

The Discursive Impact of Disinformation on Journalism

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Abstract. *Contemporary discourses, particularly within journalism, often claim to represent multiple facets of reality. However, many of these representations are misleading, fictional, or entirely detached from empirical facts. Public opinion is not only influenced by traditional media and digital platforms but is actively constructed through rhetorical and discursive strategies that obscure factual accuracy. These mechanisms restrict the epistemological function of information and undermine the autonomy of communication professionals, thus compromising the public's ability to discern truth. In today's global context, marked by increasingly complex political, economic, and military conflicts, the instrumental propaganda, distinguished as journalism, has become more prevalent like a phenomenon of further intelligence technologies. Segments of journalism are increasingly shaped by such discursive formations. This essay employs discourse analysis to examine these dynamics, by highlighting how these factors foster the gradual erosion of professional journalism. Our argument advances the view that the most pressing threat does not arise from technology or Artificial Intelligence per se, but rather from the ethical challenges that emerge in the management and circulation of information. In this regard, the central risk lies in disinformation becoming embedded as a discursive practice in journalism.*

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, disinformation, journalism, public opinion.*

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Introduction

This text aims to position disinformation as an ethical-discursive concern in contemporary journalism, surpassing technological or resource-related explanations. It demonstrates that the management of information entails risks both inside and outside the journalistic field and adopts, in the form of an essay, a discursive studies approach, focusing on illustrative discursive scenes rather than on exhaustive analyses of their details. The study argues that journalism faces the potential for further erosion from within the profession if it becomes susceptible to discourses devoid of ethical accountability.

The issue of disinformation contributes to defining the dimensions of the mediatized discourses along cleavages in the media landscape. Disinformation has become a central concept in contemporary societies, especially due to its impact on public opinion and democratic processes. From the perspective of discourse studies, disinformation is not simply the transmission of false content, but also a strategic production of ideological meanings and communicative conditions. According to Fairclough (1992), discourse is a form of social practice that both reflects and fragments power relations. Thus, disinformation campaigns can be understood as discursive practices aimed at manipulating communicative relations. Likewise, Authier-Revuz (1998) emphasizes that discourse always bears traces of its Enunciation conditions, including the subject's position, institutional context, and ideological affiliations.

Opinion polls widely echoed in the media offer a clear example of how this phenomenon is manifested. They often rest on two half-truths: first, that everyone supposedly holds an opinion or has access to one; and second, that all opinions expressed in such polls are inherently valuable. Pierre Bourdieu addressed this issue in the 1980s, by noting the lack of consensus on which questions should be asked, how they should be formulated, and which topics deserve inclusion in a public opinion poll. Moreover, semantic similarities in question formulation may introduce significant bias, just as the omission of certain questions can distort the public perception. As a result, respondents may appear

to agree with a statement without fully understanding it or reflecting on it. Bourdieu's provocative claim that "public opinion does not exist" can only be understood by examining the rhetorical structures that construct and legitimize its supposed existence.

In this sense, truth and falsehood often operate within a relative binary. Public opinion polls exemplify how the same reality can be discursively framed in divergent, yet seemingly valid, ways. Certain conjunctures strongly influence discursive production. In discourse theory, such conjunctures are referred to as discursive production conditions (Fairclough, 1992). When a poll is conducted in close proximity to a significant social or journalistic event, the context may shape the meaning of the responses. Additionally, such polls often serve political functions. As Bourdieu (1972) argued, political interests guide both the interpretation of responses and the significance attributed to the publication of results.

The narrative battlefield of contemporary media has reshaped journalism in profound ways, by altering the very nature of message, many of which no longer require mediation by professional journalists. As technologies evolve, so too do communicative practices, not only in warfare, transportation, and biomedicine, but in media itself. This evolution has rhetorical and discursive implications, enabling persuasion in an increasingly immediate and sophisticated way and particularly through artificial intelligence. Whether shaping public opinion on elections, international conflicts, or global trade disputes, digital platforms influence interpretations of nearly all media content.

