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The poisoned public debate and the limits of state regulation: for a digital literacy against the fake news

El debate público envenenado y los límites de la regulación estatal: por una alfabetización digital ante el problema de las fake news

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Abstract
In addition to the deliberate efforts to distort or misinform, the unintentional errors detected by the public —and the suspicion that there may be others not identified— have reinforced a skeptical stance among the public about the alleged veracity of the news. In the era of the so-called post-truth, it is no exaggeration to say that the main concern of the social sciences after the public debate has been completely hampered by the spread of false news and the supposed beginning of the collapse of liberal democracies, has been a collective sensation of shock, indignation. and despair at the increased prevalence of false news. This paper focuses on the phenomenon of fake news, its effects in the context of political disputes and regulatory frameworks as an alleged solution. It is intended to demonstrate that digital literacy appears as the most adequate solution to mitigate this problem, without affecting freedom of expression in the public discursive sphere.

Keywords
Fake news, post-truth, digital literacy, liberal democracy, state regulation, freedom of speech.

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Resumen
Además de los esfuerzos deliberados por distorsionar o desinformar, los errores involuntarios detectados por el público —y la sospecha de que pueda haber otros no identificados— han reforzado una postura escéptica entre el público sobre la supuesta veracidad de la noticia. En la era de la llamada posverdad, no es exagerado decir que la principal preocupación de las ciencias sociales tras el debate público se ve totalmente obstaculizada por la difusión de noticias falsas y el supuesto inicio del colapso de las democracias liberales, ha sido una sensación colectiva de conmoción, indignación. y desesperación ante la creciente prevalencia de noticias falsas. Este artículo se centra en el fenómeno de las *fake news,* sus efectos en el contexto de las disputas políticas y los marcos regulatorios como supuesta solución. Se pretende demostrar que la alfabetización digital aparece como la solución más adecuada para mitigar este problema, sin afectar la libertad de expresión en el ámbito discursivo público.

Palabras clave
Fake news, posverdad, alfabetización digital, democracia liberal, regulación estatal, libertad de expresión.

Introduction and state of the art

"Each audience has its own universe of discourse and [...] humanly speaking, a fact is only a fact in some universe of discourse" (Park, 1940, p. 649). The spread of false news, especially in politics, is nothing new, but the Internet has popularized the use of the phenomenon called fake news. Even Pope Francis, an icon of the Christian religion, was affected by this phenomenon. The religious stated: "disinformation is probably the greatest sin that a media outlet can commit because it directs public opinion in one direction and omits part of the truth" (El País, 2016). It is believed that fake news arises from real information, but that it is misinterpreted, that is, it is distorted and disseminated as truth until it influences the audience that is reached. In summary:

> The game is as old as mankind. It is a matter of deception and lies. The novelty is, as in everything else these days, in what computers and the world wide web allow us to do with it. (Mesquita, 2018, p. 33)

Incredible as it may sound, Macedonia is considered the center of the fake news industry in the world. Journalists who conducted an investigation through fact-checking companies and experts even interviewed one of the so-called Vele's Boys, a group from the city of Veles, in the interior of Macedonia, that creates and spreads fake news, and concludes that the Motivation is given, without ideology or any concern for the veracity of the facts, in a totally economical way, generating $ 20,000 a week.

Most scientific forays into fake news have focused on production issues, such as the location and possible motivations of various providers of disinformation, the changing geopolitical landscape of the information war, the economic benefits for the media, communication and search mechanisms, and the need and convenience of implementing technical and/or financial restrictions that minimize the spread of false news, among others. The focus on production issues is important and these are all valid cases whose discussion is pertinent. However, this article, while taking into account some of the previous points, aims to address some dynamics of critical reception that could be underlying the greater presence of fake news in the contemporary context than in the past.

For this, an intersectional approach between Sociology and Law stands out as of special relevance, to understand not only how to approach the problem through a legislative tool, but also how to interpret its advent from the historical, sociological, and cultural contexts that served as a birthplace, that is, postmodernity and post-truth, choosing these as a theoretical outlook.

Finally, a brief analysis is made of the measures that have been used throughout the world to face the problem, with a brief critical reflection on their relative effectiveness, both from previously established theoretical structures and empirical data, that have been proposed by the Humanities and Social Sciences.

False news as seed and fruit of post-truth

For an adequate understanding of the problem of fake news, it is essential that the phenomenon be contextualized in the socio-cultural panorama in which it is inserted, for which useful sociological categories such as postmodernity and post-truth are used. The University of Oxford, when choosing, in 2016, the term "post-truth" as the word of the year, defined the expression as "a noun that relates or denotes circumstances in which objective facts have less influence on the formation of public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal beliefs" (Oxford, 2016). It is necessary to clarify —as McIntyre (2018) does— that the prefix "post" of the neologism in question does not refer to the idea of "after" the truth, in a temporal sense —as in "postwar", for example— But in the sense that the truth has been overcome, that it is irrelevant. It is, in reality, a cultural situation characterized by a public opinion affected by public *pathos*, in which "the claim of validity matters less than the expectation that the expectation of the desire for the information to be fulfilled" (Giacoia Junior, 2017), enabling the emergence of a public space "where the tendency is to practice and disseminate the use of arguments [...] more linked to the emotional dimension than to the rational and grounded dimension", therefore "evidence of refutation are generally ignored or devalued "(Cardoso et al., 2012, p. 15).

Now, understanding the concept of post-truth with precision is an almost insoluble dilemma, "if we consider all the peculiarities that the constitution of the discourse implies, or if we take into account the complexity of the concept of truth itself" (Borges Júnior, 2019, p. 527), which would be even one of the most fundamental issues on which Western philosophy would undertake long reflections. Perhaps the discussion between Socrates and the sophists and the criticism of the former on the conception of the truth of the latter is an important point as an example of this (Reale & Antiseri, 2014). Regarding the possibility of rival versions or perspectives of the truth already present in classical culture, Borges Júnior explains that:

> While the philosophy of Socrates is based on a single, immutable and absolute conception of truth, the sophist philosophy will defend the relativity of truth, its possibility of transformation according to the operation of λόγος (logos). According to Protagoras, something can thus be announced as truth or as a lie, as in favor or against a certain argument, and it will be this flexibility of the concept of truth and the possibility of manipulating it for A or for B, for yes or no, in the that persuasion exercises and rhetoric classes will be built [...]. Right now, we are faced with thinking of truth as absolute or relative, thus calling into question any notion of objectivity or a faithful portrait of things or the world. This insoluble dispute would contribute, to a great extent, to the birth of what today we would call politics. (Borges Júnior, 2019, p. 527)

In this dynamic political narrative, Arendt, in turn, is aware of a serious risk: the possibility, on the part of politics itself, of altering the factuality of things from the "fabrication" of parallel realities, realities that seek to legitimize certain discourses. The author reflects:

> [...] if the modern political lies are so great that they require a complete rearrangement of the whole factual fabric, the creation of another reality, so to speak, into which they fit without patches, flaws, or cracks, just like the facts fit into their own original context, what prevents these new stories, images, and pseudo-facts from becoming an adequate substitute for reality and factuality? (Arendt, 2014, p. 313)

Such discourses end up rearranging their own factuality and are constructed with the purpose of sticking to it without any indication capable of denouncing its falsehood. This adherence is operated through a very well-organized form, called by Arendt (2014) "modern political lie", very different from the forms used by the "traditional political lie". Following the author's observation, the modern political lie —on which the structures of totalitarian regimes would be mainly based— seems to transfer to a domestic context the reinforcement of certain versions of reality, illusory stories often created in the sense of providing new descriptions, also under delimited biases, certain events that take place in these societies. As an example, Arendt (2014) comments on General Charles De Gaulle's efforts to retell the history of France in World War II, presenting it as haughty and powerful, indifferent to the years when it was trampled on by the Germans; or even the regime of Josef Stalin, responsible for erasing Trotsky's name from the history of the Russian Revolution.

However, modern political lies, by creating certain images that reinforce what they want to tell, paradoxically produce a kind of self-deception, from which it becomes extremely difficult and complex to distinguish between truth and lie. This is only possible due to the creation of a sophisticated apparatus of "massive manipulation of facts and opinions" (Arendt, 2014, p. 311), in which advertising occupies a central place.

Ultimately, post-truth is the notion that beliefs or impressions are constitutive of reality (Cunha Filho, 2019), encouraging individuals to distort the facts to mold them according to their opinions, and not the other way around (McIntyre, 2019). It is not surprising, therefore, that its outbreak occurs in the sociocultural context of postmodernity.

Postmodernity offers philosophical support for post-truth to the extent that it proclaims that all social facts are socially constructed and that arguments about a certain political or social fact are invariably associated with a specific narrative (Cunha Filho, 2019). The emotivist and identitarian emphasis of postmodern thought also shows fertility for the emergence of fake news, since, in this sociocultural environment, "choices [...] are based much more on sensitive and emotional reasons than on logical reasoning and accurate information" (Genesini, 2018, p. 48).

In addition, the choice of target —very precise in this definition— points to an "anti-truth", fundamental to understand the "post". Lara Mesquita (2018, p. 33) objectively affirms: "this is a lie, but its use with the specific objective of subverting or undermining democracy, is the only system for the constitution of state power in which 'public opinion' is the determinant factor".

The fact is that the phenomenon of post-truth —and the dissemination of fake news as a mechanism for the construction of a narrative of that— distorts and directly damages the quality of liberal democracies, as the author explains:

> Arming from the hand of "public opinion" the referendum, and the initiative to effectively make their will prevail over that of their elected representatives, is still a privilege of very few. However, the general concept was universally adopted as a dream. No one can face it with impunity. Even dictatorships need to sell themselves as "excess democracy" and include in their institutional disguises elements that at least resemble democratic institutions. The gradual conversion of the struggle against "bourgeois" democracy, of a dispute between truths faced with the destruction of the very concept of truth, includes the recognition of the indissoluble relationship between democracy and truth. Admitting that where it is well planted, democracy can only be destroyed from within, from the deliberation of the majority against itself, and that only deception can produce this effect, it pays homage to the moral superiority that its enemies have always denied it. throughout the history of the 20th century. (Mesquita, 2018, pp. 34-35)

Faced with this uproar, some authors have understood the bankruptcy of the liberal democracy paradigm, which would present a formalistic vision of popular sovereignty, exercised only through the vote, but without effective participation in public policies, as well as amputated of the notion of social ethics in community.

In this direction, Manuel Castells (2018) understands that the crisis of this model is "taking multiple forms", among them, "the subversion of democratic institutions by narcissistic caudillos who seize the sources of power from the people with institutional rot". "The pure and simple return to the unrestricted brutality of the State in much of the world, from Russia to China, from neocolonial Africa to the neofascisms in Eastern Europe and the dictatorial tides in Latin America" and, as to this article it refers to "the media manipulation of the hopes dashed by the snake charmers [...]". In another work, called "Sociedade em Rede", the author maintains that the phenomenon of fake news is especially demonstrative of the collapse of the liberal political system (Castells, 1999). Regarding that, Mesquita writes:

> In the pre-technological, almost artisanal stage, what would become "post-truth" evolved from "ideological patrolling" before power to repression and armed aggression of the dispute for geostrategic hegemony, until it flowed, after halting in its military advance, in an attempt to impose a "cultural hegemony" in search of the "social consent" of a set of convictions, moral norms and rules of conduct sown with a meticulous work of "improvement" induced by established beliefs and feelings, in direction to the self-immolation of democracies, which will be obtained through the "control of the cultural media of the bourgeoisie", and the "co-option of artists, teachers, and organic intellectuals" at the service of the conquest of political power. (Mesquita, 2018, pp. 35-36)

In this sense, fake news feeds on post-truth, at the same time that it constitutes a tool for its construction, thus constituting a true vicious circle. The interrelation between the appearance of fake news and the advent of the digital environment itself, which for different reasons —some related to the nature of the medium itself— cannot be ignored, has different validation criteria in relation to the classic journalistic media (McDougall et al., 2018). While in traditional physical media the benefit came from reader subscriptions, news platforms in digital media, being free, obtain their income from the advertisements displayed on their respective sites, which:

> It introduces a factor in the issuance of motivational fake news that contributes to its existence: the economic dimension of journalistic or other institutions, that is, characteristic of a marketable model on the Internet-based on ads. (Cardoso et al., 2018, p. 19)

In this way, media portals with a history of reliability and journalistic ethics are slowly being replaced by digital alternatives that avidly compete with each other for users (McDougall et al., 2018). This mechanism allows companies to use the so-called "clickbait", an artifice according to which the portals, "using a direct relationship between the number of views and recipes, titles and/or content are produced that, deliberately, serve so that users click", reinforcing the close correlation "between fake news and the emotional aspect questioned by the notion of post-truth", since "studies confirm the tendency of users to share much more news characterized by a language and content sensational and exciting" (Cardoso et al., 2018, p. 19).

In this new environment, the success of a portal depends not so much on the historical reliability of its content or journalistic ethics, but on its ease of location in the media and the use of personalized messages to capture the attention of the desired audience (Hobbs, 2017). This system contributes to the spread of fake news, as it is more likely to be shared through the media and travels faster than real content (Vosoughi et al., 2018). This is due in large part to the ability of fake news to dialogue with the reader's pathos — to instrumentalize an Aristotelian word— and in it evoke deep sympathy and intense emotions, such as anxiety or anger, which give rise to more shared than neutral content (McDougall et al., 2018).

In fact, fake news, in its broadest sense, can exist "theoretically from the first political process of humanity", but it is "with the emergence of the media that the conditions were created for this phenomenon to become a fundamental dimension of social and political life" (Cardoso et al., 2018, p. 19). Therefore, "the novelty is not in the fake news itself, but in the appearance of an instrument capable of reproducing and disseminating them with unprecedented breadth and speed" (Frias-Filho, 2018). Therefore, although the phenomenon is not unusual, it is the current dimension that it assumes that requires new approaches.

Although fake news may seem harmless to some people, several studies have shown otherwise (Balem, 2017). In addition to the obvious effects of deception on decision-making, continued exposure to misinformation can lead people to stop believing the facts altogether and to doubt the very value of science and scientific evidence (Van der Linden et al. al., 2017), as was clearly observed in the widespread denial of Brazilians regarding the scientific recommendations related to the Covid-19 pandemic (Caponi, 2020).

The sociological impact of fake news in public spaces is also directly related to the algorithms used by social networks, which filter the content that will be exposed to the person, based on the political and social visions that the user has, creating the so-called "ideological echo chambers" (Rosenzweig, 2017; Sunstein, 2001). Considering that each member of the bubble is selectively exposed to the opinions with which they agree, a social phenomenon developed, called the "false consensus effect", which translates into a tendency to overestimate how common the opinion itself is (McDougall et al., 2018). These communities "become increasingly segregated in terms of politics, culture, geography, and lifestyle" (Kakutani, 2018, p. 105), contributing to the constitution of a polarized and fragmented society, with the deterioration of the democratic system (Fisher & Taub, 2018; Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018; Recuero & Gruzd, 2019).

However, in addition to theoretical issues, recent events have demonstrated the deleterious practical effects of spreading false news on the democratic process and the exercise of citizenship.

Materials and methods

Most of the scientific forays into fake news have focused on production issues, such as the location and possible motivations of various disinformation providers, the changing geopolitical landscape of the information war, the economic benefits for the media, communication and search mechanisms, and the need and convenience of implementing technical and/or financial restrictions that minimize the spread of fake news, among others. The focus on production issues is important and these are all valid cases whose discussion is pertinent. However, this article, although it addresses some of the previous points, tries to address some dynamics of critical reception that could be underlying the greater presence of fake news in the contemporary environment than in the past.

Therefore, an intersectional approach between Sociology and Law stands out as especially relevant, to understand not only how to approach the problem in a legislative way, but also how to interpret its advent from the historical, sociological, and cultural contexts that served as its cradle, that is, postmodernity and post-truth; choosing this as a theoretical panorama.

In this sense, this work carries out a brief analysis of the measures that have been used around the world to face the problem, with a brief critical reflection on their relative effectiveness, based on both previously established theoretical structures and empirical data that have been raised by the Human and Social Sciences.

Discussion and conclusions

Is state regulation sufficient for facing the problem?

An exploration of the sociological and historical bases of the problem, despite its essential understanding, is only the first step in tackling the problem of fake news. It is imperative to proceed, in a second moment, to correlate these theoretical contributions with the empirical data that surround the subject, both with regard to their practical effectiveness and in relation to the consequences of such measures for sensitive human rights issues, such as freedom of expression.

Measures to combat the spread of fake news can be broadly classified into three types: laws regulating public media; request for private regulation of private platforms (for example, Facebook data verification); and media education of the population, with a view to sensitizing the individual about the importance of a critical stance in relation to the content disseminated on digital networks, as an exercise of citizenship (Cardoso et al., 2018).

The use of restrictive legislation is possibly the solution most frequently proposed in the matter, which is usually based on concepts such as the "right to communication" (Vannuchi, 2018) or considerations on the need to limit the right to freedom of expression (Balem, 2017).

This was the strategy adopted by Italy, through a bill that penalized the publication or dissemination of "false, exaggerated or tendentious news", with a provision of a fine of up to 5000 euros, with a combination of imprisonment for more serious fake news — such as those that can incite crime or violence— and imposition on social networks that monitor their platforms in search of such content (Tambini & Goodman, 2017). Other countries, such as Germany and the United Kingdom, have adopted similar regulatory policies (Cardoso et al., 2018).

However, it has been observed that actions in this direction tend to generate friction with human rights and often degenerate into authoritarianism. This was the conclusion of a report entitled "Fake news: public policy responses", in which the public policies adopted by China and Italy with a view to addressing fake news were critically evaluated, as well as their respective consequences in the field of human rights. The report concluded that China is a useful illustration of the dangers present both in establishing preventive regulatory structures (prior to publication) and in the very broad definition of what constitutes fake news or rumor, a concept that, for the Chinese government, includes "undermining morality, the socialist system and the authenticity of information" (Tambini, 2017, p. 13). Thus, China "is an example of a country that chose as a public response the practice of aggressively limiting freedom of expression" and ended up adopting a "too broad definition of what constitutes false news or rumors" (Cardoso et al., 2018, p. 25).

The report concludes that these circumstances explain why international defenders of freedom of expression, such as the UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and the OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media, have openly denounced the risks derived from addressing fake news through state regulation (Tambini & Goodman, 2017). Similar problems have been observed in private data verification systems, always related to the impossibility of guaranteeing the exemption of the agent responsible for evaluating the news.

A particularly notable fact in this context of discussion is the (here called) Doctrine of Equity, which exemplifies the relationship between the individual aspect and the democratic function of freedom of thought and expression, being —for Patricia Aufderheide (1990) — a place of great controversy over the future of public interest regulation.

Jonathan Andrew Stewart Honig (2019) summarizes that the Doctrine of Fairness was the fundamental construct of television regulations and one of the most controversial content regulations that has been applied to television stations in the United States by the Federal Communications Commission. (FCC). In 1949, this government commission organized a regulatory framework for the country's media, which became known as the Fairness Doctrine, here loosely translated as the Doctrine of Equity.

In general, this doctrine had the objective of promoting the discussion of controversial issues of vital interest to the community and to provide space for different points of view on these issues (Hazlett, 1989). Souza and Pinheiro (2016) comment that this doctrine was developed from the idea that for the right to information to exist, it is not enough that freedom of the press be guaranteed only under the prism of state abstention, since this could imply the exclusion of disadvantaged groups from public discourse and the manipulation of freedom by hegemonic or majority groups. In addition to developing a federal licensing system for broadcasters, the FCC identified certain types of speech as essential to maintaining the public interest standard, and this in terms of priority (Hazlett & Sosa, 1997).

The Doctrine of Equity, in objective terms, required that radio and television stations that had broadcast licenses issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) (1) dedicate part of their programming to controversial issues of public importance and (2) to allow the presentation of opposing views on these issues. This meant that political segments should include opposing views on the issue under discussion. Broadcasters had an active duty to determine the spectrum of opinions on a given topic and include the most appropriate people to represent them in their programming.

Additionally, the rule required broadcasters to alert anyone subject to a personal attack on their programming and give them the opportunity to respond and required all stations that endorse political candidates to invite other candidates to respond.

This policy began in the Radio Act of 1927, when Congress ruled that the FCC (and its predecessor, the Federal Radio Commission) should only issue broadcast licenses when it was in the public interest. In 1949, the FCC interpreted this more strictly to mean that licensees must include discussions of matters of public importance in their broadcasts and that they must do so fairly. Subsequently, the agency published a standard on editorialization by broadcasting licensees, which released the so-called Equity Doctrine and began to apply it.

However, the Doctrine of Equity has faced several challenges over the years. At first, the constitutionality of the doctrine was tested and confirmed by the United States Supreme Court in a landmark 1969 case*, Red Lion Broadcasting Co., Inc. v. FCC (395 US 367*). Although the Court later ruled that the doctrine did not violate the broadcaster's First Amendment rights, the Court cautioned that if the doctrine began to restrict expression, then the constitutionality of the rule should be reconsidered. Just five years later, without declaring the doctrine unconstitutional, the Court concluded in another case that the doctrine "inescapably weakens the force and limits the scope of public debate" (*Miami Herald Pub. Co. v. Tornillo, 418 U.S. 241*). In 1984, the Court concluded that the justification for scarcity underlying the doctrine was flawed and that the doctrine was limiting the breadth of public debate (*FCC v. League of Women Voters, 468 U.S. 364)*. This decision set the stage for action by the FCC in 1987. An attempt by Congress to reinstate the rule by statute was vetoed by President Ronald Reagan in 1987, and subsequent attempts were not even approved by Congress (Aufderheide, 1990).

In response, the FCC began to reconsider the rule in the mid-1980s and finally repealed it in 1987, after Congress passed a resolution directing the commission to study the matter. The decision was credited with the explosion of conservative radio in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Although the FCC hasn't enforced the rule in nearly a quarter of a century, it technically remains on the books. As part of the Obama administration's broader efforts to revise federal regulation, the FCC is finally scrapping the rule once and for all.

Once the historical content is understood, it seems that the Doctrine of Equity failed in its purpose by not making explicit the criteria for the realization of its scope. On this point, Thomas W. Hazlett comments that:

> The use of any arbitrary standard to license the press [...] will surely cause great political harm, even if the standard appears as innocent as "justice." After all, justice is in the eye of the beholder, and government officials are keen observers. [...]. The more subjective the pattern, [...] the more nervous the supplicant is. The FCC has never clearly defined the fairness requirement for licensees, preferring instead to adhere to a user-friendly method. [...] federal radio licensing began in the 1920s with the vaguest standard of attribution the courts would allow: rights should be granted to anyone who satisfies "the convenience, interest, or need of the public.". In the early days of radio, Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover deemed the views of labor organizations less of public interest than those of businessmen and distributed valuable spectrum rights accordingly. Franklin Roosevelt found it eminently just to prohibit all newspaper publishers from owning radio stations... on the grounds that, as a class, they were unfairly hostile to the New Deal. (Hazlett, 1989, pp. 104-105, free translation, emphasis added)

While freedom of speech and of the press traditionally means the absence of state controls, the rationale for regulating broadcasting is that freedom allows bias, as Hazlett (1989) shows. Public-minded regulation is considered necessary to guarantee equal access to the media for all sides of controversies and, ultimately, to promote equal treatment of political candidates, to mitigate possible bias from editors. Of course, there are grotesquely unfair news and even irresponsible entertainment shows. However, the relevant question is whether political regulation will tend to reduce inequality or exacerbate prejudice and kill important news sources. The regulation shifts the "justice" scheduling decision from those who compete for hearings to those who have secured bureaucratic power within a federal agency. It takes a great leap of faith to believe this replacement will get better.

Digital literacy as an alternative

The risks of regulating by state media as a tool to combat fake news have encouraged researchers and public agents to seek alternatives that do not have the same harmful potential for freedom of expression, highlighting, in this sense, the notion of "digital literacy", directly linked to the concept of "digital citizenship". Although it is an extremely broad construct, for which different authors present considerably divergent definitions, it can be said, in general, that digital citizenship is related to the person's ability to participate in the online space of society, including both connectivity to the Internet itself as the skills necessary for its use (Mossberger et al., 2007). The Council of Europe defines it as "the ability to participate in a positive, critical and competent way in the digital setting" (McDougall et al., 2018, p. 12).

Digital literacy, in turn, transcends the mere ability to obtain or use information online in an instrumental way, also encompassing, more specifically, the ability to ask questions about the source and meaning of information, about the interests involved in its transmission, in short, understand how information is related to social, political and economic forces (Buckingham, 2015, p. 15). It is, in essence, a type of ethical and social capacity that complements the technical and practical skills necessary for the use of digital technologies (McDougall et al., 2018, p. 12).

Several investigations have shown that media literacy education can have positive results in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of students to critically analyze and understand the media (Jeong et al., 2012; Vraga & Tully, 2016; Webb & Martin, 2012). More than that, studies have shown that this type of education is especially effective when it comes to preventing belief in fake news, with research showing that an individual's level of media literacy is inversely proportional to their likelihood of believing and sharing fake news (Kahne & Bowyer, 2017).

The superiority of this approach over state regulation is also related to the human cognitive phenomena called “confirmation bias” and “disconfirmation bias”, which describe the tendency to, in the face of evidence that challenges our opinions, and that, therefore, should motivate us to reexamine our views, react with a psychological impulse to hold on even more firmly to our erroneous beliefs, in both directions: seeking confirmation of our previous beliefs, rather than information that may contradict or complicate them (bias) confirmation); and ignore or reject information that challenges personal convictions (disconfirmation bias), with the propensity, in the case of information from the media space, to disqualify the media as dishonest and biased (McDougall et al., 2018), or, in the case of information from the media space, the case of state regulation, to qualify the Public Power as authoritarian and conspiratorial. Thus, paradoxically, the legislative fight against disinformation can, at some points, intensify it.

Education in media literacy, in turn, has been effective even in mitigating the effects of confirmation bias, with the potential, therefore, of treating the phenomenon of fake news at its root: the inability of a good part of the population to accept information that does not meet their personal convictions (Miller, 2016). For this reason, the European Commission has repeatedly highlighted the importance of the development of digital media literacy as an instrument to achieve citizenship and prevent fake news, both because it is a measure that does not violate individual freedoms, and because it is one of the few approaches that have long-term effectiveness (European Commission, 2018).

Despite the fact that the issues related to the methodology of said instruction (age group to apply, head of the ministry, school level to be inserted) are the subject of considerable disputes (Jeong et al., 2012; McDougall et al., 2018, p 12), there is a consensus on the long-term positive benefits of digital education to combat misinformation and prevent the spread of fake news.

The benefits of opting for digital literacy, compared to state regulation, are various and are related not only to the effectiveness in preventing misinformation but also to maintaining freedom of expression and maturing responsibilities and capacities related to citizenship, with all the long-term effects that result from a society matured at that time (Cardoso et al., 2018). The inclusion of this type of teaching in the curricula of schools, both private and public, has the potential to allow the population itself to face the onslaught of disinformation and, therefore, realize their digital citizenship.

Finally, digital education is a preferable way because, as Bobbio (1990, p. 214) recalls, it is better "to have freedom in constant danger, but expansive, than a protected freedom, but incapable of development. Only freedom in danger is capable of being renewed. Freedom incapable of being renewed sooner or later becomes a new slavery".

Final thoughts

There is no end to this list of poisons of instantaneous action, for which the only antidote remains the meticulous investigation of the truth of the facts, since the "kings" of today, individual or collective, are also under god. But it costs a lot of time and a lot of money, elements that are increasingly scarce in the world of professional journalism (Mesquita, 2018). In fact, the phenomenon of the dissemination of fake news as a political strategy –as it occurred in the last presidential disputes in the United States and Brazil– has greatly compromised the quality of public debate and skewed the understanding of social reality in the political-partisan sphere.

As explained in the first part of this study, fake news is the main tool for the meta-narrative construction of discourses that seek to alter, under the direction of political purposes, the public understanding of the facts. In this sense, liberal democracies seem to be approaching their decline, or at least suffer a strong threat under the auspices of the formation of true digital militias, as has been seen in the reactionary national sphere.

A continuously ventilated solution is the regulation by the State, with the purpose of limiting the spread of fake news or even criminalizing its practice, as in the case of Bill No. 2630, of 2020, known as the Fake News Law. The point is that the construction of alternative discourses or different interpretations are typical of social experience. As shown in the Doctrine of Equity exhibit, this attempt failed to preserve the public interest by failing to establish objective criteria for licensing radio and television stations. However, since the issuance of the licenses was in the hands of government agents, their release implied being subject to political interests, as well as legislation that seeks to criminalize the dissemination of fake news.

In the end, this study opted for digital literacy as an adequate tool not only to mitigate the effects of fake news but also for the realization of citizens' digital citizenship. This approach has the advantage of keeping people's freedom of expression and opinion strong, not limit freedom of expression. In addition, however, it has also shown particular effectiveness as a long-term solution to the problem, since, instead of preventing disinformation from reaching the individual (an objective whose full implementation is materially impossible), it enables the subject to critically evaluate the received content.

To use an analogy pertinent to the current global moment, state regulation would correspond to the imposition of measures of social distance. They are certainly needed at this time, but they cannot, by themselves, eliminate virus contamination, but rather mitigate its spread. Long-term digital literacy education, on the other hand, would amount to the discovery of a vaccine, a measure that aims not to contain the harmful element itself, but to immunize the population threatened by it.

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Journalistic verification against lies in the electoral processes of Ecuador and Spain[1]

La verificación periodística frente a la mentira en los procesos electorales de Ecuador y España

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Abstract
Fact-checking is key in the framework of electoral processes, political discourse has never been so exposed as it is today to public scrutiny and the possibility of being denied live and in a massive way. This research focuses on the fact-checking projects in Ecuador and Spain, and their role in the elections of both countries in March and April 2019, respectively.
The most relevant publications from both projects on Twitter were analyzed, the aim was to identify the main rumors that were spread and subject to verification, as well as the politicians about whom the most rumors were spread.
The most relevant results it is evident that the immigration issue and false declarations by candidates were the main topics of the fake news in both countries, and that the lies about certain candidates did not decisively affect the results of the elections. Similarly, it was evident that there is a marked inequality in the dissemination of verified information in both countries, since these do not reflect the same intensity in terms of the production of denials, as well as the dissemination of these.

Keywords
Journalism, information, internet, communication, social media, political campaign.

Resumen
La verificación de hechos es clave en el marco de procesos electorales, el discurso político nunca estuvo tan expuesto como hoy al escrutinio público y a la posibilidad de ser desmentido en vivo y de forma masiva. Esta investigación se enfoca en los proyectos de verificación informativa de Ecuador y España, y en su rol en las elecciones de ambos países en marzo y abril de 2019, respectivamente.
Se analizaron las publicaciones más relevantes de ambos proyectos en Twitter con el objetivo de identificar los principales rumores difundidos y sometidos a verificación, así como los políticos sobre los cuáles se difundió la mayor cantidad de rumores.
Los resultados más relevantes muestran que las declaraciones falsas de candidatos y la migración fueron los temas principales de las *fake news* en ambos países, y que las mentiras en torno a determinados candidatos no afectó de modo determinante los resultados de las elecciones. Del mismo modo se evidenció que existe una marcada desigualdad en la difusión de la información verificada en ambos países, puesto que estas no reflejan la misma intensidad en cuanto a la producción de desmentidos, así como a la difusión de estos.

Palabras clave
Periodismo, información, internet, comunicación, medios sociales, campaña política.

Introduction

Rumors and lies are common during elections. The use of these stratagems helps to blur the image of a candidate in front of his voters and is accompanied by questionable practices that hide behind the quest for victory, thereby causing not only the discredit of others but also an increase in misinformation. In this context, verification of facts and political discourse has become more prominent in recent years (Nyhan et al., 2019) and has alerted not only politicians and their campaign teams but also journalists and the media against the reproduction of statements without verification.

ICTs have undoubtedly disrupted the way of political campaigning, transferring to the digital scene the different strategies to promote a candidate and his political project. However, the accelerated expansion of fake news opens a new front of action in electoral processes, in which, in addition to devising a way to lead a candidate to victory, it is necessary to confront the rumors and lies that are generated around their figure and project. Added to this is a set of new habits in the use and consumption of information in the midst of a time in which more than 50% of the world's population has access to the Internet and 49% is an active user of social networks (We are Social & Hootsuite, 2020), key spaces for the dissemination of disinformation.

With attention pointing towards social networks, it is necessary to consider some phenomena that occur, due to the nature they have and the possibilities they offer. One of them is technological prosumism (Toffler, 1979), activities that were previously mediated by third parties, and today are carried out by the user without censorship or control of any kind. This change in the digital ecosystem has fostered a multiplicity of information sources and data that circulate on the Internet, which are subject to the motivations and particular objectives of the users who create and disseminate them, which can range from the need to inform something of interest, going through the desire to make a joke, to intentionally distorting a reality. This has been the context that has made possible the dissemination of fake news, that information manipulated for specific purposes, generally political, with the aim of changing an image about something or someone, and that are presented in such a way that they impact and provoke an idea of reality through digital platforms, from which users contribute to its dissemination (Tandoc et al., 2018). It is not the same as errors in the information due to lack of expertise in investigating a fact, but rather they contain an intentionality and imitate the contents of the mass media (Tandoc et al., 2018), their format and style, but they lack editorial standards, sources and research.

The negative effects caused by the dissemination of fake news has shed a light on different initiatives for their control and eradication, some have to do with the creation of laws and sanctions intended to prohibit and punish those who spread or produce false information; in several countries in Europe, laws have already been put in place against fake news, which are not exempt from criticism and the imminent danger of censorship as the power to decide what is a lie and what is not on the Internet is in the hands of governments (Valarezo-Cambizaca & Rodríguez-Hidalgo, 2019).

Other initiatives are born from journalism, as the profession that by nature develops processes of investigation, contrast, and verification of the facts and that currently is one of the keys in the fight against the misinformation phenomenon. But there is also a third alternative, whose vision is in the long term, it is media education or media literacy, through which citizens develop critical and reflective thinking in the use and consumption of media and information (Romero -Rodríguez & Rodríguez-Hidalgo, 2019).

This research is part of the second alternative: fact-checking, as part of the interpretive power that journalism has in political action processes (Luengo & García-Marín, 2020) and as a necessary element that allows the citizen to make decisions based on quality information.

To support this, previous research on fact-checking and electoral processes was reviewed, which have exposed the increase in informational verification practices led especially by journalists, and suggest that these can reduce erroneous perceptions in political discourse, although this is not reflected in the evaluation of candidates and electoral results (Nyhan et al., 2019). Others like Hill (2017) argue that political facts, true or false, generate prejudice in voters only if they identify with their pre-existing beliefs, and add a large amount of detail to resemble the product of an investigation (Chan et al., 2017), while for Guess et al. (2020) the levels of affectation by rumors and lies are directly related to the media that users permanently consume on the Internet.

Despite the fact that rumors, attacks, and smear campaigns have never been alien to the electoral processes, the global effect that the Internet gives to the information, enhances the harmful effect of misinformation regarding the way citizens view the world, they conceive what is real, correct and desirable; considering that it is from the information that people make decisions, such as who will be the authorities that manage the destinies of their communities.

It is no less true that informational verification processes generate some resistance among campaign teams, hence those who trust less in verifiers are more vulnerable to being influenced by misinformation (Lyons et al., 2020). Added to this is the need for access to open data that allow journalists to compare statements, figures, and information of various kinds, with reliable data sources. Even today countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and others, work in the verification processes with the use of artificial intelligence systems that streamline this search and contrast of data.

The final debate between the candidates who aspired to the presidency of the United States in 2020 was the ideal space to demonstrate the increase in the spread of lies on social networks, which had as its main component the very discourse of the presidential candidates. Hundreds of journalists from international media such as The New York Times, the BBC in London, CNN, and specialized fact-checking organizations such as Politifact, Maldita.es, and others were protagonists on the night of October 22 when they denied the assertions of the candidates during their speeches.

This article collects the electoral experiences of Ecuador and Spain through informational verification in the elections held during 2019 in each country in order to demonstrate the relevance of informational verification as a line of journalism that counteracts the negative effects of misinformation.

The document presents, in the first instance, a systematic review of the literature, with the purpose of conceptualizing fake news and fact-checking as key elements of the investigation while indicating the current status of the issue of informational verification in the political-electoral context; subsequently, the methodology, objectives and research questions, study sample and instruments used are explained; then the analysis of the results is carried out, followed by the discussion and conclusions, where the most significant contributions of the research are observed.

State of the art

Elections and misinformation

Traditionally, electoral processes have been the fertile ground for the dissemination of fake news because social networks are crucial tools in the development of political campaigns due to the possibilities of closeness that it builds for the user (Rodríguez-Hidalgo & Silva, 2018). The discrediting of candidates, political projects, statements are common in every electoral process (Rincón, 2011), and it has been mainly the political opposition that has been in charge of disproving a political candidate, and to this is added journalism with fact-checking.

The dissemination of fake news causes adverse effects on society and weakens democracy, and it is not for nothing that Unesco alerted about false information and called for the development of critical thinking (Frau-Meigs, 2017) against which constitutes a technological and geopolitical danger of relevance, whose effects have already been reflected in recent electoral events such as Brexit, the European Union referendum, and the United States elections (Elías, 2018). Both events, which occurred in 2016, contributed to the institutionalization of what is known as the 'era of post-truth', and where the search for particular interests was evidenced through questionable strategies of mass convincing that promote the weakening of democracy (Ayres-Pinto & Moraes, 2020).

In addition to this, it is in the second of these contexts where the term fake news takes shape when Donald Trump, recently elected as president of the United States, used the combination of fake news to discredit the press, and later the political opposition and all those who questioned his administration (Baum-Baicker, 2020). This is due to a political strategy that seeks to obscure all negative information and modify the perceptions of citizens, a process in which the use of the media and information is essential in the way to legitimize a political leader (Lischka, 2019).

Lies are a regular part of the political game, but according to Cotrino-Zárate (2019), the key to manipulating public opinion lies in who says them, although factors such as the way they say it, the media that uses and the effects it causes on recipients, are relevant.

In the case of Spain, the government has its attention focused on the dissemination of fake news, but also academia and some organizations such as the European Commission, which on many occasions have expressed concern about the high exposure to misinformation, along with the need for control measures and awareness in people (European Commission, 2019).

During the referendum for the independence of Catalonia, in a number of social networks circulated photographs taken out of context on violence, corruption, and others (Serrat, 2019). One of the most popular was that of a group of police attacking citizens, and although hours later it was found that it was a photo of a demonstration from 2013, the clarification was not as popular as the rumor.

The same happens in Ecuador, where daily photographs with alleged statements by President Lenín Moreno are disseminated, which are later refuted. But as in Spain, and in other contexts, rebuttals do not go viral, rumors do, this is due to the large emotional component that fake news have, added to narrative constructions: memes, photos, and videos altered, invented, or taken out of context.

The high emotional component in fake news is strengthened by the scarce exposure to quality information by users, and by the clearly emotional activity of users on social networks, not for nothing has Facebook placed as the main form of interaction with user publications a set of six emotions with their respective emojis: I like it, it saddens me, it amazes me, it amuses me, I love it and it makes me angry (Valarezo-Cambizaca & Rodríguez-Hidalgo, 2019).

Hence, whenever fake news are taken as true, it is because behind them there is an ideology that wants to confirm it. To this are added campaigns orchestrated with the help of trolls and bots to strengthen strategies aimed at misinformation, echoing messages that are required to reach the entire population.

Journalism in the face of fake news

Social networks have notably captured the attention of Internet users. Within them, they carry out socialization and entertainment activities (Rivera-Rogel et al., 2018), but also information. Given this, it should be noted that social networks are not information networks, they are networks for exchange, socialization, emotion, and of course for the dissemination of content, but they do not guarantee the veracity of the content that is disseminated through them. For this reason, social networks cannot be demanded the same responsibility that journalists and the media are required with regard to information management (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2020).

Despite this, the multinationals Facebook, Google, and WhatsApp have taken action to curb the spread of false information, which has been mainly motivated by the excess of rumors on social networks during the emergency caused by Covid-19, and that came to be qualified with the term ‘infodemic’ (World Health Organization, 2020). Given this, journalism has a fundamental role that is to provide answers and guide public opinion with quality information, and seek and guarantee the truth as the maximum value (Craft & Davis, 2013).

It is for this reason that in the last three years a series of organizations dedicated to the verification of the facts that are disseminated as truths on the Internet have emerged (Álvarez & López, 2016), all of them led by journalists. La Silla Vacía in Colombia, Ojo Público in Peru, Ecuador Chequea in Ecuador, Chequeado.com in Argentina, Maldito Bulo in Spain; FactCheck.org and Politifact.com in the United States and others are some of the organizations dedicated to fact-checking on the continent.

During 2020 the global health emergency prompted the creation of the Coronavirus Fact-Checking Alliance, a project of the Poynter Institute and the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), and in which there are subscribed around eighty organizations from more than forty countries in the world, to refute the rumors and lies that were spread on the Internet about the pandemic.

Countering rumors and lies not only enables better knowledge of the context, but also gives the citizen the possibility of making better-informed decisions, considering that the media constitute the windows through which people know the world and access information on topics, contexts, and facts that they do not experience directly (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001). For this purpose, the quality of the information is key, and verification constitutes one of the indisputable competencies of journalists, which allows that information not to become the echo of what the sources indicate; and, in an electoral context, the candidates who aspire to a popular election dignity.

For Álvarez and López (2016), lying is part of the political game, which is why the results of the surveys are oversized, for example, hence the verification of data, speeches, and facts also has an educational dimension for the voter, but also for the political class that always requires figures, and for journalism that uses these figures as part of the information it publishes. Audiences go to the media in search of clarifying their doubts and obtaining information that allows them to elucidate the best voting option, therefore the practice of fact-checking as a discipline of journalism would notably change the rules of the electoral context, fostering a greater responsibility of the candidates when making statements in front of the public opinion.

This research focuses on the verification activities that Maldito Bulo carried out in Spain and Ecuador Chequea in Ecuador, in the March and April 2019 elections, with the purpose of identifying the main clarification efforts of both projects and highlighting the work of verification as that transcendental activity of journalism that guarantees the quality of the information that circulates in an electoral context.

Materials and methods

The study of the metrics of the Twitter accounts of the two organizations dedicated to verifying the information in each country Ecuador Chequea in Ecuador and Maldito Bulo in Spain was carried out, with the aim of studying the rumors that most frequently are denied and the topics and characters that are predominantly subject to verification.

The study of metrics makes it possible to understand how they produce social transformations thanks to the influence of social networks, which are in charge of configuring some sociological trends and patterns with emotion as their main component (Magallón, 2019).

The research questions that guide this research are: What types of rumors are most often disproved? Who are the characters and themes present in the refuted content? What is the methodology applied by fact-checking projects in Ecuador and Spain?

