

## **Media Bios and Artificial Intelligence: the dark side of Fake News**

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### **Abstract**

*With a bibliographic nature and a qualitative approach, this work aims to discuss, through a literature review, the concept of fake news and its influence and effects on youth political formation. The article addresses the concept of fake news and its classification, based on the ideas of media bios and mediatization brought by Sodr e, as well as a reflection on the developments of artificial intelligence technologies linked to the production and dissemination of fake news. In addition, a discussion is carried out on the role played by fake news in the political formation of subjects, considering the different forms of political participation and socialization, especially with the development of digital media and social networks. The results suggest that the debate about the political formation of subjects represents the expression of new social paradigms in the face of the structure of the production and dissemination of so-called fake news in the political field. It is considered that the processes of political formation and participation today have taken place in a terrain where disinformation is a great threat to democracy and one of the challenges that emerge from this conjecture is to preserve freedom of expression and, at the same time, prevent that the trinkin compromises democracy.*

**Keywords:** Fake news; Media bios; Artificial intelligence; Politics.

### **1. Introduction**

In recent years, digital information and communication technologies (DICT) have resized human relations

in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, especially with the advent of technological innovations and transformations from social networks and digital media, while new exponents of socialization and sociability of people in the so-called “age of algorithms”.

The expression “age of the algorithms” is used to designate cybernetic social relations from the massive and global intensification of the use of the internet. It has redefined the modes of sociability through digital information and communication technologies in a relationship in which subjects - at the same time they give shape to algorithms - they are also “formed” by them, especially with the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies (Latour, 2012; Sodr , 2013; Lee, 2019; Sumpter, 2019).

In addition to being an environment for leisure and entertainment, virtual spaces have become – increasingly – a field of construction, management and sharing of information, which affect the most varied educational processes of people, especially with regard to the training of students. opinions, positions and points of view, since social networks and digital media are among the means of communication that most promote access and dissemination of information today (Castells, 2003, 2015; Campos; Pereira & Sim es, 2016; Queiroz, 2017).

This scenario of greater access and dissemination of information is the result, above all, of the intensification and popularization of the internet network, which – in turn – has effects on the processes of political formation of subjects. In other words, it is assumed that information and communication technologies can act as instruments capable of influencing the different ways in which subjects read, interpret and infer in life in society.

In this context, one of the aspects that draw attention is the side effect of social networks and digital media linked to the use of AI technologies in the political formation of subjects through the production and dissemination of fake news, as well as in the strengthening of the culture of disinformation in the field. political, which has implications both in the politics of everyday relations and in institutionalized politics, especially during electoral campaigns, such as the presidential elections held in the United States in 2016 and in Brazil in 2018 (D’Ancona, 2018; Di F tima, 2019; Carlson, 2020).

In addition to unfounded, false or lying news, given that the existence of fake news is not a phenomenon present only in current societies, it is necessary to consider that – nowadays – fake news plays a strong political and social role in production of the culture of disinformation, contributing to the minimization of the critical sense of the subjects in the face of the reception and/or diffusion of information.

Thus, also linked to the misuse of AI technologies, fake news represents a fertile ground for distorting the truth and ethical absence of information that can both affect and influence the processes of political formation and communication. (D’Ancona, 2018; Kakutani, 2018; Carlson, 2020).

This fact, in turn, becomes much more exponential in societies where the narratives of social networks and digital media occupy a certain centrality as the main sources of information, to which the character of truth is attributed. As the main instruments of access to information, social networks and digital media - through the propagation of fake news through videos, images, texts and audios, for example - act harmfully within social relationships, communication, the trust conferred on people. social institutions and the credibility given to the information.

Thus, with the objective of discussing, through a literature review, the concept of fake news and its articulated influence with artificial intelligence technologies in the processes of political formation of

subjects, this work is organized as follows: it begins with a Introduction, in which the problem, the justification, the relevance of the discussion in question and the objective underlying it are presented. Next, in the “*Methodological Aspects*” section, the methodological issues underlying this work are presented. The third section, called “Between the Media Bios and Artificial Intelligence: the Fake News Machine”, addresses the concept of fake news and its classification, as well as the idea of media bios brought by Sodr  (2013) as an element that enables understanding of human experience from the mediatization processes today. In addition, it reflects on the developments of artificial intelligence in the face of the production and dissemination of fake news. Finally, the “Conclusion” is presented, which resumes the main points discussed in the work, aiming to systematize the reflections carried out.