Today's war propaganda bears little resemblance to the street posters of World War I or the televised images of the Gulf War in the 1990s, which marked a turning point in journalism's capacity to represent events in real time. The number of actors involved in shaping and disseminating narratives has multiplied with the digital revolution, generating a fragmented discursive landscape without centralized control. Clear senders and well-defined audiences, hallmarks of the mass media era have been replaced by algorithmic dynamics that are no less ideo-

logical. This is where artificial intelligence reconfigures the production of news, the value of messages, and the legitimacy of information. Neuber (2025) points to the risks of intelligent technologies in cyberspace, concluding that disinformation and deep fakes constitute a new paradigm of digital threat capable of undermining institutional trust and human confidence. From this perspective, disinformation becomes a security issue.

The relationship between artificial intelligence and disinformation is well established in communication research (Vosoughi et al., 2018; Alaphilippe et al., 2019; Hosanagar & Jair, 2020; Pennycook & Rand, 2021). These studies investigate how false news spreads on social media via AI mechanisms, by showing that intelligent systems can both combat and disseminate disinformation. They also explore curatorial strategies for minimizing the harmful effects of manipulative content.

As the boundaries between news and everyday digital messages get blurred, it becomes increasingly difficult for ordinary citizens to recognize disinformation. This erosion affects journalism as a profession. The resulting divide in the public opinion is not just ideological or political but also cognitive, interpretive, and hermeneutical. The public's capacity to distinguish between responsible journalism and misleading posts is deeply compromised.

During the Russia–Ukraine war (since 2022), for instance, Russian bloggers using *Telegram* became alternative news sources without professional training or accountability. These circulated messages were perceived as news. According to *Reporters Without Borders* (2025), the Kremlin funds an online school for pro-Moscow war correspondents to promote ideological narratives beyond algorithmic control. More than 1,000 students enrolled in 2023 alone, with the school reportedly receiving €100,000 in government funding.

This is just one example among many illustrating how information and propaganda are circulating globally at an increasing speed and while also growing in volume. Journalistic discourse is not limited to traditional news texts. When media outlets use advertising disguised as

news to promote disinformation, they compromise one of democracy's core pillars: journalism. Christofolletti and Vieira (2025) show that 19 Brazilian newspapers used such strategies to misinform the public during the COVID-19 pandemic by promoting unproven drugs through pseudo-medical ads, all of them undermining the vaccine efforts and shaping the public perception.

Formerly dependent on international news agencies and editorial agendas, the public sphere now also relies on non-journalistic, alternative source including so-called digital influencers. Manipulated images circulate globally as false content. In Ivory Coast, a fabricated narrative of an alleged coup d'état spread widely, simulating journalistic coverage while functioning as ideological propaganda.

False or misleading messages have always existed. In ancient warfare, deception was a strategic tool. But, with the institutionalization of journalism in the 17th century, a professional ethos emerged, later reinforced by legal mechanisms imposing civil and criminal responsibility for misinformation. While the traditional media may still err, such errors are legally accountable.

What we are witnessing now is the erosion of journalism's professional foundations, ironically reinforcing its necessity in the global reality. The consequences are not merely symbolic but economic and political as well. The collapse of journalistic credibility alters the consumption patterns and shifts the mechanisms of power. No wonder that imperial and autocratic regimes have formed alliances with big tech companies. The information war is no longer about controlling TV stations or newspapers; all this is about dominating digital platforms in the 21st century.

The work of journalists within this transforming media market remains under threat. During the conflict between Russia and Ukraine that began in 2022, Russian journalists and foreign correspondents operating in the Russian territory were prohibited from reporting freely. In the first weeks and months of coverage, they were instructed not to use the term 'war' to describe the conflict. The President of Russian Federa-

tion Vladimir Putin ordered the expulsion of professionals who insisted on covering the conflict while using that semantic framing (Parzianello, 2023).

