

Mediatized Public Sphere and Journalism in Times of Algorithms, Polarization and Crisis of Democracy in Brazil

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Abstract: This paper is a result of the research conducted by the Media Communication and Social Movements Research Group (ComMov), from the São Paulo State University (Unesp), since 2015. It aims to provide a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the mediatized public sphere, focusing on the role of journalism amidst the influence of social media, algorithms, polarization, and democratic crisis in Brazil in the last decade. The study draws upon mediatization theories, the social representations articulated to the notion of the Habermasian public sphere, and network communication to analyze social phenomena observed in Brazil since 2013, a crucial year marked by conflicts and polarizations that continue to shape public discourse and the repositioning of journalism in the face of an evolving scenario. By acknowledging the complexity of the historical context, we propose a reflection on the communicational aspects within contemporary public sphere processes. Our argument revolves around the notion of an ongoing crisis within the modern societal framework, resulting in detrimental effects on democracy, media communication, and journalism. This crisis leads to the creation of a divided, less rational, and more emotionally-driven contemporary public sphere, heavily influenced by algorithmic logic. The present work aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of these issues and their implications.

Keywords: Public Sphere, Mediatization, Algorithms, Journalism, Social Representations

1. Introduction

The present article, with an essayistic nature, structured in exploratory bibliographic survey and the research experience of the authors with the Media Communication and Social Movements Research Group (ComMov/Unesp), reflects on the concept of "mediatized public sphere", in a situated way to the Brazilian context of (dis)information and democratic crisis, especially concerning the disarticulation of journalism as a knowledge social producer and center of rational public debate in modernity. For this, we use contributions from the mediatization theory and the social representations articulated to the notion of the Habermasian public sphere in the context of disinformation and Hybrid War.

With the possibility of new channels of interaction, participation and deliberation in the virtual environment, the communicative reality of the public sphere seemed promising. The possibility of citizen inclusion, the democratization of access to information and the possibility of many speaking to many have brought optimism to theoretical currents concerned with communication in the public sphere, especially in communicative alternatives to mass media [8]. However, what happened was a virtual space dominated by large technology companies, where reigns an algorithmic logic in social media that reinforces the polarization, the crystallization of previous opinions and the dissemination of disinformation, in addition to leading to an affective ideological division, especially about the political debate [7,

39]. In this sense, we seek to understand the specifically communicational [35] of the mediatized public sphere in the context of the algorithmic and social interactions in times of instability, polarization and de-democratization [9].

Since the popular protests started in June 2013, called “Jornadas de Junho”, Brazil has been going through a series of social, political and economic processes that are characterized by deep political polarization and social division, the increase in inequalities, the weakening of institutions and a crisis in the democratic model initiated with the 1988 Constitution. In this scenario, it is necessary to ask which media elements are producing fertile ground for the public sphere disarticulation and the emergence of meanings and discourses that seek to attack democracy and republican institutions, and promote disinformation and social confusion.

Market-driven journalism fed the public sphere with constructions of meanings aligned with the “neoliberal fable” [33], which, through the depoliticization and “demonization” of politics, contributed to the disintegration of Dilma Rousseff’s government, resulting in impeachment and producing fertile ground for the rise of Jair Bolsonaro’s radical discourse and Bolsonarism as a catalyst and organizer of the Brazilian far-right [33]. By being permissive to the undemocratic abuses of the spheres of power that culminated at the end of the Dilma government and in the rise of the “bolsonarist” discourse, the commercial vehicles also shot at themselves, and today they see the pillar of journalistic credibility suffers damages with the questioning of the truth value of journalistically produced content.

In this sense, we propose a reflection on the public sphere in times of algorithms and their arrangements in the context of the disputes of meanings and narratives that characterize the mediatized logic, with focused attention to the *modus operandi* of the agents of the Brazilian Hybrid War. We argue that the dissolution of the public sphere is a result of several communicative strategies, which include the notions of “disinformation”, “fake news”, “post-truth”, “denialism” and sophisticated forms of political destruction and ideological radicalization.

2. The Mediatized Public Sphere as Hybrid War

Once the public sphere is a concept developed by Habermas [17] to embrace a specific phenomenon in space and time, as a result of historical and social processes with specific characteristics [29] thinking about the mediatized public sphere is to reflect on its contemporary dimension in times of algorithms and social media, understanding the current processes of discursive exchanges, communicative actions and deliberation, both in the institutional sense and in the informal conversations that compose it. The communicative process in the Habermasian public sphere is understood as interaction and argumentative and meaning exchange based on the pragmatics of discursive rationality. However, we argue that the issue of rational argumentation is weakened in the mediatized context

in times of algorithmization, being the main characteristic of contemporary public space.

