

Explanatory potential of the reception studies in the context of Big Data¹

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Abstract

We aim to discuss communication relations, circulation and production of meanings in the scenario of manipulation, control and power of information. We try to answer the following question: how do the reception studies respond to Big Data's challenges in extracting, mining, and analysing data to manipulate digital media users' behaviors? The method is the bibliographical research for the critical and comparative analysis of the author's perspectives. The concept of the system is used to challenge its productivity in reception studies. As a result of the discussion, the Barberian maps are taken up in perspective, to put history and social conflicts at the center of disputes over hegemony of meanings, which must be problematized by reception studies in the current social context.

Keywords: Reception Studies. Big Data. System. Barberian maps. Hegemony.

Introduction

The effects of communication media on hearings and their role on the alienation of the people have been in the center of heated debate since the advent of cinema. The functionalist theories, linked to the systemic view of communication, the hypodermic theory, which advocates the direct influence of the message on the receptor's change of behavior, and the critical theories fostered the idea of the effects of communication, each one with its specific set of concepts. In the 1980s, these theories were widely challenged by Latin American reception studies, inspired by the work of Jesús Martín-Barbero. The cultural mediation on communication and, later, the communication mediation on culture materialized as production logic, industrial formats, reception competencies, and cultural matrices, started to appear as a theoretical-methodological alternative in several studies. The researchers' aim was to understand the communication process on its full diversity and complexity without reducing it to the linear notion of action-reaction, issuer-message-receptor.

From these stances, we seek to measure the contribution of the Barberian work to think communication on the era of Big Data, based on the more than 30 years of the

¹ Some of the ideas developed in this article were presented at the Compós National Meeting 2019.

classic “*Dos meios às mediações*”, which has greatly inspired the reception studies in Latin America. Lopes (2018, p. 42) discusses the “Barberian communication epistemology”, which intends to “map the knowledge of Latin American communication and cultural practices”. An epistemology whose method maps the trails, an action that has never finished and, as night maps, its agents record the importance of the outskirts through speeches of resistance and diversity. Topics as popular culture, resistance, outskirts, and diversity are analyzed through the lens of communication mediation on culture and its intersections with the structures of power.

On the other hand, the communication media have largely changed in the last 30 years, and the interactions between human and machine have gained new dimensions. Beyond communication mediation on culture, the logic of the new media is that of control and harvest of value (through the collection of personal information) from communication exchanges. Computing based on data tracking encompasses everything diverse and not yet captured, and the homogenization of everything into data banks that feed models to measure and alter human behavior. Data tracking feeds big data as a big repository of all information, of all nature, everything that can be tagged with a signal, a symbol, or a sign produced and conveyed on the Internet. Big data is a dynamic “entity” that feeds algorithms and nurture and operate the applications and the functionality of data organized with an objective direction. “The population is the source for data collection and the final target of the actions produced by these data” (ZUBOFF, 2018, p. 34). The algorithms are, in this sense, prescription sentences, norms that analyze and organize the data to operate their functionality. They are the enablers of most of our activities on the Internet. All applications act according to the organized prescription sentences, called algorithms. As prescriptions, they act by foreseeing our actions - they are like foreseers of our behaviors. Bruno (2018, p. 247) speaks of “algorithmic vision” as “the control logic that wishes to intervene directly on its own action, or even before the action”. Couldry and Mejias (2018) call the Big Data logic “Colonialism of Data”. The authors attempt to explain that capitalism operates as a colonizer: extracting everything and using it for profit, monopolizing all available resources.

These two concurrent theory branches motivate the following questions: do reception studies have the explanatory potential for the transformation occurring in online digital communication media? How do reception studies respond to the challenges posed by big data on data collection, mining, and analysis with the aim of manipulating the behavior of digital media users?

The methodology adopted here consists of a literature search for the critical analysis of the authors’ perspectives. We discuss the concept of systems (SHANNON, 1948 apud LALLEMENT, 2012, BERTALANFFY, 2008, PARSONS apud LALLEMENT, 2012), and big data (ZUBOFF, 2018, BRUNO, 2018, COULDRY; MEJÍAS, 2018) applied to communication. More specifically, the paper discusses the concept of systems as opposed to Latin American reception studies (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 1998, 2002, WILLIAMS, 2011,

RONSINI, 2007, 2012, 2018). As a result, we expect to draft a discussion that will give clues to the more than needed deepening to be pursued by us, Communication researchers.

