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“DARK AGES 2.0”: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THEIR IMPACT

Social Media Paradoxes: Power, Submission and Awareness. A Netnographic Analysis of #Metoo

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Abstract (221 words)

This paper aims to describe some paradoxes of social media using Sociocybernetics. We will develop a netnographic analysis of #Metoo as case study to discuss three controversial key points: power, submission and awareness. Millions of people around the world embrace Internet. The information and communication technologies (ICTs) have transformed the traditional way of life. Now it is evidence. Our digital societies are mediated by software and hardware. This requires a theoretical framework to consider the effects of the "Internetization" and "digitalization' of our lives and especially, its effects in the emergence of social movements. Online social networks have become a parallel universe of socialization from which interactive dynamics are generated until recently unknown. From this framework of online communication, different social movements have reached a greater diffusion. One of them is #Metoo.

Here we analyse longitudinally, from March 2018 to March 2019, the social movement #Me too on Twitter. Based on the network analysis methodology, the characteristics of the observed online social structure are analysed. Netnography findings serve to show a high level of emotion in the way of interacting and a significant pattern of polarization in the conversations about the movement. In addition, this netnographic characterization maps the paradoxes of power relations, the forms of submission and the levels of consciousness that are handled in social networks such as Twitter.

Extended Abstract (200 words)

1. Starting point.

The information and communication technologies (ICTs) have transformed the traditional way of life. Now it is evidence. Our digital societies are mediated by software and hardware. In Faro 2012 RC51 Conference, a conceptual framework to explore digital generation, emotions and social movements was discussed (Aramburu & Marcuello-Servós, 2018). Here, we want to continue developing a theoretical framework to consider the effects of the "Internetization" and "digitalization' of our lives and especially, its effects in the emergence of social movements.

This paper aims to show some paradoxes of social media using Sociocybernetics. We will develop a netnographic analysis of #Metoo as case study to discuss three controversial key points: power, submission and awareness. Following Lanier (2018), there are «Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now». At the same time, according to Kozinets (2010, p.1), *«our social worlds are going digital. As a consequence, social scientists around the world are finding that to understand society they must follow people’s social activities and*

encounters onto the Internet and through other technologically-mediated communications».

Millions of people around the world embrace Internet.

Lanier states that *«something entirely new is happening in the world. Just in the last five or ten years, nearly everyone started to carry a little device called a smartphone on their person all the time that's suitable for algorithmic behavior modification. A lot of us are also using related devices called smart speakers on our kitchen counters or in our car dashboards. We're being tracked and measured constantly, and receiving engineered feedback all the time. We're being hypnotized little by little by technicians we can't see, for purposes we don't know. We're all lab animals now»* (Lanier 2018, p.9).

Online social networks have become a parallel universe of socialization from which interactive dynamics are generated until recently unknown. From this framework of online communication, different social movements have reached a greater boom and diffusion. In Twitter these social movements have as a characteristic feature a hash tag (#) that allows spin the conversation in a transversal way. Although it has become an instrument that makes it possible to agglutinate the conversation in a massive way, we are also hearing voices that warn of the growing manipulation around these forms of socialization. As social scientist must pay attention to and investigate these means of digital activism in order to understand and avoid these possible manipulations.

2. #Metoo netnography.

The huge amount of data generated in online social networks make up the so-called Big Social Data (Manovich, 2011), a universe of information that allows the analysis of unknown connections at a glance from which patterns of behaviour can be detected (Boyd and Crawford, 2012). This phenomenon has attracted the attention of researchers from different disciplines, including social sciences, interested in studying these platforms as social systems from which to analyse and understand behaviours, attitudes and habits of socialization of people, generated spontaneously and are now measurable in real time and at little cost. In order to understand and interpret this parallel universe of socialization, which reflects changes in the way in which millions of people throughout the world relate and exchange information, digital sociology has been researching this object for some years (Daniels, Gregory and Cottom, 2016; Lupton, 2014; Marres, 2017; Orton-Johnson and Prior, 2013). Despite the fact that Big Social Data provides you with a wide sample of data and allows you to analyse millions of people in real time, there is an important lack of explanation as to why users of these services do what they do, making it difficult to interpret their behaviour and attitudes. To fill this gap, Wang (2013) argues that Thick Data is needed, a term that points to Geertz's (1993) concept of "dense description" as a method for analysing phenomena, cultures and relationships between people. Thick Data offers you more valuable information, more personal data, from a smaller sample, which allows you to contextualize and interpret these data.

