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The camel, the lion and the boy: the path to mediatization in latin american communication research[1]

O camelo, o leão e o menino: o caminho para a midiatização na pesquisa em comunicação na América Latina

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Introduction

The trajectory of research in communication illustrates a sensitive issue: the search for a paradigm that would help to understand the phenomenon in question. As time progressed, the paradigm itself became more and more complex, although a substratum remained that did not change. However, today, the overwhelming reality of social networks has challenged this substrate. And so, a slow change began in the academic world of communication research. Just as some clarity emerged in the paradigm of the influence of mass communication, social networks introduced a different role for communication. Rather than the long accepted ideas about media influences or media effects and their explanatory paradigms, scholars proposed that we can better understand communication media as a phenomenon of mediatization.

Mediatization refers to how the mass media (and now social media) interact act with and influence the various sectors of society, from politics to education to religion (Hepp, 2013; Hepp & Krotz, 2014; Hjarvard, 2013; Krotz, 2009, 2014; Lundby, 2008, 2009, 2014; Couldry & Hepp, 2017). The theory, begun in European communication research circles has interacted powerfully with communication research and theory in Latin America (Gomes, 2017; Scolari, Fernández, & Rodríguez-Amat, 2021). What

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paradigm is required today to account for what society is experiencing in terms of mediatization? How has the Latin American understanding of mediatization evolved?

The centrality of the question was expressed at first in the analysis of media processes as related to different fields and social practices: religion, politics, sport, technology, science and education (Mauro Sa Martino, 2013; Esser & Strömbäck, 2014; Friesen & Hug. 2009). Considering a media society, the mutual influences were studied. Here, scholars proposed the conception that the media constituted a social field alongside others, relating to them, confronting each other, and disputing spaces in the social imaginary.

But theoretical gaps became evident and these concerns (along with supporting research) evolved when people realized that communication technologies constituted more than a relationship between fields and permeated the very social organization and its ambience. Studies began to contemplate the new interactions involving the Internet and social networks. Thus, the concept of mediatization emerged as an attempt to explain the changes that society was going through. Concern shifted from the fields (such as religion, politics, sports, technology, education, etc.) to the distinct environment that modified social relations.

The present reflection makes use of Nietzsche, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1961/1883), with the analogy of the Camel, the Lion, and the Boy. We identified that each moment of the evolution of the research is identified with the camel, the lion, or the boy. To express this evolution, we will use texts from the book *Topics of Communication Theory*, first and second edition (Gomes, 1995, 2004). We understand that the evolution of research in search of a paradigm for communication includes North American functionalism, the Frankfurt School, and the Latin American vision. After tracing that history, we consider the role and understanding of mediatization.

1. The Camel

The camel is a beast of burden: it carries the weight of established values, the burdens of education, morals, culture; it carries the burden of awareness of its responsibility for so many things. Without questioning, it goes to the desert with its cargo.

It is important for it to fulfill its duty. In the desert, the camel lives only doing its duty (Santuc, 2022, p. 16).

Thinking systematically about communication paradigms dates back to the beginning of research processes on the subject, in the 1930s, the mid-20th century. However, organized communication actions find their roots further back in time. A very old position has its origins in ancient Greece. Aristotle stated in his *Poetics* that in communication there was a speaker, a discourse, and a listener, and the final objective of communication was to change the way of thinking, to influence the other. This paradigm lasted for centuries, since there was no greater interest in studying something that is inherent in the human person: communication.

From the development of the printing press, enhanced by the invention of movable type by Gutenberg, communication processes have presented themselves as a objects of study. Systemic communication research in the United States began in the 1930s. At that time, three major concerns characterized research in the field: a) the study of the effects caused by the growth of technical means of communication; b) the study of political propaganda; and c) the study of the commercial-advertising use of the mass media (Moragas Spá, 1981, pp. 27ff.). In the post-war period, the Cold War environment made people, including communication researchers, try to measure the international influence of the Soviet Union. This situation appears to have prompted an internal theoretical evolution of North American communication research. Here, the stability given by Harold Lasswell's (1948) paradigm takes shape (Moragas Spa, 1981, pp. 40ff). For this author, a convenient way to describe the act of communication is to answer the questions: Who says what, through which channel, to whom, with what effect? The importance of this paradigm resides in the fact that its influence goes beyond North American barriers and extends, practically, to the entire world science of mass communication. The study of this paradigm places the scholar at the center of the science of mass communication. It represents the synthesis of what could be called the first assumptions of communication science in the United States. With the evolution, Lasswell was criticized, and the deficiencies of his paradigm were pointed out by other researchers.

In this way, much of the science of communication that "developed in the United States from the 1950s onwards, focusing its interest on redefining the communicative

structure in relation, not with the effects, but with the elements that condition them" (Moragas Spa, 1981, p. 43). In this renewal, Paul Lazarsfeld played an important role, with the first empirical studies. Lazarsfeld carried out two important studies. The first of them, with Berelson and Gaudet, written in 1941, studies the variations of the presidential election that took place in November 1940 in the United States. The second study was published with Berelson and McPhee (1954) it explored the role of mass media in opinion formation in political contests. These studies focus on the role of opinion leaders and the constraints that the receiver imposes on the media (Maragas Spa, 1981, pp. 45ff). All the results of these studies can be summarized in the following points: First, communication does not directly produce behavioral effects or attitudes in the population; second, the influence of the mass media is filtered by the societal structures, mainly the groups to which the individual belongs; third, people select the means and contents of communication. Content and ideas that clash with their beliefs are censored, ignored or forgotten; fourth, interpersonal communication is stronger than mass communication. People follow opinion leaders; and, fifth, mass media work for the long term. That is, they produce long-term effects.

Another important author in communication research in the United States was Robert Merton, who worked closely with Lazarsfeld (Merton & Lazarsfeld, 1943). Merton applied the principles of functionalism to the mass media. He thought about the problem of the mass media from the point of view of the functioning of society and its internal balance. Merton and Lazarsfeld point out the following functions to the mass media: conferring social status to their protagonists and imposing social norms. At the same time, they give importance to a dysfunction of the media: the narcotizing dysfunction. This demonstrates an ethical concern for media that contribute to individual apathy (Moragas Spa, 1981, p. 48).

One should also register, in the study of research on communication, the works related to content analysis. Its history dates back to the 1930s, with the creation of journalism schools in the United States. Students carry out a series of analyses, always quantitative, on the contents of the North American press. In this field, the works of Lasswell and Berelson acquire importance. Content analysis acquires importance in the United States in view of the political and military demands arising from the Second World

War. Moragas Spa (1981) says that "North American content analysis, as an integral part of mass communication research, is nothing more than an auxiliary technique for the analysis of effects" (p. 57).

Another experience of communicative research takes place in the field of psychology of effects, with Carl Hovland and the Yale School. This concern is also directly related to the Second World War.

> The period 1940–1950 marks, in the United States, the birth of this applied science that would experience a notable development in the 1960s, when the demands of advertising persuasion and the competitiveness of the market demanded psychological instruments that were more precise than the rudimentary ones with which war psychology or the strategy of political propaganda in the middle of the present century. (p. 57).

The results of the studies of this type, as had happened with the sociological analysis, pointed to the overcoming of the simple conductivist scheme, which gave omnipotence to the mass media.

The paths of North American research still pass through Wilbur Schramm, who applied Shannon's cybernetics scheme (Shannon & Weaver, 1949) to human communication; through the interrelation between culture and mass media, with the discussion between apocalyptics and integrated by the work of Herbert Schiller (1969, 1976), with the dominant communication theory until it arrives in the 1970s and 1980s, with a moment of crisis for North American society (see Beltrán, 1981). Moragas Spa ends his presentation of the North American trajectory of communication research by quoting George Gerbner, in a conference at the IAMCR in 1976, with the title: "Where are we and where should we go?"

