

Preface

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Dossier “BRICS: Digital Technology, Culture and Communication” is a proposal of VIC [1] – Visual Culture WG – IAMCR 2020. Its aim is to present works that represent the five countries of BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The idea was announced last year, during one of the sessions of VIC in Madrid, Spain. Initially, IAMCR Conference was going to be held in China. Considering that China is one of the BRICS countries, it would be relevant to have a dossier about digital technology, which represents one of the country’s themes of importance. However, due to the situation created by the COVID – 19, the event was transferred to Tampere, Finland, and then the dossier became a VIC’s homage to Chinese authors who could not host the event.

It has been almost two decades that BRICS countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa have inaugurated and held annual summit meetings in five countries. VIC’s Dossier BRICS intends to offer a cultural map of digital age for a better understanding of a context that can contemplate representations of technological, cultural and communicative scenarios in each one of the five countries.

The Call for Papers was announced to all IAMCR Sections and Working Groups, but only authors from BRICS countries could submit proposals. The themes proposed included digital technology and cultural changes, intercultural relations and digital culture, digital age and national/international communication and new perspectives and methods of studying digital communication.

Having as main theme the digital age, the dossier includes technology, culture and communication as subthemes, which are also research areas of IAMCR. All texts

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are in English, with a Portuguese version of the title, abstract, keywords and mini bios of authors. The Preface is presented in English and Portuguese. The dossier is published online by the Brazilian periodical LUMINA, and will be launched during IAMCR Conference (July 12-16, 2020).

Considering VIC's homage to Chinese authors, dossier BRICS presents three texts, one from Hong Kong, one from Macau and one from Mainland China. Fangyu Chen, Ph.D. in Film Studies from the School of Communication at Hong Kong Baptist University, in her text "The Rupture in Hong Kong Cinema: Post-2000 Hong Kong Cinema(s) as both a Transnational Cinema and a National Cinema", discusses her interviews with filmmakers from Hong Kong and comes to the conclusion that the ones who are already well established tend to follow Chinese rules, regarding China as a motherland, but the ones from the newest generation are not aligned with the system. Born in the 80s and 90s, they have a strong sense of belonging to Hong Kong. The author classifies Hong Kong Cinema Pós-2000 as transnational and national at the same time: a transnational cinema including older generations and a national cinema made by younger generations.

Zhen Sun, Ph.D in Communication and associate professor at Faculty of Humanities and Art at Macau University of Science and Technology, talks about innovations of digital photography, in her text "The role of personal digital photographic images: a theoretical exploration with Deleuze-Guattari approach". She contextualizes photography from the era of Daguerreotype until the digital age, mentioning the changes that occurred and the nowadays possibilities, such as selfie production and manipulation. The author's paper also focuses on the self-photographic practices with different types of manipulation photographic apps and examines the emerging complex relationships among the theme of me, my photographic images, identity, time, and space, having as reference Deleuze-Guattari's concepts of rhizome, line of flight, and de-/re-territorialization.

The text "Media Evolution, "Double-edged Sword" Technology and Active Spectatorship: Investigating "Desktop Film" from the Perspective of Media Ecology", by Jing Yang, a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Journalism and Communication at Peking University, discusses the evolution of cinema in its interactions of new digital media. She cites Timur Bekmambetov's definition and describes that "desktop" is a new format of film in which all the events take place on a computer screen with a first-person perspective, having all sound originated from the computer and all actions taking place in real time and organized through in-frame montage without visible editing and transition. Her paper has the theoretical framework of "Media Ecology",

concept coined by Marshall McLuhan, which focuses on interactions between media communication and human perception, feeling and value.

José Cláudio Castanheira, Doctor in Communication from Fluminense Federal University, RJ-BR, and Professor of the Arts Department of Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil, in his text “For an autonomous existence of images: an archaeological perspective”, develops a dialog with the three first articles, regarding his theme-image - which is also present in Fangyu Chen’s, Zhen Sun’s and Jing Yang’s texts. Castanheira’s work aims to discuss the intentionality of images, emphasizing the ones in digital environments. His approach, through media archeology, concludes that the multiplicity of digital images makes of them Beings that exist beyond the human and that constitute a kind of continuous phenomenological machinic process, an awareness of the self and of the other. Images can, then, have an autonomous status of existence.

Svetlana Simakova, Ph.D. in Philology and Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications of Chelyabinsk State University, Russia, in her text “Media aesthetic component of communication and its manifestation in infographic publications”, intends to analyze infographics on two bases: infographics as illustration of media content and infographics as a media language. The author focuses on such areas as: the history of media and visual media culture; features of the concepts of media culture and media language, media aesthetics; infographics as a tool of media language, having as theoretical frame of references relevant names, such as McLuhan, Kittler, Bourdieu, Mitchell, Virillo and Manovich. Simakova believes that infographic components allow presentation of results visually, expressively and convincingly.