The mediatized public sphere is related to the symbolic construction of subjects as from the representations and meanings produced in the media and which operate according to media logics. It is about cultural sharing from the symbolic exchanges arising from the interactions that characterize the communicative action. In this sense, the constructions of representation about reality, according to Barros [3] support consciousness and the construction of identities in order to be “crossed by mediatized interactions that integrate the social structure” [3]. Sodré [39] proposed mediatization “thought of as a sociability technology or a new *bios*, a kind of fourth existential scope”. Thus, mediatization is understood as a structuring element of social practices and interactions, producing new meanings in complex arenas of meaning and circulation of content mediatically produced [5]. Mediatization can also be thought of from the point of view of institutions, which start to act from media logics that diminishes the importance of objective reality [43]. This process, however, is rarely organic and is mediated by the algorithmic logic of networks, serving the economic interests of Big Techs.

Our articulation of the mediatized public sphere has a neuralgic point in the notion of “Hybrid War”. The concept of hybrid war has military origins and was first presented by Hoffman [20], who drew on the experience of 9/11 to define it as “threats that embody a range of different modes of warfare, including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder”. Hybrid wars can be understood as forms of indirect warfare, without open confrontation, characterized by the “dilution between war and politics” [23] in a process also of informational warfare, along with others: economic attacks, lawfare and inducement to social divisions. These processes are characterized by fluidity, decentralization and asymmetry, with a focus on psychological operations and implicit and gradual fabrication processes of public opinion, in which a web of meanings and senses are produced and disseminated to create political destabilization, exchanges of leadership and maintenance of the interests of its agents.

Korybko [22] states that “chaos theory” guides the information warfare process. According to this logic, it is possible to predict patterns in non-linear social dynamics and in environments in constant transformation according to certain variables. The point here is to change “the conflict energy of social actors”, to embed values and beliefs as meaning “viruses” that contaminate that group with ideas and ideologies to direct them according to their own interests. This virus, according to the author, is then spread to other people, creating a “swarm” and subsequent social upheaval. A great example of this strategy is the “ideological turnaround” of the June 2013 protests, which started as a protest against transportation in São Paulo but was co-opted by groups of other ideologies and interests and transformed into spaces of ideological dispute that promoted the original

political emptying of the protests and became a maneuver mass for interests that had nothing to do with the original claims (Machado and Miskolci 2019), contributing to the destabilization of Dilma Rousseff's government in later years.

Thus, from communicative strategies, Hybrid War promotes institutional destabilization by creating social confusion, producing political instability from fear and the mobilization of affections (Castro 2020). For this objective to be achieved, it is necessary to dispute the hegemony in the field of the media. A concept that highlights the mediatized character of hybrid war is that of "web social wars". Korybko [22] mentions the work *The Advent of Netwar*, published by John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt [2], to explain the phenomenon: "a new type of social conflict on the horizon, in which "leaderless" networks composed mainly of actors unrelated to the State would take advantage of the information revolution (ie, the Internet) to wage a low-intensity amorphous struggle against the Establishment" [22].

Arquilla and Ronfeldt [1] emphasize that the distinction of this type of war lies precisely in the direction in the domain of information and communications, in order to "disturb, deteriorate or modify what a target population knows or thinks they know about itself and the world around it." This is the decentralized, leaderless, networked information war that takes place in a dispersed way in "information operations" and "perception management". In this type of operation, the actors do not need hierarchies and commanders, because they already know what needs to be done: confuse beliefs, create perceptions, manipulate information, direct the culture in order to create conspiratorial climates, create untrue theories and build enemies.

The less evident the intelligence services that act in the hybrid war in the virtual environment and on the streets, the more effective will be the intentionality behind this process. In an automated way, we observe the massive and covert presence of advertisements and narratives that intend to manipulate the dynamics and political discourse. Social media and several apps are used to misinform, spread fake news, carry out denialist attacks and influence the public sphere. These tools are constantly "capitalized to exploit contradictions and divisions in society and eventually make political gains" [45].

The tonic of the Hybrid War is complex and extrapolates the interest of studies in Communication. We are interested in characterizing the specifically communicational aspect of this process, with emphasis on non-organic mechanisms that promote the dissolution of the public sphere as a space for democracy. In this sense, understanding the process of formation of ideological bubbles, counter-publics and the disarticulation of the public sphere as a democratic space is of paramount importance.