In this sense, I believe that we should devote greater attention to comparative studies on the means, long-range and intercultural, that investigate the policies, processes and consequences of the mass production of the main symbolic systems, in the light of the respective structures and purposes of the different social systems . Can it really be said that the media do what the dominant theories in each society have? What are the differences and similarities between them? What are the cultural and human consequences of the international exchange of media material? What are the effects of changing cultural, technological and institutional conditions on the social functions of the media, especially television? What are the new organizational, professional, artistic, and

educational requirements necessary for the effective fulfillment of the social purposes of the different socio-cultural systems? And, finally, how can liberation from the old bonds of humanity lead to cultural conditions that, instead of limiting the vision of new opinions and possibilities, enrich it? (Quoted in Moragas Spa, 1981, p. 108).

Moragas Spa presents research in Europe, on the other hand, by starting after the First World War. It restricts itself to the problems of the written press, the dominant medium at the time. The legal, historical and philosophical perspectives constitute the basic methodological contribution in this investigation. In some countries, such as Spain, this tradition will continue into the 1970s. (See Moragas Spa, 1981, pp. 109–110 regarding the first epochs of the study of journalism; the philosophical, legal and historical tradition of Dovifat (Stöber, 1991), Otto Groth (2011; Belau, 1966), Fattorello (1966), Terrou (1958), Baschwitz (van Ginneken, 2017), must be interpreted independently of North American currents. With the end of the Second World War, a slow awakening of research on mass communication occurs, which, as happened in the United States, follows development and economic evolution. The North American influence is great, despite European research's keeping its specific characteristics. In a second stage, together with authors influenced by North American approaches, some specific lines of investigation are developed. In particular European approaches include influential semiotic studies in Italy and France, works on the relationship between mass communication and modern culture (important in England) and Marxist studies on mass communication, developed in the socialist countries of the East and in some capitalist countries of Western Europe.

Ultimately all attempts to define the process of communication come from Aristotle, for whom rhetoric was composed of three elements: *logos* (discourse), *ethos* (speaker), and *pathos* (listener). So we inherited the fundamental elements that make up the communication process: Someone who says something to someone else. The main purpose of rhetoric, for Aristotle, was the persuasion of the listener. That is, in some way, the speaker wants to convince the listener with his ideas. I want to make him change his mind. The authors who, later on, sought to understand the communication process always remained trapped in the scheme of the Greek philosopher. To better consider this model, let us again consider these North American authors whose work we have briefly seen but

now in terms of the model and its various parts, noting in particular those things that later communication study has identified as too easily overlooked in the model.

A. Harold Lasswell

In 1948, Lasswell refined Aristotle's understanding, identifying the *channel* and the *effect*. His model stipulated the *how* and made explicit the *why*. He added these two elements to the classical definition. Therefore, he says that "a convincing way of describing the act of communication is to answer the questions: who says what, through which channel (means), to whom, with what effect?" (Cited in Beltrán, 1981, p 8). For him, communication performs the functions of surveillance, correlation, and cultural transmission. These three functions basically relate to the conception of communication as transfer and influence. Lasswell sought to soften the influence of the mechanistic stimulus-response theory of classical psychology; he wanted to consider the existence of variables between the Source (S) and the Receiver (R) of the "social categories" and "individual differences" theories. Its basic paradigm gained rapid and wide acceptance (Beltrán, 1981, p. 8).

B. Shannon and Weaver

Lasswell's Theory was developed by other researchers. Later, other elements were introduced.

A telephone engineer, Claude Shannon, and his co-author, Warren Weaver, developed and explicated the Mathematical Theory of Communication. For them, "the word communication is taken in a very broad sense, including all procedures by which any mind can affect another mind" (Beltrán, 1981, p. 9). Derived from electronic communication, their information theory constitutes more a theory of signal transmission than a theory of communication, if we consider the broader meaning of this last word in the human sciences. This theory was developed in 1948 and applied to the most diverse contexts. Moreover, its use was generalized and started to be used and reproduced in most communication texts (Pfromm Netto, 1972, p. 58).

Shannon and Weaver conceive of the general communication system as composed of five essential points:

1. *The Information source* which produces one or more sequences of messages that will be communicated to the receiver's terminal;

2. *The transmitter* which operates on the message, producing signals that can be transmitted through the channel;
3. *The channel*, the means used to transmit the signal from the transmitter to the receiver;
4. *The receiver* which ordinarily performs an inverse operation in relation to the Transmitter, reconstructing the message from the signal; and
5. *The addressee*, the person (or thing) to whom the message is addressed (Beltrán, 1981, p. 9).

According to the model coined by Shannon,

An information source selects, from a set of possible messages, a certain message. The transmitter converts this message into a signal, and this is sent to the receiver through the communication channel. The receiver, in turn, converts the signal back into a message and forwards the latter to its destination. During the signal transmission process, it may be affected by distortions, errors, etc. unwanted by the source: Unwanted changes are considered noise. (Pfromm Neto, 1972, p. 59).

For this theory, the meaning of the message does not count. What matters is the process, the mechanism by which the source of information chooses a particular message from a range of possible options.

This is a mechanical model, which was applied and adapted by many authors to human communication. Constructed to describe electromagnetic communication, when applied to human communication, it highlights the coding and decoding functions of the mind's signals.

C. Wilbur Schramm

Schramm, in his book *Processes and Effects of Mass Communication* (1954), applied the Shannon and Weaver model to human communication. For Luíz Beltrán, "defining communication as sharing information, ideas or attitudes, and reinforcing with various terms the Aristotelian principle that communication always requires at least three elements (source, message, and receiver), Schramm brought them to the scheme, giving due importance to these parts, the encoder and decoder components" (Beltrán, 1981, p. 9). Schramm said: "Replace 'microphone' with 'encoder' and 'headset' with 'decoder' and we're talking about electronic communication. Think of 'source' and 'encoder' as

people, as well as 'decoder' and 'recipient,' and that 'signal' is language and we are talking about human communication" (Beltrán, 1981, p. 9).

D. Redundancy and feedback

In communication models and schemes, these terms acquire a lot of meaning. *Redundancy* opposes the factor of disorganization, uncertainty, unpredictability. That is, it means the degree of predictability, of certainty that a message can have. Schramm says that "in information theory, as well as in social communication, the more redundant the system, the less information it is conveying at a given moment. On the other hand, any language or code without redundancy would be chaos. In many cases, increasing redundancy leads to more efficient communication" (Pfromm Neto, 1972, p 60). For this very reason, knowing how to determine the optimal degree of redundancy is one of the fundamental problems for message encoding. If the encoding is too redundant, no information is transmitted; if it is deficient, chaos ensues.

Feedback, a term added to the process by cybernetics, concerns the control mechanisms designed to enable the organism to adjust automatically to behavioral goals. According to Norbert Wiener, "it is about the study of messages and the effects of effective control of messages" (Beltrán, 1981, p. 10) .

For Luiz Ramiro Beltrán,

> Although such concepts were created primarily for the field of engineering and psychology, they were accepted by many communication theorists as being useful in their work as well. They thought that if the sources wanted to produce certain effects in the receivers with the message, they should receive back, from the receivers, indicative reactions as to the effectiveness of the persuasive effort and, according to this result, adjust the messages to the target. (p. 10).

E. The code, the message

When we want to communicate something to someone, and we use a channel, we emit signals (see Palo, 1982, pp. 51–63). This is called message encoding. The work of codification consists of the incarnation of information, which acts in itself on a different level from that of signs. The encoded information must then be decoded in order to understand the message. Let's look at the process more closely.

Code—codification: The codification operation allows us to reflect on the acquisition of information and gives us the possibility to underline some interesting aspects of the sociology of communication. When we find ourselves in front of an

electronic transmitter and receiver, even one that is not part of the context of consciousness, the message can be transmitted in almost its entirety, after having neutralized the noise and obtained an adequate channel for the transmission of the code. The more complex the message, the more difficult it is to translate it into a code and fully decipher. At the moment when the message becomes "human," the richness of the phenomenon "human being" has a profound effect on the whole process, in such a way that a more attentive reading is required.