To answer these questions, a quantitative research is proposed. This form of study allows the application of methodological instruments that can be used both on content and on a container (Bardin, 2002) while being a type of replicable procedure that allows inferring the results, as well as making a quantitative description of reality, in this case to through descriptive statistics (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 2004).

In this context, a total of 135 tweets from Ecuador Chequea and 172 from Maldito Bulo published between February 1 and April 30, 2019, were collected, which includes the time before, during, and after the elections in Ecuador and Spain. In that period of time, both countries held elections to elect mayors, councilors, prefects, and members of parochial boards, in the case of Ecuador; and, deputies and senators in the case of Spain.

Based on the data recovered, a classification of rumors into seven categories is proposed in which the numerically greater contents are grouped and that are common between both countries: false statements attributed to candidates, campaign proposals of the candidates, the publication of false surveys, presentation of events that occurred in other countries as local, which were part of a previous study carried out by Magallón (2019), to which three others are added: migration, as it is a common theme between both countries, the announcement of electoral fraud and false electoral results.

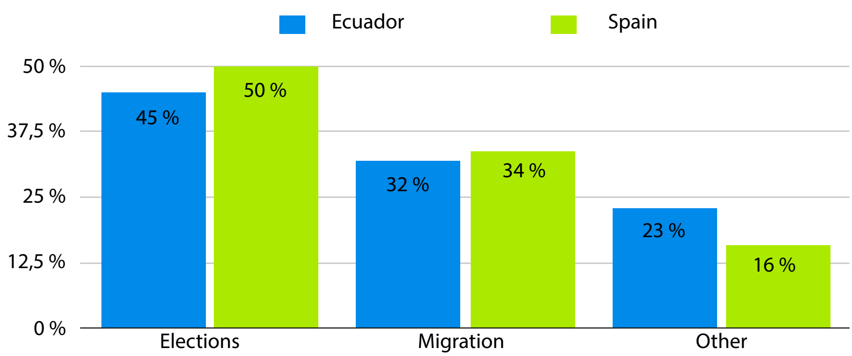
In the same way, from the review of the Ecuador Chequea and Maldito Bulo projects, the content analysis of their methodologies is carried out in order to identify common and innovative practices in the informative verification process: categories of verifications, selection of verifiable elements, verification process, and dissemination of the verified ones.

Analysis and discussion of results

Politics and migration are the topics about which the most rumors were spread, and therefore about which the greatest number of refutations were made (Figure 1). In the political context, for obvious reasons, the electoral process was the main element in the news and information disseminated in the media and social networks: the development of the campaign, declarations, speeches, confrontations, preparation of the elections, among others.

On the other hand, the migration issue, which occupies the second place, reflects that there is a marked interest in both countries due to the large presence of migrants of different nationalities, which is why it is an issue present in the electoral political discourse. There were also other types of topics related to surveys, campaign proposals, electoral fraud, false final results, in less quantity.

Figure 1
Thematic of the refuted posts



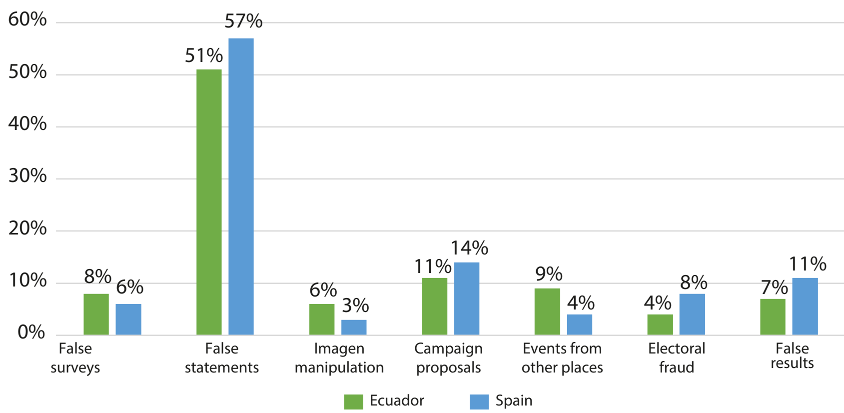
Source: Ecuador Chequea, n.d.-a; Damn Bulo, n.d.
Own elaboration.

In Ecuador Chequea of 45% of the posts framed in the political issue, there are publications related to false statements attributed to candidates, the announcement of false electoral results, inconsistencies in campaign plans disseminated on social networks, financing of electoral campaigns, among others. 32% of the posts focus on migration issues that refer in a special way to Venezuelan citizens who in the last year have come to the country en masse as a result of the political crisis they are going through.

The results for Spain are not too different from the Ecuadorian case. 50% of the contents correspond to political issues especially related to the candidates and parties that participated in the April 2019 elections, wrongly printed ballots, the presumption of electoral fraud, false statements by candidates, creation of candidate parody accounts, student protests, and citizens in general, among others. The rumors and lies were mainly presented in the form of alleged statements with photos and videos manipulated and taken out of context that attributed to a candidate statements that were not said, or made in a different context.

34% allude to the immigration issue with articles such as the charge of 1200 euros per month by illegal immigrants, modification of the social security law, censorship of Podemos towards offensive processions for citizens, the slaughter of lambs by Muslims. From the total of publications framed in the political sphere, a classification of rumors was made, which can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Types of rumors spread during the elections



Source: Ecuador Chequea, n.d.-a; Damn Bulo, n.d.
Own elaboration.

The false statements were framed in the situation of each country. For example, in Ecuador, the candidate Jorge Yunda was attributed the following statement in a televised interview: "the real problem of the city is the bad temper, and we know how to combat it" (Ecuador Chequea, 2019), with which it was tried to position a not very serious image of who pretended to be the mayor of the country's capital.

Another case is the supposed tweet of Pablo Iglesias, candidate of Podemos saying "I hope for a bomb now in Colón. Where are the terrorists when they are needed?" in connection with a demonstration for the unity of Spain held in February 2019.

In both cases, the refutations were made by searching for the original statements: the video, in the case of Yunda, and the tweet in the case of Iglesias, neither existed.

Second, Ecuador Chequea, goes to the source, Yunda, to question about the statements and they were denied, in addition to this, the original video is published, to which the false statement is attributed and nothing similar to the false publication said is mentioned.

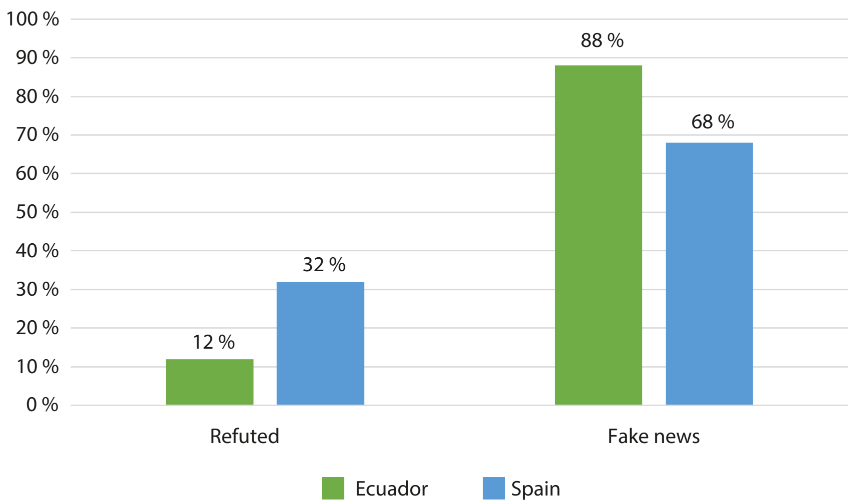
Figure 3
Other refuted issues

Source: Ecuador Chequea, n.d.-a; Damn Bulo, n.d.
Own elaboration.

Another recurring theme is related to the candidates' campaign proposal and the announcement of false election results. An example of the aforementioned can be seen in Figure 3, which includes two tweets: the first from Maldito Bulo about electoral fraud alerts in Spain, and the second, the supposed announcement of the candidate Gabriela Rivadeneira from List 5 as the positioning of this party as the main political force in Ecuador, both denied.

Regarding the level of interaction of users with the issues refuted by fact-checking accounts in Ecuador and Spain, there is a great difference between the two. The Ecuador Chequea account has a very low level of interaction from its users compared to Maldito Bulo, where a large number of retweets and favorites are observed in the publications. Ecuador Chequea obtains 10% of user interaction with its clarifications, while Maldito Bulo has at least 70% on average. In the same way, it was evident that the reactions to the refutations made by both organizations do not have the same virality as the rumors. Figure 4 shows the relationship of popularity between fake news and denials.

Figure 4
Popularity relationship between denials and rumors



Source: Ecuador Chequea, n.d.-a; Damn Bulo, n.d.
Own elaboration.

To expand the information in the previous image, Table 1 shows the five publications subjected to verification and that have the highest number of interactions in each country, there the difference between the two countries can be seen, in terms of interaction with verified information.

Table 1
Main rumors refuted in the electoral campaigns

@EcuadorChequea	Fav	RT	@MalditoBulo	Fav	RT
@MashiRafael says that the members of the Participation Council are being stolen. “Thief who robs a thief.”	47	41	No. This video is not from today’s demonstration in Colón. The Barclays building that collapsed last year appears. There is no Netflix advertising that is in Colón today.	5.6K	6.5K
@PaolaVintimilla is right. The data of the Municipality of Quito reflect, as of February 2019, a total of 19,253 employees. The figure includes officials from the municipal administration and municipal public companies...#NoComasCuento	29	18	No, there is no evidence that residents of Madrid have removed tapes against caterpillars thinking they were yellow ties	909	1.1K
The information is false. After monitoring the La Posta Ec interview, the phrase attributed to @ LoroHomero... #NoComasCuento and check https://t.co/TPPdSrWD1Q https://t.co/8SNq16suXj	13	11	No. Pablo Iglesias has neither published nor deleted a tweet saying “hopefully a bomb now in Colón”. It is a fake tweet, there is no proof of its publication. Only a capture (the same one) that is being viralized as real being false. https://twitter.com/malditobulo/status/1094900978485211136	726	973
Although the movement used by former President Correa to nominate his candidates achieved the prefectures of Pichincha and Manabí, list 5 did not reach any of the 49 mayoralties it sought... #NoComasCuento https://t.co/86H66sMk3Y https://t.co/wU2fukhxFa	7	8	No, the supposed poll of the Diario de Andorra that gives 82 seats to Vox does not exist: it is a montage.https://twitter.com/malditobulo/status/1122160203099721728	532	647

Source: Ecuador Chequea, n.d.-a; Damn Bulo, n.d.
Own elaboration.

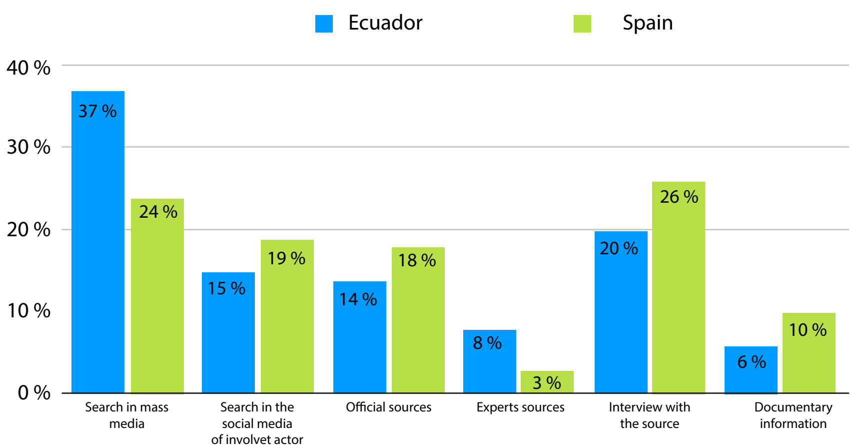
The refutations about these five posts are developed through three main practices identified in both cases (Figure 5). The most common is the search for information in the media, mainly in the press; secondly, in the case of statements by a candidate, they search their social networks for evidence of what he/she supposedly said.

Finally, in both cases they go to official sources, to verify information on expenses, statistics, and other data, developing the journalistic exercise of informative contrast, as well as interviews with the sources involved in the rumor, which allows, in addition to verifying a rumor, to report based on information produced by the medium itself.

In some cases, it is even observed the use of expert sources that contribute to the explanation of a topic and thereby promote the understanding of a topic, in addition to clarifying a rumor.

The work of Ecuador Chequea in reviewing government plan documents and comparing them is highlighted, in this process, based on official information, infographics were made to inform the electorate, rather than to deny rumors.

Figure 5
Techniques to disprove fake news



Source: Ecuador Chequea, n.d.-a; Damn Bulo, n.d.
Own elaboration.

Regarding Maldito Bulo, it is explained that if the verification cannot be carried out through the aforementioned strategies, other alternatives are used that have to do with more specific levels of access to information.

> Sometimes, if even after due diligence the falseness of the message cannot be proven, but it is believed that additional information can be accessed using the transparency law, the additional information is requested to provide more insight on the complete fact. (Maldita.es, n.d.)

The denial or verification usually contains as much detail as possible, along with photographs and, in some cases, videos that help support the truth about the rumor that is being demolished. In addition to this, both initiatives make sure to label each rumor that has reached their hands with different categories, some of which resemble each other as shown below:

Table 2
Verification categories

Ecuador Chequea	Maldito Bulo
True	
Yes, but	True, but
Untenable	
False	False
	False, but

Source: Ecuador Chequea, n.d.-a; Damn Bulo, n.d.
Own elaboration.

In the case of Maldito Bulo, when a rumor submitted to verification is verified as true, it is not published on the social networks, therefore they do not include that category. However, as expressed in the Data Methodology of Maldito Bulo, 2019, this qualification can be used when it comes to a confrontation between two parties that requires clarification to the public.

Conclusions

The flow of vast amounts of information, from many issuers to many recipients, increases the need for qualified information providers dedicated to fact-checking. °

The task of verifying the facts carried out by Ecuador Chequea and Maldito Bulo allows us to measure the contribution of journalism, as that profession that has a social responsibility with the quality of the information and, in the same way, the role of the journalist, as the professional who develops the commitment to work with the information and the set of activities framed in the collection of data, verification, statements, documents, and others that allow him to develop the content that it transmits to the public through different media with quality and in a timely manner (Muratova et al., 2019).

In addition to this, the two fact-checking initiatives studied are made up of groups of journalists who are in charge of both content evaluation and information verification. Which calls to reconsider journalism, so worn out, as that profession that has the truth as its maximum obligation. Truth is not spoken of in a philosophical sense, but in a journalistic sense, which considers the exercise of fact-checking as one of its basic principles, and at the same time the practice that enables the creation of informational content based on facts.

Disinformation, and especially fake news, with its highly emotional content, permeates people more deeply than verified information, which is worrying, but at the same time, reflects the need to develop digital skills that allow the user to discriminate content online and use information critically.

It is no less true that the different misinformative phenomena also take advantage of the absence of data and information that help people to know a topic and do not allow them to easily believe a rumor that is trying to sneak in as truth. Of course, that also depends on the levels of informative exposure of the people and the topics to which they choose to expose themselves.

As expected, in an electoral context, the process itself constituted the main theme of the lies spread on the Internet, and despite the fact that 45% of refutations from Ecuador and 50% of denials from Spain are framed on this issue, Migration cannot be ignored as a sensitive issue in both countries, which is why it has a prevalence level greater than 30% in relation to others, such as survey results and suspicions of electoral fraud.

The verification of facts constitutes a key in order to guarantee the truth in the information that is disseminated, while avoiding that the media are limited to becoming loudspeakers for political discourse, and instead identifying and clarifying inaccurate information before its diffusion. This suggests the value of verification and research, other studies could inquire about the extent to which journalists develop both in the current disinformation context.

The most evident contribution of this work is the vision of journalism in the function of guaranteeing the truth, in an environment where there are many senders addressing many recipients at the same time, and where it is necessary to discredit lying and strengthen verification as a discipline.

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Pre-covid goverment communication of spanish-speaking presidents on Twitter

Comunicación gubernamental pre-COVID de los presidentes hispanohablantes en Twitter

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Abstract
This work analyzes the goverment communication and media competence of the presidents of spanish-speaking countries prior to the declaration of a coronavirus pandemic on March 11, 2020 by the WHO. A statement unprecedented in history, but that the media from the previous weeks were already reporting on their Twitter accounts. The general objective was to analyze the government communication and media competence that the presidents of the spanish-speaking countries had the week prior to the declaration of a COVID-19 pandemic, and for this we chose a quantitative research, since this allowed us to analyze data with a method flexible. By mining with advanced data search algorithms on Twitter, we analyzed 7650 tweets from the accounts of the 22 presidents and 21 media outlets, establishing six measurement parameters of the dimensions of media competence: Flesch-Kincaid index, engagement, audiovisual support, link-hashtag index, authenticity index and the building agenda. Despite the WHO and media indicators, we concluded that many of the presidents did not have acceptable political communication and media competence commensurate with the problem addressed.

Keywords
Government communication, media competence, Twitter, spanish-speakers, coronavirus, Covid-19.

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Resumen

El presente trabajo analiza la comunicación gubernamental y competencia mediática de los presidentes de los países hispanohablantes previa a la declaración de pandemia por coronavirus el 11 de marzo de 2020 por la OMS. Una declaración sin precedentes en la historia, pero que los medios de comunicación desde las semanas previas ya estaban informando en sus cuentas de Twitter. El objetivo general fue analizar la comunicación gubernamental y competencia mediática que tuvieron los presidentes de los países hispanohablantes la semana previa a la declaración de pandemia por Covid-19, y para ello elegimos una investigación cuantitativa, ya que esta nos permitió un análisis de datos con un método flexible. Mediante la minería con algoritmos de búsqueda avanzada de datos en Twitter analizamos 7650 tuits de las cuentas de los 22 presidentes y 21 medios de comunicación, estableciendo seis parámetros de medida de las dimensiones de la competencia mediática: índice Flesch-Kincaid, engagement, soporte audiovisual, índice link-hashtag, índice de autenticidad y la agenda building. A pesar de los indicadores de la OMS y los medios de comunicación, llegamos a la conclusión de que muchos de los presidentes no tuvieron una comunicación política y competencia mediática aceptable acorde con el problema abordado.

Palabras clave

Comunicación gubernamental, competencia mediática, Twitter, hispanohablantes, coronavirus, Covid-19.

Introduction

From government communication to communication in times of crisis

At a general level, political communication is that which studies the contradictory and complementary dimensions that are presented in politics, information, and communication in democratic systems (Reyes et al., 2011). Similarly, it studies the interaction and transmission of messages by political parties and citizens or between rulers and the ruled (Reyes et al., 2011). Political communication presents multiple nuances that sometimes tend to be confused with each other, thus it is essential to clarify that the main forms in which it can be presented are government, electoral, crisis, and risk communication (Riorda, 2011). For this investigative effort, we will focus on government communication and crisis communication.

Government communication, for Canel and Sanders (2011), refers to the objectives, role and communication practices implemented by politicians, executives, and officials of public institutions at the service of a political justification, which is constituted on direct or indirect consent on the part of the citizenship, among which are social groups, business groups, minorities, etc., that seek to influence the government to formulate and implement beneficial policies for society in general, relying on marketing, the mass media, the social networks and other instruments currently offered by the internet. In other words, it is the governmental communication process that seeks to guarantee cohesion, functioning, and diversification of information for political parties, citizens, and the global political system (Molina, 2004).

The most important purpose of government communication in a democratic society is, in theory, to show that the elected leader and his/her cabinet comply with the governance plans proposed in the candidacy, as well as the defense of government interests and the interests of the state above the individuals, under the premise of building an equitable society by making the processes of the public agenda transparent; above all, in moments of tension and crisis, whose definition for us is: an event or a set of these that disturb, hinder or endanger the normality and development of a certain process or state in the social sphere that directly affects the social body and everything that underlies it (public and private sector, interpersonal relations, economy, governance, etc.).

A crisis, in the first instance, generates a feeling of uncertainty, of ignorance regarding the direction that events will take; second, the need arises to intervene, select the correct measures and decide how to apply them as soon as possible (Bauman & Bordoni, 2016). The management of it needs a direction based on evidence for crisis communication (Coombs, 2007), which must be normative, as is its management (Heath, 2010).

To address a crisis, the aspects of its context must be considered: its strengths and weaknesses. There are three generic phases:

- The pre-crisis: Information on the risks that increase the problem is collected, in order to understand it, prepare for and face it (Coombs, 2010).
- Crisis: Based on the compilation, decisions will be made and messages will be created for people (Coombs, 2010), according to the problem. That is, the leaders seek to respond to the crisis effectively.

- The post-crisis: It involves dissecting the crisis management effort, communicating the precise changes to the public, and providing messages to monitor the crisis as necessary (Coombs, 2010), for the prevention of similar problems in the future.

For Coombs (2010), crisis communication is the search for information, its treatment, and transmission to successfully address a difficult situation, whose communicative response must be defined by the way those affected by it feel, what they need to know, what can or cannot be said or done and the possibilities for help (Bonilla et al., 2013).

Consequently, it is very important to have experts examining the data resulting from citizen interaction through social networks —it will not be the entire population, but an important proportion— look for common patterns, compile what is expressed negatively and positively; in some cases, as required by crisis management, segment by regions, taking into account their own needs and the climatic, social and cultural aspects of each one.

Therefore, crisis response strategies must be established to reduce the negative effect and prevent harmful behavioral intentions, and even to repair the reputation (Coombs, 2007) of the government sphere. Also, new communication channels must be opened to take in an orderly and coordinated manner the appropriate communication actions that the situation deserves.

However, responses to a crisis are variable because not all are addressed or have a uniform impact, despite having one element in common: destabilization. Crises produce the emergence of specific audiences and the primacy conceived in advance in each group in conventional communication programs varies (Bonilla et al., 2013).

Therefore, it is necessary to develop a plan that covers each of the categories, trying to minimize risks and negative responses from citizens. In communication in crisis, silence plays a negative role, denotes inexperience, insecurity, and lack of leadership, therefore, it will influence others. Foucault (2002), proposed that the communication itineraries are the support of a node and of centralism of knowledge, since the anchors of power are marked by the game of signs.

Luhmann (1995), synthesized it by referring to the fact that the differentiation of established systems stabilizes the possibilities of reproduction by restricting the conditions of understanding of communication and the suitability of the modes of behavior. Therefore, the way in which the discursive content is transmitted will be decisive in the behavior of the citizen, having a positive impact when they comply with recommendations in the immediacy of the case or negatively generating panic and lack of control.

It should be taken into account that the mass media and social networks disseminate the knowledge of experts and citizens tend to take over portions of the information, incorporating it into their own experiences (Berger & Luckmann, 1996). However, the prominence that social networks have gained as a tool for communication in crisis could make misinformation, during the public health challenge posed by Covid-19, an even more complex phenomenon to deal with (van der Meer et al., 2020), since although social networks act as central elements for the approach to information (Triviño, 2015), they also do the same when it comes to disinformation. The desire to go viral or be a trend, in malicious cases, leads many users to generate and replicate content without reliable and verifiable sources of truthful information. Let us remember that the user is a prosumer, produces and consumes information, occupying a leading role in the paradigm of participatory culture fostered by technological interactivity (Aguaded & Sánchez, 2013) and social networks allow active citizen participation in the construction of new realities present in the information age.

For the treatment of crises through social networks, graphic content is excellent, considering that a large part of the public does not read the texts, but only read the headlines (Catalan-Matamoros et al., 2020). An important aspect to bear in mind is that, in the face of a crisis, the communication strategy must focus on a non-specialized audience and must be explanatory-purposeful. In addition, it is necessary that it be able to provide citizens with a suitable media competence to adequately understand the messages since it is necessary to explain the terminologies and scientific findings that would help calm and assure the population regarding the relevant steps to reduce the virus (Mohamad & Azlan, 2020).

Media competence as an element of communication

A global definition of media competence is the set of skills necessary to live with the media and maintain a positive relationship with them (Gonzálvez-Pérez et al., 2015). The concept of media competence is being rampantly adopted and is in the process of absorbing all the skills in relation to the presence of new cultural environments, socio-political relationships, and communication and information components. All this brings changes in learning, reading, writing, and media expression skills (Garro-Rojas, 2019). In short, media competence is defined as a promoter of giving citizens the capacity and equipping them with the skills to know how to choose and recognize the information disseminated by social media. That is why changes in education are necessary that promote citizenship with more media skills (Delgado-Ponce & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2012).

According to López and Aguaded (2015), for citizens to be trained they must have the necessary skills to transform emotion into reflection and the reverse, therefore, they must be competent and understand the information to use critical reasoning on the communication that they analyze daily; in addition, being able to manufacture communicative elements that incite reflection, that are easily understood and communicatively effective, since it is not something new that the media can drastically influence the opinions and behaviors of young people (Mallia et al., 2020; Cho et al., 2020). For Austin et al. (2020), media competence can empower parents and improve young people, gradually making them perfect the use of the mass media to obtain better information.

It is to be considered that we are in a transitory time, learning to put aside the conditioning, despotism, and exclusivity of collective communication that habituated us to believe in everything we saw and heard without seeking veracity in what was perceived, positioning ourselves as passive citizens, timid at the time to express our responses, since there was no possibility of interaction with the media or other ways in which to express or protest (Orozco-Gómez et al., 2012).

However, despite the foregoing, it is necessary to reaffirm as a negative aspect the universality of disinformation, which endangers democracy and intimidates citizens, through strategic messages that pursue commercial gains and influence present and future proselytizing behaviors (Alcolea-Díaz et al., 2019), hence, new technologies have generated that the nature of traditional communication became involutional for the conglomerate, but effective in the very nature of communication as a collective interpersonal element. However, the new technological horizon has made it easier for citizens to obtain more tools to access information in different ways, causing the use of digital media to change the mode of news production drastically (Hernández-Serrano et al., 2017).

The exposure and prolonged use of the different social networks and communication services have changed our way of life, not only at the digital-media level but also with regard to our competitive skills (media competence), which serve as elements of our own communication. Under this approach, it is required a citizenry that has competencies that provide them with skills as a consumer and creator of audiovisual elements, who are aware of their actions and have the necessary skills to make constructive criticism of the information (Gonzálvez-Pérez et al., 2015; García-Ruiz et al., 2014), for the sake of appropriation of critical thinking by citizens.

Finally, media competence as an essential element in communication, especially in this time of crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic, should be the challenge of all individuals susceptible to the constant influences of information, seeking to acquire critical thinking. That is to say, that leadership can be created and produced from the masses towards the information generators, which could be the beginning of an upward detonation of values, principles, morality, empowerment, and creativity (Pullaguari-Zaruma and Hernando-Gómez, 2019) from those who one day they were excluded for not being or belonging to a communication line.

The communication strategy on Twitter

The use of Twitter in communication strategies increases every day. There is no doubt that the diversity in convergence and accelerated technological processes, as well as social, cultural, communicative, environmental, political changes, among others, has burst into contemplating communication aggressively in social media; causing “great events” to be seen through the screens from a more critical perspective.

> Social networks are already being exploited to learn, discover, search, store, and, above all, share knowledge, demonstrating that they are an efficient vehicle for social learning that could be added as a useful tool for formal learning (López-Goñi & Sánchez-Angulo, 2018, p. 1)

In the case of Twitter, for Alvídrez and Franco-Rodríguez, (2016), it allows to know the relationship of daily actions of the public biography, in addition, its immediacy makes it a frequent tool used among public personalities (political, bureaucratic, religious, sports, cultural exponents, among others) who seek to seduce their followers, create an affinity with them and mobilize them to carry out a specific action.

For Alonso-Muñoz and Casero-Ripollés (2018), social communication is decisive, because it maintains an immediate communication strategy that allows direct contact with citizens, who become the recipients of their announcements, and this contributes to circumventing the traditional media, as they are their adversaries. Twitter's strategy can be understood as a channel to articulate hegemony for those in power, since this conjuncture is based on intrapersonal relationships and political communication (García-Carretero & Pérez-Altable, 2017) as the angular strategy of every government before its supporters. Sometimes interested parties In this context, it is significant to observe how certain groups or individuals in power make use of Twitter as a mass communication strategy during times of crisis with the sole objective of communicating their interests. take leading roles in debates or topics of media interest that interest the public. In this context, it is significant to observe how certain groups or individuals in power make use of Twitter as a mass communication strategy during times of crisis with the sole objective of communicating their interests. According to Tikka (2019), communication on social media such as Twitter can generate crises in societies.

On the other hand, the events on Twitter that became trends, debate, and high expectations, were the health information that has become the most influential trend for society, including young people and ethnic minorities who are less likely to access health information through formal news sources, among other more traditional resources (Massey et al., 2016) are the most affected. Communication in social networks can be sensitive and create anguish in vulnerable people, several studies are paying more attention to the younger generation (Burnap et al., 2017) since the influence of messages on Twitter are persuasive when it comes to health or political participation. Authors such as Wang et al. (2020), argue that in a globalized world, communication with consumers on social networks can be opportune and essential to raise awareness and proceed to act.

In summary, the communication strategy on Twitter is multifaceted; on the one hand, it can take care of the image and reputation of public, political, sporting personalities, etc. (Gomes-Franco, 2016); while on the other hand, trying to preserve the egalitarian life of people when we speak of global effects that affect health. On Twitter, the boundaries of communication dissolve as the news reaches peers and the general public, including opinion leaders such as journalists and politicians (Jünger & Fähnrich, 2020).

Spanish-speaking countries

Spanish is spoken by 400 million citizens spread over 21 countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Spain, Guatemala, Equatorial Guinea, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela). It is also spoken in Andorra, the United States, the Philippines, and Western Sahara, although they are not the official languages in those countries (Lyons, 2020).

Methodology

This research was developed according to the following objectives:

- Analyze government communication and media competence of Spanish-speaking presidents the week prior to the declaration of a pandemic.
- Design a template for the measurement of media competence on Twitter.
- Observe and compare the evolution of the outbreak until the declaration of a pandemic and its treatment by the presidents.

For the development of this research, a quantitative methodology was used. Using data mining in the social network Twitter, with a sample of 7,650 tweets, of which 884 tweets were published in 22 accounts of Spanish-speaking presidents and 6,766 tweets analyzed from the mass media of Spanish-speaking countries during the week prior to the declaration of the pandemic by WHO.

The study period is established from March 4 to 11, since the day before the WHO invited governments and the *Pandemic Supply Chain Network* to boost production and ensure supplies for countries at risk and those seriously affected by a possible pandemic.

After collecting the tweets through various advanced search algorithms and tools such as Metricool, TweetStats, Tweet Topic Explorer and Burrrd, the data extracted from the sample was analyzed in order to establish the level of government communication and media competence during the days prior to the declaration of the pandemic.

Results

Observation of the media competence of Spanish-speaking presidents

To carry out the observation and study of the media competence of the presidents' Twitter accounts based on the dimensions developed by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012), we designed a measurement model of media competence on Twitter using various calculation indices, in order to achieve objective data in the measurements of each of the dimensions. Table 1 shows the relationship between the dimensions established for media competence and the indices that we established in our study model.

Table 1
Template for studying media competence on Twitter

Dimensions by Ferrer and Piscitelli	Dimensions measurement parameters
Languages	Flesch-Kincaid index
Interaction	Engagement
Technology	Audiovisual support
Production adn dissemination	Link-Hashtag index
Ideology and values	Authenticity index
Esthetics	Agenda building. Commitment

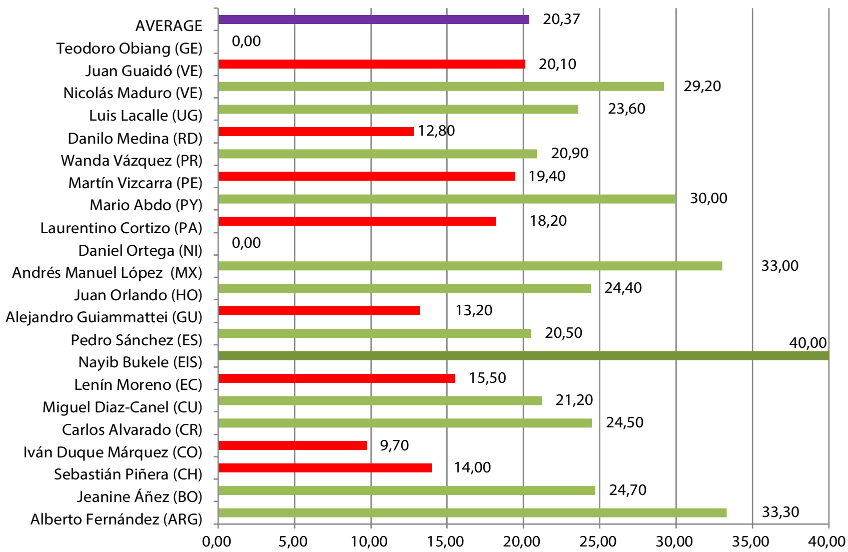
Source: own elaboration.

Flesch-Kincaid index: ease of reading

We analyzed the accounts of the presidents of each of the Spanish-speaking countries to collect data that made it easier for us to carry out the analysis of their media competence. To do this, we used various tools to find out the number of tweets and retweets that the presidents made during the analyzed period, the electronic devices from which the publications were made, the average of words used, and the assessment of the complexity of the text using the Flesch-Kincaid readability test, which indicates the level of readability on a scale of 0-100. (Being 0-30 very difficult reading that only university graduates would understand until reaching 90-100 of easy reading that eleven-year-old students would understand without effort).

Four of the accounts had a Flesch index between 30-50, being considered difficult to read, the rest of the accounts presented a Flesch index lower than 30, being considered very difficult to read, that is, practically all present difficulties in their reading among their followers (Chart 1). Taking an average across all accounts, ten of them would be even below the average of all accounts, making them the most difficult to read accounts of all.

Chart 1
Flesch-Kincaid index of ease of reading of tweets

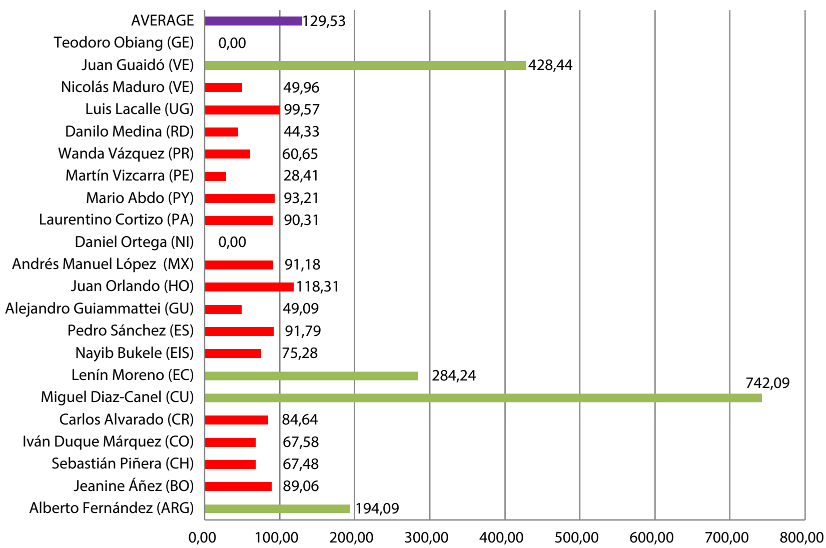


Source: own elaboration.

Engagement: interaction and engagement

On the other hand, we have measured the engagement and interaction of the accounts with their followers, which is called Twitter user engagement, and for this, a standard formula was used: the sum of the number of mentions, retweets, and likes divided by the number of followers in total, and finally multiplied by 100. As we can see in Chart 2, the average engagement stood at 129.53, where only the four accounts of the presidents of Argentina, Cuba, Ecuador, and one of the presidents of Venezuela had values well above the average. The rest of the accounts could indicate that they have a very low engagement with respect to the average of all, so it is understood that they have little interaction with the members of their community of followers.

Chart 2
Engagement of the presidents' accounts

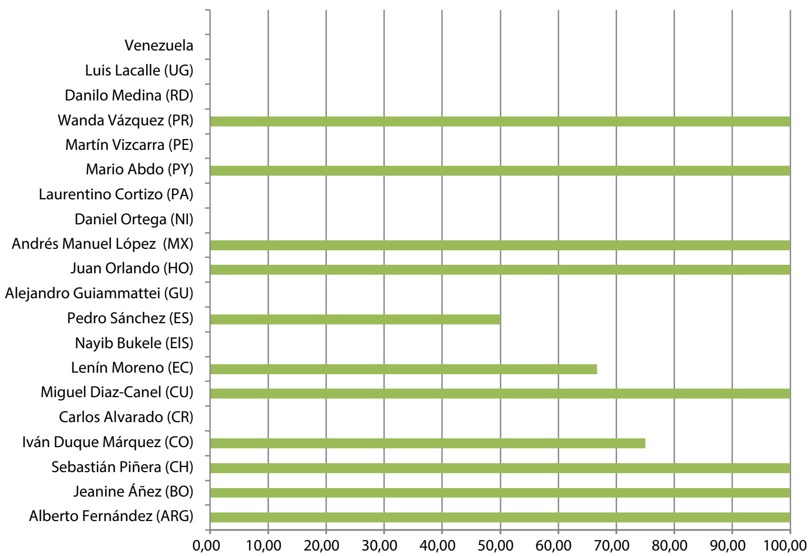


Source: own elaboration.

Audiovisual support: technology

For the analysis of technological competence, which is quite broad, we have taken into account, for the measurement in the publications on Twitter, those that present audiovisual content in their messages, be they photographs, videos, or infographics, scoring those that do have that content and not considering score in those tweets that only present plain text without audiovisual complements. In graph 3 we can see how of the 22 presidents, eight of them present audiovisual material in all their publications, another three present audiovisual material in most of their publications, six of them did not include any audiovisual material and five did not make any publication about Covid-19, so they could not be evaluated. The average presented by the accounts is 47.22 publications with audiovisual content.

Chart 3
Audiovisual support of the accounts of the presidents

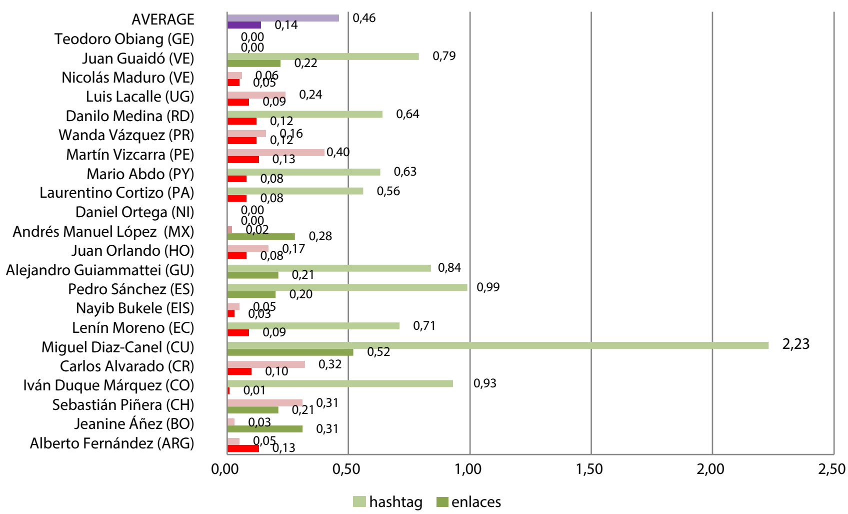


Source: own elaboration.

Link-Hashtag index: production and dissemination

To analyze the correct use of the publication, we took into account two factors: the index of links in publications and the index of the use of hashtags. The average of the links per tweet published indicates the probability that the user is a source of information for others, and the average inclusion of hashtags indicates the probability that the user's tweets are found in a search (Chart 4). As we can see in the following Chart, the production and dissemination levels were very low for all the accounts, none of them reached an average of one link per tweet, and on average, fifteen accounts were below it that stood at 0.14 links. Regarding the hashtag level, only one of the accounts exceeded more than two per tweet, the average being 0.46, of which thirteen accounts were below it despite being a very low average.

Chart 4
Presidents' production and dissemination indexes



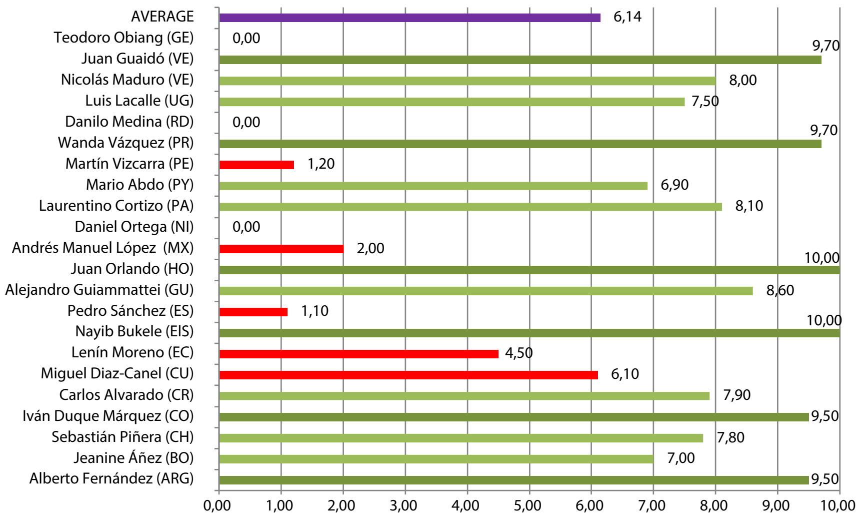
Source: own elaboration.

Authenticity index: values

To analyze authenticity on Twitter, that is, the value that refers to the percentage of messages that are issued by the user himself from his electronic device. It was one of the most complex measures, but taking into account the users we were measuring, we determined as an index the mobile device they had and from which the largest number of publications were made. Of the 19 presidents analyzed, 16 used an iPhone, two used an Android smartphone, and one used an iPad. Ten of the accounts show that tweet programming software was used, and seven of them show that they used a mobile device belonging to another user (Chart 5).

Only six of the 19 analyzed accounts indicate that the messages are from the user who owns the account, while it is found that in five of the accounts most of the tweets published do not come from their devices and therefore not from their own creativity.

Chart 5
Authenticity indices in the publication of the presidents



Source: own elaboration.