The concept of system and big data

Concepts are synthetic words of meanings in specific contexts. In Science, concepts are the result of reflection and theoretical-practical activities that organize knowledge about a given phenomenon. This organization is also situated in a specific theoretical context. For instance: the word *system* covers a wide field of meanings. It is owned by Biology, when dealing with living systems; by Economy, when dealing with economical systems; by Mathematics to report the relationship between equations. In Communication, it also acquires a specific meaning with the Mathematical Theory of Information (SHANNON, 1948 apud LALLEMENT, 2012)². It is important to highlight that, although each science branch makes a particular use, the same concept (in this case, *system*) covers a matrix field of meanings. To discuss a system is to discuss a set, a whole that interacts within a given order, i.e., there is a relationship logic whose governing law synthesizes its functioning. It concerns the ordering of the parts as a function of the whole. Every kind of systems function through entropy, which is the degree of disorder perpetrated by the elements of the system. In the Mathematical Theory of Information, more entropy depends on a larger quantity of information; less entropy results from a smaller quantity of information. For the theory, the signal is key; the meaning is not computed in the calculation of information transmission efficacy. The theory is mainly applied for military geopolitical goals, and for the development and improvement of information cryptography systems.

The concept of system is strong and central to the modern and contemporary thought. Some authors stand out as developers of a general System Theory: Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1901-1972), Talcott Parsons³ (1902-1979) and Niklas Luhmann (1927-1998). The concept is present in Communication, and Computing and Artificial Intelligence and is the core of the theoretical construct. Other concepts are aligned to it: transmission, effect, control, function, model, equilibrium, matter, energy, volume, actor-network, among others.

The systemic theory of society assumes that the whole and the parts are linked in the sense that the individuals - the parts - are isolated pieces that must be incorporated into the economic, social, and political system with a specific function. The systemic order

2 “The materialist aspects of his thoughts can help explain his estrangement from Information Theory. Some claim that this distancing would have resulted from his dissatisfaction with the path the Theory had taken: the distortion of its concepts when applied to other disciplines tormented him” (PINEDA, 2006, 19).

3 For Parsons (MOTTA, 1971, p. 20), “**all social systems face four functional imperatives** that they must meet. These imperatives are **maintenance**, satisfied by social values and cultural subsystems, **integration**, satisfied by the social norms and social subsystems, **achievement of goals**, satisfied by social collectivities and political subsystems, and **adaptability**, satisfied by the social roles and economical subsystem. Maintenance refers to the stability of the system of institutionalized values; achievement of goals refers to the relationship between the **actor** and one or more objects of the situation; it maximizes the system’s stability since it imposes a series of goals through control of the situation’s elements; adaptability refers to control of the system itself and the environment to achieve the goals; and finally, integration refers to the maintenance of solidarity between units for an efficient system functioning”.

emanates from a greater ‘entity’ and is governed by the omnipresence of technology. This systemic conception is updated within the contemporary economic and technological order. In this perspective, other relations and processes are not possible. Adaptation is the norm. This theory, which has also become an ideology, is operated to create and explain the social relationships and communication. It is widely applied to administration and management of people and companies.

As an example of the application of this systemic logic, we mention data collection by Google and other major companies. They operate with data from consumers, extracting particular, isolated and fragmented information and organize them in a systemic way with commercial and even political aim. They proceed with ease and with the autonomy given by the lack of regulation⁴. According to Zuboff (2018), they want us to believe that big data technology is autonomous, a system operating by itself, “an inevitable technological effect”. However, as the author continues, “big data derives from society and there we should find it and study it (...), it is above all the key component of a new logic of accumulation, deeply intentional and with significant consequences, which I call *vigilance capitalism*” (ZUBOFF, 2018, p. 18).