The code thus becomes a fundamental point of information. While for an information exchange between computers, for example, a mechanical or electronic mathematical code may suffice, when it comes to human beings, the code forms part of the complexity of the acting subject. The linguistic code will then be composed of graphic and phonic signs, equivalent, in itself, to the mechanical code. However, they experience a qualitative leap encompassing a meaning that transcends the code itself, until reaching the maximum expressive possibilities of the human being. The code makes it possible to channel, through external and sensitive signs, a content that is spiritual. This is one of the reasons why a "complete" translation of the message is impossible. The linguistic code is the result not only of an arbitrary choice, but of a very delicate selection process that encompasses the entire cultural phenomenon.

Therefore, to know exactly the linguistic code, it is necessary to tune into the "cultural humus" in which it was formed.

All this helps us to realize that there is no such thing as an aseptic linguistic code. Every code must be read in a concrete context, and its dynamic laws do not consist solely in an intertwining of signs, but in a continuous relationship between sign and scope of precedence. Here we come to the essential problem: the structure, understood according to the notion of Ferdinand de Saussure (1916/2011).

The code becomes an indispensable instrument of communication, insofar as the structure of the human being can only express itself through external sensible forms that constitute, in any case, "signs." Encoding means, in this way, "enclosing" in signs/symbols a content that transcends, in itself, the signs themselves. For this reason, the work of codification will never exhaust the expressive potentialities or encrypted

intentions of the source, at least in its entirety. Decoding means carrying out the inverse operation, tuning in to those signs that do not veil (hide) the message they transmit.

Message. Between the message and the code there is not only a quantitative difference, but also a qualitative one. Here are two examples.

First, the communication produced between an electronic or mechanical type transmitter and receiver also involves a difference between code and signal. Using the example from Umberto Eco: If I want to transmit the news from the mountain to the valley that the water level in a dam is rising, I use a code (a light that turns on and off). The code is distinct from the message. Because of the elemental simplicity of the message, it is fully translated by the code and can be easily decoded. If I want to establish more complex information (for example, specifying the height reached by the water in the dam) I must necessarily complicate the code. There is a direct proportion: the greater amount of information, the more complicated the code and the more difficult its coding.

Second, when communication takes place between two thinking beings, reality becomes much more complicated. In this case, the term "signal" is replaced by the term “message.” If I want to convey to another person that “the weather is fine,” I do nothing but become a sender, encode my message, which exists within my mind, through some sign-symbols (in this case, linguistic), entrust my code to the transmission channel and wait for the eventual receiver to decode my message. Difficulties arise even at this elementary level, because the term “good”—“g-o-o-d,”—the result of an arbitrary convention, expresses “personally” what I want to say. It is, in fact, a probabilistic option made at the codification level both in the language formation process and in my personal choice. For this reason, there can be real difficulties when it comes to capturing the message “completely.” The term should be fully underlined so as not to fall into the most obvious skepticism.

According to this perspective, as the message itself is enriched, later difficulties will arise. Analyzed in this way, communication shows its influence on people and its social implications. Once again, individual and society find themselves together in a process that cannot be dissociated. On the other hand, this model allows the analysis of two elements: person and society, both synchronic and diachronic. Through the application of the model, one can in fact face the problematic of the hermeneutics of a

significant praxis (be it linguistic—text—or cultural in general) of the past as a continuous attention to the reading of the present. After all, it is the hermeneutic process observed from the perspective of communication theory.

With these statements, we can see how code, message, person, and society relate in the communication process.

This panorama of communication research worldwide appears also in Latin America, which is also indebted to the paradigms developed overseas or in its larger neighbor to the North.

According to José Marques de Melo (1985), communication research in South America has roots in the last century and in the beginning of this one. However, its institutionalization as a scientific field only happened in the last 25 years. In his review of the Latin American panorama of research in communication, he registers the role played by CIESPAL [Centro Internacional de Estudos Superiores de Comunicação para a América Latina], based in Quito, Ecuador. This organism radiated a certain mystique of communication research. Prior to CIESPAL, communication research in the region below the Rio Grande subsisted on sporadic activities.

Almost always descriptive or documentary, these surveys sought to contribute to the recording of cultural memory, writing biographies of emeritus journalists, reconstituting the profile of publishing companies, cataloging periodicals that circulated at a given time or analyzing the impact caused by innovations such as cinema, records, the radio. The historical-juridical character was predominant as was the absence of critical studies. These were nothing more than monographic studies, decontextualized, simple-minded (p. 27-28).

However, the panorama begins to change around the 1950s, motivated by the expansion of the mass media in the continent. Methodologically, Marques de Melo (1985) identifies two lines of research in this period: techniques of bibliographic compilation or document analysis and the implementation of opinion surveys, which recover the other side of the communicative process, that is, the reaction and preferences of consumers. The posture, however, is still elitist, as the public's behavior is verified based on the sponsors' commercial interests (p. 28).

In increasing research in Third World countries, UNESCO played a decisive role when it endeavored to achieve the expansion of national mass communication networks. Its aim was to democratize education opportunities through electronic media activity. In the wake of this effort, poor countries imported technologies, management systems, scientific models that required adequate human resources to manage them. It is at this juncture that CIESPAL emerges in Latin America, as an initiative of UNESCO, to develop suitable models for the training of communication professionals that meet emerging socio-cultural needs. Its primary objective was to remodel university communication teaching, proposing a model and suggesting contents (see Feliciano, 1987). Research in communication in the region is inserted into this professional training effort. Under the influence of CIESPAL, two research models are disseminated in Latin America: studies of the morphology and content of the press and studies on the behavior of the media consumer public. The first was methodologically oriented by the French scholar Jacques Kayser (1953, 1966) and the second inspired by North American techniques of readability and audience analysis (Marques de Melo, 1985, p. 29).

The 1960s presented three clear matrices in Latin American continental research: traditional academic studies, commercial surveys, and university research, influenced by CIESPAL. However, a fourth sector of research began to gain momentum: research into diffusion Based on university research, it was oriented towards the adoption of agricultural technology. Marques de Melo (1985, p. 30) points out the main mistake of this research aly in its basic assumption. According to its assumption, communication alone would be able to trigger innovations and generate development, regardless of political and socioeconomic conditions.

2. The Lion

But the desert is also the place of great spiritual experiences and conversions, and the camel can transform into a lion, which destroys statues, tramples on loads, and criticizes all established values, both of religion and tradition. It criticizes modernity. For communication research the reaction begins with the rejection of the functionalist view of communication, inherited from North American studies.

The functionalist, uncritical, and conformist stance of communication research received a critical reaction. Perplexed by the impact of the cultural industry on the continent, the research-denunciation inspired by the Frankfurt School emerges; it detects the expansion of multinational companies and diagnoses the advance of the ideology of consumption. In contrast to the functionalist view of the mass media, Critical Theory emerged and developed, historically identified with the Frankfurt School. Critical Theory seeks to see society as a whole, going against sectoral disciplines that divide society. It intends, therefore, to be a sign post, avoiding the ideological function of the sciences and of the traditional disciplinary silos (Marques de Melo, 1985, p. 71).

What the sciences consider "factual data," Critical Theory sees as products of a specific socio-historical situation (p. 71). For this reason, Horkheimer says that "the facts that the senses transmit to us are socially prefabricated in two ways: through the historical character of the perceived object and through the historical character of the perceptual organ. On the contrary, both are formed by human activity" (quoted in Wolf, 1987, p. 72).

In this way, all social sciences, reduced to mere techniques of research, collection, classification of "objective" data, close off to themselves the possibility of reaching the truth, since they ignore, in a programmatic way, their social interventions (Wolf, 1987, p. 72). This moves within the perspective of dialectics, understood in its Marxist conception.

