INTERVIEW WITH JOSÉ LUIZ BRAGA

Mediatization and Interaction

The Part and the Whole

Mediatización e interacción

La parte y el todo

Midiatização e interação

A parte e o todo

DOI: https://doi.org/10.18861/ic.2026.21.1.4516

BY MARIO CARLÓN

mariocarlon895@gmail.com – Autonomous City of Buenos Aires – Seminário (REDE) Internacional de Pesquisa em Midiatização e Processos Sociais, Brazil. / Instituto Gino Germani, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5303-1308

BY JAIRO FERREIRA

jairoferrei@gmail.com – Santa María – Salvador – Seminário (REDE) Internacional de Pesquisa em Midiatização e Processos Sociais, Brazil. / Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Brazil. / Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brazil.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0197-5412

BY GUILLERMO OLIVERA

golivera1000@aol.com – Amsterdam – Seminário (REDE) Internacional de Pesquisa em Midiatização e Processos Sociais, Brazil. / University of Amsterdam, Netherlands.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3293-4269

HOW TO CITE: Carlón, M., Ferreira, J. & Olivera, G. (2026). Interview with José Luiz Braga. Mediatization and Interaction. The Part and the Whole. *InMediaciones de la Comunicación*, *21*(1). https://doi.org/10.18861/ic.2026.21.1.4516

José Luiz Braga, one of the leading figures in communication research in Brazil, obtained his doctorate from Université Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas in 1984 and was part of the same French research environment where Antônio Fausto Neto (who earned a doctorate in social sciences from the École des Hautes Études in 1982), Eliseo Verón (who earned a doctorate in Linguistics from Université Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis in 1985), and Muniz Sodré (who pursued postgraduate and postdoctoral studies at Université Sorbonne), among other leading academic figures in Latin America, were trained.

Marked by a solid background based on interactionist perspectives and the social construction of knowledge, which led him to a rapid distancing from French structuralism, Braga contributed to the founding, in Brazil, of the Associação Nacional de Pesquisas em Comunicação in 1991 and questioned —always in an up-to-date way— the distinction between communication research inherited from the social sciences (sociology, anthropology, political economy), from language theories (discourse approaches to research and theories of the sign) and from informational studies marked by cybernetics, having as interlocutors other prominent Brazilian researchers such as the aforementioned Sodré, Wilson Gomes, Ciro Marcondes Filho, Luiz Signates and Lucrécia Ferrara, among others.

In this dialogue with *InMediaciones de la Comunicación*, Braga revisits one of the central questions that marked his research – the question of what communication is – and reflects on the ways in which his work has connected with mediatization studies.

MARIO CARLÓN (M.C.), JAIRO FERREIRA (J.F.) & GUILLERMO OLIVERA (G.O.): In the article "O desafio da interação humana e os processadores comunicacionais" ("The Challenge of Human Interaction and Communication Processors") (Braga, 2023), you develop a central theme within your scholarly production: interactions. Does this imply contrasting the two approaches, "interaction" versus "mediatization"? How can we articulate the idea of conceiving "mediatization as a reference interactional process" —as in the title of a 2007 paper (Braga, 2007)— with the approach you develop in that 2023 article on communication processes?

JOSÉ LUIZ BRAGA (J.L.B.): Actually, there is no contrast, only a distinction between "the part and the whole." In my 2007 proposal, I emphasize that the specifically communicational aspect of mediatization is a relevant *interactional* process, to the point that it should become a reference point; which does not imply excluding other aspects or discarding variations. Since at least 2001, I have believed that our understanding of human communication cannot be restricted to a defining essence (which would exclude everything not defined by that essence), nor should it be limited to a mere sector of social activities, such as the media. Rather, this understanding must be expanded to encompass all actions,



all interactions among human beings, all processes involving interaction and its attempts. Furthermore, it should not be restricted to the attempts to reach consensus.

In another article, "Comunicação como trabalho da diversidade" ("Communication as a Work of Diversity") from 2022, I take as my starting point the great diversity of human beings at the individual level. Thus, in addition to this diversity (of attitudes, rhythms, preferences, gestures, focuses of attention, and learned processes), I perceive the fact that we are *diversifiers*. That is to say, faced with an extremely wide range of different contexts (natural and social), we are transformed and we transform the world. The power of diversification is manifested in the collective work of the species, in the processes that bring together and compose different singularities, generating broader and more diverse social competencies. The isolated individual encounters limitations in addressing contextual diversity. Thus, human survival (and its ability to adapt to the environment) becomes inextricably linked to our capacity to assemble the diversity of unique participants in any interactive situation (a concept I am exploring in my research).