3. Polarization, Algorithms and the Bubbles in the Public Sphere

Political divisions and polarizations are one of the most

visible layers of dissolution of the public sphere in algorithmic times. "Bubble" is a term used to refer to the fragmentation of the public sphere into peripheral subspaces, where subjects interact only with each other in a media ecology that reinforces their own prepossessions, in order to create communicative barriers in divergent subspaces [42]. Our experience in conducting empirical research¹ in the face-to-face and online environment indicates a complex process of consensus construction based on disinformation logics that involve cognitive processes impacted by affectivity, identity and social division structured by polarization. In the electoral context, one of the strategies for dismantling the public sphere, made by Hybrid War agents, is the restriction of other sources of information, based on discursive strategies of delegitimization and discrediting of institutions, such as professional journalism and research institutes. Several empirical studies have detailed this *modus operandi* [7, 16, 27].

As stated by Castro [6] "hybrid war is a media phenomenon for excellence". The algorithmic issue allows a new configuration in the matrix of meaning dispute, much less dependent on traditional media and much easier to be manipulated, as is the case of fake profiles and "robots", which hijack the debate on social media and flood the mediated public sphere of meanings and ideologies previously established by its operators. This new media ecosystem produced by social media and guided by algorithmic logic represents the degradation of the Habermasian public sphere, based on rational debate, public exchange of arguments and the effort for rationality and deliberative consensus.

According to Han [19], the 19th-century book culture conceived the Habermasian public sphere, guided by rationality and spectator passivity. The predominance of digital media in the information society transforms politics into "mass media staging" [19], in which performance is more important than rational argument. This statement is close to Stromback's conception of mediatization [43], who states that the fourth phase of mediatization occurs when "actors not only adapt to the media logic and the predominant news values, but also internalize these and, more or less consciously, allow the media logic and the standards of newsworthiness to become a built-in part of the governing processes".

From this perspective, the mediatized public sphere is the internalization of the media structure at the center of public debate, in the process of forming opinions, consciences and world perspectives. The estrangement from reality by a

¹ See: Zanetti, L. A.; Luvizotto, C. K. (2022). Mediatização da corrupção política: enquadramentos jornalísticos, percepção e debate público informal. *Temática - Monthly electronic magazine*, v. 18, p. 52-66.
Luvizotto, C. K.; Zanetti, L. A. (2020). O papel do jornalismo em ambientes informais de deliberação: o caso português. In: Caroline Kraus Luvizotto; Cláudia Assis. (Org.). *Comunicação para a inclusão e a cidadania*. 1ed. Aveiro: Ria Editorial, 2020, v. 1, p. 73-96.

Luvizotto, C. K.; Zanetti, L. A. (2020). O sensível como agente da esfera pública: o uso da razão e emoção no debate online sobre a proposta de proibição do Funk. *ComHumanitas: revista científica de comunicação*, v. 11, p. 37-53.

“theatercracy” [19] that characterizes mediatization explains how disinformation, denialisms, “post-truths” and ideological mobilization of affections, such as Christian moral panic, find fertile ground to fill the ideal of a consciousness determined by mediatized processes.

In this sense, as stated by mediatization theories, in the hybrid war machine the media has a central role, directing the public sphere and the dispute for meaning and social representations, with war strategy and in a disguised, deferred and diffuse way. In the algorithmic logic of social media, the public sphere starts to operate as ideological bubbles, divided, without spaces for conversations and argumentative exchanges that favor deliberation. The senses reinforce the ideological codes themselves and the value of truth ceases to exist as a fact, it starts to exist as a belief; and the meaning that circulates outside this belief becomes discredited [40].

This perspective, however, does not start from a mediacentric logic in the analysis of the social processes that characterize hybrid war. The complexity of the issue resides in the social practices that characterize a mediatized public sphere and their implications in terms of society's perception of itself, the institutions and the context of the world in which they are inserted. The mediatization theory seeks to understand the mechanisms of interaction, sociability and the transformations of everyday life, political practices and the relation of citizenship and consumption between subjects and institutions [12]. The *media bios* conceptualized by Sodr  [39] compose a hermeneutic key to understanding the contemporary public sphere, once the society's symbolic constructions about itself are represented by media matrices [17]. The inherent characteristic of this process is a public sphere guided by the logic of consumption, where sociability is no longer defined by political capacity, but by the ability to build an identity based on the possibilities of consumption, so that the “individualist conscience overrides, in the public space, political injunctions of social responsibility” [40].