While North American communication study concerned itself with studying the group, researching human behavior, European communication study, of which Critical Theory is a part, is concerned with the study of production, with the study of content, with ideology. I argue that they are distinguished from each other both by perspective (one the perspective of the public, the other of the sender) and by methodology (one does field research on the behavior of the public, another studies the content of the messages, therefore of ideology), by theory (one affirms the social function of the mass communication, the other affirms the domination exercised by mass media) and by their conclusions (one acknowledges the power of society over the media, the other acknowledges the power of the media over society).

From the perspective of the Frankfurt School, the concept of the Cultural Industry was used for the first time by Adorno and Horkheimer. In the Cultural Industry, "films, radio and weeklies constitute a system. Each sector harmonizes with each other and all

harmonize reciprocally" (Adorno & Horkeimer, 1978). "What the culture industry continually offers is nothing more than the representation, under ever-different forms, of something that is always the same; change hides a skeleton in which it changes as little as the concept of profit itself, once it has acquired the dominance of culture" (quoted in Wolf, 1987, p. 74). "In the culture industry system, the operative process integrates every element, from the plot of the novel that already has filming in sight, to the last of the sound effects: the filmmakers examine with suspicion any manuscript in which there is not already a tranquilizing best-seller" (p. 74). Therefore, "the Cultural Industry machine, by preferring the effectiveness of its products, determines consumption and excludes everything that is new, everything that configures itself as a useless risk" (p. 74). The individual, in this situation, ceases to decide for himself. "The conflict between impulses and conscience is resolved with uncritical adherence to imposed values" (p. 74).

Quoting Adorno, Wolf states that "man finds himself in the power of a society that manipulates him at will: the consumer is not sovereign, as the cultural industry would have you believe, he is not its subject, but its object" (p. 74). The individual's entire life is programmed. Even your free time is programmed to be an extension of the productive process of work. Everything revolves around production, even the time people have for their leisure.

Individuality is replaced by a pseudo-individuality. The subject is linked to an unreserved identity with society. The ubiquity, repetitiveness, and standardization of the cultural industry make modern mass culture an unprecedented means of psychological control. (Wolf, 1987, p. 75)

In the Cultural Industry, the more anonymous the public is, the greater the possibility of being integrated. All this has an influence on the quality of consumption of cultural products. According to Adorno and Horkheimer, "the atrophy of imagination and spontaneity of today's cultural consumer does not need to be explained psychologically. The products themselves, from the most typical, the sound film, paralyze those faculties by their very constitution objective" (p. 165) In order to be able to follow what is happening on the screen, the viewers must dispense with all reflection on what they are seeing. Cultural products are made for relaxed consumption, without major commitments. "The spectator must not act from his own head: the product prescribes all reactions, not

by its content—which disappears as soon as it is directed towards the thinking faculty—but through signs. Any logical connection that requires intellectual encouragement is scrupulously avoided" (p. 175).

From this, we can infer the intended effects of cultural dynamics. In this regard, still quoting Adorno, Wolf (1987) describes the manipulation strategy of the cultural industry:

Everything [the cultural industry] communicates was organized by herself with the aim of seducing viewers on several psychological levels, simultaneously. Indeed, the hidden message may be more important than what is seen, since the former will escape the control of consciousness, will not be impeded by psychological resistance to consumption and will probably penetrate the viewers' brain. (p. 78)

Consequently,

> The manipulation of the public—pursued and achieved by the cultural industry understood as a form of dominance of highly developed societies—thus passes to the television medium, through effects that are put into practice at the latent levels of the messages. These pretend to say one thing and say another, pretend to be frivolous, but, by placing themselves beyond the public's knowledge, they reinforce their state of servitude, of prohibitions. (p. 79).

Another aspect to be considered concerns the genres used by the cultural industry as a form of dominance. This, in its strategy, has multiple tactics. One is the creation of stereotypes.

Stereotypes are an indispensable element for organizing and anticipating the experiences of the social reality that the subject carries out. They prevent cognitive chaos, mental disorganization; they constitute, in short, a necessary instrument of economy in learning. As such, no activity can dispense with them; however, in the historical evolution of the cultural industry, the function of stereotypes has altered and changed profoundly. (p. 79)

The division of television content, for example, into various genres, has led to the development of rigid, fixed forms. These standards are important because they define:

> […] the viewer's attitude model, before questioning himself about any specific content, thus determining, on a large scale, the way in which this content is perceived. Therefore, in order to understand television, it is not enough to highlight the implications of the various spectacles and of the various types of spectacle; the presuppositions in which these implications operate must also be

> examined, before pronouncing a single word. It is very important that the classification of the spectacles has gone so far that the spectator approaches each one of them with an established model of expectations, before being faced with the spectacle itself. (Adorno, cited by Wolf, 1987, p. 79).

Within this perspective, critical theory denounces the contradiction between the individual and society as a historical product of class division and opposes the doctrines that describe this contradiction as a natural fact.

A. A brief summary

The Culture Industry designates the "set of business complexes linked to the so-called mass communications sector, as well as its products, in a given country or region" (Goldstein, 1983, p. 28). This reality is deeply linked to the monopoly phase of the capitalist system. For, although the Cultural Industry has developed slowly along with the capitalist system, only in this phase of monopoly can it reach its full configuration.

Among the main characteristics of the Culture Industry is the reality that its messages have a logic of production and distribution similar to other goods in the capitalist system. "They are made within large business complexes, highly concentrated from a technical and economic point of view. They are produced on an industrial scale, in a scheme often marked by a high degree of division of labor" (p. 28). In other words, although they are individualized as products, their messages obey a standardization in their structure. In the Culture Industry the absolute criterion for production and distribution is profitability. Profit matters. These products are totally goods intended for mass sale, aiming at profit. It is important to make a difference with cultural products that are also commodities. These obey a logic of production totally different from the logic of the social system described in the other kinds of communication research. These products are unique in their creation and production.

This does not happen with the productive logic of the Culture Industry. Although "the various business complexes in this sector are not all formally interconnected (some compete with others commercially), they all act under the same logic and in a similar direction. In this sense, they constitute a system, which tends to become ubiquitous, occupying, so to speak, say, the space for leisure, reflection, art, culture" (Goldstein, 1983, p. 29).

Not being art or culture, these products present themselves as such. However, they belong and are located in a different sphere, not only because of their rules, but also because of the way they relate to and approach reality. That is, they "tend to provide a vision that does not transcend the immediate reality, that is, it does not go beyond the way in which society presents itself to us; in this sense, they are characterized as ideology. This is due to the basic operating principle of producing messages from the cultural industry, derived from the profit expectation of the sector's entrepreneurs: the great (if not the only) source of income for most mass media is advertising, which sponsors the messages conveyed" (p. 29).

The amount of advertising, therefore money, that a vehicle can receive is directly linked to the diffusion capacity it has. Therefore, the objective is to develop, to the maximum, the diffusion capabilities of a product. This determines the production of the messages. As experience teaches that it is very difficult for people to accept messages that go against their basic values, the Culture Industry's messages try never to offend these values. As the basic values of a society are confused with the dominant ideology, Culture Industry products will never contradict this ideology. Even more, with the advent of the Culture Industry, "the ideology starts to be produced industrially, in the same molds that govern the so-called material production of capitalism" (p. 30). However, in the case of the Culture Industry, one should speak rather of reproduction than of ideology production. It reproduces, in its products and its logic, the dominant ideology. The ideology that takes place in social fabrics serves as the basis for the manufacture of cultural industry products. Thus, in order to analyze the reality of the cultural industry, we must see society as a whole, in its structure. The logic of the monopolizing capitalist society invaded everything, including cultural production. The division of labor exists and is also imposed on the so-called cultural vehicles.