Communication, in its most basic and broadest sense, encompasses each and every process that involves the work of facilitating interaction among human diversity in the effort to address or confront the demands of nature, relevant contexts, and the inherent diversity of the participants themselves. A relevant conceptual basis that supports this perspective is the following proposition by Hannah Arendt (2018), who argues that human plurality, the basic condition of action and discourse, has the dual configuration of equality and difference: "If human beings were not different, each one distinct from every other who is, was, or will be, they would need neither speech nor action to make themselves understood" (p. 175).

This implies an extraordinary diversity of communicative gestures and processes that require attention. It is not surprising, then, the dispersion of communicational knowledge we observe since the scientific field began to concern itself with these issues in the 20th century. This dispersion initially existed among various human and social science disciplines, to the point of attempting to characterize communication studies as inherently "interdisciplinary." But if we consider communication studies as having the potential to constitute its own field of knowledge (as I prefer), we must confront this dispersion without abandoning the diversity of communication processes within society

itself, even accepting discoveries made in other disciplines. In this sense, it should be possible to bring together the most diverse knowledge through the establishment of an explicitly communicative axis. And it is toward this all-encompassing level that I have always oriented my approach to research, "Mediatization and Social Processes," developed in Brazil at the Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Brazil), as well as my studies and theoretical reflections. I consider mediatization from the perspective of an interactive process. This process, throughout the 20th century, has become a relevant reference point for understanding the transformations —of a communicative nature— that occur in society. Social interaction (the joint action between participants who articulate their singularities) is not only the general sphere in which communicative processes occur, but also, and above all, a process that, in its occurrence, leads to a dynamic diversification among its participants.

Of course, in those earlier investigations, the proposals I presented in the 2023 article had not yet been developed. But in putting forward this perspective, I can assure you that the clarification now indicated does not imply a change of course in these ideas. Mediatization presents itself today (more than in the 20th century) with particular relevance for the work that society and its participants carry out, at all levels, in order to articulate human diversity.

Among the countless situations, contexts, and circumstances in which interactions develop —from dialogue between two people to the activities of large groups, including the composition of structured organizations and public or private institutions—, communication involving the media as *processors* has a particular impact on social dynamics. I mentioned some reasons for this relevance in the article "Constitution of the Field of Communication" (Braga, 2011), and undoubtedly today we could add many others.

But it must be emphasized that mediatization is not only a consequence of technological invention and large business organizations, but also involves a collective invention of uses and experimental practices that, in turn, guide technological development. Mediatization is, therefore, an ongoing activity that acts directly on social practice. The interest that the sociological, political, economic, linguistic, and legal fields dedicate to these issues is understandable. Furthermore, reiterating my conviction regarding the relevance of communicative processes, I continue to believe that mediatization and its processes require a specifically communicative perspective, one that goes beyond sociological, political, and economic considerations.

It is from this perspective that I emphasize technological media as *communication processors* (among other very diverse types of processors); just as I perceive the perspectives from which communication is not only a user, but also —and significantly— a *generator of social processes of mediatization*, by means of directing the use of media toward the interactional objectives of society. The processors themselves are socially invented as part of the communicative work

of articulating singularities. With this, I can say that my current approach, far from being a contradiction, suggests that —in order for us to be able to offer contributions of communicative knowledge to mediatization studies— we must intensify its inscription within a broader perspective of communicational: interactional situations in general.

M.C., J.F. & G.O.: Does the proposal to emphasize "communication processors" in the perspective you are developing imply disregarding the link between social processes and mediatization? From this perspective, what is the meaning of the concept of "processors" and what can their operation offer regarding communicational knowledge?

J.L.B.: I will begin with the second question, which serves to clarify the first part of the query. Human interaction (the collective action of social participants) basically requires that people —diverse among themselves in their actions— manage to communicate, despite their differences. The human species surpasses the predictions regarding instinct (gregarious tendencies, fight and flight, joint search for food, exercise of physical strength), becoming intensely dependent on communication to be able to interact. Thus, humans need *established procedural foundations* to facilitate this communication, that is, socially constituted structures that are available according to needs. What appears to be the original foundation is spoken language (which may have originated from onomatopoeic sounds accompanied by gestures). In other words, spoken language is one of those highly effective procedural foundations —a processor— that has enabled great advances in the civilizations of our species. It is also easy to identify writing as an important processor of human communication. However, human knowledge does not seem to have clearly distinguished this general aspect, transversal to diverse situations: making interaction between people possible through communication. The active possibilities of different languages have always been related to the different specific actions performed: arguing, debating, deliberating, teaching, convincing; that is, they were linked to *one or another mode* of interaction without paying attention to the whole.

