market.

Mediatized culture is a culture that seeks, through communication, to achieve recognition that leads to the production of culture and establishes itself as a process of signification shaped by the way the culture of the Internet created the conditions for the characteristics of the communicative process.

Mediatized culture is a product of the way information is produced, its ownership is managed, and its authenticity is negotiated since these are the dimensions that, through cultural diffusion, shape the way we live and understand our everyday life.

Culture is power because culture is always a matter of "producing" meanings. Whoever is unable to define what culture is does not hold power (Hepp, 2013). However, a culture only replaces a previous culture and survives if it has the ability to reproduce itself. This process of reproduction is not free of contradictions and is part of a process of contestation and discussion. However, without these, there can be no cultural reproduction (Hepp, 2013). Ultimately, a culture is affirmed by its ability to superimpose itself on the previous one as an explanatory, socially adopted, and widespread formula as well as by its ability to accept contradictions, disputes, and discussions while maintaining the social acceptance of its singularity; this occurs with mediatized culture.

Mass culture has seen its hegemony and reproductive capacity challenged by the social appropriation of mediation by individual participants in communication. In this process of contestation and action, a new culture was formed, imbued with the capacity for cultural reproduction. The culture of our societies is associated with the influence of mediation. The Subject is a mediated Subject, societies are organized in a network by mediation, and everyday communication is networked in mediation. In this way, a mediatized culture is generated from such processes.

Conclusion: The Communication of Communication

The conclusion of a book is an attempt to communicate the best possible synthesis of its content and arguments. In the case of a book about communication, it is expected that the conclusion will also be able to communicate information with its reader so that, through the ideas set forth, recognition and, consequently, culture, will be produced. In this attempt, the conclusion has taken as its title the very transversal concept that encompasses the whole book: the communication of communication.

The "communication of communication" is a concept that seeks to translate the type of communication that characterizes networked communication and the mediatized culture it promotes.

The communication of communication is thus the practice that defines our communication, the practice that is, simultaneously, most common and most distinctive of our contemporary way of communicating in networked communication.

In networked communication, most participants communicate by commenting on each other's communication or simply sharing it. In this communication process, these actions may change the meaning or form of the message received from others.

The propensity to change the message received by commenting on it or remixing it occurs because we are trying to achieve our goals of autonomy through the following of the rules of our communication, which promote the search for the greatest possible reach for our messages, creating virality in the group, network, or medium in which we communicate.

The communication of communication is largely shaped according to the rules that are established by the algorithms of social networking, social media, search engines, generative AI, and messaging platforms, but also by the gatekeeping of mass media journalism and entertainment editorial choices.

Individuals, organized groups of individuals, mass media, and platforms are the main actors in the communication of communication. They define and operate the sharing of messages and the interaction that defines the viral potential of communicative sharing.

The interactions of the communication of communication are all those that can be associated with the sharing of content, including views, likes, emoticons, comments, etc.

The communication of communication can be synthesized as the act of sharing something in a screen-mediated environment. This mediation occurs on social networks or social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, X/Twitter, and so on. The content of this sharing may have been originally created by participants themselves or could be the remixing of something already previously shared by a given mass-media brand or by any other individual or organization. The mediated sharing of something produced by us or by others via a screen defines what the practice of the communication of communication is.

We communicate, share, and comment on content on mass self-communication platforms such as Instagram, X/Twitter, or YouTube; on reciprocal mediated communication messaging platforms such as WhatsApp or Telegram; or on social networking platforms where one-to-many mediated communication predominates. On all these platforms, both anonymous participants and journalists participate in networked communication.

Journalism today operates according to the same principles of communication of communication under networked communication since it keeps producing news in the mass media, but it also does so having as sources what has previously been shared by individuals or organizations in the different forms of mediation available. After the news is broadcast in the media or published online, the journalist expects and intends that it might be shared again on social networks and social media, thus giving rise to a permanent circuit of communication of communication.

Sharing by remixing (or not remixing) the content, but always sharing something, such as news or any other type of content, constitutes the contemporary communicative circuit, which is powered by the widespread practices of the communication of communication.

What will be shared through the communication of communication is always unpredictable. It may be a photo, a video, an audio, a text, the combination of all of these, or just some of them.