Agenda Building and Agenda Setting: level of commitment during Covid-19

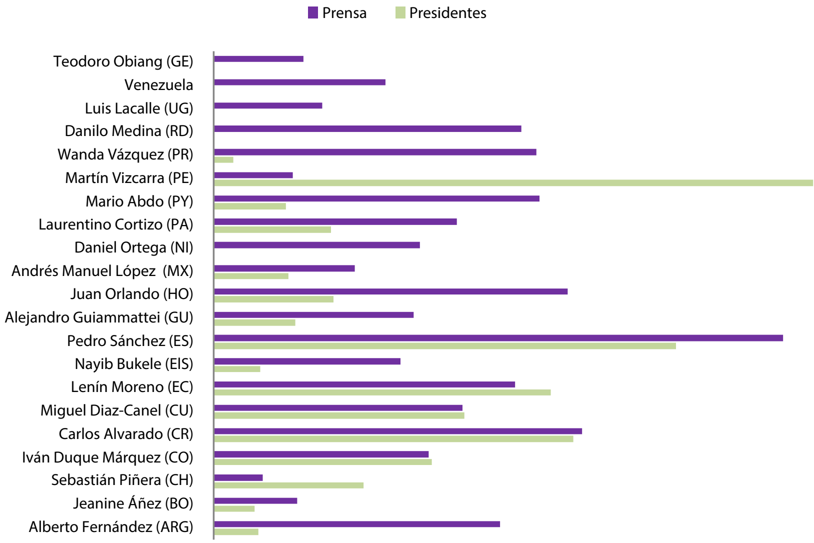
These calculations were made taking into account the total number of tweets published and those that were related only to Covid-19. For these conjectures, we took into account two factors: the social pressure emitted from the mass media and the communications made by the presidents, because Agenda Building focuses on the foundation of the news and the components that support it (Aruguete, 2017).

At the end of 2019, the mass media began to publish news about the coronavirus, intensifying these publications as of January 2020, at the time of declaring a massification of cases by the Chinese government in Wuhan and with the greater frequency of reports of the virus spreading beyond the Chinese borders. After the first major sign of a possible pandemic on March 3, until its official statement by the WHO on March 11, the media stepped up the volume of news related to Covid-19 for a total of 1887 posts compared to 6766 of various topics, which represented a 27.89% of the total impact.

We understand that the mass media act with great influence on all citizens, and the presidents of Spanish-speaking countries are influenced by them in the same way. However, the level of presence of government communication in its publications through Twitter was not observed to be in the same line as the media. The total number of publications by the presidents, during the study period, was a total of 884 tweets of which only 92 were related to Covid-19, which represented an impact level of 10.41%, which as we can observe, was far below the level of impact of the mass media, which created a mismatch in the Agenda Building of Spanish-speaking presidents. Chart 6 shows the differences between the level of impact of the press and the presidents, in detail, for each Spanish-speaking country.

As can be seen, only two presidents presented data above the press of their country and the average of all the studied profiles, and four of them had a good balance with Agenda Building. Fourteen accounts presented data below Agenda Building and four of them did not even have data related to it.

Chart 6
Impacts of media publications and presidents



Source: own elaboration.

Discussion

After the emergence of the Internet and social networks, new components of digital literacy are added to media and information literacy. This is because the mass media are digitizing their communication, thus it is necessary to have better digital skills (Delgado-Ponce & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2012).

The messages have content based on the subjective interpretation of it in different contexts, as well as an explanation of them when possible (Conde et al., 2019). Twitter is a means of pressure in both ways, on the one hand, we have citizens dissatisfied with certain incongruous actions or discourses on the part of the governance and on the other, the government that tries to expose and strengthen support for its processes both in normal situations and crisis situations.

With the study model of media competence designed in this research, the parameters we measured were: Flesch-Kincaid index, to analyze the language dimension; engagement, for the interaction dimension; audiovisual support, for technology; the link-hashtag index, for the production and dissemination index; the authenticity index, for the ideology and values; and finally, building agenda, for that of ethics.

The engagement of the analyzed accounts: only four of them exceeded the average, the rest were with levels well below the average. This leads us to conclude that the dimension of interaction with its community is deficient and must be worked to improve the indexes. Possibly the low rate of interaction is related to the use of a fairly complex language for the majority of citizens.

Regarding the audiovisual support used by the accounts, subtracting those accounts that did not publish during the analyzed period, we conclude that it remains above the average. The technology dimension presents some quite positive data for the most part.

The link-hashtag index: it was quite low for all the accounts analyzed, we concluded that the dimension of production and dissemination is quite deficient in general, which would make these accounts unreliable sources of information for other users, nor that they appear in a majority in Twitter searches.

The index of authenticity or veracity: the content of the publications coming from the owner of the account was, as a general rule, very high, except for a few accounts that we sense that the content did not come from the owner of the account. In summary, indicating that the ideological dimension and values, that most accounts approve it with very good indices.

The content of the presidents' publications was not in line with Agenda Building; In other words, the level of commitment and ethics of the accounts during the Covid-19 was not correct. Only five of the twenty-two accounts analyzed had media competencies in the ethical dimension.

We found that during the chosen period, the analyzed accounts did not present adequate media skills in five of the six dimensions. We suggest that Spanish-speaking presidents need to deeply study their government communication via Twitter, as they need to significantly improve their media competence in communicating with citizens.

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Annexes

The annexes of this research can be viewed at the following link: https://bit.ly/2TcK9At or by capturing the accompanying QR code, which will allow the reader to automatically visit the annexes from their Smartphone or Tablet.

Figure 1
Annexes of the investigation

Source: own elaboration

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Fake news and unfunded beliefs in the post-truth age

Noticias falsas y creencias infundadas en la era de la posverdad

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Abstract

The dissemination of fake news embodies a pressing problem for democracy that is exacerbated by the ubiquity of information available on the Internet and by the exploitation of those who, appealing to the emotionality of audiences, have capitalized on the injection of falsehoods into the social fabric. In this study, through a cross-sectional, correlational and non-experimental design, the relationship between credibility in the face of fake news and some types of dysfunctional thoughts was explored in a sample of Chilean university students. The results reveal that greater credibility in fake news is associated with higher scores of magical, esoteric and naively optimistic thinking, beliefs that would be the meeting point for a series of cognitive biases that operate in the processing of information. The highest correlation is found with the paranormal beliefs facet and, particularly, with ideas about the laws of mental attraction, telepathy and clairvoyance. Significant differences were also found in credibility in fake news as a function of the gender of the participants, with the female gender scoring higher on average than the male gender. These findings highlight the need to promote critical thinking, skepticism and scientific attitude in all segments of society.

Keywords

Mass communication, Communication psychology, democracy, ethics of the press, information dissemination, critical thinking.

Resumen

La difusión de noticias falsas encarna un apremiante problema para la democracia que se ve agudizado por la ubicuidad de la información disponible en el internet y por el aprovechamiento de quienes, apelando a la emocionalidad de las audiencias, han capitalizado a su favor la inyección de falsedades en el entramado social. En este estudio a través de un diseño transversal, correlacional y no experimental se exploró la relación entre credibilidad frente a las noticias falsas y algunos tipos de pensamientos disfuncionales en una muestra de estudiantes universitarios chilenos. Los resultados develan que una mayor credibilidad en noticias falsas va aparejada con mayores puntajes de pensamiento mágico, esotérico e ingenuamente optimista, creencias que serían el punto de encuentro para una serie de sesgos cognitivos que operan en el procesamiento de la información. La correlación más alta se encuentra con la faceta de creencias paranormales y, particularmente, con las ideas acerca de las leyes de atracción mental, la telepatía y la clarividencia. También se hallaron diferencias significativas en la credibilidad en noticias falsas en función del género de los participantes, encontrando que el género femenino puntúa una media más alta que el género masculino. Estos hallazgos ponen en relieve la necesidad de promover el pensamiento crítico, el escepticismo y la actitud científica en todos los segmentos de la sociedad.

Palabras clave

Comunicación de masas, Psicología de la comunicación, democracia, ética de la prensa, difusión de la información, pensamiento crítico.

Fake news as threats to democracy in the post-truth era

The advent of digital society brought with it a profound transformation in the hegemonic narrative of truth, which rested on the possibility of recognizing press institutions as reliable means of production and transmission of information, attached to the ethical and professional exercise of the journalism and open to public scrutiny of the veracity of their sources. As Amoros (2018) points out, the massive irruption of digital platforms produced an information service on-demand, customizable, and more prone to interpellate the journalistic genre. Although there have been many cases of manipulation and censorship by traditional media, it was not until the entry of the digital revolution that the so-called fake news were signaled as an endemic threat to modern societies, undermining the trust in the media and shaking the foundations that sustain democracy.

Fake news can be understood as a deliberate alteration of a real fact or the invention of a fictitious fact in order to misinform or confuse an audience, generally presented in formats that evoke that of a traditional news story. Originally, this fake news can serve multiple purposes, such as promoting political interests and influencing public debate, or obtaining financial gains generated by the traffic of visits to websites. Another distinctive aspect of them is that they lack editorial review and processes that ensure compliance with minimum standards such as the accuracy of the information, the contrasting of its sources, the quality of the argumentation, and the assessment of their impact (Lazer et al., 2018). In essence, the invention or distortion of a news event acquires particularities that distinguish it from the news distributed by television channels and mass newspapers, because, although these can also be questioned) —insofar as they exercise control over the political agenda and construct reality under the lens tinted by typically conservative interests (Gronemeyer & Porath, 2017) — the absence of editorial review is not typical of them and, in cases that fail to correctly filter false news, they tend to rectify the information in official communications.

Although fake news is not a recent phenomenon, its proliferation has been favored by the accelerated growth rate of the internet and, particularly, by the unusual adherence of audiences to virtual social networks, spaces that enable and promote viralization in real-time of the information. These platforms constitute one of the main sources of information for Chileans and their open access has been the main catalyst for the rapid and uncontrolled distribution of news content. According to Vosoughi et al. (2018), fake news spreads on social media significantly faster than verified news, and news that deals with politics spread more frequently and quickly than other topics.

The great scope of fake news is partly explained by the appeal to the reader's emotions, which is why no citizen would be completely exempted from believing in them. These are constructions that exalt the audiences' sense of amazement and that, at the same time, reaffirm certain ideological biases, thus meeting emotional needs for approval that the traditional press often leaves unsatisfied. In this sense, fake news converges with the concept of post-truth, understood as a scenario in which the influence of objective facts on the configuration of public opinion receives a lower weight than personal beliefs and emotional reactions. For these purposes, post-truth capitalizes on the need for self-defense of the belief system, whose actions in the individual are articulated from cognitive strategies that reinterpret the facts that refute a belief in favor of safeguarding it (Flichtentrei, 2018). This is how fake news can contribute to the difficulty of people to subject the information they receive to critical scrutiny, convoking them to be convinced of its truthfulness and persistently reaffirming their biased beliefs. Empirically it has been shown that social network users prefer to select news publications that coincide with their previous opinions (Sülflow et al., 2019), however, the widespread dissemination of fake news has the potential to penetrate the belief system even when they are inconsistent with the reader's political ideology (Pennycook & Rand, 2019). Conclusions that are congruent with the idea that the repetition of fake news increases the perceived legitimacy of it, since beliefs tend to be updated as dishonest behavior becomes more frequent (Garrett et al., 2016).

Although fake news can be considered a problem per se, its consequences in the field of action can be even more worrisome. Following the famous Thomas theorem, the veracity of a fact may be less relevant than the interpretation that people make of it. This implies that to the extent that a news item is judged to be true, regardless of its true status of truth, the consequences that it invokes will certainly be real. In this sense, the spread of falsehoods and rumors can generate panic in the population, increase mistrust towards institutions, polarize public debate or even put people's lives and integrity at risk. For example, the belief that certain vaccines can cause autism in children had a deterrent effect that has even motivated anti-vaccination movements, putting the individual and collective health of people at risk (Domínguez et al., 2019). Similarly, the news that assured that in Chile's presidential elections some ballots were previously marked to favor certain candidates, had an immediate effect on the polarization of public debate and on the perception of the functioning of democracy. According to the research by Halpern et al. (2019), 36.4% of the Chilean population considered this news as very credible or extremely credible.

With an audience that is especially permeable to falsehood, it is foreseeable that trust - the act by which attributions and responsibilities are delegated - will be seriously compromised. This is because what to believe? and who to believe? are direct interpellations to the prevailing way of understanding the truth and to the sources that support it. Fake news and alternative events understood as selective versions of reality, contribute to sowing a climate of uncertainty, also enhanced by the inability of the press to connect with new audiences and defend their professional heritage (Nigro, 2018). In general, the crisis in journalism has moved together with the displacement of trust towards social networks, and paradoxically, the more credibility in the press decreases, the more citizens are exposed to false content. As a corollary, in Chile, 55% of the population indicates that they have little or no trust in the traditional media, a figure that is an expression of a generalized trend in Latin America (Latinobarómetro, 2018).

Understood in this way, the spread of fake news embodies a ubiquitous problem for democracy, since the functioning of the political system demands an informed citizenry capable of intelligently influencing public decision-making. As Habermas (1991) already anticipated, the growth of the cultural industry is, to some extent, responsible for the fact that the public sphere has moved away from its original meaning, in terms of constituting a space for opinion and public debate. In this way, the archetype of the modern citizen is forced to transmute towards an increasingly demanding version of himself, not only aware of his rights and duties but also competent in the use and management of the information that surrounds him. The responsibility of a citizen in the digital age consists precisely in avoiding within this ocean of information superficial, spurious, and false data, a filter that is achieved only to the extent that critical skills allow it. Additionally, because the search for truth is a virtue that goes beyond intellectual competence, the presence of fake news also poses challenges for the ethical-moral dimension of citizenship education. Consequently, the configuration of a digital scenario that overflows content of different quality and nature requires sustaining a well-founded, prudent and reflective judgment that establishes the bases for the optimal performance of citizens.

Credibility in fake news, cognitive biases and dysfunctional beliefs

Fake news doesn't impact all of the audiences evenly. The credibility in them will depend on the content of the information, on the circumstances that contribute to give truth to the argument, and on the cognitive responses with which a certain individual manages to encode the information received and judge its coherence. Some media outlets resort to sensationalism and the banalization of discourse to take advantage of a niche of viewers who are less willing to make cognitive efforts to process information, directing their attention to peripheral factors that do not require greater rationality or are less strenuous to process. (Sobrado et al., Ruz, 2018). People can judge the plausibility of a fact based on heuristic rules based on the source, the images, and the broadcast medium, but even though the source that produces the news manages to transfer different levels of coercion based on trust, expertise, and reputation that it has (Metzger et al., 2010), credibility is ultimately an attribute of individual character (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). As suggested by theories on the effects of persuasion, some stimuli associated with the source, the channel, and the context could be capable of increasing the credibility of the messages, but with differentiated effects due to the interaction of these elements with the individual characteristics of the recipients (Moya, 1999).

Certain personality traits could explain part of the interpersonal variations of credibility in fake news. Certain psychological profiles linked to dogmatism, fundamentalism, and delusional thinking are more likely to be deceived by erroneous content (Bronstein et al., 2019). Following this line, it has been suggested that credibility in fake news could be related to the skeptical thinking of the recipients, who, in the absence of a reasoned examination of the content, are often seduced by ideas —although occasionally comfortable— distanced from the facts that they claim to represent (Pennycook & Rand, 2019). The ability of people to discern the truth in the media and, by default, to discard epistemically doubtful and inconsistent beliefs has a close correlation with the analytical skills that the reader has cultivated in their training as a citizen. In this sense, the absence of analysis turned into custom ends up giving up intellectual tutelage to people and corporations with their own interests, capable of injecting falsehoods into the social body to take advantage of the most unwary (Sagan, 2000), a credulity that carries the cost of autonomy on any plane of human existence.

The willingness to believe in implausible statements finds its anchor point in the cognitive distortions that operate in the processing of information. These biases are systematic errors of reasoning that result in a deviation of inferential judgment, based on a hasty and subjective selection of the information. In scenarios of uncertainty, it is common for people to judge the plausibility of events based on mental shortcuts that do not always lead to reasonable results, filtering the stimuli that best fit with their cognitive schemes and with the preconceptions they have of the phenomenon. For example, incomplete information can offer the illusion of causality in situations where only the temporal contiguity of two events has mediated, a bias that otherwise would be the explanatory basis for certain superstitious beliefs, such as when a person attributes success from a lottery to the immediately preceding action (closing the eyes, shaking a limb, rubbing an amulet, etc.), becoming a cabal for future attempts. Understood in this way, biases promote a simplification and categorization of reality, frequently being related to rigid visions to interpret the world, as well as to dysfunctional behaviors (David et al., 2010).

Cognitive biases are incorporated into the mental schemas that influence the selectivity of memory and attention. These schemes constitute the framework of the subject's personality and can remain impervious to reasoning due to the need to preserve their coherence with the most unconditional beliefs, therefore offering greater resistance to change. In this way, certain automatic thoughts are presented involuntarily that shape the interpretation of life experiences, impacting a wide spectrum of emotional and behavioral reactions, whether they are considered adaptive or not. Epstein (1998) has considered within his cognitive-experiential theory the existence of two types of automatic thoughts, understood as fleeting and concrete expressions of the unconditional ideas of the subject (Beck & Clark, 1997). On the one hand, it lists a series of dimensions in which thoughts of a constructive nature are grouped, which are associated with the ability to successfully face life events, while, on the other, it identifies dimensions that contribute to basic forms of destructive thinking, that line up in a direction opposite to that required for a good psychological adjustment. Magical thinking, esoteric thinking, and naive optimism would be clear examples of schemes that contribute dysfunctional beliefs for the development of the personality and that could eventually be correlated with other equally implausible beliefs.

a. **Magical thinking:** Seen from an anthropological framework, magical thinking represents an archaic and culturally typical category of the primitive stages of societies. On the other hand, for evolutionary psychology, it constitutes a child thinking scheme that fades as children are exposed to educational influence and acquire more knowledge of natural laws (Brashier & Multhaup, 2017). Although the conceptualization of these thoughts is interspersed with the definitions of esoteric, mystical, paranormal, and superstitious beliefs, Epstein (2012) proposes its distinction based on the idiosyncratic character that these beliefs acquire in the individual and due to their connection with pessimism and hopelessness. Thus understood, magical thinking operates on the basis of private superstitions to which the subject clings to defend himself from threats and accept unfavorable results in advance.
b. **Esoteric thinking:** Esoteric thinking brings together a series of beliefs that have overcome the project of cultural secularization and that have their roots in a dreamlike reality immune to the physical laws that govern the real world. Supernatural and scientifically questionable explanations abound in this category of thought, supported only by continual exposure to unfounded ideas and by the singularity of experience that has probative value for the individual. According to Epstein (2012), esoteric thinking includes beliefs of the paranormal domain and beliefs in common superstitions that, under certain limits, represent only a propensity towards unproven phenomena, but that at higher levels would reveal deficits in probabilistic reasoning (Leonard & Williams, 2019), a propensity for intuitive thinking style (Rogers et al., 2018), and lower fluent intelligence (Stuart-Hamilton et al., 2006). Similarly, beliefs in strange phenomena are concatenated with dissociative experiences and with psychopathological structures with a schizotypal trait (Dagnall et al., 2016).
c. **Naive optimism:** Although optimism, in general, is often considered a favorable personality trait, if positive thoughts act as a barely realistic and unfounded response they can be considered dysfunctio-

> nal. In this sense, the childish exaggeration of optimism plunges the individual into a fantasy, raising a feeling of naivety that keeps him from the consequences that objectively adverse events tend to provoke. It is then a simplistic and childish vision that hides negative or unpleasant events under myopia, even when they represent a relevant threat to the individual. The naive optimist overestimates the probabilities of the occurrence of favorable outcomes compared to equiprobable random alternatives and tends to generalize the successes at his convenience with no other basis than an uncritical confidence in himself and others. This voluntarism represents a break with reality that is porous to the desirable expectations of the world, but impervious to the facts that oppose it.

Consequently, there are psychological characteristics that, apart from the editorial demands that could be attributed to the press, make audiences a more suggestible actor for the purposes of the rhetorical and logical fallacies that nest in the post-truth era; making their uprooting more complex in precisely those who are less capable of protecting themselves against the interests of charlatans and greedy politicians. This research seeks to determine the existence of relationships between the credibility of fake news and the dysfunctional beliefs that individuals adopt regarding the world around them. It is hypothesized that greater credibility in fake news is coupled with a propensity towards magical, esoteric, and naively optimistic thinking, where the common denominator of these relationships would be anchored in the cognitive biases that operate in information processing.

Method

Design

An investigation was carried out with a non-experimental design, of correlational scope and quantitative nature, whose data collection was limited in time to the months of June and July 2020. Due to the unusual conditions of the confinement and health crisis context, the modality we used a computer-assisted self-administered questionnaire. This study was approved under the internal code No. 14-2 by the scientific ethics committee of the Universidad Santo Tomás, Chile.

Instruments

To measure the variables of magical thinking, naive optimism and esoteric thinking, the homonymous scales of the Epstein Constructive Thought Inventory (2012) were used, an instrument widely used for various purposes and populations, previously showing adequate psychometric characteristics of reliability and validity.

The *Magical Thinking* Scale consists of a one-dimensional battery of seven graded response items that indicates the degree to which people cling to private superstitions such as the idea that if something good happens it will be quickly offset by something bad. *Esoteric thought*, on the other hand, is made up of a battery of thirteen items grouped into two specific facets related to the belief in strange phenomena. The paranormal beliefs facet includes phenomena such as clairvoyance, phantasmagoria, eschatology, and telepathy, while the *superstitious thinking* facet is oriented towards conventional superstitions, such as astrology, tarot, amulets, and good or bad omens.

The *naive optimism* scale measures the degree to which a person is optimistic without a foundation, such as the idea of being able to make something happen if you want it badly enough. This scale has a factorial structure of three facets that together group fifteen items. The facet of *exaggerated optimism* is related to the generalization of favorable events to all situations, while the facet of naivety is related to positive, although unreal, expectations about the future and about other people. The *stereotyped* facet of *thinking* measures simplistic and little elaborate ways of thinking that, unlike suspicion, are represented by prejudices with a positive bias. All the items on the scales have five response options in Likert format, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

On the other hand, a screening scale was constructed to quantify the degree of credibility in fake news related to the political, social, international, and health contingency of the 2019-2020 period. For this, the same measurement strategy reported by previous investigations that use the headline of a news item as a reagent was replicated with credibility responses graded in six alternatives ranging from "not at all credible" to "absolutely credible" (Valenzuela et al., 2019; Halpern et al., 2019; Pennycook & Rand, 2019).

Figure 1
Example of an item from
the fake news credibility questionnaire

14. Respuesta de Metro ante manifestaciones no deja conforme a los santiaguinos: "Sólo cambiaron de lugar los 30 pesos".

Participants

The sample consisted of 171 higher education students from the Bío-Bío region, Chile, of which 75% were female, whose age range ranged from 18 to 46 years, with an mean of 22.24 and a standard deviation of 3.32 years. The sample consisted mainly of Psychology students (49.1%), followed by Occupational Therapy students (18.1%) and Social Work (11.7%). The recruitment of the participants was carried out on the basis of a sample by cluster, taking the subjects and levels of the training programs as the sampling unit. The only exclusion criterion was to present a situation of visual impairment that was disabling to answer the online form.

Procedures

Fake news that circulated on social networks during the years 2019 and 2020 were compiled for the construction of the credibility questionnaire. Mainly news related to the social unrest that occurred in October 2019 in Chile and the social and health crisis of COVID-19 were chosen. In order to include the news in the screening instrument, their falsity was corroborated from fact checking services and the mainstream press. The preliminary version of the instrument was presented to a committee of experts for review based on criteria of relevance and quality of the items. Subsequently, a pilot test was carried out on a sample of 59 people who were contacted through personal networks. The final version of the instrument featured twelve fake news stories plus two verified news items that were used to control for acquiescence bias.

The participants answered the surveys through their asynchronous application through Google Forms, after accepting informed consent. It was omitted to report that the news presented in the questionnaire was fake to ensure that the responses did not conform to social desirability. Similarly, the magical, superstitious and naive optimism thinking scales were described only as scales to measure general personality attributes.

The data analysis resorted to the calculation of univariate frequency statistics for the description of the individual credibility of the news and the calculation of correlation measures between all facets of dysfunctional beliefs with the fake news credibility questionnaire. For data analysis and hypothesis testing, the computer program was used SPSS and R-Studio was used for graphing.

Results

According to Table 1, a great heterogeneity is observed in the credibility of fake news, concentrating higher scores in the headlines related to the functioning of public institutions that operate in the national territory. Three out of four participants claim to believe that during the 2019 protest events a carabineer policeman ran over a protester in Valparaíso and more than 70% say that the price of metro tickets was only redistributed at different times, thus denying the fact that the rate increase was suspended a week after the protests began. On the other hand, the news with the lowest credibility scores were related to international events that mainly allude to conspiracies, such as the anti-vaccine movement and the Stop 5G movement.

When disaggregating the analysis based on the gender of the participants, it was found that in nine of the twelve fake news, women reported greater credibility than men, thus, for example, while 26% of men considered very or totally credible that Donald Trump mocked the death of citizen George Floyd, in women this figure rose to 45%. In the same way, it was observed that the in the news that affirmed the presence of external agents in the burning of the Santiago subway the of credibility group of women was three times the credibility granted by men.

Table 1
Credibility of the fake news selected in the fake news credibility questionnaire

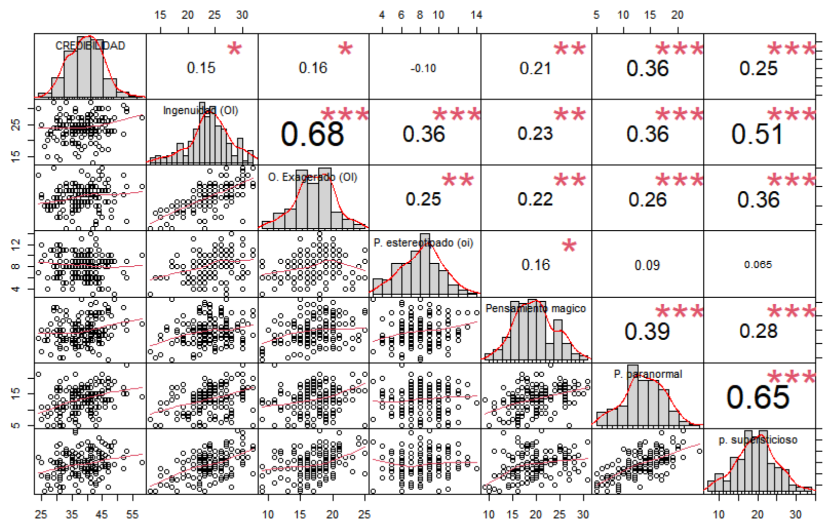
News	Credible or absolutely credible (%)		
	Male	Female	Total
Carabineer in civilian clothes runs over protesters who were forming a barricade in Valparaíso.	66,7	77,5	74,9
Metro’s response to demonstrations does not satisfy the people of Santiago: “Only the 30 pesos changed places.”	59,5	75,2	71,3
Precariousness and lack of resources in the Santiago hospital forces the use of chairs as stretchers in the pediatric waiting room [*image of a baby connected to a probe from a plastic chair*].	64,3	72,9	70,8
A kindergarten educator is beaten by the Carabineers for trying to help a minor who was being detained.	50,0	61,2	58,5
Trump mocks during a live broadcast of George Floyd’s death, saying, “I can’t breathe!”	26,2	45,0	40,4
The scientific community assures that the SARS-CoV-2 virus, given its complexity and characteristics, was created in a laboratory in China.	35,7	37,2	36,8
Experts say that prolonged use of disposable masks causes lack of brain oxygenation and respiratory problems.	21,4	39,5	35,1
Protesters force a priest to leave the Cathedral of Santiago amid protests against the Government.	23,8	20,2	21,1
Ecuadorians throw deaths from COVID-19 into the sea due to the saturation of funeral services.	26,2	17,1	19,3
5G antennas demolished during demonstrations in Hong Kong claiming that cause the weakening the immune system in the face of COVID-19.	21,4	16,3	17,5
Investigative Police confirmed the presence of Cuban and Venezuelan agents involved in the burning of the Santiago metro.	7,1	19,4	16,4
Bill Gates on the spotlight due to statements regarding the testing of his funded vaccine: “The COVID-19 vaccine will cause more than 700 thousand deaths.”	9.5	16.3	14.6

As can be seen in Figure 2, at a bivariate level, it is found that credibility in fake news correlates significantly with the facets of Ingenuity [r = 0.15 (169), p = 0.049], Exaggerated Optimism [r = 0.16 (169), p = 0.037], Magical Thinking [r = 0.21 (169), p = 0.005], Superstitious Thinking [r = 0.25 (169), p = 0.001] and Paranormal Beliefs [r = 0.36 (169), p <0.001]. The correlation with Esoteric Thought stands out for its magnitude, both in its facets of Paranormal Beliefs and in Superstitious Thought and although these correlations oscillate within moderate intensity margins, it should be noted that some specific items of these dysfunctional beliefs would be contributing different weights on the variance of credibility in fake news.

Thus, for example, when asked about the belief about the laws of mental attraction (for example, I think that some people can make me think about them just by thinking of me), those who say they strongly or absolutely agree obtain higher credibility scores towards fake news than those who remain skeptical of the possibility of influencing people's actions by summoning them with thought [t (135) = 3.79, p <0.001, d = 1.08]. This distinction is also present when considering other esoteric beliefs such as telepathy [t (126) = 3.00, p = 0.003, d = 0.66], clairvoyance [t (119) = 2.79, p = 0.006, d = 0.51] and mental projection [t (135) = 2.87, p = 0.005, d = 0.50]. At the level of superstitious beliefs, the items that are most related to credibility in fake news are those referring to the belief that the moon influences thoughts t(120) = 3.11, p = 0.002, d = 0.62], belief in the Evil eye t(134) = 3.44, p = 0.008, d = 0.53] and the belief in good and bad omens [t (116) = 2.74, p = 0.007, d = 0.51]. However, some of the more common esoteric beliefs such as phantasmagoria, astrology, and amulet fetishism did not show significant relationships with fake news credibility.

Naturally, correlations were also found between the internal facets of dysfunctional beliefs, highlighting the links between Naivety and Exaggerated Optimism [r = 0.68 (169), p <0.001], Paranormal Beliefs and Superstitious Thinking [r = 0.65 (169), p <0.001] and Naivety and Superstitious Thinking [r = 0.51 (169), p <0.001].

Figure 2
Pearson correlation matrix between credibility in fake news and dysfunctional beliefs



Note: *= p < 0.05; **= p <0.01; ***= p < 0.001

Discussion and conclusion

People do not have a silver bullet against fake news and although the contrasting of sources and critical scrutiny of the information allows minimizing their assimilation as a biased belief, they contain the potential to permeate in different segments, including the populations with academic training, proof of the above is the high credibility rates that participants grant to certain fake news, figures that are even higher than those found in previous studies with the Chilean population (e.g. Halpern et al., 2019; Valenzuela et al., 2019). From a structural point of view, the context in which a news story is made would play a relevant role in their credibility, since it is precisely in times of crisis that they manage to go viral with more force. Even so, it is possible to identify certain psychological propensities of those who usually consume and believe in these contents. This research was fruitful in finding multiple correlations with credibility in fake news, highlighting the link to the facets of paranormal belief and superstitious thinking. These correlations are aligned with the main hypothesis of the study, supporting the existence of shared variability between credibility in fake news and dysfunctional beliefs, except for the relationship with the facet of stereotyped thinking. This suggests that the basis for taking the news that are really false as true would be associated with the same cognitive biases that operate on the basis of other implausible beliefs that in practice are surrounded by a halo of mysticism and charlatanism.

The results are in tune with the research that reveals the role of critical thinking and skepticism in adherence to alternative facts (Pennycook & Rand, 2019; Bronstein et al., 2018; Pennycook et al., 2020). Consequently, there would be a common profile of credulous people who tend to be guided by their first impressions at the expense of minimizing the cognitive efforts necessary to elucidate the truth, either due to the satisfaction of complacency, disinterest in the information environment, or due to a genuine low analytical ability. Whatever the case, the proliferation of falsehoods highlights the need to call for greater efforts on the part of social institutions, mainly the educational system and press institutions.

When comparing the results of credibility in fake news based on gender, significant differences were obtained, which placed women as the group with the greatest susceptibility to misinformation in the media. These differences are small, as has already been noted in previous research (Rampersad & Althiyabi, 2019) and should be interpreted with caution, since not in all fake news did women show greater credibility than men, thus the existence of an interaction between gender and news content when judging its veracity is probable. On the other hand, it should be noted that the differences by gender can be absorbed by the covariation they have with the differences in magical and esoteric thinking, since the literature reports that it is precisely women who hold this type of belief more frequently (Caldera et al.., 2017; Rodríguez & Valenzuela, 2019), a difference attributable to culturally anchored gender socialization patterns that are intergenerationally reproduced.

Despite the foregoing, the credibility granted to fake news not only varies according to the individual characteristics of the audiences, but it also does so based on the degree of distance between the exposed content and the objective possibilities of its occurrence. News that introduces subtle distortions to the facts are easier to take as true than those that appeal to large-scale conspiracies and hoaxes. For example, the news that affirmed the running over of protesters by a civilian police officer in Valparaíso attracted high credibility due to the reasonableness of extrapolating to this situation the previous abuses that contributed to sowing mistrust towards the functioning of the security institutions and order. This example would be a fake news story that, given the social conditions in which it was registered, is more likely to have occurred. Indeed, during the social protests, there were run-overs against protesters, of which there were two fatalities, attributed to the police forces. In this sense, the problem of the dissemination of fake news should not only be weighed by the extension that these have in the population, but also by their margin of proximity to reality, since a greater deviation usually imposes more dramatic consequences for those who hold such beliefs. Consider, for example, the potential consequences of almost a third of university students claiming that prolonged use of masks generates lack of brain oxygenation, an argument that is frequently used by denial groups that have emerged in the United States and Europe in the context of the health crisis. The post-truth scenario seems to be a sad reminder of the vulnerability of the human species to deal with uncertainty.

As Rodríguez and Valenzuela (2019) point out, the 21st century has not only given shelter to impressive scientific and technological developments but also in parallel to this notion of progress, it has been the catalyst to expand new unfounded narratives and preserve irrational beliefs that neither education nor science have managed to banish. Naivete —as opposed to grounded criticism — represents a serious problem for society and for the people that comprise it, since absolute devotion to personal beliefs paves the way for biased decisions, including those that work in aggregate terms. At the individual level, it is important to become aware of the fallibility of thought. It is not too much to ask, from time to time, to question ideas and preconceptions about the world and exercise critical reasoning when intentionalities are noticed behind the content we consume, especially if it is aligned with the confirmatory expectations of our beliefs.

Finally, there are certain limitations whose consideration should be taken into account in future studies. Due to the particularities of the sample, it is likely that the correlation values are higher when selecting participants with a wider range of individual differences, especially with regard to cultural background and socioeconomic status. On the other hand, it is naive to conclude that credibility in fake news is the sole expression of people's individual dispositions and, in this sense, it is necessary to determine in new investigations the effects resulting from the involvement of factors related to the sender, the channel, and context, as well as the eventual interaction that these factors would have with the individual attributes of the audience.

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Political communication on Internet: the case of #RedAMLO in Mexico

La comunicación política en Internet: el caso de #RedAMLO en México

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Abstract
This paper analyzes the modifications that socio-digital networks have generated within the field of political communication, particularly the construction of interaction-communication networks through the creation of hashtags, such as #RedAMLO on Twitter. Thus, this work aims to identify the interaction-communication network that has been formed by the hashtag #RedAMLO, to analyze its structure, information flow and those nodes that are strategically positioned in said network.
For this, the Social Network Analysis (SNA) has been used as a methodological body and data mining has been used to collect, systematize, debug, and analyze the metacommunication of said network.
Among the main results, a network made up of 8586 nodes was found and visualized, which are largely citizens who enhance their visibility and political sympathy through this socio-digital platform. This is part of a broader process where greater visibility implies a decentralization of public opinion and a political tactic to show the base that sustains the current administration.
However, within the five most relevant nodes due to the number of links, two have an operating logic similar to that of fake accounts or bots, which is why the work also identifies that elements are also involved in these citizen-political networks. characteristic of the virtual space derived from its operational logics and particular interests.

Keywords
Hashtag, Twitter, communication, networks, politics, image.

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Resumen
El presente trabajo analiza las modificaciones que las redes sociodigitales han generado dentro del campo de la comunicación política, particularmente la construcción de redes de interacción-comunicación mediante la creación de hashtags como el caso de #RedAMLO en Twitter. Así, este trabajo tiene como objetivo identificar la red de interacción-comunicación que se han formado mediante el hashtag #RedAMLO, para analizar su estructura, flujo de información y aquellos nodos que se posicionan estratégicamente en dicha red.
Para ello, se ha empleado el Análisis de Redes Sociales (ARS) como cuerpo metodológico y se ha recurrido a la minería de datos para recopilar, sistematizar, depurar y analizar la metacomunicación de dicha red.
Entre los principales resultados se encontró y visualizó una red conformada por 8586 nodos, mismos que son en buena medida ciudadanos que potencian su visibilidad y simpatía política a través de esta plataforma sociodigital. Esto es parte de un proceso más amplio donde una mayor visibilidad implica una descentralización de la opinión pública y una táctica política para mostrar la base que sustenta a la actual administración.
No obstante, dentro de los cinco nodos más relevantes por la cantidad de vínculos, dos presentan una lógica de funcionamiento similar a la de cuentas falsas o bots, por lo que el trabajo también identifica que en estas redes de orden político-ciudadano también intervienen elementos propios del espacio virtual derivado de sus lógicas operativas e intereses particulares.

Palabras clave
Hashtag, Twitter, comunicación, redes, política, imagen.

Introduction and theoretical framework

An emerging characteristic, which is quickly consolidated in contemporary society, is the experience/construction of the world in and through the screens and platforms that are consolidated on them. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and social interaction applications have become inseparable elements of daily life in the 21st century. They are not only in the web but are essentially interfaces designed in that reticular architecture since their purpose is oriented to connectivity as a culture (Van Dijck, 2016). Its use, which was initially marked by entertainment, has been extended to work processes, cultural practices, economic dynamics, processes of social interaction, and political strategies, so their study should not be limited to a particular issue, but rather to the set of modifications and reconfigurations that emanate from their irruption into everyday life.

However, this process of incorporation and social appropriation of technology is not new, nor is it unique. In fact, this has happened with each new means of communication that is developed and inserted in social life. This was the case with the newspaper, radio, television, and the film industry (García-Calderón & Olmedo-Neri, 2019). However, what is really new about socio-digital platforms is the short time in which they were incorporated by individuals in their daily lives, that is, the appropriation process (Crovi, 2012) was faster than that of other media.

The arrival of the Internet and socio-digital platforms does not imply the disappearance of their predecessors per se, but rather a process of assimilation, adaptation, and decentralization in the media system and public opinion of said society. There is no a priori exclusion, but a process of connectivity, linkage, and media convergence that gives way to a new technological and communicative scenario for citizen participation in the political sphere. Hence, Lipovetsky and Serroy (2009, p. 271) speak of a mesh of screens that "has transformed our way of living, our relationship with information, with space-time, with travel and consumption" and where social interaction is mediated, mediatized and conditioned by the new forms of socialization that develop there (Boyd, 2011; Quinn & Papacharissi, 2018). Of all these possible combinations, the link between communication and politics acquires relevance given the new advantages and disadvantages that are manifested with the use of the Internet and socio-digital platforms for political purposes.

Although the mediated relationship between communication and politics has been present since its inception, it is with Modernity that "both have helped the organization of the State and the development of its political, economic and social potentialities" (Reyes-Montes et al., 2011, p. 86). This is how the interdisciplinary field of political communication arises, which "studies the contradictory and complementary dimensions that are presented in politics, information and communication in democratic systems" (Reyes-Montes et al., 2011, p. 90).

In general terms, political communication was established in the early 1940s and 1950s, specifically with the end of the Second World War (Reyes-Montes, 2007; Mendieta-Ramírez & Estrada-Rodríguez, 2017). Since 1970, this area of knowledge starts from "conceiving the media as a transcendental and powerful factor in the way of thinking and acting of individuals" (Reyes-Montes, 2007, p. 109).

The foregoing is relevant given that political communication is the historical result of the interconnection between the political and the media sphere, where both parties have interacted in a symbiotic relationship. This process was consolidated when the mass media were positioned as one more element to assess the level of democracy in a Nation-State. From this, the idea of "resorting more and more to the support of the mass media as privileged channels of contact with voters and the reactivation of political participation" (Grossi, 1985, pp. 152-153) was constructed.

However, the arrival of the socio-digital networks changed this state of affairs since it generated two relevant modifications: the first refers to the decentralization of the traditional media as producers of public opinion, and the consequent redistribution of citizen participation in the virtual space (Mathias, 2012). While the second modification is more profound since the new ways of articulating political strategies outside of electoral cycles or based on the administrative processes of the democratic system, permanently expand citizen participation, turning the Internet and platforms as "very useful tools to help foster subjective civic power and a greater sense of participation based on horizontal communication" (Dahlgren, 2012, p. 52).

Thus, citizen participation in the political sphere is no longer reduced to a vote on a set date, but to a constant intervention in public opinion in favor or against an ideological or political position with which they agree or diverge. This expansion in the ways of political participation has a subjective and interactive nature when sharing, reporting, commenting, reacting, or participating in the content that constantly flows on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

For this reason, socio-digital networks "give rise to creative and autonomous action by users, so that those forces can be consolidated, negotiated or challenged" (Jorge, 2014, p. 272). Faced with this new context, media conglomerates are forced to carry out a digital convergence, that is, in the creation of profiles/accounts on each of these platforms to maintain and increase their "massive" status. Their strength and legitimacy is challenged because the reticular, oblique, and multidirectional structure that exists in the network makes it possible to present visions, opinions, ideas, and information that may conflict with that produced in these mass media, giving rise to a new scenario where "citizens, immersed in digital networks, have more resources than ever to deliberate" (Trejo-Delarbre, 2015, p. 22).

From this horizontality of participation and decentralization of mass information, the strategic position of journalists and opinion leaders is reduced to the user/user function on the platforms (Olmedo-Neri, 2020), where "the network tends to facilitate new forms of communication, both horizontal and vertical, that promote discussions in public space" (Gómez-Castellanos, 2011, p. 75). Thus, this place without spatial materiality, but with an organic delimitation, is configured as the new scenario where the relationships between communication, participation, and power are substantially modified given the infinite plurality of sources of information and the growing intervention of citizens in issues of a very diverse nature, including politics at the multiscale level.

The most relevant example of the use of this new scenario for political action/participation/interaction is the electoral campaign of Barack Obama in the United States, which "was perceived as the first to combine the use of socio-digital networks with the mobilization on the field in a broader and more effective way" (Baldwin-Philippi, 2018, p. 528). The impact shown in that campaign gave way to prolific use of these networks by the political class to materialize the victory, since Obama was able to positively link citizens, who took an active part in the collection of funds, with the dissemination of messages to large sections of the population, especially American youth.