According to Couldry and Mejias (2018), we live in the era of “data colonialism” - the systemic conception employed on big data takes us closer to the colonialist period. There is nothing innocent or natural in the organization of mechanisms of data collection with economic goals. In other words, the current relationship with the communication media largely extrapolate the mechanisms of commercial practice of analogical media. Having your Smart TV⁵ capturing all data on movement in your home is a reality poorly discussed in the scope of the citizens’ rights, for instance. This indiscriminate capture of everything in the social medium hurts privacy and freedom of expression. The colonialism logic is that of extraction and domination, establishing a relationship of dependency with the citizen.

The elements of this systemic logic of data collection are added by the cognitive sciences to learn, influence, and manipulate people’s behavior. Cognitive studies applied to the design of marketing proposals, political advertisement, and management are increasingly popular in the academic, political, marketing, and healthcare environments, and are largely based on the systemic logics (BATISTA; MARLET, 2018, SILVA, n.d). The combination of data collection, mining, and analysis with techniques of apprehension of the mind’s cognitive reflexes are the “new order” of the systemic thought applied to social control. The sophistication of these initiatives surpasses the market and advertisement fields to venture into politics as exemplified by the latest elections in Brazil and USA (MOTA, 2017, FLORES, 2017). Both election processes were marked by strategies based on data mining to target groups of certain emotional and behavioral profile for the delivery of messages that

⁴ It is worth mentioning the efforts to approve and put into effect the internet Privacy Protection Law (DE LUCA, 2018).

⁵ An article published by O Globo in 2015 claims that Samsung issued in alert about the data collection by *smart tv*: “Please be aware that all personal data or sensitive information included among your words will be among the data captured and transmitted to third parties through voice recognition”, according to Samsung (O GLOBO, 2015). Available at: <https://oglobo.globo.com/economia/samsung-adverte-cuidado-com-que-voce-diz-em-frente-sua-tv-inteligente-15286181>. Accessed on: . 2019.

confound and deny all possibilities of a different perspective. The directionality allowed by social networks, opinion bubbles and closed points of view (PARISER, 2011) added to the strategy of simulating situations that create fear and hatred aligned to a general recessive economic context allowed the election results in Brazil and USA.

We can mention other examples of high investments on the study of the mind, whose aims are directly linked to the development of the so-called “artificial intelligence”. The list of corporations that own this technology is long, and one can say that all major corporations adopt some component of it mostly to optimize resources, reduce costs, and worsen labor conditions⁶. The discourse defending the advantages of artificial intelligence focus on the ease of modern life for consumption and wellness⁷, creating a picture of direct communication between minds (BBI) and telepresence, among other things.

The wonders of direct communication with someone else’s mind are presented without any hints of problematization about what this means in terms of control of the receptors’ social and biological information. The naturalization obliterates the fact that technology operates according to a set of rules, systems commanded by economic and political groups. They invest to dominate knowledge, orchestrating science to their own ends.

In this sense, we defend the existence of a common axis among all these examples - Google, Amazon, the elections, and the applications of mind communication. This axis is the systemic perspective of society functioning and technology centrality as a historical determinant. It is the production of a technoscience serving the economic and political structures of power. There is no debate over what the possible uses of these technologies are. No perspectives for uses different from that of the logic of geopolitical control and wealth accumulation.

In any case, in our field of expertise, the question asked is about the relevance of reception studies in an era when technoscience aims at the control of the mind and the genetic “improvement” for a perfect human being⁸. What is the theoretical tool of reception studies that allows us to face the discussion with the hegemonic sector of Sciences that thinks reality from the logic of big data, systems functionality, and technological centrality?

6 About this topic, refer to AmazonTurk, the exploitation of the so-called micro-works – people that click on information recognition - that plays the role of artificial intelligence (HARA, 2018).

7 In the article by Esdras Moreira for the blog *Transformação Digital* (30/01/2019), the author highlights the benefits of digital media and announces what awaits us in the near future: telepresence. Telepresence robots, like Beam, represent the generation of face-to-face communication, allowing your participation and movement as if you were in the room; Virtual worlds: allow you to join one or more people, not physically, but in a high resolution virtual world, as a very similar replica, talking and sharing experiences as if it was real; Brain-computer interface: this modality concerns the ability of connecting our mind to a computer and vice-versa, allowing a more intimate way of communication. And this potential is not restricted to the manipulation of machines with our thoughts but opens possibilities for the establishment of a direct communication with someone else’s mind - mind-to-mind communication or BBI. Available at: <https://transformacaodigital.com/novas-tecnologias-de-comunicacao-e-o-futuro-das-nossas-relacoes/>. Accessed on: 13 may 2019.