It is evident, in the same vein, that additional inventions, such as photography, radio, television, and video recordings, are communication processors. With these media, communication problems were considered in this transversal sense for the first time. Radio and television, at the time of their invention, emerged as a foreign body, much less defined in their processes: the problems arising from their impact on the established order were characterized as "communicative." The term "communication" (and, with radio and television, "mass communication") became satisfactory for the purpose of referring to them because it was generic, and has also long been in common sense usage, without specifying interactional objectives. The media (the term that became generalized, since it encompasses the entire technological diversity, from radio to

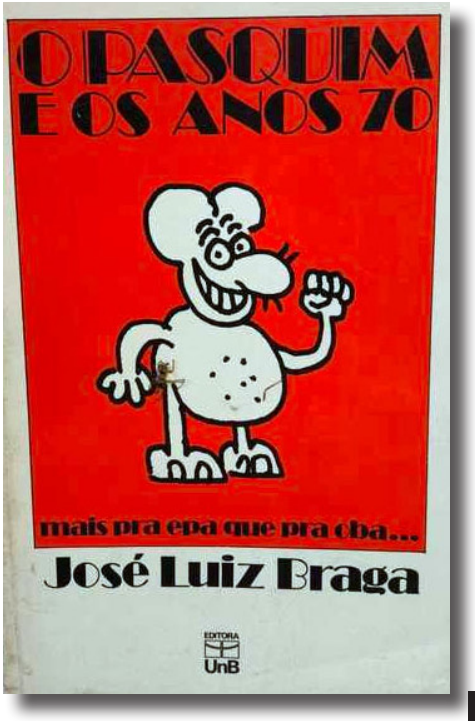
algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI), eventually including their "languages") are, therefore, processors.

The word "processor" allows us to refer to the entire set, including spoken language, writing, and sign languages. There are other types of processors, such as the strategies invented to specify ways of interacting: legal language, bureaucratic language, poetry, deliberation, and argumentation. Strategies help to identify practical objectives, thus facilitating the direction of the interaction. There are also other processors: environments, interactional contexts, such as the classroom, an assembly, a business dinner, a courtroom, or a bar. Such environments function as cultural processors for the interactions that occur there. The cultures of insertion are macro-processors of interactions.

Thus, we are familiar with the proposal to consider this entire broad set as "media," which I believe stems from the same concern to broaden the focus of attention, since technological media are not the only ones which provide the basis for communication. There is a problem, however, with using the word "media" for this broader set, because it concentrates all processors around technological media, creating an illusion of the "logical" centrality of these technological media, when in reality this centrality is historical and circumstantial. At the same time, it encourages an approach to the issue through an assimilation of the whole ("everything is a medium"), diminishing the importance of *procedural variation* and emphasizing mediality, an aspect that is not so universal. And if "everything is a medium," then all social processes are "mediatization," and a relevant distinction is lost.

What, then, does the word "processor" do? It brings the whole set together under the focus of a basic action: they all process communication. This perception leads to the question: "How do they process?", which encourages us to observe the diversity of processes and the specificities that arise in their use. If the media are processors of social interaction, it becomes clear that observing and paying attention to the general set does not imply a restriction to that relevant subset involved in the mediatization of society, nor does it disconnect mediatization from social processes.

At the same time, without abandoning the subset, which continues to be characterized by its traditional designation of "mediatization," we can seek their specificities beyond "influencing the institutions of society" and other communicative processes. Furthermore, we must acknowledge that mediatization is also the result of the very work of communication as an attempt to articulate people, groups, needs, and social singularities, which reinforces its necessary link with other social processes. In these terms, the discussion about the *interactional processing* exerted by the media becomes more complex, suggesting other more precise aspects for its understanding: a) What processes does this (specific) processor allow? b) How do social participants activate it, in what directions, with what objectives, and with what consequences for



the design of the processor itself? c) How does this processor interact with other processors, resulting in what compositions (with varying assessment depending on their uses)? What processes does it enable?