This 'turn' in the way of doing politics not only impacted the campaigns but on the way of constructing and maintaining an adequate image in the public sphere that can keep him in power. Therefore, this shift is symbolic and communicative in that it is assimilated that "it is no longer a matter of ideologically converting citizens, it is about selling —a product— with the best possible packaging" (Lipovetsky, 1990, p. 225). The foregoing is due to a gradual process that shifts the rational factor of the proposals they offer, to move to an emotional factor that generates a stronger and more lasting bond than the period in which the public office is held.

All of the above generates, therefore, a new scenario that modifies, in one way or another, the way of doing politics, which is reflected not only in the campaigns of those who aspire to a position within the State but also in the symbolic (re)configuration of any person who wishes to hold a public position. Furthermore, "the current metamorphosis of the media is having a profound impact on the conditions of participation and the dynamics of democracy" (Dahlgren, 2012, p. 51).

This does not mean that with the Internet there is greater plurality, much less than the debate is consensual. On the contrary, the so-called network of networks becomes a place where polarization is present because assuming greater connectivity and interaction does not mean that people change their political position in a radical way. In terms of networks, homophilia is replicated (Lozares & Verd, 2011), that is, the tendency of people to group with other people according to their interests to the extent of building bubbles where the same political sense flows and that, sometimes, they find themselves in conflict by colliding with other cohesive spheres based on opposing ideological or political elements.

In addition to this, this amplitude also leads to the incursion of new elements that amplify their disruptive effects: fake news and bots are configured as resources that are also generally integrated on the internet, but with particular depth, in the field of communication politics since they can play for or against a party, a politician or an administration.

Therefore, given the advantages and disadvantages mentioned here, it is necessary to analyze a particular case to identify the network that is configured and in what way the forms of participation and the challenges of the digital context are present, exposing the social complexity. The case of #RedAMLO is useful to analyze how political strategies have a citizen character, but also a communicative one in the political sphere.

In addition to #RedAMLO, other hashtags such as #AMLOVE #Chayoteros, #PrensaFifí and #AMLOvers have been built during the administration of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) as part of political strategies to 'show' the support of sympathetic users on Twitter. For some time it has been warned that in this type of strategies the use of bots or false accounts is plausible, and in some cases, it has even been identified how these accounts orchestrate or increase the visibility of the current President of Mexico (Chávez, 2020; Tajonar, 2020), therefore the analysis of this network allows both citizen strategies and those accounts that, due to their interaction logic on Twitter, can be considered as fake accounts, to be evidenced.

For this, the present work proposes the Social Networks Analysis (SNA) as a method that can help to analyze this reticular structure of interaction-communication (Olmedo-Neri, 2019) that develops around said hashtag. The interaction-communication network is made up of links that are generated between two or more nodes through the interaction that they develop with a specific creative product (meme, image, hashtag, video, link, among others), with which relationships of friendship can be reinforced, new bonds created or existing ones destroyed. These interaction-communication networks are not necessarily based on the network of links that an individual has per se, but they can motivate new links with greater or lesser durability through the information with which they interact at a given moment.

Thus, these networks that are structured according to the flow of information are particularly special in the digital space since they can reinforce the ties of friendship or the logics of operation (follow/be followed) from that content, generate new links with other users, or modify those that one already previously had.

In this way, the notion of network acquires relevance in its communicative sense since it is structured by the information and the meaning that accompanies #RedAMLO on Twitter. Therefore, it is possible to organize and visualize those political defense/promotion/attack networks towards or from a politician or party due to their action in the constant political sphere of the country.

Methodology

Social Network Analysis (SNA) is a method that:

> It aims to analyze the ways in which individuals or organizations connect or are linked, in order to determine the general structure of the network, its groups, and the position of individuals or unique organizations in it. (Sanz, 2003, p. 23)

The feasibility of using this method for the analysis of the hashtag #RedAMLO derives from its contributions to the structural study of the network and the flow of information that takes place there. From the structure, the ARS allows to identify and analyze the network itself, that is, the number of participants (nodes) that intervene and the links that are generated between said nodes; while at the informative level it provides elements to track and observe the content that allows two users, who may or may not have a link per se, to be within the infinity of the Twitter platform.

The SNA arises from contributions from sociology, anthropology, and mathematics, among others, in order to construct indicators that allow measuring cohesion, the strategic position of nodes (users/individuals), and the number of links (relationships between two or more nodes) that structure the network. Its use in the digital field acquires relevance from the very beginning of the internet (Rogers, 2018) and with the passage of time, its objects of study have diversified: from the egocentric networks that an individual possesses within a platform, passing through the impact from an electoral campaign in the digital field through the use of the cloud (Peirone, 2012), to the analysis of the media convergence processes carried out by social movements (Olmedo-Neri, 2019) to increase their visibility in the digital public space.

In this work, the NodeXL software has been used to collect the information and the Gephi program for the visualization of the network and the calculation of the indicators. The collection processes are linked to the scope of the investigation and the temporality of the events that promote the use or not of a resource such as a hashtag, a meme, or a video, therefore, its collection and analysis must be contextualized in time and spatially with the moment in which it is used since it has a crucial meaning.

In this sense, the network being analyzed is structured around the hashtag #RedAMLO on Twitter[1]. This resource has a traceability character, that is, it can be tracked using NodeXL to identify those nodes (users/profiles) that have published, shared, or commented on something about said hashtag. In terms of temporal delimitation, this study has compiled the interaction-communication relationships developed around the hashtag #RedAMLO from April 6 to 30, 2020, given that in this period the use of hashtags increased in favor of the President of Mexico and with it, arose the questioning of these resources to 'inflate' the popularity of AMLO (Chávez, 2020; Tajonar, 2020). Hence, #RedAMLO is configured as a political strategy to show sympathy and support for the president at particular times and where there is also the latent use or participation of fake accounts or bots.

Regarding the spatial delimitation, those users who have a location within the Mexican territory have been analyzed, in order to focus the analysis on the national territory, given the political position held by Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO).

1 In the early days of the application of SNA in the digital space, it was possible to carry out this type of analysis on Facebook, however, with the modification of its policies and terms of use, this possibility was eliminated, giving way to this type of analysis being used on other platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr, for example.

Once the element subject to traceability and the temporal and spatial delimitations have been identified, it is necessary to establish the indicators that will be used to analyze both the structure and the operational logic of the network that underlies the hashtag #RedAMLO. The following table shows the indicators to be used.

Table 1
Network indicators

Indicator	Description
Network type	It can be directed (the direction of the link between two nodes is known) or undirected (which is only limited to identifying the presence of the link).
Network density	"The density of a graph is the relationship between the number of existing lines divided by the number of possible lines" (Paniagua, 2012, p. 37).
Grade level	It is the number of links that a node has within the network. If the network is of a directed type, the degree level can be broken down into input degree (those interactions of one or more nodes with respect to a specific publication of a user) and output degree (those publications that emanate from a node).
Degree of intermediation	This indicator refers to an attribute of dispersion and concentration where the information flows and from where they can increase their visibility if so desired (Hanneman, 2000).

Source: Own elaboration

Finally, with these indicators it is possible to identify the structure and internal logic of the network, as well as those nodes that are strategically positioned in said network structure, either by the number of links they have or by their ability to disseminate information in said network's reticular structure.

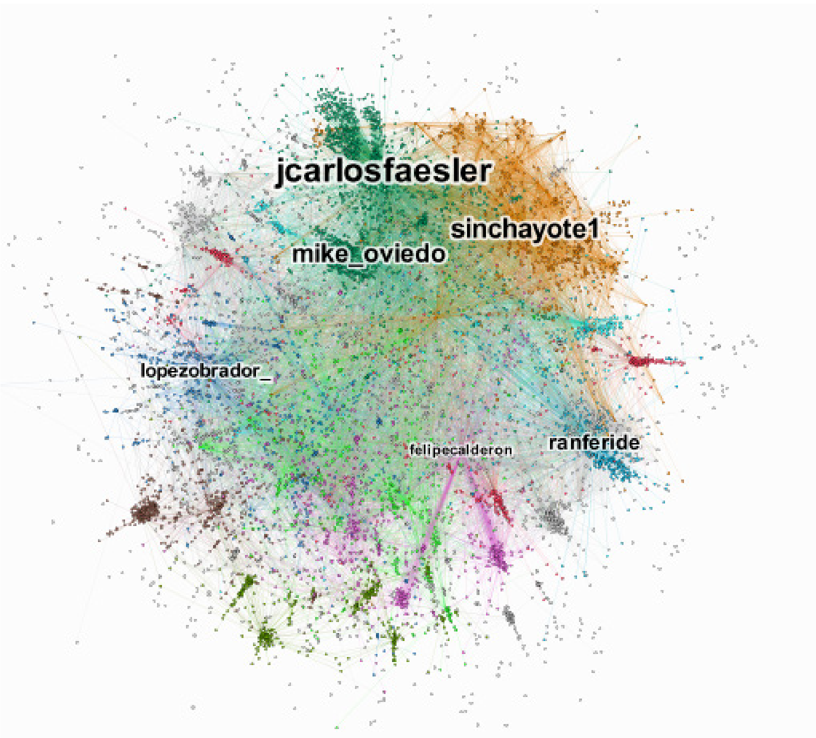
Results

The hashtag #RedAMLO becomes an example of the use of the operational logic of Twitter to summon and articulate on Twitter the sympathy of citizens in favor of the federal administration headed by Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) since his electoral triumph in Mexico in June of 2018.

The network is of a directed type, which means that the origin and destination of each link is known. This is particularly important since by knowing the directionality it is possible to explain the functional logic of the information flow of the network, that is, who has a greater capacity to disseminate information and who has a strategic position, for example.

At the structural level, the network is made up of 8,586 nodes and 26,649 links. From the data cleansing carried out, it was found that the places where there were more publications were Mexico City, Monterrey, and Guadalajara. The following figure shows the network from the input degree.

Figure 1
#RedAMLO



Source: Own elaboration with data from Gephi.

The density of this network is 0.001%, which explains that this network has a weak cohesion between its nodes, however, this responds to the purpose of the hashtag: to reach as many people as possible, regardless of whether said link may last after employing that resource at a particular time.

The network is presented under Gephi's ForceAtlas2 algorithm. The names present in said network correspond to the users with the highest grade level, that is, those nodes that have the greatest number of links in the network. The case of the official account of former President Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) has been highlighted, in order to show that this network not only has a purpose to vindicate the image of AMLO in the public sphere, but also to denounces those governments whose actions contributed, in a certain way, to the current context in the country. Furthermore, the tense relationship between AMLO and Felipe Calderón has existed since the 2006 presidential elections, when Calderón was elected with a very small margin and criticized by a part of Mexican society.

The following table shows the indicators of the users with the highest number of links.

Table 2
Nodes with higher grade level

Node	Role	Entry node	Exit node	Grade level	Intermediation
jcarlosfaesler	AMLO supporter	1525	3	1528	1 078 095
Sinchayote1	Content page in favor of AMLO	903	223	1126	1 699 036.4
Mike_oviedo	AMLO supporter	1001	4	1005	663 005.34
Ranferide	AMLO supporter	663	1	664	0
Lopezobrador_	President of Mexico	574	0	574	0

Source: Own elaboration with data from Gephi.

Understanding the operation of the indicators allows us to recognize the functional logic of said network. In this case, by knowing the directionality of the link, that is, from where it is generated and towards which node it is directed, it is possible to disaggregate the grade level into two subgroups; thus, "while the degree of entry refers to the links referred to a node, the degree of exit refers to the links that the nodes create" (Olmedo-Neri, 2019, p. 123).

In this way, it can be seen that @jcarlosfaesler published three tweets in which the hashtag #RedAMLO was included, while this user had 1525 interactions with that hashtag; these interactions can be derived from their publications or by being tagged in tweets where said hashtag is found. The case of @ sinchayote1 is similar, given that while this profile published 223 tweets with this hashtag during the month of April, this activity generated 903 interactions with other users. In these two cases, it can be seen that the indicators are not directly correlated, so a high degree of output will not always correspond to a similar degree of input and vice versa.

In fact, this relative autonomy of the indicators finds its logic not in the network, but in the user through the strength of their links to generate a potential dissemination of what is published from their account; it is the social, symbolic, and subjective factor that allows the indicators to be built around the nodes and consequently in the network.

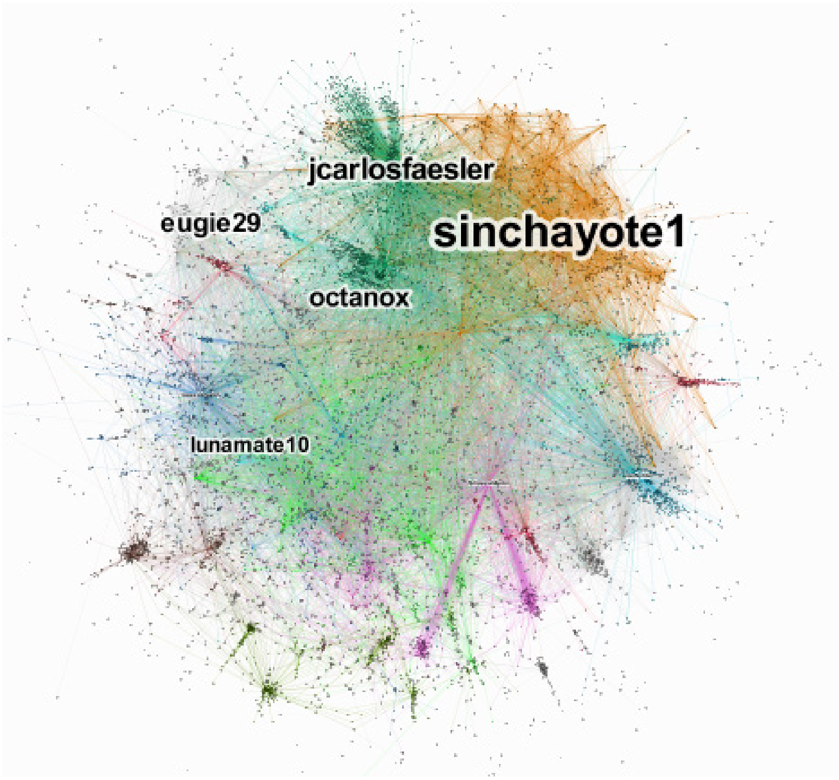
The case of the official account of Andrés Manuel López Obrador stands out in that said node did not publish any tweet with said hashtag, but this account was tagged in 574 tweets, which shows that this network, although it is structured around AMLO, his account is not the guiding center of this network, but is one of the elements that give it a symbolic meaning, of articulation and communication in the digital space.

The level of intermediation within this type of analysis becomes relevant since with it the disseminating nature of a node can be observed in terms of information. The intermediation shows the number of paths in which the node participates to link two other users in the network; therefore, having a high degree of intermediation, the node is strategically positioned as a hub (Barabási, 2011) that is, a node that can disseminate information within the network more quickly due to the quantity and directionality of the links that has.

In this sense, the degree of intermediation of @jcarlosfaesler states that this node participates in little more than a million paths to connect two nodes within the network; both @raferide and @lopezobrador_ do not have a degree of intermediation since their interaction with the hashtag or with other users were not relevant within the network structure. Therefore, each indicator can structure the network differently and consequently strategically reposition the existing nodes.

In this way, the following figure shows the five nodes with the highest degree of intermediation.

Figure 2
#RedAMLO with degree of intermediation



Source: Own elaboration with data from Gephi.

By changing the indicator under which to position the nodes, they may or may not remain strategic. As can be seen in this case, some nodes remain and others are displaced. The following table shows the indicators for these nodes.

Table 3
Nodes with the highest degree of intermediation

Node	Role	Entry node	Exit node	Grade level	Intermediation
Sinchayote1	Content page in favor of AMLO	903	223	1126	1 699 036.4
Jcarlosfaesler	AMLO supporter	1525	3	1528	1 078 095
Eugie29	AMLO supporter	9	64	73	1 044 914.9
Octanox	AMLO supporter	73	7	80	1 035 494.4
Lunamate10	AMLO supporter	133	21	154	745 660.9

Source: Own elaboration with data from Gephi.

Under the present panorama, it is possible to observe the relative autonomy of each indicator, thus having a high number of publications or interactions does not precisely mean that there is a capacity to disseminate information on the network.

Along with the structural analysis carried out, it is necessary to identify the characteristics of the content that flows in said network, in order to characterize it in symbolic and communicative terms. Although in socio-digital networks there is relative freedom to present oneself through an account/profile, there is also the possibility of transcending that freedom to obtain different, multiple, and sometimes infinite profiles or accounts of the same person; on other occasions, it is possible to identify those accounts that are created in a premeditated manner to oversize the presence of a political movement or action. Under this logic, the Botometer (2020) program has been used to identify, in analytical terms, the probability that the accounts that are strategically positioned on the network could be bots or fake accounts.

This software has origins in the University of Indiana and analyzes "some 1200 characteristics to characterize the profile of the account, the friends, the structure of the social network, the patterns of temporal activity, the language and the feeling" (Derecho a la Red, 2020); These factors are created from models of how a fake account behaves, so the higher the indicator, the greater the possibility that said account is fake or bot.

In the following figure, you can see the result obtained from each of the nodes that have been strategically positioned in the #RedAMLO both in degree and in intermediation.

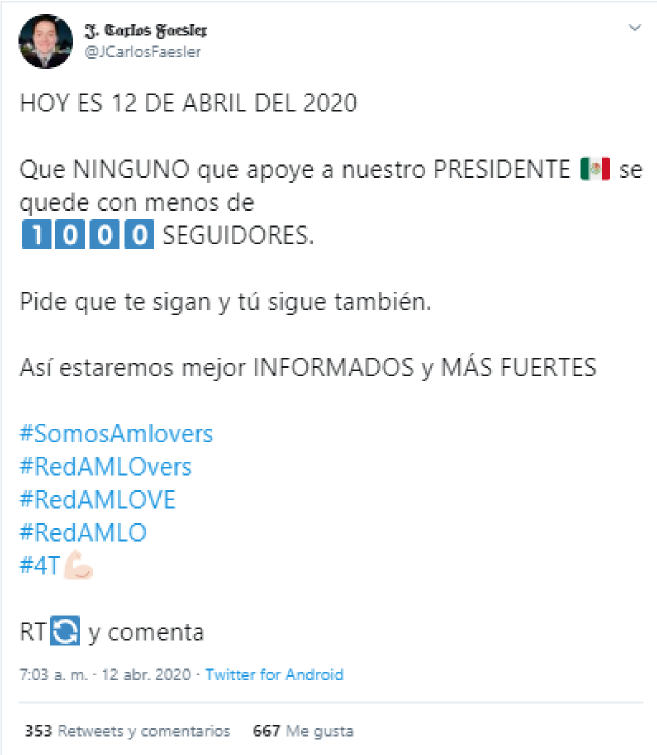
Figure 3
Probability of being fake accounts or bots

Source: Botometer (2020).

It should be noted that this tool only shows a probabilistic result from the analysis of the variables that have been previously established, so it is necessary to identify other elements within the account such as username, content in their tweets or if there is a constant number of profiles to tag in each publication, for example. Therefore, being fully certain of the falsity of an account implies a deeper work on each of the profiles, which is outside the scope of this investigation.

In terms of content, it can be seen that #RedAMLO has various functions, among which the constant interaction between the self-called #AMLOvers stands out. In the following figure, you can see one of the tweets that shows the way in which these links are established, the same that configure the network.

Figure 4
Tweet from @jcarlosfaesler



Source: @scarlosfaesler (2020).

In this way, the publications within this network are focused on maintaining the links between its members, as well as increasing their visibility by following each other and retweeting the generated content. These strategies are intended to increase the density of the network, by establishing operational links (follow/be followed) on Twitter. On the other hand, this network is characterized by constantly making a comparative link between AMLO and previous presidents, particularly Felipe Calderón, with whom, as mentioned, a historical relationship persists due to political and power issues. This type of comparison has a lesser impact in terms of interaction, but its presence is constant, which shows that this network is not only characterized by maintaining its links, but also by constantly reaffirming AMLO's image and political position.

Figure 5
Comparison of negotiations between AMLO and Felipe Calderón

Source: @Dodgeramlo (2020).

Finally, it can be seen that this network has different purposes, each one established according to the interests that are generated in the context and the information that arises from those users who do not agree with the AMLO administration.

Conclusions

This work has analyzed a network of users that is structured under the hashtag #RedAMLO. The results allow mentioning that within the network there are users who are strategically positioned by the role they play inside and outside of Twitter: while externally the position of the user in public opinion is relevant, internally the interaction it has and the attributes it receives from the links they form has the greater influence. In this way, it can be said that it is not enough to have the firm political conviction of support to hold a strategic and inciting place in the digital sphere, but that it goes hand in hand with strategies and information flows within the platform. It is also important to highlight the intervention of new factors that did not previously mediate: bots or fake accounts that are generated and managed to simulate a presence or force in the digital space become particularly relevant since they put in doubt, a priori, any network generated in the space virtual. Regardless of its origin, its purpose can help to generate a perception of the political force that supports an administration, or also set itself up as a promoter of questioning and discrediting of the defined target. For this reason, the approach of these new 'actors' in the field of political communication has a long way to go, not only at a theoretical level, but also methodologically for their identification within large information bases.

At the structural level, the network was analyzed under the SNA. With this, it was observed that the role of those nodes with a strategic position within the network are the supporters of AMLO and some pages that are constantly generating and disseminating information in favor of Andrés Manuel López Obrador. At an operational and informative level, these nodes constantly disseminate content in favor of AMLO, so it can be observed how the participation of individuals in the political sphere is no longer only restricted to the electoral processes established in Mexican democracy, but that it has been expanded to a constant dynamic of vindication of the politician within the public office he holds; it is a way in which networks of support and political sympathy are digitized in virtual space. Perhaps, the idea of being able to tag the President of Mexico with the hope of being read by him, becomes the strongest motivation to generate these interaction-communication networks.

Although these forms of networks were present in the concrete real environment, with the socio-digital platforms these networks are extended beyond the space in which the individual develops; the ability to find people who agree with a political position increases with the internet in the same way as the ability to find someone who does not agree with that position. Therefore, the study shows how with these new technological developments political activity is forced to expose a greater communicative character that goes beyond opinion studies before, during, and after a political-electoral process, to give way to the digitization of social networks of political sympathy, electoral alliance and communicative links between social voters and politicians.

Finally, this new context has forced not only to rethink political strategies in the 21st century but also to reconsider the way to present the politician and the relationships that he must establish with citizens in order to obtain their trust and subsequent vote. Therefore, these socio-digital networks are modifying the way of doing politics, thus their study will gradually become part of the area of knowledge.

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Digital Media and COVID-19: overinformation, polarization and misinformation

Medios digitales y COVID-19: sobreinformación, polarización y desinformación

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Abstract
This investigation analyses the media treatment of COVID-19 in main Argentinian digital media. The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has reconfigured the economic and social life, jointly with the centrality of the media system and the thematic composition of the media agendas. The demand of information during the outbreak enhanced the role of digital media as reliable sources. In specific terms, this work aims to investigate: 1) the evolution of the media agendas during the social isolation period; 2) the information sources deployment; and 3) the differential standing obtained by different actors in the media treatment. To this goal, a quantitative content analysis was developed of the most relevant news items in Infobae, Clarín, La Nación and Página/12 between March 20 and October 18, 2020 (n=4,240). Results show the existence of similar thematic agendas and a homogeneous presence of state sources in media with different editorial positions. Furthermore, there is partisan and polarized coverage, which is evident in the differential standing attributed to the official and opposition state sources in the analyzed media. The media treatment of the pandemic, over an extensive period, followed a cycle of over-information, polarization and misinformation that was detrimental to public debate quality.

Keywords
Pandemic, journalism, information, electronic media, politics, information sources.

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Resumen

El presente trabajo analiza el tratamiento noticioso de la COVID-19 en los principales medios digitales de la Argentina. La pandemia por SARS-CoV-2 reconfiguró, junto con las relaciones económicas y sociales, la centralidad del sistema mediático y la composición temática de sus agendas. La necesidad de información de calidad en tiempo real potenció el rol de los medios digitales como fuentes confiables. En términos específicos se pretende investigar: 1) la composición temática de las agendas informativas durante el período de aislamiento social; 2) el uso de las fuentes de información; y 3) el nivel de crédito diferencial que obtuvieron los actores en el tratamiento informativo. Con ese objetivo, se desarrolló un análisis de las noticias más relevantes de las agendas digitales de *Infobae, Página/12*, *La Nación, y Clarín,* entre marzo y octubre de 2020 (n=4.240). Los resultados evidencian la existencia de agendas temáticas similares y una presencia homogénea de fuentes oficiales en medios con diferentes líneas editoriales. Además, se advierte una cobertura partisana y polarizada que se pone de manifiesto en el crédito diferencial que adquieren en los medios los puntos de vista desplegados por las fuentes estatales oficialistas y opositoras. El tratamiento informativo de la pandemia, a lo largo de un período extenso, siguió un ciclo de sobreinformación, polarización y desinformación, lesivo para la calidad del debate público.

Palabras clave

Pandemia, periodismo, información, medios electrónicos, política, fuentes de información.

Introduction

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 was declared on March 11, 2020. A few days before, the first cases were reported in Latin America. In Argentina, the first patient was notified by the health authority on March 3. The WHO decision and the devastating effects of the new coronavirus on the most prepared health systems in the world forced a large part of the Latin American countries to take relatively early containment measures in an effort to flatten the transmission curve and strengthen health institutions.

The arrival of the virus in Argentina constituted a turning point in the visibility of the issue in the media. With growing social concern, political power had to express itself. President Alberto Fernández, after decreeing the interruption of face-to-face activity in schools on March 16, on March 19 announced the sanction of Decree 297/20, which would enter into force a day later, through which the initiation of a Preventive and Mandatory Social Isolation (ASPO) to reduce the movement of people was stipulated. Days later, the government announced a series of measures to financially support the most vulnerable sectors and contributions to companies aimed at sustaining private employment.

Pandemics caused by unknown pathogens can be classified as "emerging diseases" (Hallin et al., 2020, p. 2). One of its central characteristics is that "they become an object of public/media knowledge before consolidating as an object of medical/scientific knowledge" (p. 2). In this type of situation, the media acquire an unusual centrality as a result of the greater need of people to receive updated information in real-time, essential for decision-making (Farré-Coma, 2015; Muñiz & Corduneanu, 2020).

In this sense, the COVID-19 pandemic meets all the necessary requirements to unleash a process of moral panic (Thompson, 2014): a threat is established, the media contributes to making it recognizable, political elites must speak out and, finally, social changes occur. The situation is part of a "culture of risk" (Beck, 1998) in which the media occupy a decisive place on the symbolic construction of a state of fear in which the threat to life guides a perception of permanent danger. Said culture can be thought of from the existence of a series of objective threats to integrity that are associated with a subjective perception of risk that finds a dynamizing agent in the media (Hallin et al., 2020). Both dimensions, the objective and the subjective may or may not coincide (Kessler & Focás, 2014).

It is necessary to note, then, that, although in crisis situations information becomes a substantial asset to reduce anxiety and panic, it will depend on its quality to be effective in fulfilling its purpose (Casero-Ripollés, 2020). In a convergent media ecosystem in which news dramatization and speed are the two central newsworthiness criteria (Martini, 2017) to capture the attention of audiences who arrive at information randomly and incidentally (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2017), a spiral of production of high volumes of information (Salaverría et al., 2020) that do not always satisfy the quality standards required for these types of situations, triggering disinformation dynamics, has been developed (Bennett & Livingston, 2018; Palpan- Guerra & Munayco, 2015).

News coverage of the pandemic constitutes an active productive process on the part of the media. The media agendas are considered by the agenda setting as an organized list of issues that the media propose for public debate with certain possibilities of incidence (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2014). These are the result of mechanisms of selection, omission, ranking (Roberts, 2005) and theming (Luhmann, 1973) that shape the problems.

Different studies within the framework of this theory explained that issues further from direct experiences, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, stimulate the need for media orientation of audiences (Jablonski & Daniele, 1998; Lee, 2004; McCombs, 2006). Such findings are relevant to explain the centrality that online portals acquired during the process under analysis (Masip et al., 2020; Muñiz & Corduneanu, 2020).

In this sense, the outbreak of a pandemic produced by an unknown pathogen can be considered a key event (Brosius & Eps, 1995) that modifies the selection criteria of journalists. Generally associated with accidents or catastrophes, key events institute coverage prototypes that affect the newsworthiness of events and shape the news treatment. In their presence, productive routines are conditioned by three central factors: 1) the characteristics of a highly newsworthy public problem that dramatically bursts in and impacts the organization of journalistic work; 2) the interest of the audiences, which is manifested in an increase in the demand for information (Casero-Ripollés, 2020; Duc-Huynh, 2020; Muñiz & Corduneanu, 2020); and 3) pressure from sources as a determining element of the physiognomy of media agendas (Bennett et al., 2007).

Information sources are defined as those people who come into contact with reporters and who they include in their stories as they provide them with information about the events, their contexts, and points of view legitimized by the authority that confers their position (Gans, 1979). Transactional and symbiotic relationships of mutual dependence develop between media and sources (Bagdikian, 1985), to the point that Gans (1979) uses the metaphor of dance to account for the way in which both dancers try to gain access to the other.

The most important research on the relationship between media and sources gives the latter supremacy over the media and a broad power to shape agendas with an interested version of reality (Schlesinger, 1992). According to the Indexing hypothesis, coined by Bennett (1990), the media usually index a list of authorized voices, usually state actors with strong institutionalization and power to generate information. This leads Bennett et al. (2007) to conclude that the media tend to delegate to governments the role of controlling themselves.

However, the visibility of the sources in the news does not explain per se their ability to influence the angles (Charron, 1995). Indeed, according to the premise of standing, the sources cited by the media can obtain different levels of credit or media rejection, which affects the credibility of their versions (Ferree et al., 2002; Koziner, 2018). In this sense, previous works show that there are no significant differences between the most visible sources in the Argentine media, although, based on their testimonies, contradictory and polarized coverage related to their editorial positions are constructed (Koziner, 2018; Zunino, 2019). Such a situation, which has a negative impact on the diversity and pluralism of points of view, constitutes a limit to the quality of information.

Materials and methods

The general objective of this work is to analyze the informational treatment of COVID-19 in the most read Argentine digital newspapers. The specific objectives are: 1) to identify the level and variations in the media relevance of the problem from the beginning of social distancing; 2) establish what type of sources were consulted by the media, and 3) determine the level of credit achieved by the versions provided by the different actors.

Based on the objectives, the following hypotheses were established:

- H1: Because it is a key event, COVID-19 acquires a high relevance in digital media that presents variations during the process.
- H2: State sources predominate in the news.
- H3: The level of credit obtained by the sources depends on their political registration in relation to the editorial positions of the different media.

The empirical work consisted of a Quantitative Content Analysis on the front-page news, that is, from the first to the fifth of the homes (first and second scrolls), of the most read online newspapers in Argentina: *Infobae*, *Clarín*, *La Nación*, and *Página/12*.[1] The news gathering was done in a daily

1 According to the COMSCORE consultancy, the most consumed online newspapers in the period January-June 2020, based on the average number of unique visitors are: Infobae, 23 178 599; Clarín, 23 044 227; La Nación, 18 421 161 and Página / 12, 8 943 953.

cut-off at 9:00 a.m., a time of high influx of readers and in which it is ensured that the topics of the day are updated (Zunino & Grilli Fox, 2020)

The research technique is aimed at analyzing informational texts, identifying their structure, investigating their foundations, their components, and the way in which they interact for their symbolic functioning. The analyst uses statistical tools to infer relationships between variables whose behavior is hypothesized from the theoretical framework and state of the art (Neuendorf, 2002). Through logical deductions, the researcher establishes inferences about the mediatized reality, and about the context in which the information is produced (Krippendorff, 1990).

For this study, a universe of 4,240 journalistic pieces collected over 212 days was constituted, between March 20, the date of the start of quarantine and social distancing, and October 18, 2020, the date on which thirty weeks (seven months) of observation were completed. Then, the pieces related to the pandemic (n = 2184), units of analysis of this work, were identified, which were coded in their entirety.

Reliability

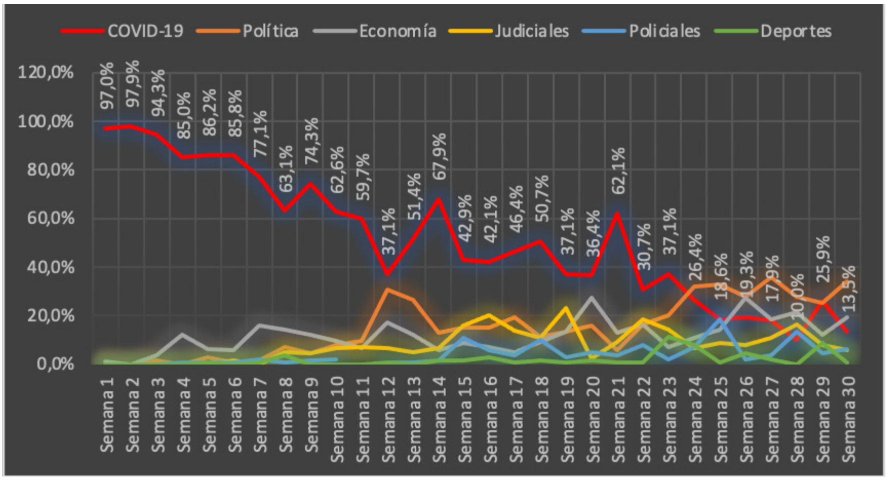
Four specialists were involved in the coding process. To establish the reliability of the empirical work, a sample of 10% of the population was randomly extracted, consisting of 220 cases, which were recoded. Next, a statistical agreement test was applied between the original coding and the contrast sample using Cohen's Kappa index (k), which yielded a mean value of agreement of k = 0.897, which expresses a high level of reliability for the analyzed variables.

Analysis and results

In relation to the proposed objectives, firstly, the relevance of COVID-19 in the media agendas between March 20 and October 18, 2020, was analyzed. Figure 1 shows the frequency of the issue in relation to the informative gap (Budd, 1964) of the covers, more visible places of the homes.

In aggregate terms, news about the pandemic occupied 51.5% of the available space. The relationship of two variables is evidenced that allows inferring a high relevance of the matter in the media. At a high frequency of coverage of the subject, which allows establishing that five out of ten news items published during the period were about the pandemic, it is added that these informative pieces were given the top places in the hierarchy, such as the first scrolls. The finding acquires greater relevance if one takes into account that different studies showed that the covers are indicative of the composition of the total information gap (McCombs, 2006; Zunino & Grilli-Fox, 2020).

Figure 1
Frequency of topics on the news agenda
in the period of social isolation due to COVID-19.
Infobae, Clarín, Página/12 **and** ***La Nación***



Source: Own elaboration

Likewise, it is possible to observe from Table 1, a homogeneous thematic structuring between the different analyzed media. Although the highest levels of similarity were registered between *Clarín* and *La Nación*, there are statistically significant correlations between the topics arranged in the agendas of the four media. The finding allows us to affirm that the data in figure 1 express the variations of similar media agendas, even if they are portals with different editorial lines.

Table 1
Pearson's correlation of the thematic composition of the media agendas. *Infobae, Clarín, Página/12* and *La Nación*

		Clarín	La Nación	Infobae	Página 12
Clarín	Pearson correlation	1	,979**	,861**	,834**
	Sig. (bilateral)		,000	,000	,000
	N	1060	1060	1060	1060
La Nación	Pearson correlation	,979**	1	,898**	,883**
	Significance	,000		,000	,000
	N	1060	1060	1060	1060
Infobae	Pearson correlation	,861**	,898**	1	,839**
	Significance	,000	,000		,000
	N	1060	1060	1060	1060
Página/12	Pearson correlation	,834**	,883**	,839**	1
	Significance	,000	,000	,000	
	N	1060	1060	1060	1060
**. Significant correlation for the 0.01 level (BILATERAL).					

Source: Data constructed by the author.

If the development of the media agenda over the period (figure 1) is analyzed, it is possible to notice that COVID-19 captured significant media attention until the end of April (week 6), a stage in which more than eight out of ten published news were on the subject. The coverage frequency curve from that moment on expresses a downward trend that accounts for a drop in the visibility of the matter over the weeks. Six news out of ten were published on the subject between the end of April and the middle of June (week 11), four out of ten between the first days of June and the middle of August (week 21), and no more than two out of ten from the third week of August to the last days of October (week 30).

The striking fact of the thematic evolution of the agendas is that a peak of overinformation about the pandemic is evident in its beginnings when the COVID-19 became a media monothem, which, however, reached the month of October, peak of infections and deaths in the country, with minimum levels of coverage.

Figure 2
Evolution of COVID-19 cases. Argentina.
March 20 to October 18, 2020

Source: Google, based on statistics from the national health authority.

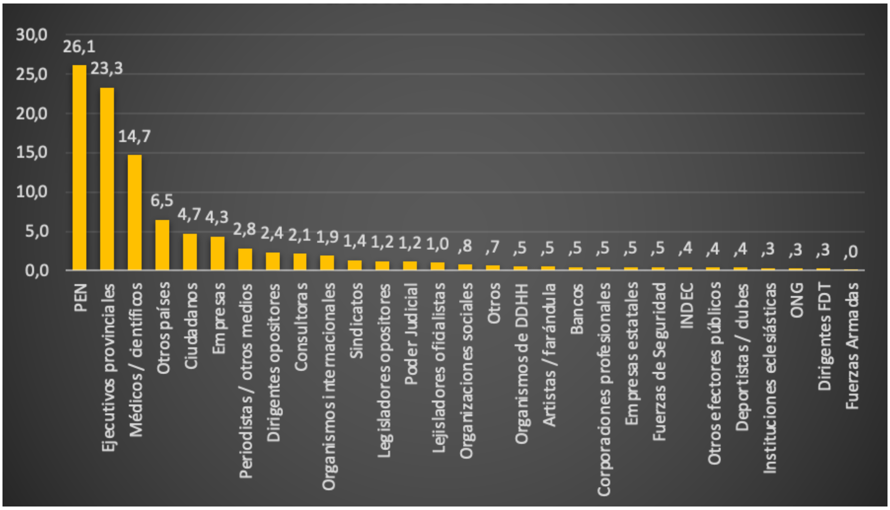
It is possible to analyze several factors that explain the invisibility of the pandemic at the peak of the disease. One of them is the thematic competition with other issues that, at the beginning of the isolation period, had been relegated. For example, the political discussion, which reappeared on the agendas as a result of some decisions made mainly by the national government. On June 8 (week 12), President Alberto Fernández announced a project to expropriate the Vicentín company, one of the most important exporters of agricultural raw materials in the country. The decision, which was rejected days later by the government itself, broke the precarious political consensus on the handling of the pandemic that existed during the first weeks between the ruling party and the opposition. Although polarization had been growing due to situations related to the management of social isolation, the announcement of the expropriation project unleashed a process of political confrontations that reached maximum levels and that reinstated an agenda of issues independent of the COVID-19. This event also rekindled the discussion on the progress of the economy in a context of deep crisis. Meanwhile, the Executive's proposal to Parliament for a justice reform project at the end of July (week 16), widely criticized by the opposition, set up the judicial discussion, related to allegations of corruption against government figures. Finally, towards the end of the observed period, other common topics on the media agendas reappeared, such as events of insecurity and sports, frequent condiments of the information menu of pre-pandemic times.

In sum, the data allow establishing a cycle of news coverage that is decoupled from the evolution of the pandemic. Indeed, while the greater media visibility of the issue was associated with the emergence of a novel disease in the country, the overinformation of the beginnings is consistent with an average of 150 daily infections and less than a dozen deaths per day. On the other hand, in the week with the highest number of infections, which occurred at the end of the period of this study, the frequency of coverage accounted for only 13.5% of the information gap. In this sense, it is possible to affirm that the evolution of coverage was inversely proportional to the evolution of infections and deaths.

The findings allow us to analyze that the newsworthiness of a pandemic is not necessarily associated with its epidemiological severity —at the national and international level— but rather with its novel and newsworthy components. Proof of this is that, in the moments of greatest uncertainty on the subject, when the demand for information and ignorance were at maximum levels, coverage was total. As time went by, and probably as a result of the saturation of information and crystallization of numbers of sick and dead, added to the fact that the pandemic experience increasingly found intersubjective sources that took it away from its status as a non-experiential topic, the media coverage changed from an initial overrepresentation to an underrepresentation that coincided with the time of greatest objective severity. Both situations institute a cycle of overinformation and misinformation favored by a climate of strong political polarization in which discussions that competed for media attention, at the time of greatest incidence of the disease, were established.

Now, a central variable to analyze the information quality standards is the identification of the presence and credit of the different subjects or institutions referenced in the pieces as information sources. A first finding to take into account is that the average number of cited sources was 2.47 per news item, a figure that, although it does not reach the three sources required as a basic triangulation requirement (Rodrigo-Alsina, 1989), is located above the average for other types of topics in the Argentine digital press (Zunino, 2019).

Figure 3
Frequency of appearance of information sources during the ASPO due to coronavirus. *Infobae, Clarín, La Nación* and *Página/12*. March 20 to October 18, 2020



Source: Own Elaboration

Figure 3 expresses the presence of the different sources in the informative agendas. If they are computed in an aggregate manner, the official state sources constitute 69.1%, while the unofficial ones reach 30.9%. The National Executive Power was the central actor in the provision of official data on the pandemic (26.1%), followed by the provincial governments (23.3%), with special visibility from those of the City of Buenos Aires (10, 1%) and the Province of Buenos Aires (7%). Meanwhile, consultation with specialist doctors and scientists was high with respect to other matters (14.7%). Citizens (4.7%) appeared generally as victims of the disease or isolation, while with less relevance other actors with a high level of institutionalization, such as companies (4.3%), journalists (2.8%), opposition leaders (2.4%), and consultants (2.1%).

The findings allow to corroborate the Indexing hypothesis for this case, which stipulates the supremacy of state sources in media coverage. Now, the data merits to be interpreted in the particularity of a pandemic and infodemic context.

The four most widely read portals in Argentina structured their coverage based on data provided mostly by state agents who, in addition to preparing official indicators on the evolution of the pandemic, were the ones who decided and announced public policies on restrictions of movement, economic aid, and crisis management. In addition, the voices of doctors or scientists were recurrent in the informational treatment. Therefore, the Argentine digital media seem to have followed the WHO's indications regarding the use of official and expert sources as a method to counteract infoxication. The statement is consistent with the curatorial role that audiences attributed to traditional and/or digital media with trajectories recognized as privileged channels of reliable information, in a context of information saturation and misinformation that expanded the need for checking (Duc-Huynh, 2020; Muñiz & Corduneanu, 2020; Salaverría et al., 2020).

Additionally, as happened with the thematic composition of the agendas, the behavior of the analyzed media regarding the use of information sources shows highly significant correlations (Table 2), data that indicates that the newspapers, regardless of their editorial lines, consulted to the same sources and in similar proportions.