## **2. Methodological Aspects**

This paper follows an exploratory qualitative approach, based on a literature review (Diehl; Tatim, 2004; Creswell, 2010; Minayo et al., 2013). Qualitative research, as a field that encompasses a range of possibilities for research methodologies, enables new perspectives and other approaches to studies related to social processes, as well as the construction of knowledge and the review of concepts in the light of the object studied.

Seen from the social perspective, the field of qualitative research dialogues with multiple processes of scientific investigations that “deal with human beings in society, their relationships and institutions, their history and their symbolic production” (Minayo, 2010, p. 34).

## **3. Between the Media Bios and Artificial Intelligence: the Fake News Machine**

According to Ferreira (2010), news is the dissemination of information through the written or spoken press. That is, the term news denotes information or a report about a new event or that spreads a novelty about something or a prior situation. This information can be published by different means and with different intentions, such as television, radio, newspapers, internet and other media.

The news is loaded with narratives permeated by intentions that can highlight the veracity of facts, be at the service of manipulating subjects through incorrect information, or even contain false information passing as true, news like the latter are called by Tandoc Jr., Lim and Ling (2018) from fake news.

The authors claim that fake news or fake news are news that have, in essence, false and unfounded content, whose main objective is to manipulate and mislead people. Fake news negatively affects society because – in addition to being false information – they are intended to deceive the receivers, turning the action into an opportunity for disseminators to try to pass them on as reliable. The practice of producing and sharing fake news can result in worrying situations in both small and large societies.

Poubel (2017) considers that Donald Trump's elections in the United States for president and the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union (Brexit), both in 2016, provided a unique field in relation to fake news via the internet, given that the The expression came to be used more frequently, until the present day, both by civil society and by the international press. Thus, for the author, the dissemination of fake news was decisive and represented a significant weight for the results of these campaigns.

Data published by Infobase (Brasil, 2020) indicate that fake news works through exaggerated headlines

that are intended to attract access, unreliable information disseminated by unreliable sites, the creation of rumors in order to harm someone or propagate negative ideas and the formation of groups that aim to spread hate, and – according to research by the Monitor de Debate Político no Meio Digital, an organ of University of São Paulo (USP) (Ortellado; Ribeiro, 2018) – family groups on WhatsApp are constituted the biggest disseminators of fake news.

Also according to Infobase (Brasil, 2020), of fake news in Brazil, 43% of the information shared comes from messaging apps; 62% of Brazilians have already trusted some untrue news; 58% of people consider themselves able to verify fake news and 48.3% of fake news come from the Southeast region. Recuero and Gruzd (2019) consider that there is a range of characterizations that can be attributed to the term fake news. However, in general terms, they conceive fake news as a phenomenon of disinformation, which aim to deceive through partial or total false information in order to achieve the interests of certain people or groups. Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) start from the conceptual angle that fake news are pernicious content, intentionally tampered with or manufactured and disseminated on a large scale, capable of generating “informational disorder” through a complex virtual communicative network, implying processes of “pollution” of information”.

In this sense, Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) characterize the term fake news from three types of informational disorder, namely:

- 1. Mis-information:** when dishonest or false information is produced and disseminated with no intent to cause harm.
- 2. Dis-information:** when false information is produced and disseminated, consciously and purposefully, with the aim of causing damage to organizations, people, groups, countries and claims.
- 3. Mal-information:** when, strategically, true information or facts are disseminated with the aim of causing damage by altering the information, especially in the context of private to public relations.

Wardle (2018) classifies fake news into seven categories, according to the table 1:

Table 1: Classification of fake news.

Type	Description
1. Satire or Parody	It doesn't necessarily mean harm, but it can mislead the reader..
2. False connection	The news headline does not match the content presented.
3. Tricking Content	Triking use of information to defame another content or person.
4. False context	Content is real but is shared with fake context.
5. Enforcer Content	The name of a person or brand is used, but unrealistic claims.
6. Manipulated Content	Real content is altered to mislead the audience.
7. Manufactured Content	100% false information and built to cause harm and spread rumors.

