

RESEARCH THEME

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Title of the doctoral research

The Image of the Other.
The Role of the Media Communication for the Acknowledgment of the Cultural Alterity

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Abstract

The core of this research is the dialectic between identity and alterity in communication design and social media systems. A critical exploration is proposed of how communication contributes on the one hand to the construction of identities and on the other hand, tends to the negation or the oblivion of different social alterity or their homologation. In the era of globalization of communication systems, this dialectic increasingly appears to be a theoretical issue to be addressed, to make it necessary to investigate how the image of the other is constructed: to distort it and distance it from the self, or to enhance it to exploit its emotional rhetoric.

The construction of identity is indeed one of the historical tasks of communication design and a subject of study in sociology and semiotics. However, when its task goes beyond the specific communicative function (allowing to identify and memorize a certain entity), the risk is the stiffening of identities with some critical consequences in the social field. The "identity obsession" can lead to the proliferation of beliefs based on prejudices and stereotypes, conflicts, or cultural opposition, as well as to discrimination in gender issues, migrations and more.

At the first instance, the research will aim to analyse the existing literature on the current topic or on others that may converge in it. It is, therefore, necessary to collect and analyze theoretical contributions from different fields of social sciences, to develop a theoretical framework on the theme of the dialectic identity/alterity as comprehensively as possible. To identify the contributions that communication design and, in general, project culture can make, we propose a critical investigation on the forms of iconographic representation of the Persona (as an image to communicate to others), of the Self (as a construction of identity) and the Other (as a foreign subjectivity), before and after the development of digital communication.

Keywords

Alterity, Communication, Narrative, Media, Social sciences