Given that processors are activated for a variety of objectives, we can observe this diversity, as well as be attentive to unethical activations, oppressive ones, or any other type of deviation (without ever losing sight of the specificities of the processor in use). Just as we can comparatively distinguish between media and other processors, it is also productive to highlight the internal diversities within the subset of the media and their various and varying forms of mediatizations: firstly, by observing the state of development and stabilization in which a given medium finds itself; secondly, by distinguishing specific logics of interrelationships and what these enable (and, consequently, the social processes in question); finally, in order to establish specific technological functionalities, it is worthwhile to observe diverse activations of the same type of media.

Just as the mass media intrigued the 20th century (now quite firmly established in social practice and the body of knowledge), today it is the social media what challenges us; the latter being now surpassed, however, by the issues of algorithms and AI. In short, I believe that paying attention to the actual diversity of processors and situating mediatization within that broader set (characterizing it based on that concept) does not in any way restrict the perception of the links between mediatization and social processes. On the contrary, it may even enhance the perception of the two-way relationship between these processors and the fundamental and broad social process that is social interaction in its extraordinary diversity within social practice.

M.C., J.F. & G.O.: In a dialogue with Northern European theoretical perspectives Braga, 2015; 2017), you critically discuss, from a constructivist perspective, propositions from the institutional trend on mediatization. Considering your emphasis on processors (Braga, 2023), is it not a risk that this approach could obscure transformative social processes by focusing attention on the logic of the processor itself? Are processors embedded in institutional logics or are they independent of them?

J.L.B.: Indeed, if attention is focused solely on the logic of the processors

themselves, we will merely be changing the words. It would be like emphasizing the logic of the media while forgetting the logic of mediatization, which I already criticized in the two articles mentioned above.

The fundamental question lies here in the scope of the transformations which we pay attention to: Do we concentrate on structures or on processes? Institutionalist perspectives privilege established structures and systemic regularities. They pay insufficient attention to underlying processes and their dynamics. The same risk applies to the observation of established (institutionalized) processors, because instead of observing the variety of processes that occur, they focus their attention solely on the predominant logics of the observed processor. When noting transformations in the systemic regularity of observed social phenomena, an institutional perspective concentrates its attention on *cause-and-effect* relationships to explain the observed changes. In other words, it primarily seeks the extraneous elements that lead to the incidents that modify the previous stability. In the case of communication studies, these elements, since the 20th century, have corresponded to the emergence of technological media, as well as to organizations specializing in media production and distribution.

Naturally, I do not intend to dismiss the active relationships that have an impact on other social processes through the media. It is clear that changes and transformations occur as a result of their emergence and must be investigated. However, in addition to observing the media's influence on other institutions, a communication study must pay special attention to constantly active interactional processes, seeking to identify —rather than what is established— the instituting processes that continually modify what is already established. This implies that, besides paying attention to structures and systemic regularities, and highlighting the causes that explain the effects, further work is required in order to identify the processes of variation and selection in the interactional situations in which they take place.

When dealing with human interaction, it is relevant to pay attention not only to media processors, but to all the processors that make up the interactional situation being observed. We should not forget that these are instruments of interaction. They act upon the interaction, logically, but they do not determine it nor are they its cause. It is important to observe the communicative gestures, their specific dynamics, and how they operate. The observation of the processes that have been successfully implemented should be distributed among the various elements and, furthermore, attention should be paid to the different modifying processes and the specific actions that lead to various "layers" of transformation.

The general term "processors" shows that the importance of these elements lies in the complex nature of the *processing* action. Thus, full attention must be given to the dynamic aspect of human communication in its interactions,

emphasizing the impact of the two-way interaction between processors and their social activation. We communicate to interact, to act collectively, articulating the personal and social singularities of the participants. Processors enable this articulation, attending to the needs arising from predicaments and projects.

It is a matter of observing the specificities of this process, keeping in mind that a significant part is certainly contained in the functionalities and logic of the processor, in what it allows us to do. But the participants activate (and develop) the processors that seem most appropriate to them, and they do so according to the situations of interaction.

A common-sense inference would seem to be: "communication is what is done through language". But conversely, the activation of communicative processes also influences the design of the processors: these are the transformative dynamics of use. The processor remains in active use in the most diverse contexts, not only by enabling the interactions that occur there, but also and more importantly, by receiving the effects of the various and varying specificities of the context and the attempts to act upon it, generating, in turn, new interactional tactics. We must say, then, more precisely, that "language is what is created and developed from human communication." In addition to the *usage dynamics* of processors, it is important to pay attention to the very creation and constant development of processors. These result directly from communicative objectives. Faced with the challenge of interactional needs, participants seek paths to fulfillment.