8 The journal *Nature* published in Nov of 2018 the paper: Genome-edited baby claim provokes international outcry. The startling announcement by a Chinese scientist represents a controversial leap in the use of genome editing. Available at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-07545-0>. Accessed on: 31 jan. 2019.

Can the reception studies explain big data manipulation?

As we stated in the Introduction, Latin American reception studies were developed based on the refusal of the concept of mass communication (mass is always the others, stated Williams [1969]), on the refusal of the concepts of the cultural industry, manipulation and alienation, to the benefit of studying the popular classes culture, the so-called subordinate classes, outweighing the traditional forms, the permanence, the reappropriations, and the resistance in the discourses of the popular expression and manifestation. Thus, what to say in favor of these concepts from the advance of big data as commercial system of political and behavioral control?

The theories that elect *system* as a matrix concept obliterate the relations of power, and the different interests of the social classes from their analysis, naturalizing the economical inequity as if it was part of the game of natural selection – the strongest wins. The systemic view suggest that political and economic power emanates naturally from the more suited ones, those who order and control, and benefit from the goods and wealth produced by society. Everything presented as different, diverse, and critical to the systemic order is understood as a dysfunction, an object to be eradicated. From the theories of propaganda to the control and prediction of consumers' acts through the collection and analysis of data, the theoretical principle is the same: entropy and control are the rule.

In reception studies, the concept of power is the immanence to be challenged; what is matter for the researcher is presented in the form of residues, tracks, breaches, resistances, contrasts, reappropriations, negotiations, reformulations, redefinitions. This theoretical environment that identifies power and seeks what is popular⁹ as a contrast to the hegemonies (GRAMSCI, 1978) aim to control opinions, minds and behaviors is, therefore, a matrix that clashes with the systemic wishes of interfering directly with people's actions and reactions.

On the other hand, in most of the reception studies, the topic of power (economic and political) remains as a shadow that haunts but is never faced as a question emerging from research. The discussion is disguised under the concept 'popular'. 'Popular' is an *omnibus* concept where all forms of resistance and class conflicts are erased, and where conformism and adhesion to the dominant ideology are hidden. The origin of the problem is in the concepts with which the theoretical edifice of reception studies was built. The mediations have become an umbrella concept to map the relationship modes of the subjects with the communication media, deepening the harvest of personal narratives without the critical analysis of these very narratives and their due insertion into the current of discourses that allow their effects of senses, historicity, and understanding of the widest context of social relationships.

9 It is worth noticing that the concept of popular is the object of dispute by theoretical fields that see it from different perspectives: popular as space/time of the manifestation of ideological disputes that occur in the quotidian of subordinate populations, from where contrast and a transforming potential may emerge; popular as reminiscence of the traditional, pure and naïve; and popular as expansion of the mass culture and the downgrading of its quality.

One exception is Ronsini (2007, 2012, 2018). The researcher focuses on “the study of the mediations in TV reception, in the field and the city, aiming to understand the relation among the popular classes, ethnicity, and gender (melodrama)”. She also studies the social uses of communication media in everyday life, highlighting the class *habitus*, cultural practices and socialization, and imaginary (text excerpt from Lattes, 2018). She is one of the few scholars to problematize the issue of social classes from Bourdieu, and, therefore, power as part of reproduction. In her studies, Ronsini (2007, 2012) ponders the conservative aspects of the hegemonic discourse in the narratives of the youth, workers (from field and city), and women from the popular classes. Ronsini (2007, 2012) has always called attention for the logic emerging from the popular classes discourse. Much more than processes of resistance or emancipation, the everyday discourses of men and women expressed aspirations, projections of the dominant social places. Ronsini’s studies (2007, 2012) allow us to understand that there is an incongruity between the times of media consumption and the memories and trajectories of the classes, families and gender, not always expressed by the author, but always observed from the potentialities of the conflicts between them (dissonant times). Conflicts often manifested as an expression of the social class positions.