War narratives have long been constructed on premises such as the existence of an enemy, which is used to justify the outbreak of a conflict. This approach is widely recognized as aligned with far-right discursive strategies. In dominant discourse, it is always 'the other' who pushes 'us' toward war. Narrating conflicts typically involve tactics that assign meaning to one side, legitimizing it as representing a noble cause. News reports about wars often emphasize casualties suffered by the opposing side, thereby generating social engagement, which is an outcome that benefits those in power. People tend to align with the victors: this pattern holds true across war, politics, and even sports media. In general, audiences prefer to support those perceived as dominant or likely to win whether in a battle, a match, or a race for hegemony. Solidarity with the disadvantaged tends to surface only in narratives focused on human rights or broader social causes, and rarely in competitive contexts. Even in journalistic accounts of personal struggles and overcoming adversity, the audience appeal is stronger when success is highlighted.

A kind of an established 'media meritocracy pact' seems to be in place: no one wants to lose online engagement, likes, or the exponential growth of social media followers. The chessboard of language, once theorized by Ferdinand de Saussure in the early 20th century, would now be virtual, digital, and multifaceted. Of these many facets, few are real in the literal sense. There remains an active effort to suppress the work of traditional media professionals who, through their practices, pose a threat to the influence of parallel informational narratives. For instance, since 2024, the Israeli government has systematically obstructed journalistic access to the Gaza Strip, preventing reporters from entering the region. As a result, a range of information circulates unchecked – unverifiable and, if necessary, irrefutable.

In 2025 alone, Israel has doubled the size of its communications unit within the armed forces, even as available imagery and on-the-ground

information about the conflict have drastically decreased. *YouTube* clips and *Angry Birds* graphics illustrate many aspects of this environment, raising doubts about who is actually preventing the arrival of more than 6,000 trucks carrying food to the Palestinian population at the Israel–Gaza border: Hamas militants or Israeli military forces. Mutual accusations have escalated into what is now essentially a war of narrative, which has reached such an extent that the very reality of famine is being called into question. This is the erosion materialized.

Due to the limited length of this study, a deeper examination of these and other examples is not feasible. Through the application of discourse analysis, the examples are considered as discursive scenes, chosen not for exhaustiveness or case-specificity, but for their illustrative significance.

Ironically, despite the proliferation of video content across countless digital platforms, the capacity to comprehend factual reality appears increasingly diminished. In July 2025, major news agencies like *Reuters*, *AFP*, *AP*, and the British broadcaster *BBC* issued a joint statement demanding access for journalists in Gaza. At the same time, they expressed concern that reporters may not survive the famine imposed on the region. Since the beginning of the conflict, at least 180 journalists have been killed, according to data from the *Committee to Protect Journalists* (O Globo, 2025).

Hermeneutic Question and its method

Interpretation is not the act of choosing meanings based on one's personal values. At least, not if one is committed to a hermeneutic effort grounded in contextual awareness. Interpretive freedom is indeed a starting point, but it must not serve emotional justifications, even though persuasive information often seeks exactly that effect. Journalism must educate society toward cognitive maturity and guide the public opinion in discerning between *doxa* and *episteme*, that is, between opinion and knowledge. These boundaries have become increasingly blurred in contemporary times. After all, normative texts are not poems

open to limitless interpretation: their foundational principles must be respected. Freedom of expression and critical thinking should not be confused with hermeneutic distortion or with the right to insult, slander, or irresponsibly promote racism, prejudice, and other offenses that challenge the foundations of civilized life.

Miguel Reale Junior (2025), a lawyer and full professor at the University of São Paulo (USP), argues that the former Brazilian president, preoccupied with his political survival in light of several ongoing legal proceedings, fails to grasp that the real interests of the American president lie in rare-earth minerals and big tech companies, and not in defending his former counterpart as a matter of genuine diplomatic or economic concern.