The clearest demonstration of this process is the creation of sign languages among deaf people. Oliver Sacks' book (2000) *Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf* shows the recurring situation of young deaf people without sign language who, upon meeting other young people in similar circumstances, begin, in their eagerness to interact, to invent a sign language together. It is probably due to a similar impulse that the human species, in its origins, began to use sound signals to communicate, thus creating the spoken languages that continue to develop constantly.

The communicative generation of interactional processes is evident, stemming from the communicative work itself in response to the very need to interact. These processes, due to their regularity and the stabilization of their use, eventually develop into processors. Thus, what we observe here is a combination of what we initially referred to as a dual dynamic aspect. The need for interaction leads to the generation of processors through the social invention of processes. These, through repetition, develop, generate their own tactics and logics, stabilize, and become socially available to facilitate communication. This process of transformation is, therefore, more complex and better suited to describing interactive praxis than emphasizing unidirectional, causal relationships.

The study of interactive processors must be understood from this perspective and through their dynamics. Mediatization processes, as part of the general set of processors, retain their specific interest. This is particularly true while they achieved certain stability in their modes of productive activation, considering the frequency of divergent and risky uses, not yet fully understood. But there is no reason to isolate them from other traditionally known processors.

It is now, then, that we can reflect on a central aspect: are processors inscribed within institutional logics or are they independent of them? I believe that processors that have stabilized in the long term do indeed assume an institutional characteristic. Vincent Descombes (1996) states that language is an institution. Yes, but what characterizes this special type of institution is its potential for diversified action: it is mobile and mutable. Its flexibility allows for the creation of art and the pursuit of science. It focuses on reiterating traditions and continually generating the new, the as yet unthinkable. This is why interactional processors are the most relevant instrument for human communication. They are part of the instituting process of the institutions that shape them within their environment, with the flexibility to revise and adapt to the interactions that society seeks and practices.

M.C., J.F. & G.O.: Several authors highlight that mediatization studies encompass various possible levels of analysis (micro, meso, macro, and meta-analysis). Many consider microanalysis to be the focus of your studies. If you agree with this perception, how can macrosocial issues be addressed through microanalysis? Is the differentiation of levels of analysis a categorization of the research itself or of the processes related to the phenomenon?

J.L.B.: At times, I have indeed observed communicative issues from a microsocial level: I like case studies, especially because of the concreteness of what is observable. However, I don't think I can say that this is exactly the approach of my studies. Firstly, because I do not restrict my studies and publications strictly to that level. Furthermore, even within the scope of a micro-study, when I conduct one, I always have objectives that seek to go beyond the specific case. My doctoral thesis, in the 1980s, had that "case study" profile, but it already included connections to the context. In *O Pasquim* e *os anos 70. Mais pra Epa Que pra Oba* (Braga, 1991), I explore this relationship between the newspaper and the historical moment. In a chapter at the end —titled "O percurso no contexto" ("The Path in Context")— the case is correlated with the enduring military regime, which, incidentally, is also inevitably present in the newspaper's daily operations. After that, I published some works focused on unique situations (film analyses, media critiques). The book *A sociedade enfrenta sua mídia: dispositivos sociais de crítica midiática* (*Society Confronts Its Media: Social Devices of Media Critique*) (Braga, 2006) is a collection of ten case studies analyzing the media. However, that section is preceded by three chapters that propose



the prospective hypothesis of a third system "of social response", which is specifically communicational, as opposed to the dualism of "media that send messages" and "society that receives messages." Thus, the ten cases are concrete examples of social mechanisms for media critique, which allows me, in the conclusions, to conduct a cross-sectional analysis, as well as a *critical-praxeological discussion* on the state of this "response system." I believe this situates my research within a connection between the micro and the macro levels. At the meso level, I also have a relatively recent article on intermediate theories, in which I defend their relevance for the development of the field of communication studies.

More recently, since 2022 to be precise, in my current research articles I have been working decidedly at a macro level (Braga 2022a; 2022b). My concern is epistemological, seeking to trace the identity of the field of communication studies. There, I propose, from an evolutionary perspective, a comprehensive view of this knowledge based on the idea of understanding communication as the work of diversity.