In turn, such a publication may be an original creation or originate from a photo, a video recording, an audio published by a third party, or simply a comment on what others have already shared. This comment may, for example, focus on news published by a newspaper, thus changing the readable context of the meaning of that news item when shared.

The communication of communication may, for example, be the viral sharing of a meme featuring a politician or movie actor, or the manipulation of a text, sound, or video of a recording of another person for clear purposes of disinformation. All of this can be considered to be the communication of communication.

Both the monetization of audiences by advertising and the exercise of contemporary politics depend on the adoption of such practices of the communication of communication.

In societies such as ours that are organized around networked mediation, when politicians want to be news but do not want to have to talk to a journalist, they

use X/Twitter to make their Tweet become news. In the context of our communication, a politician not talking to journalists and instead publishing a Tweet signifies the adoption of journalistic disintermediation practices under a frame of communicative populism. However, this might simultaneously constitute the best way to obtain a news story, paradoxically making their message even more viral.

The politician understands that, thanks to the communication of communication, they no longer need to organize a rally or meeting to justify a live television broadcast on which they will make statements; tweeting it is enough. The politician does this because they know that this will give more reach to their message since it will give rise to a news story, with or without their statements regarding the original Tweet being collected by a journalist. In turn, this news story will be broadcast on a television channel; rebroadcast on other television channels; published on the web and on the Facebook pages of television stations, radio stations, and newspapers; and then finally return once again to X/Twitter and other social networks and social media. In this way, the news story obtains 360º mediatized exposure and, in the process, a viral impulse. By adopting the practices of the communication of communication, the politician bypasses the journalistic mediation of the media, thus creating their own narrative in order to obtain a desired virality.

The communication of communication is thus the most common feature of our networked communication, one that would not be possible in mass communication. The communication of communication signals the existence of a new mode of communication in our network society.

This new mode of communication is networked communication. The mode of communication of the informational and network society has its distinctiveness in three characteristics, the first being that it is defined as being based on communicational syncretism. This results from the possibility of combining previous modes of communication with each other or modifying them to constitute a new mediated mode of communication, giving rise to a potential network of communication flows.

The second defining characteristic of the mode of networked communication is the provision of a multiform mediation, which allows for the articulation of all the different forms and shapes of mediation that are available in a single digital network and that assume variable geometries, that is, choosing how to reach our communicative objectives.

The third characteristic of the mode of networked communication is the possibility of individualized switching of the message flows. This is the characteristic that allows the participants in communication to make constant choices and rearrangements between senders and receivers, that is, deciding who to reach.

Networked communication allows the sender and receiver to reach the number of individuals that they want, whether it be few or many, in real or deferred time, or in close or distant spaces, utilizing, for this purpose, the available and mutually combinable mediation processes of mass self-communication (Castells, 2012), reciprocal mediated communication (Hepp, 2013), mass communication (Thompson, 1995), one-to-many mediated communication, or closed algorithmic communication. All of this can be seen in the different combinations intended and negotiated between senders and receivers.

The multiplication of mediation forms and the profusion of different ways of communicating have shaped the way we communicate and produced a new mode of networked communication, which, in turn, created the widespread social perception of the existence of a distinctive element of our contemporary culture: a mediatized culture.

The social appropriation of networked communication and the consequent formation of a mediatized culture promoted the emergence of a mediated Subject, one who identifies themselves as a constituent part of a networked humanity, thus giving rise to a new communicative paradigm.

A paradigm can be defined as a model of something, as a very clear and typical example, or even as a set of theories that explain how a given object of analysis is understood at a given time.

The rationale for choosing paradigmatic examples is always a product of a specific way of seeing reality. It also known that this view and the status of the singularity of the chosen example tend to reinforce each other (Kuhn, 2012).

The conviction that the paradigm in use at a given moment is reality tends to disqualify the evidence that can undermine the paradigm itself. In turn, such an attitude leads to an accumulation of anomalies that cannot be reconciled in the face of the current paradigm. It is precisely this phenomenon of the multiplication of anomalies that is responsible for the eventual revolutionary breakdown of the current paradigm and its replacement by a new paradigm.