**Source:** Wardle (2018).

If, on the one hand, Wardle's classification (2018) presents a range of situations through which fake news can be produced and reproduced; on the other hand, the current challenge – given the great dissemination of news, especially in the digital media – is to distinguish true narratives from false narratives, aiming to combat fake news. This challenge, in turn, currently emerges due to the increase in the centrality and diversity of digital media, especially social media, whose scenario presents itself as a new communicative and interactional relationship between subjects, according to Sodr  (2013) called media bios or virtual bios. In general terms, in Sodr 's (2013) view, the "media bios" or "virtual bios" concerns the processes of reconfiguration of the media as an existential sphere formed essentially by information and that seeks to integrate the subject into society through link between economy and technology.

In his work "Anthropology of the mirror: a theory of linear and networked communication", Sodr  (2013) presents the existence of a fourth bios: the mediatic or virtual bios as an element capable of explaining and understanding the mediatization of human relationships and experiences in society. "post-industrial" society, especially from the development of information and communication technologies.

In the words of Sodr  (2013, p. 21), whose work this work shares, "[...] mediatization is an order of socially performed mediations in the sense of communication understood as an informational process, in the wake of business organizations and with emphasis in a particular type of interaction – which we could call 'techno- interaction' –, characterized by a kind of technological and marketing prosthesis of sensible reality, called medium".

The fourth bios presented by the author is based on and is the result of Aristotle's work "Nicomachean Ethics", through which Sodr  (2013) analyzes the three genres of existence (bios) in the Polis, which reflect different modes of sociability in human life. , namely: the bios theoretikos (mode of knowledge), the bios apolaustikos (mode of pleasures) and the bios politikos (mode of politics).

Reflecting on each of these bios worked by Aristotle, as fields of organization of human life, the conception of the media bios emerges as a key concept to understand today's society, since - for Sodr  (2013) - the media presents itself as another lifestyle permeated by technological and market perspectives.

These elements, for the author, were not properly contemplated in the Aristotelian bios system, but they are also not repulsive to Aristotle's models, given that the four bios can coexist on the same social plane, as long as their integration takes place in technological spheres. and economic.

Sodr  (2013) considers that the media bios is related to the field of communication and the nature of information that directly affects social relations in its most diverse instances and institutions, above all, because it is based on an idea of subsidized "information society". by political and industrial interests.

Thus, as a product and producer of a kind of media "mirror", the media bios "[...] is not a simple copy, reproduction or reflection, because it implies a new way of life, with a new space and way of interpellation". collective of individuals, therefore, other parameters for the constitution of personal identities" (Sodr , 2013, p. 23).

For the author, the media bios is essentially constituted by a communicational logic, where the connections and interfaces of information technologies operate, especially with the industrialization processes of the 21st century. For this reason, he considers that the media bios does not have exactly a defined territory so that it is possible to delimit the spaces between what would be the real world and the virtual world or what would be an online and offline way of life, including from the perspective of participatory democracy and

the idea of artificial intelligence, considering that “[...] the media are structuring or restructuring perceptions, cognitions, functioning as a kind of collective agenda” (Sodré, 2013, p. 26) .

From Sodré (2013), it can be inferred that the experiences of the subjects, especially with the advent of TDIC, have suffered and - at the same time - built influences and effects through technoculture, which builds and transforms relationships giving new interfaces to the processes of formation of political consciousness of the subjects, in their perceptions about and with reality, as well as calling attention to the intrinsic articulation between market and media in globalized society, having the media and communication as key points for understand new discoveries and social relationships beyond traditional media.

In general terms, the fact “is that technoculture – the one made up of the market and the means of communication, that of the fourth bios – implies a transformation of traditional forms of socialization, in addition to a new perspective and mental technology. It implies, therefore, a new type of relationship of the individual with concrete references or with what has been conventionally designated as truth, that is, another anthropological condition” (Sodré, 2013, p. 27).

In this bios-media context where technoculture produces ways of being in the world, it is necessary to pay more and more attention to what is produced in the media, especially the digital ones. And, so to speak, it must be said that the positive side of AI, as in the field of education, health, security and scientific research, has been affected by the dark, perverse and obscure world of fake news.