In a recently published article in the periodic *InTexto*, Ronsini (2018) recalls Raymond Williams (2011) on the predominance of economy in the scope of social and cultural relationships. This is done while marking Williams (2011) position within the author’s reinterpretation of Marx according to Gramsci. In Williams (1969) approach, social and cultural are freed from the simplistic and positivist interpretation where society and culture are mere reflexes of its material basis.

In doing so, Ronsini (2018) shows that cultural mediations reveal social conflicts, struggles between classes, submission and subordination, and illustrates the counter-hegemonic content of the hegemonic. In this acceptance, power is no longer a shadow but the center of the revelations of the process of investigation; more than revealing how the now digital communication media, the trails left by their use reveal, or may reveal, how people relate with power structures. In other words, her studies reveal how ideologies are produced and how they circulate and are settled in the everyday life.

Hence, our challenges concern how the reception studies can claim its explanatory potential as social theory that criticizes the communication media in face of the omnipresence of digital technologies and big data.

Replacing the dimensions of history and the production relations in the Barberian maps

This task can be made easier if we reconsider the night maps of Martín-Barbeiro (LOPES, 2018). They started with the diachronic (history) and synchronic (everyday life) dimensions, expressed in the production and circulation logics and in the logics of the

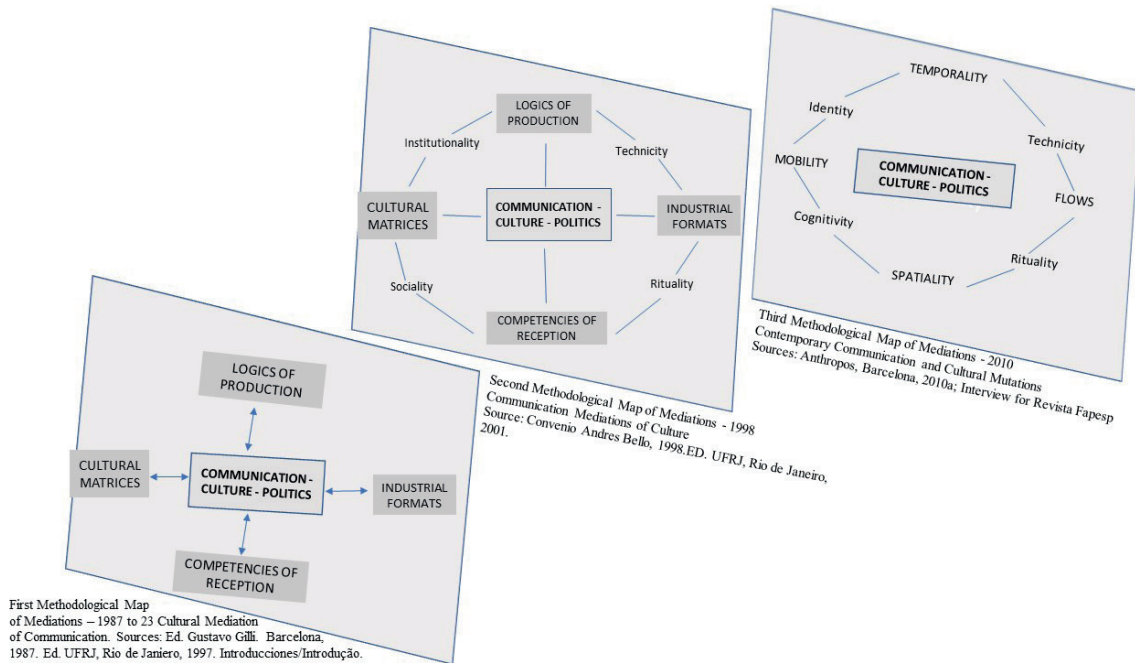
industrial formats and cultural matrices, axes where power/history are manifested in a clearer way. However, these dimensions were lost amidst the details. The 2010¹⁰ map displaces diachrony and synchrony as general aspects of the culture of communication and politics to define quotidian separately in the axes of temporality and spatiality, forming a chronotope which cognitive and technological dimensions are aimed towards the quotidian to the detriment of the conditions of production and circulation, more general aspects that contextualize the communication processes. When renouncing the notion of chronotope as a dimension of totality, we accept the risk of losing the notion of history and, therefore, of dialogue (BAKHTIN, 1992), which is essential to all discourses and to the production of meanings. In our assessment, the 2010 map, when disconnected from the other maps, emphasizes the systemic logic of flow and mobility, an aspect that emphasizes technicity as the privileged observable in the micro of social relationships. The social use of technology in the receptor's quotidian exaggerates what the subject does with the media, without considering that the current media are no longer analogue but collectors of information directly from the users, more than simply content producers, where relationships of power assume another dimension. Thus, reception studies risk failing to problematize a more general context of production and the changes in shape and expression of culture relative to power.