In the digital context, in which communication and information tools are appropriated by individuals, institutions, political groups, political parties, social movements and other social actors in the production of their content and communicative strategies, it is possible to clearly understand the scope of the mediatization of the sphere public, much more deferred, diffuse and difficult to categorize [36]. The mediatization of the public sphere is subject to the algorithmic-business logic of social media and their political and economic interests, being often the target of legal controversies related to privacy, data, local legislation, hate speech, disinformation and planned operations in the context of hybrid warfare.

Another important aspect is that the mediatization and algorithmization processes represent a reconfiguration of the social representations that characterize the relationship between the Self and the Other in the social interactions that structure the public sphere. Sandra Jovchelovitch [21] uses Social Psychology to understand the relationship between the

public sphere and social representations, analyzing how the symbolic constructions of public spaces in Brazil happen. The work was published in 2000, long before the beginning of the phenomena triggered in 2013, but still offers rich theoretical inputs that help to understand the elements that we propose to analyze in this article.

The notion that the structural problems of Brazilian society are directly linked to the fragility of the components necessary to sustain a public sphere, along the lines of deliberative democracy, is the central question developed by the author and which is currently illustrated by political and social events in Brazil after 2013. These are dilemmas that the author recognizes to be old, but which still constituted impasses in the year 2000 and still constitute, in our view, in 2022. As in that year, the social scene in Brazil in 2023 is marked by the issue of hunger, uncontrolled inflation, increased poverty and income concentration as a result of neoliberal policies that minimize the action of public policies and block strategies to mitigate social problems resulting from inequality. The similarities don't stop there. Jovchelovitch [21] cites the crisis of confidence in institutions and frustration with democracy that stem from the failure to solve economic and social problems and lead to a “disenchantment with the public sphere”. This disenchantment, in turn, leads to social fatalism, in which subjects are unable to imagine a positive social future, without recognizing historical time, and are doomed to a cycle of impoverishment of life's possibilities. It is about disbelief in politics that produces depoliticization and exacerbated individualism.

At this point, the author's postulations meet Han's notion of Infocracy [19], which places the viral flow of information structured in a “rhizomatic” format, distancing the individual from socially relevant issues, generating depoliticization and fatalism. The “surprise stimulus” and the temporal instability of information perpetuate an imperative of the present, with no time for understanding experiences. Now, the interpretation and reformulation in the cognitive process are indispensable elements in the communicative act, without which there is no communication but the transmission of information. “Rational” reflections, says Han [19] require time, and time is what does not exist in mediatized societies. In this sense, mediatization is also the triumph of affective and aesthetic meanings to the detriment of rational argument. This aspect is a major blow to the Habermasian notion of the public sphere but has long been contested by several authors [13, 32, 28]. Affective communication operates by the logic of emotional stimulus, obfuscating arguments and reason, and this is one of the main characteristics of the mediatized public sphere. However, we understand that the issue of emotions and affections in the public sphere does not, in itself, constitute negative elements to the public debate, being, many times, desirable to the deliberative process, as pointed out by Ferreira [11] and Maia [26].

The question is important to support the “psychosocial” dimension existing in the construction of social reality that “involves the symbolic knowledge that is produced in

everyday life, when social agents engage in communicative practices in the public sphere” [21]. This is because, as stated by Moscovici [30], social representations are meanings negotiated from public interactions in everyday encounters and in the media. It is in these encounters, in the space of life, in informal conversations, that the symbolic discursive exchanges, which constitute representations on the most diverse themes and give structure to the public sphere, take place [24].

The contribution of social psychology places the issues of intersubjectivity and the expression of the Self in relation to the Other at the center of the notion of public sphere, in public and communicative processes that presuppose subjective elements in the exchanges that characterize the interactions and symbolic constructions. It is from these exchanges that the community “can develop and sustain the knowledge about itself” [21]. In this sense, it is important to recognize private and public spheres as distinct, but that connect and feed each other, forming individual and collective identities based on the relationship between the Self and the Other. According to the author, social representations have their origin in the symbolic activities of the human being that characterize the social interactions linked to the development of the Self, which shares a symbolic reality with the Other, since “it is the social mediations in all their public forms that generate social representations” [21].