The notion of the existence of a communicative paradigm thus presupposes the existence of an underlying analytical model of communication and a theory of communication.

As is commonly accepted, the three models most present in the analysis of communication are the linear, interactive, and transactional models. Each one emphasizes different parts of the communicative process (Oliveira, 2017). As already discussed at the beginning of this book, a linear model can be exemplified by the work of Shannon & Weaver (1948) and describes how a sender transmits a message to a receiver. In turn, an interactive model studies the channels through which communication and feedback flow between sender and receiver. Finally, the transactional model understands the Subject as a communicator. This implies thinking of communication as a cooperative transaction in which communicators co-create the process, creating shared meanings.

The sociosemiotic approach to mediation, proposed for the analysis shared here, is based on a transactional analytical model of communication. In this theoretical framework, the theorization of networked communication and the characterization of the communication of communication, as its characteristic singular trait, have been developed in this book.

A communicative paradigm in a sociosemiotic approach to mediation seeks to answer two questions. The first one has to do with how the message flows, and the second, with what shared meanings this same message produces. To this end, we have sought to define a theorization associated with communication practices that responds to what is singular and unique in the way the message is communicated in the network society. Thus, we have sought to design a theory with an

empirical basis, which presents us with a certain way of perceiving, interpreting, and explaining the communicative phenomenon, providing us with a paradigmatic conceptual framework for understanding the social-communicative practices that give meaning to everyday life.

In networked communication, the singularity that shapes the paradigm comes from the fact that, if the message received is not considered the most appropriate by the receiver, it will be contested, deconstructed, reassembled, remixed, re-signified, and shared again. The paradigmatic communicative singularity associated with networked communication is not intended to develop any argument regarding the contextual dimension of communication. The paradigmatic communicative singularity found in networked communication emphasizes the fact that the message, once issued, circulates in the space of mediation in the network, formed by our choices, and while circulating, said message loses any characteristic of immutability in both form and content.

In networked communication, messages may be changed, provided that the mediated Subject considers such change to be necessary for the achievement of their personal or group autonomy objectives. Networked communication fosters the autonomy of the Subject and, in this process, corrodes the traditional centrality of the dialectic between media and message. All media and content available in contemporary societies are potentially digital, thus flowing in a network environment constructed both by technology and by people. They receive the content of the messages but can also produce, authenticate, remix, (re)create, (re)remix, and (re)insert them into the communicative network by sharing them in the network flow in a cycle determined by the transactional dynamics of communication itself.

In networked communication, the choice of a given medium/channel, or the affirmation of content authorship, is no longer sufficient to sustain the message. This is thus a fundamental difference from mass communication (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001; Coleman, 1999).

The element of paradigmatic differentiation of networked communication is thus more centered in the hands of people who communicate than in the medium/channel of communication available or in any unchangeable and uneditable content.

When each participant receives a message, they can comment on it and share it, and they can even change its meaning. For example, by reading a news story in a newspaper and sharing it on Facebook with the addition of a comment contrary to what is suggested by the title or content of the piece, its very nature, or meaning, is changed.

More than half a century ago, McLuhan argued that the medium was the message, constructing a proposal for a communicational paradigm. In so doing, he intended to suggest that any media induced behaviors, created psychological connections, and shaped the receiver's mindset regardless of the content that this medium conveyed.

In practice, McLuhan (2001) established a hierarchy between the medium and the message, or between the form of communication and its content, with this

analysis. On the basis of this hypothesis, McLuhan argued the existence of a subordination of the message to the medium.

This subordination would thus assume the function of a communicational paradigm in the mode of mass communication.

However, over the past few decades, the search for an explanation of what is unique and distinctive in communication has seen other approaches. These attempts emerge as a cumulative manifestation of anomalies not reconciled in the face of the paradigm proposed by McLuhan: that the medium was the message.

Examples of these attempts to go beyond the limits of the communicational paradigm associated with mass communication through their questioning can be identified in Castells' proposals regarding the message being the medium (Rantanen, 2005) or in Eco's proposals regarding the medium preceding the message (Eco, 2001).