Table 2
Pearson correlation sources of information cited.
Infobae, Clarín, Página/12 and La Nación

		Sources Página/12	Sources Infobae	Sources La Nación	Sources Clarín
Sources Página/12	Pearson correlation	1	,987**	,986**	,968**
	Significance		,000	,000	,000
	N	1271	1165	1233	1271
Sources Infobae	Pearson correlation	,987**	1	,987**	,966**
	Significance	,000		,000	,000
	N	1165	1165	1165	1165
Sources La Nación	Pearson correlation	,986**	,987**	1	,987**
	Significance	,000	,000		,000
	N	1233	1165	1233	1233
Sources Clarín	Pearson correlation	,968**	,966**	,987**	1
	Significance	,000	,000	,000	
	N	1271	1165	1233	1381
**. Significant correlation for the 0.01 level (BILATERAL).					

Source: Data constructed by the author.

At this point, is it possible to affirm that the mere consultation of official sources in the context of a pandemic ensures minimum standards of information quality?

Table 3
Standing of the main state sources according to media.
Infobae*, *Clarín*, *Página/12* and *La Nación

	Clarín			La Nación			Infobae			Página/12		
	Main-tained	Not refuted	Is discretited	Main-tained	Not refuted	Is discretited	Main-tained	Not refuted	Is discretited	Main-tained	Not refuted	Is discretited
Oppositions legislators	88,9%	11,1%		57,1%	42,9%		80,0%	20,0%			28,6%	71,4%
Executive CABA	74,0%	19,3%	6,6%	74,8%	23,1%	2,0%	78,9%	13,7%	7,4%	15,5%	64,3%	20,2%
Ministry of Health	73,3%	18,7%	8,0%	73,1%	20,2%	6,7%	84,8%	10,1%	5,1%	64,5%	35,5%	
Excutive PBA	29,3%	40,7%	30,1%	27,8%	38,9%	33,3%	50,0%	26,5%	23,5%	36,2%	58,0%	5,8%
Government legislators	25,0%	31,3%	43,8%	18,8%	18,8%	62,5%	35,0%	15,0%	50,0%	54,5%	45,5%	
Alberto Fernández	20,6%	34,0%	45,4%	28,4%	29,9%	41,8%	52,6%	11,8%	35,5%	62,3%	36,2%	1,5%
Cristina Fernández de Kirchner		20,0%	80,0%		33,3%	66,7%			100,0%	80,0%	20,0%	

Source: Own elaboration

Table 3 shows the level of credit (standing) obtained in each news outlet by the main state sources. As mentioned, although the four portals predominantly included official sources, the level of credit and discredit attributed to them based on their political/editorial orientations is revealing.

Although, in general terms, the official data produced by the Ministry of Health was not discredited, *Infobae*, *La Nación*, and *Clarín* expressed a greater doubt about the statistics and sanitary measures. Instead, *Página/12* never put that data in question. The legislators of the opposition and the Executive of the Federal Capital, led by the opposition political *coalition Juntos por el Cambio*, were the most accredited sources by *Infobae*, *Clarín*, and *La Nación*, and those that obtained the lowest level of standing in the news of *Página/12*. President Alberto Fernández acquired low credibility levels when he was cited as a source in Clarín and *La Nación* and a high volume of rejection of his claims. In *Infobae* the level of presidential credibility was higher, although so was the refutation of his statements, which shows a more balanced coverage of his figure. On the contrary, the approval in *Página/12* to the president was almost total, with minimal levels of criticism of his positions. Finally, the paradigmatic case of editorial polarization expressed in the credit or discredit to the sources as a mechanism of media positioning occurred with respect to Vice President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. While the former president (2007-2015) monopolized the highest level of standing on *Página/12*, without her opinions being questioned during the analyzed period, the explicit refutation of her points of view was total in *Infobae* and very high in *Clarín* and *La Nación*, without registering, throughout the temporary sample, cases in which these newspapers credited her word.

In support of the descriptive results, and in order to contrast the differences regarding the level of standing between the media, an ANOVA and a Tukey HSD test were carried out, which showed statistically significant differences between two subsets: in the first one, *Infobae* (1,.39, p. <0.05), *Clarín* (1.43 p. <0.05) and *La Nación* (1.47 p. <0.05), and in the second *Página/12* (1.71 p. <0.05). The tests, while confirming the differences between the first three newspapers and the last one, confirm the homogeneity between the components of the first set.

The results presented regarding the sources confirm the standing hypothesis in this research. That is, while a homogeneous presence of actors who provide information to media with different editorial lines was verified, which confirms the notion that the simple count of sources is not enough to account for the influence that these acquire in the construction of the interpretive frameworks that are displayed in the news, the differential levels of credit and discredit, provide clues about the ways in which each news outlet framed the problem. At this point, the finding shows that, although all the newspapers turned to official sources throughout the seven months of the pandemic, *Clarín*, *La Nación*, and *Infobae* —the three most-read portals in the country—systematically confronted the points of view of the ruling party. On the other hand, *Página/12* expressed a position contrary to the first three, generally uncritical of the official versions. In sum, the media treatment of COVID-19 in the most widely read media in Argentina was expressed through a homogeneous composition of agendas at the thematic level and the presence of information sources, although strongly polarized in relation to the level of credit and discredit with which the official and opposition versions were treated.

Discussion and conclusions

The present work aimed to analyze the media coverage of COVID-19 in the main online newspapers in Argentina. Underlying this objective, the starting point was a central concern aimed at investigating the role played by digital media in an exceptional setting and within the framework of a convergent ecosystem that favors, via content saturation, disinformation, fragmentation, and political polarization (Bennett & Livingston, 2018).

In the first place, it was found that the most important digital media in Argentina maintained a homogeneous thematic agenda that had a particularity: at the beginning of the period of social isolation, the pandemic monopolized all the media attention. Such behavior can be explained from different variables, among which stand out the increase in the need for guidance and the demand for information from audiences (Casero-Ripollés, 2020; Duc-Huynh, 2020; Muñiz, 2020), the pronouncement of political elites, and the change that key events (Brosius & Eps, 1995) introduce in production routines by modifying selection criteria and promoting series on related events.

However, after a first instance of over-representation of the disease at a time when the objective risk of contagion was low, over the months the contradiction was generated that at the peak of the pandemic, media coverage was minimal. Indeed, while the presence of COVID-19 monopolized more than nine out of ten news items on the agenda during March and April, when contagions barely exceeded one hundred per day nationwide, towards the end of the period with more than 18 000 cases and 400 deaths per day, the presence of the issue in the media only accounted for 13.5% of the news gap. The oscillations, therefore, were much more associated with the novelty of the emergency, the government announcements related to the use of public space and the economic management of the crisis than with the evolution of the disease. Consequently, the evolution of media coverage maintained an inversely proportional relationship to the objective dimension of the risk of contagion and could have stimulated processes of moral panic (Thompson, 2014) due to overinformation at times of low virus transmissibility and misinformation at the time higher target risk.

To delve into this aspect, the study investigated the media use of sources, a substantial factor in information quality. To this end, the Indexing hypothesis was contrasted and the supremacy of state sources in the informative treatment of the pandemic was verified. The finding makes it possible to relativize Bennett's (1990, 2007) statements about how damaging their preponderance can be in news agendas since in certain contexts of crisis and viralization of apocryphal or inaccurate content by connective means, the consultation of official sources during the setting of a global disease is healthy. Even more so if it is taken into account that they were accompanied by the voices of specialists, doctors, and scientists. Probably, as a result of the professional work of filtering or curating the information carried out by media with consolidated trajectories that are recognizable to the population, digital newspapers imposed themselves as reliable sources and increased their audience levels (Casero-Ripollés, 2020; Duc-Huynh, 2020; Muñiz, 2020).

However, the study of the sources was complemented with the investigation of other dimensions of analysis. In this sense, the premise of standing (Ferree et al., 2002) maintains that, in addition to measuring the presence of sources in the news, it is necessary to investigate which points of view are accredited by the media and which are contested or refuted or discarded.

The study of the differential credibility of the sources allowed us to discover that in Argentina there was a polarized, partisan and unequal coverage of the pandemic, even when the thematic agendas and the presence of the sources were homogeneous in media with different editorial positions. While *Clarín*, *La Nación* and *Infobae* were inclined to accept or even highlight the views on the problem of the opposition sectors and discredit the main PEN figures, *Página/12* took the official versions without objecting to them. Said informational behavior tends to construct fragmented, decontextualized, and simplifying representations of a complex and dramatic reality that, while restricting the availability of diverse and plural informational inputs for decision-making, negatively affects the possibility of finding in one outlet a reasonable range of views that will strengthen public debate.

Thus, the mediatization of the pandemic followed a cycle that, in conceptual terms, could be considered in three stages. A first moment marked by an information saturation —which could have generated, due to excess, panic (Thompson, 2014), disinformation, and cynicism (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996)— was followed by the second moment of worsening political —and media— polarization; which gave rise to the last phase of high thematic competition that configured a "post-pandemic" pseudo environment (Lippmann, 1922), of scarcity of information about the disease, just at the peak of its objective evolution. Thus, over-representation, polarization, and invisibility constituted the three phases of the cycle of mediatization of the pandemic in the main digital newspapers in Argentina.

The results of this work are intended to account for a process that is dynamic and remains open. The novelty and seriousness of the situation the world is going through invite us to rethink the productivity of certain hypotheses and to formulate others that allow scientific access to an unprecedented social and communicational scenario. The empirical findings reveal breaks and continuities. Among the former, it is necessary to revisit the postulates on the relationship between official sources and the media, especially in contexts of catastrophe and within the framework of a convergent media ecosystem that favors disinformation. Among the latter, the verification of the existence, even in a pandemic, of polarized coverage that simplifies public debate invites us to think about the processes of overinformation and disinformation beyond the connective media, although in relation to them. The contributions remain open, then, for new comparative and multidimensional studies at the national and international level.

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Public interest or published interest? Argentine media regulation in economic press

¿Interés público o interés publicado? La regulación de medios argentinos en la prensa económica

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Abstract
The Argentine Legislative Power passed Law No. 26522 on Audiovisual Communication Services (LACS) on October 10, 2009. It called into question the historical relationship among the political, socio-cultural and economic objectives that guided the regulation and represented a new notion of 'public interest'. The process of debate and approval of the Law occupied a significant space on the media agenda, although it was defined from particular frames that formulated diagnoses, evaluations and prescriptions. Analyzing the journalistic treatment of this matter is important because it involved the interests of the field where the media themselves take part. In addition, they are considered publicly prominent co-constructors of social reality, so they collaborated with the production of narratives about the debate around the Law. This work studies the news frames of the LACS in the Argentine economic press, observes the evolution of these frames throughout the debate and approval of the Law and compares how the newspapers defined the aspects under discussion. The quantitative content analysis identified three frames in tension: 'political and institutional dispute', 'sociocultural public interest' and 'business public interest', which behavior varied according to the newspaper and registered fluctuations throughout the period under study.

Keywords
Press, Argentina, regulation, frames, public interest, information.

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Resumen

El Poder Legislativo argentino aprobó la Ley N° 26522 de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual (LASC) el 10 de octubre de 2009. Esta puso en cuestión la histórica relación entre los objetivos de orden político, sociocultural y económico que habían orientado la regulación y propuso una nueva noción de 'interés público'. El derrotero que siguió el debate y la sanción de la Ley ocupó un lugar significativo en la agenda mediática, aunque fue definido desde marcos particulares que formularon diagnósticos, evaluaciones y prescripciones. Analizar el tratamiento periodístico de este asunto cobra importancia por cuanto implicó los intereses del ámbito del cual los propios forman parte. Además, se los considera co-constructores públicamente destacados de realidad social, por lo cual colaboraron con la producción de los relatos del debate acerca de la Ley. Este trabajo analiza los *frames* noticiosos de la LASC en los periódicos económicos argentinos, observa la evolución de dichos encuadres a lo largo del debate y sanción de la norma y compara las maneras en que los matutinos definieron los aspectos puestos en discusión. A partir del análisis de contenido cuantitativo, se identifican tres *frames* en tensión: 'disputa política e institucional, 'interés púbico sociocultural' e 'interés público empresario', cuyo comportamiento varió según el matutino y registró fluctuaciones a lo largo del período estudiado.

Palabras clave

Prensa, Argentina, regulación, encuadres, interés público, información.

Introduction

The Legislative Power of the Argentine Nation (LPN) approved the Law of Audiovisual Communication Services (LASC) N ° 26,522 in October 2009. The process of its creation marked a historical milestone in public communication policies and gave them a change of course, since it proposed a new notion of public interest from questioning the historical relationship between the principles of political, sociocultural, and economic order that had guided the regulation of audiovisual communication media until then.

In this context, the purpose of this article is to analyze the treatment of the LASC in the Argentine economic press. Specifically, in *El Cronista Comercial* and *Ámbito Financiero*, two newspapers with a long tradition in the journalistic field. The specific objectives are: a) Identify the specific frames of the LASC; b) Analyze the temporal progress of these frameworks throughout the debate and approval of the norm; c) Compare the ways in which both newspapers presented and defined the issues under discussion.

The coverage of the debate, the legislative treatment, and the approval of the LASC in this type of newspaper constitutes an appropriate object of investigation for several reasons. In the first place, these media institutions were involved in this process in their double role: both as economic agents that take part in the market and in the valorization of capital, and as political actors in ideological and social reproduction. Even though they were not directly affected be the norm, it affected the interests of the country's main media, characterized by the high degree of concentration of ownership, both horizontal, vertical, and conglomerate (Becerra & Mastrini, 2018).

The second element is given by the fact that commercial logic has historically predominated in Argentina in regulating the operation of the media (Mastrini, 2009). From the business point of view, it is then a matter of the agenda for these newspapers.

Third, both newspapers are considered here as political actors with private and legitimate interests (Borrat, 1989). As such, they affect political dynamics and develop representations of the power they exercise and of the society in which they operate (Kircher, 2005). Shapers of opinion, modelers of social experience, and participants in the political field have the ability to question or endorse certain policies and, thus, nurture the role they play in the public sphere (Habermas, 1989).

The creation of the specific frames that organized the debate around the LASC is novel both for the field of Communication Policy studies and for the analysis of media frames. Generally, research affiliated in critical political economy takes for granted the ways in which power disputes are embodied in media discourses. Similarly, the content analyzes of journalistic coverage, even when they address debates about regulation, do not usually relate their work to concerns about public policy (Ali & Puppis, 2018).

The article is organized as follows: first, it presents the analytical procedure carried out to design the research. Second, the aspects related to the method and the corpus of analysis are detailed. Then, the findings of the content analysis are systematized. Finally, the general conclusions are presented.

Analytical procedure for the creation of the frames of the LASC

This research is conceptually inscribed in *Framing*, understood as an investigative program that integrally comprises media communication (Koziner, 2015, 2017). The empirical work starts from the first analytical activities that this type of approach proposes (Van Gorp, 2007): detect and analyze the media frames. In a general sense, it seeks to know what is the interpretation structure of the underlying reality in the journalistic treatment of a case (Mariño & López-Rabadán, 2009).

This task takes place in two moments. First, the notion of framing is defined and the procedure for its operationalization is developed. Then, a matrix is designed in order to comprehensively address the interpretative frameworks in dispute around the definition of the LASC and to know which ones are reflected as legitimate in the coverage.

According to the classical conceptualization of Entman (1993, 2004), framing an event implies selecting certain aspects of what is perceived as reality and giving them importance in a text so that a problematic situation can be defined, its causes are identified, it is morally evaluated, and a type of treatment for it is proposed. Thus, frames diagnose, evaluate and prescribe (Gamson, 1992).

From this conceptualization, we use the epistemological approach carried out by Matthes and Kohring (2008). This includes the collection of data, their processing, and the subsequent creation of the frames of the case under study. The operational nature of the definition allows them to identify four functions that frames perform: defining a problem, morally evaluating it, identifying causes, and recommending a type of treatment. Each of these dimensions is composed of variables of different levels of abstraction and their indicators are tracked in the news content. The ways in which these elements are combined give rise to certain patterns whose recurring appearance makes them frames.

The conceptualization of the elements that make up the frames requires investigating the characteristics of the phenomenon and thus identifying the thematic axes that organize the debate. Consistent with this procedure, in this work, it is considered necessary to know the central characteristics of the discussion around the LASC for the definition of the dimensions and variables that make up the analysis matrix.

To identify the frames, the authors introduce a computerized data processing technique that allows the detection of latent variables (Igartua, 2006) in the texts through the systematic grouping of manifest indicators. In contrast to deductive studies, which attempt to confirm or discard the presence of generic frames, this procedure allows detecting the emergence of new frames typical of the analyzed subject. The process of interpretation and contextualization of such definitions of the situation is the work of the analyst, whose comprehensive look allows him/her to characterize the discursive field in which ideas and arguments make sense.

Analysis matrix for the identification of the frames of the LASC

From the proposal of Entman (1993, 2004), the functions that make up the frames on the LASC, as well as the variables and the values that these can charge in each unit of analysis, are conceptualized below. Of the four *frame elements*, the focus will be on the first and the third, since their definition involves the conceptual dialogue between the perspective of the Frame and the particularities of the case according to the Communication Policy studies. All in all, figure 1 shows the elements, variables, and categories that complete the operationalization process that was carried out.

The first component involves an arena or area where the action takes place, a topic in which the event and the actors who are the protagonists in it can be classified through what they say and/or actions. The arenas around the LASC can be legislative, executive, political, judicial, business and financial, civil society, and media. For those areas not considered in the aforementioned categories, the possibility of computing another area is included.

The topic refers to the specific issue that summarizes the main event that the news[1] is about, which is clearly observed in the text. As shown in figure 1, seven topics are identified in the debate around the LASC, to which is added an eighth category for others whose frequency of appearance is low.

The sources of information and the main and secondary actors constitute the last four variables that make up the definition of the problem. Although the categories designed for both are the same —and, in fact, they may coin-

1 An event or event is a discrete event that is limited by time and space (Rogers & Dearing, 1988).

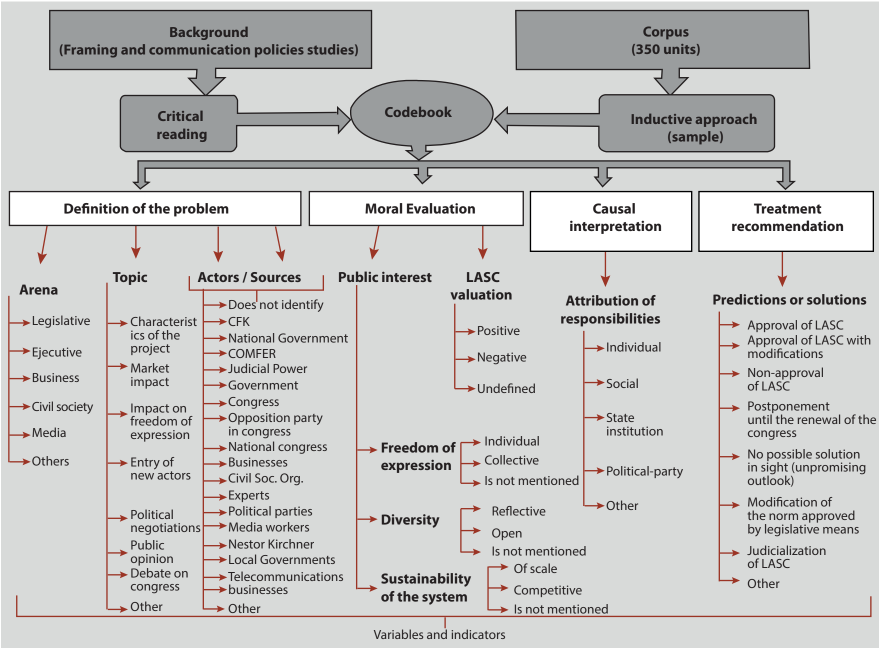
cide— they both point to different roles in the news story. Sources are those whom the journalist observes or interviews and contribute information as members or spokespersons for groups with different levels of organization (Gans, 2004). The actor, on the other hand, is the individual or collective person directly involved in the events reported or presented as the subject of the action. For this work, a categorical system of 16 options displayed in figure 1 was developed based on the recurrences observed in a qualitative induction to a corpus sample.

The moral evaluation constitutes the second central dimension for the creation of the frames of the LASC. These are expressed as statements about what should be considered good, and the duties that this entails, and about what should be considered bad (Schmitt, 2009) for the community. Thus, the most important aspects of the three constitutive values of the LASC around which the public debate revolved are traced in the notes: the economic sustainability of the media system, diversity, and freedom of expression.

Each of these principles is part of one of the three types of well-being that a regulatory framework for audiovisual media must pursue in seeking to promote the public interest: political, socio-cultural, and economic (Van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003). Although the public interest constitutes an elastic, vague, and complex concept (Iosifidis, 2011; Just & Puppis, 2012; Papathanassopoulos & Negrine, 2010), it identifies contributions to understand the normative paradigm shift (Elíades, 2015) that embodies the LASC for the regulation of the audiovisual sector. In abstract terms, there is consensus in the positive evaluation of the three values protected by the LASC. However, a good part of the positions taken by the various actors involved in the public discussion for the approval of the Law were based on different views on them and on the relationships, they weave with each other. For that reason, this frame element is made up of four variables.

First, the type of assessment of the LASC is revealed. Positive and negative judgments refer to cases in which the debate or the implications of the approval of the standard are valued as convenient and/or desirable, on the one hand, or inconvenient and/or undesirable for society, on the other. Undefined or ambiguous judgment is computed, negative or positive judgments cannot be clearly identified. It is also computed when negative and positive judgments are balanced on the same note.

Figure 1
Analysis matrix of the frames of the LASC



Source: Own elaboration

Second, the assessment of freedom of expression is investigated (Van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003). Two[2] possible expressions of this variable are contemplated in the texts: individual and collective or social.

The first refers to the possibility or impossibility that some specific media or journalists have to freely express their opinions and ideas based on the actions of the State, it considers that divestment processes have an impact on the exercise of freedom of expression and/or refers to press freedom, consistent with the free speech tradition (Loreti & Lozano, 2014). The social or collective character is computed when mentioning the importance of a grea-

2 The variables related to public interest values contemplate a third category: “not mentioned”, for those cases in which no type of reference to the value appears.

ter participation of various social actors in the media, the need to limit market forces and/or the plural discussion of the law, in line with the conception proposed by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (1985).

The second variable points to pluralism and diversity of the media system and contemplates two categories: the principle of reflective diversity indicates that the variety of opinions and issues expressed by the media must respond to what audiences prefer to consume. Open diversity, on the other hand, refers to the fact that the media must represent as fully as possible the range of voices, issues, and opinions that circulate socially, beyond what the audiences demand (Van der Wurff & Van Cuilenburg, 2001).

The last variable that makes up the definition of public interest refers to the sustainability of the media system. This can assume two values: economies of scale or competitive market. It is difficult to find these values explicitly expressed in the texts, given their technical nature, which is why the presence of arguments related to these principles is observed. In the first case, it is considered that the measures that seek to limit the concentration of ownership undermine the profitability of the media or, even more, the sustainability of the companies (Llorens-Maluquer, 2001). According to the second value, opening the market to new players has a positive impact on its operation. It is also computed when concentration is characterized as an economic problem that erodes competition and market efficiency (Doyle, 2002).

Corpus, codification and reliability

The corpus of the study is made up of all the journalistic articles published about the LASC in El *Cronista Comercial* y *Ámbito Financiero* as of the first day of the month in which the draft law was presented —March 1, 2009, and the last of the month in which the regulation was approved — October 31st. In total, 350 units were collected.

All units subjected to quantitative content analysis were selected and coded according to the same detailed and explicit rules (Colle, 2011; Igartua, 2006). The qualitative immersion (Neuendorf, 2002) that was carried out on a sample of 50 units - 14.3%[3] of the marks - allowed to identify the "critical

3 Although there is agreement among content analysis theorists that the sample should be 10% of the units, it is recommended that this be not less than 50 units in total (Igartua, 2006).

variables" of the study (Igartua, 2006) in dialogue with the characteristics of the LASC and the newspapers.

The quality of the data obtained through this technique is linked to three aspects: a precise conceptualization and operationalization of the variables, the training of those who will carry out the coding, and the levels of "inter-coder reliability". This measures the levels of agreement between the data collected by different researchers who addressed the same contents with the same codebook (Igartua & Humanes, 2004).

In this work, four coders participated in the data collection. To measure the degree of agreement between the variables, two coefficients were used: Krippendorff's alpha (α) and Cohen's Kappa ($\varkappa$)[4]. All the calculations of the reliability coefficients (Krippendorff, 2004) were above 0.85.

Analysis and results. The frames of the LASC

This phase of the work seeks to shape the LASC's media frames in economy newspapers, analyze their evolution and compare coverage. First, a statistical analysis of conglomerates or clusters is carried out. This method seeks to group the units in sets as similar as possible. The processing identifies, through mathematical algorithms, sets of related characteristics in a universe of cases that appears to be heterogeneous (Vilà-Baños et al., 2014). As a result, each case is assigned to a specific group that ultimately forms a frame.

An optimal solution of three clusters or frames arises from the data processing. The interpretive reading of each group allowed them to be called 'political and institutional dispute', 'business public interest', and 'socio-cultural public interest'.

The first cluster groups 55.4% of the cases in the universe. The frame refers, fundamentally, to the disputes and negotiations that take place between the different political forces within the framework of the LPN, an area in which the normative project was debated. Table 1 summarizes the most important categories in this frame.

It is observed that most of the notes that cite two sources, face opposite positions before the LASC, which contributes to the conflict compo-

4 In order to know the Krippendorff Alpha (α), the SPSS version used was macro 3.0, in line with what was proposed by Hayes and Krippendorff (2007).

nent. Identical behavior is evidenced with respect to the leading actors of the news.

Table 1
Frame elements and variables of the 'Political and institutional dispute'

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Elements and variables</th><th>Categories</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Definition of the problem</td><td>Arena</td><td>Legislative</td></tr>
<tr><td>Topic</td><td>Treatment of the project in Congress
Political negotiations</td></tr>
<tr><td>Main source</td><td>Political opposition in the LPN
Political officialism in the LPN</td></tr>
<tr><td>Secondary source</td><td>None
Political opposition in the LPN
Political officialism in the LPN</td></tr>
<tr><td>Main actor</td><td>Political opposition in the LPN
Political officialism in the LPN</td></tr>
<tr><td>Secondary actor</td><td>Political opposition in the LPN
Government of the Nation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Causal attribution</td><td>Attribution of responsibility</td><td>Institutional
Political</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Moral evaluation</td><td>LASC evaluation</td><td>Not defined or ambiguous</td></tr>
<tr><td>Freedom of expression</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td>Diversity</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sustainability</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td>Treatment recommendation</td><td>Proposed solution</td><td>No mention is made
LASC approval
LASC approval with modifications.</td></tr>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration

The high degree of institutionalization in this frame is related to the "authority-disorder bias" (Bennett, 2012, p. 63), a tendency that can be combined with personalized, dramatized, or fragmented news episodes. This is because its central feature consists of the high emphasis of the news on the actions of the authorities —if they take the reins or lose control, if they win, lose or negotiate— and in establishing "if the situation in question seems to move in one more orderly direction and reassuring or disorderly and disturbing". Thus, the details of the public policy debate are not as important as the dramatic and controversial aspects that surround it. The indefinite assessment of the initiative debated in Congress and the zero frequency of appearance of the values that make up the types of well-being included in the notion of 'public interest' are consistent with the general features of this frame.

The level of generality of this frame allows it to be linked to the definition of "script" proposed by Entman (2004). That is, as a standardized information processing model that journalists use to deal with matters of public interest. The main difference between "scripts" and "frames" is that the former channel the stories, while the latter promote definitions of the situation that involve moral evaluations and propose a type of treatment for the events reported (Entman, 2004, pp. 6-7). Indeed, the dispute over the LASC and its political-partisan implications take center stage to the detriment of the moral evaluation of the measure and the forecasts around it.

Table 2
Frame elements and variables of the 'Business public interest'

Elements and variables		Predominant categories
Definition of the problem	**Arena**	Business and financial Political power
	Main topic	Impact of the law on the media market Characteristics of the project / LASC
	Main source	Communication companies Government of the Nation
	Secondary source	Communication companies Government of the Nation
	Main actor	Government of the Nation Communication companies
	Secondary actor	Communication companies Government of the Nation

Causal attribution	**Attribution of responsibility**	Political Individual
Moral evaluation	**LASC evaluation**	Negative Positive
	Freedom of expression	Individual
	Diversity	Reflective
	Sustainability	Economies of scale
Treatment recommendation de tratamiento	**Proposed solution**	No solution in sight Judicialization of the Law

Source: Own elaboration

The second cluster accounts for 25.5% of the cases. It is called 'Business public interest', as it sets the parameters for the debate based on arguments that privilege economic criteria over political and cultural ones. The prioritized values correspond to a contradictory view with the principles supported by the normative text. Table 2 summarizes the most important categories of the frame.

The news action evokes situations that revolve around the features of the text of the LASC aimed at regulating the functioning of the media market, as well as the economic-financial consequences that the regulation would have for the dynamics of that market. Frequently, the leading role of the national government is associated with political-party or individual causes — or responsibilities — much more than with its institutional role. This accounts for a trend in newspapers to "personalize" (Bennett, 2012), that is, to develop stories more focused on the actors than on the events themselves. In contrast, personal or political party motives and intentions are overestimated in attributions of responsibility, while the role played by context is underestimated (Iyengar, 1991).

The individual view of freedom of expression, reflective diversity, and economies of scale are not explicitly mentioned in the texts. Instead, freedom of the press is mentioned and the potential threat to its exercise within the framework of the democratic system that the LASC would mean is noted. In addition, it is argued that the restructuring of the system that would impose limits on the ownership of licenses or the obligation to produce local content, would affect the plurality of voices of the commercial private sector and it is considered that the duty to divest would entail a serious danger to sustainability or the legal security of companies or media groups that exceed the limits established by law.

Table 3
Frame elements and variables
of the 'Sociocultural public interest'

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Elements and variables</th><th>Predominant categories</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Definition of the problem</td><td>Arena</td><td>From civil society
Legislative</td></tr>
<tr><td>Main topic</td><td>Project / LASC characteristics Impact on freedom of the press and/or expression</td></tr>
<tr><td>Main topic</td><td>Civil society organizations
Specialists</td></tr>
<tr><td>Main source</td><td>There is none</td></tr>
<tr><td>Secondary source</td><td>Civil society organizations
Government of the Nation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Main actor</td><td>Government of the Nation
Civil society organizations</td></tr>
<tr><td>Causal attribution</td><td>Secondary actor</td><td>Institutional
Political</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Moral evaluation</td><td>Attribution of responsibility</td><td>Not defined
Positive</td></tr>
<tr><td>LASC evaluation</td><td>Collective</td></tr>
<tr><td>Freedom of expression</td><td>Open</td></tr>
<tr><td>Diversity</td><td>Competitive market</td></tr>
<tr><td>Treatment recommendation de tratamiento</td><td>Sustainability</td><td>LASC approval</td></tr>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration

The last cluster groups 19.1% of the cases in the universe. The frame represents the view in which socio-cultural and political values are prioritized over those of economic well-being and tends to coincide with positions favorable to the LASC. Table 3 summarizes the most important categories of the frame.

State actors and those belonging to civil society acquire greater prominence as agents capable of influencing the development of the events that are reported. The moral evaluation that this framework promotes is consistent, in general terms, with the public interest approach protected by the text of the LASC. Thus, the collective view of freedom of expression is combined with an open approach to diversity and pluralism and an understanding of the media market in competitive terms. However, this assessment of the public interest does not necessarily result in a positive judgment of the SCA bill, as contradictory views coexist. From this, it follows that the general argument promoted by this frame cannot be linearly related to the support of the legislative initiative, although it coincides, in general terms. It happens that some critical positions to the norm are based, precisely, on the same values that it seeks to protect.

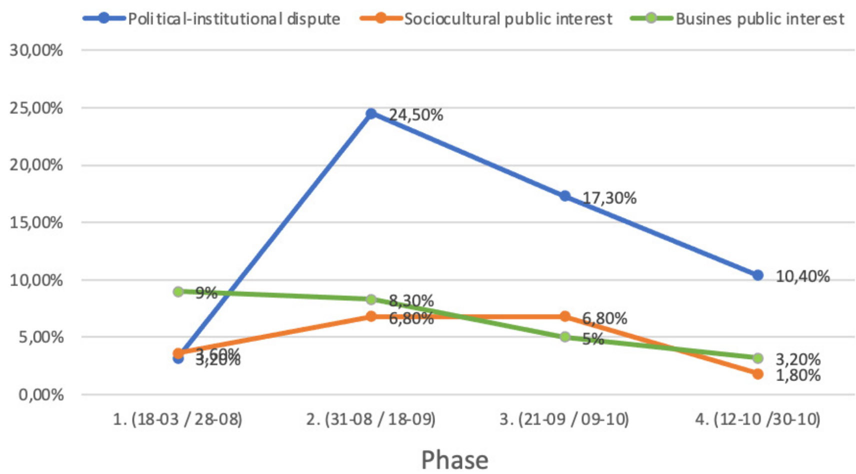
The second specific objective of the work was to analyze the temporal evolution of the frames throughout the debate and the sanction of the norm. This is represented in figure 2, according to four stages of development of the case: 1) of public debate: from the presentation of the bill (March 18) until its submission to the National Congress (August 28); 2) treatment in the Lower House: between August 31 and September 18, one day after having obtained a half sanction; 3) treatment in the Senate: from September 21 to October 9, one day before becoming law[5]; 4) of repercussions: between October 12 and 30, 2009.

The graph shows that the three frames are present during the 36 weeks studied, although the behavior of each one varies in a singular way. The political and institutional dispute fluctuates concomitantly with the general frequency of the case. Meanwhile, the business public interest presents a lower overall frequency, which decreases as the weeks progress. Finally, the sociocultural public interest frame is the one with the lowest level of appea-

5 The LSCA was approved during the early hours of Saturday, October 10, the day the economy newspapers are not published. For that reason, the phase closes on Friday the 9th, when both newspapers anticipate that the project would become law.

rance in general terms, although it remains stable during the most relevant phases of the case.

Figure 2
Temporal evolution of frames according to stages of the period (March 1-October 31, 2009). ***El Cronista Comercial y Ámbito Financiero***

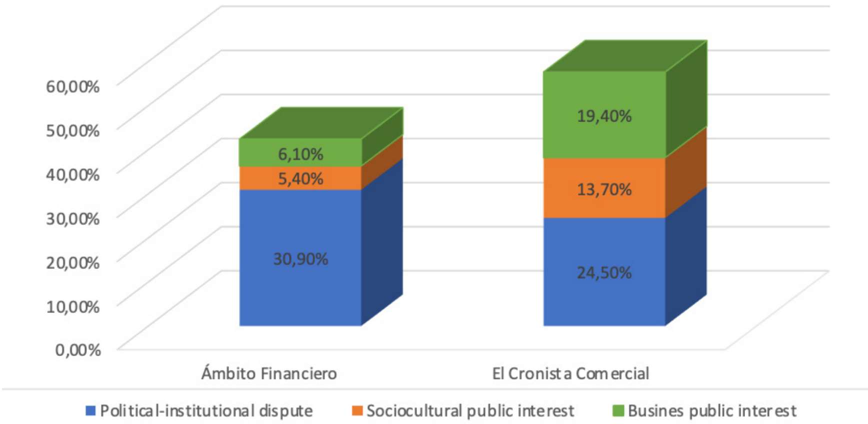


Source: Koziner, 2017.

The last specific objective aimed to compare the treatment that both newspapers gave to the case. In this sense, the data shown in figure 3 are eloquent: although the three frames are present in the two newspapers, in *Ámbito Financiero* seven out of ten articles are framed as a political and institutional dispute, reserving significantly less space for the frames specific to the LASC. The *Cronista Comercial*, on the other hand, not only offers global coverage more abundant but also more heterogeneous regarding the ways of framing the debate by the Law.

In these differences, it is possible to observe the traces of the editorial profile of the newspapers. In the *Ámbito Financiero*, the controversial component that usually characterizes all coverage of political affairs prevailed widely and less attention was paid to the specific aspects of the case. Even though *El Cronista Comercial* also dominated the political and institutional dispute frame, the other two were also relevant. Especially, the business public interest, which was highlighted in the notes of the argumentative genre and, within these, in the editorials.

Figure 3
Presence of the frames 'Political and institutional dispute', 'Business public interest' and 'Sociocultural public interest' (March 1-October 31, 2009). *El Cronista Comercial* and *Ámbito Financiero*



Source: Koziner, 2017.

Discussion and Conclusions

This article set out to analyze the treatment that the Argentine economy newspapers made of the course that the LASC process of debate and sanction that followed, assuming that the matter is of great interest to this sector of the media, both for integrating the field of actors achieved by the law, as for constituting a matter with economic consequences for a large part of the sector.

We found three frames: 'political and institutional dispute', 'business public interest', and 'sociocultural public interest'. The political and institutional dispute could be thought of less as a frame and more as a "script", in the sense defined by Entman (2004, p. 6).

The business public interest manages to print a negative view of the LASC, while the sociocultural public interest synthesizes a position related to the arguments supported by the initiative, but not totally aligned with it. It was not by chance that this frame had been the least relevant, given that, in keeping with the provisions of the Law, it proposed a renewed vision of how the regulation in audiovisual communication should be morally evaluated. Thus, it was contradictory with the Argentine normative tradition of the field, favorable to the commercial and private logic of operation.

The temporal evolution of the three frames was not homogeneous; nor the relevance that they gained on the surface of the newspapers. The behavior of the 'political and institutional dispute' frame fluctuated concomitantly with the general frequency of coverage of the Law, for which it was strongly linked to the evolution of events. Thus, it is inferred that a fundamentally episodic approach prevailed, focused on specific events with a high degree of controversy and drama.

The interpretation of the behavior of the frames in each newspaper can be related to two central aspects: the way in which the regulatory initiative dialogued with the history and situation of each one and the editorial traditions of economic journalism in which they could be affiliated.

The LASC took up some points of a historical claim against *Clarín* by Julio Ramos, creator of *Ámbito Financiero*, for the conformation and exponential growth of the business group from the nineties (Ramos, 1993; Ulanovsky, 2011).

However, the critical stance towards this type of process, even when it was stated that they impacted on freedom of expression, was based on a conception of public interest slightly divergent from that proposed by the LASC. From that point of view, free competition and antitrust rules are the central values for any media policy, so state intervention should be limited to guaranteeing those conditions.

In general terms, *Ámbito* positioned himself as an external observer of a political debate that only indirectly involved him. The specific frames of the LASC could be considered more as leaks of the ways of defining the measure by the sources and the actors who participated in the debate and less as definitions shared by the editorial line of the newspaper.

The ownership structure of *El Cronista Comercial* placed this journalistic institution in a particular situation, since its owner, Francisco De Narváez, was in violation of the Law for being a national deputy and licensee of the television channel *América TV*. Its institutional position was compatible with the definition proposed by the business public interest and was expressed, to a large extent, in the editorials dedicated to the matter. In line with this, a greater presence of the business sector was observed on its pages, as a source and as the protagonist of the reported action. The coverage of *El Cronista* was more heterogeneous than that of its competitor in terms of the frames present in the news treatment and the sources and actors involved.

In addition to the differences, the centrality of the official actors, the hierarchy of the legislative and executive arenas over the debates in civil society, and the controversy as the central axis of the news were elements common to both newspapers.

Finally, in both newspapers it is possible to find traces of the two original models of economic journalism: the American, in *El Cronista* and the British, in *Ámbito*. In the latter, information is mixed with analysis, comments, and predictions. In addition, it is characterized by the frequent use of *off the record*. The American, on the other hand, tends to separate information from opinion more clearly and the former is accompanied by a greater number of sources, generally institutional. Opinion is usually articulated with external voices and experts in the field.

In addition to the specific findings to which this work has arrived, it is interesting to emphasize a factor in relation to the frames: the creation, crystallization, and circulation of these organizing patterns of the news meanings are the result of dynamics in which various factors interact —Cultural, economic, political— that go beyond the texts, although they are reflected in them. The frames are persistent principles that integrate all the instances of the communicational process and that must be shared at some level by the societies in which they develop in order to be meaningful and communicable. It is necessary to consider, then, that, although the frames of the treatment of the LASC were not born in the analyzed press, they were powerful keys in the organization of the meaning of its contents.

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Artificial Intelligence, algorithms and freedom of expression

Inteligencia Artificial, algoritmos y libertad de expresión

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Abstract
Artificial Intelligence can be presented as an ally when moderating violent content or apparent news, but its use without human intervention that contextualizes and adequately translates the expression leaves open the risk of prior censorship.
At present this is under debate within the international arena given that, since Artificial Intelligence lacks the ability to contextualize what it moderates, it is presented more as a tool for indiscriminate prior censorship, than as a moderation in order to protect the freedom of expression.
Therefore, after analyzing international legislation, reports from international organizations and the terms and conditions of Twitter and Facebook, we suggest five proposals aimed at improving algorithmic content moderation.
In the first place, we propose that the States reconcile their internal laws while respecting international standards of freedom of expression. We also urge that they develop public policies consistent with implementing legislation that protects the working conditions of human supervisors on automated content removal decisions.
For its part, we understand that social networks must present clear and consistent terms and conditions, adopt internal policies of transparency and accountability about how AI operates in the dissemination and removal of online content and, finally, they must carry out prior evaluations impact of your AI on human rights.

Keywords
Artificial Intelligence, automatic content moderation, fake news, freedom of expression, social networks.

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Resumen

La Inteligencia Artificial puede presentarse como un aliado al momento de moderar contenidos violentos o de noticias aparentes, pero su utilización sin intervención humana que contextualice y traduzca adecuadamente la expresión deja abierto el riesgo de que se genere censura previa

En la actualidad esto se encuentra en debate dentro del ámbito internacional dado que, al carecer la Inteligencia Artificial de la capacidad para contextualizar lo que modera, se está presentando más como una herramienta de censura previa indiscriminada, que como una moderación en busca de proteger la libertad de expresión.

Por ello luego de analizar la legislación internacional, informes de organismos internacionales y los términos y condiciones de Twitter y Facebook, sugerimos cinco propuestas tendientes a mejorar la moderación algorítmica de contenidos.

En primer término, proponemos que los Estados compatibilicen sus legislaciones internas respetando los estándares internacionales de libertad de expresión. También instamos a que desarrollen políticas públicas consistentes en implementar legislaciones protectoras de las condiciones laborales de supervisores humanos sobre las decisiones automatizadas de remoción de contenido.