In the words of Lee (2019, p. 20), “artificial intelligence is the elucidation of the human learning process, the quantification of the human thought process, the explanation of human behavior and the understanding of what makes intelligence possible”.

From Lee (2019), it can be said that the popularization of AI technologies has also changed fake news, since AI has been used to strengthen the culture of disinformation. Through AI technologies, in addition to the process of spreading fake news becoming easier, fake news has reached more complex levels, especially because the fake news industry has grown and technologies are being used at its service.

With regard to the propagation of fake news in the field of AI, Ruediger (2017) considers that one of the consequences of the automation of publishing tools was the birth and growth of the number of robots in the world, which reverberated in the control of accounts through of software as if they were people, in the domination of human life through social networks, as well as an active participation in moments of political discussions, for example. Thus, the author assumes that there is a favorable environment for disinformation, the internet, and software or people sending fake news through social media and robots.

Thus, for Ruediger (2017, p. 06), “the internet and social networks have become a very important, growing, and dynamic field of public debate and dispute over narratives, which lead to the search for hegemonies in politics. This reality opens space for legitimate and factual discussions, but also for corsair, non-legitimate and non-factual discourses (fake news)”.

The author draws attention that, among the various spheres of action of fake news via AI, in the political-party perspective, for example, robots have been used as strong allies of party strengthening, whose action is not limited to the conquest of supporters and sympathizers, but it is also linked to attacks against opponents and the construction of reputable and superficial narratives.

Once at the service of fake news, robots, as well as people through social networks, act as machines that work on a large scale in the dissemination of fake news capable of manipulating debates and influencing

public opinion (Mello, 2020). One of the most common examples today is the production of hashtags, whose mass promotion of automated posts can affect public debates and, consequently, obstruct real knowledge about some fact, phenomenon or event of a social, political, economic and cultural nature.

In this sense, thinking about the processes of political formation and political participation of subjects within the field of everyday politics and institutionalized politics, reflections on AI associated with the evolution of fake news assume that: “the growth of the concerted action of robots represents, therefore, a real threat to the public debate, posing risks, in the limit, to democracy, by manipulating the process of consensus formation in the public sphere and the selection of representatives and government agendas that can define the future of the country” (Ruediger, 2017, p. 07).

Ruediger’s (2017) speech reinforces Lee (2019) and Sumpter (2019) when they call attention that algorithms control human life and robots have transformed the world, in a way that – given the importance of AI in its beneficial aspects – no there is no denying that AI has become more and more sophisticated and, as a result, it has developed structures that have the ability to replicate the human pattern, more and more, with precision.

If, on the one hand, Ruediger (2017) points out the automation of information as one of the adversaries arising from AI, given that software assumes the ability [capable] of automatically producing fake news that present authentic characteristics. On the other hand, and without disregarding the perspective of Ruediger (2017), the infographics from Infobase (Brasil, 2020) point out that one of the great evolutions of fake news today is the creation of deep fakes, which are constituted in images, sounds and videos that have characteristics of authenticity and veracity, but which are not.

Deepfakes, as a technique that uses AI with the aim of creating images and videos through the manipulation of audio, facial expressions and faces, has become a common practice thanks to technological development, especially in the field of AI. In general terms, deep fakes are considered a form of AI, called machine learning, capable of producing fakes very similar to the real one based on a database.

This production, in turn, takes place through studies carried out on existing patterns in sounds, photos and videos, which makes it possible to replace faces, change recorded speeches, as well as other variations (Sá, 2019). This means that in order to produce a deep fake video of someone, it is necessary for the system to be fed with videos and photos in which the person appears. The greater the amount of materials, the greater the possibilities of achieving a satisfactory result.

From training with the material available, the AI learns the person's behavior and begins to recognize their movement patterns, voice and face aspects, as well as other characteristics. In Brazil, Manuela D’Ávila, for example, was the target of deep lakes in the 2018 elections, when she ran for the country’s vice presidency on the Workers’ Party (PT) ticket (Brasil, 2020).

Infobase (Brasil, 2020, p. 01) states that: “in the political context, the popularization of deep fakes and tools to change videos and images in a simple way is affecting the public's trust in different institutions. 68% of Americans say misinformation affects their trust in government. 50% of them believe that fake news is as big a problem for the country as terrorism or racism”.