The solution for this conceptual and methodological problem is to resize the Barberian maps. Not individualizing those maps by processing them as advancements over the previous ones. We suggest that they must be revisited in perspective, taking the three superimposed maps as a single one to add depth to the conceptual analysis of the study.

In Figure 1, next, the maps of Martín-Barbero (published on the years of 1987, 1998 and 2010) are not three. The figure forms one single map with three layers, where the notions of historicity and power are not missed out.

10 Third Methodological Map of Mediations, 2010, "Contemporary Communicative and Cultural Mutations" (LOPES, 2018).

Figure 1 –



Source: Author's proposal for the interpretation of the Barberian maps (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2018).

The methodological maps of the mediations are not exclusive. They must be understood in perspective. The first one plots the logics of production and the competencies of reception on the synchronic axis; the cultural matrices and the industrial formats make the diachronic axis and give us the wide history dimension. Structured in layers and depth, the other maps specify the investigation and direct the investigator's view to the specific penetrations of the quotidian and history axes and how they relate to each other. In other words, the logics of production must be observed from the chronotope (time-space) in terms of flow and mobility; this is how one should proceed with the cultural matrices and industrial formats.

In this manner, the foundation of reception studies can be resumed in terms of residues, breaches, reappropriations, resistances, contrasts, negotiations, reformulations, resignification, from where the concept of hegemony inevitably emerges¹¹(GRAMSCI, 1978). This concept allows the comprehension of the dialectical movement, the permanent contradiction of history in the context of political strategies and tactics. In other words, hegemony is the movement of constant negotiation that happens as the social life among the established ideologies, the quotidian ideology (common sense values) and against hegemony. This political movement embraces the whole social structure, touches culture, education, arts, communication media, and materializes institutionally as party politics and

11 Under the influence of Gramsci in the thought of Martín-Barbero (1998, 2002), refer to Moraes (2018).

other institutions of the State, and as economic conglomerates that control the information of the citizens. Hegemony is the expression of the class struggle, updated on the fight for the control of the technoscientific knowledge and its use.

Leaving the popular and reaching the historical subject

When we reposition the Barberian maps as such, we also need to reconsider the idea of “receptor” as individual/social. The concept of historical individual/social is constructive for the reception studies because it updates our comprehension of the social *praxis* as the foundation of human, departing from the systemic conception of artificial intelligence and humanization of machine.

The human being is vital, natural, historical and social (SCHAFF, 1967). This means that the human being is an individual/social. Their real existence takes place within social and cultural aspects: in the objective relations of social struggles and contradictions. Thus, as stated by Baccega (1998, p. 36), “the individual/subject is not independent: he/she is tied by the conditionings imposed by the society where he/she lives. He/she is, however, autonomous, i.e., capable of redefining this load, producing novelty”. The subject is an individual (particular) and is, at the same time, social, resulting from the historical process; he/she is a historical being, responsible for his/her actions.

If this movement of confirmation and denial is intrinsic to the objective existence of the subject, it is thus repeated so we can understand the processes of production and circulation of meanings. Contradictions are the subject of the researcher of reception processes. Let us remember that the cultural matrices are permeated by the dominant ideologies; and the production logics are rationalizations of the labor processes that make the cultural products feasible in the form of merchandise.