The author Daya Thussu, Ph.D. in International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, and Professor at the School of Communication of Hong Kong Baptist University, in his text “The Rising Soft Power of India” focuses on India’s potentialities in three areas, such as its democratic strengths, being a multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-religious society, its diasporic dimension, as the world’s largest English-speaking country, and the “Digital India” initiative, that would make the country become the world’s largest ‘open` internet. Although the author mentions India’s weakness as poverty, he believes that “the digital revolution is particularly significant and will ensure that Indic ideas will travel across global digital superhighways in large volume, strengthening the already well-established connection between India and its diaspora, as well as wider international publics”.

Sanjay Bharthur, Ph.D. from *Simon Fraser University*, Canada, and a Professor of

Communication at the University of Hyderabad and Adjunct Professor at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) is another author whose text is from India. In “Communication Policy in and for Digital India”, he initiates with a brief review of media, starting with the arrival of printing press and newspapers and then mentioning the role of television for the masses, coexistence of old and new media and digitisation, finishing by presenting a relevant infographic with the total population: 1.361 billion and its relation to mobile subscriptions: 1.190 billion, the equivalent to 87%, and 560.0 billion for internet users, equivalent to 41%. To conclude, the author mentions that a study of media systems in BRICS is in development at the University of Tampere, Finland.

Tshuma Lungile, a Ph.D. Candidate in Journalism at the Department of Journalism, Film and Television of the University of Johannesburg, South Africa, in his text “For better or worse”? A frame analysis of BRICS activities by digital journalists in South Africa”, intends to develop a framing analysis of BRICS. One of his theoretical references is Goffman’s concept of framing analysis as a form of communication and a “schemata of interpretation”. His findings demonstrate that BRICS is benefiting South Africa, although some skepticism regarding the presence of world powers such as China and Russia. Digital journalists conclude that BRICS can really help in the revitalization of South Africa’s economy as well as in regard of promoting international trade. The text also refers to South Africa’s challenges and areas of concern.

The text “Towards a full body narrative: a communicational approach to techno-interactions in virtual reality”, by Eduardo Zilles Borba, Ph.D. in Communication and Information Sciences at University Fernando Pessoa (UFP, Portugal) with Postdoctoral degree in Electronical Engineering and Digital Systems of the Polytechnic School at the University of São Paulo (USP, Brazil), adds one more step within the digital age scenario. The text states that the five senses – sight, hear, touch, smell and taste – are responsible for sending information to the brain, in which subjectivity guides users’ perceptions. The results from two experiments with VR – Virtual Reality – suggest that audiovisualities are dominant in 3D and interactions within another platform, not in front of a flat screen. The debate about VR emphasizes users’ possibilities of VR interaction.

Among the nine texts, there are points in common as well as adoptions of the same authors regarding theoretical references. Svetlana Simakova’s text, for instance, is concerned with users, stating that infographics make it easier for them to understand issues that could be complex when stated in other media. E. Z. Borba’s text is also concerned about users in VR environment. Both texts, Daya Thussu’s

and Sanjay Bharthur's mention Bollywood and the Digital India Project in order to emphasize the route to either a fictional and/or a digital world respectively. The three texts by Chinese authors demonstrate their concern about media, Jing Yang's about a new form of film in computer, Fangyu Chen's about filmmakers of Hong Kong and Mainland China and their attitudes toward film production, and Zhen Sun's text about photography and mainly selfies. J.C. Castanheira's text is about images and their autonomies, which develops a dialog with selfies and the ways to portray yourself versus the way images can produce meaning by themselves. Tshuma Lungile's text is concerned about digital journalists and BRICS possibilities for South Africa.

Regarding theoretical frame of references, the theories most used are from Bourdieu, Jacobson, Kittler, Manovich, McLuhan, Mitchell, Virillo, Barthes, Flusser, Benjamin, Deleuze-Guattari, Baudrillard, Goffman, Kerckhove, Baudry, Nielsen and Chatterji.

The title of the Dossier, "BRICS: Digital Technology, Culture and Communication", was a lighthouse for all texts, which have dealt with one, two or even the three subthemes, having all of them worked within a digital scenario.

Many thanks to Lumina and to the authors with their insightful texts!

Notes

[1] VIC - IAMCR 2020. Disponível em: < <https://iamcr.org/s-wg/working-group/vic> >. Acesso em: 28 abr. 2020.

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