In this way, the exercise of distinguishing real from manipulated information is a challenge in the processes of analysis of political and social life, since the decision-making and choices of subjects can be defined by the set of information they receive and the analyzes they make; which implies saying that the anchoring of

the public agenda – with reverberations in private life – must be in qualified information.

#### **4. Conclusion**

One of the emerging possibilities of the “age of the algorithms” is the rapid and wide dissemination of fake news, which roughly can be seen as adulterated or falsified information, whose power of reach was more reduced, prior to digital information and communication technologies; and had fewer implications for democratic systems. In this scenario, it is important to highlight that the concept of media bios brought by Sodré (2013) presents a transmedia perspective of the mediatization processes of the human experience with digital information and communication technologies, both from the point of view of the dissemination of information and the consumption of diversity of network contents that are accessed at an ever-increasing speed.

Characteristic of this process, the field of AI has been reconfigured, for example, through the creation of robots that act in the propagation of fake news, mainly through the manipulation of social networks, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter. The evil use of AI finds fertile ground and has repercussions both in everyday political practices and in party-political practices, whose movement, opposed to democracy, affects social institutions and people in their public and private lives.

In this regard, for example, Mello (2020) reports that, as a journalist and after publishing reports related to the financing of fake news shootings on the network and on WhatsApp – for the most part – in favor of the candidate Jair Bolsonaro in the 2018 elections in Brazil, it became the target of an intense and violent campaign marked by intimidation and defamation provoked by the so-called “hate office” and the so-called digital militias.

Looking at the media bios and AI technologies can represent important key points to understand not only how fake news is born and reproduced, but also how to build new responses to the challenges that this issue brings to societies.

It is in this context that the debate on political formation takes on the expression of new social paradigms in the face of the production and dissemination of fake news. Although the production and dissemination of fake news is not a nascent phenomenon today, it is a fact that its propagation has increased in recent years, mainly with the advent of digital media and social networks, as well as the harmful use of artificial intelligence technologies through creation of robots, which work on social networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter.

The literature review points out that it cannot be denied that fake news has represented the function of a polarizing agency of opinions, ideas, positions and visions in the political field and influenced the political formation of subjects, such as the strong influence that fake news exerted. Through the president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, in the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as in the Brazilian elections in 2018

The literature highlights that fake news has different characteristics and can act in different ways in the processes of political formation and participation, affecting both everyday political practices and institutionalized practices. And, in this way, they can be used from the creation of cyber scams, to the spread of viruses and unfounded narratives, or even to influence the political situation through the culture of disinformation.

It can be said that the culture of disinformation, reinforced by the “hate office and machine” in Brazil, represents a threat to democratic society. And, therefore, the preservation of freedom of expression and the impediment for disinformation to compromise democracy constitute one of the greatest challenges today from the point of view of the political formation and participation of the subjects.

The discussions brought in this work also highlight that the propagation of fake news, through digital information and communication technologies, has become a powerful instrument in the most varied processes of manipulation of public opinion, strengthening - through culture of disinformation – the coloniality of minds.

Coloniality of minds, in turn, represents a mode of epistemic violence as a result of the transmission and transformation of customs and habits of social systems themselves, such as education, science, governmental political institutions, religion, media, family, which propagate ways impositions both in the field of thought and in the action of the colonizing spheres.

In this way, the research developed in this work in its bibliographic dimension draws attention that, with the help of digital media and social networks, fake news has assumed the condition of colonizing agents of minds through the production of beliefs where the truth is on the sidelines. or, simply, it does not exist, giving rise to creation or changing behaviors, attitudes, actions and narratives.

Fake news, in this sense, are elements capable of weakening democracy, in addition to serving as obstacles to the distinction between freedom of expression and the use of this freedom to propagate harmful narratives. Factors that can contribute to putting the credibility of social institutions in check, as well as can generate or strengthen a feeling of indifference in relation to the political subject, causing subjects not to perceive the existence of politics in their simple everyday relationships.

Thus, it can be said that the lack of digital literacy and/or literacy is currently one of the main points that have contributed to the reception and propagation of fake news. Seen from the perspective of political formation and participation, fake news represents a social phenomenon that strategically attacks social institutions and jeopardizes the survival of democratic societies as they can compromise the political formation of future generations through the establishment of a “epistemic crisis”.

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