However, it should be borne in mind that, in the more than 50 years since McLuhan's work was published, it has received multiple and fair criticisms (Eco, 2018c; 2018d). Thus, it can be argued that it produced a possible description of the communicational paradigm associated with mass communication.

However, the fact that McLuhan set aside the contributions of sociology of communication and semiotics prevented him from incorporating a sociosemiotic perspective of mediation into his analysis of the communicational paradigm of mass communication, a choice that limited his ability to produce an explanatory theory of communication as a total phenomenon (Oliveira, 2017).

In the current mode of networked communication, the appropriation of the message emancipated itself from the influence of any specific medium, given that almost all communication is mediated on screens and in digital format. The basic idea of the communicational paradigm expressed by McLuhan (2001)—that any single medium induces behaviors, creates psychological connections, and shapes the receiver's mentality—is faced with a new set of limitations, capable of calling into question its dimension as an explanatory paradigm for contemporary communication.

In particular, if all mediated communication is digital and multimedia and if the communication of messages with audiovisual content reaches us simultaneously through all types of screens, then we start to have a single medium, expressed in the articulation between multiple types of screens. If there is a single medium, the result of a network of screens, the distinctive singularity of mass communication being linked to the quality of different medium channels, can no longer be argued. With the creation of a network of mediation screens where digital content flows from node to node of the network, the argument that each medium creates psychological connections and shapes the receiver's mentality differently ceases to have empirical coherence to communicative reality.

In our contemporary communication, almost all media tend to be similar since they all have screens, are digital, and are increasingly based on algorithmic practices or, at the very least, are influenced in their communicative options by algorithmic social representations built on them. Hence, the medium no longer constitutes a distinctive element of the communicative singularity through its shaping of the transmission and reception of the message. Consequently, it no longer constitutes a viable paradigm in its explanatory function.

Our communication no longer resides in the Global Village (McLuhan & Powers, 1989), because communication is no longer perceived as solely a means to knowing everything that is happening in the world. Communication is increasingly perceived as what allows us to experience what is happening—as if the cameras and screens of others could replace our physical presence in such a space, allowing us to experience it through a Global WYSIWYG.

In computing, WYSIWYG is an acronym for "What You See Is What You Get,". In communication, if theoretically all participants can produce a film or photograph and share it on the network, it is possible to imagine that one can ideally access a "copy" of reality through the sum of all the available mediation. Ideally, if one is able to access a large quantity of content, it is possible to imagine equating such access to the experience of being there in first person, as if the experience built on the space of places could be simulated through the space of flows (Castells, 2002).

Although it is true that the dominance of mass-media brands in communication has been replaced with a dominance shared between them and the platforms and that, therefore, the holders of the channels remain few and even more concentrated than before, it is also a verifiable fact that, as a result of the characteristics of the networked communication mode, the power in communication is increasingly being put in the hands of participants and no longer only in those of organizations. Without the sharing carried out by people, without the production carried out by them, and without their evaluation of the authenticity of the content, there is no communicative circulation and, therefore, no communication. The system is run by those who have the channels and program the algorithms, but it is, at the same time, totally dependent on a set of functions and social roles played by people, the participants in communication.

The hypothesis formulated here is that the communicational paradigms centered on the relationships established between the medium and the message no longer have explanatory capacity in the framework of networked communication. Therefore, the new communicative paradigm should be understood as having an explanatory dimension based on the dialectic established between people and the message.

People are the message because, in addition to the interpretation and decoding of messages always depending on them, it is also up to the mediated Subject to maintain the form and content of the message in the communication, assuming a greater responsibility in the process of distributing messages through new social roles of classification of authenticity, production, and sharing, materializable in the practices of the communication of communication.

People are the message because the dissemination and social appropriation of social media, social networking, and messaging have changed the way we think about society and communicate with it. The adoption and domestication of social networks and social media in one-to-many mediated communication, mass self-communication (Castells, 2012), closed algorithmic communication, and reciprocal mediated communication (Hepp, 2013) have created the possibility of linking all existing communication practices into a single mediation network,

enabling the link between what journalism and mass-media content produce and what participants share. The network that connects the different ways of communicating depends on the choices of the mediated Subject each time they communicate a message. The domestication of the different forms of mediation available transformed the previous prevailing communication model, that of mass communication, applying a structural revolution in communication practices and, consequently, in people's representations of what communication is about.