Here we analyse longitudinally, from March 2018 to March 2019, the social movement #Me too on Twitter. This social movement has grown exponentially over the past year around the phenomenon of women's empowerment (Jaffe, 2018). Based on the network analysis methodology, the characteristics of the observed online social structure were analysed. In social network analysis there are different relational properties that were measured. On the one hand the degree centrality, which is conceived as the number of actors to which an actor is directly linked (Freeman, 1979). The degree centrality analysed in an online context is the basis of the possibility of social connectivity, defined as computer-mediated communication —currently also by smart mobile phones— that supports the development of personal ties (without the common geographical constrictions) and the connection with larger groups and communities of interest (Wellman et al., 2001). By measuring degree centrality, it is considered that directed relationships can be input, sum of relationships referred to one actor by another, or output, sum of relationships that actors claim to have with the rest. Another of the relational properties analysed was the degree of intermediation of the network nodes. This measure indicates the number of intermediaries to be used in order to connect with others (Freeman, 1979). It determines who is in the middle of the geodesic roads, knowing the shortest route that any actor must follow to reach any other in the network, that is, who of these nodes can control the

information according to the position they occupy. Therefore, the degree of intermediation indicates the number of times an actor appears between the geodesic roads (shorter roads) of two network actors. Depending on this, it is possible to detect through which nodes it is necessary to pass in order to reach another node. Who acts as bridges between nodes occupying a strategic position in the network. In the analysis of cohesion, the measure of closeness has been considered, which is defined as the average distance from one node to all the other nodes in the network. Proximity emphasizes the mean distance from one actor to others by focusing on the geodesic distance (Freeman, 1979), i.e. the shortest route an actor must follow to reach other actors in the network. Thus, the inverse of the sum of the distance of the actor to the rest turns out to be the proximity. It is not a physical distance, but the necessary jumps that must be made in order to be able to reach each other. In order to analyse compactness, the eccentricity measure was used, which expresses the distance from a node to the node furthest from it in the network. Finally, the results related to the analysis of the properties of the network structure are shown. In order to carry out a joint analysis of the network structure at the two moments considered. It is necessary to distinguish some important qualities within them. In this sense, the density of the network was analysed, which is the proportion of all the loops that can be theoretically present (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). The density of the network depends on two parameters of the network structure. On the one hand, the degree of inclusion (which is calculated by subtracting the isolated nodes from the others) and, on the other, the sum of the degrees of their points. The more inclusive a graph is and the higher the degree of the points, the denser it will be. This notion comes from graph theory. The density of a network will vary according to the number of links within the network. In short, density is the total number of links at the present time divided by the total number of actors.

Secondly, the clustering coefficient algorithm was used to find out how embedded the nodes were between their neighbouring nodes. The Latapy algorithm (2008) defines the clustering coefficient of a V node as the probability that any pair of randomly chosen nodes are neighbours of V and are linked together. In order to detect whether the structure was more or less cohesive, special attention was paid to the position occupied by the nodes in this structure, in order to know at what distances they appeared from each other.

Thirdly, the modularity algorithm was used (Girvan and Newman, 2002), a method of community detection that consists of decomposing the analysed structure into communities. It allows the identification of dense conglomerates of relationships in broad social networks (Girvan and Newman, 2002). This algorithm begins by considering all the isolated nodes and then determines whether the links are within a community or between a community and the rest of the network. A cumulative strategy is followed. Successively, clusters are formed based on the greatest increase in modularity. The process is interrupted when the maximum possible modularity between peers is reached. And what makes it empirically more reliable is its way of optimizing the division of communities. It makes an adjustment according to the degree centrality, that is, according to the possibility that there is a link between two nodes, which is proportional to their degree. These methods have been developed in the Gephi application (Bastian, Heymann, and Jacomy, 2009), version 0.9.2.

Once these communities were detected, we developed the content analysis with the help of the Semantic Import Web tool, which detects a semantic analysis and identifies repetitions of words. In order to analyse and interpret the information collected, we have followed a procedure based on the Grounded Theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 2006). For the analysis of content collected by each group of actors we use the Constant Comparative Method (Valles, 2000), which focuses more on the generation of conceptual theory than on the provisional test to analyse the content. This method orients the analysis to the saturation of the information and not to the achievement of universal certainties. In order to saturate the different discourses, we carry out a deconstruction work that conjugates coincidences, oppositions and variations in the discourses.

3. Findings and paradoxes: a sociocybernetical approach.

Based on the network analysis methodology, the characteristics of the observed online social structure required a sociocybernetical analysis. Netnography findings serve to show a high level

of emotion in the way of interacting and a significant pattern of polarization in the conversations about the movement. The netnographic characterization maps the paradoxes of power relations, the forms of submission and the levels of consciousness that are handled in social networks such as Twitter

The key is how we congregate and converse in networks around those with whom we share our perspectives and opinions about the world. This leads to a biased and monolithic view of reality. In order to counteract these conflicts, it is necessary to raise the level of self-awareness above the level of homophilia in the way we congregate and converse on online social networks. That's the point of Lanier, «How about "Behaviors of Users Modified, and Made into an Empire for Rent"? BUMMER. BUMMER is a machine, a statistical machine that lives in the computing clouds. To review, phenomena that are statistical and fuzzy are nevertheless real» (Lanier, 2018, p.40).

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