The cultural industry, in turn, is directly integrated into the capitalist accumulation process, either as a space for investment in itself, or as an instrument of advertising activity, which, in turn, also facilitates the accumulation process to the extent in which it helps shorten capital circulation time by promoting sales of advertised goods. But as an industrial apparatus for the reproduction and large-scale dissemination of ideology, the culture industry perhaps provides its greatest service to monopoly capitalism: involving

human life in its leisure time, where it reinforces and complements, with its characteristic messages, the dominion over human life exercised by capital at work time. The world of leisure becomes, with the culture industry, a mere extension of the universe of work. (p. 31)

While some studies do not go beyond confirming new phenomena, others identify imperialist ramifications and point out the dangers facing the sovereignty of Latin American peoples. However, the influence of this reaction is very restricted, as North American-inspired models still prevailed in most communication schools (p. 31).

Thus, on the one hand, we have a dazzling trend that accepts the advance of capitalism, without questioning its origins and motivations. On the other hand, we have a smaller segment that opts for rejection, denouncing its devastating effects on national cultures, without contemplating its contradictions. However, new political situations in Latin America give another dimension to communication research: the transformations that took place in Peru and Chile. Marques de Melo (1985) says that "suddenly, Latin American political dynamism produces a confrontation between communication researchers and the transformations in process. In Peru, the expropriation of large daily newspapers and the prospect of handing them over to popular sectors introduces the theme of the structure of communicational power and its direct link with the monopoly of political and economic power enjoyed by oligarchies. In Chile, the peaceful transition to socialism raises the question of new forms of media management in a democratic society and its cultural responsibilities" (p. 71). The experiences carried out in these countries exerted a great influence on communication researchers, as they put on the agenda the possibility of research ceasing to be an abstract activity and becoming an effective instrument in the process of social change. In Chile, the structural-Marxist interpretation of Armand Mattelart (1973, 1979; Mattelart & Dorfmann, 1971) and the Christian-Marxist analysis of the Brazilian Paulo Freire (1967, 1971, 1975) stand out. The latter points to the core of the process of social domination: the absence of dialogue in everyday communication and its projection into the secular silence of oppressed populations across the continent (Marques de Melo, 1985, pp. 31–32).

In Peru, the courage of the military-nationalist government to face the nucleus of the oligarchic power, aroused in researchers the interest in unraveling the plots of the

political macrosystem and the role played by the national communication systems in the formation of public opinion.

In this context, CIESPAL emerges, promoted in 1973 in Costa Rica at the first meeting of Latin American researchers dedicated to communication. This meeting recognized the dependent character of communication theory and research methodology existing in the region; it proposed the search for theoretical and methodological alternatives capable of offering solutions to the problems faced by Latin American countries. This meant a radical change in the panorama and brought immediate consequences. “The rejection of the predominant scientific arsenal (North American functionalism) led to the adoption of new, imported models (mainly French structural semiology)” (Marques de Melo, 1985, p. 33).

On the other hand, the attempt to build indigenous methodological alternatives ran into the epistemological limitations of many researchers, leading to forms of political militancy confused with scientific innovations (p. 33). In 1984, Marques de Melo stressed that communication researchers in Latin America were still dependent on imported scientific standards. The trails opened by Paulo Freire’s dialogic communication and the social ownership of the media suggested by Peruvian nationalism have not been sufficiently explored. With regard to dialogical communication, this will become UCBC’s [Brazilian Christian Union of Social Communication] main concern from the end of the ’70s and ’80s, with the critical reading of communication courses (pp. 33–34).

From the second half of the 1970s, mainly due to the economic crisis that hit the continent, there was a decrease in research. CIESPAL itself withdrew. At the same time, new spaces for reflection and research have opened up. The following stand out: The Latin American Institute of Transnational Studies, founded in Mexico, currently in Chile and Argentina, with a continental scope. Nationally, the Brazilian Society of Interdisciplinary Communication Studies, in Brazil; the Centro de Inquiry and Expresión Cultural y Artística (CENECA), in Chile; and Equipo Comunicación, from Venezuela. The production of these centers has focused on three lines: transnational communication; popular and alternative communication; and the ideological plots of the mass media (pp. 34–35).

Taking stock of the trajectory, Marques de Melo (1985)says that the balance was positive. For him, we are moving from a stage of complete theoretical and methodological dependence to an awareness of such external subordination that initiates a process of investigative autonomy from the challenges of our reality. This approach holds that the task of communication researchers is to contribute to the construction of democratic communication systems that are a reflection of and engines for the democratic societies we wish to build (p. 38). He ends his assessment by quoting Jesús Martin Barbero, in the early 1980s, who said, “The era of major denunciations—always necessary—seems to give way to another more obscure work, but one no less risky and difficult: the fight against an ambient neopositivism that once again opposes, now in a more cunning and sophisticated way, scientific work to political work” (1984). Barbero, together with Luis Ramiro Beltrán, is the researcher who has been trying a Latin American perspective for social communication research. Barbero (1984, pp. 24–35) provides an excellent review of communicative research on the continent and presents a very broad bibliography (See also Lopes, 1990, for another good bibliography on the subject.)

At first glance, approaches to the communication paradigm differ greatly in functionalism and critical theory. The camel becomes the lion, fighting the burden it carries. However, it seems that this is not so simple. While one humbly carries the load, the other rebels and tries to destroy the load. There is something that is not questioned by either the camel or the lion: the existence and identity of the cargo. The charge predates the two and remains untouched in its essence. It rebels against carrying the load, not its existence.

In the case of communication, there is an uncontested fact of reality: the communication paradigm that comes from Aristotle. In that communication process there are three primary movements: speaker, discourse, and listener. This is the touchstone, which neither functionalism nor the critical school puts in check. That's the boy’s job.

3. The Boy

The Lion can undergo a transformation and become a child, that is, a game and a new beginning. That's what the boy is. That is, the lion can free himself to be the creator of new values and new principles for evaluating things, thus becoming a Boy. The Boy is

the artist, redeemer of the vicious circle of existence, lived and interpreted as something to justify them (with science, the revolution, etc.) (Santuc, 2022, p.17). This metamorphosis does not happen overnight, abruptly. There is a long and painful path of transformation that entails questioning the essence of the load, producing a new load according to the circumstances.

In terms of the communication paradigm, the need for its transformation is arduous and requires courage and idealism. Taking as an example the reflection that sprouted in Latin America, we see that the process began in the 1960s. The first reflexes appeared slowly and 60 years later it is still in the beginning. Only the fringe of the mantle of what is to come is lifted. It has to be recognized that the extreme technological development is enabling the proliferation of social networks and the old paradigm is a short blanket that does not handle restraint. Let's look at the process.

In the Latin American continent, people also thought in terms of communication theory. Anamaria Fadul (1989) states that "in the 1980s, Latin America was the scene of a series of events that profoundly marked studies on communication" (p. 69). After making a brief characterization of our reality, both from a political, economic and cultural point of view, she notes, "In this context, one perceives the insufficiency of a Theory of Communication that continues to have Dependency Theory and the Theory of Manipulation as its starting point. If, on the one hand, one cannot minimize the effects of the economic, political, and cultural influence of the United States in the Latin America, on the other hand, the Theory of Cultural Imperialism, consequences of previous conceptions, is incapable of dealing with the current Latin American situation" (p. 70). Among the thinkers who were concerned with this new reality, the pioneering work of professor Luís Ramiro Beltrán stands out, with his proposal to say "Farewell to Aristotle."

A. Luíz Ramiro Beltrán and "Farewell to Aristotle"

The communication problem, in the understanding of Luíz Ramiro Beltrán, involves a fierce battle in the contemporary world. While the countries of the so-called Third World rebel against the three classes of dependence to which they are subjected—political domination, economic domination, and cultural domination—the First World strives to maintain its privileges. Cultural dependency is the big news of recent decades.

In the 1980s, the recognition that communication is at the service of the three classes of neocolonialist domination definitively appeared.