Engaging in debate with certain individuals to clarify perceptions of reality is sometimes akin to playing chess with a pigeon, as the well-known Brazilian anecdote goes: the pigeon knocks over the pieces, defecates on the board, and flies away claiming victory. Brazil recently witnessed one such scenario when the U.S. president imposed steep tariffs on the country in retaliation for Brazil's judicial investigations against the former president, its position within BRICS, and its stance on tech industry sanctions. Rare-earth minerals strategy for the future of high-tech economies has become the real object of interest. In this context, disrupting the game board becomes a deliberate strategy. The metaphor applies equally to those who flee the country seeking new rules abroad that serve their own interests.

But the pigeon effect can backfire. As Fabio Gallo (2025), a professor at Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV) in São Paulo, notes, Harvard University offered Brazil an important example by resisting such sanctions, pursuing legal action, and successfully suspending them in the name of academic and intellectual freedom. The aggressor's rationality need not – and should not – be adopted by the victim. A vital role of the media is to educate and mobilize the public opinion in favor of values that resist violence, authoritarianism, and injustice. Yet there is a very fine line between doing so and falling into ideological propaganda or militant activism.

Analysing occurrences

Germany, too, may have important lessons to offer to the world. In general, the professional environment for journalists in Germany remains relatively stable. However, in recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in violence, verbal aggression, and intimidation directed at media professionals. The year 2022 was particularly hostile, with journalists frequently targeted by far-right protesters and conspiracy-driven groups. Although the role of the press as a pillar of democracy continues to receive broad institutional support, especially from the traditional political actors, such recognition is notably absent within the far-right circles.

German media outlets have traditionally maintained a critical stance toward both government and opposition forces, even though many newspapers follow editorial lines aligned with specific political orientations. At the same time, recurring legislative initiatives pose threats to the protection of journalistic sources and whistleblowers. The right to access public information is still implemented inconsistently across the country, with regulatory frameworks varying from one federal state to another.

The decline in press diversity constitutes a latent yet persistent threat to pluralism and democratic discourse. The barring of journalists in Gaza is merely the tip of the iceberg. *Al-Jazeera*, a television network owned by Qatar's royal family and aligned with *Hamas* (despite exercising strict control over its content), has managed to present journalism with fewer propagandistic features by offering space for contradictory perspectives. Few Brazilian media outlets do the same. CNN is one of those rare examples. Since 2023, it has been broadcasting programs featuring simultaneous debates between people with opposing views. The *GloboNews Broadcasting* began offering similar programming in 2024.

It must be acknowledged that media control has always existed within the conventional journalism. However, it is through alternative platforms and now, with the added force of artificial intelligence, that the construction of misleading realities is taking place in unprecedented

ways. If traditional journalistic agenda-setting filtered and framed the world of news, what we are now consuming is a torrent of falsehood messages disseminated irresponsibly and without any ethical commitment. We have moved from problematic partiality to an ethically corrosive environment of deliberate deception.

The war between Israel and Iran was escalated by artificial intelligence in ways never seen before. Posts in Persian called for the release of Iranian detainees, while messages in Hebrew spread false alerts of attacks across various platforms. The United States' traditional warfare model is increasingly giving way to a mode of conflict without open confrontation, in which the public can no longer clearly distinguish what is or is *not* real. There is a stark difference between using language to obscure parts of reality for ideological or persuasive ends, and using it deliberately to fabricate realities completely detached from factual events. Wars have become struggles over the production of meaning. The so-called U.S. trade war in 2025, marked by a sweeping reform of import and export tariffs, has evolved into a linguistic war, a rhetorical battle.

The reality is that today's information environment coexists with both fiction and falsehood. If opinion polls can already be manipulated to distort factual interpretation, a question arises: What can be said of the power of digital messages (crafted with computational tools) to attribute speech to individuals who never uttered it, or to fabricate images that never existed, which yet appear so convincing that discerning their truthfulness becomes almost impossible? Fact-checking agencies worldwide attempt to mitigate this, but their efforts resemble drops in an ocean. Media literacy initiatives often appear naïve and insufficient. Only clear and rigorous legislation will be capable of curbing the excesses and preventing the deepening of the current information abyss. We are staring at an abyss that risks redefining information as a right, stripped of its connection to freedom and responsibility.