Por su parte, entendemos que las redes sociales deben presentar términos y condiciones claros y consistentes, adoptar políticas internas de transparencia y rendición de cuentas acerca de cómo opera la IA en la difusión y remoción de contenido en línea y, finalmente, deben realizar evaluaciones previas de impacto de su IA a los derechos humanos.

Palabras clave

Inteligencia Artificial, moderación automática de contenidos, *fake news,* libertad de expresión, redes sociales.

Artificial Intelligence and freedom of expression. State of the art and preventive proposals

Freedom of thought and human expression is the fundamental basis of any democratic society. This is recognized by art. 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as art 18 (freedom of thought) and art 19, 1) and 2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by providing that "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice" (UN, 1966).

However, at the same time, said article recognizes that this right may be subject to restrictions that must be established by law necessary to: a) ensure respect for the rights or reputation of others and b) the protection of national security, the public order or public health or morals.

For its part, the Inter-American Human Rights System establishes that right in the same sense and scope of broad protection in Article 13 of the American Convention, with the particularity that it expressly prohibits censorship in any form and only considers it, in a prior manner, to protect the rights of children and adolescents. In the same sense, it emphasizes that whoever exercises this right is subject to the subsequent responsibilities that must be established by law, respecting their need, legitimacy, and proportionality.

Regarding the possible restrictions and responsibilities subsequent to the exercise of the right, we note that the UN Human Rights Committee - interpreting the scope of art. 19 of the ICCPR — is inclined towards an even more protective position, considering that freedom of opinion "does not authorize any exception or restriction" to its exercise, either "by law or by another power" (UN, 2011).

It is evident that the limits and scope of the exercise of this right are the center of analysis and complementary interpretation on the part of the main international organizations.

Without going any further, it is enough to cite the validity of OC 5/85 issued by the Inter-American Court which indicates that freedom of expression is not exhausted on the individual but also includes the collective dimension, underlining that free thought and its dissemination are inseparable, in such a way that a prior limitation —state or private— to any of them would be incompatible with the inter-American standards that protect this right (Sec. Gral. OEA, 2017).

In Argentina, the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation (CSJN), has followed the same line, noting that freedom of expression is one of the most important freedoms, while, without its proper protection, the democratic system would function only in an apparent fashion.

These intercontinental standards were agreed throughout most of the 20th century and the beginning of the present 21st century. With the emergence of social networks and other online intermediaries, the moment came when practically half of the world population exercises the triple action of disseminating, investigating, and disseminating information through the Internet through the main platforms that use "Artificial Intelligence" (Hereinafter AI) with which we interact every day.

Now, what is AI? At the moment, it has not been possible to agree on a single universal definition. On this occasion, we will be inclined to cite the one provided by the Office of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression of the UN when saying that "it is a 'constellation' of processes and technologies that allow computers to complement or replace specific tasks that would otherwise be performed by human beings, such as making decisions and solving problems" (UN, 2018).

The Rapporteurship adds that at the base of AI are the "algorithms" that are computer codes designed and written by human beings. All kinds of data that an algorithm processes are translated and produces a specific result such as inferences, suggestions, or predictions. Thus, the flow of infinite data generated by a person per second when interacting on the network, leads to the necessary development of AI in the face of the material impossibility that a person can do it on their own in a short time and efficiently.

As a proof of this, it will suffice to note that the volume of online data generation grows exponentially every second, to the point that in just one minute of browsing the Internet on Google, more than three million searches are carried out, on Facebook more than thirty million messages and more than two million videos are viewed, more than four hundred and fifty thousand tweets are published on Twitter, more than forty-six thousand photos are posted on Instagram, more than four million hours of videos are uploaded on YouTube and almost double on Netflix. This large amount of information has been called big data, and it arises from the interrelation of our electronic devices connected to the Web. Storage capacity is no longer measured in kilobytes composed of a four-digit number, but evolution has led us to alhella bytes, which has twenty-seven figures (DAUS, 2019), that is, the information is six hundred times greater.

This immense volume of data that we generate through social networks and intermediaries makes up an eccentric virtual place where we converge with other people, as well as with "bots" and other automated systems based on AI.

Although the latter contribute to the human exercise of free expression, at the same time, concrete evidence has emerged that alerts us to the serious risk that, little by little, AI "usurps" the human right to receive, investigate and disseminate content in line when deciding, in an automated way, which content remains and which is removed according to the "terms and conditions".

A first approach to the use of AI by platforms could be considered appropriate for the removal of violent content, disinformation, or that which incites hatred, for example.

However, anticipating the development and conclusion of our proposal, we consider that without human moderation that contextualizes and adequately translates the expression line, there may be a serious risk that the platforms will give precedence to AI as an automated moderator of online content, thus breaching with the aforementioned international standards in relation to the human right to receive, investigate and disseminate, which would be limited not by a necessary law, with a legitimate and proportional purpose, but by a de facto "constellation" made up of inhumane algorithms.

Therefore, our work will begin by explaining how international organizations conceptualize and diagnose the use of AI in the automated moderation of online content, as well as pointing out its main advantages and disadvantages. Next, we will analyze what are the implications of AI in the exercise of freedom of expression through platforms such as Facebook and Twitter in order to assess whether its implementation has contributed, in recent times, to restrict expression or not. Finally, and based on the factual and legal framework analyzed, we postulate the necessary intervention of human supervision when the AI suggests the removal of online content of public interest.

AI and automated online content moderation. Reasons for its implementation and the necessary human supervision

AI is usually considered as a set of automatic and impartial technological systems aimed at facilitating the effectiveness in the moderation of content in search of mitigating possible hateful, discriminatory, terrorist, etc., discourses and thus improving the experience of its users and the Citizenship Construction.

However, the UN has remarked that, in the field of content moderation, although AI has its positive aspects, the negative ones are also significant.

Among the benefits of using AI, the UN highlights that the personalized selection of content enhances the online experience of each person allowing them to quickly find the requested information, even in different languages. However, this initial virtue has as a disadvantageous element the limitation that each person faces to access different points of view, thus interfering with the personal possibility of delving into and confronting different ideas and opinions with individuals who have another ideological, political, religious or social position. In this way, this content segmentation that appears to be very useful and effective, could, at the same time, reinforce individual beliefs and lead to the exacerbation of violent content or misinformation with the sole purpose of maintaining the user's online participation (UN, 2018).

Sandra Álvaro explains that algorithms are already part of our daily lives, using as an example Facebook who has an algorithm called Edgerank that analyzes our browsing data — the "likes" we grant, the friends we have, and the comments we make — and with this, it profiles us in order to show us those stories that we like and hide those that bore us and show us new friends that match our profile and ideology (Álvaro, 2014).

This situation, which generates a kind of information bubble, has aroused the interest of the European Union as it warns that human beings who interact with AI systems must be able to maintain full and effective self-determination about themselves and be able to participate in the democratic process. That is why it urges that AI systems must not coerce, manipulate, infer or unreasonably group human beings.

At the discretion of the European body, AI should then be designed to increase, complement, and enhance human cognitive, social and cultural skills, thus following human-centered design principles (Eur. Comm., 2019).

Faced with this new reality in which information of all kinds overflows on the network, already in March 2018 the European Commission urged internet platforms to use automatic filters to verify and, where appropriate, remove extremist content, although —at the same time— suggested that human review be used in order to avoid errors that come from automated systems.

This is so, since the use of AI in the automated moderation of content can affect the exercise of freedom of expression since, for the moment, its limitations include the impossibility of being able to evaluate the context, the idiomatic uses, and cultural aspects of human beings.

Although in recent times AI has exponentially improved in Natural Language Processing (NLP), it has not yet achieved such a development that allows it to understand all the linguistic and cultural nuances by which humans express themselves.

This has led to the fact that, when moderating content automatically, the algorithm used by the platforms has also eliminated images of nudity with historical, cultural, or educational value, historical and documentary accounts of conflicts, evidence of war crimes, interventions in against groups that promote hatred or efforts to challenge or report racist, homophobic or xenophobic language.

This would show that, in this face of AI development, we still find weak automated systems that need human supervision to be able to carry out their actions without affecting other rights.

It is precisely in this context that AI loses its "magic power" to solve the removal of online abusive content, hate speech, or the eventual misinformation. For this reason, internet companies have urged users to refine the content observed with different contextual elements, although, it should be clarified, the viability and effectiveness of these guidelines are not clear (UN, 2018).

In this sense, the UN Human Rights Committee understands that, unlike people, algorithms lack corpus and mind, that is, they are not yet capable of understanding when an expression is ironic or is a parody, or to confirm with precision whether a certain demonstration can be described as praise of "terrorism". Therefore, the automation of its mathematical operability tends more to opt for a quick result consisting of limiting or removing a certain expression without taking into account that this results in considerably affecting the human right to receive, investigate and disseminate (UN, 2018).

In the same way, the use of AI when uploading files on the web, in order to protect the intellectual property rights of both the videos has raised doubts due to the large number of blocks that occur, which, added to Possible leaks from the content linked to terrorism or other extreme positions may arrive at the opposite, that is, instead of protecting rights, totalitarian regimes can be established by applying an automated prior censorship.

Indeed, while the use of cryptographic comparison algorithms is extremely useful to detect images of sexual abuse of minors, on the contrary, their application to "extremist" content —which generally requires contextual evaluation— is difficult without the existence of clear norms that define what "extremism" is (UN, 2018).

In this sense, the UN understands that the platforms should make transparent the way in which they use AI, explaining in detail with aggregated data that illustrates examples of real cases or hypothetical cases in order to clarify how their interpretation and the application of specific norms are (UN, 2018).

Likewise, since it is the responsibility of companies to prevent and eventually reduce the negative effects on human rights with the use of AI, it is clear that part of their transparency policy should consist of beginning by recognizing the important limitations that automation suffers in moderation of content, such as those difficulties already mentioned about the interpretation of the context as well as the wide variation of idiomatic nuances and the meaning and the linguistic and cultural particularities. That is why, at a minimum, current and future technology to address issues related to large-scale data should be subject to a rigorous audit and, of course, have contributions from civil society tending to enrich the analysis.

To end this section, we want to refer to the last aspect related to our proposal that human supervision be guaranteed in the event of the possible automated removal of online content.

We refer specifically to the one by which the platforms are urged to strengthen and guarantee that the automated moderation of online content has the possibility of review and supervision by human beings trained in knowing international standards of freedom of expression.

To this end, the UN states that it is essential that adequate protection be provided to the working conditions in which they perform tasks since they must be compatible with human rights standards applicable to labor rights (UN, 2018).

Such an application has its basis, for example, in a specific case of "job insecurity" of moderators who worked for Facebook.

Indeed, in 2015 this company had less than 4,500 people as moderators of audiovisual content, but, due to COVID-19, it had to expand the workforce by hiring some 15,000 moderators, most of whom are under the modality of subcontractors in various cities around the world (Dublin, Berlin, Manila).

This is how the magazine "The New Yorker" reports that moderators often work odd hours in different time zones in the world, to which is added the lack of sleep and the strong psychological impact they suffer from absorbing everything they see in their screens without having a standardized "protocol" to indicate what content should stay online and what shouldn't.

As a result, in May 2020 thousands of moderators joined a class-action lawsuit against Facebook alleging psychological disorders and, for this reason, agreed with the company a settlement of USD 52,000,000 (Marantz, 2020).

The human supervision that we postulate for the review of the automated content decision, although it would not be able to absolutely prevent online censorship, it is possible to anticipate that it would contribute to making up for the serious defects of the AI that cannot - yet - interpret contexts, linguistic terms, irony, satirical humor, artistic images of nudity, etc.

Let's see below certain specific cases that, according to our position, accompany this proposal to implement human supervision in the face of misinformation and automated content removal.

How Twitter and Facebook operate

Twitter guidelines

The social network Twitter has a series of rules entitled "General policies and guidelines" that must be respected in order to use the platform. One section of those guidelines is linked, as far as our analysis is concerned, to online content that relates to topics of public interest.

Although this social network anticipates taking various kinds of measures on tweets that violate its rules, at the same time it recognizes that on certain occasions —without specifying which ones, at least as an example— they keep certain tweets online that may be useful to society, since otherwise they would be erased. When would a tweet be considered in the public interest? The platform reports that it qualifies as such when it is presented as "a direct contribution to the understanding or debate of an issue that concerns the entire public" (Twitter, 2020).

Thus, this social network highlights that those tweets issued by government officials are of public interest because it is important to know what they do in order to debate their actions or omissions. Twitter thus anticipates that it will give prevalence to the dissemination of content of public interest based on the following four criteria that make up an exception to the direct removal of content, specifically:

- The tweet violates one or more Twitter rules.
- The author of the tweet is a verified account.
- The account has more than 100,000 followers.

- The account represents a current or potential member of the local, national or supranational government or legislative branch: i) current holders of a leadership position elected or appointed by a Government or legislative body, or candidates or nominees for political office.

It can happen, however, that a public official publishes a tweet violating the terms and conditions of Twitter. In that case, as an exception, the platform informs that one can choose to keep the tweet, which would otherwise be deleted. For this purpose, Twitter inserts behind it a notice that is intended to contextualize the breach of the rules and allow people to enter to see it if they wish.

Going to the use of AI, it expresses that, by placing that notice, the possibility of interacting with that tweet is also decreasing, through "Like", "Retweet" or by sharing it on that same social network to generate that the Twitter algorithm avoid recommending it. Thus, it is noted that through these actions an attempt would be made to restrict the scope of the tweet, at the same time, guaranteeing the public the possibility of viewing it and discussing the subject in question.

As a first observation to be made, we want to highlight the limited and restrictive framework that Twitter implements when it requires an account to have 100,000 followers in order to be included in the conditions of the public interest standard. The quantitative measurement based only on the number of followers - which could well be made up mainly of bot accounts - we believe that it would undermine a qualitative analysis of the discourse in question as long as it defines whether or not is of public interest, since it should be used Human supervision following jurisprudential standards such as that of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights that defines the public interest with those opinions or information on matters in which society has a legitimate interest in keeping informed about the operation of the State or general rights and interests (IACHR, 2009, 2011). Returning then to the analysis of the measures that Twitter implements on this point, we can see an example of this in particular in one of the many tweets that President Donald Trump issued on August 23, 2020, on the occasion of the presidential electoral contest.

As can be seen, in said tweet, President Trump alluded to possible electoral fraud that could be committed through the citizen vote-by-mail system. In that case, Twitter inserted a notice in the tweet that warned the public about the breach of the rules regarding the integrity of the civic electoral processes, although it was also decided that the tweet remains accessible. For more information, a link was attached to refer the user to reading the policies and general guidelines on public interest cited above.

For these particular cases, we note that Twitter informs that its "Trust & Safety Team", which is made up of professionals who are experts in various fields, will implement a second analysis, in order to analyze the tweet and give an opinion to keep or not its visibility based on public interest criteria. Subsequently, the first recommendations made by this team will be made known to a group of internal referents of the social network with extensive knowledge on the subject and in the cultural context in which the tweet was circumscribed so that, after they are issued, the Trust & Safety leaders finally make the decision whether to apply the notice or delete the tweet.

However, this mode of personalized review would not appear to be applied by Twitter in a uniform manner for situations of public interest. An example of this can be seen when in October 2020 Twitter prevented users from sharing an article in the New York Post newspaper linked to presidential candidate Joe Biden and his eventual contacts with a Ukrainian businessman. Why did it stop it? The notice stated the following rationale: "Your Tweet could not be sent because Twitter or our partners identified this link as potentially harmful" (Cox, 2020). No additional information was provided about whether a team of "Trust & Safety" professionals could have intervened in such a decision, as it would appear that they did when referring to their "public interest" policies in the notice inserted in President Trump's tweet.

Going to the analysis of the general policies of this platform, it is worth referring to the case of dissemination of multimedia content. Thus, Twitter anticipates that it will focus its attention on content that is significantly altered or falsified with the deliberate intention of deceiving. However, it does not explain how it would arrive at such a conclusion, that is, how it would determine that certain audiovisual content has been altered or falsified. To this end, Twitter alerts that it has the power to apply its own technology — it does not specify or report it— or to collect a complaint through its collaborators or external partners. Only in those cases in which it is impossible to determine with certainty whether what is exposed in multimedia content was modified or is a copy, it may be — it does not guarantee— that it does not take any measure to restrict or reference it (Twitter, 2020).

Likewise, and always in relation to the dissemination of multimedia content on which it fails to provide details about how it concludes that it could lead to confusion or suggest a malicious intention to deceive, it reports that it analyzes the context of the tweet to determine if the content is modified or falsified, although it does not specify whether professionals are involved for this purpose, as expressly indicated by the content of public interest. Thus, the lack of precision inclines us to infer that Twitter would use AI for the purposes of reviewing:

- The text of the tweet that is attached to or included in the multimedia element.
- The metadata associated with the multimedia element.
- The profile information of the account that tweets the multimedia element.

- The websites linked in the tweet in the profile of the account that tweets the multimedia element.

In this sense, we observe that the automated measures that Twitter adopts in the face of content that the same platform qualifies as false or altered, since it prevents it from being shared on Twitter and, consequently, it could be deleted, at the same time, that the account from which the aforementioned content emanates may be permanently suspended.

Facebook

Facebook reports on its platform that its strategy to stop misinformation consists of three specific actions:

- Remove accounts and content that violate our community rules or advertising policies.
- Reduce the distribution of fake news and inauthentic content such as “click bait”.
- Inform people by providing more context to the publications they view.

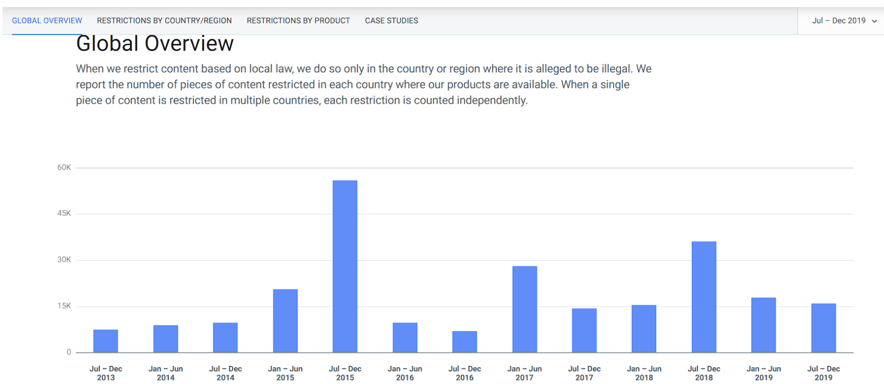
This three-pronged action would tend to weed out the “bad actors” who frequently spread fake stories and, it says, would dramatically decrease the reach of those stories by helping people stay informed without stifling public discourse.

It stands out that for this work it uses machine learning to help its teams detect fraud, enforce its anti-spam policies and block millions of fake accounts every day when they try to register (Facebook, 2020).

It reports that it takes “action” —although it does not explain what would it consist of— against entire pages and websites that repeatedly share fake news, which would reduce its overall news distribution. They highlight that because Facebook has no intention of making money from misinformation or helping its creators make a profit, those publishers are prevented from running ads and using its monetization features like Instant Articles.

It also highlights that part of its strategy to combat misinformation is to partner with various countries with third-party data verifiers to review and rate the accuracy of articles and posts on Facebook. These fact-checkers would be independent since, as it notes, they are certified through the non-partisan International Data Verification Network. Thus, when those organizations rate some content as fake, Facebook rates that story significantly lower in the News Feed. In this way, they claim that this reduces future views by more than 80% (Lions, 2018). In line with what Agustina del Campo observes, it is noted that Facebook has gone from "a system that depended almost entirely on its users for complaints of content that violated its rules, to a system of activation and proactive 'enforcement' of its terms and conditions of service". Regarding the so-called infodemic, this change implied that this social network automates the moderation of content that would be "possibly" false, and then directly forward that same content to other users or to so-called "verifiers", even before someone uploads an internal complaint about said content (Del Campo, 2020).

To close, the following graph prepared by Facebook is illustrative as a global sample of content removal from 2013 to 2019 in the last six years (Facebook Transparency, 2019):



Conclusion: The necessary human supervision as a rule and not as an exception in the final decision to remove online content

Throughout this paper, we have analyzed and briefly described the international legal framework related to the protection of freedom of thought and expression as a human right that is exercised regardless of what medium or platform it is done through. With the exponential growth of the various online platforms and the volume of data that grows second by second due to the interaction of users, we have realized how international organizations highlight the use of AI in distribution and, also, in automated restriction of online content.

We have also exposed that, in general terms, the inhuman use of predictive algorithms in regard to the precise and automatic removal of online content violates international standards of freedom of expression, such as the prohibition of prior censorship.

With only the use of AI in the decision to remove online content, the first factual situation that contradicts that standard of prohibition of censorship is visualized: that a series of instructions programmed by humans with predictive functions and with the ability to read natural language, It simply has what information we receive through the social networks with which we interact on a daily basis. This situation openly contradicts the standard established by article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights, Article 19 of the ICCPR, art. 10 of the European Treaty on Human Rights, among others, because, in general, "the restriction of free expression is only admissible through the enactment of a necessary law, which pursues a legitimate purpose and is proportional to the right that it is trying to protect."

With a view to ensuring that this standard does not become a dead letter and at the same time without affecting the use of AI in the moderation of online content, in order to achieve a balance between the two, we postulate that human supervision is transcendental for the necessary review of any automated decision to remove content. The illustrative examples referenced throughout this work allow us to infer that, although human supervision of the decision adopted by the AI would not be able to absolutely prevent online censorship, it is possible to anticipate that it would contribute to remedying the serious defects of AI which cannot —yet— interpret contexts, linguistic terms, irony, satirical humor, artistic images of nudity, etc.

To this end, it is imperative that international organizations such as the UN, OAS, European Commission, etc. continue the global study of this problem and, from there, persist in urging States to:

Make their internal laws compatible while respecting international standards of freedom of expression. Although each country is sovereign and has the power to regulate speech on Internet platforms more directly, there are specific cases such as the one that happens in Germany where the NetzDG Law has been in force since 2018. This law requires social networks to quickly remove illegal speech, with a specific focus on hate speech and hate crimes, otherwise, they should pay fines of thousands of euros. The laudable end that the issuance of this regulation could have has to confront with an undeniable fact: that an alleged rapid elimination of supposedly illegal online content ignores relevant constitutional guarantees such as due process and the right to defense when the decision is delegated to private platforms to confirm what content deserves or does not to remain online when, where appropriate, such a resolution would correspond to be adopted by a natural Judge, at least with regard to those democratic States.

Also, it is necessary that they develop public policies consisting of implementing protective legislation for the working conditions (psychophysical aspects in particular) of the dependent personnel who carry out supervision tasks of all automated decisions to remove online content under the orders of platforms.

Likewise, it would be pertinent to require companies that their terms and conditions are clearly explained and consistent with the human rights standards established for freedom of expression.

On the other hand, it would also be convenient for those companies that operate physically or virtually in their territories to also adopt internal policies of transparency and accountability about how AI operates in the dissemination and removal of each online content that everyone receives when interacting with their platform. All this, of course, together with the necessary collaboration that these companies should provide in perfecting the current internal appeal mechanisms in the event of a possible automated and supervised decision that orders the blocking of an account or removal of online content (UN, 2018).

And finally, complementing the above, those same companies must carry out due diligence through impact assessments on human rights, that is, what their rules are, how they are applied and what measures they take to prevent them from being violated. While it is clear that the details of individual compliance actions should be kept private, transparency reports in turn provide essential information on how the company is addressing the challenges of the day (New America, 2020).

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Discourse, opinion and episteme. Immigrants and COVID-19 in the Chilean press

Discurso, opinión y episteme. Los inmigrantes y la COVID-19 en la prensa chilena

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Abstract
In the current democratic societies, the media, known as "the fourth power" and that are generally in charge of the local elites, have achieved a crucial role in the naturalization of discourses in the community having the capacity to even influence the public opinion in political, social, religious and economic areas, among others. Being the problem of study the influence that the expression of a certain type of discourse has over its receivers, the goal of this article is to reflect about the link between the discourse, the public opinion and the press epistemology regarding the immigration in Chile during COVID-19 times. The results from the examination of eleven newspapers employing a Critical Discourse Analysis approach inform us that, on the one side, the actors such as authorities are nominalized, whereas the foreigners are assimilated in a group or invisibilized altogether. On the other hand, the themes that emerge from the data analysis are poverty, vulnerability and discrimination. This study aims at problematizing the discourses that come from the press from a critical perspective in order to contribute to the dialogical construction of the other from an objective point of view away from preconceived and stigmatized views spread by the media.

Keywords
Discourse, episteme, press media, migration, COVID-19, discrimination.

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Resumen

En las sociedades democráticas actuales, los medios de prensa, conocidos como "el cuarto poder" y que generalmente están a cargo de las elites locales, han adquirido un rol fundamental en la naturalización de discursos en la comunidad ejerciendo la fuerza de incluso influenciar a la opinión pública en temas políticos, sociales, religiosos y económicos, entre otros. Siendo el problema de estudio la influencia que la emisión de cierto tipo de discurso tiene sobre el receptor de este, el objetivo de este artículo es reflexionar acerca del vínculo existente entre el discurso, la opinión pública y epistemología de la prensa escrita en torno a la migración en tiempos de COVID-19 en Chile. Los resultados de la observación de once diarios por medio del Análisis Crítico del Discurso arrojan que, por un lado, los actores tales como autoridades son nominalizados, mientras que los extranjeros son asimilados a un grupo o invisibilizados completamente. Por otro lado, los temas que emergen del análisis son la pobreza, la vulnerabilidad y la discriminación. Este estudio apunta a problematizar los discursos que provienen de los medios escritos desde una perspectiva crítica y a contribuir a una construcción dialógica del otro de forma objetiva alejada de visiones preconcebidas y estigmatizadoras difundidas por los medios de comunicación.

Palabras clave

Discurso, episteme, medios de prensa, migración, COVID-19, discriminación.

Introduction

The study of public discourse has occupied numerous authors. Due to the characteristics of the object, interest in it has been manifest in the social sciences and literature linked to the field of linguistics and sociology. From this perspective, their interest goes both through its role in social representations and its incidence on the plane of power. Considering this last point, the emission of discourses in public spheres encompasses a series of problems related to culture, identity, and national and international politics.

In relation to the object, Jakobson (1986) initially defines it as a linguistic expression. However, the author makes the concept more complex by arguing that discourse is, above all, a collective reality, because individual discourse is always generated with an exchange. From this perspective, there cannot be a sender without a receiver, an argument valid even for "inner discourse" —not emitted — since dialogue is at the base even of inner discourse.

With similarities and differences, Chomsky (1981) defines the object as a "mirror of the mind", a product of human intelligence, created in each individual through operations that are beyond the reach of the will or consciousness. From this perspective, the author establishes a link between individual consciousness and linguistic expression, in such a way that the study of language can be instrumented to achieve a certain understanding regarding the specific characteristics of human intelligence.

On the contrary, for Bourdieu (1990), discourse cannot be defined only as the linguistic expression of an individual, nor in individual linguistic competence, but as an expression that is within a context. For Bourdieu, a sender does not generate a discourse on thin air, but rather emits a message whose addressee is a set of senders and receivers who receive and value the discourse of the first speaker.

An alternative perspective is seen in Giddens (2003). For the theorist, discourse constitutes a type of practice, where a series of social formulas are implemented to generate intersubjective communication. In this field and from the concept of "discursive consciousness", Giddens approaches linguistic expression as a type of act motivated by human consciousness. This awareness is the result of both the intelligent human agent and the symbolic structures that subjects internalize as participating actors in society.

Despite the heuristic value provided by these theoretical perspectives, a conceptual void is observed when reflecting on the link of discourse, with problems linked to media opinion, different types of nationalism, and immigrant populations in times of pandemic. In this field, a work that takes charge of establishing the conceptual links between the idea of discourse, with nomenclatures such as public opinion and worldview in times of pandemic, is missing. It is from this gap that this work starts. Our interest is to reflect on the theoretical marriage between discourse, public opinion, and epistemology in the Chilean written press, considering the publication of content on foreign migration to the country in times of COVID-19. On this basis, our guiding question is: what are the main discursive, opinionated, and epistemic topics present in these media regarding the immigrant population in Chile? It is hypothesized that these topics are discriminatory, nationalistic, and civilizing. In this sense, the opinion of the media reflects a way of knowing, based on the cultural valuation of the West, discriminating against any community that carries representations and practices that are distant from this symbolic scheme.

The work will use a series of illustrative cases from the written press, where the media opinions towards migrant populations in the current context of pandemic will be discussed. The cases are approached in order to contribute elements to the theoretical reflection on the nexus between medial discourse and epistemology around a different other. On this basis, the contents of the article consider a first section, where the theoretical marriage between discourse and the media is addressed. The text continues with a section that gives theoretical treatment to the notions of public opinion and episteme. The article ends with the initial analysis of a series of opinions in the written press about immigrants in Chile.

Discourse and media

After the introduction that informs us of the link between linguistics, discourse, and the media, we turn to Critical Discourse Analysis, which is the most appropriate approach for this article. This is a broad and complex discipline as explained by Wodak and Meyer (2001), composed of different theories, methodologies, and data collection tools that define it as "a critical academic perspective, a theory, and method of analyzing the way in which the individuals and institutions use language" (Richardson, 2007, pp. 1-2). Being the object of study for this discipline the link of the use of language with social power (Mohammedwesam, 2017, p. 1).

Richardson (2007) has a clear vision of this discipline in relation to the analysis of the written media. The author argues that:

> Critical discourse analysis offers interpretations [and explanations] of the meanings of the texts (…); placing what is written or said in the context in which it occurs, rather than just summarizing patterns or regularities in texts; and argue that textual meaning is constructed through an interaction between the producer, the text, and the consumer rather than simply being read from the page by readers in exactly the same way. (p. 15)

The discourse in the media reflects the interests and ideological positions of the ruling elite (Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1989, 2001, 2003; Van Dijk, 1997, 1998a, 1998b). In this line, Androutsopoulos (2010, p. 183), maintains that "linguistic ideologies are not neutral or objective, but rather serve the interests of specific individuals or groups, that is, they are always formulating from a particular social perspective and they have particular references and objectives". Thus, the way in which the actors who participate in events narrated by the media are represented depends on the ideologies associated with the corresponding written medium (Chiluwa, 2011, p. 197) arguing that the representations of the actors or group to which they belong in the media they are associated with specific ideologies. The fact that newspapers are associated with certain ideologies, it is hoped that through the news opinions contained by these media are legitimized. This is how these discourses disseminated by the press naturalize discourses that ultimately have an influence on the formation of public opinion in the community that consumes them, with the political objective of distracting the population's attention from a certain social problem (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 145). That is why in this section we will reveal how the selected media use discursive strategies to construct reality and represent immigrants as one of the social actors impacted by the health crisis in Chile during the pandemic period and we will expose the responsibility that media have in the formation of public opinion about these immigrants.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in Chile, the press has reported on the difficulties foreigners have faced in the country and the risks to which illegal immigrants who have entered Chile through unauthorized means have been exposed. This has been interwoven through the use of discourses issued by national authorities that, by employing persuasive discursive strategies, have drawn a reality that shapes public opinion about foreigners in Chile in times of COVID-19. To reveal the discriminatory messages implicit in the text, we will focus on the actors who participate in them and the actions with which they are associated and, thus, show the discursive construction of hostility towards the immigrant in Chile during the pandemic. The national press is full of news related to the arrival of immigrants to Chile. The comments issued in these spaces are divided in favor and against the immigrant. However, a negative view about them persists. Among those comments, the positions of different political, academic, religious, and cultural authorities also appear, regarding the event. These actors, on the one hand, represent the vision that comes from the group to which they belong. On the other hand, the discourses of these actors are emphasized by means of the nominalization, invisibility, or assimilation of the actors through the use of discursive strategies (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2007) with the aim of contributing to the editorial line of the newspaper in question. Consequently, the readers of this news are influenced by the discursive construction of immigrants emitted by the local media, which are the ones that emit the speech in question. This predisposes the community, "the linguistic market", towards the foreigner, naturalizing conducts in favor or against the foreigner, that is, the "linguistic habitus" that is manifested through the linguistic expression that is the speech.

In accordance with the above, the power exercised by the media in shaping public opinion should not be underestimated. These being a tool that can naturalize the objectives of the elite. The tool that the elite seeks to control through the management of the media is discourse, that which is consumed by society and which according to Johnstone (2002, p. 9) "shapes the world and discourse is shaped by the world". So crucial is this selection of discourse that Foucault (1981, pp. 52-53) indicates that "discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination but is the thing for which there is struggle, discourse is the power that must be harnessed". That is why the language selected by the media to refer to the conditions of immigrants in Chile is crucial for the construction of reality and the influence that construction has on society.

Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001) give an example of the power of discourse. According to them, there is a new type of discourse that they call "Liberal Newspeak" echoing Orwell (1949). This new lexicon is used to naturalize reality in society, for example, COVID-19 and its discursive normalization worldwide. Chomsky (DiEM25, 2020) reports how the war speech has been associated with the COVID-19 speech. For example, the former Chilean Health Minister, Jaime Mañalich (2020), who spoke of "the war against COVID-19", "doctors fight daily with the corona", among other discourses related to the pandemic. This type of lexicon was decolonized from its original context, war, and recolonized into a new one, health (Fairclough, 1996, 2002; Massey, 2013). The frequent use of Mañalich's discourse associated with the presence of immigrants and disseminated by the media can influence the public opinion receiving these news and affect foreigners.

The influence that the written press exerts on the community receiving these discourses is in contrast to the free press position that is the work of the media (Ejupi et al., 2014). This is how Груевски (2004) and Gruevski (2004) warn that at present the decision-making made by residents and congressmen depends heavily on the obtained information. The press had a supervisory role, informing the reader of reality, thus becoming the fourth estate. However, according to Ramón (Силјановска, 2007, p. 96), former editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, "the media have been for a long period of time a source of citizenship, known as the fourth estate, a power that has become opposed to government decisions which could have had a damaging effect on the people. The fourth estate no longer has its power", especially when the media is used to influence public opinion on social and political issues such as immigration. Consequently, the role of the media in strengthening public opinion and creating free thought is influenced by the large amount of news circulating on social media that is taking on the role that previously belonged to the press. As a result, the reader is being persuaded who is making uninformed decisions that may be crucial for the community. For example, the Russian intervention in the 2016 presidential elections of the United States of America (Mayer, 2018).

Opinion and episteme behind media discourses

The concept of "public opinion" has been studied by numerous theoretical approaches. In this field, Habermas (2009) addresses the idea from its historical origin, placing the nomenclature in the European nineteenth century with the development of the written press. For him, the notion is understood as "bourgeois advertising". In this sense, public opinion constitutes the act of publishing the common reasoning of a community that is distinguished from others by having access to property and instruction. Due to its symbolic characteristics, it constitutes a "social sphere", different from the economic fabric and formal power relations.

Vasilachis's (2013) proposal goes further: for this author, the press participates directly in the way of constructing the subjects. In this sense, the media are made up of a series of categories that end up articulating the social representations of individuals. This aspect is relevant since it allows us to understand the opinion of the press from the field of human representations, considering different levels of abstraction.

Human representations have an important intellectual component. In this last field, the press guides its action from the foundations of knowledge linked to university education, the professional culture of journalism and communications. The act of communicating is linked to a series of intellectual procedures learned at the university, an epistemic space that Löwy (1979) defined as a "qualitative universe of values". For the author, this symbolic environment is distinguished from others by presenting qualitative values to interpret society.

However, academic symbolic environments present similarities and differences with other cultural contexts. In this field, Foucault (1972) contributes elements to the analysis with his concept of "episteme", an idea that aims to identify different ways of knowing in human communities, in such a way that academic activity can be understood as a form of knowledge such as any other. This episteme has consequences in human acts, as can be seen in the field of oral or written discourses.

Along a similar course, we find the work of Gellner (1998). Focusing the analysis on intellectuality and its behaviors, he argues that epistemology and the political context are truly independent variables of intellectual practices. In this field, Gellner argues that the starting point of intellectual work passes through epistemology. However, this also has consequences on the political behavior of intellectual professionals, since the subjects generate practices according to the way they think and the contingency they face. In this way, an epistemological stance has consequences in daily action and in politics, a fact that can be observed in acted and spoken behavior. The writing practice would not be the exception.

Around this article, the context that serves for reflection is the Latin American migration to the country in the presence of COVID-19. The object of this work is focused on the media discourses of the Chilean written press about immigrants at a time when the world is going through a health contingency linked to COVID-19. For this reflection to gain in heuristics, we selected eleven national digital newspapers around the problem. These are the newspapers: La Cuarta, La Nación, El Mercurio, La Tercera, SoyChile, TeleSur, El Siglo, Pauta, Crónica Digital, Pauta and AA, press that, due to their characteristics, are presented as articulators of social representations at a national scale and as symbolic constructors of subjects, as proposed by Vasilachis (2013). The following lines will deal with this subject.

Analysis of the press from the discursive and epistemic features of media opinion

According to the National Institute of Statistics (2020), the migrant population in Chile is around 1,500,000 mostly from Latin America. Of these, only 20% have a qualified job while 10.8% are classified as poor. This population is at risk during the pandemic, with the Chilean media reporting on the current health crisis that the country is going through. These outlets are colored by ideologies of the elites that are behind them, transferring these ideologies to the community through discourse in order to later naturalize positions on a certain social issue. For example, immigration in Chile.

The written media that are part of this study are examined from the beginning of the pandemic in Chile in March 2020 until the first week of October 2020. From this observation issues such as unemployment, health, poverty, stigmatization, and lack of support networks arise. While the words with a negative connotation that have been used to refer to immigration in Chile are: crime, risk, illegal, “coyote”, clandestine, denounced, chaotic, expel, trafficking, criminal, denounce, and dismantle.

However, not all the discourse associated with the subject of study is negative. Many actors have appeared in defense of foreigners coming from the political, academic, and religious universe. For example, the former president, Michelle Bachelet, expresses her concern about the migration crisis, arguing that immigrants are greatly affected by COVID-19 and that it is our responsibility to help them (La Cuarta, May 2). Another actor who produces pro-immigrant discourses comes from academia. José Manuel Cárdenas, academic from the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Talca, in light of the results delivered by a survey conducted by CENEM-UTALCA reports that 47% of immigrants fear contracting COVID-19 (Chronicle Digital, 20 August 2020).

The Jesuit priest Felipe Berrios, from the religious sphere, who lives in “La Chimba” Antofagastina, populated by immigrants, denounces the vulnerability to which foreigners are exposed, which is manifested in the lack of support networks. The media highlights that immigrants are without their families, unemployed, and without money (EMOL, 2020, August 19). People with these characteristics are those that Berrios defines as “the new poor” (El Mercurio de Calama, September 4, 2020a). The vulnerability in which they find themselves forces them to ask for money in the streets since they do not have the resources to be able to return to their countries (El Mercurio de Calama, September 4, 2020b). Meanwhile, “the new poor” live in overcrowding, on the streets, and in poverty where the chances of getting infected are greater (Pauta. cl, June 5, 2020; EFE Agency, May 8).

On the other hand, Javiera Cerda, from the Jesuit Migrant Service of Arica, recognizes the largest increase in illegal immigration in Chile through unauthorized passages during the entire last decade, where 50% occurred between 2018 and 2019. Cerda (La Tercera, October 2) reports that the Venezuelan immigrant has increased exponentially after the operation of the Democratic Responsibility Visa. The increase was from nine Venezuelans in 2017 per pass to 3,000 in 2019 and this is increasing (EMOL, 2020, October 9).

On the contrary, the social actors who have opposed immigration in Chile come mainly from the political world. The former interior minister, Andrés Chadwick, who, faced with the entry of illegal immigrants into the country, argues that we must protect national boundaries (La Cuarta, July 22, 2020). Something similar expressed the president of the republic, Sebastián Piñera, saying that: air, sea, and land borders must be reinforced to prevent the entry of the pandemic into the country (El Siglo, April 2020). Faced with the same issue, Minister of the Interior Pérez (La Nación, 2020, September 29; Schuller, 2020) indicated that 506 out of 762 are illegal immigrants in health residences.

While, from the International Police Department of Iquique, as of September, the investigative police have reported the entry by unauthorized passage of 1,493 immigrants, 615 of them are Venezuelans (La Nación, 2020). The minister added that immigrants are accepted by Chileans as long as they enter in a regulated and orderly manner, following the requirements to integrate into Chile. The irregularity in entering the country has caused difficulties in regions and communes, for Chileans and for immigrants themselves, and indicated that at the moment we have closed the borders, but when the situation is regularized the problem may be greater. That is why it is pertinent for the State to introduce an Immigration Law to combat this irregularity (La Nación, 2020, September 28).

Foreign minister Allamand (La Nación, 2020a, 2020b), adds that it is expected during the week to have a law that regulates the action at the borders and the entry of illegal immigrants and, thus, avoid disagreements with the opposition and discourage growing illegal immigration and adds that the illegal entry of immigrants is a crime and the law will be implemented to expel these immigrants from Chile. Finally, the mayor of Tarapacá, Miguel Quezada (2020), explained that public officials face a difficult situation in the sanitary residences of Iquique that house mostly Venezuelans who entered illegally from the non-authorized passages between Chile-Bolivia and concludes arguing that the government is not in favor of illegal immigration in which it is the foreigners themselves who self-report to gain access to sanitary residences. This can put citizens of the region and immigrants themselves at risk (La Nación, 2020). Finally, another actor comes from the Health Department, Rossana Díaz, who indicates that in Iquique, until a week ago, there were around 600 foreigners in the authorized health residences. They had previously self-reported after arriving in Chile according to the protocol, entering the country through an unauthorized passage. Finally, the mayor reports that in Antofagasta there are 378 immigrants in similar circumstance (I am Chile, October 7, 2020).

The news related to immigrants in Chile in times of pandemic are divided into two. The first group contains the news of migrants who are already in Chile. The second group is made up of immigrants who have arrived in the country during the pandemic. From the first group, the newspapers report the lack of employment they face. Those jobs, in some cases, were informal and precarious, however, they allowed them to survive (La Tercera, March 26, 2020). In terms of health, due to the work they did, they are not entitled to health benefits, leaving them even more vulnerable (El Mercurio de Calama September 4-a). According to TeleSur (2020), the reality of foreigners in Chile is difficult since they are exposed to COVID-19, especially because being in irregularity, they cannot access the national health system. In relation to stigmatization, La Tercera (May 8, 2020) reports that some believe that those who bring COVID-19 to Chile are immigrants and that it is the country's job to ensure the well-being of Chileans in the first place in the face of an economic crisis. These discourses are racist and, according to van Dijk (1993, p. 21), it is "a form of domination" and omitting who is issuing them is a discursive strategy called suppression (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 38). On the other hand, some immigrants devastated by the current crisis, seek repatriation from their embassies, AA (2020) reports that hundreds of Bolivians, Peruvians, Colombians, and Venezuelans are waiting to return to their countries of origin, escaping the vulnerability caused by COVID -19. In this situation, they accuse discrimination, racism, and physical abuse (El Mercurio de Calama, September 4-b; La Cuarta April 22, 2020; El Siglo, April 2020).