The struggle takes place mainly in the communicational field, seen as a paradigm of all dominations. For Luiz Ramiro Beltrán (1981), "The conflict involves several important areas of concern. Policy makers, development strategists, researchers and communication professionals in developing countries are, in turn, objecting to the structures, operations, funding, ideology, and influence of certain powerful international communication organizations" (p. 6). At the same time, the traditional concepts of communication born in First World countries began to be questioned. That is, "the very conceptualization of the nature of communication, coming from developed countries, is now beginning to be questioned in developing countries" (p. 7) .

For Beltrán, in the field of Communication Theory, all the definitions given to the phenomenon date back to Aristotle. Again, this held that rhetoric was composed of three elements: speaker, discourse, and listener; the purpose of communication was to persuade people in every possible way. Subsequent structuring only limited itself to refining this brief definition of communication.

Now, from his perspective in Latin America, Luíz Ramiro Beltrán (1981) argues that the time has come to say "Goodbye to Aristotle." According to him, the subsequent explanations given about the phenomenon of social communication, starting with Aristotle's description until reaching the sophisticated interventions of cybernetics and its feedback proposals, did not in any way really transform or help in the understanding of the process.

> In short, the traditional definition of communication describes it as the act or process of transmitting messages from source to receivers through the exchange of symbols […] through signal carrier channels. In this classic paradigm, the main target of communication is the purpose of affecting, in a certain direction, the receiver's behavior: it [the communication process] wants to produce certain effects on the receiver's way of feeling, thinking, and acting, or, in other words, to persuade them of the communicator. (p. 9).

For this very reason, this model has already begun to suffer criticism within the developed countries themselves:

> Two basic assumptions of the traditional definition are questioned. On the one hand, the mechanical notion of the transmission of knowledge from one mind

> to another by means of signals conducted through some channel is replaced by the idea that the symbols are mere stimuli provoked by the source on the receiver, with the hope that they will be able to lead him to recover, from his experience, the meanings implicit therein and thus, probably, to obtain from him the intended behavioral responses […] On the other hand, the reformulation contained a relation of interaction instead of conceiving the action only on the source or emitter of the stimulus. (p. 13).

Communication is seen, then, as a process. With this, the concept of feedback becomes relevant. This conceptual criticism has not undergone major repairs. However, in everyday practice such concepts had a negligible application. That is, practice betrays theory. Training still seems to be based on the notion of transmission and many studies continue to consider communication as something static. Thus, "although the professional discourse widely recognizes the bidirectional nature of communication, in practice what predominates is the traditional unilinear paradigm" (p. 14). Another criticism of the classical definition comes from the confusion between communication and information. Then, "communicating refers to a bilateral process that contains emotional and cognitive elements and that occurs both verbally and non-verbally. On the other hand, informing refers to a process of verbal communication predominantly driven by knowledge" (p. 17).

Luíz Ramiro Beltrán thus summarizes the criticisms of the traditional model of communication that have arisen within developed countries:

> (1) Traditional definitions and models are unilinear and propose the mechanical notion of communication as the transmission of information from active sources to passive receivers. In fact, this is not transmission; there is simply a provocation of already existing meanings in people who, when decoding the symbols, actively participate. (2) These models are based, moreover, on the chronic notion that communication is an act, a static phenomenon in which the source is privileged; communication is, in fact, a process in which all the elements act dynamically. Thus, communication is eminently a fact of social relations, a phenomenon of multiple exchange of experiences, and not a mere unilateral exercise of individual influence. (3) The models, finally, lead to confusion between information, which can be transferred through a unilateral act, and communication, different and broader than information, since its bilateral nature necessarily involves interaction that seeks community of meanings or consciousness. (p. 17).

However, all these criticisms and refinements, as they arise within developed countries, include aspects of interest to their respective societies. Other aspects, which are not within an individual's or culture's concerns, are excluded. One of these aspects is persuasion. With rare exceptions, restrictions on these concepts have not arisen within the United States. In that society, manipulating people's behavior through communication

has always seemed natural. It was in Latin America that these criticisms emerged most vigorously (pp. 18ff). In Latin America, persuasion is seen as an instrument of the "status quo." So does the concept of feedback, used to facilitate commercialism and propaganda. Feedback is seen in Latin America as a privilege of sources that allow the recipients to respond. On the other hand, Latin Americans consider that alienation is the imposition of an ideology: the capitalist ideology. Finally, the entire system expresses vertical and authoritarian communication.

Faced with the situation, Luíz Ramiro Beltrán writes:

> What subsequently occurs under the name of communication is little more than a dominant monologue for the benefit of the initiator of the process. Feedback is not employed to provide the opportunity for authentic dialogue. The receiver of the messages is passive and submissive. Since he is never given the adequate opportunity to also act as a true and free sender, his role consists of listening and obeying. Such a vertical, asymmetrical and almost authoritarian social relationship constitutes . . . an undemocratic form of communication. . . . We must be able to build a new concept of communication—a humanized, non-elitist, democratic and non-mercantilist model. (p. 23).

From this position, the understanding of communication on the South American continent began to be rethought, as well as its importance for human life. In view of this, the communicative process is understood as:

> […] a process of democratic social integration based on the exchange of symbols through which human beings voluntarily share their experiences under conditions of free and equal access, dialogue and participation. Everyone has the right to communicate through the use of communication resources. Humans communicate for multiple purposes. The main thing is not the exercise of influence over the behavior of others. (p. 31).

B. Jesús Martin Barbero and the mass-popular relationship

With the reality of urbanization on the continent, the mass began to be studied from another perspective. It is said that "for a long time stigmatized from the pure and authentic popular culture, identified with a culture of rural origin, mass culture began to be studied from another reality: that of the human masses" (Fadul, 1989, p. 74). With this position, the opposition between mass culture and popular culture began to be slowly overcome. The position that affirmed this dichotomy ignored that

> […] there has never been a rupture between the different forms of culture, not even in the past, because culture is not a static thing; it has always incorporated elements of different cultures, that is, of the manifestations of erudite, popular,

> mass culture crossed with those of local, national, and international culture. (p. 74).

In this way, when radio and television are denied the status of popular culture, a conception of culture is evident that uses classical culture as a fundamental criterion for the critique of mass culture.

Still in this line of thought, it could be said that the popular and the national intersect even on Latin American television. In many countries, there is an increase in national production at the expense of imported North American production. The challenge for communication researchers is not to deny the popular nature of these programs, but rather to understand the reasons for their success. (p. 76)

To account for this phenomenon, Latin American researchers study the "Melodrama Cultural Market" in Latin America. The telenovela is based on the reuse of melodrama, our historical tradition. Scholars analyze telenovelas as forms of resistance to the North American cultural industry. Even more, as far as the masses are concerned, Latin American cultural integration takes place through telenovelas. Even First World countries are worrying about this phenomenon, studying it exhaustively. Here, too, its study is required.

"Among the various forms sought for its understanding, the need for knowledge of its genres and subgenres is clearly outlined" (Fadul, 1989, p 80). In this regard, Jesús Martin Barbero's position is situated as one of the authors who have contributed the most to a reflection on genres and mass media. Anamaria Fadul says that he assumed "the proposal of a group of Italian researchers, according to which a genre is above all a communicability strategy, and it is as a mark of this communicability that a genre is present and analyzable in the text" (p. 81). According to Barbero (1987), "the consideration of genres as a purely literary—not cultural—fact and, on the other hand, their reduction to a recipe for fabrication or a label for classification, has prevented us from understanding their true function in the process and their methodological pertinence: the key to the analysis of mass texts and, in particular, of television ones" (p. 241). The analysis of genres is particularly important in the case of telenovelas; otherwise it becomes impossible to understand their meaning in the culture of the continent. The study of genres is also important for the reality of radio. In summary, it can be said that "the

study of much of the mass media does not end with the study of the economic, political, ideological, or discursive structure of the message and much less with studies of reception. Genres thus gain a centrality in studies on communication, as they articulate the two moments of the process of communication, broadcasting and reception" (Fadul, 1989, p. 82). Within this perspective, the study of communication must also be extended beyond the media. The important thing is to move into everyday life and there to study how people communicate. Jesús Martin Barbero (1993) writes that it is necessary to study "the processes of communication that take place in the square, in the market, in the cemetery, at festivals, in religious rites" (p. 70). Based on this study, a methodology can be developed that allows "relating the study of the constitution of meaning, of the production of meaning, with the senses" (p. 70. To do this, it is necessary to learn to look, to smell, to listen, to feel the different ways in which people communicate in a popular market or in a supermarket.