Journalists make mistakes. Errors *do* occur, and the traditional media outlets have historically developed a variety of mechanisms to mir-

ror their conduct under the scrutiny of professionals, institutions, and society itself. Christofoletti and Vieira (2025) identify failures in the journalistic news production process that may cause such errors to be confused with what is globally recognized as fake news, even though a school of thought rejects the notion that news can be 'fake' by arguing that, if it is fake, it is not news but something else altogether.

Just as not every opinion is inherently valuable, and not every opinion poll reveals reality without at least room for doubt, professional journalism requires a diversity of channels to minimize the risk of presenting information as absolute truth. Diversity of information, pluralism of worldviews, and ideological multilateralism do not compromise the news; on the contrary, they enhance its democratic value. What is truly concerning is the deliberate dissemination of deceptive messages, strategic distortion of facts, and the creation of fictitious events presented as journalistic content. This is the spectrum of the problem that most directly worries the academic and professional fields of journalism and communication.

Omitting information for ideological reasons is an inherent part of news construction. It is the responsibility of news consumers to seek alternative sources to access a broader range of interpretations. But this is not always feasible, especially in developing economies, where low income, poor literacy, and lack of time constrain media consumption. Thus, intentionally distorting facts to the point of inventing them, lying about them, and treating fiction as news with no accountability is something altogether different. It is not journalism.

Digital platforms cannot evade their share of responsibility when they fail to prevent the circulation of content that promotes crimes such as paedophilia, terrorism, incitement to suicide, or human trafficking, among other violations of the Law. Brazil's criminal case No. 2668 seeks to establish the legal responsibility of such platforms, which in 2025 launched a sudden public campaign – both in Brazil and abroad – pro granting amnesty to individuals involved in crimes against the State of Brazil, many of whom had not yet been tried or convicted. A request

for presumed amnesty echoes almost as a tacit admission of guilt, as amnesty presupposes wrongdoing. Beyond this point, the use of artificial intelligence to create and disseminate false information reflects the weapon actions of disinformation in the pursuit of power.

In a live broadcast by “TV Justiça” Channel on August 1, 2025, marking the end of the judicial recess, justices of the *Brazilian Supreme Federal Court* (STF) emphasized that technology companies claim to defend freedom of expression while, in reality, serving the private interests of their shareholders (Mendes, 2025). Their internal policies hide behind generic ‘terms of service’, designed to ensure that no content is censored – and yet they are turning digital platforms into lawless zones. These platforms – largely U.S.-based big techs – seek to retain full control over what is or is not allowed, while simultaneously resisting the domestic legislation of other countries. In some cases, they have openly coordinated attacks against foreign governments, often supported by far-right political leaders, including the current U.S. administration.

Threats against Brazil’s Supreme Court constitute a direct attack on national sovereignty. The mainstream Brazilian press, alongside major international media outlets and foreign governments, stood in protection of Brazil’s institutions, declaring any attempt at external interference in domestic affairs to be unacceptable. Brazilian jurists reaffirmed the exercise of judicial duties, all of which are ultimately collegial in nature, ensuring that even initially monocratic rulings are later confirmed by the full Court. Proof of this lies in the more than 700 appeals filed with the courts, all of which were denied, and the initial rulings upheld by judicial panels.

The trial, which is scheduled for the second half of 2025, in which the former Brazilian president stands as a defendant, has sparked numerous attacks against the Supreme Federal Court. In an address to the Brazilian people during the Court’s return to the session after the mid-year recess, the Minister of Justice, Justice Alexandre de Moraes, denounced the actions of digital militias engaged in coordinated attacks on Brazil’s democratic institutions and the rule of law. According

to him, these actions have recently caused tangible harm to the national economy through successive illicit campaigns amounting to a clear affront to national sovereignty.