People are the message because in networked communication there is a datafication of communication. The communication established between sender and receiver, in addition to the message, gives rise to the permanent generation of data. The data are, like the message, also content that is generated in the communication. However, this content is not discernible either by the sender or by the receiver. Data are a type of content only able to produce meaning for the sole holder of the interpretative code and that which facilitates the mediation in communication between sender and receiver: the platforms. This is a fundamental differentiating point from mass communication and the paradigm of the medium being the message since, although the sender and receiver do not have in mind the data they generate in their communication, they are influenced by them in their everyday life. On the basis of the data produced through communication, different options are generated by the platforms for the everyday life of each sender and receiver involved in the communicative process.

People are the message because, within the framework of networked communication, gatekeeping processes have become individualized, giving rise to an algorithmic gatekeeping that promotes the erosion of the social role of gatekeeping of traditional classifiers created within the framework of mass communication and transposes it to new institutional actors, such as platforms, which in turn assign new classification roles to participants on the basis of their individual literacies. In these roles, the participants also play the part of censors. This is because, by acting in the mediation system, they create empty spaces. Participants do not remove messages or their content from circulation, but they favor the likelihood of certain messages being shown more or less often, to the detriment of other potential content. Algorithmic concealment or algorithmic censorship is thus the product of algorithmic gatekeeping and is characterized by the widespread promotion of a type of hidden censorship centered on the system of mediation, expanding hidden censorship beyond the traditional influential systems of censorship: production systems, semantics, and denotative-connotative.

People are the message because participants in networked communication have taken on new roles in the communicative process, namely ones that promote virality, nodality management, or distribution in communication. However, in a network society, everyday communication practices do not only create functions but also shape new social roles associated with the communication practice of sharing, producing, and classifying information. The new media system is thus characterized by the emergence of a new social role for participants in networked communication: that of experience sharer. In turn, the individualization of the production of experience also turns all participants in communication into potential

experience producers along with any other participating Subjects. In the framework of networked mediation, in which participants, together with mass-media organizations and others, are content producers and distributors, the social role of experience classifier also emerges. The participant is as much an individual classifier for themselves as they are for everyone else, specifically when deciding which text to share, when to review pages and content, or when to assign ratings to brands.

People are the message because, culturally, they are classifiable as *Homo retiarius*, literally "network man" in Latin, understood here in its plural as a humanity that lives with and through the network, which, in turn, has a correspondence as a social categorization in the networked individual (Wellman et al., 2012) and in a mediated Subject.

People are the message because the culture of network society, mediatized culture, is the product of the unpredictable interaction between the experience-producing participant and the experience-producing institutional producer. Mediatized culture is thus the product of opposition and complementarity between the powers of sharing, production, and classification made by individual participants in communicative processes and the institutional powers of classification, distribution, and mass-media production, giving rise to well-defined and distinct cultural traits in terms of the distribution, production, and classification that shaped the previous mass cultural model.

People are the message because mediatized culture, as a syncretic culture, is the product of the action of individual Subjects and organizations that disseminate culture in different ways, communicating in a network in the framework of a mediated everyday life, valuing the convergence between mediatic, cultivated, and phatic content, and basing said communication on a permanent reappropriation of themes and symbols of different cultures. Mediatized culture is constituted as a semiosis, a process of signification and production of meanings, both in the sphere of information and its market as well as in terms of cultural and communicational goods dissociated from the information market. Mediatized culture is a culture that seeks to achieve recognition through communication that leads to the production of culture.

The study of the social appropriation of networked communication and its ability to connect all communication networks challenges the notions related to traditional dualities in communication theory, not only the production-receipt duality but also the duality between the mediation process, the medium, the content, and the message. Networked communication promotes a fusion of dualism between form and content.

In networked communication, the receiver and sender have greater influence on the message communication process, to the detriment of the medium/channel. The unaltered preservation of the form and content of the message depends almost exclusively on the mediated Subject as well as the communicative reach of mediation.

The communicational paradigm associated with networked communication finds its distinctive singularity in the predominance of people over the channel/medium. This centrality of the networked individual, or the mediated Subject,

in the process of communicating the message and in the production of the shared meaning can thus be translated into the idea that "people are the message."