A comprehensive perspective should not be confused at all with a proposal for a "general theory of communication". A general theory (which we do not need) would have to "define" our object of knowledge, based on an ontological essence. In contrast, and quite differently, a comprehensive, holistic perspective focuses on a heuristic objective: in this case, to try to understand the diverse angles from which communication has been studied and to address the problem of the fragmentation among these different perspectives. It is, therefore, a matter of finding the perspective that includes these angles in such a way that it does not hinder their diversity. Since heuristic perspectives, even comprehensive ones, can be plural, a search must be undertaken that, in coexistence, tests their heuristic possibilities.

As can be seen, entering the macro level does not exclude, here, an interest in the micro level; on the contrary, it implies obtaining different articulations between the various levels. Also, at this comprehensive level, in the debate and collaborative work at the Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG), which I carried out with Professor Luiz Signates, we reflected on the issue of the field's exogenous nature. Signates has provided a precise diagnosis of this issue, also linking dispersion as a comprehensive problem that communicational

knowledge must address. I also observe that heuristic constructions are not still primarily related to a single level of observation and inference. Both inferential, index-based work (which starts from concrete evidence present in a situation) and a broader perspective (which starts from the design of an epistemological horizon) require abductive inferential work. And they can strengthen heuristic stimulation, fostering discoveries in research.

In fact, if we assume a dialectics between "the part and the whole", we can see that heuristic approaches foster integration, which helps clarify the final question regarding the differentiation of levels of analysis situated in the research *gesture* itself or in the reality of the observed phenomenon. Certainly, the choice of one of these levels can be a research decision, simply based on the researcher's preference when deciding on their focus and formulating their questions. And here it is simply a matter of deciding the intended scope of the research within the conditions of its execution (including dimensions such as time, resources, and access to observation).

On the other hand, and especially if we study complex topics —as is the case of media coverage, processors, and interaction, in communicational terms— we must recognize that the processes related to this phenomenon unfold at different levels of complexity and scope. In this case, the dialectic between "the whole and the parts" becomes a call for observation, as well as for clarifying reality. As Lucien Goldmann (1970) points out, the mutual constitution between "the whole and the parts" means that knowledge at each level depends on the other levels. Regardless of the level at which the investigation begins, the knowledge at that level will not be sufficient. However, if this partial knowledge is applied to the observation of the other end of the dimension between the micro and the macro (between "the part and the whole"), this initial approach allows for some inferential discoveries. Therefore, by bringing these back to the starting point, we will have new discoveries in addition to those we already had at the beginning. And so on, eventually arriving at a perception corresponding to the complexity of the object of study. In this way, it is better not to focus exclusively on a single level. Naturally, it is necessary to define what our "whole" will be, and to understand which ones should be considered the significant "parts". But the back-and-forth method itself helps to see and understand what fits within our necessary delimitation of the object. It is always possible, in subsequent investigations, to broaden and deepen the understanding.

M.C., J.F. & G.O.: We are experiencing a crisis of democracy and the institutions that surround it (legal, political, educational system, etc.). Some authors link this to the hegemony of corporations that dominate the media: digital networks, artificial intelligence, algorithms, and platforms. How do your current studies address this crisis?

J.L.B.: Certainly, the corporations that dominate digital networks,

platforms, algorithms, and artificial intelligence bear a significant share of the responsibility for the crisis of democracy and its institutions. However, what we must avoid (following the previous questions in this interview and my way of thinking) is adopting one-dimensional responses with a simple causal explanation. That is to say, this macro issue of the crisis that permeates different systems —legal, political, educational, cultural, and various professional fields— requires not only a broadening of the epistemological horizon needed to understand it, but also the identification of the interplay between different lines of force.

A first, more evident level is precisely that of mediatization. Attributing simple and direct causality to corporations does not excuse us from ignoring the participation of a large number of users who, taking advantage of the technological capabilities of digital networks, began to spread fake news designed to attract and socially deceive a large number of people, thus forming a manoevring mass for the rise to power of far-right politicians —like a fascist wave) in many countries around the world (including our own, Brazil, in 2019). This is a clear example of the fact that it is not enough to place emphasis on the logic of the media and corporations. "Ordinary" users also position themselves as direct participants and steer the course of events toward certain directions —in this case, toward institutional dismantling, albeit with no other project than that dismantling itself— as if something new could emerge from this. But so far we are still focused on the most obvious scenario: corporations, with more technological functionalities that, free from regulation, allow the worst dynamics of society to take place. This means that, if we broaden our perspective, we can list a whole set of factors contributing to the institutional crisis.