About the last group of immigrants, local newspapers have reported using the following headlines that tell about the large influx of immigrants between January and August, most of whom are Venezuelans (La Nación, 2020) and the news continues arguing that they were the most numerous wave that has entered throughout the year (La Nación, 2020). These types of notes negatively predispose the community to Venezuelans living in the country.

Another headline informs the reader about the illegal entry of immigrants and their trafficking through analogy (van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 99) in an alarmist fashion, emphasizing the increase from 53% to 91%, but at the same time, it highlights that they have completed secondary and tertiary education (La Tercera 2 October 2020) and adds that the Prosecutor's Office reported an increase in this type of infraction and the OS-9 of the Carabineers examined the operation of the "coyotes" and foreigners who crossed the border illegally, most of them being Venezuelans (La Tercera 2 October 2020). To give objectivity to the note, the authority strategy that comes in this case from the police is used, informing that OS-9 has detained haulers defined as "coyotes" between 2019 and 2020, this being a new form of criminal organization that operates in Tacna-Peru and is made up of Venezuelans who earn money from their own countrymen. According to the police, the cost of the service is diverse but is around $ 100 and $ 300 to ensure the successful passage to Chile (Rivera & Ojeda, 2020).

On the contrary, Soy Chile (October 7, 2020) uses discourses in favor of Venezuelan immigrants emphasizing their pilgrimage through five countries in South America to reach Chile and reports that the Venezuelan, Rafael Pérez, wife, and children walked for three days through the coast to get to Antofagasta (I'm Chile October 7, 2020). Rafael Pérez (Soy Chile, October 7, 2020) reports that, upon arrival in Chile, the group of around 25 foreigners reported themselves to the police and were later transferred to health residences to complete the quarantine. Staying in the health residence allowed them to rest from the trip.

An initial examination of these discourses in favor and against immigration in the country, allows us to observe that foreigners are classified as "them" and the Chileans as "us". According to van Dijk (1992, p. 245), it is a discursive strategy used to classify and divide those who belong to a group from those who do not, the latter being segregated by the community.

Another discursive strategy used by the media is the construction of the actors and roles that are used in the discourses issued by the government or academic authorities (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2007). This strategy is called nominalization and authority of the expert respectively (van Leeuwen, 1996; van Leeuwen, 2007). The objective of this strategy is to highlight the people who issue the comments aligned to the objectives of the elite, that is, those who enjoy status, privileges, income, and access to good jobs (van Dijk, 1993), those who control these communication media. In contrast, stigmatized migrants are not named, but are classified in a group such as nationality. This discursive strategy is known as assimilation (van Leeuwen, 1996). Thus, assimilated people lose identity and go on to constitute a whole that is demonized according to what the media report. In the examined media, we can observe that several local authorities were nominalized, while only one immigrant was named by them.

In the analysis focused on the public opinion of these media, it is observed how the written press articulates representations around the migrant from the field of opinion leaders, whether political, academic, or religious. Along with this, newspapers symbolically construct immigrant populations as collectivities from their textual practices. These scriptural acts contribute to the "*sarmientino* paradigm", a world view linked to the dichotomy between civilization and barbarism, as argued by Santa Cruz (1988), Jiménez, and González (2019) in the analysis of the Chilean press. In this way, there is a cultural model behind the journalistic texts that report on this symbolic scheme operating in the communicative acts of these newspapers. This episteme classifies migrant communities as diminished humanity, a product of both their material precariousness and their pathological potential as a result of the global health contingency that comes "from outside" the country. In this way, a civilizational approach is observed where the "us" (Chile) is advantageously positioned against the "other" from abroad.

To conclude, the objective of this section was to examine the discursive construction of immigrants in Chile in times of pandemic made by the press. After a brief analysis, we have observed that they are placed in a disadvantaged and poor position, being stigmatized and made visible as a whole belonging to a group through the discursive strategy of assimilation. While the class in power is nominalized, on the one hand, they issue stigmatizing discourses against immigrants, while, on the other hand, the nominalized actor is categorized as an expert authority who invites us to respect the rights of the other. Finally, the frequent characteristic of the discourses is the division made between "us", the Chileans, and "them", the others, the illegal and clandestine immigrants with whom negative discoruses are associated and who might bring the pandemic to the country, according to reports La Tercera (May 8, 2020).

Final thoughts

This work reflected on the nexus between discourse, public opinion, and the episteme of the discourse issued by the Chilean press about immigration to the country in times of pandemic. The problem of the essay focused on the discursive, opinionated, and epistemic topics present in these media, proposing that they presented discriminatory and nationalist dimensions. The opinion of the press was understood as a textual practice, dependent on an epistemology and a political contingency, a communicative act characterized by the cultural appreciation of the West and discriminatory of other lifestyles.

Considering the theoretical discussion present in the article, plus the initial analysis of the media discourses presented in the last section of the text, we formulate some final reflections. The first has to do with the discourses themselves and their main characteristics around the "other". In this field, a distinction is observed between an "us" and a "them", a phenomenon explained by van Dijk (1992, p. 245) as a discursive strategy used to classify and divide those who belong to a group of those who no, the latter being segregated by the community.

A second reflection goes through the discursive strategy used by the national media for the construction of actors and roles. At this level, the dichotomy observed in the procedures used is evident, "nominalizing" the national authorities, compared to the collective labeling of foreign populations settled in Chile from the classification of "immigrants". These strategies would contribute to a vision of the world linked to the "*Sarmientino* paradigm", a model that establishes an antinomy between the West as a civilization, in the face of the barbarism represented by non-Western cultures. From this episteme, the written press implements a series of textual practices that articulate the representations of opinion leaders from politics, academia, and the Catholic universes. Along with this, we can observe how these communicative acts enable the symbolic construction of the subjects from the very issuance of the publicized opinion, a fact that can be seen in the case of the migrants themselves.

The main scope of this work is linked to empirical research. A study of the media discourses on immigration in Chile must go through the analysis of the different dimensions of public opinion present in the sections of the written press. A similar mention can be made in the field of cultural models behind textual practices. In this sense, the inquiry into news headlines, editorial pages, news, and opinion articles must be approached with the methodological rigor that discourse analysis prescribes. Future works will have to take over this task.

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The youth protest in October 2019: context, motives and repertoires

La protesta juvenil en las Jornadas de octubre-2019 en Ecuador: contexto, motivos y repertorios

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Abstract
In this work, the dynamics of the protest carried out by young people from October 3 to 5, 2019 in Quito-Ecuador is explored in an exploratory way. To meet this objective, the contextual factors that allow understanding the influence of the structure of political opportunities, the perceptions and emotions that drove the contentious activation, and relational aspects that allow understanding the configuration and articulation of the repertoires used by the protesters during the first days of this cycle of protest. In collecting the information, an ethnographic approach has been used that triangulates field observation, semi-structured interviews and digital documents, from which the mechanisms involved in the protests developed during the days prior to the arrival of the indigenous movement to the capital city and to the mobilization called by representatives of workers', indigenous and student organizations. Thus, the contributions of the theory of collective action and the sociology of emotions are briefly exposed and discussed to explore a way to combine them in an understanding of contentious youth activation.

Keywords
Context, perceptions, emotions, spaces of belonging, repertoires of conflict.

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Resumen
En este trabajo se analiza de forma exploratoria la dinámica de la protesta protagonizada por las y los jóvenes del 3 al 5 de octubre de 2019 en Quito-Ecuador. Para cumplir con este objetivo se examinan los factores contextuales que permiten comprender la influencia de la estructura de oportunidades políticas, las percepciones y emociones que impulsaron la activación contenciosa, y aspectos relacionales que permiten comprender la configuración y articulación de los repertorios empleados por los manifestantes durante los primeros días de este ciclo de protesta. En el levantamiento de la información se ha empleado un enfoque de corte etnográfico que triangula observación de campo, entrevistas semi-estructuradas y documentos digitales, a partir de los cuales se examinan los mecanismos involucrados en las protestas desarrolladas durante los días que antecedieron al arribo del movimiento indígena a la ciudad capital y a la movilización convocada por representantes de organizaciones de trabajadores, indígenas y estudiantes. Así, se exponen y discuten brevemente los aportes de la teoría de la acción colectiva y de la sociología de las emociones para explorar una forma de conjugarlas en una comprensión de la activación contenciosa juvenil.

Palabras clave
Jóvenes, contexto político, percepciones, emociones, espacios de pertenencia, repertorios de contienda.

Introduction

This work examines the confluence of structural, agency, and relational factors to analyze the dynamics of youth protest during the days of October 3, 4, and 5, 2019 in Quito-Ecuador. This proposal locates the analysis in the actions, perceptions, and emotions of various protesters based on the contributions of the sociology of collective action and the sociology of emotions, to present a situational and dynamic understanding of the mechanisms with which the youth protest.

These mechanisms consist of a "delimited class of events that alter, in an identical or very similar way, the relationships between a specific set of elements" (McAdam et al., 2001, p. 24). These are of three types: a) contextual (i.e., an unfavorable economic decision by the authorities), b) cognitive-evaluative (i.e., the modification in the representations and emotions of the protesters that define a conflictive situation) and c) relational (i.e., roles of individuals, groups or networks).

In this sense, the category "youth" refers to "experiences and forms of action, defined by a greater degree of independence from other instances and social actors and, therefore, it is specified as a general, open, plural and multidimensional" (Urbina-Cortés, 2014, p. 822).

To analyze this process, we propose to integrate structural and agency levels that allow us to understand the strategic disposition of young people in the geographical spaces and temporal continuities in which the protest was concentrated.

Although the sample of informants is not large enough to make generalizations, this work has the virtue of obtaining the information in situ and in the heat of the facts, exposing what the actors do and say in the middle of their participation in the protest. In this sense, the data from field records, interviews, and documentary material acquire relevance and meaning, insofar as they allow representing the configuration of a chain of factors that exposes an approximate idea of the dynamics of youth protest.

Thus, ethnographic immersions were applied to the protesters' concentration points, which allowed us to record the way in which these spaces were occupied and the role that various protesters played within them. Within these spaces, semi-structured interviews were applied to twelve protesters (six men and six women), selected for their presence in: a) the confrontations against police officers, b) in the parks of El Ejido and El Arbolito, and c) in the vicinity between the House of Culture and the Guambra Bridge. Additionally, the analysis of news published in digital media allows supporting the chronology of events, referring to the expressions of the President of the Republic, highlighting the events that characterized each day, and verifying the veracity of the descriptions and stories.

The first part analyzes the influence of the "structure of political opportunities" (Gamson & Meyer, 1999) and "the conflicting use of space" (Sewell, 2001). While we examine *the structure of political opportunities* based on the subjective perceptions of protesters (Tilly, 2003) and those signals issued by political actors "that encourage them to use the resources they have to mobilize" (Tarrow, 1999, p. 89), the conflicting use of space responds to the articulation of different activities aimed at sustaining the conflict within a defined geographical area (Sewell, 2001).

The second part analyzes the emotions that drove the contentious activity and their articulation during the protests (Eyerman, 2005), highlighting those sources of commitment with which they issue their demands and justify the activities in which the protesters participate (Hopkins et al., 2005).

Finally, in the third part, the analysis of the *repertoires of conflict* does not refer to a stable and closed list of repeated and identical forms of action, but to "constantly reinvented and redefined performances under the double effect of improvisation and the exchange of blows between opponents" (Mathieu, 2012, p. 570), that is, to the differentiated and articulated forms of collective action, redefined by the protesters during those days (McCarthy, 1999; McAdam, 2010).

In order to overcome the oppositions between the macro and micro-sociological levels, as well as between the objectivist and subjectivist perspectives, which consider contentious behaviors as essentially rational or emotionally determined by the space and time in which they are situated (Mathieu, 2012), this work analytically integrates the structure of political opportunities, the emotions inscribed in the activation of the protesters, and the action formats that allow formulating a situational and dynamic understanding of the protest (Aminzade & McAdam, 2001).

Structure of political *threats:* authoritarianism, police violence and media silence

In this part, we will analyze the statements with which the President of the Republic reacted to the demonstrations, the role of the executive function and the legislative function in the face of events, and the way in which the public forces repressed the demonstrations. In the second part, we will examine the role of public space as a structuring factor of the repertoires used by protesters.

According to the model proposed by Ch. Tilly in his famous book *From mobilization to revolution* (1978), protest operates as an effect of the political exclusion of groups that, being unable to defend their interests through routine institutional channels, they find no alternative but to impose themselves through disruption.

Thus, starting at 09:00 on October 3, 2019, thousands of students and young members of various leftist militant organizations gathered near the

Guambra bridge and the House of Culture to reject the unilateral issuance of the Executive Decree N° 883 with which the President of the Republic made the decision to free the price of fuel[1]. Despite the emphasis of the first president that there would not be a drastic increase in the price of basic goods and services, popularly known as "paquetazo"[2], the young people marched towards the National Assembly, organ of the legislature function, and the Government Palace, headquarters of the executive function: "The president lied and now we want the authorities to face us, we are demanding an explanation, that they listen to us and that that decree be repealed" (Pedro, 26 years old). Thus, with their presence in the streets, squares, and parks, the young people resisted the loss of their parents' jobs, the cut in the education budget, the increase in bus fares, and "everything they are doing to us" (Daniel, 24 years).

However, at 12h00 on that same day, the President of the Republic moved the headquarters of the national government to the city of Guayaquil and, while the legislative function remained closed, armored bodies of the army and the police reinforced the government buildings to prevent the advance of the marches that came through the surrounding streets.

The clashes broke out when the uniformed officers began to dislodge the protesters, using permanent shots of various types of projectiles that emitted tear gas, expanding splinters and rubber bullets: "these explosives seem homemade, they just wounded my arm with fragments of rusty iron wrapped in cardboard" (Luis, 24 years old).

One of the places of clashes was the popularly known Plaza del Teatro, near the executive headquarters, where young people covered their mouths and noses with their sweaters and masks, set tires on fire, and erected improvised barricades with the material they found in their path, such as tree branches, pipes, and stones. The protesters testify that during the confrontations "the police attacked us without reason and used their weapons without measure" (Anthony, 25 years old), while they set up ambushes to arrest the young people who were seeking refuge.[3]

1 Since his inauguration, President Lenín Moreno had repeatedly affirmed that there would be no "*paquetazo*". An excerpt of these statements can be accessed at: https://bit.ly/2YHNmKZ; https://bit.ly/3cKjh5w

2 For more details on the increase in goods and services after the approval of Executive Decree No. 883, see: https://bit.ly/2O2VUK9

3 October 3, 2019: "Young suffocated and streets covered with stones leave the protests in the Historic Center of Quito." For more details on the results of the first day of protests see: https://bit.ly/36IoiaU

At 8:00 p.m. that night, the President justified the action of the police, presenting the protests "under the criminal sign of looting and uprising" (Ramírez-Gallegos, 2020, p. 24). On a mandatory televised national address, he announced the issuance of Executive Decree No. 884, which decreed a state of exception throughout the national territory, obeying the need to: "eliminate that custom that borders on the miserable of trying to impose criteria with vandalism (…), I am referring to thieves and criminals who have dedicated themselves to destabilizing" (L. Moreno, 2019).[4]

These expressions and "the violent way in which our colleagues were treated" (María José, 21 years old), generated feelings of indignation, anger, and pain that the informants identified with their distress (Annex 1). For the following day, Friday, October 4, the number of protesters and the violence of the clashes with the police revealed the incipient strategic configuration of various repertoires of action, arranged in a spatial range of 2.6 km, in which the building of The National Assembly connects with the House of Culture and the Guambra Bridge, through the parks popularly known as the Ejido and the Arbolito, to the Presidential Palace located in the historic center of the city.

The repertoires with which the young people occupied this space allowed the dissemination of information in real time, organizing logistical support and returning to the offensive, making this space "a challenge to authority" (Sewell, 2001), both because of the strategic significance it acquired for the actors, as well as the role it played in the deployment of the mobilization (Annex 2).

During October 5, within this same space, the police procedure to confront the riots began with the diffusion of a deafening sound through loudspeakers that prevented the protesters from hearing each other. They were then allowed to advance to meet them with shots from various projectiles, tear gas, and immediately attack with their armored bodies, motorcycles, and horses. They were chased and dispersed until they were cornered and detained, leaving hundreds of young people wounded, trampled by police cavalry and one of them lost an eye in the clashes (Annex 3).

Thus, the youth mobilization operated as a reaction to the "opportunity structures created by others" (Tarrow, 1999, p. 89), such as the declarations of the President and the blocking of political prosecution by the institutions.

4 "President Lenín Moreno decrees a state of exception and ratifies the economic measures." The full statement can be accessed at: https://bit.ly/3cBjYOC

Additionally, in the responses of the informants, we can see the importance of police repression as the “threat” (Chazel, 2003) before which its levels and formats of containment were diversified, amplified, and deepened (Della Porta, 1999; Goldstone & Tilly, 2001).

Meanings of the contest: defense of rights and solidarity

In this section, we analyze the meanings of youth protest based on the emotions that prompted the activation and deployment of their mobilization. In this examination, the modification of emotions that go from distress to the claiming rights, from fear to solidarity, gave way to the repertoires of conflict that sustained the conflict, is highlighted.

During the day of conflict held on Thursday, October 3, young people attended the protests, according to María José (21 years old), “to demand their own rights and those of all.” In the same way, Pedro (26 years old), justified his presence in the march to the “historic center” “because his father lost his job, so he and his siblings could no longer continue studying.” From these versions, we can highlight a current and imminent dissatisfaction perceived on a personal level, but which also fell on their “social mutes” (Vommaro, 2017).

For those who protested in the streets surrounding the government palace, this was the only form of resistance to the imposition, restriction of rights, and precarious living conditions. This is how Luis (24 years old) explains it as he walks from El Ejido park to the Plaza del Teatro around 10:00 am: “With this decree they raise the fares and then they raise everything, so we have no choice but to go out into the streets”. Thus, it allows realizing that their contentious disposition responded to the defense of their personal rights and the well-being of their community, of which they are more or less aware as long as “they share the same sufferings and the same dreams of transformation of the oppression” (Bonvillani, 2010, p. 38).

However, by 3:00 p.m., after the confrontations with the police, some demonstrators who retreated exhausted, dirty, and angry, reveal the sense not only of discomfort, but of “anger to see that they treat us like criminals, when we, the young people, protest they do take out all their arsenal” (Pablo, 26 years old). In other words, the level of violence generated by the law enforcement procedure triggered feelings that prompted the young people to resume their actions the following day, not only with the aim of claiming their rights, but also to defend themselves and attack the public force.

Indeed, for Friday, October 4, in addition to blaming the government, the protesters denounced the police aggression and the lack of dissemination of the clashes by the media: "Look how the police attack us, but Teleamazonas (channel of television allied to the ruling party) there they don't say anything, that is what makes us angry" (Dayana, 26 years old). What stands out from this fact is that, despite this silence from the public and private media, the protesters were aware of the risks to which they were exposing themselves: "I am afraid, many colleagues have been injured, but being here is the only thing that we have left. I mean, if we do not fight, we will not have anything to eat and we will still die" (Laura, 24 years old). This awareness of risk makes it possible to realize the importance of alternative media that managed to position a message, allowing protesters to know what they were facing and its consequences.

After almost twelve hours of protests, around 8:00 p.m. on that second day, it was possible to follow the trail of small groups and solitary protesters who were retreating to their respective homes. While walking with four friends along Av. 6 de Diciembre towards Av. Colón, until reaching the first stop of the Ecovía enabled to the north (mass collective transport system), Pauli (23 years old) agrees to tell us about her impressions of that second day of protests: "I felt anger, indignation, and pain when I saw how the police treated us for claiming our rights, but we have to be here again tomorrow." Thus, it shows that the increase in anger and pain of the protesters (as well as that of their family and friends) operated by strengthening the commitment to the fight (Yang, 2005).

For Saturday, October 5, the meeting between "people who deep down want the same thing" (Esteban, 24 years old), in addition to being justified by emotions of anger and fear, was also configured as the effect of feelings of solidarity. "It is true that we are afraid, but supporting the people of the neighborhood and the colleagues of the University is the only way to face what is happening" (Esteban, 24 years old). Thus, it is possible to verify that, although the political context generated shared subjective reactions, the community encounter in the public space also produced the concurrence of common perceptions and emotions, translated into actions of solidarity (Maffesoli, 1997).

This solidarity was expressed in the articulation of specialized activities, with which the protesters covered the most urgent needs of the protest:

> When someone fell, people would help him and shout: doctor! While carrying him. When we saw that they could no longer because of the gas, we gave them gauze and vinegar water to relieve the irritation of the eyes, and that was what allowed us to resist. (Emilia, 24 years old)

Thus, by the third day, it was no longer a question of defending their rights and living conditions, but of solidarity to face the threat of the public force (Mathieu, 2012). This understanding of the configuration of solidarity as a form of struggle can be conceived as a reaction and result of interaction with political threats, that is, in the exchange of blows between the protesters and the authorities. In this sense, unease, fear, and solidarity gradually played a decisive role in the configuration and diversification of collective action (Annex 4).

Thus, we can understand the spatio-temporal articulation of the repertoires with which the young people claimed their rights, supplied the silence of the mass media, and survived the police violence, based on the configuration of a sustained "us" in feelings of unease and fear, which found in solidarity the platform on which specialized networks of action were built that, as we will see below, defined the dynamics of this cycle of protest.

Contest repertoires: *stonethrowers,* first aid, and digital communication

In this section we will analyze the factors that allow us to understand the activation, diversification and articulation of the repertoires with which the young people sustained this cycle of protests, projecting themselves as a collective actor in the heat of the contest (Eyerman, 2005).

On Thursday, October 3 at 09:00 a large group of students marched from the Guambra bridge towards the headquarters of the executive function, revealing the importance of social networks, but above all "of the chat groups of student associations and the groups that we have among colleagues to disseminate the calls" (María José, 21 years old).

Verifying the existence of these groups allows us to account for the relevance of friendship and militancy relations, later exposed in the exercise of specific roles:

> From here you can see that some are up fighting with the *chapas*, others carry buckets of water to turn off the pumps and others help to carry the stones. Everyone does something, even shouting and clapping (María José, 21 years old).[5]

Thus, by October 4, it was no longer only students who were demonstrating, it was also possible to identify militants from left organizations such as the Guevarista Youth and the Antifascist Youth, as well as residents of the neighborhoods surrounding the historic center, who faced the police with sticks, stones, and Molotov cocktails. Some protesters were equipped with helmets, masks, and gloves, others took photos and broadcast events in real time, while others were distributing water to inhibit the effects of tear gas and providing first aid. That day some of them overcame their fear, they did it supporting what they could, defending their lives and that of their colleagues: "I was very afraid and I thought I was going to faint, but I said to myself, I have to help them!" (Emilia, 24 years old).

In the clashes on this day, professional communicators and volunteer amateurs received strong attacks, a photojournalist lost an eye due to the impact of a rubber bullet, and several cameramen were arrested.[6] Thanks to these intrepid communicators, it was possible to know first-hand what was really happening at various points and moments of the protest, "increasing popular outrage by unmasking the alignment with the official discourse by the traditional media" (García & Soria, 2020, p. 402).

On Saturday, October 5, the confrontations against the police began around 9 a.m. and were carried out by young people who no longer wore uniforms from their educational institutes and also maintained clearly identifiable roles: "we were in various spaces, some colleagues were in the front line, others, like me, trying to record everything I can with my camera" (Sofi, 23 years old).

The first line was integrated and was constantly renewed by young people who threw stones and armed themselves with sticks to face the police

5 "Chapa" is a word of Quichua origin that means security or surveillance. Colloquially, in Ecuador it is the appellation used to pejoratively name the police.

6 The stories of the repression in Quito during the strike, on the details of the injured and detained see: https://bit.ly/3pSGjeo. On October 5, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador-CONAIE, reported injuries in the central Highlands and a university student lost an eye in the clashes against the police in the center of Quito. You can see the full news on these events at: https://bit.ly/3jnEkML

onslaught, followed by protesters who supported and pressed them, providing them with arsenal, lighting bonfires with tires and branches, and shouting slogans against the government. Among these groups were digital communicators who came and went strategically to cover the events. Finally, in the third line, which reached the El Ejido and El Arbolito parks, students and health professionals who were willing to help suffocated and injured could be identified. Thus, woven by stories of discomfort, fear, and solidarity, these forms of action were redrawn in occupied spaces "between integration and disintegration, between what is established and what is questioned" (King, 2005, p. 152), generating processes of collective self-management, among which the young people held the protest.

In this sense, this deployment of specialized groups that threw stones to confront the police, disseminated digital content, and provided first aid to their colleagues, can only be understood from the "micro-mobilization" of information networks and action groups, in which the protesters interacted. Thus, they were able to direct their personal skills in the form of lines of action that broke with the routine and the usual rules deployed in the space-time in which the protest was configured (McAdam, 2010).

Conclusion

In this work, we have analyzed the convergence of contextual, personal, and relational factors to account for the dynamics between agency and structure during the first days of this protest cycle. In this sense, focusing on the perceptions, emotions, and repertoires articulated by young people during these days has allowed us to approach an understanding about the configuration of mechanisms with which youth protest unfolds.

From the field records obtained during those days in the demonstrators' concentration spaces, interviews with men and women who acted in these spaces, and the review of documentary material published in various digital media, the way in which the mechanisms that allow understanding the contentious dynamics were configured: first, the perception of the structure of opportunities and threats of the political system (Tilly, 2003), the emotions that drove the contentious activation (Aminzade & McAdam, 2001) and the repertoires that expressed the redefinition of the meaning of the protest during those days (McAdam, 2010).

In this sense, it has been shown that the decisions and declarations of the President and the ineffectiveness of the institutions for the political processing of the demands, aroused feelings of unrest, while the violence of the police procedure and the silence of the traditional media generated fear and anger, from which the protesters justified their mobilization during the second. For the third day, the consolidation of solidarity in the face of known facts and generated feelings allowed a coordinated deployment of various repertoires of action in the middle of the fight.

The presence of the protesters in spaces that allowed their protection and their wide distribution in the moments of retreat gave way to the configuration of lines of action with which the young people held the fight during the first three days of this cycle of protest. Thus, from the sociology of collective action and the sociology of emotions, we have been able to verify a connection between feelings in the face of threats from the political system, with the diversification and deepening of the contention repertoires, that is, to account for the mechanisms registered in the repertoires with which the juvenile contentious activity operated.

When examining the reasons with which the protesters justify their presence in the protests, we can realize that "the contexts do not subject the subjects outside of their own perceptions and decisions" (Dobry, 1986, p. 79), nor are the ideological factors "the ultimate key to its intelligibility" (Chazel, 2003 p. 140), but these dynamics are, above all, the product of the interdependent action of people situated socially and historically, trapped in specific logics, reacting to their perceptions about the threats of the political system and inspired by defensive and offensive emotions that lead them to act.

This process makes it possible to account for the way in which the dynamics of the protest is configured, through repertoires activated by the exchange of mutual support, driven by the solidarity inscribed in the reaction to the threats of the political system, through which it aims to defend the rights and lives of both the protesters themselves and their social worlds of belonging.

It should be recognized that, although the used information is not sufficient to demonstrate in-depth the dynamics of each mechanism with which the protest unfolds, it is expected to have exposed data that exemplify and connections that show the convergence of factors between different analytical levels, in a multidimensional understanding of the activation and contentious deployment of young people.

In this sense, the performance of the structure of political opportunities was first examined, exposing the authoritarian nature of government decisions and the blocking of political institutions challenged by the protesters, the violence of the police procedure, and the concupiscence of the traditional media. Thus, the configuration of a structure of political threats against which perceptions forms of action is manifested.

Second, the emotions inscribed in the involvement of young people in the spaces and repertoires that held the protest during those three days were analyzed. In this sense, solidarity stands out as a response to fear and unrest, generated during the second and first day. Thus, the protest acquired *última ratio* the character to survive, condensing the meaning of the juvenile contentious disposition.

Finally, the convergence of threats and solidarity in the perceptions and emotions of the protesters has been evidenced, not only regarding their mere presence in public space but also in the activation and articulation of micro-networks, with which the diversification of repertoires used by protesters was operated.

In this way, an analytical approach has been presented that combines the sociology of collective action and the sociology of emotions in a brief understanding of the dynamics of protest, highlighting the conditions of tension and adjustment, under which young people acted to express their unrest and confront the fear generated by the configuration of a structure of political threats.

In this sense, the repertoires revealed the diversification of micro-networks that mobilized personal and collective resources, which young people were able to articulate insofar as they strategically occupied the public space to resist. Within this context, collective action was modulated by emotions generated and fostered through interaction networks that allowed their massive mobilization and sustained leadership in the contest.

A brief analysis has been presented that integrates the examination of the influence generated by the structure of political opportunities in the contentious activation, the role of the emotions with which the protest was activated and sustained, and the diversification of the repertoires used during those three days. Thus, the dynamics of an indomitable youth politicization operated between mobilization and movement, between crowd and organization, with the potential to act in an irruptive way and as a community at the same time, has been exposed.

Based on these reflections, it is expected to have contributed with at least three objectives to the field of studies on youth political participation. First, by analyzing the influence of the structure of political opportunities on the dynamics of the protest. Second, offering an understanding of the modification of the emotions inscribed in the activation and dynamics of youth mobilization. And, third, reflecting on the articulation of mechanisms that allow understanding the diversification of the repertoires implemented to sustain the contest.

Annexes

Annex 1. Table of perceptions and emotions exposed by informants located at different points during the three days of protests

Informant	Day	Place	Perceptions	Emotions
Pedro	03	El Ejido Park	Lies of the President	Outrage and helplessness
Daniel	03	Plaza del Teatro	Lack of response from authorities	Outrage, anger and helplessness
Anthony	03	Plaza del Teatro	Police agression	Pain, anger and solidarity
María José	03	House of Culture	Bad treatment by the authorities and police aggression	Pain, outrage and solidarity
Pablo	04	El Ejido Park	Police abuse, solidarity	Outrage and anger
Luis	04	El Arbolito Park	Dissatisfaction with measures	Anger and solidarity
Dayana	04	Guambra Bridge	Media silence	Outrage
Pauli	04	House of Culture	Dissatisfaction with measures and police abuse	Frustration, fear and solidarity
Esteban	05	El Ejido Park	Lack of responses from authorities	Anger, fear and solidarity
Emilia	05	El Arbolito Park	Lack of response from the authorities and police violence	Pain and solidarity
Sofi	05	El Arbolito Park	Lack of responses from authorities	Solidarity

Annex 2. Students, youth and their families occupying public space in a strategic way for the struggle

Photo (1)

Photo (2)

In the photo (1), we can see the protesters present in El Arbolito Park. In the photo (2) a line of young people is organized to pass stones and build a barricade on Av. 6 de Diciembre between the parks of El Ejido and El Arbolito. Personal archive photos.

Annex 3

Photo (3)

In the photo (3), young protesters flee the police attack on Guayaquil and Manabí streets, a few blocks from the presidential palace in the "Historic Center of Quito." Personal file.

Annex 4. Table of repertoires and roles exposed by the informants located in different points during the three days of protests

Informant	Day	Place	Repertoire	Role
Pedro	03	El Ejido Park	stonethrowers	Provide stones
Daniel	03	Plaza del Teatro	Stonethrowers	Quell tear gas
Anthony	03	Plaza del Teatro	Communication	Take photos
María José	03	House of Culture	Communication	Broadcast live
Pablo	04	El Ejido Park	Stonethrowers	Build barricades
Luis	04	El Arbolito Park	Stonethrowers	Throw stones
Pauli	04	House of Culture	Health	Support provisioning
Dayana	04	Guambra Bridge	Communication	Broadcast live
Esteban	05	El Ejido Park	Health	help injured
Emilia	05	El Arbolito Park	Health	help injured and suffocated
Sofi	05	El Arbolito Park	Communication	Take photos

Interviews

- Pedro, 26 years old, student at the Central University of Ecuador. Interview conducted on the Guambra bridge during the students' march to the historic center of Quito on 10/03/2019 at 10:00 a.m.
- Daniel, 24 years old, resident of the San Roque neighborhood. Interview carried out at the concentration of the protesters in the Plaza del Teatro on 10/03/2019, at 3:00 p.m.

- Anthony, photographer for the digital medium Laberinto. Interview conducted at the corner of Esmeraldas and Guayaquil streets, on 10/03/2019 at 2:00 p.m.
- María José, 21 years old, a member of the Coordinadora Alternativa de Jóvenes y Estudiantes (CORAJE) and a student at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador. Interview conducted in the vicinity of El Arbolito Park on 10/03/2019 at 11:00 a.m.
- Luis, 24 years old, student at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador. Interview conducted on the corner of the vicinity of El Ejido Park on 10/03/2019 at 12:25 p.m.
- Pablo, 26 years old, resident of the La Marín neighborhood. Interview conducted in the vicinity of the Ejido park, on 10/04/2019 at 12:30 p.m.
- Laura, 24 years old, resident of the La Tola neighborhood. Interview conducted in the vicinity of the House of Culture, on 10/04/2019 at 3:15 p.m.
- Pauli, 23 years old, a student at the Salesian Polytechnic University. Interview conducted at Av. 6 de Diciembre and Av. Colón (north center of the city) on 10/04/2019 at 7:00 p.m.
- Dayana, 26 years old, resident of the El Dorado neighborhood. Interview conducted in the vicinity of the El Arbolito park, on 10/04/2019 at 2:30 p.m.
- Esteban, 24 years old, student at the Central University. Interview conducted in the vicinity of El Ejido Park, on 10/05/2019 at 11:00 a.m.
- Emilia, 24 years old, student at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador. Interview conducted in the vicinity of the House of Culture on 10/05/2019 at 10:30 am.
- Sofi, 23 years old, student at the Salesian Polytechnic University. Interview conducted in the vicinity of El Arbolito Park on 10/05/2019 at 11:45 am.

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For those works that are empirical investigations, the manuscripts will follow the IMRDC structure, being optional the Notes and Supports. Those papers that, on the contrary, deal with reports, studies, proposals and reviews may be more flexible in their epigraphs, particularly in material and methods, analysis, results, discussion and conclusions. In all typologies of works, references are mandatory.

1) Title (Spanish) / Title (English): Concise but informative, in Spanish on the first line and in English on the second. A maximum of 80 characters with spaces are accepted. The title is not only the responsibility of the authors, changes being able to be proposed by the Editorial Board.

2) Full name and surnames: Of each of the authors, organized by priority. A maximum of 3 authors will be accepted per original, although there may be exceptions justified by the topic, its complexity and extent. Next to the names must follow the professional category, work center, email of each author and ORCID number. It is mandatory to indicate if you have the academic degree of doctor (include Dr./Dra before the name).

3) Abstract (Spanish) / Abstract (English): It will have a maximum extension of 230 words, first in Spanish and then in English. : 1) Justification of the topic; 2) Objectives; 3) Methodology and sample; 4) Main results; 5) Main conclusions. It must be impersonally written "This paper analyzes ...". In the case of the abstract, the use of automatic translators will not be accepted due to their poor quality.

4) Descriptors (Spanish) / Keywords (English): 6 descriptors must be presented for each language version directly related to the subject of the work. The use of the key words set out in UNESCO's Thesaurus will be positively valued.

5) Introduction and state of the issue: It should include the problem statement, context of the problem, justification, rationale and purpose of the study, using bibliographical citations, as well as the most significant and current literature on the topic at national and international level .

6) Material and methods: It must be written so that the reader can easily understand the development of the research. If applicable, it will describe the methodology, the sample and the form of sampling, as well as the type of statistical analysis used. If it is an original methodology, it is necessary to explain the reasons that led to its use and to describe its possible limitations.

7) Analysis and results: It will try to highlight the most important observations, describing, without making value judgments, the material and methods used. They will appear in a logical sequence in the text and the essential charts and figures avoiding the duplication of data.

8) Discussion and conclusions: Summarize the most important findings, relating the observations themselves with relevant studies, indicating contributions and limitations, without adding data already mentioned in other sections. Also, the discussion and conclusions section should include the deductions and lines for future research.

9) Supports and acknowledgments (optional): The Council Science Editors recommends the author (s) to specify the source of funding for the research. Priority will be given to projects supported by national and international competitive projects. In any case, for the scientific evaluation of the manuscript, it should be only anonymized with XXXX for its initial evaluation, in order not to identify authors and research teams, which should be explained in the Cover Letter and later in the final manuscript.

10) The notes (optional) will go, only if necessary, at the end of the article (before the references). They must be manually annotated, since the system of footnotes or the end of Word is not recognized by the layout systems. The numbers of notes are placed in superscript, both in the text and in the final note. The numbers of notes are placed in superscript, both in the text and in the final note. No notes are allowed that collect simple bibliographic citations (without comments), as these should go in the references.

11) References: Bibliographical citations should be reviewed in the form of references to the text. Under no circumstances should references not mentioned in the text be included. Their number should be sufficient to contextualize the theoretical framework with current and important criteria. They will be presented alphabetically by the first last name of the author.

3.2. Standards for references

Periodic Publications

Journal article (author): Valdés-Pérez, D. (2016). Incidencia de las técnicas de gestión en la mejora de decisiones administrativas [Impact of Management Techniques on the Improvement of Administrative Decisions]. *Retos, 12*(6), 199-2013. https://doi.org/10.17163/ret.n12.2016.05

Journal Article (Up to six authors): Ospina, M.C., Alvarado, S.V., Fefferman, M., & Llanos, D. (2016). Introducción del dossier temático "Infancias y juventudes: violencias, conflictos, memorias y procesos de construcción de paz" [Introduction of the thematic dossier "Infancy and Youth: Violence, Conflicts, Memories and Peace Construction Processes"]. *Universitas, 25*(14), 91-95. https://doi.org/10.17163/uni.n25.%25x

Journal article (more tan six authors): Smith, S.W., Smith, S.L. Pieper, K.M., Yoo, J.H., Ferrys, A.L., Downs, E.,... Bowden, B. (2006). Altruism on American Television: Examining the Amount of, and Context Surronding. Acts of Helping and Sharing. *Journal of Communication, 56*(4), 707-727. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00316.x

Journal article (without DOI): Rodríguez, A. (2007). Desde la promoción de salud mental hacia la promoción de salud: La concepción de lo comunitario en la implementación de proyectos sociales. *Alteridad, 2*(1), 28-40. (https://goo.gl/zDb3Me) (2017-01-29).

Books and book chapters

Full books: Cuéllar, J.C., & Moncada-Paredes, M.C. (2014). *El peso de la deuda externa ecuatoriana*. Quito: Abya-Yala.

Chapter of book: Zambrano-Quiñones, D. (2015). *El ecoturismo comunitario en Manglaralto y Colonche*. En V.H. Torres (Ed.), Alternativas de Vida: Trece experiencias de desarrollo endógeno en Ecuador (pp. 175-198). Quito: Abya-Yala.

Digital media

Pérez-Rodríguez, M.A., Ramírez, A., & García-Ruíz, R. (2015). La competencia mediática en educación infantil. Análisis del nivel de desarrollo en España. Universitas Psychologica, 14(2), 619-630. https://doi.org.10.11144/Javeriana.upsy14-2.cmei

It is prescriptive that all quotations that have DOI (Digital Object Identifier System) are reflected in the References (can be obtained at http://goo.gl/gfruh1). All journals and books that do not have DOI should appear with their link (in their online version, if they have it, shortened by Google Shortened: http://goo.gl) and date of consultation in the format indicated.

Journal articles should be presented in English, except for those in Spanish and English, in which case it will be displayed in both languages using brackets. All web addresses submitted must be shortened in the manuscript, except for the DOI that must be in the indicated format (https://doi.org/XXX).

3.3. Epigraphs, Figures and Charts

The epigraphs of the body of the article will be numbered in Arabic. They should go without a full box of capital letters, neither underlined nor bold. The numbering must be a maximum of three levels: 1. / 1.1. / 1.1.1. A carriage return will be established at the end of each numbered epigraph.

The charts must be included in the text in Word format according to order of appearance, numbered in Arabic and subtitled with the description of the content.

The graphics or figures will be adjusted to the minimum number required and will be presented incorporated in the text, according to their order of appearance, numbered in Arabic and subtitled with the abbreviated description. Their quality should not be less than 300 dpi, and it may be necessary to have the graph in TIFF, PNG or JPEG format.

4. Submission Process

Two files must be sent through the OJS system of the journal:

1) Presentation and cover, in which the title in Spanish and English will appear, names and surnames of the authors in a standardized form with ORCID number, abstract in both Spanish and English, descriptors and keywords and a statement that the manuscript is an Origina lcontribution, not sent or in the process of being evaluated in another journal, confirmation of the signatory authors, acceptance (if applicable) of formal changes in the manuscript according to the rules and partial transfer of rights to the publisher (use official cover model).

2) Manuscript totally anonymized, according to the norms referred in precedence.

All authors must register with their credits on the OJS platform, although only one of them will be responsible for correspondence.

No author can submit or have in review two manuscripts simultaneously, estimating an absence of four consecutive numbers (2 years).

NORMAS DE PUBLICACIÓN EN «UNIVERSITAS»

UNIVERSITAS
Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas de la Universidad Politécnica Salesiana

ISSN: 1390-3837 / e-ISSN: 1390-8634

1. Información general

«Universitas» es una publicación científica bilingüe de la Universidad Politécnica Salesiana de Ecuador, editada desde enero de 2002 de forma ininterrumpida, con periodicidad fija semestral, especializada en Ciencias Sociales y Humanas y sus líneas interdisciplinares como Sociología, Antropología, Psicología Social, Estudios Políticos, Estudios del Desarrollo, Estudios Latinoamericanos, Estudios de la Cultura y la Comunicación, entre otras.

Es una revista científica arbitrada, que utiliza el sistema de evaluación externa por expertos (*peer-review*), bajo metodología de pares ciegos (*doble-blind review*), conforme a las normas de publicación de la American Psychological Association (APA). El cumplimiento de este sistema permite garantizar a los autores un proceso de revisión objetivo, imparcial y transparente, lo que facilita a la publicación su inclusión en bases de datos, repositorios e indexaciones internacionales de referencia.

«Universitas» se encuentra indizada en Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) de Web of Science, el catálogo LATINDEX, Sistema Regional de información en Línea para Revistas Científicas de América Latina, El Caribe, España y Portugal, forma parte del Directory of Open Access Journals-DOAJ, pertenece a la Red Iberoamericana de Innovación y Conocimiento Científico, REDIB, Red de Revistas Cientificas de America Latina y el Caribe,España y Portugal, REDALYC, además conforma la Matriz de Información para el Análisis de Revistas, MIAR y está siendo evaluada en mediano plazo para pasar a formar parte de SCOPUS.