In this theoretical design, the concept of system is reconsidered under the dialectical laws. In this acceptance, the system is open and subordinate to the *metabolism* of the social and historical movement. Even in nature, the systemic logic cannot be functional, the contradictions inherent to the transformation of matter create a dialogue between nature and society¹². The uniqueness and causality are aspects of the dialectical movement. Concerning the algorithms and machine control over society, we need to go back to the idea of power and politics. Zuboff (2018) made a good case for it when coining the term “vigilance capitalism”. The interests of hegemonic groups are superimposed to the welfare of the many and to the emancipation of people. These logics are not inherent to the movement of history, they depend on regulation by vigilance and control.

In this sense, it is necessary to reconsider the critical social thinking and endow the reception studies with elements that allow the comprehension of the movements of

¹² Marx used the concept “flaw on the metabolic relationship” between human beings and the land to capture the material alienation of human beings within the capitalist society from the natural conditions that formed the basis of their existence, which he terms: “the perpetual condition[s] of human existence imposed by nature” (AUGUSTIN; ALMEIDA, 2006, p. 83-84).

contradictions and conflicts of the hegemonic, of the common sense, and the counter-hegemonic. The guiding of the interrelations from particular instances to general (micro/macrosocial), and the drawing of the relations between communication, culture, and power can make reception studies reach another level. The relevance of reception studies is on highlighting the political emphasis of the communication relations to surpass the individual/social action and their conditions to position themselves in the world; as well as identifying, in the communication process, how the production relations intensify the conflicts for hegemony.

Thus, the intensification of the empiric research on the digital networks, the mapping of the pathways travelled by receptors in the circulation of messages, and actions and interactions in the digital media have the aim of understanding the communication relations and, in this context, how they converge in terms of hegemony and counter-hegemony, greater or smaller control.

To the Barberian maps (the synchronic and diachronic axes, the temporalities and spatiality) we add the understanding that operating with each aspect of mediations require the understanding of the dialectical movement, whose drive is contradiction. The metabolism of the Capital is present in all axes, spaces and times, but its opposite is also present. Reception research has a potential for *action-research* (PERUZZO, 2005), which also acts as part of the process, transforming it.

To conclude

We opened this manuscript asking questions about the explanatory potential of the reception studies, given the transformations in the online digital communication media. Arguing affirmatively about the potential of this kind of research, our trajectory was based on the concept of system. This choice enabled the synthesis, on these few pages, of the trajectory of the hegemonic thought, particularly on how the concept of system has been established from the end of the 19th century until this day. The general theory of systems, on its several ramifications through science fields, proposes understanding the object under study as a system, which feedback is given by the interaction between the parts as a function of the whole. This perspective helps understanding the circulatory system or the cooling system of computers. But, when applied to other situations, its limitations are disadvantageous. What to say about the interpretation of the social relations as a system where the functions are pre-determined, and contradictions serve only to provide feedback into the system? How are the relations of power in this scenario? How to treat the materiality of the subjects' actions, the historicity, the chance, or even the uniqueness of human action?

If the concept of system is useful when thinking alternatives to it in the scientific scope, it also helps to understand the digital electronic systems as culture artifacts (FOLCHER; RABARDEL, 2007). They contain the logics of their own conception, logics that are aligned with the economic and hegemonic political power interests that created

them. The technological systems are not immune to the social and political order of their time. Digital systems represent, unarguably, great advance of human knowledge, but in the order of exploitation and concentration of wealth, they serve primarily to deepen inequities, to control, and to banalize life. In this sense, when realigning the night maps of Martín-Barbero (2018), scholars of reception should not forget to consider them in their dimension of perspective and unit, to track the ways in which political and economic power are revealed in the signs, signals and symbols of the conflicting movement for hegemony.

In the scenario of challenges expressed by the new logic of accumulation and exploitation structured on big data, be it as vigilance Capitalism (ZUBOFF, 2018), or Colonialism (COULDRY; MEJIAS, 2018), communication scientists look at the humanist civilization. Science is not done for science. Knowledge is at the service of life, and humanization is at the service of humanity. Arts and Science, as many have stated before, are expressions of the capacity of the human being to humanize themselves, they are the result of human labor. Reception studies, when seeking to understand circulation and uses and cultural practices, may effectively contribute for the understanding of society's conflicts and dilemmas, and confrontations with big data.

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