Armand Mattelart presented an issue in the 1980s that remains completely topical today. He wondered why we tended to forget communication instead of focusing attention on information (Mattelart, 1983).

The answer given by him is one of great clarity and renewed relevance. Mattelart (1983) argued that communication had ceased to be a focus of attention in his time because it was replaced by a fascination with the novelty brought about by information technologies such as the personal computer.

Adapting the reasoning put forth in his response to contemporaneity, one could argue that, again, in recent decades, communication has lost social attention to the detriment of information. The contemporary fascination with information could come from the fact that first the Web, then the multiple apps present on our smartphones, and later social networks, social media, and generative artificial intelligence have all fascinated and captured our social imagination.

This fascination with information as a concept, as in the past with information technology (Mattelart, 1983), has resulted in a loss of the notion of the social relevance of questioning current communication and how it has implications for shaping everyday life.

In an attempt to overcome this cognitive and socially self-induced gap, we can resort to the words of Mattelart (1983, p. 17) and remix them, with the suggestion that it is necessary to forget the Internet today to better understand what is happening with the Internet.

The analysis in this book followed this maxim, seeking to remind the reader that it is not through information but rather through communication that the central axes that define and redefine the modes of organization of power, production, and experience are formed, since relations between individuals, groups, peoples, organizations, and states are accomplished with and by communication.

To question what communication is today is to question not only what mediation is but also which media system develops from mediation, as well as what kind of unavoidable tensions arise between the information technology industries, the financial industries, and the different social interests.

Even bearing in mind the existence of a mode of informational development as an engine of the economy (Castells, 2002), it is also important to remember Mattelart and his warning that "it would be a grave mistake to think that economic vitality necessarily goes hand in hand with the deepening of democracy" (1983, p. 21). Without a communication embedded with values compatible with democracy, there is neither democracy nor the deepening of it.

In liberal democracies, during the peak period of mass communication, the attention paid to the study and analysis of communication's social practices was confused with the attention given to professional practices associated with mass communication. The trees were thus confused with the forest, and journalism, with social communication practices.

From the definition of what kind of communication was presented in television, radio, and newspapers and the characteristics of journalism practiced there,

articles of laws, philosophical doctrines, and scientific arguments regarding the role of communication in society were born. From these definitions came a series of postulates that established, socially and legally, the norm, par excellence, of what the understanding of freedom of opinion and freedom of expression in our democracies was.

Therefore, it was the communication practices present in the mass media, and not a broad social and shared ideal of what communication was in the society of that time, that shaped the understanding of individual freedoms.

Today, faced with the dissemination and social appropriation of a different communication, that of networked communication, it is important not to repeat the same mistakes of the past. It is important not to confuse the social practices of communication with the professional practices associated with the small number of professionals and keepers of mediation channels. In the contemporary case, these are the platforms and the mass media, as well as those who carry out their functions.

It is only by questioning networked communication according to what people think and make of it that we can aspire to safeguard democracy, thereby defining the concepts of freedom of opinion and expression in communication and the role that we, the participants, have in it.

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Networked Communication

This book is an account of the communication dynamics of the network society and it aims to formulate a systematic theory of communication of contemporary societies. This study and analysis of networked communication offers us an interpretation and decoding of what is our communication today and how our way of communicating is shaping our social, political, and economic institutions. Understanding the contemporary communicative phenomenon is fundamental, not only for understanding society and our daily lives but also for questioning the institutions we need to create to live the life we desire.

Gustavo Cardoso argues that the social appropriation of networks reflects and creates distinctive cultures, but such distinctiveness is also anchored in common communicative traits that gave rise to a new communicational mode and a new culture of the network society. He examines the processes of communicational crises based on research in several countries and the transformation of journalistic institutions and its economic and political implications. He shows that the social appropriation of communicative networks has shaped mass communication into a new networked communication mode and mass culture into a mediatized culture. He suggests that the effect of the generalized adoption of networked communication around the world is to give rise to a new media system in which the communication of communication is the common trait and where a new communication paradigm is born, in which we, the people, are the message.

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