First, it is necessary to emphasize that the operational logics in the media sphere (and of mediatization in social processes) involve an aspect of internationalization, given the borderless nature characteristic of the internet. This already creates an additional legal challenge (and, therefore, distorts the *rule of law* upon which our institutions are based). International law is currently the area where legal practice and norms are least developed and structured, depending on treaties, agreements, and their incorporation into the legal systems of each country. But it also depends on reinterpretations at the state level. Alongside this issue, there has been a loss of the previously more stable structure of international trade between countries, exacerbated by the crisis itself. Also, in the mid-20th century, at the international level (though less dependent on media coverage), with the end (or near end) of colonization by occupation, the intense displacement of populations in terms of migration developed and grew—generating right-wing nationalist reactions, as well as restrictions imposed on human rights—at a time when these were becoming a necessity and an ethical and institutional requirement. At the same time, a climate and environmental crisis is taking place, with serious risks to nature due to human activity related to exploration and pollution. This is primarily an international

issue —although the difficulties in this area also encompass the internal tensions within different countries—, since it implies a need to redirect activities which strongly resist this process, generating political conflicts from those sectors that benefit from the uncontrolled exploitation of nature.

In addition to economic globalization, migrations, and the instrumentalization of political decisions in certain uses of digital networks, we observe mutual encroachments between the public and private spheres, generating a large space of ambiguities and risks that we have not yet learned to organize and which, therefore, becomes an area of experiences that are uncontrolled and unpredictable in their consequences.

It seems to me that all of this is correlated with the institutional crisis of which democracy is the first victim. It should be noted that I did not say that such processes are the cause of the crisis, but rather that they are correlated with it. This is because, as in any process of transformation of the social environment (positive or negative), it is difficult not only to identify linear causes, but also to distinguish between cause and effect, given that different processes can reinforce each other. Rather, we understand that a general process of variation/selection occurs, in which each distinguishable active element (such as those I have just described in previous paragraphs) exhibits some aspects of variation (which will be selected or not by the other components); all exerting both incidental and selective influences. An epistemology characterized as evolutionary allows us to highlight this greater complexity of the processes of variation/selection in the social environment. Social participants, with their needs and projects, participate in both variations and selections.

I would add that, for the logics of communicative praxis in society that, human interactions also function in a dialectic of transformations and attempts at stabilization in mutual activation (Braga, 2022a). What we see now, in the aforementioned crisis situation, is a (worrying) circumstance in which the (always provisional) stability of institutions, such as they developed until the second half of the 20th century, is crumbling—with the characteristics highlighted in the question—demanding an intense and diversified process of revisions and interactional experimentation. Therefore, it is necessary to rethink the communicational work of articulating diversity, under the prevailing conditions, with the aim of confronting the crisis and seeking new forms of stability, aiming at democratic, ethical, and civilizational processes of recovery that surpass both the previous and current conditions.

We must observe that, in this dialectic, stability does not mean "peace" or a state of "ethical and civilizational equilibrium." This simply means that power structures ensure "strategic compliance," allowing them to maintain their core structures. Transformations during periods of stability are tasks of maintenance and adjustment in response to variations always brought about by social actors with their respective projects. When the structure faces its own

contradictions, it becomes incapable of making sustainable choices, and crises ensue. The communicational question that arises at this point is the production (a social invention in which we can all participate) of new articulations that address the urgent needs and projects that the stable structures have failed to address. It is within this interregnum where we find ourselves.

M.C., J.F. & G.O.: Finally, we would like to hear your reflections on the processes of contemporary mediatization and the themes it encompasses, which have been present in the development of this issue of *InMediaciones de la Comunicación*.

J.L.B.: The list of themes and questions that make up the call for papers for this dossier covers a broad area of possibilities for reflection and research, both in the social and communicational spheres. The main organizing principles are two key words: *mediatization* and *circulation*, which already constitute an important segment within the vast horizon of the field of communication. I think it is important to realize that other words offer complementary considerations to these two key words. Some point to specific approaches within the scope of these two key conceptual expressions; approaches that require special attention within their respective fields: AI, algorithms, agents, analytical perspectives, impacts, and processes. Others, in a different way, open themselves up to both the external space and the central set, showing synapses between these and other more encompassing themes —in which mediatization and circulation can be inscribed— such as transformations, social fields, identities, social movements, political actions, and interactions.