These actions are rooted in a longstanding refusal by segments of Brazil's political class to accept the outcome of the most recent presidential elections. The Supreme Court views measures such as U.S.-imposed trade tariffs on Brazil as attempts to trigger an economic crisis, with the ultimate aim of generating popular pressure to reverse forthcoming legal convictions against those charged with crimes against democracy, including, most notably, the former president himself. Many lies that we see online on political figures in both Brazil and the United States work as a discourse and product sense in diverse directions. An increasing number of these messages rely on artificial intelligence, dramatically distorting public perceptions of journalism and amplifying confusion over what can be trusted as information.

Results and other considerations

Artificial Intelligence has increasingly functioned as a catalyst for social instability, serving the interests of far-right factions and individual political agendas. The threats made against members of the Brazilian Supreme Court on social media in 2025 were not isolated incidents. Numerous other attacks were directed at the presidents of Brazil's legislative branches, and even at the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Senate despite the absence of any indication of misconduct or legal violations by these public officials. Disagreements with judicial or legislative decisions have led to persistent attempts to coerce judges and lawmakers, seeking to delegitimize or remove them from office through manipulation and intimidation. Edited videos, anonymous threats, and misleading posts portraying people in places they have never been or saying things they have never said all fabricated through synthetic audio and imagery, is what has become common tactics.

The distortion of reality is enabled largely by rhetorical mechanisms now empowered by Artificial Intelligence. Attempts to obstruct justice,

driven by personal or foreign interests, have also targeted the Office of the Prosecutor General and the Federal Police, extending beyond attacks on the judiciary and legislative officials. Social media posts have undermined the independence of these institutions, fabricated events, and defamed their public representatives. In many instances, family members of these officials have been directly named in these posts, clearly intended as acts of coercion and intimidation.

Nevertheless, these public servants have consistently reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to defending national sovereignty and democracy, even at significant personal cost, such as the application of the 2012 *Magnitsky Act*. Judicial independence, it must be emphasized, is not a privilege of judges but a fundamental right of all citizens. The professional press journalism, carried out under legal and ethical responsibility, has continued to cover such developments with integrity and accountability, despite facing the daily challenge of combating a flood of false information, deceit, and deliberate informational confusion. Across the globe, journalists are being threatened or even murdered in efforts to suppress freedom of the press. *Reporters Without Borders*, RWB (2025) has documented a sharp rise in the number of journalists killed in Latin America.

While mainstream media outlets are legally accountable for what they publish, alternative media operating under the protection of unregulated digital platforms continue to practice precarious and destructive forms of communication. Pacheco (2023) warns that AI is now capable of fabricating fake events involving scientists, generating false biographical reports of assassinations of people who are still alive and have never experienced such tragedies. “Disinformation has become a household hobby”, the journalist writes. The use of these technologies in the geopolitical arena has resulted in even greater harm in terms of spreading falsehoods and destabilizing public trust.

In any war, information is used to shape narratives. The militarization of communication has long been a subject of academic inquiry, particularly since the interwar period (Wolf, 1986; Mattelart, 2003).

Even U.S. President Joe Biden fell victim to a false narrative widely circulated online, alleging that Hamas militants had beheaded children. On October 9, 2023, a false claim that Israeli warplanes had bombed a church in Gaza went viral, convincing hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. The church itself was forced to publicly refute the story. Many images allegedly from wars in Syria and Afghanistan or from the Turkish earthquake were fabricated, circulating online as if they were real events (Viana, 2023).

Videos posted on *Platform X* (2023) showed Syrian cities under alleged bombardment, which were later revealed to be AI-generated simulations. Since then, disinformation strategies have only become more sophisticated. Political polarization has inflamed social tensions far beyond the traditional arenas of power disputes, infiltrating private lives and fracturing friendships and families. A deep rupture has fragmented societies worldwide, rendering public and private coexistence increasingly untenable.

Molahehi Saba et al. (2025) reinforce the understanding that the digital age has severely compromised both the trust and integrity of information. Journalism could not remain untouched. Their decade-long analysis of AI's role in promoting disinformation draws on a database of over 8,000 existing studies, from which, the authors of this research extracted a representative sample of 76. The findings highlight key historical transformations, such as the digital revolution, the financial support of the economy, and the erosion of national sovereignty as markers of a new historical epoch. The globalization of information has ultimately revealed a new architecture of domination.