4. Journalism in the Context of the Mediatized Public Sphere

The role of the media in the modern social configuration has been a central point of research in Communication and in the Social and Human Sciences for a long time, and it is not by chance that it is a key issue in Habermas’ [18] conceptions of the public sphere. The tension between the communication of citizens in argumentative exchanges in everyday conversation, on one hand, and the apparatus of the mass media and their economic interests, on the other, has been the Habermasian object in most of his work [29]. Since journalism is necessary to provide information, opinions and instruments that are appropriated by subjects for the constitution of public debate, the transformations in journalism are also changes in the public sphere, since both are originated from the same rational process of configuration of modern societies. In this way, journalism constructs the public sphere “by framing situations, representing events for society, in order to place them in a constellation of values, ideologies, interpretations and imaginaries” [38].

Journalism itself is part of the social representation system and is subject to the perception of public opinion about its social function. Otherwise, the credibility of the vehicles in the market context would not be so important for the commercial survival of the media. The new algorithmic reality of network communication on the internet allows

meanings to circulate in ways that disarticulate the *modus operandi* of industrial journalism and is also taken advantage of by Hybrid War agents, who, committed to disinformation, strategically appropriate the journalistic apparatus: either by infiltrating agendas, either by manipulating the news, as a form of social confusion, especially in electoral contexts. The “crisis in journalism” question has been discussed for a long time by researchers without necessarily emerging a satisfactory answer to the question. Many authors reduce the problem to the change in the consumption pattern with the advancement of Information and Communication Technologies, to the speed of information propagation in the age of networks and to the break with the classic scheme of mass media in which few communicate to many. Far from being mistaken, these perspectives lose sight of the fact that the political, social and economic developments that culminated in a generalized crisis in Western democratic regimes [10] reached important pillars of the modernity project, including classic values that support journalism as a praxis and profession.

In other words, we align ourselves with the authors who identify that the crisis in journalism is a crisis in the very project of liberal (and neoliberal) modernity of social configuration, and in the regimes of enunciation (such as the notion of truth and credibility), produced from complex economic relationships that involve the concentration of power and income by Big Techs at a global level. Souza (2018) identifies the abandonment of commercial journalism from its enlightenment principles of defense and strengthening of democracy, and the acting, “without hesitation”, as an “ideological device of globalization” (Souza 2018, p. 58). Journalism has been transformed both in terms of the circulation of news (in new formats and platforms) and the precariousness of newsrooms and professional practice, which is much more homogeneous, scrapped e with no space for the profound, the contradictory and the detailed verification (Xavier 2015).

In addition to the structural changes in journalism as a profession, we are interested in understanding the phenomenon of the dissolution of credibility and truth value that has structured journalism since its origins. The discrediting of vehicles is deeply related to the weakening of the public sphere, which, in turn, is of great interest to Hybrid War agents, who use cognitive chaos as a method of action (Korybko 2018). In his analysis of the mediatization of journalism, Sodr  [40] points out the displacement from the truth value of journalism to the value of viral exposure that characterizes the logic of social media dominated by Big Techs through “subtle mechanisms of exposure that lead to self-deception” [40]. Well, it is precisely in the social media arena that the biggest and most intense war of meanings is fought, which characterizes the manipulation of public opinion at the center of the Hybrid War, where we can identify widely discussed phenomena such as Fake News, post-truth, the scientific denialism and depoliticizing ideologization as a hegemonic social representation of the “universal subject”

in the public sphere, which can also be understood as counter-publics in Fraser's conception [14], or even as bubbles and fragmentations of the public sphere.

The attacks on the press and the disrespect for journalists by President Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil are situated in the strategy of dismantling journalistic vehicles as promoters of information, reasons and facts that can demystify the discourse that sustains Bolsonarism and its authoritarian pretensions. The "personalist" and "populist" historical tradition of the fragile Brazilian public sphere, which creates mythical figures and national heroes [21], is constantly fed by the bolsonarist *modus operandi*, which tries to place Bolsonaro as an anti-system figure through the deliberate falsification of reality. [21] had already demonstrated how the family ties and novelistic emotions that characterize the public sphere in Latin societies are the ideal scenarios for the emergence of populism from fatalism in relation to political institutions.