I believe that, in a way, some aspects of my answers to the previous questions permeate some of these different words that are articulated with each other. Others did not have the opportunity to be addressed, but they could certainly appear in future conversations. For a while, I tried to imagine a thematic structure in which I could organize this reflection and these studies (or think about a research project that would have this scope). Just as an exercise in ideas, I improvised an organization around four macro-themes, which would be the following: 1) Analysis of circulation versus analysis of mediatization. Characteristics of contemporary circulation (a map?). Impacts of media coverage and impacts of circulation. 2) Processes triggered by new resources. Production of texts, images, and music in diverse sociocultural areas. AI. Intelligence crisis. 3) Diversity of agents, human and non-human. Types of agency (and actors). Relationships between actors (and their agencies). 4) Processes that characterize contemporary society. Social movements, political actions. Mutual reactions between processes. Crises. Transformations.

Certainly, other structures could be considered. This exercise merely serves to highlight the complexity and scope of the issues when thinking about communication. But it is clear that a journal like *InMediaciones de la Comunicación*

does not expect the call for papers to be answered in its entirety, but rather, wisely, to offer an array of alternatives in which each approach is the starting point for reflection, for the treatment of an observable phenomenon, a description, a research result that can illuminate one of the countless questions that, in communication studies, shape a landscape of discoveries and the construction of mutual relationships between different perspectives.

At the same time, I greatly appreciate another aspect of the call for papers and what this interview entailed, for which I am grateful. This led me to reflect on my ongoing research and the search for a comprehensive perspective that can encompass the diverse processes that characterize communication in social practice, processes that involve interactional situations due to their potential to articulate these processes. Each empirical interactional situation is unique and different from all others: it must be understood through its own characteristics, in terms of urgency, projects, objectives, strategies, participants, and contexts (and cannot be explained solely by general categories into which it might fit). For this reason, it must be analyzed in its complexity, considering the combination of factors that should not be overlooked.

REFERENCES

Arendt, H. (2018). *The Human Condition*. The University of Chicago Press.

Braga, J. L. (1991). *O Pasquim e os anos 70. Mais pra Epa Que pra Oba*. UnB.

Braga, J. L. (2006). *A sociedade enfrenta sua mídia: dispositivos sociais de crítica midiática.* São Paulo.

Braga, J. L. (2007). Midiatização como processo interacional de referência. Em Médola, A. S., Araújo, D. & Bruno, F. (orgs.), *Imagem, Visibilidade e Cultura Mediática* (pp. 62-77). Editora Sulina.

Braga, J. L. (2011). Constituição do Campo da Comunicação. *Verso e Reverso*, 25(58), 62-77. https://doi.org/10.4013/924

Braga, J. L. (2015). Lógicas da mídia, lógicas da midiatização? Em Fausto Neto, A., Anselmino, N. R. & Gindin, I. L. (orgs.), *Relatos de investigaciones sobre mediatizaciones* (pp. 15-32). UNR Editora.

Braga, J. L. (2017). Instituições & midiatização. Um olhar comunicacional. Em Ferreira, J., Rosa, A. P., Fausto, A., Braga, J. L. & Gomes, P. G. (orgs.), *Entre o que se diz e o que se pensa- onde está a midiatização?* (pp. 291-311). FACOS-UFSM.

Braga, J. L. (2022a). Epistemologia evolutiva? uma heurística para a comunicação. *Galáxia, 47*, e58887.

Braga, J. L. (2022b). Comunicação como trabalho da diversidade. *Matrizes*, *16*, 87-104.

Braga, J. L. (2023). O desafio da interação humana e os processadores comunicacionais. *E-Compós*, 26, 1-17.

Descombes, V. (1996). *Les institutions du sens.* Les Éditions de Minuit.

Goldmann, L. (1970). *Dialética e cultura.* Paz e Terra.

Sacks, O. (2000). *Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf.* Vintage Books.

* Note: The journal's Editorial Committee approved the publication of the interview.

Article published in open access under the Creative Commons Licence - Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).

IDENTIFICATION OF THE INTERVIEWEE

José Luiz Braga. Ph.D. in Communication from the Université Paris II Panthéon-Assas (France). M.A. in Education from Florida State University (United States). President of the *Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação* (Brazil) from 1993 to 1995. Visiting Professor in the Graduate Program in Communication at the Universidade Federal de Goiás (Brazil) and Professor Emeritus at the Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Brazil). He was a professor at the Universidade Federal da Paraíba (Brazil) and the Universidade de Brasília (Brazil). His academic output includes the publication of books and numerous scholarly articles in journals from around the world.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3742-1119