The spread of false news during Brazil's 2018 presidential election triggered changes in the country's electoral law to address the growing influence of social media on politics. Penalties of two to eight years in prison were introduced for those disseminating falsehoods about political candidates with the clear intent to damage their image. In December 2019, the *Superior Electoral Court* (TSE) passed a resolution making political parties and candidates legally responsible for spreading fake

news. The law required them to verify the accuracy of the information they shared and granted a right of reply to those harmed. The problem, however, is that once a message has been disseminated, people quickly take sides often without any clear understanding of its veracity. In such cases, the narrative becomes the reality.

Authors like Jonathan Rauch (2021) argue that liberal democracy is not just a political or economic model, but also an epistemic one, far away from thinking and producing consensus. The historical bourgeois state, as theorized by thinkers like Marx, Engels, Gramsci, Althusser, and Poulantzas, has functioned simultaneously as both the instrument and the arena of class struggle. Its role was to ensure the reproduction of the capitalist order (through either force or consent), and to facilitate value extraction. Today, however, this function is being challenged by a new kind of entity: digital platforms (Paula, 2025). It is in this context that Pierre Lévy's concept of the *Platform State*, developed in the late 1990s, gains renewed relevance. According to Lévy, Big Tech companies such as *Google*, *Amazon*, *Facebook*, *Apple*, and *Microsoft* have come to assume social and political functions once monopolized by nation-states: regulating the public sphere, certifying identities, managing cartographic and financial systems, curating collective memory, and extracting economic value. This shift significantly undermines the ability of peripheral nations to autonomously design their own public policies, thereby intensifying global technological and informational dependency.

Conclusions

Videos posted on *Platform X* (2023) showed cities allegedly being bombed in Syria, though these were nothing more than AI-generated fabrications. From that point on, disinformation strategies have only escalated. Political polarization has inflamed social tensions far beyond institutional spheres, infiltrating private life and fracturing friendships and families. A process of social rupture has rendered coexistence increasingly untenable in both public and private domains worldwide.

Contrary to the utopia of ‘collective intelligence’ envisioned by Pierre Lévy in the 1990s, the internet has become a space of symbolic domination, where algorithms determine what is true, relevant, or acceptable. The tension surrounding national sovereign, historically rooted in industrial and financial subordination driven by the ideology of development is now reproduced in the digital realm.

From the perspective of *Discourse Theory*, disinformation can be understood as a discursive formation (DF) that promotes, under our analysis, as a sense of erosion of reality in contemporary journalism. The resulting epistemic void makes it increasingly difficult for ordinary citizens to distinguish truth from falsehood. Political, economic, and military issues are often used to disguise propaganda as journalism, an increasingly common phenomenon exacerbated by Artificial Intelligence technologies.

Today, misleading representations, which are often fictional and entirely detached from empirical reality exert a stronger influence on public opinion than journalism itself. Popular consciousness no longer seems concerned with factual accuracy. The epistemological function of the media appears to be fading. Whether this apocalyptic prognosis will materialize is not merely a question of time; it will depend on our ability to develop and defend a journalism that adapts to new realities. The greatest challenge lies in preparing future generations with the skills and competencies necessary to reaffirm the value of in-depth, ethically grounded, and rigorously investigated information.

The good news is that the very same artificial intelligence technology that threatens us can also play a decisive role in combating disinformation. As with any technological innovation, however, AI serves contradictory purposes, particularly through the proliferation of deep fakes. The most coherent and optimistic conclusion is this: the more we are able to raise public awareness about manipulation, the less effective these false messages will be in the future. Perhaps, with time, they will come to be seen as dated on rhetorical strategies, relics from a time when media audiences were still willing to pay, knowingly or not,

the high price of believing them. Ethics continues to lie at the heart of journalism, shaping both its present transformations and the changes required for its future.

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