However, it would be wrong to say that Bolsonarism is the cause of the problem of the democratic crisis. We argue that it is a symptom of problems that have never been openly faced in various spheres that make up Brazil. The financialization and algorithmization of the world of life, according to Sodré [40], the privatization of neoliberal policy and the perverse globalization [33] have led to an increase in inequality around the world, with an increase in poverty, precariousness of work and the consequent worsening of social conflicts. As Cunha [10] points out, the consequence is a process of "de-democratization", which is the very crisis of the liberal State and the inability of social control through democratic ways. Thus, the consequences of neoliberal policies reveal their authoritarian and reticent face regarding the strengthening of democracy.

Among a diversity of researchers who denounce the conflicting practices of the neoliberal logic of informational capitalism with democratic practices, James Bartlett is emphatic in saying that the Internet, instead of contributing to democratic principles, is, in fact, killing democracy. Bartlett [4] argues that technologies conflict with democratic systems because they were not designed for them. For the author, democracies were built based on a time of nation-states, hierarchical and with industrialized economies, while the digital technological model is non-geographic, decentralized, data-driven, subject to network effects and with exponential growth. Democracy and digital technologies would be little or not compatible from this perspective. Contrary to the disintermediation of the mainstream media, there is the obscure mediation, which is intended to be invisible, of algorithms. The centrality of communication results in a super communicational offer and, at the same time, in an unprecedented and harmful disinformation process.

This is just one of the points, which concern the relevant discussion to the field of Communication, which seeks to understand the rise of Jair Bolsonaro and other governments and which are linked to the notion of Hybrid War. In this sense, the commercial media, by assuming the uncritical defense of globalization and liberal practices, contributed to

enabling the emergence of the authoritarian discourse of which they are victims today. Because it is closely linked to the emergence of liberalism, commercial journalism finds itself in a complex technological, political and economic conjuncture that has as a consequence the decomposition of its function as a mediator between the citizen and the public sphere, losing its function as a spirit of modernity [40].

In this sense, the political, economic and technological transformations that affect journalism also affect its epistemological bases. As Serrano [35] points out, the journalism crisis is about objectivity, impartiality, authority, credibility, mediation and distribution. Moraes and Veiga da Silva [31] punctuate the epistemological construction of journalism centered on the "universal subject", guided by the "capitalist, masculinist, heterosexist, westernist system" and by the same notions of scientific objectivity and neutrality from rationality that simplifies the world and reduces knowledge within the scope drawn from these bases. The contradictions of the profession must be understood as a way of overcoming problems, improving the type of knowledge produced in journalism, as suggested by Genro Filho [15]. Thus, the recovery of journalism as a social producer of knowledge, beyond the communication companies that act in the commercial logic and serve the interest of financiers, is a crucial point of resistance in the context of the mediatization of journalism that we seek to present in this article.

5. Conclusion

With strong expectations of transformative and incremental contributions to democracies in the world, the development of cyberspace, of network communication, was, from the beginning, seen as the great pro-democracy potentiality. On the other hand, opposing positions were also common since the beginning, which see in the development of information and communication technologies a growth and a strengthening of values aligned with the neoliberal order, in which democratic principles lose space or are despised in favor of capital, potentiating hybrid war scenarios.

The complexification of the algorithmic mediatization current stage and the new modalities of networked information warfare take the relationship between media and the public sphere to unprecedented levels in human history, making the repositioning of journalism necessary in a scenario of structural transformations in contemporary societies, which keep their epistemological foundations in check. In this article, we seek to articulate concepts and notions for the deepening of the phenomena mobilized here, which result from years of studies related to the public sphere, the deliberation, the action of social movements in the network and the role of journalism in the process of negotiating meanings in mediatized society. It is a deep reflection developed with the Media Communication and Social Movements Research Group (ComMov/Unesp), since its conception in 2015.

If before, as identified by Milton Santos [33], the public sphere was occupied by the emptying of the contradictory and by the single discourse to meet the interests of globalization, today it is no overstatement to say that the public sphere is occupied by agents of hybrid war, committed to a division of the country and the assimilation of military tactics of indirect war as a form of democratic disarticulation resulting from the social aggravations arising from the increase in poverty on a world scale. In this process, it is important to highlight that the methods change, but the interests remain the same: favoring the richest and billionaires at a global level. Journalism, as a social producer of knowledge, must also meet itself, rejecting the forced ideologization of mediatization and reaffirming the democratic journalistic values, against misinformation and valuing the humanization of social subjects. If it operates in the logic of informational war in the hybrid war scenario, journalism is doomed to disintegrate as a modern project, becoming a mediatized phenomenon distinct from its original epistemological bases to be another instrument in the service of social chaos and democratic dissolution.

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