La revista se edita en doble versión: impresa (ISSN: 1390-3837) y electrónica (e-ISSN: 1390-8634), en español e inglés, siendo identificado además cada trabajo con un DOI (Digital Object Identifier System).

2. Alcance y Política

2.1. Temática

Contribuciones originales en materia de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, así como áreas afines: Ciencias Sociales y Humanas y sus líneas interdisciplinares como Sociología, Antropología, Psicología Social, Estudios Políticos, Estudios del Desarrollo, Estudios Latinoamericanos, Estudios de la Cultura y la Comunicación y todas aquellas disciplinas conexas interdisciplinarmente con la línea temática central.

2.2. Aportaciones

«Universitas» edita preferentemente resultados de investigación empírica sobre Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, redactados en español y/o inglés, siendo también admisibles informes, estudios y propuestas, así como selectas revisiones de la literatura (*state-of-the-art*).

Todos los trabajos deben ser originales, no haber sido publicados en ningún medio ni estar en proceso de arbitraje o publicación. De esta manera, las aportaciones en la revista pueden ser:

- **Investigaciones:** 5.000 a 6.500 palabras de texto, incluyendo título, resúmenes, descriptores, tablas y referencias.
- **Informes, estudios y propuestas:** 5.000 a 6.500 palabras de texto, incluyendo título, resúmenes, tablas y referencias.
- **Revisiones:** 6.000 a 7.000 palabras de texto, incluidas tablas y referencias. Se valorará especialmente las referencias justificadas, actuales y selectivas de alrededor de unas 70 obras.

«Universitas» tiene periodicidad semestral (20 artículos por año), publicada en los meses de marzo y septiembre y cuenta por número con dos secciones de cinco artículos cada una, la primera referida a un tema **Monográfico** preparado con antelación y con editores temáticos y la segunda, una sección **Miscelánea**, compuesta por aportaciones variadas dentro de la temática de la publicación.

3. Presentación, estructura y envío de los manuscritos

Los trabajos se presentarán en tipo de letra Arial 10, interlineado simple, justificado completo y sin tabuladores ni espacios en blanco entre párrafos. Solo se separarán con un espacio en blanco los grandes bloques (título, autores, resúmenes, descriptores, créditos y epígrafes). La página debe tener 2 centímetros en todos sus márgenes.

Los trabajos deben presentarse en documento de Microsoft Word (.doc o .docx), siendo necesario que el archivo esté anonimizado en Propiedades de Archivo, de forma que no aparezca la identificación de autor/es.

Los manuscritos deben ser enviados única y exclusivamente a través del OJS (Open Journal System), en el cual todos los autores deben darse de alta previamente. No se aceptan originales enviados a través de correo electrónico u otra interfaz.

3.1. Estructura del manuscrito

Para aquellos trabajos que se traten de investigaciones de carácter empírico, los manuscritos seguirán la estructura IMRDC, siendo opcionales los epígrafes de Notas y Apoyos. Aquellos trabajos que por el contrario se traten de informes, estudios, propuestas y revisiones podrán ser más flexibles en sus epígrafes, especialmente en Material y métodos, Análisis y resultados y Discusión y conclusiones. En todas las tipologías de trabajos son obligatorias las Referencias.

1) Título (español) / Title (inglés): Conciso pero informativo, en castellano en primera línea y en inglés en segunda. Se aceptan como máximo 80 caracteres con espacio. El título no solo es responsabilidad de los autores, pudiéndose proponer cambios por parte del Consejo Editorial.

2) Nombre y apellidos completos: De cada uno de los autores, organizados por orden de prelación. Se aceptarán como máximo 3 autores por original, aunque pudieren existir excepciones justificadas por el tema, su complejidad y extensión. Junto a los nombres ha de seguir la categoría profesional, centro de trabajo, correo electrónico de cada autor y número de

ORCID. Es obligatorio indicar si se posee el grado académico de doctor (incluir Dr./Dra. antes del nombre).

3) Resumen (español) / Abstract (inglés): Tendrá como extensión máxima 230 palabras, primero en español y después en inglés. En el resumen se describirá de forma concisa y en este orden: 1) Justificación del tema; 2) Objetivos; 3) Metodología y muestra; 4) Principales resultados; 5) Principales conclusiones. Ha de estar escrito de manera impersonal "El presente trabajo analiza…". En el caso del abstract no se admitirá el empleo de traductores automáticos por su pésima calidad.

4) Descriptores (español) / Keywords (inglés): Se deben exponer 6 descriptores por cada versión idiomática relacionados directamente con el tema del trabajo. Será valorado positivamente el uso de las palabras claves expuestas en el Thesaurus de la UNESCO.

5) Introducción y estado de la cuestión: Debe incluir el planteamiento del problema, el contexto de la problemática, la justificación, fundamentos y propósito del estudio, utilizando citas bibliográficas, así como la literatura más significativa y actual del tema a escala nacional e internacional.

6) Material y métodos: Debe ser redactado de forma que el lector pueda comprender con facilidad el desarrollo de la investigación. En su caso, describirá la metodología, la muestra y la forma de muestreo, así como se hará referencia al tipo de análisis estadístico empleado. Si se trata de una metodología original, es necesario exponer las razones que han conducido a su empleo y describir sus posibles limitaciones.

7) Análisis y resultados: Se procurará resaltar las observaciones más importantes, describiéndose, sin hacer juicios de valor, el material y métodos empleados. Aparecerán en una secuencia lógica en el texto y las tablas y figuras imprescindibles evitando la duplicidad de datos.

8) Discusión y conclusiones: Resumirá los hallazgos más importantes, relacionando las propias observaciones con estudios de interés, señalando aportaciones y limitaciones, sin redundar datos ya comentados en otros apartados. Asimismo, el apartado de discusión y conclusiones debe incluir las deducciones y líneas para futuras investigaciones.

9) Apoyos y agradecimientos (opcionales): El Council Science Editors recomienda a los autor/es especificar la fuente de financiación de la investigación. Se considerarán prioritarios los trabajos con aval de proyectos competitivos nacionales e internacionales. En todo caso, para la valoración científica del manuscrito, este debe ir anonimizado con XXXX solo para su evaluación inicial, a fin de no identificar autores y equipos de investigación, que deben ser explicitados en la Carta de Presentación y posteriormente en el manuscrito final.

10) Las notas (opcionales) irán, solo en caso necesario, al final del artículo (antes de las referencias). Deben anotarse manualmente, ya que el sistema de notas al pie o al final de Word no es reconocido por los sistemas de maquetación. Los números de notas se colocan en superíndice, tanto en el texto como en la nota final. No se permiten notas que recojan citas bibliográficas simples (sin comentarios), pues éstas deben ir en las referencias.

11) Referencias: Las citas bibliográficas deben reseñarse en forma de referencias al texto. Bajo ningún caso deben incluirse referencias no citadas en el texto. Su número debe ser suficiente para contextualizar el marco teórico con criterios de actualidad e importancia. Se presentarán alfabéticamente por el primer apellido del autor.

3.2. Normas para las referencias

Publicaciones periódicas

Artículo de revista (un autor): Valdés-Pérez, D. (2016). Incidencia de las técnicas de gestión en la mejora de decisiones administrativas [Impact of Management Techniques on the Improvement of Administrative Decisions]. *Retos, 12*(6), 199-2013. https://doi.org/10.17163/ret.n12.2016.05

Artículo de revista (hasta seis autores): Ospina, M.C., Alvarado, S.V., Fefferman, M., & Llanos, D. (2016). Introducción del dossier temático "Infancias y juventudes: violencias, conflictos, memorias y procesos de construcción de paz" [Introduction of the thematic dossier "Infancy and Youth: Violence, Conflicts, Memories and Peace Construction Processes"]. *Universitas, 25*(14), 91-95. https://doi.org/10.17163/uni.n25.%25x

Artículo de revista (más de seis autores): Smith, S.W., Smith, S.L. Pieper, K.M., Yoo, J.H., Ferrys, A.L., Downs, E.,... Bowden, B. (2006). Altruism on American Television: Examining the Amount of, and Context Surronding. Acts of Helping and Sharing. *Journal of Communication, 56*(4), 707-727. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00316.x

Artículo de revista (sin DOI): Rodríguez, A. (2007). Desde la promoción de salud mental hacia la promoción de salud: La concepción de lo comunitario en la implementación de proyectos sociales. *Alteridad, 2*(1), 28-40. (https://goo.gl/zDb3Me) (2017-01-29).

LIBROS Y CAPÍTULOS DE LIBRO

Libros completos: Cuéllar, J.C., & Moncada-Paredes, M.C. (2014). *El peso de la deuda externa ecuatoriana*. Quito: Abya-Yala.

Capítulos de libro: Zambrano-Quiñones, D. (2015). *El ecoturismo comunitario en Manglaralto y Colonche*. En V.H. Torres (Ed.), Alternativas de Vida: Trece experiencias de desarrollo endógeno en Ecuador (pp. 175-198). Quito: Abya-Yala.

MEDIOS ELECTRÓNICOS

Pérez-Rodríguez, M.A., Ramírez, A., & García-Ruíz, R. (2015). La competencia mediática en educación infantil. Análisis del nivel de desarrollo en España. Universitas Psychologica, 14(2), 619-630. https://doi.org.10.11144/Javeriana.upsy14-2.cmei

Es prescriptivo que todas las citas que cuenten con DOI (Digital Object Identifier System) estén reflejadas en las Referencias (pueden obtenerse en http://goo.gl/gfruh1). Todas las revistas y libros que no tengan DOI deben aparecer con su link (en su versión on-line, en caso de que la tengan, acortada, mediante Google Shortener: http://goo.gl) y fecha de consulta en el formato indicado.

Los artículos de revistas deben ser expuestos en idioma inglés, a excepción de aquellos que se encuentren en español e inglés, caso en el que se expondrá en ambos idiomas utilizando corchetes. Todas las direcciones web que se presenten tienen que ser acortadas en el manuscrito, a excepción de los DOI que deben ir en el formato indicado (https://doi.org/XXX).

3.3. Epígrafes, tablas y gráficos

Los epígrafes del cuerpo del artículo se numerarán en arábigo. Irán sin caja completa de mayús-culas, ni subrayados, ni negritas. La numeración ha de ser como máximo de tres niveles: 1. / 1.1. / 1.1.1. Al final de cada epígrafe numerado se establecerá un retorno de carro.

Las tablas deben presentarse incluidas en el texto en formato Word según orden de aparición, numeradas en arábigo y subtituladas con la descripción del contenido.

Los gráficos o figuras se ajustarán al número mínimo necesario y se presentarán incorporadas al texto, según su orden de aparición, numeradas en arábigo y subtituladas con la descripción abreviada. Su calidad no debe ser inferior a 300 ppp, pudiendo ser necesario contar con el gráfico en formato TIFF, PNG o JPEG.

4. Proceso de envío

Deben remitirse a través del sistema OJS de la revista dos archivos:

1) Presentación y portada, en la que aparecerá el título en español e inglés, nombres y apellidos de los autores de forma estandarizada con número de ORCID, resumen, abstract, descriptores y keywords y una declaración de que el manuscrito se trata de una aportación original, no enviada ni en proceso de evaluación en otra revista, confirmación de las autorías firmantes, aceptación (si procede) de cambios formales en el manuscrito conforme a las normas y cesión parcial de derechos a la editorial (usar modelo oficial de portada).

2) Manuscrito totalmente anonimizado, conforme a las normas referidas en precedencia.

Todos los autores han de darse de alta, con sus créditos, en la plataforma OJS, si bien uno solo de ellos será el responsable de correspondencia. Ningún autor podrá enviar o tener en revisión dos manuscritos de forma simultánea, estimándose una carencia de cuatro números consecutivos (2 años).

GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWERS OF «UNIVERSITAS»

The **Council of External Reviewers of «Universitas»** is an independent collegiate body whose purpose is to guarantee the excellence of this scientific publication, because the blind evaluation - based exclusively on the quality of the contents of the manuscripts and carried out by experts of recognized International prestige in the field - is, without a doubt, the best guarantee for the advancement of science and to preserve in this header an original and valuable scientific production.

To this end, the **Council of External Reviewers** is made up of several scholars and international scientists specialized in **Education,** essential to select the articles of the greatest impact and interest for the international scientific community. This in turn allows that all the articles selected to publish in **«Universitas»** have an academic endorsement and objectifiable reports on the originals.

Of course, all reviews in **«Universitas»** use the internationally standardized system of double-blind peer evaluation that guarantees the anonymity of manuscripts and reviewers. As a measure of transparency, the complete lists of reviewers are published on the official website of the journal (www. http://Universitas.ups.edu.ec/) los listados completos de los revisores.

1. Criteria for acceptance/rejection of manuscript evaluation

The editorial team of «Universitas» selects those that are considered more qualified in the subject of the manuscript from the list of reviewers of the Council of Reviewers. While the publication requires the maximum collaboration of reviewers to expedite the evaluations and reports on each original, acceptance of the review must be linked to:

a. **Expertise.** Acceptance necessarily entails the possession of competences in the specific theme of the article to be evaluated.
b. **Availability.** Reviewing an original takes time and involves careful reflection on many aspects.

c. **Conflict of interests.** In case of identification of the authorship of the manuscript (despite their anonymity), excessive academic or family closeness to their authors, membership in the same University, Department, Research Group, Thematic Network, Research Projects, joint publications with authors ... or any other type of connection or conflict / professional proximity; The reviewer must reject the publisher's invitation for review.
d. **Commitment of confidentiality.** Reception of a manuscript for evaluation requires the Reviewer to express a commitment of confidentiality, so that it cannot be divulged to a third party throughout the process.

In the event that the reviewer cannot carry out the activity for some of these reasons or other justifiable reasons, he/she must notify the publisher by the same route that he/she has received the invitation, specifying the reasons for rejection.

2. General criteria for the evaluation of manuscripts

a) Topic

In addition to being valuable and relevant to the scientific community, the topic that is presented in the original must be limited and specialized in time and space, without excessive localism.

b) Redaction

The critical assessment in the review report must be objectively written, providing content, quotes or references of interest to support its judgment.

c) Originality

As a fundamental criterion of quality, an article must be original, unpublished and suitable. In this sense, reviewers should answer these three questions in the evaluation:

- Is the article sufficiently novel and interesting to justify publication?
- Does it contribute anything to the knowledge canon?

- Is the research question relevant?

A quick literature search using repositories such as Web of Knowledge, Scopus and Google Scholar to see if the research has been previously covered, may be helpful.

d) Structure

Manuscripts that refer to «Universitas» must follow the IMRDC structure, except those that are literature reviews or specific studies. In this sense, the originals must contain summary, introduction, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion.

- The ***title, abstract, and keywords*** should accurately describe the content of the article.
- The ***review of the literature*** should summarize the state of the question of the most recent and adequate research for the presented work. It will be especially evaluated with criteria of suitability and that the references are to works of high impact - especially in WoS, Scopus, Scielo, etc. It should also include the general explanation of the study, its central objective and the followed methodological design.
- In case of research, in the ***materials and methods,*** the author must specify how the data, the process and the instruments used to respond to the hypothesis, the validation system, and all the information necessary to replicate the study are collected.
- ***Results*** must be clearly specified in logical sequence. It is important to check if the figures or charts presented are necessary or, if not, redundant with the content of the text.
- In the ***discussion,*** the data obtained should be interpreted in the light of the literature review. Authors should include here if their article supports or contradicts previous theories. The conclusions will summarize the advances that the research presents in the area of scientific knowledge, the future lines of research and the main difficulties or limitations for carrying out the research.
- ***Language:*** It will be positively assessed if the language used facilitates reading and is in favor of the clarity, simplicity, precision and transparency of the scientific language. The Reviewer should not proceed to correction, either in Spanish or English, but will inform

the Editors of these grammatical or orthographical and typographical errors.

- Finally, a thorough **review of the references** is required in case any relevant work has been omitted. The references must be precise, citing within the logic of the subject at study, its main works as well as the documents that most resemble the work itself, as well as the latest research in the area.

3. Relevant valuation dimensions

«Universitas» uses an evaluation matrix of each original that responds to the editorial criteria and to compliance with the publication normative. In this sense, the reviewers must attend to the qualitative-quantitative assessment of each of the aspects proposed in this matrix with criteria of objectivity, reasoning, logic and expertise.

RESEARCHES	
Valuable items	**P.**
01. Title and abstract (clarity and structure)	0/5
02. Thematic relevance 03. Originality of the work 04. Review of the literature	0/10
05. Structure and organization of the article 06. Argumentative capabilities 07. Redaction	0/10
08. Methodological rigor 09. Research instruments	0/10
10. Research results 11. Advances 12. Discussion 13. Conclusions	0/10
14. Quotations (variety and richness) 15. References	0/5
Total	50

If the original is a review of the literature (status of the subject) or other type of study (reports, proposals, experiences, among others), the Editorial Board will send to the reviewers a different matrix, including the characteristics of Structure of this type of originals:

REPORTS, STUDIES, PROPOSALS, REVIEWS	
Valuable items	**P.**
01. Title and abstract (clarity and structure)	0/5
02. Thematic relevance	0/10
03. Review of the literature	0/10
04. Structure and organization of the article 05. Argumentative capabilities and coherence 06. Scientific redaction	0/10
07. original contributions 08. Conclusions	0/10
09. Quotations 10. References	0/5
Total	50

4. Ethical Considerations

a) Plagiarism: Although the journal uses plagiarism detection systems, if the reviewer suspects that an original is a substantial copy of another work, he must immediately inform the Editors citing the previous work in as much detail as possible.

b) Fraud: If there is real or remote suspicion that the results in an article are false or fraudulent, it is necessary to inform them to the Editors.

5. Evaluation of the originals

After the quantitative-qualitative evaluation of the manuscript under review, the reviewer may make recommendations to improve the quality of the manuscript. However, the manuscript will be graded in three ways:

a. **Acceptance without review**
b. **Conditional acceptance** and therefore review (greater or lesser). In the latter case, it is necessary to clearly identify which review is necessary, listing the comments and even specifying paragraphs and pages suggesting modifications.
c. **Rejection** due to detected deficiencies justified and reasoned with quantitative and quantitative assessment. The report should be longer if a score of less than 40 of the 50 possible points is obtained.

INDICADORES PARA REVISORES EXTERNOS DE «UNIVERSITAS»

El **Consejo de Revisores Externos de «Universitas»** es un órgano colegiado independiente cuyo fin es garantizar la excelencia de esta publicación científica, debido a que la evaluación ciega –basada exclusivamente en la calidad de los contenidos de los manuscritos y realizada por expertos de reconocido prestigio internacional en la materia– es la mejor garantía y, sin duda, el mejor aval para el avance de la ciencia y para preservar en esta cabecera una producción científica original y valiosa.

Para ello, el **Consejo de Revisores Externos** está conformado por diversos académicos y científicos internacionales especialistas en **Ciencias Sociales,** esenciales para seleccionar los artículos de mayor impacto e interés para la comunidad científica internacional. Esto permite a su vez que todos los artículos seleccionados para publicar en **«Universitas»** cuenten con un aval académico e informes objetivables sobre los originales.

Por supuesto, todas las revisiones en **«Universitas»** emplean el sistema estandarizado internacionalmente de evaluación por pares con «doble ciego» (doble-blind) que garantiza el anonimato de los manuscritos y de los revisores de los mismos. Como medida de transparencia, anualmente se hacen públicos en la web oficial de la revista (www. http://Universitas.ups.edu.ec/) los listados completos de los revisores.

1. Criterios de aceptación/rechazo de evaluación manuscritos

El equipo editorial de **«Universitas»** selecciona del listado de revisores del Consejo de Revisores a aquellos que se estiman más cualificado en la temática del manuscrito. Si bien por parte de la publicación se pide la máxima colaboración de los revisores para agilizar las evaluaciones y los informes sobre cada original, la aceptación de la revisión ha de estar vinculada a:

a. **Experticia.** La aceptación conlleva necesariamente la posesión de competencias en la temática concreta del artículo a evaluar.
b. **Disponibilidad.** Revisar un original exige tiempo y conlleva reflexión concienzuda de muchos aspectos.

c. **Conflicto de intereses.** En caso de identificación de la autoría del manuscrito (a pesar de su anonimato), excesiva cercanía académica o familiar a sus autores, pertenencia a la misma Universidad, Departamento, Grupo de Investigación, Red Temática, Proyectos de Investigación, publicaciones conjuntas con los autores… o cualquier otro tipo de conexión o conflicto/cercanía profesional; el revisor debe rechazar la invitación del editor para su revisión.
d. **Compromiso de confidencialidad.** La recepción de un manuscrito para su evaluación exige del Revisor un compromiso expreso de confidencialidad, de manera que éste no puede, durante todo el proceso, ser divulgado a un tercero.

En caso que el revisor no pueda llevar a cabo la actividad por algunos de estos motivos u otros justificables, debe notificarlo al editor por la misma vía que ha recibido la invitación, especificando los motivos de rechazo.

2. Criterios generales de evaluación de manuscritos

a) Tema

La temática que se plantea en el original, además de ser valiosa y relevante para la comunidad científica, ha de ser limitada y especializada en tiempo y espacio, sin llegar al excesivo localismo.

b) Redacción

La valoración crítica en el informe de revisión ha de estar redactada de forma objetiva, aportando contenido, citas o referencias de interés para argumentar su juicio.

c) Originalidad

Como criterio de calidad fundamental, un artículo debe ser original, inédito e idóneo. En este sentido, los revisores deben responder a estas tres preguntas en la evaluación:

- ¿Es el artículo suficientemente novedoso e interesante para justificar su publicación?

- ¿Aporta algo al canon del conocimiento?
- ¿Es relevante la pregunta de investigación?

Una búsqueda rápida de literatura utilizando repositorios tales como Web of Knowledge, Scopus y Google Scholar para ver si la investigación ha sido cubierta previamente puede ser de utilidad.

d) Estructura

Los manuscritos que se remiten a **«Universitas»** deben seguir obligatoriamente la estructura IMRyD, excepto aquellos que sean revisiones de la literatura o estudios específicos. En este sentido, los originales han de contener resumen, introducción, metodología, resultados, discusión y conclusión.

- El ***título, el resumen y las palabras clave*** han de describir exactamente el contenido del artículo.
- La ***revisión de la literatura*** debe resumir el estado de la cuestión de las investigaciones más recientes y adecuadas para el trabajo presentado. Se valorará especialmente con criterios de idoneidad y que las referencias sean a trabajos de alto impacto –especialmente en WoS, Scopus, Scielo, etc. Debe incluir además la explicación general del estudio, su objetivo central y el diseño metodológico seguido.
- En caso de investigaciones, en los ***materiales y métodos,*** el autor debe precisar cómo se recopilan los datos, el proceso y los instrumentos usados para responder a las hipótesis, el sistema de validación, y toda la información necesaria para replicar el estudio.
- En los ***resultados*** se deben especificar claramente los hallazgos en secuencia lógica. Es importante revisar si las tablas o cuadros presentados son necesarios o, caso contrario, redundantes con el contenido del texto.
- En la ***discusión*** se deben interpretar los datos obtenidos a la luz de la revisión de la literatura. Los autores deberán incluir aquí si su artículo apoya o contradice las teorías previas. Las ***conclusiones*** resumirán los avances que la investigación plantea en el área del conocimiento científico, las futuras líneas de investigación y las principales dificultades o limitaciones para la realización de la investigación.
- ***Idioma:*** Se valorará positivamente si el idioma utilizado facilita la lectura y va en favor de la claridad, sencillez, precisión y transpa-

rencia del lenguaje científico. El Revisor no debe proceder a corrección, ya sea en español o inglés, sino que informará a los Editores de estos errores gramaticales u ortotipográficos.

- Finalmente, se requiere una profunda ***revisión de las referencias*** por si se hubiera omitido alguna obra relevante. Las referencias han de ser precisas, citando en la lógica de la temática a estudiar, sus principales obras así como los documentos que más se asemejen al propio trabajo, así como las últimas investigaciones en el área.

3. Dimensiones relevantes de valoración

«Universitas» utiliza una matriz de evaluación de cada original que responde a los criterios editoriales y al cumplimiento de la normativa de la publicación. En este sentido los revisores deberán atender a la valoración cuali-cuantitativa de cada uno de los aspectos propuestos en esta matriz con criterios de objetividad, razonamiento, lógica y experticia.

INVESTIGACIONES	
Ítems valorables	**P.**
01. Título y resumen (claridad y estructura)	0/5
02. Relevancia de la temática 03. Originalidad del trabajo 04. Revisión de la literatura	0/10
05. Estructura y organización artículo 06. Capacidad argumental 07. Redacción	0/10
08. Rigor metodológico 09. Instrumentos de investigación	0/10
10. Resultados de investigación 11. Avances 12. Discusión 13. Conclusiones	0/10
14. Citaciones (variedad y riqueza) 15. Referencias	0/5
Total máximo	50

En caso de tratarse el original de una revisión de la literatura (estado de la cuestión) u otro tipo de estudio (informes, propuestas, experiencias, entre otras), el Consejo Editorial remitirá a los revisores una matriz distinta, comprendiendo las características propias de estructura de este tipo de originales:

ESTUDIOS, INFORMES, PROPUESTAS, EXPERIENCIAS	
Ítems valorables	**P.**
01. Título y resumen (claridad y estructura)	0/5
02. Relevancia de la temática	0/10
03. Revisión de la literatura	0/10
04. Estructura y organización artículo 05. Capacidad argumental y coherencia 06. Redacción científica	0/10
07. Aportaciones originales 08. Conclusiones	0/10
09. Citaciones 10. Referencias	0/5
Total máximo	50

4. Cuestiones éticas

a) Plagio: Aunque la revista utiliza sistemas de detección de plagio, si el revisor sospechare que un original es una copia sustancial de otra obra, ha de informar de inmediato a los Editores citando la obra anterior con tanto detalle cómo le sea posible.

b) Fraude: Si hay sospecha real o remota de que los resultados en un artículo son falsos o fraudulentos, es necesario informar de ellos a los Editores.

5. Evaluación de los originales

Una vez realizada la evaluación cuanti-cualitativa del manuscrito en revisión, el revisor podrá realizar recomendaciones para mejorar la calidad del original. Sin embargo, se atenderá a la calificación del manuscrito de tres maneras:

a. Rechazo debido a las deficiencias detectadas, justificadas y razonadas con valoración cualitativa y cuantitativa. El informe ha de ser más extenso si obtiene menos de los 30 de los 50 puntos posibles.
b. Aceptación sin revisión.
c. Aceptación condicionada y por ende con revisión (mayor o menor). En este último caso, se ha de identificar claramente qué revisión es necesaria, enumerando los comentarios e incluso especificando párrafos y páginas en las que sugieren modificaciones.

PROTOCOL OF MANUSCRIPT EVALUATION FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Article Details</th></tr>
<tr><td>Date of submission for evaluation:</td><td>Date of return of evaluation:</td><td>Article code: xxxx</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Title of the article to be evaluated:</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">SECCIÓN: INFORMES, ESTUDIOS, PROPUESTAS Y EXPERIENCIAS</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">01. Title and abstract (clarity and structure)</td><td colspan="2">Mandatory comments:</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2"></td><td>Value 0 to 5</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">02. Thematic relevance</td><td colspan="2">Mandatory comments:</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2"></td><td>Value 0 to 5</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">03. Review of the literature</td><td colspan="2">Mandatory comments:</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2"></td><td>Value 0 to 5</td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">4. Structure and organization of the article
5. Argumentative capabilities and coherence
6. Scientific redaction</td><td colspan="2">Mandatory comments:</td></tr>
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<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">7. Original contributions
8. Conclusions</td><td colspan="2">Mandatory comments:</td></tr>
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<tr><td rowspan="2">9. Quotations
10. References</td><td colspan="2">Mandatory comments:</td></tr>
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<tr><td>SOCORE</td><td>Of the total of 50 foreseeable points, this evaluator grants:</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

REDACTED OPINION (More detailed if the work does not get 40 points, to inform the author(s) This text is sent verbatim to the author (s) anonymously.								
WORTH PUBLISHING		No			Yes			Yes, with minor changes
PROPOSED CHANGES (In case of “Yes, with conditions”)								

PROTOCOLO DE EVALUACIÓN DE MANUSCRITOS PARA REVISORES EXTERNOS

Datos del artículo		
Fecha envío evaluación:	Fecha devolución evaluación:	Código artículo: xxxx
Título del artículo a evaluar:		
SECCIÓN: ESTUDIOS, PROPUESTAS, INFORMES Y REVISIONES		
01. Título y resumen (claridad y estructura)	Comentarios obligatorios:	
		Valore de 0 a 5
02. Relevancia de la temática	Comentarios obligatorios:	
		Valore de 0 a 10
03. Revisión de la literatura	Comentarios obligatorios:	
		Valore de 0 a 10
4. Estructura y organización artículo 5. Capacidad argumental y coherencia 6. Redacción científica	Comentarios obligatorios:	
		Valore de 0 a 10
7. Aportaciones originales 8. Conclusiones	Comentarios obligatorios	
		Valore de 0 a 10
9. Citaciones 10. Referencias	Comentarios obligatorios:	
		Valore de 0 a 5
PUNTUACIÓN OBTENIDA	Del total de 50 puntos previsibles, este evaluador otorga:	

OPINIÓN REDACTADA (Más detallada si el trabajo no obtiene 40 puntos, para informar al autor/es). Este texto se remite textualmente a los autor/es de forma anónima.								
PUBLICABLE		No			Sí			Sí, con condiciones
MODIFICACIONES PROPUESTAS (En caso de «Sí, con condiciones»)								

Cover Letter

Section (Mark)
Mnographic Dossier ___
Miscellany ___

Title in Spanish: Arial 14 bold and centered. Maximum 80 characters with spaces

Title in English: Arial 14 cursive.

Maximum 80 characters with spaces

Name author 1 (standardized)
Professional category, Institution,
Country Institutional email
ORCID

Name author 2 (standardized)
Professional category, Institution, Country
Institutional email
ORCID

Name author 3 (standardized)
Professional category, Institution, Country
Institutional email
ORCID

Abstract (Spanish)

Minimum 210 and maximum 230 words. It must include 1) Justification of the topic; 2) Objectives; 3) Methodology and sample; 4) Main results;

5) Main conclusions. It must be impersonally written “The present paper analyzes ...”

Abstract (English)

Minimum 210 and maximum 230 words. It must include 1) Justification of the topic; 2) Objectives; 3) Methodology and sample; 4) Main results; 5) Main conclusions. It must be impersonally written “The present paper analyzes ...” Do not use automatic translation systems.

Descriptors (Spanish)

6 standardized terms preferably of a single word and of the UNESCO Thesaurus separated by commas (,).

Keywords

The 6 terms referred to in English separated by commas (,). Do not use automatic translation systems.

Financial Support of Research (Optional)

Entity:
Country:
City:
Subsidized project:
Code of the project:

PRESENTATION

Cover Letter

Mr. Editor of «Universitas»

Having read the regulations of the journal «Universitas» and analyzed its coverage, thematic area and approach, I consider that this journal is the ideal one for the dissemination of the work that I hereby attach, for which I beg you to be submitted for consideration for publication. The original has the following title "__________________________________", whose authorship corresponds to ____.

The authors (s) certify that this work has not been published, nor is it under consideration for publication in any other journal or editorial work.

The author (s) are responsible for their content and have contributed to the conception, design and completion of the work, analysis and interpretation of data, and to have participated in the writing of the text and its revisions, as well as in the approval of the version which is finally referred to as an attachment.

Changes to the content are accepted if they occur after the review process, and also changes in the style of the manuscript by the editorial process of «Universitas».

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It is also declared that they have respected the ethical principles of research and are free from any conflict of interest.

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Signed. (By the author or in the case, all the authors)

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Cover Letter

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Dossier Monográfico ___
Miscelánea ___

Título en español: Arial 14 negrita y centrado. Máximo 80 caracteres con espacios

Title in English: Arial 14 cursiva.

Máximo 80 caracteres con espacios

Nombre autor 1 (estandarizado)
Categoría profesional, Institución, País
Correo electrónico institucional
ORCID

Nombre autor 2 (estandarizado)
Categoría profesional, Institución, País
Correo electrónico institucional
ORCID

Nombre autor 3 (estandarizado)
Categoría profesional, Institución, País
Correo electrónico institucional
ORCID

Resumen

Mínimo 210 y máximo 230 palabras. Debe incluir 1) Justificación del tema; 2) Objetivos; 3) Metodología y muestra; 4) Principales resultados; 5)

Principales conclusiones. Ha de estar escrito de manera impersonal "El presente trabajo analiza…"

Abstract

*Mínimo 210 y m*áximo 230 palabras *cursiva. Debe incluir 1) Justificación del tema; 2) Objetivos; 3) Metodología y muestra; 4) Principales resultados; 5) Principales conclusiones. Ha de estar escrito de manera impersonal "El presente trabajo analiza…" No utilizar sistemas de traducción automáticos.*

Descriptores

6 términos estandarizados preferiblemente de una sola palabra y del Thesaurus de la UNESCO separados por coma (,).

Keyword

Los 6 términos referidos en inglés separados por coma (,). No utilizar sistemas de traducción automáticos.

Apoyos y soporte financiero de la investigación (Opcional)

Entidad:
País:
Ciudad:
Proyecto subvencionado:
Código de proyecto:

PRESENTACIÓN

Cover Letter

Sr. Editor de «Universitas»

Leída la normativa de la revista «Universitas» y analizada su cobertura, área temática y enfoque, considero que esta revista es la idónea para la difusión del trabajo que le adjunto, por lo que le ruego sea sometida a la consideración para su publicación. El original lleva por título "______________ ________________________", cuya autoría corresponde a _____________ ____.

El autor/es certifican que este trabajo no ha sido publicado, ni está en vías de consideración para su publicación en ninguna otra revista u obra editorial.

El autor/es se responsabilizan de su contenido y de haber contribuido a la concepción, diseño y realización del trabajo, análisis e interpretación de datos, y de haber participado en la redacción del texto y sus revisiones, así como en la aprobación de la versión que finalmente se remite en adjunto.

Se aceptan la introducción de cambios en el contenido si hubiere lugar tras la revisión, y de cambios en el estilo del manuscrito por parte de la redacción de «Universitas».

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Call for papers Dossier No. 34
Fake news, communication and politics

No. 34. March 2021-August 2021

Coordinators

Dra. Andrea Varela, National University of La Plata (Argentina)
Dra. Amparo Marroquín Parducci, Central American University (El Salvador)
Dr. Carlos Del Valle, University of la Frontera (Chile)
Dr. José Antonio Alcoceba Hernando, Complutense University of Madrid (Spain)

The objective of this publication is to address the debates related to fake news, communication, and politics in the midst of the mutations that occur in contemporary societies.

Faced with this context, in which the world is traversed by the COVID-19 Pandemic and where many countries took preventive, social, and mandatory isolation as a sanitary measure, tackling the role of the media and social networks in today´s construction of the news becomes a key element to understand how so-called fake news operate in relation to political systems and democracies in Latin America.

In this context, communication faces enormous challenges in relation to politics and citizenship, but doubtless the first obstacle to be surpassed is to be able to identify the complexity in order to inform ourselves as objectively and adequately as possible.

That is why before talking about fake news or misinformation it is necessary to reflect on the matrix that enables them. We are not talking about anything other than the post-truth; a social phenomenon that allows us to understand why this type of news circulates so easily, catalyzing and guiding public opinion.

In line with the aforementioned, the World Health Organization (WHO) recently warned about the “infodemic”, the damage generated by overexposureto news (both fake and true) about the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, we are interested in delving into how fake news and big data strengthen polarizations and impact on the political systems of the Region, and in particular, how they have become a tool that puts governments and democracies at risk, enabling political expressions with hints of conservatism and authoritarianism throughout the world.

Along these lines, it is necessary to mention, for example, the lawfare processes that occurred against political and popular leaders in the region; or the media narratives that create new public spaces throughout online networks with their own rules of participation that are articulated with those already known as media and streets, squares— and that allow the emergence of cybercitizens,cyber movements but also the so-called "trolls", "bots", etc.

In this framework, it is necessary to rethink the role of the State, and from there, understand Technological and Digital Sovereignty as a right that allows access to technologies for the entire society. This challenge implies moving away from the gaze of neoliberalism that proposes the selfregulation of the market, while understanding that equity in access can be achieved thanks not only to the State´s intervention through the promulgation of laws; but also, to its active role regarding the implementation of public policies.

To claim the regulatory function of the State with respect to new media technologies suppose to recognize them in their complexities, in their networks of power, in the differentiated appropriations and in their link with everyday uses and practices. In sum, to understand that technologies are constitutive of the social and, therefore, that they can never be inherently neutral or aseptic.

Technologies are determined by power relations that implicitly lead to the generation of inequalities. Although one does not start from thinking negatively about the technological process by itself; these transformations entail, in their frameworks, contexts, and proposals, new ways of accessing the consumption of symbolic goods, which operate as a matrix of inequalities.

The role of the State and public policies appears as the way to overcome these scenarios of social inequality. As communication professionals, researchers, we must unravel the meanings of technology to helping construct our own design, appropriation and use strategies that contribute to a more free and democratic consumption of information.

In a context where all the people in the region knows and identifies their executioners, who seem to enjoy punishing those that do not subjugate themselves in the face of violence and injustice and use fake news as a destabilizing factor against their enemies in popular struggles and the need to regulate communication as a matter of State.

In this sense, and without excluding other topics related to the aforementioned field, this call is addressed to researchers who, through original works, contribute to the social and academic discussion on the following thematic axes:

- Post-truth, fake news and their influences on public debates
- Online networks, polarizations and algorithms, citizen participation
- Cyber movements, media, platforms and democracies
- Technological sovereignties and the right to communication
- Fake news, implications for democracy and political systems in the Region
- Academic debates on fake news

Original and unpublished works that reflect on the theme of the call, in any of the areas indicated above, from reviews of the existing theoretical heritage, that present case studies of experiences of interest or field studies and other related research, are welcome.

Call for papers closing date: 2020-10-31

Guidelines for authors available at https://universitas.ups.edu.ec/pdf/docs/universitas/NORMATIVAUNIVERSITAS.pdf

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Convocatoria del Dossier
“Fake News, comunicación y política”

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El objetivo de esta publicación es abordar los debates vinculados a las fake news, la comunicación y la política en medio de las mutaciones que se producen en las sociedades contemporáneas.

Frente a este contexto, en el que el mundo se encuentra atravesado por la Pandemia del COVID-19 y donde muchos países tomaron como medida de prevención el aislamiento preventivo, social y obligatorio, problematizar el rol de los medios de comunicación y las redes sociales en la construcción de las noticias se convierte hoy en un elemento clave para comprender cómo operan las denominadas fake news en relación a los sistemas políticos y las democracias en Iberoamérica.

En este contexto la comunicación enfrenta enormes desafíos en relación a la política y a la ciudadanía, pero sin lugar a dudas el primer obstáculo es señalar la complejidad para poder informarnos lo más objetiva y adecuadamente posible.

Es por ello que antes de hablar de noticias falsas o desinformación es preciso reflexionar en torno a la matriz que las habilita. No hablamos de otra cosa qué de la post verdad; fenómeno social que permite entender por qué este tipo de noticias circula con tanta facilidad catalizando y orientando la opinión pública.

En sintonía con lo mencionado anteriormente, la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) advirtió recientemente sobre la “infodemia”, un mal generado por la sobreexposición a noticias (tanto falsas como verdaderas) sobre la pandemia del coronavirus.

Además, nos interesa profundizar acerca de cómo las fake news y la bigdata fortalecen las polarizaciones e impactan sobre los sistemas políticos de la Región, y en particular como se han convertido en una herramienta que pone en riesgo a los gobiernos y a las democracias, habilitando expresiones políticas con tintes de conservadurismo y autoritarismo a lo largo y ancho del mundo.

En esta línea, es preciso mencionar, por ejemplo, los procesos de lawfare acaecidos sobre dirigentes políticos y populares de la región; o las narrativas mediáticas que gestan en las redes online nuevos espacios públicos –com sus propias normas de participación que se articulan con las ya conocidas como medios y calles, plazas– y que permiten la emergencia de ciberciudadanías, ciber movimientos pero también de los denominados "trolls", "bots", etc.

En este marco, es necesario repensar el rol del Estado, y desde allí comprender a la Soberanía Tecnológica y Digital como un derecho que permite el acceso a las tecnologías para toda la sociedad. Esta toma de postura, implica el alejamiento de la mirada del neoliberalismo que plantea la autorregulación del mercado, para comprender que la equidad en los accesos sólo puede lograrse si el Estado interviene activamente con la promulgación de leyes; pero también, con la puesta en práctica de políticas públicas.

Plantear a las tecnologías como una cuestión de Estado, es reconocerlas en sus complejidades, en sus entramados de poder, en las apropiaciones diferenciadas que se hacen de ellas y en su vínculo con los usos y prácticas cotidianas. Entender, en definitiva, que las tecnologías son constitutivas de lo social y, por lo tanto, inherentemente nunca podrán ser neutrales o asépticas.

Las tecnologías están determinadas por relaciones de poder que llevan implícitamente la generación de desigualdades. Si bien no se parte de pensar negativamente el proceso tecnológico por sí mismo; dichas transformaciones conllevan en sus entramados, contextos y propuestas, nuevos modos de acceso al consumo de los bienes simbólicos, que operan como matriz de las desigualdades. El rol del Estado y las políticas públicas aparecen como superadoras de estos escenarios de desigualdad social.

Como profesionales de la comunicación, investigadores e investigadoras, debemos desentramar los sentidos de lo tecnológico para contribuir a construir nuestras propias estrategias de diseño, apropiación y uso, que contribuyan a un consumo más libre y democrático de la información.

En un contexto donde cada pueblo de la región conoce e identifica a sus verdugos, estos parecen gozar de castigar a aquellos que no se avasallan ante las violencias e injusticias y, las fakes news como factor desestabilizador frente a sus enemigos en las luchas populares y a la necesidad de la regulación de la comunicación como un asunto de Estado.

En este sentido, y sin excluir otras temáticas ligadas al campo citado, la presente convocatoria se dirige a investigadores/as que a través de trabajos originales contribuyan a la discusión social y académica sobre los siguientes ejes temáticos:

- Posverdad, noticias falsas y sus influencias en los debates públicos
- Redes online, polarizaciones y algoritmos, participación ciudadana
- Cibermovimientos, medios, plataformas y democracias
- Soberanías tecnológicas y derecho a la comunicación
- Fake news, implicaciones para la democracia y los sistemas políticos en la Región
- Debates académicos sobre fake news

Serán bienvenidos trabajos originales e inéditos que reflexionen sobre la temática de la convocatoria en alguno de los ámbitos señalados a partir de revisiones del acervo teórico existente, que presenten estudios de casos de experiencias de interés o estudio de campo y otro tipo de investigaciones relacionadas.

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