According to Barbero, carrying out this study made it possible to see the need for a theory that was not restricted to the problem of information, since information in society had become capital, a commodity. Furthermore, for most people, communication is not limited to the media. If that was (and is) true, then to understand what is happening in the streets, in the house, in the square, or at the party, one must go beyond a theory of information. Barbero (1993) states that "the problem was not that a theory lacking logic or coherence thought in terms of sender, message, receiver, codes, source. . . . The problem was what types of communicative processes were thought of from there" (p. 71). If we analyze the communicative processes at a party, at a ball, at a religious sacrament, it is very difficult to explain the sender, the receiver, the message. The communication aspect of these practices goes much further than information theory explanations. "Communication in a religious practice, such as Mass, for example, concerns other dimensions of life, other experiences, going beyond the mere theory of information. Therefore, talking about communication is talking about social practices and if we want to answer all the questions, we must rethink communication from these practices" (p. 71).

As can be seen, Jesús Martin Barbero's position implies rethinking the entire methodology of the study of communication. Here, the receiver's perspective and the

social processes of domination gain resonance, which demonstrate a form and manner of communication.

4. A Conclusion: A New Understanding of Mediatization

Despite recognizing that in the positions of the authors reviewed above there is a germ of the transformation that will come, the world is on the threshold of the great social metamorphosis that is approaching. It must be conceded that, despite the courage, the touchstone of functionalism in communication remains undaunted. The critique of what one lives is still not the explanation that is sought.

With the development of social networks, the problem becomes more urgent. What is the communication paradigm required today to explain what is happening to society? We can gain some sense of this by examining the communication system of social networks. (The ideas presented here are more extensively developed in Gomes, 2017.)

Humanity is experiencing a key moment in its history, which will affect its way of living and will structure future social relations. Searching human history, one finds what is perhaps the most important episode of existence that gave a decisive turn to human interrelationships: the invention of writing. It was (who knows?) the most significant leap, or quantum leap, made by humanity, even though it depends on the fundamental turn that culminated in the hominization process: the development of the word. Human life has definitely changed. Today, the stupendous development of digital technologies configures another quantum leap, making humanity reach a higher level, experiencing a radical change in its way of thinking and acting. This leap, mediatization, seems significant to me and I conceptualize this change as a new way of being.

The reality of society in the process of mediatization allows for different interpretations, all based on the fact that society is constituted through communication. All elements of society are mediatized—we know more and more of our lives, of our cultures, of our institutions through communication media. The content of the communication is the expression of the life of that society: past, present, future, stories, dreams, etc. The result is the sharing of experiences among people of all generations. The communicational process enables the advances of society, always at increasingly

complex levels. What media institutions mediatized in the past now occurs through people's online interactions. People mediatize their own societies and themselves.

Today's communicational process is one of the most complete examples of the so-called systemic thinking. Systemic thinking is understood as a new form of approach that understands human development from the perspective of complexity. The systemic approach looks not only at isolated individuals, but also considers their context and the relationships established there. This does not mean an abandonment or contempt for the microphenomena that appear phenomenologically in everyday life. The two views complete each other in the contemplation of reality. The systemic view cannot be marked by our criticism of the present moment or by our expectations and desires for the future, directing visual acuity only to focus on what happens in everyday life. These two stirrups, although they carry risks, require articulation and tensioning to ensure that these risks are overcome. This interaction between the two approaches has proven to be very productive. Braga says that Lucien Goldmann proposes this as a method (personal communication). To the extent that authors who prefer one or another approach develop an agonism between their perspectives, he believes that the area of communication can generate significant knowledge that is quite resistant to fallibility.

Thinking systemically implies a new way of looking at the world, at humanity, and, consequently, also requires a change of attitude on the part of the scientist; a posture that allows one to expand the focus and understand that the individual is not solely responsible for having a symptom, but that there are relationships that maintain this symptom.

The media's relationship with the processes of meaning and socio-cultural processes expresses reality and takes place within the scope of what is called the "framework of media processes." These two movements, moreover, interact for the construction of social meaning, carried out by individuals and societies.

Electronic media play the role of information enunciator devices. In them, the individual perceives a process of meaning, which includes the construction of discourse in its various configurations—both verbal and non-verbal constructions (through images, gestures and actions). Within the framework of communicative possibilities, certain concepts, images, and gestures are chosen with which an enunciative process is elaborated

that allows communication with and for society. In the same movement, a dynamic of sociocultural processes develops. The importance of this dynamic lies in the fact that any significant process directly affects social relations. These, in turn, condition, determine, and influence both the processes of meanings and society in its communicative action. Relations, interrelations, correlations, connections, and interconnections happen in a two-way movement between the poles of media processes.

In interpersonal communication, the circulation of messages happens immediately between the emission pole and the reception pole. In the case of media processes, circulation occurs mediately, via electronic devices. The media appropriates contents and works them through meaning and sociocultural processes. This complex movement takes place within the contexts of media processes.

Circulation is also structured in connections and interconnections that unfold within the framework of the relationships that society engenders so that communication takes place quickly and efficiently. The transmitted contents reach society and their results return to the communication process, via media processes, thus generating a broader communication environment that influences and is influenced by human beings. In the communication process, there is circulation of contents that, socially elaborated, produce practical and symbolic results. This appears in the different elements at play in the communication process: in society, in communication, in media processes. There are direct, immediate relationships, and indirect relationships, mediated by devices in their meaning and social processes.

With the advent of digital technology, these interrelationships became complex and expanded, creating this ambience. The human process of communication is enhanced, in contemporary society, by the sophistication of its electronic means. In this way, communication interrelationships, as well as media processes, occur in the cultural crucible of mediatization. The reality of society in mediatization surpasses and encompasses the particular dynamics that it engenders in order to communicate. The social environment is modified. The background, the framework within which social dynamics interact, is generated by the assumption of digital reality. Digital virtuality brings, as a consequence, the structuring of a new way of being in the world. Society in mediatization constitutes, from this perspective, a cultural womb where the various social

processes take place. This ambience, this new way of being in the world, characterizes today's society. The interrelations receive a semantic load that places them in a radically new dimension, qualitatively different from the way of being in society until then, characterized as a society of means. Communication and society, intertwined in the production of meaning, are articulated in this crucible of culture that is the result of emergence and extreme technological development. More than a stage in evolution, it is a qualitative leap that establishes the totally new in society. The result of this movement creates an environment (which we call society in mediatization) that configures for people another way of being in the world, in which the media are no longer used as instruments that enable personal relationships, but are part of social self-understanding and individual. Identity is constructed from interaction with the media. The person is not an "I" who uses instruments as an extension of his body, but an individual who understands himself as a being who values his relationships and connections through technological communication instruments.

A society in the process of mediatization is bigger, more comprehensive, than the dynamics of communication carried out until now in the so-called media society. It is not only communication that is enhanced, that is, it is not only the possibilities of communication, through extremely sophisticated technological means, that characterize the current context; but technological sophistication, widely used by people from an early age, creates a matrix environment that ends up determining the way of being, thinking, and acting in society. We call this matrix environment a society "in mediatization."

Mediatization encompasses two simultaneous and dialectical movements. On the one hand, it is the result and consequence of relations, interrelationships, connections, and interconnections of society's use of communication means and instruments, enhanced by digital technology. On the other hand, it means a new social environment that has a profound impact on those same relationships, interrelationships, connections, and interconnections that build contemporary society. Society is in mediatization. The human being is in mediatization. This, today, it is emphasized, configures another way of being in the world. This is the cultural substratum in which the different social groups in the world move. The society erected in these movements is a society in the process of mediatization.

The unanswered question is: can the explanation of this moment of humanity still be given by the description of the mechanical process of speaker, discourse, and listener? This paradigm managed to place the human being in the context of a society of media. Does it still serve or does it leave out a series of elements that configure a society in mediatization? As Luiz Ramiro Beltrán used to say, people communicate for several reasons, the main one not being to exert influence or change the behavior of the other.

The challenge presented to us in this 21st century is to establish the possibility of another (new) paradigm that can handle the reality that humanity is going through. Globalization is on its threshold. Artificial Intelligence, with all its consequences, knocks on the door. The limits of human action are fluid and liquid (Baumann's, 2000, conceptualization). In this sense, it can be said that society lives in limbo. It no longer lives with the certainties of the past, but it still hasn't found new certainties that allow it to thematize what it is suffering.

It is possible to say that the challenges of mediatization are the enigma of the sphinx updated for the third millennium. Who or what is the Oedipus who will decipher them?

A research project submitted to the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) (not considered due to lack of funding) poses some questions that may be useful for what we wish to present here.

To use the metaphor of epigenetics and behavioral epigenetics (the study of how behaviors and environment can cause changes to how genes work), wen can ask, from the perspective of "epimimetics," what are the memes that characterize media processes and make up the DNA of mediatization? Speaking of the health sector, Rosnay (2018) underlines that he is "experiencing a real paradigm shift. It is necessary to understand and generate new epigenetic practices if we want a relevant and equitable transition with respect for people and individual freedoms" (p. 195). For him, the epigenetic-based mechanisms that allow us to act on the complexity of our body can be transposed to the complexity of the society in which we live and work. Society's DNA is constituted by virtual genes, called memes, cultural genes transmitted by mimicry, thanks to the means of communication, collective behavior, and the use of interactive numerical instruments (see Palo, 1982). In summary, "From genes to memes, from genetics to mimetics,

epigenetics, a science under genetics, can be called epimimetics, a science under mimetics, which studies the transmission of memes in society" (p. 200).

This is a power that people can use to transform society. It is more important to regulate, in the cybernetic sense of the term, than to propose regulations. Cybernetic regulation is the role of epigenetics with respect to our body and that of epimimetics with respect to society.

Considering that the DNA of media processes is the one that characterizes the communication process, (as we saw before) that is, a speaker, a discourse and a listener, we must ask which are the memes that, throughout history, have been qualifying this process. As society evolved, new elements were associated and made explicit. The concern was always linked to the role of the sender of the message, who held the leading role in the process. Jesús Martin-Barbero (1987) introduced the concept of mediation to the discussion. However, even in this case, the sender played a leading role in the broadcast, although it did not definitively determine the understanding and action of the receiver.

There is an hypothesis today that a new element has imposed itself with the rapid development of social networks. The relationship between sender, message, and receiver has changing with the end of mediation. Each person is the protagonist of the process. All are senders and receivers. Joël de Rosnay (2018) calls this situation "prosumer" (a word formed from "producer" and "consumer") (p. 95). We now face a new environment that conditions society and people, qualifies the DNA of media processes. This is what we call the mediatization process. Some, like Schulz (2017), advocate its demise. But this is not the case here.

The advent of social networks provides the independence of social actors from the dominance of media logic. In this sense, it is legitimate to speak of the end of mediation, as each actor owns and controls the logic of interrelationship with the other levels of society.

As we have already developed in several places (Faxina & Gomes, 2016; Gomes, 2017), we are no longer facing the phenomenon of the use of technological devices for the transmission of the message, nor as mediators of the relationship of individuals with reality. On the contrary, the development of digital media has created a new ambience

that, in turn, gives rise to a new way of being in the world. The consequence of this is that, instead of watching the end of mediatization, we are just on the threshold of its full development. What society will be born? What way of life will you establish? Only time and its evolution will tell. Nevertheless, we can identify some clues. Paradigms that used to explain reality are no longer able to fulfill that mission. Concepts such as participation, presence, and interaction are resignified by a generation that is born within social networks. Interrelationships are changing. Society can no longer dispense with social networks. It is a new way of being in the world.

From the perspective of a new ambience, the theme has not yet been sufficiently explored, as it goes beyond mere reflection on the media and its role in society. The concept of ambience is a consequence of a change in time in history, when the question of mediatization comes to light (Gomes, 2013). The dimension of media processes transcends individual facts (microphenomena) and points to collective aspects (macrophenomena), collective social construction based on the process of a society in a state of mediatization. The question is, how to approach the media process, which we understand today as mediatization and the generator of a new ambience?

Society in mediatization constitutes, in this perspective, the cultural broth, we repeat, where the various social processes take place. It is an ambience, a new way of being in the world, which characterizes society today.

Big changes are happening in the media world. In the last two decades, media technologies have developed a lot. “The transformation assumed speed and gained wide diffusion with the so-called Web 2.0, with the introduction of smartphones, easy to use, with applications and social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, among others” (Schulz, 2017, p. 4). This reality has greatly transformed the role of the media as an intermediary that connects individuals and institutions. Levels, sectors, and the center and periphery of the political system are increasingly weakened. Therefore, all these changes call into question the concept of mediatization. Political actors were emancipated from the mode of operation of the mass media. Why should they adapt to the logic of the media and adapt their concerns and messages to the rules of journalistic production? Now, they can bypass the media and go directly to the public, without further mediation (See Wolf, 1987, p. 74)

The logical question is: are we facing the end of mediatization? In conclusion, Schulz (2017) states that if we are ready to abandon the concept of media logic as a concept for organizing the message in the age of television, we will also be ready to abandon the concept of mediatization (p. 4). For him, when examining the transformation of political communication in the Internet age, it is more important to analyze its consequences than how to name the process of change (p. 74).

From the perspective of a new ambience, the theme has not yet been sufficiently explored, as it goes beyond mere reflection on the media and its role in society. This conception of ambience is a consequence of a change of an historical epoch.

These affirmations maintain their pertinence in the development of the actions carried out to understand the moment. Nevertheless, we identified that what was exposed as mediatization is identified with the concept of mediation. Although Schulz's thought is relevant, it does not point to the end of mediatization, but to the increasing relevance it assumes today. Therefore, we are of the opinion that we are facing the end of mediation and the transformative beginning of mediatization.

Affirming the end of mediation means advocating that, along with it, the paradigm that gave rise to it also comes to an end. The digital world brings fundamental variables that point to the overcoming of the classical model, with roots in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Perhaps what remains in other bases is the concept of feedback—coming from information engineering. It no longer implies getting to know the other and taking the pulse of a possible change in behavior. The change, if any, is neither foreseen nor sought by the initiator of the communication process. People cannot plan what will come out, in feedback, of the interrelationships and relationships established in social network communities.

The paradigm sought must be within the scope of individual freedom. There are several exchanges, each one with its peculiarity, which cannot be conditioned, programmed and determined by those involved in the communication process of social networks.

Sandra Massoni (2017) writes:

> That looking to the sides and beyond, in communication in Latin America, implies understanding that the new paradigms of communication today make a radical decentering possible: it is not now a question—nor only—of

> transmitted meanings, but to outline in different situations some current traits capable of persisting as a cartography of our future shared horizons. Communicating in Latin America, more than just speaking, is presented as living from the South. No longer paths that fork, but strategic communicators want to follow paths that connect in multiple ways. (p. 11).

More than a saying about, more than information about, society is facing a way of life. Isolated, people look for ways to interact with each other. The pandemic phenomenon excluded face-to-face meetings, which were then held in the context of networks. Technological resources (AI among others) accelerated, and a new, symbiotic creature emerged (De Rosnay, 2000) that establishes new relationships and projects a completely different way of being and living for the Third Millennium (Faxina; Gomes, 2016).

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